

**U.N. Commission for Sustainable Development
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STATEMENT BY FARMERS AS A MAJOR GROUP

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

Mr. Chairman,

I am the President of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), which has in membership 100 national farmers organisations, representing 500-600 million family farms worldwide. Two-thirds of our member organisations are from developing countries.

Water is critical for food production, for health, and for the livelihoods of millions of farm families.

Agriculture is being called upon to double production capacity over the next 25 years, from essentially the same resource base. Already, agriculture uses 70 per cent of freshwater resources, so farmers will have to use the best practises available to produce "more crop per drop".

We know what needs to be done in terms of technology transfer and making locally-friendly, low-cost technology available to farmers. The political will must follow to translate this into action on the ground.

Mr. Chairman, increased priority is needed for water for agriculture.

Farmers are disappointed that most national delegations and international organisations had little to say about agriculture. Mostly they are talking about water and sanitation for urban areas. Currently, most of the world's population is rural. If we cannot get agriculture on the agenda now, what chance will there be when over 3 billion people live in urban areas in the next 20 years? How will food security be achieved then, and how will the rural areas survive?

IFAP is pressing for the Water Challenge programs of the CGIAR to include not only gender balance and indigenous peoples rights, but also to include a requirement to engage with local farmers' organisations as partners.

Water for agriculture should also be included as part of the World Bank PRSPs, with appropriate mechanisms to encourage the transfer of technology for the best practises in rational use of water.

Farmers believe that control of water resources is a public responsibility, and that access to water is a basic human right. While the private sector has a role in providing delivery of water, it will not be cost-effective for them to deliver water to remote rural areas. This should be a government responsibility.

Water rights are important to farmers. Farmers must be full participants in water management and in decisions about prioritisation of access to water. Farmers should therefore be members of water boards.

Finally, it is critical to build capacity in farmers' organisations so that they are able to play their full role in water management and prioritisation, through user groups or as members of water boards.