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INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR CSD 17

STATEMENT ON AGRICULTURE
DELIVERED BY Mr. ABOUBACAR S. BARRY,
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ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

Chairperson,

I have the honor to deliver this Statement on behalf of the African Group which fully aligns itself to the Statement made by the delegation of Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 & China.

The Group is confident on your ability to lead us to a successful outcome of CSD17 and wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary General for his important report submitted for the discussion under the current cluster.

Chairperson,

As we gather here, the time still remains critical when we consider the current context of uncertainty and challenges facing the world and affecting the course of economies all over the planet.

It is with this sense of gravity that this preparatory session keeps all its relevance, as regard to those numerous challenges, including that of food security subsequent to the recent food crisis which has generated a unanimous global consensus on the necessity to attach greater importance and to increase investments to the sectors of agriculture and rural development, in order to reverse the trend of food dependency in most developing countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa.

Therefore, we believe that this meeting is important in helping identify measures and policies aimed at accelerating the implementation of the sustainable development agenda and at promoting a "developing and diversified" agriculture in Africa.

Chairperson,

Problems of the agricultural sector in developing countries, particularly in Africa, are well known, as identified in the Statement made by the Group of 77.

Allow me to say few words on where Africa stands.

We believe that it is time to find a lasting solution to the problem of Agriculture in Africa.

As one the priorities set out in the NEPAD, agriculture is vital for Africa's development and thus requires diversification and a shift from subsistence-oriented systems towards medium and large scale production. This would necessitate financial support for improved agricultural infrastructure which increases productivity and ensures labor intensive growth.

We must renew and enhance our efforts in this regard, including by strengthening the International support to the **NEPAD Environment Program** and to the **Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)** ".

Land reforms and natural resources policies, particularly in guaranteeing women's rights, can also play a crucial role in achieving economic growth and development in Africa.

The African continent is working hard, with the support of its partners, towards these objectives and towards the realization of the "**African Green Revolution**".

In this respect, we wish to highlight and urge the Commission to consider the important recommendations of the **Windhoek Declaration**, adopted by the African Ministers during the High Level Meeting untitled "**African Agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting the Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution**", which was recently held in Namibia, from 9-10 February 2009.

These recommendations invite Governments, international donors and institutions, to take among other measures, the following:

- 1- to substantially increase financial support to agricultural and livestock research centers in Africa, working to make them more effective and efficient;

- 2- to help small-scale farmers to better manage the various risks they face, including price, weather, climate and natural disaster risks, by mitigating risk and promoting the development of agricultural insurance markets;
- 3- to work with development partners to mobilize investments in needed infrastructure for agriculture and rural development, including irrigation, roads, electricity and communications technologies;
- 4- to provide subsidized inputs to small-scale farmers as a way of promoting agricultural production and enhanced food security;
- 5- to diffuse widely pre and post harvest technologies to enable farmers to realize greater value from their crops;
- 6- to enhance the empowerment of women farmers, including through secure land tenure, recognizing that they are a majority of agricultural producers;
- 7- to implement National Action Plans (UNCCD) and NAPAs (UNFCCC) in a synergistic fashion for adaptation to climate change;
- 8- to further enhance North-South and South-South cooperation in such areas as bio-fuels, dry lands agriculture and combating desertification;
- 9- to invite International financial institutions and other funding agencies to put in place, as needed, streamlined procedures for timely disbursement of funds for food and agricultural input purchases.

These are, **Chairperson**, few highlights of the recommendations by our Ministers on the way forward to best address the problems agriculture face in Africa.

The Honorable Minister of Namibia will give more specifics on this important Windhoek Declaration during **CSD17**.

I thank you.