

Statement by Farmers' Major Group – by Dr. Sarala Gopalan, IFAP

On Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns Roundtable

May 12, 2010

Madam Chairman,

Madam Chairman, **Farmers want to be part of the solution.** Our goal is to foster methods that encompass environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and food security.

The dialogue in this CSD session clearly highlights the neglect of natural resources, rural areas, and consequently farmers, women and indigenous people on the one side and wasteful ways of lifestyles and production on the other, that continue to be barriers for quenching hunger, thirst and a decent quality of life for all people of the world. It is urgent now to take decisions and implement them to put 'development' on a different trajectory that will keep us at sustainable levels everywhere in the world. I thank the representative of the Youth major group for emphasising agriculture.

In many developing countries, sustainable practices are difficult to implement due to the lack of financial resources, infrastructure, services, and access to science and appropriate technology. This represents a major constraint on the competitiveness and profitability of the agriculture sector. Training, education and extension programs are essential to transfer information from the scientific community. We must also promote access to improved tools to minimize resources use (such as drip irrigation) and access to recycling schemes (such as composting and biogas). Adequate attention and resources are needed for building these capacities.

As well, we want to stress the essential role farmers' organizations play in helping to reach farmers directly. As donors consider agriculture programs, we believe farmer organizations are better placed than many governmental and other bodies to directly impact the lives and work of farmers.

Work must be done to help farmers produce more sustainably, but once grown, we must also address the substantial losses of crops that occur after harvest – sometimes as much as 40%. Proper storage, market signals, transportation, and processing are needed – ironically in the countries where food can least afford to be wasted.

So, too, do we need to educate consumers and end users. For once food moves to cities, vast percentages of it go to waste there. **Food is essential to existence.** We therefore urge this august body to include the question of post-harvest losses and food in the outcomes of this cycle.

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