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Chair: Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

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

1. **Mr. Mukherjee** (Chief, Policy and Analysis Branch of the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/72/303), said that the report examined ways in which national Governments, global institutions and other stakeholders were working together to reorganize their strategic thinking on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and specifically Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture. Goal 2 and its five targets were inherently linked to the other Goals.

2. Since the Secretary-General's report had been finalized, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had released its 2017 report, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, which included the most recent hunger estimates. Unfortunately the results were not encouraging. The FAO report indicated that, after a prolonged decline since 1990, global hunger had increased in 2016 and now affected 815 million people. The worrying increase appeared to have arisen as a result of conflict, natural disasters, the effects of the El Niño and La Niña phenomena, and associated factors such as crisis-level food insecurity, famine and famine-like conditions. Unless major steps were taken to transform the approach to food and nutrition security, Goal 2 was unlikely to be achieved.

3. The Secretary-General's report drew attention to several efforts to address those crises, such as the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises adopted by the Committee on World Food Security, and the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System. It also underscored the need for countries to promote multisectoral approaches to nutrition and food security by aligning social protection, nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agricultural interventions.

4. A second key message contained in the report was that nutrition challenges were becoming increasingly complex as multiple forms of malnutrition might coexist within the same country or household. The prevalence of overweight and obesity among children, which was increasing in most regions, was a cause of concern. The report therefore called for nutrition education among actors along the value chain and ways to increase

demand for diversified, nutrient-dense foods. The United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) provided an accessible, transparent and global mechanism for tracking progress in achieving target 2.2 of the Goals, and for ensuring mutual accountability.

5. A third key message in the report was that solutions for more sustainable and productive agriculture did already exist but had to be implemented and taken to the field. Agroecology was effective in producing strategies to accommodate the nutritional characteristics of food, its social aspects and the need to restore and maintain ecosystem functions. Over the previous year, awareness of the role of the agricultural sector in building resilience to climate change had grown. Approximately 90 per cent of nationally determined contributions to implement the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change now included agriculture. Building synergies in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and other agreements and agendas was essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. A fourth clear message from the report was that research and innovation must provide for change and a better understanding of ecosystem functions and services. Noting the availability of technologies and approaches, he said that strategic investments were required to promote the wide adoption of sustainable natural resources and landscape management across the range of productive systems and farming typologies.

7. A fifth key message was the fact that, in many cases, agriculture and food system policies did not differentiate between different types of farmers and, by focusing on production targets, tended to favour larger holdings. Efforts must be made for the development of suitable technologies and their transfer to small producers. Access to innovative financing and stronger land governance also constituted an important means of preventing soil degradation and strengthening indigenous food systems. The report highlighted the key role of the State in empowering smallholders to invest responsibly and in fostering an enabling environment for the promotion of food and nutrition security. Mention was also made of the need for policies and programmes on agriculture and natural resources to be gender-sensitive. The increasing importance of the fisheries and aquaculture sector for food and nutrition security was noted, and evidence was presented of many regional actions that were complementing global actions and supporting countries at the national level to promote food security and nutrition.

8. Lastly, the report drew attention to a number of positive steps taken by many Governments and concrete

ideas for combining such areas as social protection, nutrition, agriculture and environmental conservation. It highlighted the need to work across sectors and mobilize partnerships from different areas to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and sustainably feed a growing population by 2030.

9. **Mr. Cadena** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the statistics concerning access to dietary energy, stunting and malnutrition presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/303) were worrying. The current pace and scope of implementation was unlikely to promote the transformational change necessary to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 and its targets in many parts of the world.

10. As the eradication of hunger and malnutrition was linked to transformation in agriculture and food systems, and empowerment of rural people, the creation of more sustainable food systems must be at the centre of efforts to eradicate poverty and promote prosperity. However, all Member States, in particular the developing countries, faced challenges in comprehensively addressing the complex interlinkages among food security, nutrition, rural transformation and sustainable agriculture, as well as the linkages between Goal 2 and the other Goals. The Group therefore looked forward to tangible results from the implementation of national plans and programmes during the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025).

11. Progress on mobilizing means of implementation for Goal 2 and related provisions in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development remained insufficient and must be urgently addressed, particularly as investment in agriculture was more effective in reducing poverty than investment in non-agricultural sectors and therefore was an essential tool for breaking the vicious cycle of extreme poverty, undernourishment and malnutrition. A significant increase in the quantity and quality of investment in agriculture and rural areas, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, was required, and farmers' voices must be central to any strategy for increasing investment. Although some progress had been made in preventing distortions in world agricultural markets, it was essential to advance the negotiations on the Doha Development Round, including on domestic support, market access and export competition.

12. **Ms. Khyne** (Myanmar), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that poverty, hunger and malnutrition remained major obstacles to sustainable development. Noting the impact

of climate change, population growth and volatile food prices on food insecurity, she said that without accelerated efforts, some parts of the world might be struggling with poverty and malnutrition well beyond 2030.

