

H.E. Ms. Gerda Verburg, Chair (The Netherlands)

Ms. Gerda Verburg was elected Chairperson of the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17), a session which will focus on the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa, and which will complete the second or Policy year of the first two-year (2008-2009) Implementation Cycle of the CSD.

As Chairperson, Ms. Verburg will oversee the Commission's negotiations on measures to speed up implementation and mobilize action to overcome obstacles and constraints, and build on lessons learned in the focal area of the thematic cluster - issues which were highlighted by participants during the "Review year" that was CSD-16. It is expected that special attention will be given to the recent food price crises and competing claims for food, fuel and water.

Ms. Gerda Verburg's professional career has covered the domains: politics, the international field, and civil society and the private sector. Ms Gerda Verburg is currently the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands. Prior to this appointment Ms Verburg was a member of the House of Representatives of the States General for the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) (1998-2007). During this period Ms Verburg was responsible for social affairs. She was vice chairperson of the House of Representatives and the parliamentary party of the CDA (2002-2004). She also served on the boards of the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions, the Protestant Young Farmers Association, the Dutch Social and Economic Council, the European Trade Union Confederation, and the National Commission for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO).



In her capacity of Minister, Ms Verburg chaired the 14th Session of the Conference of Parties of the International Conference on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in the Hague, the Netherlands (2007). Ms Verburg led the Netherlands delegation to the Food and Agriculture Organisation Conference (2007). She chaired international seminars, lastly at the FAO High Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome last June. She released a new policy on agriculture, rural employment and food security together with her colleague Minister Koenders for Development Cooperation.

She is personally committed to sustainable agriculture, food security and a solid natural resource base at national, regional and international level.