



STATEMENT BY DR. KAIRE M. MBUENDE, AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON
AGENDA ITEM 53 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 64TH
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 02, 2009

Mr. Chairman

I commend you and other members of the Bureau for the excellent manner in which are you directing the business of this Committee. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for the informative reports that form the basis for our deliberations on this agenda item. We associate ourselves with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group respectively.

Mr. Chairman

Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) remain the main basis for our discussions on sustainable development while the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is our point of departure when addressing the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced manner. Indeed, Agenda 21 and the subsequent conferences on sustainable development have been useful in bringing home the message that socio-economic development and the protection of the environment are two sides of the same coin to be pursued concurrently. There has been an increasing awareness among our people that development can only be sustainable if the three pillars, economic development, social development and the protection of the environment, are given equal significance in planning, implementation and evaluation of the outcomes of development.

However, there is still what the Secretary-General refers to as “the unfinished development agenda” that of fully anchoring sustainable development in rural development plans and strategies. This is important because the livelihoods of the majority of the people in rural areas depend on the land and their lives are as a consequence directly threatened by environmental degradation.

Mr. Chairman

Most of our countries have policies and programmes in place that encompass all the three pillars of sustainable development but are unable to adequately meet the implementation

targets of those policies and programmes due to lack of both financial means and human capacity. Lack of technology also continues to be cause for concern.

Mr. Chairman

Namibia actively participated in CSD17 not only as one of the Vice-Chairs for the session but also as host of the Africa Regional Intersessional Meeting **on African Agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting the Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution**, which in our view was a resounding success. The Windhoek Meeting placed live stock farming and mixed crop-live stock farming at the centre of agriculture development on the agenda of the United Nations. Furthermore, it also, among others, energized deliberations on sustainable land use management. The meeting further succeeded in integrating community-based natural resource management into agriculture and rural development, as means to address rural poverty, bring sustainable development and democratic governance closer to the people and to adapt to climate change. These issues are core to our national sustainable development strategies as we believe that rural communities will only use natural resources in a sustainable manner and conserve biological diversity and the ecosystem if they draw benefits from these resources. They also need to feel a sense of ownership of the process of sustainable development. In this regard, we reiterate our call for the international support to the implementation of a Sustainable Green Revolution in Africa and for the recognition of the critical role of small-scale farmers and women farmers in particular, in this revolution. This, we believe, is the only way to achieve food security on the continent, address rural poverty in general and achieve sustainable development.

The other important contribution of the outcome of the Africa Intersessional Meeting was the recognition that in combating desertification, drought and land degradation attention should not only be give to prevention but also to rehabilitate degraded land to make it productive again. This is important as land is not expandable but could be renewable given financial resources and technological know-how.

Mr. Chairman

Sustainable development is facing a daunting threat from a number of challenges. The current financial and economic crisis, which emerged in the middle of food, energy and climate crises do not bode well for sustainable development. While development financing is declining, demand for financing for infrastructure development and the rehabilitation of the ones destroyed by natural disasters is increasing. We therefore, concur with the Secretary-General that many of the sustainable development gains that most of our countries have achieved over the last few years may be reversed. Growing exposure to risks and vulnerabilities to natural disasters associated with climate change has outstripped the capabilities of many of our countries to cope with disasters.

In Namibia, for example, we were used to coping with frequent and sometimes prolonged droughts and we believed that our disaster risk preparedness was sound and perfect. However,

the floods of the past two years as a result of climate change and variability have proved that the nature of disasters is changing in character and intensity and we have to develop capacity to respond to new threats. In this regard, we appeal to the international community to support our efforts to develop capacity for disaster risk reduction. Disasters, such as floods and wildfires do not only threaten human life and livelihoods but they are also destroying the very ecosystems and the biological diversity on which communities depend.

Mr. Chairman

To lessen the frequency and intensity of climate change-induced natural disasters there is need for drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. We expect developed countries to take the lead because of their historical responsibility. At the same time our efforts to adapt to climate change deserve to be supported through finance, transfer of technologies and capacity building. In this regard, we are disappointed to learn that a number of developed countries are hinting at abandoning the Kyoto Protocol instead of committing themselves to a new commitment period under the same Protocol. There seems to be a huge gap between what world leaders said here during the Summit on Climate Change on 22 September 2009 and what their negotiators are advocating. This gap, unless addressed urgently, poses a threat to Copenhagen.

Mr. Chairman

Desertification, drought and land degradation are among our delegation's top priorities. We are convinced that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification remains the principal global instrument through which we can effectively address land use management issues. We are concerned with the apparent lack of coordination between the Secretariat of the Convention and the Global Mechanism (GM) that results in duplication of efforts and overlapping of activities. We would like to thank the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) for its assessment report, which clearly identified the need for a drastic change in the relationship between the Secretariat of the Convention and the GM. This state of affairs if allowed to continue will adversely affect the ability of the United Nations and its Member States to address sustainable land use management effectively. This situation does not augur well with the UN's efforts to "deliver as one" at the country level and is contrary to achieving coherence of the Organization's development system.

I thank you.

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