13. The eradication of hunger and malnutrition was closely linked with agriculture, food systems and the empowerment of rural people. With some 40 per cent of the global population employed in the agricultural sector, rapid and sustained growth in the agricultural and rural economies was essential for breaking the vicious cycle of extreme poverty, undernourishment and malnutrition. Private and public sector investment in infrastructure, climate-smart technologies, enabling policy and institutional environments, social protection and public services for the rural poor were essential. More integrated policies and programmes, including multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships, would play an important part in promoting agriculture development, achieving food security and improving nutrition.

14. The ASEAN Community Vision 2025 underscored the crucial role of agricultural development, food security and nutrition for the sustained development of the region. ASEAN was implementing a number of initiatives to promote food and nutrition security, including the Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (2016–2025), which had already led to improvements in the harmonization of agricultural standards; the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security (2015–2020), which was intended to enhance cross-sectoral coordination to secure food supplies; and strategic plans of action for ASEAN cooperation on livestock, fisheries and crops for the period 2016–2020. Various guidelines had also been developed, including on food security and nutrition policy, and on soil and nutrition management. ASEAN had adopted a multisectoral framework on climate change and food security under which coordinated policies and strategies were being developed and implemented to address climate change in the agriculture and forestry sectors.

15. Nutrition was a powerful driver of sustainable development and an important factor for the success of the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite impressive economic growth, ASEAN was still burdened with cases of malnutrition. During the ASEAN multisectoral collaborative workshop on nutrition security held in March 2017, an ASEAN nutrition surveillance system, which included initiatives on assessment, capacity-

building and nutrition security advocacy, had been developed.

16. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that it was deeply concerning that the world was facing one of the largest food crises in 70 years. Of the 23 countries facing acute food insecurity, 18 were least developed countries with a combined population of around 72 million. The Group called on the international community, particularly development partners, to enhance the provision of financial and in-kind support to address the situation.

17. Sustainable Development Goal 2 underpinned many of the other Goals and deserved particular attention. Agriculture, which was the dominant sector in most least developed countries and the primary source of employment for the vast majority of the rural population in those countries, had direct linkages to the eradication of poverty and hunger, rural development, gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was a matter of concern that agricultural productivity in the least developed countries had remained constant from 2010 to 2014, and that only 8.3 per cent of total agricultural land in those countries was being irrigated. In recent decades the least developed countries had been disproportionately affected by climate change, and climate-induced migration was increasing. The reduction in productive land caused by desertification and land degradation was further undermining efforts to sustain food production. The majority of farmers in the least developed countries were smallholders, many of them women, who were highly vulnerable to natural disasters and price shocks.

18. Although the prevalence of undernourishment in the least developed countries had declined slightly and had stood at 22.3 per cent in 2015, some 40 per cent of children under 5 years of age were stunted. Nutrition must be given higher priority in national development if the Sustainable Development Goals were to be achieved.

19. Increasing the growth of agricultural output and productivity was key to boosting income in the least developed countries. Commodity diversification and value addition, including through the adoption of new technologies, would enable participation in regional and global value chains. The Group highlighted the need for adequate investment in physical infrastructure, scientific and technological development, agricultural research and extension services, and access to finance and technology. Support was required for the development of climate-resistant higher-yielding varieties of staple foods, capacity-building and

financing to adopt climate-smart practices and technologies. The empowerment of women, particularly rural women, was also critical to eradicating poverty and malnutrition.

20. The achievement of Goal 2, the overarching goal of eradicating poverty and the aim of enabling half of the least developed countries to graduate from that status by 2020, in accordance with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, would require a revitalized international partnership. Eradicating poverty and hunger, providing access to public health, education and other social services, addressing the impact of climate change, and building productive capacity and infrastructure in the least developed countries should remain at the centre of United Nations development cooperation. Investing in food security and agricultural development would strengthen efforts to prevent conflict and achieve peace.

21. **Ms. Naeem** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that food security and nutrition were issues of particular importance for small island developing States, given the link between their food systems and economies and their natural environments. The Alliance welcomed the reference in the Secretary-General's report ([A/72/303](#)) to the development of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States, which sought to improve nutrition levels and food security and foster the achievement of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) and the 2030 Agenda. All United Nations partners should support small island developing States for the full implementation of that much-needed initiative.

22. The nexus between food security, climate action and sustainable oceans was highly relevant for small island developing States. Changing temperatures, increasing levels of flooding or drought, and rising sea levels could contribute to reduced agricultural yields, and increasingly frequent natural disasters could damage production and infrastructure. Declining stocks of marine resources were having a detrimental effect on economic development, and efforts must be made to develop the sustainable use and management of oceans and seas.

23. Factors limiting the economic diversification of small island developing States included size, a limited resource base and distance from market centres. Many such States were now net food importing countries and subject to high and variable import costs and the volatility of global supplies. The reliance on imported

food and the consumption of processed foods had also had a negative impact of the health of citizens, with non-communicable diseases on the rise.

24. The Alliance was committed to tackling those challenges. The Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework would increase opportunities for knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and technology transfer. The use of baseline data was being expanded to create healthier and more sustainable food systems.

