

CANADIAN STATEMENT ON CARBON SINKS

{NOTE: not exactly as read}

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to share Canada's position on carbon sinks. Canada will continue to promote the inclusion of all sinks, including agricultural soils, as a means of meeting our commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

At the third Conference of Parties meeting, SBSTA was tasked with carrying out the work outlined in Article 3.4 of the Protocol. That is, to consider modalities, rules and guidelines for land use and forestry categories as well as to consider adding additional sink activities. It is our intention to ensure that the discussions on definitions and additional activities, including the interpretation of the language of the Protocol, are dealt with in a manner that reflects the unique nature of our forestry and agricultural sectors. Canada will continue to support a position that is justifiable and defensible and that is based on giving credit for reducing emissions and enhancing sinks.

Canada will work with Parties to refine the definitions, guidelines and rules for measuring carbon stock and reforestation, afforestation and deforestation activities. We will continue to promote the improvement in methodologies and verification procedures, subject to appropriate treatment of natural disturbances and guidelines reflecting our concerns about the treatment of forest products. Canada is further committed at these meetings to working toward guidelines for ensuring that sinks activities are verifiable, transparent, achievable and consistent with IPCC guidelines.

Mr. Chairman, the capacity of agricultural soils to store carbon presents an opportunity for farmers on a global scale to undertake more sustainable farming practices which will contribute to the reduction of atmospheric greenhouse gases with additional desirable improvements to soil and water quality, enhancement of biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Canada's experience in this field provides us with the confidence to believe that sustainable land management practices do indeed improve the ability of soils to absorb atmospheric CO₂. As well, scientific advances have improved methodology for measuring soil carbon content with a relatively high degree of certainty over time. In light of the very significant opportunities for restoration of degraded soils in developing countries, Canada would recommend the inclusion of soils sinks within the Clean Development Mechanism.

In accordance with SBSTA's mandate, Canada would recommend that parties undertake discussions on sinks with the objective of resolving outstanding technical issues as well as considering the addition of our carbon sinks, such as agricultural soils. We would advocate the establishment of a contact group on sinks through which parties can discuss carbon sequestration issues in light of the existing technical information. We look forward to working with our partners in the Protocol to advance the ability of countries to build on the capacity of sinks in their efforts to meet the Convention's objectives.

Thank you.