



Ministry of Agriculture

**Statement by Mr Rolf Eriksson, State  
Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture,  
Sweden, at the High Level Segment of  
CSD 16, New York, 15 May 2008 ``The  
Way Forward''**

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Your Excellences; distinguished Delegates,

First of all, I would like to express our condolences to the peoples of China and Burma.

As we all know, sustainable development must address ecological, economic and social aspects. The on-going climate change is perhaps the most telling example of how valid the concept of sustainable development is. It also implies that the solutions to i. a. climate change cannot be too simplified; addressing one aspect or factor, while leaving out others. This sessions' focus on agriculture is held when agriculture, food production and climate change are higher on the agenda than ever before – and it's about time.

It is somewhat disturbing then to find that the crisis because of high food prices is blamed one single factor - that is the biofuel production from agricultural crops - when you know that there are many other causes to this; and that, in fact, the increased prices also hold possibilities for agriculture and rural development, not least in Africa.

FAO has stressed that high food prices are not a threat alone, but also, used correctly, represent an opportunity. Now is the right time to invest in agriculture and the international community must not miss this opportunity. The World Bank Development Report 2008 also stressed the urgency of this, and that such investments also will have positive effects that can spread throughout the entire economies.

We have to work hard on measures to solve the urgent problems, and also on measures to help farmers in the developing countries benefit from the new situation in the long run. Measures in the short term as well as in the long term are needed. Short term decisions should not lead to problems when it comes to deciding on and implementing measures to solve the problems in a longer perspective. Special attention should be given women in farming, land ownership rights, establishment of land tenure registers, etcetera.

There has to be a focus on the development of sustainable agriculture and rural development, because as we know it is not good enough to concentrate solely on increased agricultural production and productivity: we also have to give priority to the sustainable management of our natural resources.

The way forward is more trade – not less. A successful conclusion of the Doha round is needed. More trade barriers are not the solution of the problems we are facing today. Land ownership rights have to be well established and recognized. Investments in the agricultural sector are important all over the world, but especially in Africa.

More research in agriculture is needed in order to increase productivity without destroying ecosystems and threatening biodiversity. We should build a biobased economy where we make

better use of photosynthesis in order to get away from the independence of fossil fuels. Food, fuel and fibers can – and have to be – produced on our agricultural land to a greater extent.

The way forward is also to include business society. Environment should be used as an incentive for economic growth and business development. The role of governments here is I) to create incentives - it must be profitable for companies; II) to promote vital tools such as Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility, Environmental Management Systems, Eco-design, supply chain management, to mention a few.

Thank you!