25. **Mr. Ten-Pow** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the devastation caused by the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean had served to further highlight the acute vulnerability of CARICOM members to climate-related disasters. With such events expected to increase in frequency and severity, the development of agriculture and the achievement of food security in the region would be difficult. Figures recently released by FAO showed that the absolute number of persons suffering from hunger in the Caribbean had increased, reversing decades of progress. At the same time, the rate of obesity in children under 5 years of age in the Caribbean was estimated to be almost 7 per cent.

26. CARICOM members looked forward to continued support from the international community in developing the resilience needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals relating to poverty reduction, food security and nutrition. International instruments, such as the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security containing the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security, had bolstered the Community's 2010 Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy and its 2011 Common Agriculture Policy. Together with the Samoa Pathway and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), those policies would constitute the overarching framework for action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 2.

27. Regional policies to address hunger and malnutrition were linked to agriculture production and food systems and their value chains. Small-scale farmers and artisanal fishers were regarded as critical agents for the development of agriculture and important in achieving food security and nutrition outcomes. More often than not, however, they were unable to maximize productivity because of the low levels of technology at their disposal. CARICOM members would therefore welcome assistance from international partners in modernizing the technologies used to strengthen food security and reduce rates of hunger and malnutrition in the region.

28. The Sustainable Development Goals could also not be achieved without the support of partners for initiatives such as debt swaps for climate adaptation and disaster mitigation actions, and easier access to concessionary financing. CARICOM supported the call by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development for increased investment in support of sustainable national development goals. Because of their recent upward reclassification, a number of CARICOM countries were now prevented from accessing the concessionary financing they needed to rebuild their countries. CARICOM members therefore called for a review of the criteria used for the classification to ensure that vulnerability to natural disasters and other risk factors and development gaps were taken into account when determining development categories. In addition, they called for the recommendations set out in the Paris Agreement, the Samoa Pathway and the Sendai Framework to be mainstreamed into all development plans.

29. **Mr. Jaime Calderón** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC remained committed to the continued implementation of the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025 (CELAC Plan), which contained recommendations and strategies, including on school feeding programmes, and was used as a means to ensure compliance with the 2030 Agenda. CELAC requested FAO to continue its cooperation with countries of the region.

30. Application of the Voluntary Guidelines for Agro-Environmental Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, developed by FAO, could help to protect the resources forming the basis for food security in the region. CELAC had accepted the FAO offer to use the platform on biodiversity, agriculture and food as a tool to promote the integration of conservation and biodiversity in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism.

31. Noting that increased investment in agriculture, including family farming, would have a positive impact on food and nutrition security in countries of the region, he said that CELAC reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of public policies aimed at promoting the development of family farming. Initiatives to encourage cooperation in food and nutrition security at the regional level would foster the implementation of the CELAC Plan and help to create the institutional framework necessary to build resilience in family farming. South-South and triangular cooperation also had a role to play as a complement to North-South cooperation and official development assistance (ODA)

in fostering the exchange of good practices and experience, and in increasing national capacities for food and nutrition security.

32. CELAC would continue to support actions aimed at addressing all forms of malnutrition, particularly in early childhood, including training activities. It would continue to promote a sustainable, inclusive and efficient food production system that provided for the participation of small-scale farmers and a reduction in food losses and waste. It recognized the challenges that extreme meteorological events posed to agriculture, food security and nutrition, and underscored the importance of the international community's support. CELAC renewed its request for financial and technical support from international partners to promote the achievement of the CELAC Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. In the Special Declaration on Food Security and Nutrition adopted at the fourth CELAC summit in 2016, members of CELAC had reiterated their commitment to promote inter-agency coordination in their respective countries for the implementation of the CELAC Plan.

33. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that, although enough food was produced to feed the global population, millions of the poor went hungry. Accelerated growth in the agricultural and rural economies was essential to break the vicious cycle of extreme poverty, undernourishment and malnutrition. It was also key to achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets.

34. His country had transitioned from food deficiency to self-sufficiency in a couple of decades to become a major exporter of farm produce and animal products and the world's largest producer of milk. Institutional efforts to raise the levels of technology used in agriculture had led to the growth of food-grain production and the development of world-class research and training institutions. However, a number of challenges persisted, such as improving agricultural productivity, introducing more sustainable farming practices, making inputs more affordable and improving food distribution systems.

35. His Government was taking several steps to double farmers' income by 2022, which included making use of a unique biometric identification system as well as banking services and mobile phone technologies. An electronic trading platform, eNAM, had also been launched to improve the linkage between farmers and markets, and a scheme had recently been announced to bring value addition to agricultural produce. Cooperatives had been asked to venture into new business areas to boost the rural economy, soil health cards were being provided to all farmers, and

significant investment was being made to improve irrigation coverage.

36. Efforts to end hunger and malnutrition must be accelerated. In line with its commitment to South-South cooperation, India remained committed to sharing its technical assistance with other developing countries.

