

**Statement by the Scientific and Technology Community,
Thematic Group-Rural development ,
Intervention by Lindiwe Majele Sibanda 1145hrs**

Mr Chairman

Most of the problems we face in attempting to reduce rural poverty are associated with poor targeting and our inability to match development interventions to peoples' needs. Understanding rural vulnerability is critical now than ever before as we attempt to deal with climate change and the rising food costs.

The Scientific and Technology Community will need a better understanding of the livelihood dynamics in rural communities, which as we all know are not homogenous and yet we continue to generate and attempt to implement one size fits all interventions. To enhance technology uptake by the poor and women in particular, we need basic disaggregated statistics on the human capital base, social networks, the natural resource base, financial, physical resources and the coping mechanisms. This requires data that is collected on a longitudinal basis with databases that are updated regularly. Unfortunately such information is not readily available because of poor investments in research and development, the whole infrastructure for data collection at household level is weak, institutions tasked with analysis of such data lack technical capacity and are usually under-staffed. Consequently we bemoan the poor use of research outputs and yet we do not sufficiently understand the needs. We continue to plan on the basis of inaccurate data generated from short term research studies leading to reactive policies that fail to address the long term problem. The Scientific and technological Community is calling for increased investment in R&D, particularly the resources to collect data on rural livelihoods- such as household surveys, production data, and data on use of natural resources. There is need to use local expertise in national universities to build information databases so that the information is locally owned and used for improved targeting, proactive policy development.

Mr Chairman we cannot be relevant to vulnerable groups if we do not have disaggregated statistics on rural livelihoods. The Scientific and technological community is therefore calling for increased and consistent funding for research and development so as to support the strengthening of infrastructure for data collection, analysis and use.

I thank you