

Statement by Dr. Carol Kramer-LeBlanc
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Office of the Chief Economist
before the
Commission on Sustainable Development-18
United Nations, New York, New York
Monday, May 3, 2010, 3:00-4:30 pm

REGIONAL DISCUSSION: AFRICA

Chairperson, thank you for the opportunity to offer a statement on behalf of the United States Government in this regional discussion regarding Africa. The United States Government commends CSD for its emphasis on Africa in this session and we wish to emphasize the importance of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) within the African agricultural and food system--which is of vital importance to African development prospects and the welfare of African people. We also wish to comment on implementation of some of the policy prescriptions of CSD-17 which dealt with agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. Finally, we will emphasize some of the important interrelationships with additional topics of CSD- 18, especially chemicals, and transportation.

Sustainable Consumption and Production: First, we recognize the essential importance and interconnections of the CSD-18 topic of sustainable consumption and production with sustainable agriculture (the topic of CSD-16-17) and food and nutrition security, the Secretary General's high priority. Perhaps no other area of consumption is more important to Africans than food at this time when about half of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is food insecure or hungry, when every year 5-6 million children die from malnutrition before their fifth birthday, and when 60 percent of the population depends on agriculture for its livelihood. Current African maternal and child malnutrition rates are indicators of an unsustainable agriculture and food system with respect to meeting African needs.

- The Obama Administration's global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future, we believe is critical to addressing global hunger and making production and consumption truly sustainable for Africa.
- The full inclusion of women will promote achieving sustainable consumption and production through global food security and a better quality of life.
- Women are disproportionately hungry, ill-nourished, and under-resourced in general, especially in agriculture where they play a major role. Investing in women and their access to critical resources pertinent to food security, the productivity and sustainability of the agriculture and food sector and other economic enterprises will benefit the whole of society.

U.S. Implementation of Sustainable Agriculture Measures (CSD-16-17): The Obama Administration requested a FY 2011 budget percent increase of 30 percent for global agriculture and nutrition programs over the 2010 base request, excluding Critical Priority Countries--an important step forward.

- The request reflects a coordinated, government-wide strategy that expands support for both bilateral and multilateral assistance programs.
- Agriculture and nutrition programs are one of our highest priorities and will require resources that address the scale of a problem affecting a billion people very directly and millions more globally.
- The global community must redress the drop in agriculture's share of development assistance from 18 percent in 1979 to just 3.5 percent in 2008.
- By establishing new relationships with existing partners, such as the World Bank Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, NEPAD, CAADP and by finding new local partners, we will fulfill our commitments to embrace a new, goal-oriented, evidence-based approach to achieving food security.
- We will support country-led plans and priorities in countries committed to policies that are conducive to rapid development progress.
- These policies include embracing a strategic and robust research agenda that promotes innovation in science and technology.
- Second, we are supporting entrepreneurial, market-based approaches to agricultural growth.
- Third, we are making targeted investments to meet the unique needs of women who make up the majority of the farming labor in our countries of focus. The American ideal of gender equality permeates through our approaches to economic development as we intentionally target our work to meet the unique needs of women. Half of African farmers are female. In order to make the most of our food security funds, we must focus on these women who are leaders of agriculture in Africa.

African Implementation of Comprehensive National Agriculture Plans: Action is also happening at the country level. The coordinated effort of multiple stakeholders behind a country-led process is a central principle of the global effort. In July of 2009, only one country in Africa, Rwanda, had a comprehensive national agriculture plan. Today there are 17, and by the end of June there will be 25. Several of these will be translated into technically reviewed and costed investment plans around which donors can organize and coordinate funding. The progress is not only in Africa but also in Latin America and Asia, effectively reversing the declining trend of investment from the 1980s until 2008.

Chemicals: Africa with its growing population needs to increase agricultural production (for food and in some cases biofuel, fiber or pharmaceutical) and industrialization. As pointed out at the RIM, the use of chemicals, particularly fertilizers and pesticides in the agricultural sector will increase. A heightened need for capacity building at all levels related to safe management, use and disposal of chemicals will be necessary.

- We welcome contributions of institutions such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), the African Ministerial Conference on Water

(AMCOW) to strengthening policies and strategies for implementation and enforcement of environmentally sound management of chemicals.

Transport: Recognizing the critical importance of strengthening transportation infrastructure and capacity throughout the African continent, the USG Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is partnering with 11 African governments on transport projects. These include developing farm-to-market roads, modernizing seaports to enable cargo shipments and airports to permit export of perishable, high-value products.

- Examples are Benin’s Compact including modernization of the Port of Cotonou;
- Burkina Faso where access to markets is being enhanced through investments in the road network;
- Cap Verde where improved infrastructure will support increased economic activity and provide access to markets;
- Ghana where feeder roads are being rehabilitated, highways and trunk roads are being upgraded, and the Lake Volta Ferry Service will be upgraded to facilitate growth of agriculture in the Afram Basin region.
- I don’t have time to mention all of the MCC transportation initiatives with eleven African partner compact countries, but I would invite you to visit the Millennium Challenge Corporation website for more details (<http://www.mcc.gov/>).

In summary, the U.S. Government welcomes this opportunity to join in the African Regional Discussion and we look forward to working together to review this important set of issues in the context of sustainable development. //