

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – CSD 17
Agriculture, Rural Development, Land, Drought, Desertification and Africa.**

May 15
Business and Industry "Shared Vision" Intervention Statement

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have been pleased to join the many voices who have agreed that agriculture is a critical means to achieve food security, rural development, and better quality of life.

Sustainable agriculture is a continuous journey of improvement economically, environmentally, and socially. It behooves us collectively to take the best information, technology and practices we have, study the effects of their implementation, and then refine those practices every step of the way.

Business and Industry is part of that journey, and we welcome the opportunity to work with all the players involved, including all nine major groups and governments, to seek these continual improvements in ALL forms of agriculture.

It is imperative to tackle the challenges of sustainable development with a mosaic of solutions. Past journeys have shown that addressing the complex needs of sustainable development must reflect the people and environment in which development is occurring.

That is why the partners in Farming First believe knowledge must be the corner stone of sustainable agriculture.

From time-to-time, we have heard about bottom up solutions, but it should not be bottom up versus top down. Addressing sustainability requires fully COLLABORATIVE approaches, combining best practices, best research, and insightful engineering with deep respect for local farmers, traditional knowledge,

and women's experience. Enabling collaboration through farm groups, improved extension services, and training for farmers and agricultural workers is essential.

Collaboration is also needed along the vast life-cycle of food and agriculture commodity chains, including infrastructure, credit, and risk management tools.

Ultimately, farmers need access to a wide array of technologies and knowledge, including biotechnology where appropriate. Then they can select the practices that work best for them and their families.

At no time should we lose sight of the importance of water and land. Climate change has contributed to the situation. There is a critical need to implement sound efforts and initiatives to improve agriculture's water management.

Lastly, on behalf of all major groups, Madame Chairperson, Major group representatives take the mandate to strengthen and support implementation of Agenda 21 and the JPOI very seriously, both through their own constituencies and via partnerships. We appreciate the opportunities to work constructively with government delegates, the UN community and one another during CSD sessions. We strongly encourage the Secretariat and government delegates to renew and strengthen the role of the designated Major Groups in future sessions, and the major groups will continue our efforts to advance action on sustainability through the CSD.

The work of CSD could not have been more timely, and we hope it will bear fruit. Thank you Madame Chairperson.