

Rio 2012 Prep Com
March 6, 2011

Statement by Farmers Major Group On Objectives

We believe the objectives of the conference should be to define a green economy that closes the gaps in implementing Agenda 21.

One of those gaps is agriculture. Farming is about nourishing the world's people. It stands as a critical green endeavour. **Every form of agriculture must continuously improve the way in which it produces food. It requires treatment as a separate issue.**

Agriculture has been working to adopt techniques like conservation tillage which protects soil and water. But in the 20 years since Rio, farmers have increasingly had to do it on their own. Total investment in agriculture development has dropped dramatically since the 1980's.

Most concerningly, the vast majority of farmers are small holders, and they are part of the world's most poor and vulnerable. They have few options, virtually no resources, and need help to achieve social, economic and environmental goals. They face **emerging challenges such as drought and disaster risk reduction** that need attention.

At Rio +20 we will be calling for more efforts in agriculture to:

- 1) Do more with less – finding ways to meet sustainable food production while minimizing the ecological footprint of agriculture, such as agroecological practices
- 2) Use a knowledge-based approach – applying best practice to all forms of agriculture, as in CSD 17
- 3) Reduce poverty – farmers represent one half of the world's poor, often women without adequate land tenure. Despite high-profile promises, woefully few resources have truly begun to flow to them

To share the knowledge needed for farmers to do more with less, have resilience to climate change, and break the poverty cycle, extension services are essential. The networks of local experts that work with farmers to transfer scientific expertise and combine with traditional best practices have been decimated. We will be seeking their revitalization. After all, everybody has to eat.