Opening session

The parties elected the head of Argentina delegation, Mrs. Florencia Grimalt, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Chair of the Regional Executive Committee. Mr. José Miguel Torrico, the UNCCD Coordinator of the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) welcomed the delegates and gave an opening statement.

Organizational matters

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

The parties elected the representatives of Argentina, Republic of Dominican, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Peru and Costa Rica, for the statement draft which was read by Argentina, the Chair of the Committee Executive Regional (See appendix).

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: implications for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

A presentation on the integration of the SDGs and its goals in the implementation of the UNCCD was made by the Secretariat.

The countries acknowledged the support given by the Global Mechanism (GM) and the Secretariat, especially to the consultants in conducting workshops and the Target Setting Programme (TSP), which already includes 10 countries with its base lines and goals established.

Brazil, Venezuela and Cuba expressed their interest in establishing the STP-LDN programme and conducted consultations in order to be incorporated in the program. Brazil expressed that they would make the announcement of incorporation during the COP 13 session.

Some countries did not agree with information from the data provided by the GM and noted that they would use their own data for the validation of the baseline.

The future strategic framework of the Convention

The Secretariat presented the document drafted by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the future strategic framework of the Convention (IWG-FSF) established by decision 7/COP.12, that requested the IWG-FSF to assess the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) and consider options for a future strategic approach for the Convention. The presentation did a brief report of the process that follows the decision to establish this group. Three meetings of the IWG-FSF were convened in 2016 and an extraordinary meeting was convened on 5 September 2017 during COP 13 in order to improve wording of the new Strategic Objective on drought. The IWG-FSF presented its initial findings to the fifteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the
Implementation of the Convention (CRIC15) held in October 2016 and its final proposal to Parties should be presented at COP 13 for consideration and possible adoption.

After the presentation, the group expressed their intentions to approve the document done by the IWG without re-opening it. The delegate from Venezuela expressed an interest to add the issue of indigenous people. After several consultations, the Venezuelan delegate agreed not to re-open the document.

Several countries took this opportunity to thank the representatives of the IWG for the work carried out.

**Programme and budget for the biennium 2018-2019**

The programme and budget for the biennium 2018-2019 was presented by the Chair and gave the outlines of the components of the budget using a results-based budgeting approach that responds to the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018). As was stated in the document (ICCD/COP(13)/L.8-ICCD/CRIC(16)/2, the budget should be considered together with the comprehensive multi-year work plan for the Convention (2018-2021) and the two-year costed work programme for the Convention (2018-2019).

The presentation gave an overview to the parties on the proposed budget and the main areas of work for the secretariat and the GM, the core budget biennium 2018-2019 and financial performance of 2016-2017.

There was concern in the group about the previous same budget which indicated zero nominal growth. They also raised the possibility to include in the core budget, funding for translation during the regional meetings.

It was mentioned by the Secretariat that budget is allocated for the “Drought initiative”. An initial budget for this special initiative is approximately EUR 2,000,000. The group indicated that this was not enough to develop this initiative.

**Global Mechanism**

A presentation was made and report delivered by the GM Managing Director, Mr. Markus Repnik, assisted by the LDN global coordinator, Sven Walter and Pedro Lara, LDN coordinator for LAC.

An overview was given regarding the LDN fund, LDN-TSP process, transformative projects and resources mobilization.

- The LDN fund will be launched on 12 September, with an initial budget of 300 million euros. This is private sector money and is available for the implementation of transformative projects.
- LDN-TSP will follow by LDN Implementation support programme which aim to support the identification and design of the transformative projects (TPs).
- In the Green Climate Fund, the GM participated as an observer.
- The Executive Secretaries of the UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD have begun the preparation of a project facility.
- The parties raised the issue of the duration of the contracts for the country consultants. They pointed out that the resources have not increased despite new countries joining the process.
There were concerns when the GM Director announced the launch of the country profiles. Most of the parties expressed their concern on this information. The GM Director informed that although it was not official, as it was produced by the UNCCD, it may be taken as that. The countries requested not to send out these profiles until they have been reviewed and checked by their governments.

The transformative projects were developed by the GM and supported by a team of five staff members.

