

## **Chairman's summary (*unedited*)**

### **Part two**

#### **High-level Segment**

1. The High-level segment of the Commission's sixteenth session was held from 14 to 16 May 2008. The Chairman of the Commission, Francis Nhema, Minister of Environment and Tourism of Zimbabwe, chaired the segment.

2. The present summary represents views expressed during the High-level Segment; it does not reflect a consensus.

3. In his opening statement, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for reinvigorating agriculture and noted that he had created a Task Force on the Global Food Crisis. This Task Force will spearhead urgent, concerted and sustained action by the UN system, in cooperation with other key actors, to address both immediate food needs and the medium- and long-term challenge of boosting agricultural production to feed the world's growing population. He also stressed the projected impacts of climate change on agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification and emphasized the particular vulnerabilities of Africa and the small island developing States.

4. The High-level segment included four ministerial sessions, with a focus on the way forward; two parallel roundtables, with one focusing on investing in Africa to achieve MDGs and sustainable development, and the other on inter-linkages among the thematic issues, including adaptation to climate change in the context of sustainable development. In addition, there were two dialogue sessions, one with organizations of the United Nations system and the other representatives of Major Groups. Ministerial discussions were preceded by thematic and regional discussions, dialogue with Major Groups and partnerships representatives, the review of the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy for implementation, as well as the review of CSD-13 decisions on water and sanitation.

5. Ministers identified a broad range of issues to be addressed by the seventeenth session of the Commission – the policy session, including:

- a. Poverty eradication remains a central policy objective in developing countries, and agriculture and rural development will be essential to its attainment.
- b. Addressing the means of implementation, including meeting commitments to financing for development, trade, technology transfer, scientific knowledge, education, and capacity building, will be critical to ensuring progress.
- c. The current food crisis has highlighted the consequences for food security of neglecting agriculture and the urgency of redressing this situation. There are multiple factors contributing to this crisis, many of which are interlinked, and an integrated response is needed.
- d. Climate change was highlighted by many as having important implications for all the issues in this cluster, with particular challenges facing Africa and SIDS.
- e. Progress in addressing the challenges identified at CSD-16 will require strengthened international cooperation, strong political commitment from governments, and active engagement of all Major Groups.
- f. Greater policy coherence and coherence of donor support is required with regard to agriculture and the other issues under consideration.

- g. The importance of good governance at all levels in promoting progress towards sustainable development was highlighted.
- h. Emphasis was also given to Governments' need for policy space to address their sustainable development challenges in ways best suited to their national circumstances.
- i. The importance of the successful and timely conclusion of the negotiations in the Doha development round of trade negotiations was emphasized.
- j. The themes on the agenda need to be seen as interlinked and addressed in an integrated manner, taking account of the cross-cutting issues contained in the JPOI.
- k. Poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and with developed countries taking the lead, and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development. Preservation of biodiversity is also crucial.
- l. South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation all need to be encouraged to promote sharing of technology, knowledge and practical experience and know how.

### **Agriculture**

- a. The multilateral trading system as well as regional trading arrangements will need to be more supportive of agriculture, in particular through improved market access for agricultural exports of developing countries, including processed agricultural exports, and through reduction or elimination of subsidies.
- b. Many highlighted the importance of the development dimension of the Doha round of trade negotiations and the need for capacity building support to strengthen productive capacity in developing countries.
- c. Sizeable new investments will be required in the agricultural sector in coming years to boost substantially agricultural production, especially in developing countries and in particular in Africa. Public agricultural R&D focused on sustainably enhancing food and other crop production of small farmers deserves particular attention.
- d. Investments in a range of agricultural, including livestock, infrastructure will also be needed, including feeding pens, silos and other storage facilities, agro-processing, testing and certification, etc.
- e. Agricultural investments will need to be informed by a combination of the best traditional knowledge and the latest scientific knowledge of sustainable management of land, water and other natural resources.
- f. Strengthened national and international policies in support of technology transfer, knowledge transfer and capacity building will be essential to support productivity improvement in agriculture.
- g. Institutions and practices need to be strengthened along the entire agriculture supply chain, including agricultural R&D, supply of affordable inputs, providing credit, enhancing extension services, developing and transferring post-harvest technologies, strengthening marketing and distribution systems. Social, economic and environmental aspects need to be taken into account throughout the agriculture life cycle.
- h. It is necessary to develop sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards and food labeling requirements in a transparent and participatory manner. In this respect, support is needed for developing country agricultural producers and processors to be able to meet agreed sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards and food labeling requirements in major export markets.
- i. The primary roles of women in agriculture, notably in Africa, needs to be recognized and measures devised to enhance further their productivity, addressing the specific challenges they may face in access to land, credit and the legal system.

