



CSD-16, 5 May 2008
Regional panel for Africa
Statement by FAO

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of FAO I would like to thank you, the CSD Bureau and Secretariat, and Economic Commission for Africa, for inviting FAO to serve on the panel of the Plenary Session for Africa and help review progress in Africa in addressing the interlinked issues of agriculture, land, desertification and drought and rural development.

FAO has worked closely with the CSD Secretariat and contributed to the preparation of Secretary General's documents and reports on progress in the above thematic clusters, drawing largely on experiences in Africa which receive priority attention of FAO and its partners.

Accelerating progress in the implementation of the thematic clusters of CSD-16 is high priority in FAO as they are central in attaining the World Food Summit (WFS) target and the Millennium Development Goal –MDG1 and MDG-7 that are aimed at reducing the number of hungry people in the world by half no later than the year 2015 and attaining environmental sustainability respectively.

A summary of the contribution of FAO in these areas with member countries and development partners is highlighted in the FAO brochure we have provided to the event which contains a document and a set of 11 fact sheets on the implementation of the CSD-16 themes.

In reviewing progress in Africa for CSD-16 themes, we recall the recognition and commitment in Chapter 10 of Agenda 21 of the need for Integrated planning and management of land resources and holistic policies and strategies to address the interlinked issues of land, SARD, biodiversity, forests and desertification. This is again emphasised in the SG documents and report of regional implementation meeting for Africa, notably:

- Need for synergy in plans and actions for implementing Conventions on biodiversity, desertification and climate change; and
- Need to integrate these thematic issues in national development and poverty reduction strategies (as for example in Senegal)

Today's context requires not just renewed commitment but ACTION:

- ODA for agriculture fell 57% in the period mid 1980's- 2000
 - hunger is still faced by 840 million people worldwide; and
 - rural areas host 45% of the world's population but 80% of world's hungry and 75% of its poor.
- Despite progress in reducing proportion of malnourished, the continued population growth, climate change and escalating fuel and food prices bring unprecedented challenges in meeting WFS and MDG targets.

Agricultural production has expanded and kept pace with population growth in regard to food and other products from crops, livestock, fish and forests, but degradation has continued and 73% of the world's rangelands and 2/3 of croplands in Africa are at risk of degradation.

We now need to place greater attention to sustainable land management of land resources and maintain ecosystem functions and services to ensure food security and livelihoods of today's and future generations.

Need recognition of and incentives for land users for their efforts not only to produce food but also to sustain water supply, protect and restore healthy soils and soil carbon in agricultural soils and reduced degradation and deforestation (a priority for post Kyoto) in watersheds and rangelands and the maintenance of evolving stock of genetic resources for food and agriculture.

FAO recognises the opportunities for achieving synergies in meeting targets of agriculture, food and environmental commitments and in reducing vulnerability to climate change are demonstrated in many case studies presented to CSD on

- integrated land and water management
 - conservation agriculture
 - water harvesting
 - sustainable agropastoral systems
 - water use efficiency and increased productivity in rainfed and irrigated systems
- and many more

Need for more efforts for building capacity to overcome policy and institutional barriers through for example more

- experience sharing and
- modalities and investments (financial and human resources) for scaling up of good practices and approaches
- data on costs and benefits of SLM practices and approaches
- attention to balanced land policies improving land rights and access to resources including common property rights as crucial for access of poor rural households and landless
- land use planning from community to watershed levels to address increased pressures on land resources from biofuels, urbanisation, degradation and other pressures.

These and many more issues are highlighted in FAO's brochure to CSD on its work with Members countries and partners.

Other emerging issues for follow up that resulted from the RIM in Africa were

- the concerns that the market led approach to agriculture-led development poses risk to natural resources degradation and a call for a long term perspective in land use planning in support of agriculture development, drawing lessons from Asian economies
- the need for assessment of commitments by African governments in the development of the agricultural sector and extent to which governments are implementing the CAADP commitments of allocation of 10% of countries budget to agriculture
- the role agricultural development will play in slowing down underlying migration to African cities
- need for immediate actions to address climate change adaptation and mitigation.

In this regard FAO is organising an important high level Conference on World Food Security: the challenges of climate change and bioenergy from 3-5 June 2008. Also invites participants to side event on LADA and SLM for addressing vulnerability and climate change tomorrow 13.15h.