

CSD-17 IPM HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2009

The Intersessional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) discussed agriculture during the morning and rural development during the afternoon.

AGRICULTURE

Chair Verburg invited contributions highlighting policies and measures that have worked and why, and how they might be replicated and scaled up. Panelist Norman Uphoff, Cornell University, presented an alternative approach to the green revolution and demonstrated its superior ecological and productivity outputs. Panelist Sarah Scherr, Ecoagriculture Partners, presented a green strategy for food security and proposed that: a global summit be convened to frame such a strategy; Copenhagen place a high priority on agriculture and land-use systems; and a facility to help farming communities plan for agriculture, environment and climate resilience be established.

The G-77/CHINA underscored the need for a green revolution, and elaborated requisite national and global policies. The European Commission, on behalf of the EU, highlighted some of the challenges under the Johannesburg commitments. He also expressed support for a Global Partnership for agriculture, food security and nutrition and commitment to securing a comprehensive, balanced and ambitious Doha Development Agenda (DDA) deal. Senegal, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, underscored its support for NEPAD programs and urged the CSD to consider recommendations from the Windhoek Declaration. Jamaica, on behalf of AOSIS, highlighted how a prudent approach to biofuels could solve, rather than aggravate, development challenges. Papua New Guinea, on behalf of PSIDS, underscored the role of participatory techniques and the need to strengthen extension services.

Oman, for the ARAB GROUP, emphasized developing drought-resistant plant strains, reducing post-processing losses, and developing laboratories to improve food safety and quality control. The US highlighted: promoting enhanced productivity; improving livelihoods and linking producers to markets; and empowering communities to grow markets. INDONESIA suggested five areas for reforming the agriculture sector, including by ensuring better synergies between agriculture and development policies and strategies, and establishing a Regional Food Security Framework.

CANADA highlighted conservation tillage, and said agriculture must contribute environmental goods and services that society values and depends on. CHINA emphasized: food security as a primary strategy; attention to rural development from all aspects; and strengthened dialogue and coordination.

MICRONESIA highlighted its threatened food security, appealed for international support, and outlined national measures to address the situation.

SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the need to make CSD a results-oriented process. INDIA underscored the need for South-South cooperation and for greater emphasis on organic farming, trade barriers and small farmers. SWITZERLAND supported the role of sustainable commercial and agriculture policies, small-scale farming and local/regional production. MEXICO highlighted agrosystems in promoting good ecological practices and improving soil productivity.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted its pledge to provide US\$100 million for food aid and agricultural assistance to developing countries. PAKISTAN highlighted the importance of financing, technology transfer and fair trade. The NETHERLANDS: emphasized the need for investments to make agricultural patterns sustainable and to stimulate markets; said women and youth should be an integral part in the allocation of resources; and suggested increasing investments in second generation biofuels. FAO agreed with India on the need for an integrated approach incorporating both organic methods and fertilizers, and suggested broadening food crops.

Children and Youth emphasized solutions that incorporate local and traditional knowledge. NORWAY emphasized: increasing agricultural production in a sustainable and climate-resilient manner; strengthening cooperation between relevant, existing institutions rather than establishing new structures; and supporting *in situ* use and preservation of genetic resources.

MALAWI emphasized policies and evidence-based strategies and incentives to stimulate small-scale agriculture, and supported the 2009 Windhoek Declaration. ARGENTINA cautioned that unilateral initiatives to measure transport costs could place high costs on agriculture exporting countries and may be inconsistent with WTO rules and, with ALGERIA, said distortionary agricultural policies undermine agricultural production in developing countries. Business and Industry underscored the role of technology in meeting future food needs, noting the inability of organic agriculture to do so without extensive environmental degradation. IRAN highlighted policies targeting improved water management in agriculture. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed, *inter alia*, considering biofuel risks and sustainability criteria and enhancing knowledge and technology cooperation and exchanges. NIGERIA highlighted existing global policy frameworks for agriculture and noted the need to link them.

NGOs highlighted: the role of agroecology; the need to integrate livestock in agricultural policies; and the importance of traditional and local knowledge. JAPAN noted the role of biofuels in mitigating climate change and revitalizing agriculture and rural development, as long as their production is compatible with food security concerns. CHILE expressed

support for a DDA breakthrough and liberalized international trade. LIBYA highlighted the recommendations from the “Water for Agriculture and Energy in Africa: the challenges of climate change” conference held in Sirte, Libya, in December 2008.

Panelist Scherr highlighted the importance of getting investments to farmers and farmer organizations, and emphasized the need to restore degraded agricultural lands. Panelist Uphoff said agriculture needs to be climate-proofed, including through focusing on soil biology and plants’ root systems.

FIJI, on behalf of PSIDS, highlighted the establishment of the project implementation and monitoring unit within the Ministry for Rural Development to accelerate project implementation and coordination with other stakeholders. KAZAKHSTAN underscored the decision to pledge US\$1 billion to support domestic agriculture and livestock infrastructure. The MARSHALL ISLANDS stressed providing direct access to funding mechanisms and mainstreaming climate change challenges in future policies.

