

Statement by the Delegation of Canada to the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

May 9 2008, 10:00 – Climate Change Adaptation in Africa

Mr./Madame Chairperson,

There is now an increasing consensus that adaptation to climate change must be a priority for development initiatives in Africa. The successful design and implementation of sustainable climate change adaptation initiatives in Africa requires a coordinated and integrated approach informed by credible local data and contextual information, practical experience, and tools for integration.

We would like to share with the Commission three examples where Canada is working with our development partners to improve overall climate change adaptation initiatives for Africa.

First, through the Canadian International Development Agency and Environment Canada, Canada has supported the AGRHYMET (AGRICulture, HYdrology, and METeorology) Regional Centre, a unit of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, specializing in the science and techniques applied to agricultural development, rural development and natural resource management. Canada's work with AGRHYMET has focused on reducing the vulnerability of the people of the Sahel to the impacts of climate change by improving the overall collection, management and dissemination of climate related data and information in the region.

Second, Canada and the United Kingdom, through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Department for International Development (DFID), respectively, have initiated the Climate Adaptation in Africa research and capacity development program which aims to improve the capacity of African countries to adapt to climate change in ways that benefit the most vulnerable. Building on existing initiatives and past experience, the program works to establish a self-sustaining skilled body of expertise in Africa to enhance the ability of African countries to adapt. Practical experience implementing climate change adaptation initiatives with African communities is generating essential knowledge that will be used to adapt current, and inform future, initiatives.

Third, Canada and the other members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are currently working on Guidelines on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Cooperation and an Advisory Note on using the proven tool of Strategic Environmental Assessment to address climate change considerations. These are being designed to present the user with tools that help to understand the specific challenges of adaptation for a specific country or programming situation, to present options for specific adaptation practices, and to introduce options for integrating these into the associated development process. These tools represent a move forward for the overall integration of climate change adaptation into development

cooperation. The Advisory Note will be available later this month (May 2008) and the Guidelines in the coming months.

This type of combination of coordinated and multi-stakeholder participation, quality climate change related data and information, practical project experience, and tools for integration will help African nations and their development partners to successfully develop and implement sustainable climate change adaptation initiatives.

Thank you.