

*CSD 17/IPM on Agriculture, Rural development, Land, Drought, Desertification, and Africa, New York, 23 – 27 February 2009*

## **Intervention on Land held by Daniel Ziegerer on 25 February 2009 behalf of the Swiss Delegation**

Thank you Madam Chair,

Let me start by thanking the secretariat for elaborating a very useful document on possible policy options and actions on the issue of land. The Swiss Delegation would like to highlight three specific topics: Firstly, the issue of tenure rights, secondly, the need for effective land use strategies, and thirdly, payments for ecosystem services.

### **Tenure rights**

Secure tenure land rights as well as effective policies and institutions to manage land and related natural resources are prerequisites for stimulating investment in increased agricultural productivity and sustainable rural development.

There are many forms of tenure arrangements, depending on cultures, law traditions and many other factors. Tenure rights can be formal or informal. They can be given to individuals, families, groups or communities. Security and enforcement can be provided by governments, by the judicial systems or by traditional arrangements. It depends on the circumstances which tenure system works best. However, many of the tenure systems that are in place lack transparency and enforcement and are not functioning efficiently. One of the main reasons for this are weak governance structures.

The CSD-17 decision should therefore reflect the importance of the relationship between secure tenure arrangements and a sustainable use of natural resources. Furthermore the decision should call upon countries to take measures for improving existing tenure systems, for enhancing capacity building measures in this regard and for developing international guidelines for promoting more secure tenure arrangements.

### **Effective land use strategies**

Let me turn to the issue of land use strategies. We need to be aware that there are limits to increasing the productivity of our soils. We will therefore not be able to fully compensate reduced land availability with increased productivity. Effective land use strategies and spatial planning are needed at all levels in order to address the in-

creasing pressure on limited land resources. This means for example that land available for construction activities needs to be limited. It also means that protection for fertile soils needs to be ensured.

Local measures will not be sufficient for conserving fertile soils and guaranteeing food security in the future. Now is the time for thinking about a format for a new international instrument and common objectives for the sustainable use of soil - including agricultural land and grassland - in order to protect and monitor it more effectively at the global level both from a quantitative as well as from a qualitative point of view.

### **Land provides ecosystem services**

With regard to ecosystem services, Switzerland shares the view that greater recognition is needed of the fact that land provides services that restore productivity, conserve soil, water and biodiversity, sequester carbon, regulate climate and provide landscape and cultural values. We hope that this CSD will recognise that payments for ecosystem services or other incentives to foster the sustainable management of land have proven to support the adoption of sustainable land management practices.

Thank you, Madam Chair.