37. **Mr. Zhang** Zepeng (China) said that, as a result of factors including the impact of climate change and the reduction in arable land, the global food security situation appeared to be bleak. The international community must therefore intensify its cooperation through joint efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 2.

38. Efforts should be made to promote the modernization of agriculture. Countries should attach high priority to agriculture and food production, increase their inputs to agriculture, build agricultural infrastructure, promote the development of green agriculture and build capacity for sustainable agricultural development. Action must also be taken to increase food utilization, reduce waste and losses, and promote the development of science and technology in agriculture. The international community should work to establish a fair, reasonable, sustainable and stable order of agricultural trade, to minimize trade protectionism and to promote trade facilitation. The developed countries must effectively honour their commitments to developing countries. His Government attached great importance to agricultural development. Food production in China had been increasing, including as a result of agricultural modernization, and the living standards of farmers were steadily improving.

39. His country actively participated in international cooperation efforts to eradicate hunger and reduce poverty. More than 100 countries and regions had benefited from its assistance, including through agricultural technology demonstration centres, technical training and the provision of inputs. China would continue its efforts through the "One Belt One Road" initiative and South-South cooperation to enhance the agricultural productivity of other developing countries.

40. **Ms. Goh** (Singapore) said that the resilient supply of safe and nutritious food at affordable prices was a complex sustainable development issue and a global challenge, particularly given the decline in agricultural productivity owing to a lack of investment, the shrinking agricultural workforce and the impact of climate change. With innovation and technology, strong government support and effective policies, such challenges could be overcome and the world free of hunger envisioned by the 2030 Agenda could be achieved.

41. Although Singapore imported over 90 per cent of its food supply and was therefore vulnerable to food supply and price fluctuations and food safety incidents overseas, it had been ranked the most food secure country in Asia in 2016 and third on the Global Food Security Index. It had developed three core strategies to address food security in a holistic manner: import source diversification, internationalization and local production. The small agricultural sector in Singapore played an important role in food security, and the Government had been working closely with various stakeholders to transform the local agricultural sector.

42. Technology and innovation were key enablers of agricultural transformation and productivity. Farms in her country were growing more with less by using indoor vertical production systems and smart technologies to reduce their reliance on labour and their vulnerability to environmental risks. As a highly urbanized State, Singapore was promoting the efficient and innovative use of space for urban food solutions and could act as a living laboratory for urban farming solutions and progressive farming technologies. Singapore was committed to attracting and training a new generation of young people as agrotechnologists to transform the agricultural sector of the future.

43. **Mr. Schlosser** (Israel) said that, despite the international community's commitment to end hunger and eradicate poverty, one in every eight people in the world did not know where their next meal would come from. The development of sustainable agriculture, fresh water supply systems and the empowerment of smallholder farmers were some of the essential steps towards ending hunger and achieving food and nutrition security. Those steps would be possible with joint efforts, enhanced coordination and effective cooperation among all stakeholders.

44. Climate change posed a threat to the very existence of small island States. However, training, the acquisition of vital knowledge and the skilful use of equipment could make a difference to the challenges that countries faced in developing strong and sustainable agricultural infrastructure. Israel had its own experience in that regard. Over the last six decades, Israel had transformed its food and water system from a small-scale, subsistence agriculture system characterized by food and water insecurity into a global powerhouse of agriculture technology and innovation. Israel had shared its expertise and technology in farming, climate change mitigation, disaster preparedness, water management and desalination with other countries, and its drip irrigation system was now used across the world. The Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation, which trained

up to 2,000 professionals from 100 countries every year, had adopted a "train the trainers" approach in its capacity-building activities to help participants become agents of change in their own countries.

45. **Mr. Alimov** (Russian Federation) said that coordinated efforts were required to address the worsening global food security situation. FAO, the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Health Organization had a key role to play, alongside Member States, in developing and implementing strategies to ensure the provision of necessary food products to all those in need.

46. While his delegation agreed with the conclusions in the Secretary-General's report ([A/72/303](#)), the report did not give sufficient attention to food safety and balanced diets, which were important elements of Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 3. The Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises provided a legal and institutional basis for action in that area. Efforts should be made for the effective implementation of initiatives, such as the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) and the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition for Small Island Developing States, so that they yielded tangible results.

47. Food safety and high-quality food products were an ongoing priority for the Russian Federation, which had undertaken various initiatives in that area. For example, his country had hosted an international conference on food safety and risk analysis, which was the first part of a three-year programme with FAO to provide countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia with assistance in addressing antimicrobial resistance, and, in that context, was planning to host an FAO antimicrobial resistance reference centre. Similarly, Russia would host an FAO regional conference in May 2018 on manufacturing safety, at which food security issues would be discussed, in particular the effect of climate change on agriculture; it was providing financial contributions to assess and strengthen laboratory services in five countries; and it was offering comprehensive support to the Agricultural Market Information System of the Group of 20 and to the Global Soil Partnership. Home to 70 per cent of the world's boreal forests, from which hundreds of food resources and medicines were sourced, the Russian Federation also placed great emphasis on sustainable forestry management.

