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Chairperson: Mr. Lundberg (Vice-Chairperson). (Finland)

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In the absence of Ms. Ochir (Mongolia), Mr. Lundberg (Finland), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 26: Agriculture development and food security (A/65/73-E/2010/51, A/65/253 and A/65/486)

1. **Mr. O'Connor** (Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the Secretary-General's report on agriculture development and food security (A/65/253), said that while there had been a decrease in the number of hungry or undernourished people worldwide, there were still 100 million more people suffering from hunger than a decade earlier. The proportion of such people had fallen from its 1990 level of 20 per cent, but the world remained less than half way towards the target of halving that proportion by 2015, under Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2. Notwithstanding a downward trend in global grain prices in the early half of 2010, food price volatility was a continuing concern. Factors likely to maintain upward pressure on food prices were increased global demand from population growth; continued growth in demand for biofuels; and yield declines for major crops due to climate change. Factors expected to cause higher price volatility in the coming decade included repeated supply disruptions from extreme weather events; thin international grain markets and low buffer stocks; and financial speculation in commodity markets. Moreover, as confidence had waned in the ability of the global trade system to ensure security of supply in times of need, there had been a growth in investments to boost domestic agricultural production in some countries; there was, however, a danger that such investments could jeopardize and not enhance local food security.

3. Referring to the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security, set out in paragraph 39 of the report, he said that international efforts to implement those Principles had crystallized in the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, established to foster and support investment and currently in need of replenishment; the next funding round, in November 2010, would offer an opportunity to accelerate progress in donor delivery against pledges. To advance implementation of the Rome Principles, the Committee on World Food Security of

the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was being revitalized, to make it a more inclusive international platform. The Committee had recently established a High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, which would provide an independent platform to synthesize research and expertise in support of global policymaking. The Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action of the Committee's High-level Task Force, based on six months of multi-stakeholder consultations, reflected the outcome of the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, including the Rome Principles.

4. A further significant development was the increased importance given to nutrition, as called for in the fifth Rome Principle. He referred in that connection to the policy brief entitled "Scaling-up Nutrition: A Framework for Action", which had been launched during the recent High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs. It was based on findings concerning the lifelong repercussions of proper maternal and child nutrition and the impact on the nutrition of vulnerable individuals and communities of incorporating low-cost measures into appropriate programmes.

5. At the international level, it was important to ensure that the multiple initiatives under way were mutually reinforcing, supported country-driven strategies and investment plans, and generated concrete results on the ground. At the national level, efforts were needed to make more investments in agricultural research and extension and rural infrastructure; to ensure the timely availability of affordable inputs to support smallholder agriculture; to prioritize undernutrition as a development problem in national development plans; and to promote the empowerment of rural women as critical agents for enhancing agriculture development and food security.

6. **Mr. Escalona Ojeda** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that food had become part of the futures market; in order to combat food price volatility, it was necessary to control speculation on food prices. Transgenic food production was also a concern, linked to intellectual property rights in such production. He reminded the Committee of the value of small- and medium-scale farm production, which had the advantage of proximity to consumers and needed to be protected against monopolies, which were detrimental to the interests of the vast majority of people.

7. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

8. **Mr. Charlier** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that it was unacceptable that close to 1 billion people remained hungry or undernourished in the world. The renewed collective efforts called for by the High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs must therefore build on the strong and coordinated international response to the recent food crisis. Increasing resilience and preventing crises were crucial to those efforts.

9. The European Union, for its part, had initiated a new food security strategy at the beginning of 2010 to complement its €1 billion food facility launched in 2008; the strategy targeted smallholder farmers, particularly women, and vulnerable groups in countries lagging most behind in achieving the MDGs. The European Union was also seeking to more effectively link relief, rehabilitation and development and to promote off-farm opportunities in order to improve the coherence between longer-term assistance and humanitarian food support. There remained a need to consider policy options that would address extreme price volatility and the associated risks.

10. Public resources could be significantly complemented by foreign and domestic private investments in the agricultural sectors of developing countries; however, without clear policies, regulations and commitment, such investments could jeopardize land rights and small-scale agricultural production as well as exacerbate negative environmental and social impacts. The European Union therefore welcomed the development of FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and Other Natural Resources and supported the ongoing elaboration by the World Bank and others of principles for responsible agricultural investment that respected rights, livelihoods and resources. Moreover, in view of the importance of open trade flows and efficient markets for integrating developing countries into the global economy, promoting economic growth and food security, the European Union would continue to push for the conclusion of the Doha Development Round.

