

## New 'Belt & Road' mechanism to combat desertification

A new cooperative mechanism to combat desertification was launched on Sunday in Ordos, Inner Mongolia for countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.



Monique Barbut, executive secretary of UNCCD and Zhang Jianlong, minister of the State Forestry Administration (SFA) launch the Belt and Road Cooperative Mechanism to Combat Desertification in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, Sept. 10, 2017. [Photo by Han Lin/ China.org.cn]

Monique Barbut, executive secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and Zhang Jianlong, minister of the State Forestry Administration (SFA) attended the launch ceremony along with more than 300 officials and guests, which was held during the ongoing 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD from Sept. 6 -16.

The Belt and Road Cooperative Mechanism to Combat Desertification will enhance mutual trust, establish consensus and promote the cooperation among countries, to develop a strong collective power to fight desertification.

The new mechanism will have a mix of membership including countries, international organizations, NGOs and enterprises. The framework will involve a conference mechanism, information sharing, technology training and project demonstration. Member countries will discuss and decide four funding channels, make development strategies every five years, set the phased goals and tasks and evaluate the results.

Zhang said the co-building of the green Silk Road is consistent with China's

avocation and the broad consensus of countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. He noted the new mechanism is a Chinese solution to resolve challenges and difficulties, and to maintain the global ecological safety.

Zhang contended that the mechanism can enhance the communication and coordination to effectively contain the desertification and land degradation and contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development approved by the United Nations in 2015.

Barbut hoped the participating countries can find their most effective fit in the cooperation. She said the mechanism will help to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and bring forward the green development concept, technologies and investments to countries within the Belt and Road Initiative.

She stressed that the cooperative mechanism is a very important platform to share the best global anti-desertification practices, innovate the cooperation approaches among UN member countries and start a broad pragmatic cooperation to benefit people of the world.

In 2016, the SFA and UNCCD jointly issued the “Belt and Road Joint Action Initiative to Combat Desertification” to call on countries within the initiative framework to work together as many countries suffer from desertification.

Ahcene Boukhelfa, Algerian Ambassador to China; Sokhun Ty, state secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Cambodia and Daniel Calleja Crespo, head of the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Union also attended and addressed the ceremony.