48. His country recognized the importance of introducing new agricultural technologies and had

formulated an agriculture development programme for the period 2017–2025. It had significantly increased the production of meat over the last 10 years and exported a number of food products. The Russian Federation also contributed more than \$30 million per year in food assistance through the World Food Programme.

49. **Ms. Ponce** (Philippines) said that World Food Day, celebrated on 16 October, highlighted the unified global struggle against hunger and malnutrition. Ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture were not only imperative to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, but were key to the very future of people.

50. Noting from the Secretary-General's report (A/72/303) that the world was not on track to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030, she said that the issue should be viewed not simply in terms of food supply, but through the lens of agricultural productivity and the effects of climate change. Over the previous decade, climate change had resulted in more extreme and frequent weather events with alarming impacts on agriculture and food security.

51. As a country severely affected by climate change, the Philippines had designed a climate resilient agriculture programme that closely monitored risks and hazards for farmers and fishers. It was also designing food storage facilities that could withstand typhoons for use in vulnerable areas. A number of other interventions had been developed to address climate change, including universal crop insurance coverage, solar powered irrigation technology, tree crop farming, access to financing and the repopulation of lakes and rivers. The Philippine Development Plan sought to expand economic opportunities for those in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors.

52. Stronger international cooperation was needed to support country-led food security strategies to eliminate chronic hunger and food insecurity and to prevent future food security crises. Efforts must also be made to promote technology transfer and capacity-building.

53. **Ms. Ratnasari** (Indonesia) said that climate change, a lack of capacity and infrastructure, limited access to innovation and technology, and supply chain mismanagement were all factors making the eradication of hunger and malnutrition by 2030 increasingly challenging. For the world to be on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, joint efforts must be stepped up and special attention accorded to countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Leadership was also required to translate political commitments into

policies and actions, in a spirit of global partnership and solidarity.

54. Increased efforts were needed to promote and facilitate investment in rural agribusiness. Research and development in agriculture should be intensified to improve productivity, efficiency and competitiveness, and coordinated efforts should be strengthened for policy coherence. Indonesia had taken a number of steps in that regard, including streamlining investment procedures, restructuring the procurement system for agricultural inputs and revitalizing suboptimal agricultural lands. It had devised a planting calendar policy for farmers to reduce the risk of crop failures and was modernizing agriculture through education, improved water management and research and development. It was also providing non-cash food subsidies for the poor and encouraging households to use their home yards and gardens to produce nutritious food. As a result of such measures, the grain yield in 2016 had been the highest over the previous decade and rice exports had increased.

55. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that Sustainable Development Goal 2 set out clear benchmarks concerning food security, which included a focus on the very young, market access for small-scale farmers, access to land and technology facilitation. The information in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/303) regarding hunger and malnutrition worldwide was therefore deeply concerning.

56. Following its severe drought between 2012 and 2015, Namibia had developed a Zero Hunger Road Map that defined strategic actions to achieve a "Namibia without hunger" over the next five years in line with the principles of the 2030 Agenda. Budget allocations to overcome food and nutrition security were clearly laid out in the current national development plan, and the Government had also established the Directorate of Disaster Risk Management and a food bank under the supervision of the Deputy Prime Minister. Other measures included a programme to promote exclusive breastfeeding and a school feeding programme for children from vulnerable homes. Fresh produce business hubs that provided a marketing and trading platform for small-scale producers had also been set up. Efforts were being made to address the critical shortage of skilled labour in the agricultural sector through the provision of accredited programmes in agriculture, and extension services to smallholder farmers had been intensified.

57. The efforts of Namibia to address food insecurity had been negatively affected by the global economic situation, and exacerbated by poor diet, inadequate care practices and limited access to clean water and

sanitation. Training programmes, including on food fortification, were being sought, and the country called on its partners to help it establish strong and accountable institutions and policies so that there would be zero deaths due to a lack of food. A second national land conference would be convened in 2018 to address the colonial legacy of unequal access to land.

58. **Mr. Tupouniua** (Tonga) said that food security was an important priority for Tonga. However, as a small island developing State, Tonga was primarily a net food importer that was economically vulnerable to the excessive price volatility of food imports and environmentally vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. It therefore supported the call in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/303) for more coordinated efforts to meet the immediate needs of people affected by major food crises.

59. Initiatives under way in Tonga included the Agriculture Sector Plan 2016–2020, which sought to promote climate resilient and smart farming systems in the country and was supported by a variety of international partners. The AgroMet project, which was being implemented in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Climate Center, was changing the way climate and agricultural knowledge were linked and would increase economic resilience and enhance food security. Tonga recognized the importance of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Island Developing States and looked forward to the enhancement of United Nations system-wide coherence for agricultural development, food security and nutrition in the context of climate change.

60. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica) said that his Government was committed to promoting and addressing agriculture development, food security and nutrition, and was adopting a number of measures to that end. The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and subsequent action plan had been aligned to Sustainable Development Goal 2 and the contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product (GDP) in Jamaica had increased in 2016 as a result of the intensification of farmer support programmes.

