

**Respect for Land Rights**  
**Remarks by Ulrike Sapiro, The Coca-Cola Company**  
**On behalf of the Private Sector Mechanism of CFS**  
**May 14, 2014**

Madame Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ministers, and Colleagues,

Land tenure is fundamental to food security. I am pleased to bring you remarks on behalf of private sector mechanism and the particular perspective of my company Coca-Cola.

As we reflect upon these guidelines, we can see important key elements to make land tenure function. In many places, land tenure systems are in effect - non-existent. To us in the private sector and to our farmer partners, it is important that there should be effective local administration of land registries without corruption. Dispute resolution mechanisms are essential. There must also be equal access to land for women.

Ultimately, fair, transparent rules benefit everyone. We appreciate the acknowledgement of the need for clear national guidelines on land management, recognizing the needs of agriculture in land planning and the vital role of farmers. These are essential to successfully producing the food the world needs.

The Voluntary Guidelines have helped to focus attention on this critical issue and we have seen the private sector increasingly take up land tenure issues in their own programmes. For instance, work is being co-ordinated through many venues such as the World Bank, the Interlaken Group, the G20, and the UN Global Compact to highlight land tenure and the importance of making it functional.

For instance, the Food and Agriculture Business Principles that have been developed by the United Nations Global Compact include specific reference to “respecting land and natural resource rights.” One of the powers of such systems is to use Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting systems to create an effective means for companies to incorporate the Voluntary Guidelines into business reporting and is evidence of private sector engagement.

Turning this to a company level, I represent Coca-Cola Company which has made a strong commitment to protect the land rights of farmers and communities.

The Coca-Cola Company is grounded in the view that all people should enjoy fundamental human rights to life, liberty, dignity, respect, equality under the law and more. We know that we cannot have a healthy and growing business unless the communities we serve are healthy and sustainable. We also recognize that we must work in partnership with others – government, civil society and the private sector. Global solutions today require collaboration more than ever.

The commitment the Company has made on land rights reflects these core values. This commitment is also grounded in the substantial commitments that we have made to improvements in sustainable agriculture and sourcing practices, including our sustainable sourcing goal and the Company’s Sustainable Agriculture Guiding Principles. Although the Company does not own any farms, we are working to advance efforts to drive transparency and accountability across our global supply chain down to the farm.

As a major purchaser of agricultural commodities, The Coca-Cola Company understands that sustainable agricultural practices are important to farming communities' long-term sustainability. Thus, our approach to sustainable agriculture is founded on principles that protect the environment, uphold workplace rights and help build more sustainable communities. We also believe in creating economic opportunities for everyone associated with our supply chain, including women and smallholder farmers, helping to protect the land rights of local communities, as well as stewarding water and other natural resources within the more than 200 countries in which we operate.

With our land rights commitment, we have taken significant steps to help respect and prohibit violations of land rights in our supply chain. And, we are now working on the implementation of our commitment, including:

- Disclosing our top cane sugar sourcing markets and suppliers, which we will disclose all within the next three years;
- Operationalizing the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) across Coca-Cola operations and providing guidance for our suppliers, which we issued in February;
- Undertaking country baseline studies on land rights in our top cane sugar sourcing markets; initial studies underway in 2014 are Colombia and Guatemala.
- Engaging with governments and international organizations to advocate for responsible land rights practices, and facilitating peer collaboration through various forums.

The Coca-Cola Company and the private sector mechanism believe land grabbing is unacceptable, and is committed to ensuring accountability throughout our supply chain.

We strongly support the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, and appreciate the opportunity to share a private sector perspective.