

International Federation of Agricultural Producers

UN CSD 15 HIGH MINISTERIAL SEGMENT New York, April 30- May 11 2007

MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE - 9 MAY 2007

FARMERS GROUP STATEMENT

**by Mr. Jack Wilkinson, President
International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)**

My name is Jack Wilkinson, I am a farmer from Canada and I am here as the President of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

Mr Chairman, I would like to bring to your attention three main points.

The first one relates to the great potential of agriculture in contributing to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration. This potential is underestimated. And yet, agriculture and farmers are able to benefit from carbon storage, linked to changes in agricultural practices. Offering farmers the possibility to trade the carbon sequestered through sustainable agricultural practices, represents an interesting incentive for them. Besides, carbon storage leads to rural development and contributes to combating desertification and land degradation. A few countries in the world have already put in place a carbon trading system from which farmers benefit. Successful experiences and systems should be documented and scaled up so as to apply them to a wider number of countries.

The second point refers to the widely discussed food versus fuel issue. Many governments show some reluctance to raising this issue and dealing with it. There are enough calories to feed the world population. Bio energy has the potential to create economic development thus reducing poverty in rural areas and meeting the Millennium Development Goals. However, we are convinced that if governments do not put in place the right regulations and regulatory frameworks, the benefits related to the development of bio energies will go directly to large multinationals and to the detriment of farmers in particular small scale farmers. We, as farmers do not want to end up being mere suppliers of raw materials. We would like to benefit from this new outlet.

Finally Mr. Chairman, the price issue is of utmost importance even though it is wrongly controversial. Commodity prices have been too low for too many years. This

represented an unsustainable situation for farmers. Now, commodity prices have risen and this is good news for us farmers.

Farmers desperately needed this improvement in the trend of commodity prices in order to be able to make a decent living out of their agricultural activities. With higher agricultural prices farmers are able to make new investments.

Besides, bio energy creates an entire market with a strong demand in energy.

To conclude, there is no doubt that farmers have the capacity to both feed the world and produce energy in a sustainable way, while protecting the environment.

The development of bioenergy represents a unique opportunity to boost the economies of rural areas provided this development is carried out properly. Otherwise, there is a risk that farmers miss this opportunity to improve their incomes.