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Statement by

H.E. Mr. Ton Boon von Ochssée

Ambassador for Sustainable Development

of

the Kingdom of the Netherlands

**on the occasion of the thematic cluster for the implementation cycle
2008/2009**

“Dialogue with major groups”

The 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

New York, 6 May 2008

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Mr Chair,

The Netherlands attaches great importance to a broad participation and involvement of all stakeholders in the process of CSD 16 and 17. Their involvement is a necessity to ensure successful sustainable development. The major groups have a crucial role in sharing their experiences at the grassroots level and assisting us in compiling recommendations for further action. The mutual responsibility of all stakeholders, i.e. civil society, businesses and governments is essential to ensure good governance also in relation to sustainable development.

In this context The Netherlands undertakes several initiatives to stimulate innovation as regards sustainable agriculture and rural development. An example I would like to highlight is "TransForum", a programme in which several stakeholders cooperate in developing innovations for sustainable agriculture, i.e. new combinations of sustainable economic chains and new combinations of activities for vital rural areas.

Secondly, I would like to draw your attention to a very important group of stakeholders: our future generation. We should be aware that the youth are the current and future producers, consumers and leaders. Creating awareness amongst today's youngsters on the issue of sustainable development is therefore highly important and not only a matter of formal education. Several projects and programmes in the Netherlands are designed to raise young people's awareness and share experiences about concrete action to promote sustainable development. One example is the project "Peer Education" of the National Youth Council of the Netherlands, where a team of youngsters provide training and internet support on this topic for the youth and youth organisations. The central slogan is "The youth learns from the youth."

Finally, we would like to ask the major groups their view on the following questions:

- What are the main obstacles and challenges for fostering partnerships between stakeholders?
- What are your experiences and suggestions for improving the involvement of young generations in sustainability issues?

Thank you Mr Chair.