

## **Commission on Sustainable Development**

### **Thematic Discussion on Drought, Wednesday morning, 8 May 2008**

#### ***Contribution on Behalf of the Scientific and Technological Communities***

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We have heard much this week about the interactions between drought, climate change, environmental degradation, food production and rural livelihoods. I'd like to affirm this recognition, and encourage continued progress toward coordinating and integrating efforts to manage drought, adapting to climate change, and developing agriculture and rural livelihoods in the tropical drylands. Better management of climate risk and particularly drought, today, is an essential and feasible step toward reducing long-term vulnerability to a changing climate. In the drylands, farmers and pastoralists will experience climate change not so much as a gradual change in average conditions, but as changes in the frequency and magnitudes of droughts, floods and other extremes. Many of the anticipated impacts of climate change are amplifications of current climate-sensitive development and environmental challenges. Managing current climate risk more effectively may therefore offer win-win opportunities to contribute to legitimate current development priorities while reducing vulnerability to climate change over the longer-term in the vulnerable drylands of the tropics.

Several international initiatives are seeking to address the challenges of drought, climate change, environmental degradation, food production and rural livelihoods in an integrated manner. I note two emerging examples, cited earlier this week and in the background papers, which seek to address climate-related environmental and development issues in an integrated manner:

- The Climate for Development, or "ClimDev Africa," initiative of the Africa Union, Africa Development Bank and UN Economic Commission for Africa; and
- The proposed CGIAR Global Challenge Program on *Climate Variability, Agriculture and Food Security* – involving a partnership of coordinated international agricultural research community, the global change science community, and their regional, national and local partners.