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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – CSD 17

Agriculture, Rural development, Land, Drought, Desertification and Africa.

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Business and Industry Opening Statement

Madame Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Business and Industry welcomes this opportunity to take part in these important discussions to advance and step up implementation of sustainable agriculture and development.

We welcome the Report of the CSD17 IPM and the Chair's draft Negotiating Text. By and large, we find it to be a comprehensive and balanced document.

As the text recognizes, it is imperative to tackle the challenges of sustainable development as they relate to Africa, agriculture, drought, desertification, land and rural development in an integrated and cooperative manner. Business and industry believe a mosaic of solutions through the joint efforts of all stakeholders will be needed. One important example of such multi-stakeholder effort is Farming First.

Farming First emphasizes returning farmers to the centre of policy decisions as fundamental to sustainable development. Governments, businesses, scientists and civil society groups should focus attention on the source of food security, and encourage all these groups to work together to enable the many millions of farm families, especially smallholders, to grow more crops sustainably through effective markets, stepped up collaborative research and committed knowledge sharing.

The Farming First framework proposes six interlinked imperatives for sustainable development:

1. Safeguard natural resources
2. Share knowledge
3. Build local access
4. Protect harvests
5. Enable access to markets
6. Prioritize research imperatives

We note that these areas are also identified in the Chair's draft negotiating text.

The Commission on Sustainable Development should enable a wide range of policy, market and voluntary measures and approaches. Prioritizing flexible approaches will be more important than ever as governments and the private sector cope with the recent economic downturn.

Food and agricultural commodities chains are increasingly global and comprised of many different stages and players, including farmers, manufacturers, suppliers, transport, retailers, consumers and waste managers, all of whom generate different environmental impacts. Sustainability in food and renewable commodities chains requires shared responsibility and engagement among all those involved along their life-cycles.

We hope the negotiations yield decisions that recognize appropriate technology development and deployment as important to sustainable agricultural development. Business and industry support the pursuit of sustainability by providing technology packages, R&D, people and expertise, outreach capacities, managerial and market development skills. We look to our government partners to create and maintain the necessary enabling frameworks and markets.

As major groups, we have a particularly important role to play in developing, promoting and implementing sustainable agriculture and development in the context of other challenges, such as climate change, water scarcity and attaining the MDGs. Policies and

programs to support innovation, foster initiatives that build skills and joint efforts and partnerships involving major groups are of critical importance.

Thank you for allowing business and industry to take part in this Session, and we look forward to working together to find concrete and workable solutions.

