



CSD-16 on [Agriculture](#), [Rural development](#), [Land](#), [Drought](#),
[Desertification](#), and [Africa](#).
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Person responsible: François Pythoud, Head International Sustainable
Agriculture, Federal Office of Agriculture

Hunger, poverty and food security

The actual food price crisis calls for an immediate and substantial intervention of the international community both at emergency level and for long term structural solutions.

Different avenues should be found to address food insecurity in the longer term. Switzerland agrees with the recent findings of the World Bank that investments in agriculture are the most productive way to promote growth in local markets and to contribute to the reduction of poverty and the creation of employment and income. We therefore advocate a multilateral system in which agricultural development is a high political priority.

Switzerland would like to associate itself with the statement made by the EU raising the importance of the implementation of the FAO voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the **Right to Food** in the context of the formulation of national food security strategy.

In the context of continuing reforms of the agricultural sector stemming notably from trade liberalization, maintaining a balance between the social, environmental, and economic interests is more challenging than ever. New policies and tools with less market distorting effects should be developed and used to promote sustainable agriculture.

Trends and prospects in agricultural production and consumption

Consumption patterns are rapidly changing, and deeply affecting agricultural production practices. The most significant example is the increasing demand in emerging countries for animal products such as meat and milk.

Consumption change is also the rising influence of consumer awareness, primarily in industrialized countries, for products from sustainable agricultural supply chains which should in this context also be better taken into account. Indeed sustainable agricultural products can be differentiated all along the entire supply chain by an increasing number of standards and labels for fair trade and for environmental, social and animal welfare requirements developed primarily by the private sector. This increasing number and variety of existing schemes may cause confusion, reduce transparency, increase costs and ultimately prove to be counterproductive. More attention should thus be given to this aspect at national and international level.

Switzerland of the view that the comparative advantage of developing international reference framework for quality assurance, harmonisation of criteria and mutually recognition of sustainability labelling schemes should be discussed.

The 2007 FAO State of the Food and Agriculture (SOFA 2007) identifies close links between poverty, hunger and damage to ecosystems.

Multifunctional agriculture is at the heart of these complex problems and offers potential solutions through its **ecosystem services** such as soil conservation, climate regulation, water and biodiversity conservation.

Compensating farmers for the ecosystem services they provided should be encouraged through appropriate non trade distorting measures and policies. This would mobilise new resources for sustainable environmental management, while helping to reduce poverty and develop agriculture.

Production and supply challenge and impacts on prices

Biofuels are at the interface between energy and agriculture on one hand, environment, climate change and food security on the other hand.

It is therefore essential to set up policy framework that will ensure proven positive effect on climate change while at the same time making sure that they are produced according to minimum social and environmental criteria and are not affecting negatively global food production and security.

The Swiss government has adopted this year a new regulation on biofuel. It allows for fuel tax exemption on domestic or imported bio-fuels that meet a specific range of environmental and social criteria.

Our experience has shown that stronger international collaboration is needed to further develop harmonized set of reference criteria and international norms for certification standards that could be adapted to concrete situations in individual countries. In this context, we would like to mention the pioneering achievement of the International Roundtable

on sustainable Biofuels set up by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, a multistakeholder approach.

Climate change, desertification and agriculture

With regard to climate change, more emphasis should be placed on the intrinsic interdependency between agriculture and the climate.

Agriculture can and also will be part of the solution. Agriculture should contribute to climate change **mitigation** through carbon conservation, sequestration and establishment of ecologically designed agricultural systems that can buffer extreme events.

Agriculture has historically shown substantial **adaptive** capacity to change in climatic conditions. Increasing support and investment in agricultural science, research and extension programs is therefore urgently needed in order to provide climate-related knowledge to farmers as well as to develop farming approaches with enhanced climate resiliency. New mechanisms such as micro-insurance should also be developed to reduce the volatility of the effects of climate change on the farmers income.

Integrated planning of sustainable agriculture

Sustainable agriculture is and will even more depend on availability of genetic resources. Significant progress was made in the last decade on institutional multilateral arrangements for the conservation and sustainable use of **genetic resources for food and agriculture** as well as the sharing of the benefits arising from their use. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture entered into force in 2004 and 116 countries have become Parties to the Treaty.

Today most of the transfers of plant material from public gene bank are operated under the multilateral system of the Treaty. Next challenge will be to encourage the private seed sector to join the system.

In the area of Farm Animal Genetic Resources, the Global Plan of Action for conservation and sustainable use has been adopted by the FAO Conference that took place in Interlaken, Switzerland in September 2007.

The challenge for the international community will now be to mobilize sufficient resources to support long term implementation of those instruments in developing countries, particularly those rich in genetic resources. The Global Crop Diversity Trust that raised more than 100 millions dollars from both private and public contributors to support ex-situ conservation in gene banks is an encouraging successful example of a new and innovative funding approach mechanism in this area.

Sustainable agriculture requires stronger science and research input. In this regard Switzerland welcomes and supports the results and recommendations of the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for development (**IAASTD**), a unique international multi-stakeholders collaborative effort of 400 scientists. This very valuable network should be kept and pursued to monitor progress and provide advices to the international community.

Thank you for your attention