

Statement by Farmers' Major Group by Sarala Gopalan

On Chemicals

CSD-IPM March 1, 2011

Mister Chairman,

Agriculture employs both biology and chemistry to produce crops. The use of crop protection products has generated an **abundant supply of food** and lowered food prices. Fertilizer has helped to increase yields and sustains soils. Farming needs access to both, but as with all technologies, proper use is essential. **First and foremost, we would like to see support for integrated crop, pest, and nutrient management. These are best practices that ensure application of the right amount at the right time and in the right manner.**

The use of crop protection products presents several **risks** for both farmers and environment. The undesirable side effects are a consequence of indiscriminate use and overuse of crop protection products and fertilizer. Especially in developing countries, enforcement of safety standards leave much to be desired.

Farmers need regulation, awareness campaigns, specific **training and education** in order to learn about proper use of crop protection products, as well as fertilizer. We encourage farm input companies, as well as governments, to do more on training. Improved awareness of careful management practice can lead towards sustainable farm production. For instance, use of manure and compost in conjunction with mineral fertilizer can lead to proper soil management and even conservation of water.

It is therefore important to encourage access to **appropriately-sized and priced products**, plus best practices on their use, and availability of alternative products. Labelling programs that give farmers the option of organic production and access to related markets is an important element of choice.

These are mechanisms that promote socially, environmentally and economically sustainable practices in the use of crop protection products that contribute to sustainable production patterns. **Farmers want to be partners for sustainable development.** Our goal is to foster methods that encompass environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and food security.