11. Environmentally, socially and economically sustainable agricultural development could also contribute significantly to climate change adaptation and mitigation, in addition to improving food security, for which, moreover, effective governance and coordination, at national, regional and international levels, remained key priorities. The European Union remained committed to supporting fully the international community's efforts to meet all those challenges.

12. **Mr. Sharma** (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the efforts of those countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, had been undermined by the current economic, financial and energy crises, together with the impacts of climate change. Owing to their limited availability of capital and new technologies, agricultural productivity in the least developed countries remained very low, while their structural weaknesses had posed serious challenges to their agricultural development and food security. Furthermore, the inadequacy of their domestic supply had been reflected in an increase in their food import bill. Food security was thus vitally important to those countries, as they were the least able to respond to increased hunger and poverty.

13. The least developed countries called for physical, social and economic access by all people, particularly women and children, to sufficient, safe and nutritious food; appropriate national and global arrangements in support of agricultural development, food security and poverty eradication, notably through reforms of the FAO Committee on World Food Security and its projected High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition; the use of modern, scientific tools and technology to raise agricultural productivity, without undermining time-tested indigenous knowledge and practices; reversal of the decline of official development assistance (ODA) in the agricultural sector, particularly through early implementation of the commitments made at the Group of Eight (G-8) Summit held in L'Aquila in 2009; increased attention to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the sustainable development of water, land and other natural resources, including the conservation of biodiversity, notably at the forthcoming sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the early conclusion of the Doha Round and the

resultant creation of an undistorted, non-discriminatory equitable market; the transfer and use of appropriate, affordable and sustainable agricultural technology and supportive international trade rules; enhanced short-, medium- and long-term investment in sustainable agricultural and rural development; and, lastly, improved agricultural productivity in the least developed countries, together with an enhanced level of global partnership in agricultural development and food security to ensure universal enjoyment of the right to food.

14. **Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which aligned itself with the statement made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the global food crisis, though seemingly over, continued to punish silently yet fatally the victims of food insecurity. While world prices of food commodities had declined since the crisis, domestic food prices and price volatility had remained high, resulting in food insecurity for the poor. The global food and agriculture economy remained weak, and the ability of many Governments and international bodies to address the food insecurity of the poor was being jeopardized by the inadequacy of the current system and institutions.

15. The impact of food insecurity on Goal 1 of the MDGs was obvious; however, its impact on other Goals, such as education, child mortality, maternal health and livelihoods, must not be underestimated. Concrete action to address the root causes of food insecurity was therefore needed urgently. The basic challenge of food security was to find ways to increase the supply of food and improve access to it quickly and in a sustainable manner. That required a comprehensive approach to strengthen and revitalize the agricultural sector, particularly in developing countries, and firm political commitments to adopt long-term solutions involving all stakeholders.

16. It was vital to accelerate investment in agricultural research, development and infrastructure, and to enable the transfer of technology that could address the impact of climate change on food security. That investment should primarily be directed at upgrading the productive capacity of developing countries; public-private partnerships could play an important role in that regard. All available global resources, both financial and technical, must therefore be mobilized to build the necessary agricultural infrastructure. It was also important to improve

information systems on food production, consumption, price movements and reserves, so as to establish a well-managed early warning system and enable quick responses to conflicts and natural disasters.

17. International trade rules needed to be supportive of agricultural development in developing countries. Greater efforts were therefore needed in order for the Doha Round to resume.

18. ASEAN continued to intensify its efforts to address the interconnected challenges of food insecurity, malnutrition, poor health care, adverse and unfair agricultural market conditions, weak infrastructure and environmental degradation. Its member States had implemented numerous joint projects in the food, agricultural and forestry sectors and were working to strengthen cooperation to ensure food security through sustainable food production, better post-harvest practices and supportive marketing and trading arrangements in their region. ASEAN leaders had adopted a number of initiatives in that regard, including the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework, the Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security in the ASEAN Region and the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve.

19. **Mr. Mwanyula** (Malawi), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, with only five years remaining until the deadline for achieving the MDGs, food security remained a major challenge in Africa. Indeed, food security there appeared to have deteriorated over the past 50 years compared with other regions of the world.

