

**Statement by  
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**on  
"Rural Development"  
before  
The 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Madam Chairperson;

At the outset, I would like to thank the panelists for their excellent presentations. I also associate myself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of G77 and China on rural development.

Yesterday, my delegation presented its position concerning "Agriculture" and now I would like to refer to some other parameters which affect rural development:

1. **Unsustainable management of lands** in rural areas hinders the realization of sustainable development and the MDGs by 2015.
2. **Desertification, loss of biodiversity, degradation of wetlands**, and increase in frequency and prolongation of **drought** cycles continue to threaten rural development, particularly in desert areas.
3. In the countries with large desert areas, rural development depends on reaching success in combating **desertification and land degradation**. In other words, any failure in controlling desertification, soil erosion, and sand dune movement will make the efforts for rural development fruitless. It goes without saying that failure in developing rural areas will lead to more migration and unsustainable urbanization. Therefore, combating desertification deserves enough attention and adequate resources should be allocated to the development of rural and remote areas.
4. Majority of poor people in developing countries are living in rural areas. Therefore, in addressing **poverty and hunger, improving health and**

- combating diseases**, and in order to realize the related MDGs, rural development should be in priority.
5. **Traditional knowledge and practices** of the local people particularly in rural areas dealing with the nature and developmental issues are great assets. They should be incorporated in local and national development plans so as to ensure the implementation of the sustainable development strategies.
  6. **Handicrafts** play a major role in income generation of households living in rural areas in many countries. Lack of insurance, health services and some difficulties to have access to materials needed for their work are among the problems and constraints that handicraft makers are facing with. For example in my country, **carpet designing and weaving** are among the handicrafts millions of people in rural areas are directly or indirectly engaged in. Adequate attention must be paid to the needs of handicraft makers which are often among poor and unprivileged people.
  7. Millions of **mobile peoples** around the globe can not and should not be excluded in the national, regional or international plans related to rural development. The livelihoods of mobile peoples particularly nomadic pastoralists depend on the use of natural resources. Their mobility throughout the history indicates an invaluable strategy for dealing with conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. They represent a long-standing cultural identity. Water scarcity, unsustainable urban development, degradation of grasslands, drought and desertification continue to pose threats to their mobility, livelihoods, and invaluable cultures of these communities.
  8. Role of **women** in rural development is undeniable. Therefore, the existing living conditions of women, lack of access of women to education in many rural areas, poor health, and their deprivation of many social and economic privileges would be destructive for the implementation of the rural development plans.
  9. Last but not least, I would like to highlight the unprecedented population growth, due to the **influx of refugees**, and its tremendous pressure on natural resources in the recipient countries. Influx of refugees continues to cause loss of biodiversity, land degradation, and desertification. It also distorts national development plans including in the area of rural development.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.