



**PERMANENT MISSION OF
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Statement by
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of
The Kingdom of the Netherlands
and
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Commission on Sustainable Development

**on the occasion of the Opening of the
High Level Segment of CSD 17**

New York, 13 May 2009

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Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are living in a world of crises, we all know.
The food crisis, energy crisis, and more recently, the financial and economic crisis.
At the time we need it most; sustainable development is hit in its heart.

We also live in a world in which the average income per capita is higher than anytime in the past before us. Enough food is being produced to feed everyone! Yet nearly a billion people live on less than \$ 1 dollar a day. Most of them depend on agriculture for their daily livelihoods. The food crisis is still there, although no longer on the front page. May I remind us that worldwide we made the commitment to reduce by half the number of people living in poverty by 2015. The achievement of this first Millennium Development Goal is further away than ever. One of our biggest challenges is how are we going to feed 9 billion people in 2050.

Against this backdrop of multiple crises, let us not add another crisis: a leadership crisis. Leadership is needed more than ever. Old solutions do no longer fit the challenges of the 21st century. I fully concur with the words of Minister Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah at the High Level preparatory meeting in Namibia: if you do what you did, you get what you got. The time for change has come. Change to make a difference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

CSD 17 should set the scene for change. Our message should be: Credibility, Cooperation and Commitment
Credibility to stick to our promises and to come forward with a shared vision.
Cooperation to build public-private partnerships at all levels to make a difference.
Commitment to implement our agreements on the ground with adequate means of implementation.

At the end it can only be done with dedication and leadership. Leadership for making decisions today, sometimes tough, determining the world we live in tomorrow. Farmers know it very well; you need to plant first to be able to harvest later. Let us follow that practice. This is our time to plant for the future while addressing the immediate needs of those who are in need now.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A paradigm shift is needed.
Agriculture should not longer be seen as part of the problem.
Agriculture should be part of the solution. Why?

- Agriculture is at the heart of poverty reduction. In many developing countries agriculture is the driving force for economic development.
- Agriculture is at the heart of sustainable development. It is crucial for the conservation and sustainable use of our natural resources. And,
- Agriculture should be at the heart of the climate change agenda, especially when we look to mitigation and adaptation measures.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Negotiations for a successful outcome of CSD 17 are well underway with a shared sense of urgency. I remain optimistic for a positive result with new concrete actions and deliverables. They should go hand in hand with a shared vision from us. That is the objective of this high level meeting: developing our shared vision for the future. May I share some elements of my vision.

Green Revolution

First and foremost we need a sustainable and home grown Green Revolution, especially in Africa. A revolution in the most literal meaning of the word. This means calling for a revolution in ideas, a revolution in technologies and a revolution in agricultural and trade policies and market access as well as providing the financial means. It calls for new, creative and innovative thinking. But, moreover it calls for concrete deliverables and actions to be implemented.

My vision is that we can make a green revolution for sustainable agriculture happen along a five track approach:

- increasing our investments in sustainable agriculture;
- creating an enabling environment,
- developing sustainable production and food chains;
- improving market access especially for developing countries, and
- Social safety net and access to finance, for example to micro credits.

New Technology

Another crucial element is making full use of opportunities provided by science, research and technology. They must be linked up with education and extension to be able to disseminate the results of research and to make it applicable on the ground. Science, technology, education and extension are the pillars for sustainable agricultural and rural development. Linking traditional knowledge, science and new research and development is pivotal to generate new ideas and technological breakthroughs.

However, in addressing the challenges of the 21st century there is a strong need to learn from the past. By doing so, we can avoid mistakes while replicating and scaling-up effective practices making them tailor-made. In shaping our future we have the opportunity for leapfrogging to new technologies recognizing specific national circumstances.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Energy and Climate Change

Agriculture should be in the heart of the climate change agenda. Globally, the agricultural sector has significant potential to contribute to mitigation of climate change as well as to provide adaptation and sustainable development opportunities. It has the potential for pro-poor double dividend. Investing in agriculture mitigation measures has tremendous potential to absorb greenhouse gas emissions in a cost-effective way. So, let us try to keep the door open for including agriculture and soil carbon in a new climate change deal. In this respect we have to give due respect to the competing claims between food and fuels. Although easy answers do not exist, the question is whether there is not a need for a process leading us to sustainable production of bio fuels. The round tables for sustainable soy and palm oil production are good examples.

Distinguished colleagues,

Water

My last element is water in relation to agriculture.

Investments in agriculture are a cornerstone of any sustainable solution to overcome our challenges. But the question is: will there be enough water to make this possible and to grow enough food? The crude fact is that worldwide agriculture consumes 70% of all fresh water withdrawals and 90% of overall consumption. There is a strong need to close the gap in agricultural productivity in many parts of the world and in realizing the unexplored potential that lies in more adequate and efficient water management along unprecedented changes in policy and production techniques.

Should we not develop a water agenda for food and ecosystems?

Means of Implementation

A shared vision containing some of these issues can only succeed if we have means to implement it. That will be our biggest challenge. New and additional resources from private, public, domestic and international sources are needed, especially for developing countries. Especially developed countries have a special responsibility in this respect. We all have to live up to our promises. Nobody can or should pull back from the promises they have made.

Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude.

Given the challenges of our time there is no time to waste. Our leadership is called for to become strategic about achieving the long-term goals of sustainable development. We all need to rise to the occasion. We need to be credible, to cooperate and to commit ourselves. Swords into ploughshares, words into action! With this UN motto I will ask you to be forward looking and go beyond generalities during the High Level Segment in the coming days.

The green revolution for sustainable agriculture, while effectively conserving and managing our environment, has to become a reality. To speak with the words of a new leader and famous son of Africa: yes we can, yes we should and yes, we will make it happen!

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

Thank you.

