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Economic and Social Council
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General Comments on the Chairperson's draft negotiating document.

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STATEMENT

By

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Norway would like to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for efficient preparations for this session of the CSD. We appreciate this opportunity to provide general comments on the chair's draft text, and would like to highlight a few key priority areas where we believe there is need for improvement.

First of all: While the world's attention is on the financial crisis, the food crisis still persists, and actions to overcome it must be properly reflected in our outcome document. A reference should be made to the **High Level Task Force on the Food Crisis** established by the Secretary General, and to the Comprehensive Framework of Action (CFA) that was elaborated in order to ensure a coordinated international response to the crisis. Norway calls for a more proactive role for the High Level Task Force in reporting on progress made on implementing the CFA. We welcome the growing international consensus on the **right to food** as a basic principle in development, and would like to see this right reflected in the text.

Equitable access to land is key for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Ensuring **women's equal right to own and inherit land is of particular importance**, as well as their full and equal access to markets and credit. Norway welcomes the initiative taken by FAO to elaborate **guidelines for land rights**, based on the positive experience from the voluntary guidelines for the right to adequate food.

Production of **biofuels** has become a controversial issue both in the climate change debate and in the context of food security. There is an urgent need to develop international guidelines on sustainable production and use of biofuels. This task should be given to the relevant UN organizations, in particular UNEP and FAO, drawing upon experiences of other relevant organizations and initiatives.

The International Treaty on **Plant Genetic Resources** for Food and Agriculture establishes common global rules for access to crop diversity and equitable sharing of the benefits of such resources. It is of great importance for agricultural development that the treaty is implemented; hence we would like to see a reference to it.

In **Africa** in particular, land degradation and desertification threaten food security. These issues are closely linked to the effects of climate change, and must most urgently be integrated into sectoral policies and national development plans together with policies to reduce the risk of disasters.

Norway looks forward to constructive negotiations in the days ahead, aimed at ensuring a well-balanced and action-oriented outcome document.