

Statement by Dr.Sarala Gopalan on behalf of IFAP/Farmers' Major Group at the Parallel Session on Air Pollution on 1st May 2007

Thank you Chairman for recognising the Farmers' representative.

Farmers are most effected by the changes that are taking place in the environment. They could do a lot to change this and that must be recognised.

It is true that farmers also contibute to environmental pollution by their activities and the use of inputs that industry gives them. This too could be changed.

Chairman, our grievance is that we are not adequately heard. Neither are we able to express our needs nor are we able to advice about our experience and help in Policy formulation. We are not provided information on the advancement of technologies, nor are we given to share our experience of using some of them. Further since farmers by definition live in rual areas which have inadequate infrastructure are jeopardised by indoor pollution, absence of clean fuels and other infrastructure that could make their lives better.

Farmers need incentives to adopt alternatives in crop production and even to contribute to growing bio-fuels which can reduce emissions from fuels used in transportation. Targets and goals to reduce emissions by 20% have been formulated, but how can farmers help this if they are not given the right technolgy, inputs, seeds and other incentives in terms of taxes and assurance of their livelihoods with adequate incomes?

Governments and Scientific Communities have to think about it.

Industry should not push polluting inputs into agriculture in terms of fertilisers and pesticides and hold the farmer responsible for polluting.

Farmers have to provide food security first and they can take up cultivation of ther biomass for biofuels if they are given a remunerative package with all the necessary scientific information and inputs.

This important partnership between farmers, industry and science has to be forged and enable by Governments effectively, and that must be emphasized in the policy resolutions that are to emerge from CSD15.

Chairman, once again, let me emphasize, 'please do not forget farmers in your deliberations'

Thank you.