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Chair: Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 25: Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (*continued*) (A/72/63-E/2017/11 and A/72/303)

1. **Mr. Fox-Drummond Gough** (Brazil) said that his delegation wished to commend the Secretary-General for his report on agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/72/303), which clearly stated that the world was not on track to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030. It also welcomed the 2017 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) entitled “The State of Food and Agriculture”, which concluded that fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development depended crucially on progress in rural areas, where most of the poor and hungry lived.

2. The high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017 had provided an opportunity to review progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 on zero hunger. One lesson learned from that exercise had been that the targets of Goal 2 were unlikely to be met at the current pace and scope of implementation. That conclusion, and the findings in the above reports, must be understood as an urgent call for action in the coming years. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development had outlined the necessary means for combating hunger and malnutrition. However, implementation would depend on the availability of adequate resources to finance commitments.

3. The number of people at severe risk of famine had dramatically increased in recent months, which constituted a major humanitarian challenge requiring a coordinated and timely response from the international community. Collective action was therefore needed to accelerate the achievement of Goal 2, in both the short term and in the long term. The Committee could play a pivotal role in that regard.

4. Greater investment in agriculture and in rural areas, including through international cooperation, would be crucial for building productive capacity in developing countries. At the same time, the massive agricultural subsidies of rich countries, which distorted international food markets, must be curbed when they directly jeopardized the development of robust agricultural sectors in the developing world.

5. Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 were intrinsically linked. Experience in Brazil had shown that social protection measures, combined with broader agricultural and rural development and a particular

focus on the specific needs of smallholders and women farmers, could contribute towards breaking the cycle of poverty.

6. While the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) provided the necessary tools to unify the relevant international commitments made, the time had come to go further. In that regard, he was pleased to announce the Brazil had been the first country to make specific, measurable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) commitments.

7. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the initiative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to hold the International Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Brasilia in November 2017. The Conference would be a unique occasion for all countries to discuss how to fast track global efforts to achieve progress in rural areas with a view to eradicating hunger and malnutrition by 2030.

8. **Ms. Edison** (Nigeria) said that the comprehensive reports under consideration provided useful information on the progress made to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030 and the response needed by the international community to meet the challenges of food security, nutrition and sustainable livelihoods around the world.

9. In Nigeria, her Government had responded to the calls to scale up efforts to end hunger and malnutrition by advancing agricultural development policies, strategies and programmes that would promote food security and reverse malnutrition. The new agriculture promotion policy for the period 2016–2020, for example, sought to engage investors, financial institutions, farmers and communities in order to ensure national food and income security.

10. To address concerns related to malnutrition and improve nutrition, especially among children and pregnant and lactating mothers, a national policy on food and nutrition for the period 2016–2025 was being implemented. The policy, which would address problems of extreme hunger and malnutrition affecting individuals, households and communities at different levels of society, was expected to contribute towards overall national development. By 2025, its expected outcomes included halving the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition, and halving the incidence of malnutrition among victims of emergencies.

11. A lack of funds continued to impede agriculture development, especially in the least developed countries but also in developing countries. Her delegation therefore reiterated the need to repatriate stolen assets

to their countries of origin for investment in the agricultural sector.

12. Achieving zero hunger required a global commitment. By working together, the international community could ensure a better future for all.

13. **Mr. Andambi** (Kenya), welcoming the report of the Secretary-General on agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/72/303), said that the agricultural sector in Kenya directly accounted for 24 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) and, indirectly, for 27 per cent of its GDP through linkages with other sectors. Approximately 45 per cent of the Government's revenue was derived from agriculture, which accounted for 60 per cent of total employment, and over 80 per cent of the population derived their livelihoods from activities related to agriculture. His Government attached a high priority to the agricultural sector as an important tool for promoting national development and a critical component of the national industrialization strategy, especially agroprocessing.

14. Unfortunately, Kenya had still not fully recovered from the significant long-term negative economic impacts on the GDP per capita contribution of agriculture as a result of structural adjustment programmes. The recommendations that the programmes had made to offload some key services to the private sector, such as those offered by agricultural extension officers, had led to the stagnation of agricultural growth.

15. However, the Government had now adopted a three-pronged approach to food security that involved policies related to supply, income and price. Supply related policies included subsidizing farm inputs; improving research and extension services; providing rural credit for farming; enhancing rural infrastructure; developing rural agricultural markets and agribusiness skills; and improving the management and use of natural resources. Price related policies involved the Government buying maize at above market rates, for example, in order to provide incentives to producers. Income related policies included increased government expenditure on health and education in order to improve disposal incomes.

