

**Concept Note on the Ministerial Dialogue with Representatives of the Major Groups and UN System
17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

**12 May 2009
10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Conference room 6**

One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making (Agenda 21, Section III, Chapter 23.2)

One day prior to the official opening of the High-level Segment of CSD-17, there will be a Ministerial dialogue with representatives of the Major Groups and of the UN System. This dialogue session provides an opportunity for a focused, yet informal, discussion on the role that major groups play in implementation, how they have been able to address the challenges in implementation, and how they envision the way forward in their activities relevant to the CSD-17 thematic cluster.

This note on the dialogue session, prepared by the Secretariat, includes a few questions to facilitate discussions. Ministers, Major Groups and UN System representatives may choose to address any of these questions and should not feel obliged to address all of them. Participants may also address any aspects of the issues they think relevant to the discussions.

Format and Focus

The dialogue session will be informal and there will be no delivery of official statements. The Major Groups' representatives are being identified by the Secretariat in close collaboration with the Major Groups Organising Partners based on their involvement and activities relevant to the current thematic cluster and the cross-sectoral issues. Regional and gender balance will be among the criteria for the identification processes.

Opening remarks: 15 minutes

The session will be opened with general remarks by the Chairperson, followed by a statement from Ms. Mayanja, DESA Assistant Secretary-General. The Chairperson will then introduce the format of the dialogue.

Part I: Presentations from the Nine Major Groups sectors (approximately 50 minutes)

During the first half of the session, each of the nine Major Groups' sectors will make 3-minute presentations on their priorities for advancing implementation. The order of the sectors will be as follows:

- Women
- Children and Youth
- Indigenous Peoples
- NGOs
- Local Authorities
- Workers and Trade Unions

- Business and Industry
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Farmers

Presentations will be followed by approximately 20 minutes of discussion guided and moderated by the Chair, including responses from Ministers and representatives of UN entities. Interventions during discussion will be limited to 3 minutes.

Part II: Substantive Discussion on Issue Clusters (approximately 100 minutes)

During the second half of the session, four specific issues from multiple major groups' sectors will be discussed in depth. Each topic for discussion will be led off with a presentation made by a major group representative on behalf of several sectors. Each multi-sectoral presentation will be 5 minutes long and focus on the following topics:

- Farming First
- Rural development
- Urban-Rural Linkages for Food Security and Vibrant Market
- Secure land tenure and water rights

Major groups will develop questions on each of the above topics to stimulate the ensuing dialogue, to be guided and moderated by the Chair, including responses from Ministers and representatives of UN entities. Interventions during discussion should be limited to 1 to 3 minutes (approximately 20 minutes for each topic).

Part III: Closing Session (approximately 15 minutes)

The latter part of the session is reserved for closing remarks by the Chairperson.

Possible Questions for Discussion

To facilitate the discussion periods, Ministers, Major Groups and UN entities may consider the following questions:

- **Agriculture:** The establishment of the Network of Women Agriculture Ministers and Leaders launched during CSD-16 is an example of North-South cooperation that empowers rural women through partnership with women ministers of agriculture, women farmers and key leaders from the private sector, civil society and governments. What other concrete initiatives will support the efforts of this Network?
- **Rural Development:** Aside from agriculture, what are the most important components of rural infrastructure that need to be improved, and what steps must be taken now in order to see both short-term and long-term improvements?
- **Land:** How can we move forward in establishing favourable conditions for secure land tenure and rights to land, particularly for women, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups?

- **Drought:** How can traditional knowledge contribute to the development and improvement of integrated water resources management systems, and create an enabling environment for drought preparedness and mitigation among all stakeholders?
- **Desertification:** Addressing desertification is an essential part of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change as well as mitigation of global biodiversity losses. How should the role of the scientific and technological community be enhanced in promoting the rehabilitation and improved management of degraded lands, including increased integration of pastoral and agricultural land uses?
- **Africa:** Will Africa’s integration into regional and world markets help to ensure food security for its people? What role should local communities play, and how is education critical to the success of a new “sustainable green revolution”?
- **Inter-linkages, cross-cutting:** What do Major Groups need from Governments to be effective partners in implementation, and how can Major Groups support Governments?

Additional questions for Section II will be made available on Monday 11 May in the revised version of this document and in Outreach Issue (<http://sdin-ngo.net/outreachissues/outreachissues.php>)