

PRESS/016/02E

Brussels, August 2002
Press release

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL AUGUST 23

The European Food and Drink Industry welcomes the Opening of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg

“The Johannesburg Summit should create the necessary conditions for the industry to become a strong partner in a global strategy for more equitable growth and sustainable development.” This is the main message that will be put forward by the CIAA (Confederation of the food and drink industries of the EU) at the forthcoming Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development*. Under the UNEP patronage, the CIAA has drafted the first food industry global report on sustainability. This report, entitled “Continuous Improvement Towards Sustainability”, offers testimony to the determination of the food and drink industry to understand and integrate sustainability into its business culture and processes.

Food and drink companies are already committed to raising their environmental performance through on-going improvements to their products and processes. For example, eco-efficiency measures have been implemented across the industry and most of the firms have reported significant reductions in water and energy consumption and wastewater production.

The food and drink industry has not just limited its efforts to environmental, occupational health and safety issues. The sector has endeavoured to make substantial economic and social contributions. Improving access to and availability of safe, wholesome and high quality products is part of these contributions.

Although much has already been achieved in the last ten years and in many cases, the food and drink industry has even been at the forefront of development, there still remain future challenges which the food industry is addressing by:

- Continuously improving availability, quality and safety of the food supply
- Ensuring further progress in resource management, particularly for water and energy.
- Promoting sustainable practices throughout the whole food chain and increasing dialogue with all stakeholders.

*** “How does the food industry implement sustainability in practice and tackle future challenges?” – Join the debate at the side event hosted by the CIAA in Johannesburg on Saturday August 31 at 6.30 pm. (for more details and registration, see invitation in annex).**

The CIAA is the voice of the European food and drink industries to the EU and International institutions to contribute to the development of a European and international regulatory and economic environment combining industry competitiveness, food safety and quality, consumer protection and respect for the environment. For more information on the Confederation of the food and drink industries of the EU, consult www.ciaa.be