16. The national food and nutrition security policy of Kenya stipulated that all Kenyans, at all times, should enjoy safe food in sufficient quantity and quality to satisfy their nutritional needs. In addition, policies had been put in place to enhance access to food, provide assistance to specific vulnerable groups and raise awareness about nutrition among all family members, especially children.

17. Training and capacity-building for farmers had been noted as crucial for food security. To help farmers deal with adverse weather conditions, the Government had piloted insurance schemes for crops and livestock. Funds had also been allocated to promote the mechanization of agriculture. Such measures would be critical in order to deliver on Sustainable Development Goal 2 and meet its targets.

18. **Mr. Mohamed** (Sudan) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/303) indicated that the world was not on track to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030 and that Sustainable Development Goal 2 would not be achieved by that deadline. In particular, the report highlighted that an estimated 793 million people lacked access to adequate amounts of dietary energy, and that the number of hungry and food-insecure people in countries affected by conflict and crises had increased dramatically from 80 million in 2015 to 108 million in 2016. Millions also suffered from food insecurity, which constituted a major humanitarian challenge confronting the international community that required urgent attention. Efforts to end hunger and malnutrition must therefore be accelerated. The United Nations must do its utmost to ensure that no one was left behind, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

19. As the Sudan enjoyed immense natural resources, including millions of hectares of fertile arable land for the production of agricultural crops, it was in a position to provide food both regionally and internationally. His Government had developed a national agricultural strategy for the period 2017–2020, whose goals included upgrading the agricultural sector.

20. The Sudan was committed to achieving food security at the national, regional and international levels. Within the framework of its efforts in that regard, the Sudan had held the chairmanship of the forty-fourth session of the FAO Committee on World Food Security from 9 to 13 October 2017.

21. As the host of over 2 million refugees, the Sudan also played a pivotal role in ensuring food security at the regional level. It called on FAO, the United Nations and other relevant organizations to support Sudanese initiatives to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, including through partnerships, technology transfer, capacity-building efforts and agricultural research centres.

22. **Mr. Maope** (Lesotho) said that the 2017 high-level political forum had led to an increased understanding of the interlinkages among all the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, while agriculture played a direct role in eradicating hunger and

extreme poverty, it was also central to achieving many other Goals.

23. Efforts were under way in Lesotho to modernize its agricultural systems. The passing of legislation on land administration in 2010, in particular, had gone a long way towards addressing the issue of security of land ownership, including by removing impediments to women's access to land.

24. With the assistance of its development partners, Lesotho was engaged in farming methods that would help it to better withstand climate and weather hazards. In that context, a smallholder agriculture development project funded by the World Bank and IFAD provided a combination of technical assistance and competitive grants designed to improve the productivity of smallholder farming activities and increase market opportunities in Lesotho. The project had benefited more than 370 of its farmers, most of whom were women, and grant recipients included the owners of protected farms. Another major partnership with IFAD was the Wool and Mohair Promotion Project, which involved the restoration of grazing lands and efforts to improve animal health. Such initiatives promised huge national savings in costly food imports as well as good nutrition to the people of Lesotho.

25. As more than half the population of Lesotho lived in rural areas and most people were engaged in subsistence agriculture, agriculture continued to play a major role in national development strategies. Many of the agricultural projects under way aimed to promote innovative agribusiness, with a focus on increasing competitiveness, improving market access, adding value and boosting the provision of services.

26. However, Lesotho continued to face major challenges such as climate change and malnutrition. In response to the latter, Lesotho had drawn up a nutritional policy and had also joined the Scaling Up Nutrition movement in 2016.

27. **Mr. Remaoun** (Algeria) said that it was paradoxical that millions of people suffered from hunger and famine around the world while there was unprecedented access to food. If a population produced enough food to satisfy all its needs, it was inconceivable that market forces should be allowed to deprive part of that population from having access to that food. Market forces, namely the private sector, could not be solely responsible for control over the food security system. Food security was too important a matter to be left to market considerations alone. Universities, the private sector and government agencies should all work together to establish a new vision at the national, regional and global levels.

28. While many talked about food sovereignty, others favoured a food democracy. There were many findings that could help to tackle food security in a more integrated manner. In that regard his delegation had taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/303), which paid attention to all the key components of food security.

29. Any new global vision should take into account the right to safe and nutritious food, support farmers wishing to leave the productionist model, provide consumers with information, include market regulation and promote equitable trade and agricultural land protection, among other measures. The same integrated approach should encompass actions to educate citizens and support sustainable patterns of consumption and production, including in developed countries.

