

CSD 16

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MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Intervention from the Farmers' Group by

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Mr. Chairman, I thank all the colleagues from the major groups for emphasising their roles in agricultural development. I appreciate the mindset of the Youth for their willingness to come back to farming with greater information and knowledge. I recognise: the role of the women farmers, the interest of the indigenous people and their traditional knowledge, the contribution of the workers in agricultural activities and the need for their welfare, the role of the NGOs in project implementation and advocacy at the local level, the importance of local authorities in facilitating agricultural and rural development. We also appreciate the partnership with Business and Industry who provide inputs for agriculture as well as markets for the produce.

Agriculture is a multidisciplinary sector requiring the expertise of several scientific disciplines which have to be demystified and the knowledge transferred to the farmers. As the distinguished delegate from Nigeria rightly mentioned that the strength of sustainable development is strong organisation. Therefore, we believe that strong organisations need to be in place to develop their own extension services and also indent on such services from governments, universities, research centres, the private sector (the industry) and public institutions involved in R&D activities.

As mentioned by the Indigenous people's major group, there is a storehouse of knowledge with the farmers. This has to be refined using modern technical information including weather forecast, early warning systems, risk management tools; and communicated to all farmers across the world and particularly to those living at the brink of disaster, poverty and desertification.

Farmers are certainly part of the solution to address the crisis we are facing now. We need a long term plan based on a new "farmer centred agricultural model" in which farmers would contribute as entrepreneurs. Programs are needed for the development of more sustainable agricultural practices to manage water efficiently, to fight desertification and drought through sustainable land management (SLM) techniques and use of innovative technologies. Farmers also need better facilitation to get organised in the market place and

developing high quality products in order to respond to increasing consumers' demands. While farmers in developed countries have been able to gain from all these advancements, the majority of farmers who are in the developing countries are still lagging far behind; unless they are brought in line, progress will be a mirage.

Large resource flows into agriculture in all parts of the world have to be organised and channelled effectively. We all know that ODA dedication is inadequate generally and particularly for agriculture (only 4% of ODA goes to agriculture). This has to change.

Farmers are proactive and are willing to work with governments and other stakeholders in order to exploit the full potential of agriculture in reducing poverty and protecting natural resources, through a “farmer centered approach” to agriculture policy. The multidisciplinary team has to work in sync like the members of an orchestral symphony.

Thank you for your attention.