

# **International Federation of Agricultural Producers**

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## **MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE**

Intervention from the Farmers' Group by  
Mr. Ajay Vashee, IFAP President

My name is Ajay Vashee. I am a dairy and crops farmer from Zambia, and President of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

This policy year of CSD 17 is critical for the Farmers Major Group because it places the focus on agriculture as one of the thematic areas.

In the present difficult context, agriculture is faced with multifaceted challenges, including doubling world food production by 2050 in order to meet the needs of a growing population. At the same time, this doubling of food production must be done using essentially the same land area, using less water, producing less greenhouse gases, contributing to renewable energy production and conserving biodiversity. It is a big challenge, but it can be done if public policy makers worldwide accept to re-engage with farmers and other stakeholders to build a new agricultural model which would be “people-centred and knowledge based”.

This shift in thinking is critical should we aim at harnessing the full potential of agriculture to reduce poverty and hunger and revitalise rural areas.

In order to achieve this objective, action is required in five areas:

1- First, there is a need to **recognise agriculture as an engine for economic growth**, rural development and thus poverty reduction.

2- Second, conducive **policy frameworks** and a proper **allocation of budgetary resources** are necessary to attract investments into agriculture. These investments must not only target the top end of the farming sector. They should also support efforts to transform small-holder farmers into entrepreneurs through building effective and inclusive commodity supply chains; modernising agriculture through innovation, knowledge sharing and access to technology; developing farmer-centred research programs, and rewarding farmers for ecosystem services.

3- Third, any successful rural development strategy needs an **integrated approach**, taking into account all assets: natural, social, physical, human and financial capital. In particular, basic rural infrastructure is critical, and women farmers must be recognised as a driving force in any rural development strategy.

4- Fourth, **land** is the farmer's basic asset. Rural strategies need to develop secure land tenure arrangements, especially for women farmers. Well-functioning land markets also need to be created. Once farmers have secure access to land, it is important that they have access to the fullest knowledge and modern tools to ensure that the land is managed sustainably, since this underpins long term productivity.

5- Fifth, efforts to **combat desertification** should be an integral part of development policies and national strategies. In order to attract investments into agriculture in dry lands and degraded areas, it is necessary to turn dry lands into economic assets. Development of effective risk management tools is critical for farmers if they are to take the risks required to innovate in their

production decisions in the face of the hazards of: weather changes, disease outbreaks, market risks and risks related to loan repayments.

Farmers are willing to work with governments and other stakeholders in order to implement this “people centred and knowledge based” agricultural model. We hope that governments will not miss this opportunity to re-engage with Major Groups in a long- term and sustainable manner to reduce poverty and hunger and create much needed economic impetus. Including agriculture and rural development in the fiscal stimulus packages that governments are using to fight global recession would be a good place to begin.

I thank you for your attention.