

International Federation of Agricultural Producers

CSD 17
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OPENING SESSION

Intervention from the Farmers' Group by
Mr. Serge Benstrong,
On farmers' priorities for action

My name is Serge Benstrong. I am a livestock farmer from the Seychelles; I represent the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

Madam Chair, there is no need to reemphasise the critical nature of this timely CSD17, in particular for us farmers.

We are satisfied that agriculture and rural development are being lifted as one of the top priorities on the international agenda. We hope that CSD17 will serve as an important platform within the UN system in order to take forward the following message: "there can be no food security without farmer security". Public policy for the development of agriculture and the rural economies must be 'knowledge-based and people centred', if we are to achieve good results. In a context marked by multiple global crises, CSD 17 must encourage increased long term investments in agriculture.

For the Farmers Major Group, the Chairperson's text is a thorough summary of the IPM discussions. However, it would gain in strength and impact if it were more focused on outcomes, to avoid ending up with a shopping list of good intentions.

Farmers request that four proposals be strongly stated in the final negotiating text. They are:

1- **There is a need for a long term global plan for agriculture with clear time-bound objectives and strong stakeholder participation.** Such a plan must be built on strong public policies that favour investments in agriculture through enabling environments and increased budget allocations.

Clear targets should be agreed upon at the national level, following the example of the Maputo Declaration.

2- **Sustainable agriculture must be recognized as a solution provider.** It offers to society multiple services including provision of: food, feed, fibre, fuel as well as ecosystem services. It can bring answers to the many challenges facing the world, such as climate change, food security, poverty reduction and a sustainable management of natural resources. That is why farming should come first!

3- Third, for agriculture to be sustainable, farmers need to be encouraged to adopt **sustainable agricultural practices.** Governments - with the cooperation of farmers and other stakeholders - need to increase research to further develop such practises and put in place incentive schemes to encourage their adoption.

4- Finally, the cluster themes have to be looked at in an **integrated manner.** There can be no sustainable agriculture without sustainable management of the land, especially in dry land areas where land management is key to the fight against desertification.

Madam Chair, the CSD needs to align itself to the call made by the first G8 Agriculture Ministers meeting recently held in Italy, and place agriculture and food security are at the core of the international agenda.

I thank you for your attention.