30. **Ms. Panabokke** (Sri Lanka) said that sustainable development, food security and nutrition were all crucial components of the 2030 Agenda and vitally important for ending global hunger, which remained alarmingly high. The vast majority of the world's hungry were located in developing countries where those most vulnerable were children, who, as a result, suffered from growth deficiencies and increased susceptibility to disease and even death.

31. While climate change was one of the greatest threats to food security, poverty was the leading cause of hunger worldwide. Thankfully, carefully crafted policies on agriculture, food security and nutrition, particularly at the national level, could make a significant contribution towards overcoming that challenge.

32. The Government of Sri Lanka had declared 2017 as the Year for Poverty Alleviation. In that context, it had formulated a three-year plan for a sustainable future aimed at ensuring the proper implementation and monitoring of sustainable development policies, particularly relating to Sustainable Development Goal 2. A three-year action plan had also been launched to reduce undernutrition, anaemia and stunting among children.

33. Sri Lanka placed a strong emphasis on nutrition. For example, her Government had designated the month of June every year as National Nutrition Month, a national nutrition surveillance survey was operational throughout the country with a view to ensuring the nutritional well-being of the population, and a national programme first established in 1973 continued to provide nutritional supplements to combat malnutrition in mothers and children.

34. Sri Lanka was also focused on promoting sustainable agriculture, which included sourcing food locally and maintaining self-sufficiency in rice as the nation's staple food. The Government continued to support sustainable agricultural initiatives at the rural and urban levels and had introduced special home gardening projects to increase food production and stabilize food prices on the domestic market.

35. Sri Lanka had been able to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger seven years before 2015. The efforts now being undertaken would help to eradicate hunger in line with the 2030 Agenda.

36. **Ms. Hamdouni** (Morocco) said that the report of the Secretary-General had highlighted that climate change, drought, political instability and conflict were threats to food security in many places and prevented progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The challenges facing developing countries would require strong political will and harmonized efforts by all Member States.

37. Food security had always been a priority of the national economic policy of the Kingdom of Morocco, which was working to ensure its food supply through the development of sustainable agriculture and a policy of openness to the international economy.

38. In view of the impact of climate change and desertification on food security, her Government attached strategic importance to the agricultural sector. For example, the Green Morocco Plan adopted in 2008 aimed to strengthen food security, increase food production and improve farmers' incomes. Similarly, the Halietis Plan, launched in 2009, sought to conserve fisheries resources and marine ecosystems, enhance productivity and quality in the fishing industry and increase the availability and affordability of food.

39. South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation played a key role in efforts to combat malnutrition and hunger. The Kingdom of Morocco had signed a general agreement on South-South Cooperation with FAO for the period 2014–2020 in order to help African countries increase their agricultural productivity on a sustainable basis, achieve food security, improve livelihoods, strengthen resilience to food crises and learn from best practices in Morocco.

40. In April 2016 Morocco had launched the initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture to Climate Change, which had then been discussed by Heads of State and Government at a meeting chaired by King Mohammed VI of Morocco and held on the margins of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change. It had subsequently also been decided to establish a working group of African representatives to implement the Sustainability, Stability and Security initiative in Africa, which aimed to propose solutions for vulnerable populations at risk of forced displacement from insecurity, including food insecurity.

41. **Ms. Ochir** (Mongolia) said that Sustainable Development Goal 2, on ending hunger, was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda that cut across all other Goals. The worrisome finding in the report of the Secretary-General that the world was not on track to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030 made it imperative for national and global efforts to be redoubled in order to reverse that trend.

42. A national food security forum held recently in Mongolia to discuss the challenges of ensuring food security and safety had resulted in specific recommendations for action aimed at improving food producers' access to long-term soft loans, enhancing food safety inspection and control, and raising consumer knowledge about healthy food. The implementation of those recommendations would be essential. More generally, agricultural and food industry policies were formulated in line with the national development priorities set out in Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030, the Government's 2016–2020 Action Plan and other relevant national programmes. The sector for agriculture and light industry accounted for about 36 per cent of GDP and employed 56 per cent of the labour force.

43. The prevalence of undernourishment in the total population of Mongolia had decreased from 31 per cent over the period 2004–2006 to 19.6 per cent over the period 2014–2016. Similarly, the prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age had decreased in Mongolia from 24.7 per cent in 2005 to 10.8 per cent in 2016.

