

Business and Industry Intervention
CSD 16
Land session 3 – 6 pm, 8 May 2008

Thank you Mr. chairman. My name is Annik Dollacker. I am speaking on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce, ICC the International Agri-Food Network, IAFN and its associated industry federations.

Increasing demand for agricultural products and climate change present us all with a new set of challenges. Integrated, balanced and holistic land management approaches are required. In this context, business and industry offer technologies adapted to local conditions that are solutions to the issues at hand. Plant breeding for instance is one of the most promising ways to adapt to climate change. Stress tolerant plants, that better deal with drought, heat, cold and salinity are just one example.

By providing the technologies that allow effective productivity increase per hectare, industry also makes an important contribution to limiting the conversion of pristine land to agriculture. In fact by one estimate the use of agricultural technologies has since the 1960ies avoided the conversion of 970 million hectares of land. This is an area larger than the size of the United States (940 million hectares).

On soil protection a combination of measures can be taken. No-till practices help reduce erosion by over 90%, improve soil quality and water retention. The introduction of herbicides and other technologies have enabled no till agriculture. Here the introduction of herbicide tolerant crops has doubled the area under no till in the United States. And no till is also expanding to many countries worldwide. To maintain soil quality, good practices that make the most efficient use of soil nutrients and help reduce micronutrient deficiencies of diets are by definition site-specific and thus knowledge-intensive.

The optimal use of technologies to increase efficiency, the implementation of holistic land and crop management systems and the preservation of natural habitats also depend on farmer's having access to knowledge and capacity building through extension services. It is therefore critical that governments increase resources for capacity building and extension services, as public and private efforts are complementary. In addition to farmers being given the necessary knowledge on technologies, they should also be given the choice to choose from a set of solutions most appropriate to their local conditions.

But the capacity of farmers to use and invest in new technologies for improved land management is contingent on their access to secure land tenure, including recognition of women as farmers and land owners. There is also need for the valuation of what role farmers can play in support of maintaining healthy agro-ecosystems. Incentives must be created to reward these good practices. In the absence of proper incentives, valuable ecosystem services such as the provision of clean air and water, carbon storage and the maintenance of genetic resources as well as protection from floods and droughts may be threatened.

Given the private sector's critical role in continuing to advance sustainable agriculture, including through scientific research, creation of new technologies, approaches and technology transfer and cooperation, we look forward to working as a partner in our mutual effort to concretely contribute toward sustainable agricultural.

Thank you