

UN CSD-16

CLOSING COMMENTS BY THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL
COMMUNITY

(Jorge Spitalnik -May 16th 2008)

Mr. Chairman,

The Scientific and Technological Community acknowledges that the proceedings of CSD-16 highlighted the specific issues that need to be considered when dealing with sustainable development in relation to Agriculture, Rural development, Land, Drought, Desertification, Water and sanitation, as well as in Africa.

Issues like water and land management, enhancing food production and introducing biofuel agriculture, impacts of climate change, and the deficiencies of small scale farming in developing countries, were raised by many stakeholders. The recognition of their importance is not new, and has been the subject of many meetings in past years. Although there have been many examples of good practice, treatment of these problems has been made through projects of limited scope -in terms of land surface areas and numbers of people involved- to serve as examples of what could be done. However, with the timescale of this approach, the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals may not be accomplished within the specified time frames.

Regarding agriculture efficiency and rural development, the Scientific and Technological Community is able and willing to contribute its expertise and experience to increasing the yield of agricultural production by providing extension services to farmers, particularly those in charge of small scale farming, through the dissemination of existing knowledge and engineering techniques that in general are well known, not requiring leading edge technologies, and therefore involving low investment costs.

As for food production versus biofuel agriculture, we consider that there is not a straightforward answer in favor or against; there is a need of scientific and engineering analysis of the conditions of feasibility that govern both types of operation in terms of suitability of existing arid or semi-arid lands, soil characteristics and crop efficiency.

The Scientific and Technological Community is committed to work with all other stakeholders in ensuring the most suitable and efficient solutions based on available science, engineering and technology.

Thank you Mr. Chairman