

*Stressing* the important role played by women in regions affected by desertification and/or drought, particularly in rural areas of developing countries, and the importance of ensuring the full participation of both men and women at all levels in programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought,

*Emphasizing* the special role of non-governmental organizations and other major groups in programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought,

*Bearing* in mind the relationship between desertification and other environmental problems of global dimension facing the international and national communities,

*Bearing* also in mind the contribution that combating desertification can make to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and other related environmental conventions,

*Believing* that strategies to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought will be most effective if they are based on sound systematic observation and rigorous scientific knowledge and if they are continuously re-evaluated,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to improve the effectiveness and coordination of international cooperation to facilitate the implementation of national plans and priorities,

*Determined* to take appropriate action in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought for the benefit of present and future generations,

*Have agreed as follows:*