

**INDONESIA INTERVENTION
ON LAND THEMATIC SESSION CSD-16
7TH MAY 2008**

Mr. Chairman.

Let me start by thanking the panelists for their comprehensive presentation. We agree with the view that at a time when most of the international attention is focused on the issue of Climate Change, the continuous combat against land degradation and desertification contributes heavily to efforts of adaptation and mitigation.

Land is considered to be a main factor for agriculture production. However, misuse of land by human, land conversion to non-agricultural uses, over-cultivation, deforestation, and poor irrigation methods, have contributed to the potential threat of transforming our fertile ground into unproductive patches of degraded lands.

Land degradation has indeed affected our country severely. It is one of the main causes of frequent landslides and drought, due to low retention of water in the soil. We therefore view that land degradation poses a serious threat to the achievement of consistent agricultural production, income of farmers, and sustainable development objectives. It is closely related to all efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly to the eradication of poverty in rural areas.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that some measures should be taken.

First, in developing countries, like Indonesia, where there is a limited availability of land use for agricultural purposes due to a large number of dry unused land, there is an urgent need to reduce land conversion and to open new land for agricultural production. We have already put forward various programs such as the creation of around 25 to 50,000 ha of new agricultural land per year, and opening around 30-40,000 hectares of dry unused lands per year. We have also developed a legal platform to protect agricultural lands against land conversion.

Second, we need to encourage small-scale ownership to a wider area of land by farmers. Small farmers in Indonesia own an average of 0.3 hectares of land, whereas ownership for ideal production is normally about a minimum

of two hectares. The current condition of ownership creates some difficulties in the effort to eradicate poverty and in future land management. We need to emphasize corporate model farming as part of our agriculture reformation.

Third, there is a need to socialize a more efficient land management to small farmers. The mismanagement of land, due to constant use of inorganic fertilizer, inefficient usage of inputs, and bio-hazardous gases, are the main causes of the degradation of land fertility. Therefore, there is a strong need to shift the culture of small farmers towards encouragement and empowerment to a better implementation of environmentally friendly land management, such as the use of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), a method developed by our Government to cultivate rice with a minimum usage of water, fertilizer, and other inputs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.