61. As a small island developing State, Jamaica was unable to produce sufficient quantities of food to support its population. Various factors continued to impact national agriculture development, food security and nutrition, including extreme weather events, the limited availability of technology and agricultural land, low levels of research and development and the high cost of capital. Measures were needed to address hunger and poverty simultaneously and to increase interventions in rural areas, where the majority of the

extreme poor lived. As a net food importing developing country, Jamaica was particularly vulnerable to external economic shocks and climate change, and was mindful of the need to enhance the resilience of local food systems.

62. New food consumption patterns had increased the prevalence of obesity and non-communicable chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, which had become a key national public health problem. Although agriculture played a direct role in eradicating hunger and extreme poverty, it was also essential for the achievement of many other Sustainable Development Goals and targets. His Government was taking a number of steps so that all people in Jamaica had access to a constant and nutritious supply of food, including by encouraging the production of food in Jamaica, encouraging investment and increasing the use of technology in agriculture, and promoting the sustainable use of agricultural land.

63. **Mr. Thammavongsa** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the effective implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2 would contribute to the achievement of other Goals and was crucial, in particular, for countries in special situations.

64. Agriculture and rural development were of great importance in achieving food security and better nutrition for the people of his country. His Government, which was participating actively in ASEAN initiatives to promote food security in the region, had established a national committee for nutrition in 2009 to better coordinate action on tackling poverty and hunger in the country. The National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016–2020 had been adopted to succeed the previous strategy. The measures they contained included human resources development, improving nutrition information and promoting investment in nutrition interventions. Revitalized and enhanced partnerships were important for mobilizing sufficient resources to support the implementation of such initiatives.

65. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and for gathering relevant information on food security, had steadily been improved. The eighth five-year national socioeconomic development plan for the period 2016–2020 had served as a means of integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national planning. His Government remained committed to working closely with development partners and other stakeholders to eradicate poverty and hunger by promoting sustainable agriculture development.

66. **Mr. Castro Cordoba** (Costa Rica) said that food security was an issue that had remained unresolved since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. Specific actions must be taken by the international community for a people-centred response to the issue. The importance of small-scale producers must be taken into account in identifying strategies and sustainable solutions. Family farmers, in particular, had a key role to play in achieving global food security, offering women and young people decent work, protecting the natural environment, promoting sustainable production and consumption, and eradicating poverty and malnutrition.

67. If family farmers, who produced between 70 and 80 per cent of the world's food, were to realize their potential, family farming had to become more productive and sustainable. New partnerships must be developed, including at the national, regional and international levels, to meet the social, economic and environmental needs of family farmers. Building on the success of the International Year of Family Farming in 2014, he said that Costa Rica, on behalf of a group of sponsor countries, was proud to propose the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028. Such a step would bring about lasting results in implementing the 2030 Agenda and in ensuring that no one was left behind, and he trusted that Member States would support it.

68. **Mr. Hikmatov** (Tajikistan) said that, although progress had been made since 2000 in combating hunger and malnutrition, one in every eight people remained hungry worldwide. A lack of food not only affected health but slowed progress in many areas of development. It was timely to ask why hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition were widespread when enough food was being produced to feed the world's population. As the latter was projected to increase, more efforts were urgently required to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

69. As a lower-middle income country, Tajikistan faced many challenges, including a food deficit and malnutrition; approximately 97 per cent of country's agricultural land had been affected by drought and erosion. His Government, which attached priority to food security and access to quality nutrition, had joined the Global Scaling Up Nutrition Movement in 2013, and a national multisectoral strategy and action plan for nutrition and physical activity for the period 2015–2024 had been launched.

70. Development of the agricultural sector was essential for the achievement of Sustainable

Development Goal 2, but the per capita share of agricultural land in Tajikistan was falling. Steps had to be taken to promote the effective use of land, sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, and the use of technology to increase productivity. He highlighted the importance of investment, enhanced international cooperation, research and development and an increase in ODA to enhance capacity for agricultural productivity in developing countries.

71. **Ms. Bayedikissa Kargougou** (Burkina Faso) said that, although the number of people suffering from hunger in the world had decreased in recent decades, the statistics remained worrying. Extreme climate change events, frequent natural disasters, political instability and conflict were threats to food security, which was exacerbated by commodity price instability, rising food and energy prices and unemployment.

72. The dedication of Sustainable Development Goal 2 to agriculture, food security and nutrition demonstrated the international community's commitment to combat hunger and malnutrition. However, political commitment, partnership, sufficient finance and an appropriate range of measures were required to achieve that Goal. Burkina Faso had joined a number of relevant international frameworks, including the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, the Declaration of the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, and the body of international law concerning food security, nutrition and human rights.

73. Her country was facing challenging agroecological conditions as a result of the deteriorating climate and population growth. Burkina Faso was heavily dependent on the land for its economic and social development, but almost half of its territory had been affected by land degradation. Recognizing the importance of policies and investments linking agriculture, health and nutrition, her Government had adopted a national policy for food security and nutrition in 2013 aimed at achieving food security and sustainable nutrition by 2025. Action over the previous five years, including in improving management of water resources for agriculture, preventing and managing food crises, and promoting the rural economy, had led to an average increase of 2.3 per cent in grain production and of 3.2 per cent in GDP.