20. Africa was currently the recipient of 25 per cent of all food aid in the world and at least 212 million people in Africa had been undernourished in 2009, compared with 44 million in 1996. Low-fertility soils, environmental degradation, limited access to relevant technology and poor infrastructure continued to impede progress in developing the agricultural sector in Africa. Smallholder farmers were the most affected by those obstacles and they lacked sufficient funds to access farm inputs. Unless the trend of stagnation in food production levels was reversed, Africa would not be able to feed its population.

21. The African Union had put in place several agricultural development initiatives within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, under

which African Governments had committed to increase public investment in agriculture to 10 per cent of their national budgets per year and to increase agricultural productivity by at least 6 per cent per year. Progress towards those goals had been made in several countries.

22. Africa had been affected disproportionately by the negative effects of climate change and it lacked the resources to address them. It therefore depended on financial assistance and the transfer of technology. In 2009, African Heads of State had assigned the African Union Commission and NEPAD the task of developing an agriculture-based climate change mitigation framework. The Heads of State had also agreed to establish an inter-ministerial mechanism whereby ministers of agriculture, the environment and water resources would work together to address the climate change agenda.

23. While aid to Africa had increased over the years, aid in the areas of agriculture and food security had actually decreased. Currently, of the total aid extended to Africa, only 2 per cent was allocated to those areas. Commitments to increase ODA must therefore be fulfilled. In addition, unconditional financial and technical assistance, including technology transfer, should be provided swiftly to support the agricultural sector.

24. Lastly, the Group called on all parties in the Doha Round to compromise in order to resolve the issue of protectionist measures, particularly agricultural subsidies in developed countries, which hampered the agricultural development efforts of developing nations.

25. **Mr. Ould Cheikh** (Mauritania), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that many international reports warned that a new wave of global food crises would be triggered by climate change. The international community should prepare to respond to that eventuality. Most Arab countries had arid and semi-arid climates and therefore faced severe constraints in agricultural development, in addition to intensifying drought and severe water scarcity. The global financial and food crises were a warning to the Arab world of the need for urgent measures to achieve food security, such as the development of local agriculture, agricultural and environmental research, knowledge- and capacity-building and the establishment of a regional partnership for food security and agricultural development. Qatar would

host an international summit on food security in the Arab world in October 2011.

26. Africa had suffered most from climate change and was home to 15 countries where the hunger rate exceeded 35 per cent of the population. Until the global economic crisis receded and food prices declined, that continent in particular would face serious difficulties in halving hunger by 2015. The shortage of food had led many African countries to rely on food aid, which fuelled a vicious cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

27. In February 2010, the Joint Afro-Arab Ministerial Meeting on Agricultural Development and Food Security had adopted an action plan involving joint efforts to intensify the exchange of food supplies, the creation of food reserves, the development of infrastructure and trade, and the promotion of agricultural research and technology transfer. The international community's support for such cooperation would likely strengthen the capacity of developing countries to deal with the repercussions of the food crisis.

28. The Arab region faced other challenges as a result of the continuing Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab lands in the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. According to FAO and other international bodies, Israel's illegal practices, including settlement construction, the uprooting of fruit trees, the bulldozing of agricultural fields and the seizure of land and water resources, had led to food insecurity affecting more than 1.6 million people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It was the international community's duty to compel Israel to end the starvation imposed on the Palestinian people and to respect its obligations under international law to end its occupation of all Arab lands.

29. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which aligned itself with the statement made by the Group of 77 and China, noted that CARICOM had pursued approaches to harness the agricultural sector's potential, including the "Caribbean Week of Agriculture", from 16 to 23 October 2010, which had been a valuable mechanism for highlighting the region's achievements in that area. Developments such as the earthquake in Haiti, food price volatility and the global economic crisis had adversely affected the ability of small,

vulnerable developing States like his own to optimize their agricultural sectors. Most agricultural activities in the region were carried out by smallholder and subsistence farmers and it was important to boost their production while promoting the empowerment and participation of rural women.

30. To that end, Caribbean countries had begun working in collaboration with FAO as part of the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative to implement policies aimed at supporting small-scale farming. Through that initiative, Governments were encouraged to boost domestic staple food markets, increase the productivity of small-scale farming and implement risk-management mechanisms. For its part, CARICOM was coordinating its efforts through the Jagdeo Initiative, a strategic framework to transform the agriculture sector into an internationally competitive one with increased capacity.