Effective implementation of the Convention at national, sub regional and regional level


Ms. Sabine Sakr, Associate Programme Officer from the secretariat presented the document prepared in response to decisions 7/COP.12 and 15/COP.12, which requested the secretariat of the UNCCD to adjust the reporting procedures in consultation with the GM in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention and improve the relevance of the monitoring framework. In these documents, there are new relevant elements of the forthcoming UNCCD reporting as well as the timeline for the 2017-2018 reporting process.

The main conclusions were:

1. Guidance on capacity building measures i.e. what training elements parties would like to see covered by regional workshops;
2. CRIC Bureau to use the information from the narratives (implementation framework) in order to select topics/themes of interest for interactive sessions of the CRIC;
3. Request Parties to use funds from the enabling funding to set up a monitoring system and collaborative efforts to continuously monitor progress indicators;
4. Request the secretariat and UNEP to work closely together and try to achieve alignment of the GSP and the umbrella project;
5. Discuss and decide whether an indicator framework for the SO on drought is needed (so far it will be reported on through qualitative information);
6. Discuss the reporting modalities (reporting on SO, including finance);
7. Request the sec/GM to finalize efforts for the forthcoming reporting process.

After the presentation, the countries agreed on the proposed reporting cycle (every 4 years) and the inter-sessional CRIC sessions to be held every 2 years.

The capacity building, through the Umbrella projects as well as with the GSP workshops where considered essential for an adequate and effective reporting process.

It was requested to invite the GM and UNEP officials in charge of these two projects (Umbrella and GSP) to the workshops.
Linking scientific knowledge with decision-making: review of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology and its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties

(b) Cooperation with other scientific panels. Report by the Science-Policy Interface.
(d) Compilation of proposals for topics to be considered for inclusion in the SPI work programme 2018-2019.

The scientific conceptual framework for Land Degradation Neutrality

The CST Vice-Chair, Mr. Jorge Rodriguez presented the document on the agenda item.

The presentation highlighted the framework developed by the Science-Policy Interface, a scientific conceptual framework for LDN to guide countries choosing to pursue LDN in operationalizing this definition.

The framework provides a scientifically-sound basis for understanding LDN, to inform the development of practical guidance for pursuing LDN and to monitor progress towards the LDN target.

The parties acknowledged and expressed their appreciation to the work of SPI and the regional representatives who contributed to the development of the LDN conceptual framework and two technical reports. It was stressed out that the LDN Conceptual framework should be a voluntary guideline and shall also evolve together with the experience of its application by the countries.

Mr. Jorge Rodriguez, briefed the group on the CST session and informed that the LDN is a process that requires the involvement of all stakeholders, led by the NFPs.

The three indicators used (carbon in soil, productivity and land cover) were highlighted as the link to the other two conventions UNFCCC and CBD, and the importance to this in the development of synergies.


By decision 23/COP.11, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided that the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) will function until the end of COP 13, at which time it will be reviewed.

The parties decided to support the future work of SPI and its work programme for the next two years and stressed that an adequate financial support to SPI will be needed. A consensus was made by the parties in order that the Convention needs scientific and technical support and in this context the role of SPI is increasing. Also it was pointed out the need for a more scientific regional representation in the SPI.

Special Segment Overview

(a) Parallel ministerial/high-level round tables
(b) Gender and land rights (a dialogue with civil society)
(c) Report of the regional representative to the UNCCD Civil Society Organizations Panel
(d) How can local governments help address the challenges of land degradation? (a dialogue with elected and local government representatives)

Special segment Introduced by the Chair, the Secretariat made a presentation on the special segment agendas. At the high-level segment of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13), ministers and other heads of delegation will hold plenary discussions in the form of three ministerial round tables and three interactive dialogue sessions. The Secretariat presented parallel ministerial/high level round tables, a dialogue with CSO about gender and land rights, a dialogue with local governments on how can local governments help address the challenges of land degradation. A dialogue with the private sector regarding how the private sector can invest to help achieve land degradation neutrality is also another session in the agenda.

Ms. Marioldy Sanchez, CSO representative for LAC, and Ms. Cecilia Gasic, gave a presentation on gender after attending the Gender workshop.

The report on Land Rights was launched during the side event organized by the panel and also the recommendations that were developed for the decision to be discussed during the COP 13.

