Madam Chairperson,

Nigeria supports the statement of the representative of Spain on behalf of the G-77 and China. We commend the Panelists for the impressive and comprehensive presentation.

The global nature and impact of desertification be it any beyond question and can go on poverty alleviation, reversing global food crisis and hunger, and indeed meeting the targets of the millennium development goals for many developing countries, particularly in Africa.

Desertification have direct linkage with restoration of all that environment and Afforestation, renewable energies, environmental issues, rural development, etc. It is therefore imperative that the major environmental Convention must coordinate and coordinate efforts to address desertification and land degradation.

Having enumerated the nature of impacts and inter-linkages and cross-cutting nature of desertification and land degradation, let me state firmly that the problem has never been a matter of lack of policy framework, but rather a persistent and consistent lack of means of implementation, including financial, technical and technological needs, funds, and capacity building. It was unfortunate that the global community deemed this as a critical and matter of little consequence in 1992 and therefore the UNCCD was then only Convention without a financial mechanism. It is disturbing that after years of pressure leading to making GEF a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, the focal area of sustainable land management is still the least in the allocation of funds.
resources in each of the replenishment cycles to the extent that if Climate Change and Biodiversity each receiving $1 billion US$, Sustainable Land Management is allocated a third of this amount in the present 4th Replenishment Cycle. We got this far because of efforts of donors and very commendable visionary leadership of the Chief Executive of the GEF, Madame Nancy Rubfe. It is critical that this situation should be normalized in the forthcoming 5th replenishment to substantially provide the same level of resources to SLM and other focal areas.

And to compliment the contribution of the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, the work of the Global Mechanism as a broker in mobilising of funds should be streamlined and placed rightly within the leadership of the UNCCD Secretariat, to prevent the present waste of energy resulting from duplication of services, parallel reporting and management challenges.

I thank you.