

Statement by Farmers Major Group

On Ministerial Dialogue on Challenges and Opportunities

CSD -18

Dr. Sarala Gopalan

Mister Chairman,

Farmers represent **a third of the world's population**, and deal with global challenges, such as food security, climate change, depleting water resources, and biodiversity. We are custodians of much of earth's land and water resources. Unfortunately, smallholder farmers also represent a large proportion of the world's poor, so agriculture is strongly interrelated to environmental, economic and social development.

The challenges for agriculture to remain sustainable are enormous. Farmers want to be part of the solution. To further the work of this cycle and foster more sustainable consumption and production, we believe there are some clear steps that intersect agriculture with some of the other issues.

- Support is needed for dissemination of technologies and practices that will allow farming to reduce its footprint on the environment. Science has provided us many known tools already, such as integrated crop management. We encourage CSD to consider the opportunity to improve farming practices through training, education and extension programs.
- Using inputs responsibly, at the right time, in the right manner helps to reduce chemical use and avoid waste. As well, more channels are needed to make use of bioproducts like manure, straw, and crop residue. We encourage CSD to consider the opportunity to encourage practices that minimize farm waste.

- Investment must be focused on infrastructure, especially roads, storage, processing facilities, market information systems, extension services, credit, risk insurance. We encourage CSD to consider the opportunity to reduce crop losses due to non-functioning transportation and markets.
- National Governments should invest in improving the livelihoods of farming families by providing them with market returns and rewards for their services to nature, the ecosystem services. We encourage CSD to help policies that value farmers' role in supporting nature.
- Finally, significant financial resources and political will are needed to **strengthen farmers' organizations** to better address food security and sustainable patterns in production and consumption. We encourage CSD to seize the opportunity for farm organization's to help be a bigger part of the solution to sustainability.

The themes of this years' CSD may seem disparate, but we join our colleagues in the major groups in noting that there are linkages between the themes. First and foremost, CSD has been part of a global effort to foster techniques in **sustainable SYSTEM management** rather than specific management projects.

I beseech this august body to make the current challenge a great opportunity for changing the course of development.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.