

Statement by
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Vice-Chair of the
Seventeenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

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United Nations Headquarters

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Report of the Capacity Development Workshop for Improving Agricultural
Productivity, Water Use Efficiency and Rural Livelihood

Distinguished delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
Dear Participants;

As Vice-Chair in the CSD-17 Bureau, representing Asia region, I have the honor to report to this august body the outcomes of the inter-sessional meeting held in Bangkok from 28 to 30 January 2009 under the title of: Capacity Development Workshop for Improving Agricultural Productivity, Water Use Efficiency and Rural Livelihood. This meeting was organized jointly by UNDESA, UNWDPC and UNESCAP.

The workshop was attended by senior Government policy-makers of various countries of the region, four members of the CSD-17 Bureau, representatives of major groups and the relevant international organizations.

The summary of recommendations has been issued as an official document of the CSD, bearing reference number: E/CN.17/2009/13.

I would like to announce that the workshop was an important step in advancing the implementation of key elements of the sustainable development agenda as articulated in the Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), and in formulating policy options and possible actions to overcome the obstacles and barriers identified by the 16th session of the Commission in last year.

The workshop discussed issues and challenges concerning agricultural development and food security, agricultural water management, rural

development, land use planning and management, and stressed the need for adaptation to climate change.

The recommendation emanating from this workshop can largely be grouped in the following five areas:

1. Agricultural productivity should be increased by developing policies with participation of all stakeholders with focusing on achieving sustained food security;
2. Promoting integrated management of land and water resources is essential while addressing the interlinked crises of desertification, land degradation, water scarcity and deteriorating water quality;
3. Building social capital through broad-based investments in rural areas is necessary in order to benefit entire communities, including those who are engaged in agricultural activities;
4. There is a need for land tenure, especially for marginalized groups, through formulation of national land policies that allows participation of the full spectrum of land users;
5. Adaptation to climate change needs to be considered as an important element of the coping strategy. Main thrust of such strategy should be reduction in vulnerabilities and strengthening the capacities of societies and institutions in relation to their respective socio-economic conditions.

Allow me, Mme. Chairperson, to conclude my report by conveying several key messages that the workshop participants decided to send to this session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The participants believed that meeting sustainable development challenges in the areas, covered in the workshop, requires multi-dimensional efforts and strong political and civic resolve. They also stressed that agricultural development requires long-term vision with the objective to stimulate economic growth with due respect to the environment and existing natural resources. The participants were of the view that challenges are well known and considerable knowledge and experience exist to address them. And, therefore, policies and actions should be targeted at scaling up and mainstreaming successful practices.

I thank you Mme. Chair