- j. Biofuels are an increasing source of demand for agricultural products. The potential of biofuels to improve incomes for farmers throughout the world was mentioned, provided that their development does not compromise food security and environmental concerns and that small farmers share in the benefits. The need for further R&D into second generation biofuels was highlighted. The need to share technical information about biofuels sustainability was emphasized by some, and some emphasized the need for developing sustainability criteria.

### **Rural development**

- a. Investment in infrastructure will also be critical to boosting agriculture and rural development. Priorities will differ with local, national and regional circumstances, but adequate rural roads and other means of transport, irrigation and water storage, electrification and telecommunications are all important. Infrastructure for social development is also crucial, including rural health care facilities and schools.
- b. Domestic public investment will be a vital source of finance for agriculture and rural infrastructure. While many governments have increased these investments, further resources are needed. External sources of financing will also be vital. Official development assistance to agricultural and rural development will need to be substantially increased.
- c. New and innovative sources and methods of finance may be able to contribute to meeting these financing needs, including public-private partnerships.
- d. Diversification of rural economies is a high priority, including through strengthening of productive capacity, development of value-added agro-processing, promotion of SMEs and other rural industries, rural co-operatives and expansion of social, financial, infrastructure and tourism services in rural areas. This should create new employment opportunities for rural youth.
- e. Enhanced access to global markets, technology transfer and sharing of experiences, know how and best practices were all highlighted as important to rural development.
- f. Increased rural finance on favorable terms will need to be made available to small-scale entrepreneurs through a variety of channels, including loan guarantees, micro-credit and venture capital.
- g. Local authorities and communities play a vital role in management of land, water and other natural resources in rural areas, and their capacities need to be strengthened. Local authorities are also often responsible for infrastructure investment and maintenance and need access to adequate financial resources.

### **Land**

- a. Sustainable land management practices are essential to maintain the social, economic and environmental functions of land for sustaining livelihoods and supporting food security.
- b. Land management and planning capacities need to be improved, including cadastral surveys, titling, and zoning to facilitate equitable access to land and sustainable patterns of land use. Access to adapted information systems can help strengthen the capacities of governments.
- c. Land management and planning need to take an integrated approach that takes into consideration the important ecosystem functions land provides. Sustainable land management and soil monitoring and protection play an important role in mitigating and adapting to climate change, as do forests.
- d. Improved land tenure security can facilitate farmers' and rural communities' investments in sustainable land management practices. Addressing the land access and security of tenure rights of women and indigenous peoples deserves special attention.

- e. Provision of more secure land tenure and livelihoods in the pastoral livestock sector, together with research into effective stock breeding and management of pasture lands, would help support sustainable use and management of rangelands.
- f. The landless poor, including agricultural workers, are especially vulnerable to food and economic insecurity, and measures are needed to provide them with diversified and stable sources of income and, where possible, access to land.

### **Drought**

- a. Moving to a proactive, risk-based approach in drought management has proven to be effective in preventing or reducing the human, physical and economic losses associated with drought.
- b. Sharing of know how and access to technologies for effective management and conservation of scarce water resources will be critical to strengthening farming and pastoralist communities' resilience to drought and climate change.
- c. Informed selection of crop patterns that accounts for seasonal availability and water productivity responses of crops and crop varieties has become an important element of crop management under drought conditions. Know how in this area needs to be widely shared.
- d. Increased attention and resources need to be devoted to public awareness efforts and to drought early warning and monitoring systems. Developing countries in particular need improved access to accurate and timely climatic and meteorological information.
- e. Drought has become an important risk factor in investment decisions of both agricultural producers and financial institutions working with farmers. Index-based weather insurance represents an emerging innovative scheme for managing risks associated with drought, but this requires improved meteorological data.

### **Desertification**

- a. Support to the full implementation and adequate funding of the UNCCD, including its 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018) is urgently needed. It is the only legally binding agreement on land issues that systematically addresses land degradation and desertification.
- b. Effective implementation of national action plans to combat desertification in affected countries requires continued support of bilateral and multilateral donors with regard to finance, transfer of appropriate and affordable technologies and corresponding know how, the strengthening of scientific research, and capacity building at all levels.
- c. Sustainable grazing strategies and other sustainable practices in dryland agriculture and livestock raising can yield results in the rehabilitation of degraded grasslands. There is much valuable traditional knowledge in this regard, but pressures like population growth and climate change call for adaptation.
- d. Monitoring of desertification trends, including the identification of hotspots and encroachment on agricultural lands, early warning, including of sand dune movements and dust storms, and the assessment of desertification's socio-economic causes and impacts are considered central to the identification of focused interventions.
- e. There are strong interlinkages between desertification and climate change. Adaptation measures will be crucial to strengthen the resilience of dryland populations and ecosystems.
- f. Capacities of information and climate observation systems to access and analyze remote sensing data and to disseminate accurate and user-relevant data and information in a timely fashion need to be strengthened.

