

**STATEMENT BY MS GERDA VERBURG, MINISTER OF  
AGRICULTURE, NATURE AND FOOD QUALITY AND  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN  
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE  
MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON IMPLEMENTING  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2010**

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Excellency Mr. Luis Ferraté, Chairperson of CSD-18,

Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary General of UNDESA

Mr. Tariq Banuri, Director, Division for Sustainable Development

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly honored to be here at the “Multistakeholder Dialogue on Implementing Sustainable Development” which is being organized to follow up the implementation of decisions taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its 17<sup>th</sup> session.

I am delighted to note that this Dialogue is being organized within the framework of CSD. It makes sense because CSD remains the leading mechanism within the UN system to follow up the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Action.

Over the years, stakeholders have raised voices and concerns about the slow progress being made in achieving internationally agreed goals.

And, in this context, CSD also received its fair share of the criticism.

We all believe that the CSD should become more effective.

Its leadership role needs to be strengthened. It is even more important now than ever before because of the multiplicity of challenges we are facing.

We have the opportunity to do so: not only by agreeing on a set of policy decisions--but by making sure that those decisions are implemented.

That's why the dialogues such as the present one are very important.

We have nothing here to negotiate.

We have crossed that milestone last year.

Since the conclusion of CSD-17, together with the Secretariat, I have been campaigning about the implementation of actions agreed during CSD-17. This dialogue offers yet another opportunity for open exchange of views and ideas on the way forward.

And I would like to congratulate the CSD Secretariat for organizing this event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our world is facing multiple crises, including climate change and looming natural resource scarcity.

It is clear that the world economy needs an urgent transition towards a sustainable, inclusive and resource efficient path.

We are not yet out of food crisis.

Many countries are going through the worst drought of their history.

Population growth and changing diets are contributing to steadily increasing food demand. Growth of non-food agriculture is also pushing up the prices.

Against this backdrop of multiple crises, CSD-17 agreed on 278 “policy options and practical measures to expedite implementation in agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa”.

These options and measures offer both short term solutions to address immediate food security concerns and long-term options to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The most important result of last year’s CSD-session was a paradigm shift for agriculture.

We all recognized that: Agriculture is not longer part of the problem, but part of the solution.

Why?

Because it serves as an engine of economic growth and development in many developing countries.

It offers greatest opportunities to reduce rural poverty.

It paves the way for achieving sustainable development.

It is crucial for the conservation and sustainable use of our natural resources.

It has become clear that agriculture remains the centerpiece of post-Copenhagen climate agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The agenda we agreed during CSD-17 by no means was simple.

Its implementation requires coordination among all stakeholders from global level to country level.

We need to forge and promote partnerships to advance the implementation of agreed decisions. Both developed and developing countries need to meet their obligations.

And, most importantly, scientific knowledge must be combined with the local experiences to obtain best possible results.

Extending support to small farmers, especially women, in the form of capacity building and providing access to resources will be critical in enhancing agricultural productivity.

I am very glad to note that many of the implementing actors are present in today's meeting.

You will not only be invited to share your experiences with regard to implementation of CSD-17 decisions, but your views to make this “implementation campaign” more effective are vital.

Let me conclude by the phrase you heard time and again during CSD-17.

Swords into ploughshares, words into action!

Only together we can assure that our common aspirations for the implementation of a fundamentally changed agricultural policy and green economy can become a reality for the benefit of our children and grand children.

Finally, I am grateful to the Bureau of CSD-18, especially Minister Ferraté, for making implementation of CSD decisions an important priority, while being fully focused on the preparations for CSD-18. Yesterday, I attended the Bureau meeting and was quite impressed with the innovations introduced in the organization of work.

Let me assure you of my firm support to the Commission’s work ahead.

Thank you.