74. **Mr. Abebe** (Ethiopia) said that a comprehensive and coordinated response from the international community was required to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 by 2030. The development and transfer of new technologies were imperative to make agriculture more sustainable and climate-friendly, particularly given the increase in the number of hungry

people in 2016 and the continuing threat of climate change and conflict to food security in many parts of the world.

75. In Ethiopia, an integrated development strategy placed agricultural production and productivity at its centre, while the Government was allocating more than 10 per cent of the national budget to agriculture. Agricultural extension programmes had been expanded through an integrated development programme that included education, health and infrastructure, with a particular focus on smallholder farmers. Agricultural development agencies had been working closely with populations to introduce innovative practices. As a result, crop productivity and food self-sufficiency had been increased. Achieving household food security remained one of the Government's top development priorities. The productive safety net programme, which provided food and cash transfers to households suffering from chronic food insecurity, was saving lives and enabling the most vulnerable communities, including in drought-prone areas, to build assets.

76. The agricultural sector was critical to achieve food security and structural transformation in the majority of developing countries, but at risk because of the adverse effects of climate change. His Government was continuing to carry out disaster risk reduction measures in collaboration with development partners. Climate change must remain an urgent priority for the international community and action must be taken to implement the Paris Agreement.

77. **Mr. Te** (Cambodia) said that improving food security and nutrition with a view to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 was an important priority for his Government. The issue had been addressed in a number of policies and plans, including the National Strategic Development Plan 2014–2018 and a national strategy for food security and nutrition for the period 2014–2018, which had had a positive impact on millions of people in the country.

78. With remarkable economic growth of 7.6 per cent over the previous two decades, the poverty rate in Cambodia had fallen from 47.8 per cent in 2007 to 13.5 per cent in 2014, consumption inequity had been reduced substantially and food access and food consumption had been improved. Despite the progress made, however, a wide range of constraints affecting household food security needed to be addressed, including low agricultural productivity and diversification, the sustainable use of resources and employment opportunities. Efforts were also required to improve the capacities of vulnerable groups by scaling up social safety nets and disaster preparedness and

mitigation mechanisms, including climate change adaptation.

79. Agriculture, food security and nutrition were closely linked to climate change. Cambodia was regularly ranked among the 10 most vulnerable countries globally to climate change and extreme weather events, and its agricultural sector could be severely affected. The long-term vision of Cambodia was to move towards a more value added, productive and competitive agricultural sector, through the implementation of various ASEAN initiatives and the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Zero Hunger Challenge. Dedicated investment in such areas as agriculture, social protection, disaster risk reduction and education was required. Public private partnerships for agricultural development would facilitate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2. He called on industrialized and developed countries to provide the least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries and small island developing States with more financial and technical support for agricultural modernization and climate change adaptation.

80. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) said that, although Mali had managed to reduce considerably the number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition, that achievement should not disguise the fact that agricultural production remained dependent on climate and faced other challenges, including land and water resources management, access to credit and insufficient financing. Agriculture was the mainstay of the Malian economy and provided more than 30 per cent of GDP. As a result of steps taken to introduce mechanized agriculture and focus more on product processing, cereal production had grown by an average of 8 per cent per year between 2012 and 2017 and cotton production had increased by 43 per cent between 2012 and 2016, making Mali one of the main producers of those crops in Africa.

81. In order to address agricultural development challenges, Mali had enacted legislation covering all economic activities in the agricultural sector. A national agricultural development policy had been developed and a committee headed by the President was overseeing its implementation. In line with its commitment under the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, the Government had decided to allocate 15 per cent of the national budget to agriculture for the fourth consecutive year. Considerable efforts had also been made to increase agricultural production, including through the distribution of 1,000 tractors to farmers, the implementation of measures to secure land tenure and the provision of subsidies. A national food security and

nutrition policy had also been launched. His Government remained committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 and called for further joint efforts of all development actors to achieve zero hunger.

82. **Ms. Naowanondha** (Thailand) said that a number of global challenges, such as climate change and drought, were threatening global agriculture, food security and nutrition, which were essential to expedite the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, access to food and global agricultural markets was being undermined by distortions in the multilateral trade system.

83. The utilization of technology would promote sustainable agriculture and aquaculture and improve the productive and adaptive capacities of farmers. The sustainable use of soil and water resources was key to a sustainable food supply. Thailand attached high importance to soil development and management and to eco-friendly fishing practices, and supported the sustainable use of ocean resources under the blue economy initiative. In the promotion of good nutrition and access to food, particular attention should be given to vulnerable groups. As a result of continued efforts in that regard, the number of undernourished persons in Thailand had declined from 34.6 per cent in 1992 to 7.4 per cent over the period 2014–2016. Thailand had also joined the Zero Hunger Challenge.

