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CSD-16 on [Agriculture, Rural development, Land, Drought, Desertification, and Africa](#).  
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## Speaking Point No. 5

**Subject:** Statements on **Land Management**  
**Date and time:** 08.05.08, Conference Room 4  
**Person responsible:** Alexander Kopp

- Dear colleagues, would you manage your land sustainably, if not owning it? Probably not! You wouldn't give much care, as you would fear to be chased away, if at all moments someone could come and take the land!
- There won't be any sustainable management of natural resources, if we continue to ignore the importance of tenure arrangements.
- What are tenure arrangements on natural resources? - They give answers to the questions: Who can use or access what resource for how long and under which conditions? Who gets the harvest or benefit?
- Tenure arrangements have been poorly addressed under the CSD sessions so far. It is high time to discuss them now.
- Tenure arrangements concern not only developing countries, but all of us. In Switzerland in the 19th century, securing tenure arrangements led to a more sustainable use of the forests.
- We have already been talking a lot about food, desertification and poverty during the last few days: Tenure arrangements are central in all of these discussions: they are a catalyst for managing natural resources in a sustainable way, but also for increasing food security and welfare and for reducing conflicts and poverty.
- Weak governance structures are the main culprit for poor tenure arrangements. A tenure *discussion* is not enough. Important measures that have to be taken for securing tenure arrangements are:
  - good governance practices,

- a review of existing tenure arrangements, following the principle of equal access for all to natural resources, because often women and nomadic groups are excluded,
  - a formalization of the rights on land in a sound form of land registration system.
- Do not change what is working well: traditional systems *can* provide security in tenure arrangements. The modern and the traditional system do not have to be inconsistent, but can rather be mutually supportive.
- Secure tenure arrangements can have manifold forms: formal or informal, given to individuals, families, groups or communities etc. There are no general rules, for the best form of tenure arrangement. What is important, is, that people have a long-term security about the concrete arrangements in place for their land and that these rights are protected.
- In conclusion, Mr Chairman:
- The CSD-17 decision should reflect:
  - the importance of the secure tenure arrangements for a sustainable management of natural resources,
  - the need for outreach,
  - request the compilation of existing information by a UN agency,
  - and the need for further research, for a better integration of tenure arrangements into sustainable development, especially in the environmental pillar.
- Furthermore the CSD-17 decision should call upon countries to take measures in these areas and develop guidelines for encouraging more secure tenure arrangements, accompanied by capacity building.