Ms. Sanchez, also the CSO representative of the SPI group informed on synergies with the Rio conventions particularly with the UNFCCC (open dialog session will be organized on the topic of “land and climate during COP13”).

Regarding the UNCCD Comprehensive Communication Strategy, Ecuador expressed interest to hold the next World Day to Combat Desertification celebrations and the information was given to ERPA for further communications with them.

Regional issues

Election of the GRULAC representatives for the Vice Chairs of: COP Bureau (2); CST Bureau (1); CRIC Bureau (1), Regional Executive Committee (1); sub regional Representatives (4: Mesoamerica, Andean, South America and South Cone).

Nomination to the COP, CRIC, CST bureau and Regional Committee

The following nominations were made:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bureau</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COP Bureau</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Mr. Jorge Heider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Mr. Trevor Benn</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRIC Bureau</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Mr. Jorge Rodriguez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CST Bureau</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Ms. Angelica Fernandez</td>
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Executive Regional Committee

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<tr>
<th>Sub Region</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Delegate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Caribbean (Spanish)</td>
<td>Cuba (President)</td>
<td>Mr. Ulises Fernandez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caribbean (English)</td>
<td>St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>Mr. Randolph Edmead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesoamerica</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Ms. Gladys Villareal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andean</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Mr. Gabriel Silva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Cone</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Mr. Alfredo Blumm</td>
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Dialogue with the Executive Secretary, Ms. Monique Barbut

The Executive Secretary, Ms. Monique Barbut addressed the group and pointed out issues to be taken into account for COP 13:

- The Strategic Framework was discussed for two years, where all the regions had an active participation through their delegates to the IWG. As this process has taken long, she requested the parties not to re-open the negotiation on the agreed text.
- She mentioned that the strategic framework’s main scope is to promote the Convention in the countries and to advocate for more attention to land and people at international fora.
- The ES recognizes the outcomes of the LDN-TSP that could mobilize financial and technical support to catalyze LDN target setting in all countries which expressed interest. The GM develops a country tailored approach to design LDN transformative projects, which would respond to three Rio-conventions; LDN Fund is another source of finance for large scale bankable projects.
- LDN Target Setting Programme would not have happened if we could not have the timely methodological support from SPI. The relatively small group of experts produced an important and valuable technical report on LDN Conceptual Framework. The 2016 voluntary reporting cycle has shown low level of reports and weak added value of the information contained in the documents. According to Ms. Barbut, reporting on the implementation would be more meaningful if it is done every four years, instead of every two years.
- Nevertheless, four years between CRIC sessions would be a rather long period which may lead to a reduced momentum and attention to the process both nationally and globally. It is therefore proposed to have CRIC sessions every two years.

Regional initiatives on drought, early warning systems, sand and dust storms and drought and gender

The Secretariat supported Regional initiatives for drought preparedness, sand and dust storms and gender. The positive agenda on drought was presented to COP for approval to initiate the UNCCD’s renewed focus on practical drought activities. Drought conferences were already held for Africa region in 2016 and LAC in August 2017. The outcome of both events showed a strong need to increase drought preparedness and to put emphasis on mitigating the impact of drought. The Executive Secretary emphasized that these initiatives will help the countries through building their capacities and partnerships to raise the political momentum and to make countries better prepared and more resilient in the face of natural and social disasters.
The preparation of the GLO and all other initiatives on communication produced growing and well informed interest in our activities and should be continued, updated and renewed. There is a growing awareness that improving environmental conditions, the ecosystem's resilience and combating DLDD will enhance the concerned countries' stability and help to reduce the related forced migrations.

