

**NGO STATEMENT MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE 1 -
05/06/08 – 4:30 – 6 pm, Conference Room 2
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NGO Major Group spokesperson**

Numerous examples from around the world of positive people-centered approaches to address the needs of communities for a sustainable agriculture and food system exist, and NGOs welcome the opportunity to point to successful examples in this CSD review year as well as cite constraints and challenges, both new and old, that can be overcome to allow the scaling up of programs and practices that work. Many examples of successful good practice case studies have been noted and include:

- rainwater harvesting/recycling and investment in new water efficiency technologies offer positive and sustainable technological developments that enhance water efficiency and productivity over the long term
- emergence of livestock working groups that are beginning to address critical challenges related to hunger, land, water and rural development by identifying sustainable livestock, livelihood and landscape-scale good practices.
- Land use and conservation agriculture that incorporates carefully planned crop rotation can help minimize erosion and allow farmers to plant less water-dependant crops in drier years and manages greenwater in rainfed areas.

Rural areas remain the lifeline of many people in Africa as well as all regions and efforts must be made to maintain their rich socio-cultural diversity, boost agricultural systems and enhance rural economies.

Positive programs and practices that enhance proven solutions are those which:

- integrate indigenous knowledge, people and resources
- ensure specific targets that benefit smallholder women and waged agricultural workers, promotes the equal rights of citizens including women, peasants, tenant farmers, the youth, pastoralists and the poor
- integrate indigenous crops in national research programmes
- diversify farmers' and waged agricultural incomes through sustainable livestock development, agro-processing, and fisheries.
- incorporate the benefits from livestock in integrated farming, especially organic by-products, buying power, muscle power, and motivation of small scale farmers
- incorporate **the development of national water policy plans as well as integrated water resource management strategies.**

Common threads across all of the thematic clusters in CSD 16 to insure realization of the values, hopes and aspirations of small scale farmers worldwide and support community-based efforts include the need for:

- Increased voice and empowerment of the marginalized in decision-making processes,
- Rights-based approaches to development, including the right of peoples and states to determine their own policies that protect livelihood security, environmental quality and livelihoods

- Increased global cooperation on sustainable development, including increased and coordinated investment and funding
- Ensuring that ethical and social aspects of development are considered along with environmental, technological and economic dimensions
- Embracing the concept of food sovereignty, or the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods

But old and new constraints and challenges remain: (at **Different dimensions and multiple scales**)

- climate change and increasing vulnerability of poor populations
- insufficient attention to and investment in agro-ecological approaches to pest control and soil fertility management, infrastructure and research
- Water shortages and increasing competition for freshwater. Without water productivity improvements, global water will become a contentious commodity, since use will increase by 70-90% by 2050 to meet current agricultural and domestic trends.
- Limited capacity to collect hydrological data and integrate climate risk assessment with water resources management
- Lack of universal standards and indicators for water and sanitation provision, taking into account social, environmental, health and economic impacts.
- Nutrient imbalances, leading to an increase in dead zones and potentially exacerbated by initiatives such as ocean eutrophication.
- Harmful social, health, economic and environmental impacts of the industrial model of agricultural and livestock production, including genetic engineering. Recent scientific research reports on the negative aspects of the use of GMOs on sustainable agriculture (**cite IAASTD report**)
- Insufficient support for local programmes promoting livestock husbandry and health, and insufficient attention to the benefits derived from integrated livestock production and livestock-based livelihoods.

(select language below to round out section on constraints...)

- Rural-urban migration and impacts on rural areas as well as poor conditions for workers in industrial production systems moving into rural areas, threatening sustainable rural-urban linkages
- Increasing corporate concentration and control of value chains without shared benefits to producers and consumers, and treatment of agriculture solely as a market good.
- Failure to internalize social and environmental costs, and harmful impacts of agricultural policies on livelihoods of people dependent on agriculture.
- Negative impacts of multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, especially for the rural and urban poor, small-scale and family-farm sectors in both developing and developed countries. This includes WTO rules preventing countries from developing their own agricultural and food policies.
- Negative impacts of export subsidies in industrialized countries and dumping products below the cost of production in developing countries, undermining local markets.

(End with strong call re avoiding crisis response with more failed technological fixes...)

The crisis we see today is not at all surprising. It is the result of a lack of support over many years for truly sustainable agriculture practices and rural development. It is the result of the breakdown of dialogue and the increase of distance between the producer and the consumer. As we will see over the course of our discussions in the next two weeks, and in our weekend

exposure to local food system examples in the New York area, these dialogues are on the increase, and more direct connections are being re-established.

Sound approaches to the issues of drought, desertification, water management and sanitation must be included in the dialogue. NGOs cite the need to focus on root causes of the problems, rather than on symptoms, and are concerned that the food, land, energy and water crisis be met not with a rush to intensify short-term technological fixes, but to take the time to identify medium and longer-term solutions.