PALESTINE said conflict creates hardships for agriculture. AUSTRALIA noted that open markets allow farmers to respond to high food prices and supported integrating adaptation to climate change through policies and programmes.

BRAZIL said it is willing to discuss biofuels in a scientific and open manner, and the establishment of a global market for biofuels could contribute positively to current challenges. ISRAEL said applied research and extension services that recognize the farmer as end user are needed. BARBADOS said its efforts to provide incentives to the agricultural sector have led farmers to invest in new technologies.

The Scientific and Technological Community emphasized its partnership with the farming and industry communities with a view to put the farmer at the center of agricultural dialogues, and urged that Copenhagen include agricultural carbons in both mitigation and adaptation. Farmers called for information about market demand for organic products and highlighted resource limitations. CAMBODIA urged broadening market access and partnerships for agricultural production and supporting a 21st Century green revolution. NAMIBIA described its weather-related agricultural challenges and the value of markets, technology transfer and infrastructure.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Panelist Tim Hanstad, Rural Development Institute, stressed the importance of pro-poor land policies. He highlighted the importance of: empowering local communities and governments, and land ownership by women. Panelist Rosalud de la Rosa, WOCAN (Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management), recommended reforming agricultural extension institutions and using incentives to increase the number of women enrolled and trained.

The G-77/CHINA highlighted the need for viable, realistic and implementable policy options to address rural development, including options that empower women and promote gender equity. The EU said: its Common Agricultural Policy is contributing to a stronger, more dynamic and sustainable agri-food sector; and sustainable forest management is an integral part of sustainable development.

The ARAB GROUP said greater efforts should be made to promote efforts to achieve the MDGs, especially the reduction of poverty and malnutrition, and improved education, health and empowerment of women, and to strengthen the capacity of women in villages. Tonga, for AOSIS, said climate adaption should strengthen the resilience of vulnerable rural communities and improve infrastructure. COLOMBIA emphasized the importance of an objective, well-informed approach to biofuels.

FIJI, on behalf of PSIDS, highlighted the importance of promoting infrastructure development, agroforestry practices, cultural enhancement and proper management of natural resources. CANADA supported initiatives that increase economic

diversification, strengthen capacity and promote sustainable resource management. GUATEMALA highlighted the need for policies promoting the use of traditional knowledge in handling natural resources. She also welcomed policies and regulations that implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

SWITZERLAND highlighted the need for long-term commitment for agro-pastoral productivity in economically sustainable ways, integrated crop-livestock systems and access to education, particularly for women. BOLIVIA said the prevailing development model is unsustainable and proposed structural transformation to a new model of development. Noting the impact of the current financial crisis on the poor, INDONESIA proposed including rural development in stimulus packages, enhancing social safety nets for the poor and empowering rural communities. The US underlined, *inter alia*, investing in science and education and empowering local communities, and highlighted several lessons learned to promote rural vitality.

Workers and Trade Unions highlighted special attention to youth, education and vocational training, and the rights to free association and collective bargaining. ARGENTINA said it promotes water basin management policies. NIGERIA emphasized access to land and inheritance rights for women, and said the Global Environment Facility (GEF) replenishment should increase funds for sustainable land management.

JAPAN argued for a “community-based human security approach” to rural development, and presented the outcomes of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) IV, held in Japan in 2008, and their implementation by Japan. NORWAY called for strengthening female influence and power in the agricultural sectors, and women’s position in agriculture, including through promoting their rights and property ownership. IRAN emphasized the plight of nomadic communities and handicraft makers, and proposed various policy measures, including fair income distribution and social insurance coverage. BURKINA FASO announced that it would host the Seventh World Forum on Sustainable Development in October 2009.

MEXICO suggested promoting micro- and medium-sized agricultural enterprises and services that can ensure adequate management of natural resources by combining modern technologies with indigenous and traditional knowledge. Local Authorities said the role of urban market infrastructure is key in rural development. MOROCCO called for: a multilateral fund for capacity building; financing climate change adaptation measures and technology transfer in developing countries; and a green revolution for Africa to increase agricultural production and boost economic growth and food security.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On the second day of IPM, many participants speculated about the proposals that are likely to come out of the session. Some highlighted that biofuels have come up in statements and corridor conversations, particularly in reference to the Chair’s suggestion to explore the development of a voluntary set of criteria for biofuels. Others are pleased to note that the debate has moved beyond past international discussions of these issues, with many speakers acknowledging that new approaches to agriculture are needed, for example.

Meanwhile, others are giving the Chair high marks for beginning each meeting on time and for signaling that speakers should conclude after three minutes. Yet some are still wishing that the discussion could involve more dialogue, particularly after what they describe as successful dialogue experiences during the UNEP Governing Council meeting last week. As a starting point, one participant noted that speakers should realize that reading one page of a printed speech will fill the allotted three minutes. Some participants hoped that the warm atmosphere at the Dutch-hosted reception Tuesday evening would carry over to the second half of the IPM.