

Summary points from Ministerial Dialogue with Major Groups 15 May 2008

All major groups participated in the ministerial segment. Many Ministers underscored the importance of major groups and their work in implementation, and welcomed their valuable inputs to the review session. A ministerial dialogue session with Ministers and representatives of the major groups focused on the following:

Major groups' role in expediting and contributing to progress in implementation:

A Network of Women Agricultural Ministers launched at CSD-16 is committed to promoting women in leadership positions in agricultural sectors, addressing rural women's needs, and seeking recognition of women as agricultural experts and primary caretakers of rural areas.

In certain countries, progress has been made through enacting legislation that gives women legal rights to inherit property, reserving 33% of seats in political bodies for women, and giving millions of women access to microfinance initiatives at the grassroots level.

Respecting and protecting indigenous lands and traditional livelihoods is supported by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and land tenure by indigenous people is now a constitutional provision in some countries.

Community food system projects like farm-to-school programs and urban farming systems have enormous potential to develop sustainable practices and increase access to affordable food by local communities.

Several Ministers described green schools initiatives run by environmental NGOs with Government and youth-targeted rural education programs that successfully engage youth in community-level sustainable development.

Decent work based on ILO core labor standards is at the heart of sustainable development strategies.

Waged agricultural workers should be recognized as change agents in climate change implementation efforts.

Local Governments are increasingly recognized for their role in implementation, and must be supported.

Many supported increasing the presence of youth delegates at CSD.

Challenges and obstacles:

The UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis currently has no provision for including inputs from farmers.

Several Ministers and major groups agreed that the food security crisis is in danger of being used by some to justify increased use of GMOs in developing countries.

It is necessary to develop sustainable criteria on biofuels at the international level.

The Doha round must benefit small farmers in developing countries.

The Green Revolution in Asia showed that high costs are borne by small-scale farmers.

Suicide among farmers has recently become a problem in some countries due to indebtedness and lack of support.

Farmers in rural areas combating desertification and water scarcity have special needs.

HIVAIDS and malaria affect agricultural livelihoods, especially of women, and must be addressed.