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*Speech at the High Level Segment Open Dialog Session*

*RTD 2: "Desertification/land degradation and climate change—what role for the land in the ongoing negotiations for a new climate change regime at Copenhagen?"*

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Thank you, Madam Chair.

Since you wish us not to read any prepared statement and be flexible I'll do just that.

First off, where I'm coming from. I come from a wet country confronted by serious land degradation. My NGO PRRM is a strong advocate and field practitioner of the Agenda 21 chapter 14 on sustainable agriculture which in climate convention parlance -and in my own view- is a 'no regrets' option that has both climate change mitigation and adaptation values.

Second, the linkage between land degradation and climate change is pretty well established. Hot temperatures kill plants, animals and soil microorganism leading to land degradation. We all know that.

But the problem for me is of a different order – it's about climate justice or applied in UNCCD, land degradation/desertification justice. I don't see this justice issue resonated in the previous speeches.

I don't see this adequately reflected in the current voluminous text passed up to the ongoing UNFCCC Bangkok intersessional. And I don't see how we will get it into the Copenhagen outcome agreement.

This is a big cause for worry. Nothing in the current climate negotiations suggest any emerging consensus on climate stabilization target. IPCC has simply given us a range of options -350ppm, 450ppm, 550ppm, 660ppm. We know that it's 350ppm that will keep us under the dreaded 2°C threshold which we are advised not to cross, or we are dead. At 350ppm we are safe, at 450 we are gambling with our lives. At 350ppm corals will still be alive, at 450 they'll die.

But where's the discussion on climate stabilization target? Not in the negotiations table, probably only in quiet rooms that don't matter at all for Copenhagen outcome. It's mainly the rich countries' call and responsibility, if they don't do deep cuts on their emissions, and quickly, we'll get nowhere.

UNCCD is not a peripheral convention to the other two conventions, not a 'mistress' convention to the conventions on climate and biodiversity, pardon the use of the term Madam Chair. Land as source and sink is central to climate stabilization.

Finally, if I ask myself 'can we negotiate climate and land justice in Copenhagen?' my answer is 'difficult but not impossible'.

-End of speech-