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### AGRICULTURE

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on behalf of the European Union  
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The European Union (EU) believes that agriculture has an important role to play in realising the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and in meeting our commitments to achieving internationally agreed development goals.

#### **The JPOI commitments in the field of agriculture imply two major challenges:**

- The need to improve *policy coherence* in meeting the objectives *of poverty eradication, food security and sustainable natural resource management*.
- The need to take into account *social, cultural, and environmental impacts throughout the lifecycle of agricultural production*. Basic standards of sustainability for all agricultural products are needed.

#### **Internally, the EU has addressed these issues:**

The notion of the European Model of Agriculture clearly goes beyond a sector perspective. It is linked to the wider interest in promoting sustainable development. It addresses environmental, social, and economic objectives, which –as we all know- do not automatically emerge in a harmonious manner. Indeed, the economic viability of farming cannot be ensured, if its natural basis is being ruined. However, it is also true that only economically viable farms will be able to deliver environmental benefits to society. Thus, further advancing towards sustainable agriculture requires that discussions recognise multiple objectives and concerns and hence the need for policy coherence.

The EU recognises the significant role of stakeholders, namely farmers and the importance of farmer organisations and cooperatives in strengthening dialogue on the European agriculture scene.

The reforms of the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** promote food quality and safety and a sustainable farm sector.

- **A cross compliance scheme** encourages farmers to meet EU standards on the environment, food safety, plant health, animal health and animal welfare.
- Soon the EU will unveil legislative proposals for a "**Health Check**" of the **Common Agricultural Policy** which will build on past reforms and help the CAP to meet new challenges, in particular *climate change, water management, soil protection, bio-energy, risk management and biodiversity*. Addressing these challenges requires policy coherence for which the EU strives when developing legislative proposals.

**Food price issues** have dominated the headlines in recent months. The EU has taken a number of actions in order to address supply side constraints and contribute to enhanced trade liberalisation:

1. Set aside rates were set at zero. Thus 2008/09 should see an increase in the cereal harvest of approximately 10 million t.
2. The EU decided to suspend cereal import duties for the current marketing year for most cereals, and
3. Milk quotas were increased by 2% in April this year.

**Climate change**, in particular, represents a pivotal challenge for the EU and the international community. Agriculture and climate change are closely related both from a mitigation and an adaptation point of view. Within the EU-27 gas emissions from agriculture, a significant emitter of methane and nitrous oxide, fell by 20 % from 1995 to 2005. However, there is still potential for reducing these GHG emissions.

To contribute to GHG mitigation and soil protection, the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP) working groups on agriculture and on carbon sinks have identified technical instruments to enhance carbon sequestration and improve production methods, such as more efficient fertiliser applications and anaerobic digestion systems to deal with by-products and waste, conservation tillage and organic farming.

The development of renewable energy from agricultural and forestry biomass could further contribute to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in other sectors. Particular efforts are needed to promote adaptation – both in terms of ensuring that the agriculture sector can cope with unavoidable impacts resulting from past emissions, and ensuring that the sector plays its full part in helping the natural environment and wider society to adapt (for example by supporting sustainable flood management or by providing habitats to help biodiversity adapt).

**Also, internationally the EU is addressing these challenges:**

The EU actively supports policies that will enable developing countries to benefit from better access to international markets, which clearly must be complemented by good governance and better environmental and social standards.

In particular one should highlight:

- The EU's **2004 Action Plan on Agricultural Commodity Chains, Dependence, and Poverty** which aims to facilitate producer access to commodity risk insurance and trade finance. Furthermore, it addresses management issues at the macro level and improved access to the FLEX compensatory instrument.
- **Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)** negotiated with 5 African regions, Cariforum and the Pacific aim at combining unprecedented market access with regional integration and development cooperation.
- Through its **development cooperation**, the EU provides substantive and growing support to key sectors and activities, including agricultural research, sustainable production methods, rural infrastructure, and improving sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards. A substantial number of African countries have selected rural development as a focal sector for support under the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (2008-2013).
- The EU's 2007 **development package** represents another step to address hunger, poverty, and food security concerns. It includes a number of tools to enable countries to meet their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- The EU strongly supports the FAO voluntary guidelines to the right to food which present criteria for adequate i.e. sufficient and healthy food as well as ways of implementing this fundamental right. These guidelines are a modern instrument with the rights-based approach to combating hunger and malnutrition.