

**Business and Industry Major Group
Statement at the IPM for CSD 17
on Interlinkages**

Madame Chairperson,

The CSD has selected a series of thematic issues for this cycle that innately share linkages. One can't discuss rural development without contemplating agriculture's central role in it; or to discuss land without contemplating desertification risks; or desertification without contemplating drought; or any of these issues without thinking of how they link to the challenges and opportunities of Africa.

In all cases, a knowledge-based approach is central to improving sustainability. We need policy-makers and practitioners to build locally-sustainable value chains. In particular, there must be an emphasis on the need for knowledge networks and policies centred on helping subsistence farmers to become small-scale entrepreneurs.

There is always more information to be gathered, more knowledge to be developed, but the first step is to **share the knowledge** we do have, Madame Chairperson. Using know-how, technologies, and collaborative skills to improve the sustainability of both conventional and organic agriculture, is key. For instance training programs on integrated crop management are important for farmers and agricultural workers. Recognizing land tenure rights for smallholder farmers, particularly women, provides incentives to steward land and greater access to credit. Proper sanitation for water and waste water sustains us all.

Research and development can then help to drive a continuous improvement cycle. This is why research needs more funding and more public-private partnerships. As well, local knowledge is needed to apply that research in a manner which is environmentally-responsible and socially-sensitive.

We appreciate the lively discourse on GM in this session and want to stress adapting crops is one of the most important strategies for sustainability - both through biotechnology and traditional plant breeding. We agree new traits should be scientifically evaluated before introduction. Biotech crops were grown in 25 countries last year by over 13 million farmers. It is noteworthy that biotech crops were grown in three new countries including two in Africa.

We collectively have the ability to build upon the legacy of the first green revolution to feed people, and improve it. This is why we have joined our farmer and scientist colleagues in action plan called Farming First and believe it applies to the themes of this session.

Thank you.

Farming First

Safeguarding natural resources - furthering widespread adoption of sustainable practices of water and land use, such as conservation technology.

Sharing knowledge - while much knowledge to improve global agriculture already exists it often does not reach those farmers who could benefit most. Programs like village-based knowledge centre help.

Building local access - fundamental resources should be available to farmers to help them manage their production process more reliably, including mechanical tools, seed, fertilizer, and crop protection.

Protecting harvest - in many of the poorest countries, 20-40% of crop yields are lost because of inadequate pre- and post-harvest support. Likewise, vast quantities of food are squandered during production and consumption phases of the food chain.

Enable access to markets - farmers need to be able to get their products to market and receive equitable price treatment when they do by getting information like up-to-date market pricing even in remote areas.

Prioritise research imperatives - achieving sustainable agriculture requires intensified, continuous research, prioritising locally relevant crops, stewardship techniques, and adaptation to climate change.