

United Nations
Commission on Sustainable Development – Eleventh Session
New York City
9 May 2003

On behalf of the major group FARMERS and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and all its farmer members, we offer genuine thanks for the spirit of friendship and cooperation we have observed and been fortunate to participate in with the many parties and nations represented throughout the CSD 11.

FARMERS feel positive about the progress that CSD 11 has produced toward strengthening and implementing improved organizational and procedural guidelines for future United Nations work in sustainable development, and in particular the Multi-Year Program of Work and Thematic Cluster Work Cycle.

We encourage the Commission to stay the course and to chart the path to demonstrable achievements in uplifting struggling economies to eradicate poverty and hunger. We pledge to continue diligent and meaningful participation at all levels. Farmers seek an explicit role from the CSD in the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

However, capacity building for farmer groups worldwide is an important objective that will enable rural agricultural populations to gain the tools and influence they require to accomplish the goals of sustainability outlined in our talks. We feel that governmental and other contributing groups will necessarily have to endow this process with great vigor.

Last week in the first meetings of CSD 11, there were many discussions surrounding the issue of 'trade-distorting' agricultural subsidies. During the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue FARMERS said, "In order to sustain rural communities, farmers in some countries need government subsidies and domestic agricultural policies that support their incomes." Furthermore, FARMERS emphasized the importance of how these subsidies are paid, and that all subsidies cannot be put in one box.

We then pointed out that trade-distorting agricultural subsidies are being progressively replaced in many countries by other measures, and in particular by payments to farmers for environmental services and the multifunctional features of rural and agricultural communities that support sustainable development. In a rapidly globalizing world, and as farmers everywhere experience the natural trade tensions among developed and developing countries, north and south, we press on for the recognition of fair trade principles and multi-national corporate responsibility that can only encourage sustainable development.

During future CSD Multi-stakeholder Dialogues, we might suggest that it would simplify procedures greatly for the Chair to rely on the major groups themselves to summarize their priority positions in one or two paragraphs, thus eliminating the possibility of any misunderstanding that might arise from the vast range of complex and nuanced technical issues discussed during these Dialogues.

The key point the FARMERS position reflected at CSD 11 was the value of the interlinkages among the differing sectors and our keenness and enthusiasm for developing hands-on, practical partnerships with other major groups and nations to advance the achievement of sustainable development goals. Examples include the emphasis on measurable efforts for freshwater to meet drinking, sanitation, ecological integrity and food security targets; rural energy initiatives; and vital rural health and education programs.

In closing, let me again emphasize the value and importance that FARMERS as a major group and IFAP places on the CSD. It is a significant forum, in which farmers can exchange and gain ideas and experiences with governments and other groups of civil society.

Thank you.

Addendum

An example of Farmers Priority Actions and Commitments to Implement WSSD Outcomes Means of implementation and practical example of how farmers are prepared to engage in the WSSD Outcomes and Institutional Framework

The South African Government Department for Agriculture has launched a draft Farmers' Charter on environmental management implementation at a Round Table discussion that was held during the WSSD in Johannesburg. The key elements of protecting and managing the natural resource base and commitments to translate the WSSD outcomes into reality are included in the Charter, to be signed by individual farmers. It was envisaged to finalize the Charter within one year after WSSD. The action will be supported by farmer organizations worldwide to demonstrate their pro-active commitment to sustainable development principles. Governments are also encouraged to support the effort and to foster the process at national level. In many settings, LandCare committees would be excellent structures to enhance the process. The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) will intensify efforts for action by its members as a part of a sustainability awareness campaign. However, it was noted that only an economically-viable agriculture would be able to meet the goals of sustainable development.