



Commission on Sustainable Development

Sixteenth session, High-Level Segment

**Statement by Julia Marton-Lefèvre
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Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to share IUCN's views on the critical issues that have been on our agenda at this Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification, and water and sanitation are all issues the world is expecting us to address.

These issues confront humanity with grave challenges. There is a global food crisis, telling us not least that we need to act urgently on drought, which leaves people vulnerable to hunger and conflict; on desertification, which is enfeebling productivity in agriculture; and on land degradation, which is robbing future generations of the very soil needed to feed themselves.

How we respond presents critical choices. We must address not just food security, but also a burgeoning water crisis, a crisis of biodiversity loss, and the threats posed by climate change. We must do all this while sustaining a growing economy and defeating poverty.

The work of CSD, and the deliberations at WSSD on which it is based, show us a way forward. We need sustainable development. Most urgently, as our sense of crisis grows, we need action on the ground that turns science and policy into benefits for people and for the ecosystems that sustain us all.

During this 16th Session of the CSD, we have heard repeatedly about the need for sustainable agricultural development, climate change adaptation and integrated water resources management. None of

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these offers a simple solution. Each demands not one global actor, but many actors working at all levels. Each demands action in not one sector, but integration across sectors and across the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman, sustainable development is impossible without the basic infrastructure of ecosystem services. Mainstreaming ecosystem services in water management, climate change adaptation and agricultural development is fundamental to meeting our sustainable development goals. These ecosystem services underpin all of the issues on our agenda. They are tied intimately to human well-being and are essential for production and consumption; they help to alleviate and reduce poverty, and are required for societies to prosper and economies to grow.

agricultural policies and technologies, inequitable trade rules, agricultural subsidies that distort the markets, and the systematic marginalization of small producers lie at the heart of the current food crisis. In addition, there is chronic underinvestment in agriculture in developing countries and a real neglect of the basic premise that ecosystems have to be in good shape in order to provide good food. We need more discussion about the risks biofuels pose, but also the opportunities they present. Second generation biofuels offer substantial opportunities. They are produced from agricultural waste or algae, so reduce competition with food crops, and offer higher energy yields. IUCN is working to find long-term and sustainable solutions based on the best science available.

Mr. Chairman, IUCN urges gove