

Intervention by Ms. Saheli Ghosh Roy, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, during the Thematic Discussion on "Agriculture" during IPM to CSD-17, 24 February 2009

- We thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report on the subject. The report has correctly highlighted some successful agricultural development strategies, including that of India. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, we have been sharing the experience that we have gained, and we stand ready to deepen these efforts.
- Just one comment on the report – there appears to be an overemphasis on promoting organic method of farming by small farmers in developing countries. Our experience shows that an optimal combination of organic cultivation with use of appropriate chemical fertilizers is extremely essential for enhancing the productivity of different crops, and meeting the growing food grain demand in developing countries.
- Let me emphasize that the key barrier to agricultural development in developing countries remains the massive agricultural subsidies by developed countries. These have distorted international markets and weakened agricultural production in developing countries, apart from adversely impacting their food security. It is now time for implementation – we urge developed countries to take urgent steps to eliminate their agricultural subsidies.
- We also need to keep in mind that in developing countries, agriculture is not merely an issue of commerce, but is a vital livelihood issue for millions. Hence, an integrated approach, focussing on improving net income of farmers; promoting sustainable use of natural resources like soil, water, bio-diversity; empowering small, marginal and vulnerable farmers; appropriate price and trade policy mechanisms; and ensuring food and nutritional security, are imperative.
- The food crisis last year has highlighted the need to enhance agricultural production in developing countries. We must ensure that international efforts support this objective. A point in particular is the need for supporting institutions like the CGIAR and enhancing international collaboration in areas

like genetic resources and development of new and improved varieties of crops.

- Before concluding, allow me to highlight our success in leveraging ICTs in our agricultural development efforts – provision of market intelligence and price analysis to farmers is a good example.

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