

NGOs Opening Statement at CSD 16
5 May 2008

NGOs are most concerned that the lessons and challenges of this thematic cluster are debated not from a short term crisis mentality but should focus on experiences in demonstrated medium and long term solutions to hunger, poverty and agricultural resource degradation that need to be supported.

The urgency of addressing the current global food crisis and the imperative on the CSD to live up to this expectation underline the importance of scaling up the many important innovations and people-centered solutions found across the world to these problems that NGOs have been espousing. NGOs call on governments to embrace solutions to obstacles and constraints facing the implementation of projects and interventions under the current thematic cluster, including those on water and sanitation identified in numerous international fora such as the Africa World Water Week and the World Water Forum, using CSD as a platform to draw on lessons learned.

NGOs urge governments to embrace practical solutions addressing the root causes of the current food crisis in farming and livestock production systems. These solutions are collectively a new holistic development model that integrates ongoing work rather than fragment efforts into parallel but often disconnected efforts. The current review should fearlessly take stock of the obstacles and constraints in replicating good practices, especially in international trade, technology and food aid.

As we debate the way forward for this cluster of all-important themes, we NGOs join other sectors to call attention to local communities' rights to decide and to develop good practices ranging from access to land, to water, to seeds, to people-driven technologies, to finance, and to markets for products at fair prices. This review session should be a time for deep reflections.