

Opening Statement to CSD 18 – May 3, 2010

By Farmers Major Group

Mister Chairman, Bureau Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Farmers represent **a third of the world's population**, and deal with global challenges, such as food security, climate change, depleting water resources, and biodiversity. We are custodians of much of earth's land and water resources. Unfortunately, smallholder farmers also represent a large proportion of the world's poor, so agriculture is strongly interrelated to environmental, economic and social development.

The challenges for agriculture to remain sustainable are enormous. At the same time that agriculture must nearly double its production to meet the increasing population's needs by 2050, farmers are also expected to minimize the impact of agriculture on the environment including: a decrease in GHG emissions, producing more per drop, and providing society with ecological services. **Men and women farmers are committed to fulfill both objectives, however a strong commitment from the international community to facilitate the agriculture sector is urgent.**

- Agriculture needs a substantial increase in investments, support, and prioritisation in international and national strategies to link rural communities efficiently to growing global markets to the benefit of both.
- Investment must be focused on infrastructure, especially roads, drip irrigation, storage and processing facilities, market information systems, extension services, credit, insurance, and access to inputs, scientific information, and technology.
- National Governments should invest in improving the livelihoods of farming families by providing them with market returns and rewards for their services to nature, the ecosystem services.

- Finally, significant financial resources and political will are needed to **strengthen farmers' organizations** to better address food security and sustainable patterns in production and consumption.

We look forward to a constructive dialogue during the coming week.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.