

Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting
for the Seventeenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development
23 – 27 February 2009

Dialogue with Major Groups

Statement
on behalf of the European Union
by

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Madam Chairperson / Mr Chairman, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Czech Republic has the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its twenty-seven Member States.

The EU recognises the necessity of and fully supports the **involvement and participation of major groups** as women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organisations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological communities and farmers **in the activities of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development**, in the implementation of Agenda 21, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and also in improving the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The EU appreciates the major groups' active participation in the **Partnership for sustainable development initiatives** and related activities. Each group has its specific and crucial role in promoting sustainable development.

Generally, the common effort of governments, international organisations and major groups should lead to activities such as establishing **long-term partnerships, strengthening local governance, ensuring equal human and civic rights, and sharing information and lessons learned**.

In relation to the CSD-17 thematic cluster, the CSD-17 policy decisions should reflect, as appropriate, **the roles of all major groups in implementation** of necessary measures in as the following areas:

- a) Fostering the **access of women and girls from developing countries to education**, training and information, particularly in the agriculture sectors and women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels and addressing the needs of women in rural areas;
- b) Supporting **professional and specialized education** which trains experts in organic farming, spatial planning, environmental technologies, science and research and other relevant professions in connection with decision-making and management;
- c) Respecting and protecting **indigenous land and traditional livelihoods** and contributing to the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- d) Recognising and supporting the **role of local governments**;
- e) Improving **land tenure systems and securing land rights**, particularly of indigenous peoples;
- f) Supporting **local community food programmes**;
- g) Enhancing **food security** in the long-term perspective;
- h) Promoting **sustainable consumption and production patterns**, with a special regard to water management, use of energy sources and use of all natural resources.

The EU would like to express its appreciation for the effort and work done by major groups while developing their written contribution on **"Major groups' priorities for action in agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification, Africa and cross-cutting issues"**. This document also presents the policy options and possible measures to implement the above-mentioned documents and initiatives. In this context the document is a valuable basis for further discussion on promoting implementation activities in relation to the thematic cluster and the role of major groups, particularly with the representatives of the governments and also with international organisations.

Thank you.