

NGO Major group intervention on Drought and Desertification, May 8 Morning Session

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The importance of adopting a multi-stakeholder approach in the management of arid lands was mentioned by some of the panelists (Drs Scherr and Kante). With this in mind, we would like to emphasize the role of civil society actors working with organizations at the grassroots levels using traditional knowledge in the management of these fragile lands.

Heifer International and our partners would also like to stress the role of livestock as an critical element in improving the livelihoods of local communities. Dr Christiansen mentioned how lamb fattening and milk management are some of the tools used for the integrated management of arid lands. Dr Brouwer did also imply the relevance of livestock in the agricultural systems of Niger when he mentioned the focus on crop residues utilization. Heifer International advocates for a sound livestock husbandry as a vehicle for arid land management as a pivotal element in the improvement of livelihoods for local communities.

The distinguished representative of Canada has prompted for strategies for implementation, the distinguished representative of Japan has listed lessons learned from those projects supported by his government in the Southern African context. The message that Heifer International wants to share is that sound livestock practices and participatory learning with communities are an integrative solution for combining poverty alleviation, soil fertility and land management in the context of combating desertification in the developing world.