

**Statement by Workers & Trade Unions**  
**UN Commission on Sustainable Development**  
**7 May 2008**  
**Thematic Discussions: Drought**

Mr. Chairman,

My intervention on draughts will focus on Waged-Agricultural Workers. These are women and men who labour in cropfields and livestock units and primary processing facilities to produce the world's food and fiber. They do not own or rent the land they work nor the tools they use, they are therefore a group distinct from the farmers. They depend on the wages from their labour working on the land. The wages are pegged on the output of their labour for example of they are paid according to the kilo of crop picked, row weeded, hectare sprayed. The terms and condition of their employment are diverse: seasonal, part-time, casual or permanent full time).

Extreme weather, floods or droughts negatively on the productivity of the workers. Drought conditions mean, low productivity, decreased earning and even loss of jobs. Prolonged drought usually forces workers and their families to migrate to other places to look for employment, usually to the urban centers. This also have impact on rural labour market.

Labour migration in this condition is due to desperation and the need to survive. This situation forces the workers to accept the lowest wages in bad working conditions. In order to meet their survival need, child labour is employed to supplement their meager income.

Workers and trade unions calls upon the governments, intergovernmental organisations to include the plight of waged workers during the drought management plans to provide safety nets to mitigate the impact of draughts on their livelihoods. A similar initiative like the crop insurance for the farmers should also be adopted for the workers and other vulnerable groups.

The CSD should promote the ILO Decent Work Agenda that enhances social protection and social dialogues. This would bring synergies from all the stakeholders to address the common problem of climate change.

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