Closing session

The session was closed having given some outputs and recommendations in order to identify priority items for a more focused discussion at the next session, to keep regular communication with the group through bureau members and to continue work in close cooperation and full coordination with all Parties and regional annexes in order to serve the interests of all and the UNCCD.
### APPENDIX

### AGENDA

Regional Meeting preparatory to COP13 for country Parties of Annex III
Latin America and the Caribbean
4-5 September 2017, Ordos, People's Republic of China (PRC)
Venue: MET 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:30-10:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:15</td>
<td><strong>Opening Session</strong>  &lt;br&gt;  - Welcoming remarks from the UNCCD Secretariat  &lt;br&gt;  - Opening statement of the Regional Chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15-10:30</td>
<td><strong>Item 1: Organizational matters</strong>  &lt;br&gt;  (a) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work  &lt;br&gt;  (b) Election of the group of work to prepare statement by GRULAC in the opening session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 -13:00</td>
<td><strong>Item 2: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: implications for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification</strong>  &lt;br&gt;  (a) Integrating the SDGs and targets into the UNCCD implementation and the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Land Degradation Neutrality  &lt;br&gt;  (b) The future strategic framework of the Convention  &lt;br&gt;  (c) Programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019  &lt;br&gt;  <strong>Formulation of the regional positions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00 –14:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>14:30 –15:30</td>
<td>Global Mechanism  &lt;br&gt;  Report of the Global Mechanism:  &lt;br&gt;  a) LDN fund  &lt;br&gt;  b) transformative project  &lt;br&gt;  c) Mobilization of resources for implementation of the convention</td>
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<td>15:30 –16.00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00 –17:00</td>
<td><strong>Item 3: Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional level</strong>  &lt;br&gt;  (a) Report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties  &lt;br&gt;  (b) Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention – Terms of reference of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of</td>
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### 4 September 2017

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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| 09:00-11:00 | **Item 3: Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional level**  
(a) Addressing particular regional and national conditions  
(b) Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies  
(c) Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Global Environment Facility  
(d) Draft advocacy policy frameworks: Gender, Drought, and Sand and Dust Storms (ICCD/COP(13)/19).  
Securing of additional investments and the relations with financial mechanisms  
Regional implementation plan with financial support  
Observations of issues by LAC representative of the COP or CRIC Bureau  
*Formulation of regional positions* |
| 11:00-13:00 | **Item 4: Linking scientific knowledge with decision-making: review of the report of the Committee on Science and Technology and its recommendations to the Conference of the Parties**  
(e) The scientific conceptual framework for Land Degradation Neutrality. Synthesis report by the Science-Policy Interface  
(f) Cooperation with other scientific panels. Report by the Science-Policy Interface  
(g) Work programme for the Science-Policy Interface (2018-2019)  
(h) Compilation of proposals for topics to be considered for inclusion in the SPI work programme 2018-2019.  
Observations of issues by LAC representatives of the CCT Bureau-SPI.  
*Formulation of regional positions* |
| 13:00–14:30 | **Lunch** |
| 14:30–15:30 | **Item 5: Special segment – Overview**  
(e) Parallel ministerial/high-level round tables  
(f) Gender and land rights (a dialogue with civil society)  
(g) Report of the regional representative to the UNCCD Civil Society Organizations Panel  
(h) How can local governments help address the challenges of land degradation? (a dialogue with elected and local government representatives)  
How can the private sector invest to help achieve land degradation neutrality? (a dialogue with the private sector)  
*Observations of issues by LAC representatives of the CCT Bureau-SPI.* |
| 15:30-16:00 | Break |
| 16:00-17:00 | **Item 6: Regional issues**  
Dialogue with the Executive Secretary Mrs. Monique Barbut  
(a) Presentation of the outcomes of gender training and drought workshop of Bolivia.  
(b) Report of the regional representative to the UNCCD Civil Society Organizations Panel  
(c) Election of the GRULAC representatives to de Vice Chairs to the: COP Bureau (2); CST Bureau (1); CRIC Bureau (1), Regional Executive Committee (5); Subregional Representatives (: Mesoamerica, Andean, South America and Caribbean (English and Spanish speaking).  
(d) Implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy and the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification  
(e) Other issues.  

**Item 7: Closure of the meeting**  
Group Chair’ Summary. Closing remark from the UNCCD representative/Closure of the meeting.
Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this message on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Given that this is our first intervention of GRULAC in this meeting, I would like to express our greetings to the outgoing President of COP12 for his excellent performance and the present President for his designation to COP13, and express our gratitude to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China for the warm welcome and hospitality and facilitation received during the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13), the sixteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC16), and the thirteenth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST13). Also, we appreciate and thank you for the documentation prepared and the efforts made by the Secretariat of the Convention in the organization of this important event, and the agencies of the United Nations, as well as the organizations of Civil Society.