31. While the region's net agricultural trade had enjoyed a surplus 20 years earlier, it had now accrued a considerable deficit. Moreover, over that period CARICOM's share of world agricultural trade had declined from 2 per cent to 0.3 per cent. Those developments had exacerbated economic inequalities and poverty in the region.

32. There was a need for higher and more consistent levels of financing for agriculture in the region, particularly for the purposes of climate change adaptation. A multilateral trading system that took greater account of the special needs of small vulnerable economies was needed. In that regard, he called for renewed action to ensure a balanced and fair outcome of the Doha Development Round and for a strong global consensus on strong, systematic and strategic action in the short-, medium- and long-term to promote food security. Moreover, it was important for synergies between agriculture, development, and food security policies at the national and international levels to be enhanced. That could be accomplished, for example, by giving greater priority to agriculture and food security and mainstreaming them into development policies.

33. **Mr. Rossi** (Switzerland) said that his country attached the highest importance to agriculture development and food security, which should remain central concerns of the international community. In that respect, urgent action was needed, in particular, to increase global food production; to manage natural resources in an efficient and sustainable manner; to

strengthen global governance in the area of agriculture and food security; and to establish a more effective and rule-based international trade system to address volatility on the international agricultural markets.

34. Additional investments were needed in agriculture, rural development and infrastructure to achieve a lasting increase in global food production. Indeed, targeted public and private investments must be increased in all forms of sustainable agriculture throughout the world, with a particular emphasis on family farms since those had the greatest potential for production growth. However, in order for such investments to bear fruit, an appropriate policy environment was also necessary in terms of macroeconomic conditions, good governance, physical infrastructure and structural policies.

35. The growing scarcity of natural resources created an urgent need for a more coherent and coordinated approach to internalizing externalities at the international level. Prices that reflected true production costs would provide incentives to use scarce resources more efficiently and to develop innovative approaches.

36. The global food crisis had shown the need to improve global governance for food security. The time had come for decisive and coherent action at the national, regional and international levels. Cooperation and coordination must be improved: the international organizations responsible for agriculture and food security must work together in a more coordinated manner, strengthen their effectiveness and avoid duplication of their efforts.

37. In that regard, Switzerland welcomed the excellent work accomplished by the Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. Switzerland also welcomed the reform of the Committee on World Food Security. The first session of the reformed Committee, held in Rome in October 2010, had illustrated how progress could be achieved when the various stakeholders worked together to find solutions. The next challenge was to implement the decisions taken and to make the reformed Committee an even more open platform from which to mobilize the private sector.

38. His delegation hoped to see a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round, which would promote a transparent, fair and rule-based international trade system. Open trade flows and efficient markets could play a positive role in reducing

price volatility and strengthening food security. He called on the relevant United Nations bodies to analyse the factors that influenced commodity prices and to propose policy options to reduce the negative impact of volatility.

39. **Mr. Sammis** (United States of America) welcomed the fact that, according to FAO figures, the number of people suffering from chronic hunger had decreased in 2010 to 925 million, despite continuing increases in the world population. In September 2010, President Obama had announced a new United States global development policy, the first of its kind, which placed a premium on broad-based economic growth as the foundation for sustainable development. His country's Feed the Future initiative reflected that new approach by helping to accelerate inclusive agricultural sector growth and by increasing economic resilience in vulnerable rural communities.

40. United States food security efforts also highlighted the importance of gender, environment and climate change as cross-cutting issues. In view of the importance of healthy ecosystems and natural resources for sustainable agriculture, the potential of climate change to adversely affect food security in some parts of the world and the undervalued role played by women in agricultural production in the developing world were both central concerns in the implementation of his country's food security strategy.

41. At the G-8 Summit held in L'Aquila in July 2009, his country had pledged at least \$3.5 billion to combat hunger over the following three years; that, in turn, had helped to leverage more than \$18.5 billion in commitments from other donors in support of a common approach to achieve sustainable food security. That approach had been further refined when all United Nations Member States had endorsed the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security in November 2009. It was critical for that momentum to be maintained and for all countries, both donors and recipients, to follow through on their commitments.

