

Statement by Dr. Carol Kramer-LeBlanc, Director for Sustainable Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Chief Economist before the Commission on Sustainable Development-18, Multi—stakeholder Dialogue on Advancing the Implementation of CSD Decisions. Tuesday, May 11, 2010

The United States Government welcomes the opportunity to join this important dialogue on implementation. We agree that it is important to regularly fix our focus on how CSD themes, decisions, and policies are being implemented by national governments in partnerships with other stakeholders, including major groups. In my brief comments I will mention four illustrative areas where themes and policies of CSD 16-17 are resulting in new partnerships and new actions on the ground with potentially important and positive effects on the ground.

First CSD 16-17 concentrated on agriculture, rural development along with care of the land and African development. Let me provide an update on U.S. actions relative to African development, agriculture and food security. The Obama Administration has developed an initiative called Feed the Future which we believe will contribute to addressing global hunger and making production and consumption truly sustainable for Africa. The inclusion of women is an explicit part of this initiative. Food security is one of the highest priorities for U.S. development assistance. The Obama Administration's FY 2011 budget request reflects a 30 percent increase for agriculture and nutrition programs over the 2010 base request, excluding Critical Priority Countries—an important step forward. The request reflects a coordinated, whole-of government or government-wide strategy that expands support for both bilateral and multilateral assistance programs. Agriculture and nutrition programs are one of our highest priorities and will require resources that address the scale of a problem affecting a billion people very directly and millions more globally. By establishing new relationships with existing partners, such as the World Bank Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, as well as new local partners we will fulfill our commitments to embrace a new, goal-oriented, evidence-based approach to achieving food security. We will support country-led plans and priorities in countries committed to policies that are conducive to rapid development progress. These policies include embracing a strategic and robust research agenda that promotes innovation in science and technology. Second, we are supporting entrepreneurial, market-based approaches to agricultural growth. Third, we are making targeted

investments to meet the unique needs of women who make up the majority of the farming labor in our countries of focus.

Turning to a second area, CSD 17 included a call to strengthen urban-rural linkages with goals to revitalize connections between rural farms, businesses and communities and markets and consumers they can serve in urban and peri-urban areas. Working with our partners in civil society, FAO and others, the U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to develop this thinking and identify case studies and other best practices. USDA and partners held a workshop on this subject, both in the United States and internationally, last October. USDA and civil society partners also hosted a networking session on this topic at the Rio World Urban Forum-5 held this March. There, the theme of strengthening linkages was taken up in several sessions as urban planners also recognized the need and value of strengthening marketing, transportation, and information infrastructure to enable regional producers to market to urban and peri-urban consumers. Within the United States, the Obama administration has recognized the importance of improving nutrition and food security, promoting growth in knowledge of food and agriculture, and fostering enhanced employment and economic development through strengthened urban-rural linkages. An initiative called Know Your Farmer-Know Your Food can be found on the USDA website: www.usda.gov.

The U.S. Government believes in the value of partnerships. As a founding co-sponsor of the Global Nutrient Partnership we were pleased to co-host a side event this past week where experts shared knowledge relevant to nutrients and their use. This Partnership has held a major meeting hosted by the Netherlands in 2009 and looks forward to its next annual meeting in India at the end of the year.

Finally, another theme stressed at CSD-16-17 was the importance of extending research-based knowledge to strengthen farming and other practices. The United States believes strengthening extension or advisory services is essential to accomplish the goals laid out in CSD-16-17 and that one component in doing this is through the use of modern and innovative information and communication technologies. USDA and others have been meeting to explore how a global web-based information and knowledge platform might be constituted to provide open-source access to research-based good agricultural practices. We will further explore this in a session at this CSD to be held this Friday from 10-1 in Conference Room D.