44. The continued implementation of a crop cultivation campaign was designed to improve cropland usage and ensure 100 per cent self-sufficiency in crops by 2020. However, persistent challenges included insufficient financial resources and technical know-how, the unsustainable use of natural resources, extreme weather fluctuations and expanding land degradation. Moreover, as a result of prolonged droughts, wheat output was projected to fall by 50 per cent compared with average output over the past 5 years and other crops would also be severely affected. The limited availability of fodder and pasture access in drought-affected areas was jeopardizing the livestock sector.

45. Explicit political commitments with concerted follow-up and adequate financing were needed to make

ending poverty and hunger a global priority. The effective and timely achievement of Goal 2 would depend on such factors as dedicated investment in agriculture, capacity-building in disaster resilience and the extension of social protection as well as education and health-care services to rural and remote areas.

46. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the report of the Secretary-General carried a clear but extremely disappointing message that the world was not on track to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030. According to the report, large segments of the world's population, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, would remain undernourished or malnourished by 2030.

47. In his recent message to the FAO General Conference, Pope Francis had reiterated the commitment of the Holy See to contribute towards global efforts for the elimination of hunger and malnutrition and had acknowledged the duty of the entire human family to provide practical assistance to those in need. When a country was incapable of responding adequately to its pressing development needs, there was an international obligation to provide support to meet the basic needs of that country's population. Consequently, on the present occasion of World Food Day, 16 October, the Pope had taken the opportunity to call for a new model of international cooperation based on love, fraternity and solidarity. His message was that diplomacy and multilateral institutions must nurture and organize the capacity to love as a path that guaranteed both food security and human security.

48. **Ms. Muraki Gottlieb** (Observer for the International Chamber of Commerce) said that accelerating the economic growth of the agrifood sector was important for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets aimed at eradicating hunger and implementing sustainable agricultural methods and investments. Public-private partnerships promoted by United Nations agencies played a crucial role in boosting national economic growth and developing social infrastructure, including roads, facilities and buildings. Such partnerships had also been embraced by developed marked economies as a means of providing more effective and efficient public services.

49. Increasingly, public-private partnerships had become a significant way to foster research and development policies, and were viewed as a new tool to accelerate agricultural innovation in developing countries. Such partnerships could also play an important role in strengthening institutional mechanisms that facilitated access to financial

resources, promoted the sharing of risks and addressed other constraints affecting the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive agricultural development.

50. For Governments, public-private partnerships could be a resourceful way to provide local farmers with appropriate tools and knowledge about sustainable agriculture. For the private sector, such cooperation might offer an innovative approach that helped to meet financial and resource needs or to develop new markets. Another advantage of partnership arrangements was their ability to include the poor in value chains as producers, employees and consumers in ways that were both fair and sustainable.

51. Greater efforts were needed to strengthen public-private partnerships, particularly through the development of new technologies and the distribution of tools and knowledge to resource-poor farmers and other marginalized populations in development countries. Doing so would empower those in need and help to achieve the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals.

52. **Ms. Mucavi** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO) said that although the current meeting was taking place on World Food Day, there was little cause for celebration. According to the 2017 FAO report entitled "The State of Food and Agriculture", the number of chronically undernourished people in the world was estimated to have increased from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016, some 155 million children under 5 years of age suffered from stunted growth and wasting still affected 52 million children.

53. Conflict was a leading factor in increased hunger, often combined with droughts or floods. An estimated 489 million people, the vast majority of the world's hungry people, lived in countries affected by conflict. Most of them lived in rural areas heavily dependent on agriculture. While hunger was worse in conflict-affected areas, hunger could also trigger violence and instability, particularly in contexts characterized by persistent inequalities and fragile institutions.

54. The current theme of World Food Day was "Change the future of migration. Invest in food security and rural development". Migration could be a driver for sustainable development and its positive contribution should be recognized, supported and promoted. At the same time, food insecurity, the degradation of natural resources, political instability and economic stagnation in rural areas were forcing many people to leave their homes. Migration should be a choice not a last resort.

55. Evidence showed that investing in inclusive, sustainable and resilient agriculture and rural development could increase the incomes of poor family farmers and landless workers. Such investments were particularly effective in addressing the root causes of hunger, rural poverty, forced migration and conflict, and also in sustaining peace. A significant contribution could be made through the implementation of inclusive economic and social policies, such as promoting the responsible governance of tenure and improved access to land and water; supporting financial inclusion, financial literacy and management skills; enhancing the employability and entrepreneurial capacity of rural people; increasing the public financing of agricultural research focused on poor family farmers; investing in rural infrastructure and social safety nets; and empowering women.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.