

## **Norwegian statement on Agriculture, Tuesday 6 May, afternoon**

Thank you Madam Chair,

Norway views agriculture as a crucial sector in efforts to reduce hunger and poverty, to improve rural livelihoods and to achieve sustainable development, and agree that food production will have to expand to meet world demand. We furthermore are of the opinion that the agriculture sector is central in achieving both adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction, which we feel is a vital area of the sustainable development agenda.

At the national level our agricultural policy is based on goals for food security and sustainable agriculture adopted by the Parliament. It is also strongly linked to general rural policies. Agricultural production plays an important role in securing national food security, sustaining viability of rural areas and safeguarding environmental qualities. This role, as a producer of much more than just agricultural goods, is defined as the multifunctional role of agricultural production.

Most agricultural policies and economic resources are administered at the national level. In recent years, many of these instruments have nevertheless been adapted to suit the regional level, particularly in areas such as environment, rural development and to some extent land use. The Annual Agricultural Agreement is negotiated between the government and the farmers unions, in this way involving civil society.

Why regional and local involvement?

Each county and municipality faces different challenges which need to be met separately. Citizens, through local councils, have the right to participate in democratic decisions that concern them. And in a country where different regions may have very different agricultural conditions, it is necessary that some administrative instruments can be adapted and applied in accordance with these conditions.

For our development assistance we emphasise the role that sustainable agriculture plays in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Like in our national agricultural policy we see environmental sustainability, locally based management and the central role of women as vital to make agriculture sustainable and climate change resilient.

Agriculture, particularly in Africa, will need to adapt to climate change to be able to sustain and increase food production. If this fails there is a risk of decreased food security and consequent humanitarian disasters caused by hunger in vulnerable areas, such as drylands. The mainstreaming of an integrated approach to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into national agricultural policies, as well as other relevant policies such as natural resource management policies, is essential. The primary objective should be to improve the situation of the poor and the most vulnerable groups, including children and women. It is important to focus on capacity development and empowerment of local people with a strong role for civil society, including community-based organisations.

Activities within the agricultural sector aimed at increasing production should be based on lessons learned from past failures and successes and should be sensitive to local contexts as well as the wishes and needs of local people. Research in the agricultural field, especially for

dryland areas, should be expanded and the extension system should be revisited so that the link between farmers and researchers enables a two-way sharing of information and knowledge.

Governments and other partners at all levels must explore and adopt innovative financing mechanisms, such as market-based solutions and public-private partnerships, to ensure consistent support for longer-term programming and to draw effectively on private sector and other resources.

In terms of funding the Svalbard Global Seed Vault is Norway's largest commitment to disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation in the agricultural sector. The vault ensures that the genetic diversity of food crops is preserved for the future. This genetic diversity can serve as a basis for developing new adaptive varieties of today's food crops, thereby forming a safety net to guard against future food crises.