42. The Rome Principles emphasized the importance of investing in country-owned plans. In that respect, donor countries should reiterate their commitment to supporting such plans and aligning their diverse sources of assistance with them. They should also consider providing new funding to support those plans.

43. To that end, his Government had joined others in launching the Global Agriculture and Food Security

Programme to finance agricultural development strategies in poor countries so that smallholder farmers could grow and earn more. It represented a new model of cooperation that encompassed traditional and non-traditional donors; incorporated a governance structure that gave a voice to developing countries and civil society; and made use of the existing expertise of multilateral development banks and relevant United Nations organizations.

44. Under the above Programme, \$224 million had been allocated to food security projects in Bangladesh, Haiti, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo. An additional 20 countries had requested funding of nearly \$1 billion from that innovative source. It was therefore essential to secure both financial and technical assistance from other donor partners to sustain and replenish the Programme. The private sector was also crucial for increasing the growth potential of the agricultural sector in developing countries. In that respect, the Programme had recently launched a private sector facility with initial pledges of \$100 million.

45. Lastly, in order to meet the demands of a growing world population, he stressed that it was also important for development partners to increase their investment in research and development and to include nutrition as a vital component of food security. The efforts being undertaken in those areas were therefore welcome.

46. **Mr. Raja** (India) said that the collective aspiration to attain the MDGs, especially Goal 1 thereof, was critically dependent on fully addressing the issue of food security. The food crisis had exposed the global imbalance that had crept into the management of agriculture and food production worldwide, and the inherent limitations of unsustainable farming and market practices.

47. Despite the recent fall in world prices, domestic food prices and price volatility remained high, which directly threatened the survival of more than a billion people in developing countries. Unsustainable agricultural practices, the production of non-food crops, drought, environmental degradation, climate change and a lack of investment in modern inputs had led to a discrepancy between global food supply and demand. In addition, inadequate grain storage facilities in developing countries, including in India, must be addressed.

48. India had adopted an integrated approach to agriculture development and food security. The

purpose of its national policy was to improve the economic viability of farming by raising the net income of farmers; to promote the sustainable use of natural resources; to empower smallholder and marginal farmers; and to establish appropriate price and trade policy mechanisms. His Government was also considering enacting food security legislation, among other measures.

49. Stressing the importance of international cooperation, he reiterated India's support for the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative and called on countries to meet their financial commitments to enhance the capabilities of developing countries to design and implement effective food security strategies. In particular, a collective effort was needed to ensure more investment in agriculture, greater use of modern technology and increased access to credit. Noting that the countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation had decided to establish a food bank to enhance their collective food security, he encouraged other regional groups to undertake similar initiatives.

50. Lastly, he noted that the ongoing multilateral trade negotiations must take into account the need to provide adequate safeguards for agriculture, food security and the livelihoods of people in developing countries. He also took note of the recent agricultural development initiatives adopted by the Group of Twenty (G-20) and hoped that the reactivation of the Global Food Crisis Response Programme by the World Bank would yield positive results.

51. **Mr. Yoseph** (Ethiopia) noted that, despite the recent fallback in world prices, domestic food prices and price volatility remained high. Two years after the global food crisis, food insecurity still persisted in 29 countries and more than a billion people remained hungry or undernourished. Moreover, the outlook seemed bleak: international commodity prices were expected to be higher on average in the next decade due to a surge in economic growth in developing countries and rising biofuel production. Even gloomier prospects awaited sub-Saharan African countries, where agricultural production was projected to remain stagnant.

52. The international community should therefore take more stringent and coordinated measures to address the problems associated with agriculture development and food security. The agricultural sector,

which had suffered years of neglect and underinvestment, must be placed high on the development agenda. While international development policies should focus on improving the production and processing system of smallholder farms in order to address the needs of the most vulnerable, such actions must be implemented in accordance with country-led policies and initiatives.

53. His delegation commended the work of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and its efforts to implement the Comprehensive Framework for Action. It appreciated the approach taken by the Task Force to address the immediate needs of the most vulnerable while fostering the long-term sustainable development of the agricultural sector in many developing countries. In the same vein, building the capacity of smaller economies to adapt to the impact of climate change would reduce the risk of food insecurity and the demand for humanitarian action.

