

Remarks given by Dr. Jeffrey Seale, Environmental Stakeholder Strategy Manager, Bayer Crop Science, on behalf of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development to the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (text as prepared).

Workshop on improved soil carbon, soil health, and soil fertility under grassland and cropland as well as integrated systems, including water management.

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Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Madam Chair. On behalf of the members of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on the role of agriculture at the intersection of our two most important societal challenges – climate change and food security. I would also like to thank my fellow panelists for sharing their views here today.

Over the past two days, we have heard of the important role agriculture, and in particular soil health, can play in helping to adapt and to mitigate climate change.

In 2018, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development released a report highlighting the business case for investing in soil health which demonstrates how companies around the world are addressing the issue and identifies next steps in scaling up action and investment in soil health. The opportunities for the business community include: increasing crop productivity, securing supply chains, and meeting the growing demand for food. But also, the business opportunity includes helping to reverse the impacts of climate change, improving water quality, protecting biodiversity, and improving the livelihood of the one in three people around the world that work in agriculture. And last, most importantly, climate change negatively impacts farmers and we must help them by giving them all the tools that will help them survive economically while producing sustainably. In particular, we have an obligation to strengthen the resilience of family and smallholder farmers.

The business case for investing in soil health includes maintaining/increasing revenues, reducing costs, and creating finance opportunities, all while helping farmers. Agriculture can be part of the solution to climate change and not just part of the problem. We have an obligation to deliver benefits to society while creating a sustainable agriculture sector.

To address the two key questions given to us by the Secretariat:

First, the key challenges or barriers in increasing investment in soil health.

- As we have seen in this workshop, this is an enormous challenge which requires strong partnerships across value chains, landscapes and sectors. If you attended the IPBES briefing on Monday, you heard perhaps the most important words said at this meeting, we cannot solve the

challenges of climate change by remaining in silos. Our success will depend upon a collective effort.

- One of the largest barriers to improving soil health is a lack of incentives to growers for adopting climate smart practices. We must invest in lowering the financial barriers to create a bridge for farmers to change to more environmentally sustainable practices. As we have heard in these sessions this requires us to scale up a robust financing mechanism.
- The current lack of uniform greenhouse gas guidance for dynamic, biological agriculture systems must be addressed. Current GHG guidance standards around permanence, land tenure, and other issues where agriculture provides unique challenges are insufficient. We must create standards and protocols that reward growers for improving soil health.

What actions can the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture and the UNFCCC take to address these barriers?

- First, support countries in creating jurisdictional baselines for soil carbon that combine with regional emissions factors to determine changes in soil carbon content. As Secretary Vargas mentioned in his opening talk this morning, we need more soil data globally. This is the baboon's big stick that the gentleman from the World Farmer's Organization was speaking of in his story yesterday. These global soil databases are key in advancing a better understanding of improvements in soil properties.
- Second, support countries in prioritizing soil health as part of their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. Having soil improvements as part of the NDCs will help facilitate the adoption of these climate smart agriculture practices and drive a more sustainable sector.
- Third, emphasize the role of diverse partnerships needed to improve soil health and facilitate the development of these relationships.
- Lastly, recognize the farmer as part of the solution and support a holistic approach to enabling sustainable agriculture.

Yesterday I passed the photobooth out in the corridor here and decided to stop and have a look. Since we are in Bonn one of the image backgrounds available is of Beethoven. The caption on this particular image caught my attention. It says, "Because playing together unites the world." I found that especially relevant to our work here today. This task will take us all.

I would like to close with a special thank you to the delegates representing the farmers of the world disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. Thank you for giving a voice to those that do not have one or who are often not heard in this conversation. Continue speaking up and be louder!

Thank you.