

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to the panelists for their informative presentations

As President Franklin Roosevelt once stated, "A nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself."

As discussed yesterday, desertification goes to the core of global environmental concerns, affecting everybody on the planet by robbing soil of nutrients, degrading agricultural production, spreading dust around the globe, contaminating water, and making it far more difficult to remedy poverty and hunger on many continents.

Drought is known to hasten the process of desertification. There are warnings that the potential frequency, intensity and consequences of droughts are going to worsen as a result of drought climatology, population, and other factors such as health crises, conflict and unsustainable use of natural resources, which all serve to magnify droughts' impacts.

Both national and local level, bottom-up solutions are required to address drought and desertification. As we heard in yesterday's interventions, it is critical that efforts to combat both drought and desertification include early warnings about areas at risk so that local communities, as well as regional and national governments, can take action to address land degradation before it becomes irreversible.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is unique because it addresses the problem of desertification through a bottom-up approach, by empowering local people to take the lead in identifying innovative approaches to sustainable agricultural development and sustainable land management.

The UNCCD has entered an exciting new implementation phase having recently approved a new 10-Year Strategic Plan, which moves the Convention to a results-based management approach and provides the Executive Secretary the ability to adapt the programs and structure of the Convention to make it conducive to concrete action. We look forward to this year's CST and CRIC meetings where we hope to engage in discussions of how to best capture success on the ground and scale-up the many on-going local, national and regional efforts to combat desertification.

We appreciate the panelist presentations and insights regarding the technical, scientific and practical linkages among the issues of desertification, climate change and biodiversity.

The United States believes that enhancing cooperation among the Conventions should recognize the different mandates of the three Conventions, preserve the rights of the Parties to the respective conventions, be transparent to the Parties, and aim to avoid duplication of work, use resources efficiently, capture synergies, and identify potential areas of conflict.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's discussion and commend the

continued work of the Joint Liaison Group on mutual supportiveness between the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD.

We note that national level coordination among policymakers handling climate change, desertification and biodiversity matters, is a key component for ensuring coordinated decision-making and action.

We welcome this thematic session of the CSD, as many of the cross-cutting issues are critical for understanding and analyzing the causes and effects of drought and desertification. We look forward to continued discussions outlining successes and potential solutions.

Thank you.