

## **Statement by the Group of Friends on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) on the occasion of the discussion on the sustainable development goals and targets (25 March 2015)**

Co-Chairs, Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following members of the Group of Friends on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD): Australia, Burkina Faso, Iceland, Lesotho, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and my own country Namibia.

We would like to reiterate the importance of target 15.3 on combatting desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world. Implementing this target is essential to addressing several challenges the world will face in the coming decades ranging from ensuring food security, alleviating poverty, adapting to climate change and sequestering carbon emissions, restoring ecosystems and contributing to the well-being of affected communities as recently noted by the General Assembly.

Every year we lose 12 million hectares of land due to desertification and land degradation. The Group of Friends on DLDD was formed to continue to raise awareness of this alarming trend and the importance of halting land degradation and rehabilitating degraded lands.

In our deliberations on the Post-2015 Declaration in February, we were encouraged to hear how much importance delegations attached to the sustainable management of our resources, including sustainable land management and the achievement on land-degradation-neutral world.

Lastly, allow me to thank you for your continued support on this issue which we believe is one of the truly transformational targets of our agenda.