

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MANUEL NEY CARDOSO,
COUNSELOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF CAPE VERDE TO THE
UN, DURING THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY
MEETING OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:
DESERTIFICATION
(New York, 26 February 2009)**

Thank you, Mme Chair

Cape Verde would like to associate itself with the statement made by Sudan on behalf of the G77 and China.

I join to previously speakers to thank the Secretary General for providing us comprehensive reports on drought and desertification and to the panelists for their presentations which will be helpful for our deliberations.

Mme Chair

Cape Verde is strongly affected by drought and desertification. Its climate is characterized by a short rainy season, from July to October, with an irregular precipitation poorly distributed in terms of time and space. About 20% of the water from precipitation is lost through superficial draining, 13% infiltrates while recharges the groundwater and, 67% evaporates.

With drought and desertification, the degradation of the soil's quality is further compounded. Only 10% of the immersed soil is potentially arable. From this, 95% have been used for dry land agriculture and the remaining 5% by irrigated land.

The cyclical drought constitutes one of the major environmental challenges that facing Cape Verde. Its multi-dimensional impact is further aggravated or compounded by other multiple vulnerabilities facing the country which often make it difficult for a preventive intervention and the much needed funds.

In order to overcome these challenges, my government has been adopting medium term policies aimed at, above all, create the necessary conditions to face these problems without compromising the country's sustainable development.

The National Plan of Action for the Environment, adopted, which incorporates the development guidelines assumed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, in 2002, constitutes the strategic framework and guideline for intervention on the environmental sector in general.

We wish to emphasize that, although the cyclical drought that the country is facing and to combat desertification, the reforested areas did not stop growing.

Anyway, with this Plan, the Government of Cape Verde seeks to create an atmosphere that encourages economic sustainable growth and contributes significantly towards poverty reduction.

Of course, we will continue to need help from our partners and external investments to provide us with necessary funds to continue on the way to materialize this Plan. That's why we advocate that this meeting should put on the ground concrete outcomes in order to permit us to face more confidently the ongoing financial crisis and to permit us to find the way out for the future.

Thank you