

Thanks, madame Chair,

You will not be surprised that first of all we want to react on the intervention of Paul Collier, because we are shocked. We think that GM crops will not help small-scale farmers adapt to climate change, but will actually reduce community resilience due to the adverse impacts of GM crops on the environment and biodiversity. Poor farmers in Africa and developing countries must not serve as waste baskets for questionable and harmful technologies. Rather than spending millions of dollars on development of climate-ready GM crops, funds should be channeled to the massive promotion of locally-adapted and traditional crops and varieties that are resistant to drought, salinity and floods. These crops and varieties exist and have been nurtured by farmers to adapt to changes in local environments, but has been long neglected due to wrong priorities in agriculture.

Chair, we wish to stress once again the need for a rights- based approach.

A right based approach for sustainable development

A right to food,

A right to land,

A right to water

We see it thus necessary to work more on the redistribution of wealth and use of natural resources, considering the overconsumption versus the underconsumption, a gap that is increasing and increasing. In the panel was already mentioned that at the moment we have the same amount of obese people than undernourished people. Redistribution is the best tool for poverty reduction. Leading us to social and environmental justice.

To achieve food sovereignty we have to focus more on short production chains, which means local food systems, with local available resources, without pesticides or chemical fertilizers. We need to strengthen urban rural links and effectively linking rural as well as urban farmers AND PASTORALISTS to urban markets, addressing the need to prioritize investment in local markets and local investments for local processing and distribution, such as access to credit, roads, and essential infrastructures, and Recognizing the central role of livestock in many rural economies and in sustainable development.

Fertile and agricultural lands have to be used prior for food supply and needs in the countries, and not firstly for economic interest, such as biofuels or ornamental products. The international community should stop the alarming trends in off- shore farming and land acquisition in many developing countries around the world by companies and governments of developed countries and big developing countries for food and biofuel production as a form of security for future food and energy crises. The right of farmers and communities to land and production should be strongly affirmed.

Another point we want to make is the importance of a coherent policy. We see governments suffering with their commitment on 1001 plans they have to write, a dozen of one-issue task forces per country are installed, all with their own targets, forgetting the broader and interlinked framework they work in. This leads to incoherence and overlap in policy making and implementation. So we strongly demand for realization and implementation of national strategies of SD plans (NSSDs) where all those plans fits in in a coherent way and with full participation of stakeholders and civil society.

To come to the final point: for good governance and participation bigger investment in education for sustainable development is necessary, as well for civil society as for decisionmakers.

Thank you.

*Intervention on behalf of the NGO Major Group, Leida Rijnhout, (VODO-Belgium- ANPED)*