84. A free and fair multilateral trade system was essential for equitable market access for agricultural products from developing countries. Unfair trade measures that were incompatible with international rules and the principles of the World Trade Organization hindered the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. One such example was harmful fisheries subsidies, which should be eliminated.

85. International cooperation must be further strengthened to promote technology transfer and capacity-building in order to achieve sustainable agriculture, food security and good nutrition. Thailand supported South-South and triangular cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation. Accordingly, its agricultural best practices and sufficiency economy philosophy were being shared with Asian-Pacific and African countries.

86. **Mr. Bilan** (Ukraine) said that his country, which would be marking the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holodomor at the end of November, was acutely aware of the high price of hunger. It welcomed the United Nations initiatives aimed at halving global hunger, which could affect all other Sustainable

Development Goals, and proposed the holding of a multilateral event on food insecurity within the framework of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly with the participation of the world's leading grain exporters and relevant United Nations agencies.

87. Despite difficult conditions, Ukraine remained among the strongest players in the international food market, with over half of its grain harvest for 2017 intended for export. Having signed the Association Agreement with the European Union, Ukraine was working on harmonizing its national legislation, including with respect to technical regulation and food quality and safety. The State agrarian policy was aimed at reforming core branches of agriculture, creating favourable conditions for implementing financial instruments and attracting investment. Cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies remained an important element of the national food strategy, and his country was grateful to the international community for its assistance. As one of the top 10 global exporters of grain, Ukraine stood ready to continue working with the international community to resolve the challenge of global hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

88. **Mr. Oniane Nguema** (Gabon) said that, after falling for a number of years, the number of undernourished people in the world had risen sharply, including as a result of conflict and climate change. Sustained political commitment was essential to combat hunger and other forms of malnutrition; agriculture development, food security and nutrition should be placed at the forefront of national policies.

89. Gabon continued to increase its activities to combat hunger, poverty and insecurity. The national agricultural strategy was based on four priority areas: the promotion of peri-urban agriculture; the transition to agriculture in rural areas; the establishment of a sustainable export industry that would create jobs; and training, research and development. A number of initiatives were being implemented to support the agricultural strategy, including an agriculture development and investment project and an agricultural programme for food security and growth. Results had been achieved with respect to job creation, the redistribution of wealth and diversification of the drivers of economic growth. The Gabonese Initiative for Achieving Agricultural Outcomes with Engaged Citizenry was another important agricultural programme to support small-scale farmers. In three years, 453 cooperatives had been established across the country under the programme, and the first full crop cycle had yielded some 12,000 tonnes of cassava tubers. To anticipate difficulties that might affect the implementation of the programme, the Government had

recently established a national fund for agricultural development, which included crop insurance to protect the income of farmers.

90. **Ms. Hlaing** (Myanmar) said that efforts to promote sustainable food production systems and more resilient agricultural practices were required to address hunger and malnutrition, levels of which were increasing around the world. The agricultural sector, which contributed around one third of GDP, was one of the driving forces for poverty eradication, rural development and food security in Myanmar. The Government had embarked on a comprehensive reform of the agricultural sector and rural development with a view to an inclusive, competitive and sustainable agricultural system. The country's agricultural development strategy, which would enhance cooperation between the public and private sectors and farmers, had been developed with assistance from international organizations. Policies had also been developed to manage, protect and preserve aquaculture, given its enormous potential for economic growth. The Government had launched a national initiative for nutrition earlier in the year, and significant results on nutrition had already been achieved in cooperation with relevant partners, including United Nations funds and programmes.

91. Rural development was a key priority for her Government, which had established a rural development strategic framework. A number of strategies and plans were being implemented to meet the basic requirements of rural people, including an electrification plan that aimed to achieve 100 per cent electrification in the country by 2030.

92. Noting the impact of climate change and extreme weather events on livelihoods and food security, she said that Myanmar was one of the countries most vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly cyclones, floods and landslides. Financial, technological and capacity-building assistance should be given to assist the least developed countries in their efforts to combat climate change and achieve sustainable development.

93. **Mr. Dzonzi** (Malawi) said that immediate and steadfast action was required so that that climate change and other economic shocks did not derail the development plans of developing and vulnerable countries.

94. Unless the implementation of the key parameters driving sustainable development was accelerated, the number of people around the world affected by water scarcity and hunger would increase. Developed countries must therefore fulfil their ODA commitments, and developing countries and countries in special

situations should be given increased access to technological innovation. Particular attention should also be given to gender equality, women's empowerment and economic inclusion.

95. Hunger could not be addressed in isolation from poverty. Agricultural products were key for renewable energy, water sustainability and health, which were all essential elements for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

96. His Government was continuing to restructure the agricultural sector in Malawi. Particular emphasis was being given to irrigation agriculture to enable production under unfavourable weather conditions, and small-scale irrigation projects covering the majority of smallholder farmers in the country were being developed. A new institution, the Greenbelt Authority, was focusing on large-scale irrigation projects in partnership with the private sector. The Farm Input Subsidy Programme, which aimed to provide rural smallholder farmers with non-traditional forms of credit and access to farm inputs, was also being implemented.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.