Mr. President,

The COP13 occurs in a time of special importance in the development of the Convention, defining present matters of substantial importance for the future, such as the New Strategic Framework for 2018-2030.

In this regard, GRULAC understands the importance of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that we hope will direct the world on a path of progress in harmony with nature and in balance with Mother Earth, as recognized as a common expression in a number of countries and regions, in economic, social and environmental dimensions. This will undoubtedly guarantee healthy productive lands with a promising future for the next generations and ensure the permanent eradication of poverty in all their forms and dimensions.

In the same way, we emphasize the importance of the Action Agenda of Addis Ababa (AAAA), complementing other means of implementation for financing the new agenda of development during the next 15 years.

Therefore, the new strategy will be fundamental in elevating the recognition of the Convention in combating Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD), and to strengthen its work in the furtherance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) compliance, from its mandate and scope.

We consider relevant to mention that the Land Degradation Neutrality concept even though it still requires methodological and conceptual refinement has been welcomed worldwide. The GRULAC countries are already working to acquire technical capacities and financial resources to carry out the effective implementation, as part of the actualization and strengthening process of National Action Programs. We look forward to the continued support of the rest of the Parties in this process, in particular developed countries.

The Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, with incredibly rich and important ecosystems that provide important services, as well as environmental functions that benefit the entire planet, and that are highly vulnerable to the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). Therefore, this requires the means of implementation including
financing, technology transfer and capacity building to deal with these phenomena, as well as the necessary operational financial mechanisms to support the program.

We would like to highlight the importance of adopting a new Strategic Framework (2018-2030), which, in this present Conference, will consolidate an integral approach to preparedness, mitigation and response to drought, mainly in the regions most vulnerable to these climatic effects that require the shared effort to their resilience and adaptation. That is why we would like to congratulate the efforts made by the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the UNCCD, FAO and the WMO in the organization of the Regional Conference for the Management and Drought Preparation carried out last August in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. Consequently, we consider pertinent the inclusion of a specific strategic objective on drought.

Mr. President,

We recognize the crucial role played by this Convention in combating desertification, land degradation and drought and its leadership to add alliances and efforts in the search for solutions and alternatives that might be disseminated and adopted as part of the strengthening of the capacities of countries to implement solutions to counter the processes of DLDD. However, there is much still to be done, including the need to address the different realities at the national and regional levels for the implementation of the decisions of the Convention.

Also, we wish to emphasize that the efficient implementation of the Convention on the prevention, control and reversal of the processes of DLDD requires an adequate, timely and efficient allocation of resources, both financial, technological and capacity building for the affected countries. Therefore we call upon developed countries and other development partners, to renew their commitment to the UNCCD and with the countries concerned.

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean recognizes the work done by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework of the Convention (IWG-FSF), which represented all regional groups and which throughout the year 2016 dedicated continuing efforts to define the new strategic objectives. This will guide the implementation actions of the Convention between the years 2018 and 2030, including a drought target, the document presented is the result of the consensus achieved within the group after intense discussions. Therefore, the region considers it unnecessary to reopen the proposed text for further discussions.

In this sense, we also want to call the attention of the proposal made by the Executive Secretary regarding regional meetings being organized and financed by one of the respective countries. With respect to this, that option would be difficult for the Latin America and Caribbean region due to a lack of finances on our part. We would recommend that the Secretariat continue to fund and organize these meetings some time prior to the COP meetings. This would give us time to fully prepare and coordinate our positions to present to the COP. We would like to ask the Secretariat to reconsider this position for future meetings. The GRULAC suggested the allocation of funds for the implementation of at least one meeting of Annex III prior to the following COPs.
Mr. President,

We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work carried out by the Science Policy Interface in the preparation and methodological foundation of the Land Degradation Neutrality, as a contribution to the goal of reducing the gap on the scientific knowledge of the UNCCD and its link with political decision-makers. Furthermore, to continue with the expert group, subject to the guidelines laid down by the Committee on Science and Technology.

Similarly, we would like to acknowledge the accomplishment of the Secretariat in filling the post of Regional Coordinator for the LAC region. We take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. José Miguel Torrico for his new designation and also take advantage of this time to send warmest greetings and appreciation to Mr. Heitor Matallo for his hard work, dedication and commitment to this region for the past years.