54. While welcoming the Secretary-General's report on agriculture development and food security, he noted that it should have placed more emphasis on progress made in implementing the outcome of the World Summit on Food Security. Member States had a primary role to play in ensuring food and nutrition security for all but other actors also made vital contributions, particularly in implementing the outcome of the Summit and the Five Rome Principles. His delegation therefore wished to hear from the Secretariat about the major results achieved in that regard.

55. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposals on maintaining the global momentum on a comprehensive approach to achieve food security through agricultural development and stressed that, without substantial additional investment and better policies in support of smallholder agriculture, many of the poorest countries would not reach the targets of Goal 1 of the MDGs. There was a need to increase spending on agricultural production through ODA, foreign and direct investment and national budget support.

56. **Mr. Mashabane** (South Africa) welcomed the Secretary-General's report on agriculture development and food security. To date, 29 countries had been identified as lacking adequate physical, social or economic access to food and therefore requiring external assistance. While the number of hungry people

globally was expected to decrease from 1 billion to about 925 million in 2010, structural hunger would increase due to the current relatively high food prices and the global financial and economic crisis. Given current population growth, only long-term and global partnership and cooperation could successfully address food insecurity and agricultural development.

57. Recalling that the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative established by the G-8 in July 2009 had pledged \$20 billion to address food security issues, his delegation called upon donor countries to implement that commitment in order to continue to make a positive difference to many vulnerable communities around the world.

58. His delegation had noted with interest the launch of the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition at the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, at which the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security had also been adopted. The important role of the Committee on World Food Security, as an inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders, should also be fully recognized.

59. Particular attention must be paid to the interests of women farmers, who were the majority of small-scale farmers in developing countries and who made a significant contribution to food production. However, those women suffered from a lack of access to land, technology, training, marketing, credit, seeds and fertilizers, and their contribution would be far greater if they enjoyed equal access to essential resources and services. In that regard, women must also be involved in the decision-making processes related to food security and agricultural development.

60. Agriculture and food security must be mainstreamed into development policies. It was also important not to underestimate the valuable contribution made by voucher programmes, school feeding programmes and nutrition programmes, among others.

61. African countries had already collectively decided to allocate 10 per cent of their budgets to agriculture but further international assistance was needed to provide more spending on agricultural production through ODA, foreign direct investment and national budget support. Welcoming the due recognition given to the critical role of the

Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme in addressing agriculture development and food security, he stressed the importance of promoting food and agriculture research and using national, regional and international research organizations to increase the availability of data and up-to-date research. North-South and South-South cooperation were also of crucial importance for transferring technology and know-how.

62. To overcome the challenges posed by food insecurity, his delegation called on the international community to strengthen the mechanisms responsible for global governance of food security and nutrition; to invest more in agriculture by strengthening country initiatives to increase production; to promote and provide affordable credit to smallholder farmers, especially women; and to help review and develop a new "Agenda for Action" for countries experiencing protracted crises.

63. **Ms. Masot** (Cuba) stressed that the Committee's discussions of agriculture development and food security issues, which had been included as an agenda item at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, should not duplicate or seek to replace the work done by FAO in that area.

64. The goal of reducing the number of hungry people from 800 million to 400 million by 2015 would not be reached by many developing countries, as noted at the recent High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs. FAO had stated that hunger remained higher than before the international economic and food crises, making it ever more difficult to achieve the hunger reduction targets formulated by the 1996 World Food Summit and set out in Goal 1 of the MDGs. Some reduction in hunger could be attributed to an improvement in the international economy, particularly in developing countries, and to a decrease in prices since 2008. However, the essence of the problem lay in the deeply unjust and unsustainable current international economic order, which had resulted in an unequal and unfair global distribution of resources.

65. The problem of global hunger would not radically change while major transnational corporations in the agro-food industry controlled prices, technologies, standards, certifications, distribution channels and sources of funding for world food production, not to mention transportation, scientific research, genetic funds and the production of fertilizers and pesticides.

Furthermore, the Governments of many developed countries continued to subsidize their agricultural production at a time when the situation of smallholder farmers and rural populations in the underdeveloped world was becoming more precarious. The increasing production of biofuels derived from essential staple foods such as corn was also exacerbating hunger in many parts of the world.

66. Hunger would not be eliminated as long as developing countries continued to allocate one fourth of their export earnings to pay their foreign debts, unless developing countries were given fair, special and differential treatment, and until developed countries desisted from closing their markets to developing countries through tariffs and a variety of other protectionist measures. The unsustainable production and consumption patterns of the developed world, which wasted resources and destroyed the environment, must be replaced with sustainable ones.

