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OPENING STATEMENT

Intervention from the Farmers' Group by

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My name is Elisabeth Gauffin. I am an organic dairy farmer from Sweden, and Vice-President of the Swedish Framers' Federation.

It is a pleasure for me to address this session of the CSD on behalf of the farmers' group which I represent through the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

For the first time in 10 years since CSD-8, the cluster themes to be addressed are closely linked to the livelihood of farmers. It is certainly very timely that after years of neglect, agriculture is back at the top of the international agenda. We congratulate the CSD to bring back agriculture on its agenda

We are very much aware of the current food and energy crisis. Farmers feel concerned about the terms of the debate and are willing to refocus the discussion laying down the real reasons which lead to this situation. Also, farmers and farmers' organisations are determined to encourage policy

makers to involve them in future plans to ensure a sustainable future for agriculture.

The key question to be tackled here in the forum is: how to increase agricultural efficiency to meet growing needs while protecting a strained natural resource base? Despite technological advances which led to increased agricultural productivity, the world is witnessing a multifaceted lack of sustainability on social, economic and environmental levels.

Farmers are certainly part of the solution to address this situation. We need a long-term plan based on a new “farmer centred agricultural model.”

The key to success in this CSD cycle is to overcome the challenges farmers are facing in attracting investments into agriculture and rural development, in particular in arid and semi-arid zones which are most affected by desertification and drought.

Farmers are willing to work with governments and other stakeholders in order to exploit the full potential of agriculture in reducing poverty and protecting natural resources.

I look forward to fruitful discussions and I thank you for your attention.