Also, GRULAC wishes to acknowledge the support provided by the Secretariat, the Global Mechanism and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago who supported our countries in the Regional Launch for the preparation of voluntary targets of Land Degradation Neutrality, in line with the SDG 15 and the goal 15.3, in the month of July 2016 in Buenos Aires.

Mr. President,

We would like to thank you for your invaluable contribution to this Conference of the Parties, and to the members of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism for their hard work, reiterating the commitment of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean to participate actively in this event to achieve substantive results.

Thank you.
Final Statement - GRULAC

Mr. President

I have the honour to make this final declaration on behalf of the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean Group to the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in the countries Affected by severe drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. We would like to reiterate our gratitude to the People's Republic of China and the beautiful city of Ordos for their hospitality and facilities for the development of this Conference of the Parties (COP13). We also thank the Executive Secretariat of the Convention for the organization of such an important event, as well as the participation of the various United Nations Agencies and representatives of Civil Society. A special thanks also to all the volunteers who accompanied us and helped with great enthusiasm.

Mr. President

We have reached the end of the COP13. We have made new and valuable decisions, in particular the strategic framework 2018 – 2030 that marks the way to strengthen the implementation of our Convention and contribute to the objectives of sustainable development, especially on the neutralization of land degradation, which requires the commitment, dedication and collaboration of the actors involved.

GRULAC sees as a priority the implementation of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, with which we wish to direct the world towards a path of progress, with healthy and productive lands in order to contribute to the eradication of poverty in all forms and dimensions. To this respect, we will continue our actions towards the land degradation neutrality, by updating and strengthening National Action Programmes, hoping to have the support of other parties, in particular of developed countries, for an efficient implementation of the Convention, in synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean, while containing one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world, has a multiple types of ecosystems that provide important services, as well as environmental functions that benefit the whole planet, and that result highly vulnerable to the effects of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). We should also highlight that the changing scenarios on the land resource are being seen exacerbated by climate change. Therefore, it is important to have the means of implementing adequately including additional, stable and predictable financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building to address these problems. In this regard, we highlight the work of the bodies of the Convention as is the case of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) which plays an essential role in achieving our objectives, as well as the Science and Technology Committee and its intermediary with the Science and Politics Interface, for the results obtained. We also recognize the support of all delegations and the Executive Secretariat on strengthening capacity building.

The new Strategy Framework 2018-2030 is essential to elevate the recognition of the Convention in combatting desertification, land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, and strengthen its role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from its mandate and scope.
It is important to reinforce actions to mitigate the effects of drought, to the benefit of the communities most affected by this phenomenon. We would want to recognize the importance that the Convention has placed on gender, drought, sand and dust storms. Thank you again to the Plurinational State of Bolivia, our Executive Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Meteorological Organization, for organizing the Regional Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean on drought, held in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in August 2017.

In order to continue our fight against desertification and mitigation of the effects of drought, we encourage all delegations to bring all the issues corresponding to the highest political level and to promote the involvement of a greater number of actors, including civil society. In this regard, we congratulate the Federal Republic of Brazil, India and Liberia for joining the Land Degradation Neutrality Target - Setting Programme and congratulate the Republic of Ecuador for being the next host country for the commemoration of the World Day to combat Desertification.

Although the COP13 has ended, allow us to recall that the fight against desertification, land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought should be a permanent effort. We have a lot to continue to do in our countries and our success must be reflected in the field. When we are back to our homes and place of work, let's redouble our efforts to ensure more and more sustainable land management.

In this regard, we reiterate that the efficient implementation of the Convention to prevent, control and reverse the processes of desertification, land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought, requires a sufficient, timely and effective allocation of resources, both financial and technological, and capacity building for the countries concerned, and so we urge developed and other development partners to renew their commitment to the Convention and the countries concerned.

Mr. President and distinguished delegates

We thank you for your invaluable contribution to the development of the Thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP13) and to the members of the Executive Secretariat and the Global Mechanism for their hard work, reiterating the commitment of the countries of GRULAC to strengthen the process of combating desertification and land degradation, as well as the mitigation of the effects of drought, to the benefit of present and future generations.

Thank you