

Statement by the Scientific and Technological Community at the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-17)

Tuesday 24 February 2009

Presented by Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, ICSU

Madame Chair,

The Scientific and Technology community is happy to be here to celebrate the acceptance that Agriculture is a fundamental instrument and viable option for spurring growth to reduce poverty and hunger significantly in the new millennium. Indeed, the key to moving away from poverty is in improving the productivity, profitability and sustainability of farming, particularly smallholder farming.

Much of the needed knowledge already exists within the scientific and engineering communities; however the knowledge often does not reach those that could benefit the mostly because of policy failures.

Madame Chair, the Scientific and Technological Community has seen it fit to partner with the farming, business and industry communities to push for a "Farming First" agenda which puts the farmer at the centre of the policy processes.

There is need to break out of the bureaucratic and false dichotomy separating science from development and further separating farmers, particularly the smallholder farmers from business and industry. There is need to regard research and agricultural development as an integral part of the development process. This calls for the promotion of interactions between research, knowledge use and policy development. We acknowledge the pivotal role of governments as connectors of multiple stakeholders and providing a conducive environment for all actors.

Madame Chair, as we prepare for the forthcoming COP15 global climate negotiations, we need to ensure that the post Kyoto protocol includes agricultural

landscape carbon and CHGs in climate agreements for mitigation and adaptation. We have a unique opportunity to make a case for green agriculture and call for a regime that recognizes and rewards Agriculture, Forestry systems and Sustainable Land Use systems as a solution to global warming. This can happen only if the science community is adequately resourced to generate the evidence that tells a complete story and wins conflicting arguments. It requires incentives for industry to develop low cost technologies.

Madame Chair ,The Scientific and Technological Community is calling for increased and consistent investment in Research, Development and engineering applications. For available knowledge to reach the remote indigenous communities, and benefit global agriculture, we need genuine partnerships, strengthened human and institutional arrangements for coordinated research and extension, technologies that enable farmers to receive information on weather, input and output markets and other early warning data that allows timely decision making. Most important, **we must ensure that farming and farmers come first in agricultural policy processes.**

I THANK YOU

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