## **Africa**

- a. The current food crisis has particularly affected Africa, highlighting the continent's food security challenges. Climate change will compound those challenges, as Africa's agriculture is projected to be among the most adversely affected of any region's. A strong appeal was made for strengthened African and broader international support to the implementation of NEPAD's programmes, not least to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.
- b. There is substantial potential to boost food crop productivity on the continent. To do so, Africa needs significantly increased investments in agriculture, including through attainment of the Maputo Declaration target of at least 10% of national budgets devoted to agriculture and rural development.
- c. Expansion of irrigation networks and improved irrigation methods are vital components of efforts to boost on-farm productivity.
- d. Farm inputs like fertilizers and pesticides are scarce and expensive in much of Africa. Efforts are needed to make them more accessible and affordable, possibly through investment in regional production facilities at economic scale, and to increase efficiencies in their use, while respecting human health and the environment.
- e. Crop and other agricultural and livestock research in Africa needs to be substantially strengthened through enhanced financial and human resource commitments, including research into crop varieties and farming methods well adapted for projected climate change.
- f. Africa's rural infrastructure urgently needs extension, upgrading and maintenance. A high priority is the road network, including farm-to-market roads, national roads and trans-border highways. Electrification and other energy infrastructure, safe drinking water and sanitation, and communications also require large investments. The contribution of renewable energy technologies could be significantly increased.
- g. Most African economies remain heavily dependent on one or a few primary commodities. Diversification and industrial development could be advanced, including but not limited to, value addition to raw materials, including agro-processing, as well as through supporting enterprise creation and enhanced competitiveness in other industries.
- h. Community-based and other sustainable tourism can also contribute importantly to rural income diversification in Africa. Access to finance and capacity building for communities, tourism operators and other stakeholders could strengthen this sector.
- i. Rural health care needs to be substantially improved, health insurance made more widely available, and medicines for Africa's endemic diseases made more affordable and more widely available.

## **Review of BPOA and MSI**

- a. While SIDS themselves have made some progress at the national and regional levels in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, many of them continue to encounter constraints, including limited technical, financial and human resources, which have impeded their sustainable development.
- b. The Commission on Sustainable Development, as the primary forum for the regular review of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, should dedicate one day exclusively to such review.
- c. The SIDS are at the frontline in responding to climate change. They share in the responsibility for developing solutions to climate change.
- d. Because of structural disadvantages of SIDS in terms of small size in land, population and resource base, and high import dependence, many SIDS have been particularly affected by the recent dramatic rise in food and energy prices, which decreases their level of food security.

- e. SIDS need to develop effective land use strategies to address the increasing pressure on limited land resources in SIDS through strengthening human resource and institutional capacity, watershed, coastal zone and land use change management.
- f. There will be a continuing need to develop sustainable tourism so that it provides opportunities for income generation for rural communities, thus contributing to the revitalization of agriculture and rural development, strengthening food security in SIDS and promoting the well-being of rural communities. The need for economic diversification was emphasized.

### **Water and Sanitation**

- a. Given the sense of urgency for making rapid progress towards achieving the water and sanitation MDG targets, comprehensive and concerted efforts will be needed. The change must begin with demonstrating political commitment by allocating increased share of national budget to water and especially sanitation sector.
- b. This change should be complemented by the external development partners in the form of increased flow of ODA and increased international cooperation in general.
- c. Meeting water and sanitation targets and implementing IWRM requires partnerships among various stakeholders at all levels. The main thrust of these partnerships needs to be on mobilizing investments to support infrastructure rehabilitation and development, capacity building of local institutions, transfer of technologies and scaling up of good practices, in particular in sanitation.
- d. The multiplicity of water-related challenges faced by countries highlights the importance of advancing the implementation of IWRM. However, the implementation of IWRM needs to be guided by specific objectives against which impact can be monitored and measured with tangible indicators at national level.
- e. While demand for water is increasing in its different uses, climate change is contributing to water scarcity in many areas and regions. Implementing demand management measures will help in reducing water losses in public water supply networks, increasing irrigation efficiency, and improving water productivity. Also, there is a need to mainstream adaptation to climate change into IWRM.
- f. The role of the UN development system in providing capacity building to support the achievement of the water and sanitation MDG targets was emphasized.
- g. The successful review of CSD-13 water and sanitation decisions demonstrates the strong added value of this Commission. The need to strengthen UN-Water was highlighted.