67. Global hunger must be totally eradicated, not just reduced. To that end, countries that had committed to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to ODA must be as good as their word; they must also commit themselves to devoting part of that ODA to support agricultural production in developing countries.

68. Cuba was already achieving the goals formulated in the 1996 World Food Summit and in the Millennium Declaration and was cooperating with other developing countries, in accordance with the principles of solidarity and mutual assistance.

69. Her delegation supported FAO initiatives aimed at facing the consequences of the world food crisis. It also recognized the important role of the FAO reformed Committee on World Food Security, which was the primary forum for addressing and following up on global food insecurity and nutrition.

70. The cruel and unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba for the past 50 years was the main obstacle to the full enjoyment by Cubans of the right to food. That fact was reflected in the third national report of Cuba on its progress in achieving the MDGs (A/65/384, annex) and in its most recent report on the necessity of ending the embargo (A/65/83) pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/6.

71. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia) said that, while the Caribbean countries relied to some degree on exports

to generate income, they were net food importers and, as such, had suffered greatly from the recent increases in food and fuel prices. Accordingly, it made sense to encourage the production and consumption of locally and regionally produced foods. Governments of the region were therefore forging ahead with developing food security policies. At a recent meeting of ministers of agriculture, participants had expressed their commitment to ensuring that agriculture became a major economic driver in the region.

72. Given that agricultural enterprises depended on the sustainable use of natural resources, he stressed the need to preserve biodiversity and to conserve traditional knowledge and practices. Although climate change could negatively affect agricultural development, it was also true that bad agricultural practices could contribute to such change. The challenge was how to respond to climate change while keeping the focus on food production. More must be done to ensure that the agricultural sector was environmentally friendly.

73. Turning to trade, he noted that trade liberalization and other reforms continued to have a significant impact on the Caribbean economies. As trade between countries with reciprocal trade agreements accounted for a third of global trade, his delegation felt that, where individual country markets were small, regional agreements could provide economies of scale. Saint Lucia, for its part, intended to remove non-tariff barriers to trade that increased costs and hindered distribution of food within the region; it hoped that developed countries would do likewise.

74. While he had focused on agricultural development as a means of earning foreign exchange, his delegation also realized the importance of providing adequate and balanced nutrition for the population, particularly now that chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease had become major causes of death in many countries. The States of the Caribbean Community would soon adopt a regional policy for food and nutrition security as an integrated framework to attain food security in the region.

75. **Mr. Rajabi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the unfolding food crisis not only gave rise to humanitarian concerns but also posed a threat to social and political stability. Food prices had increased so rapidly that even staple foods were beyond the reach of many people. The world population was projected to increase to about 9 billion by 2050, yet high-income

consumers, mostly in developed countries, persisted with their increasingly unsustainable lifestyles.

76. A coordinated global response was needed in order to reach agreement on agricultural development in the framework of multilateral negotiations; reduce agricultural export subsidies in developed countries; deal with speculation in food prices; and encourage food production in developing countries, including by providing microcredit for smallholder farmers and enhancing public investment in infrastructure and irrigation.

77. **Mr. Ntwaagae** (Botswana) said that, because of its harsh climate, Botswana had become a net importer of food. Accordingly, agriculture was a top priority in the country's development agenda. The Government had conducted a comprehensive review of the agricultural sector in 2009, as a result of which research into new crop varieties was likely to be intensified. It was also assisting farmers through a number of tailor-made programmes designed to boost agricultural production.

78. In addition, steps had been taken to develop an environment conducive to an economically sustainable agricultural sector and to extend financial assistance to young people interested in engaging in sustainable agricultural production. In an effort to encourage investment in agriculture, the Government was trying to identify unutilized agricultural land that could be leased with a view to commercializing agriculture. Thus far, 16 State farms had been leased to foreign investors.

79. Botswana's development efforts continued to be negatively impacted by the spread of HIV/AIDS. According to FAO statistics, at least 7 million agricultural workers in Africa had died from the pandemic since 1985. Botswana alone had lost more than 6.6 per cent of its labour force since 2000.

80. Overcoming those multiple challenges would require concerted efforts to promote new farming techniques so as to ensure sustainable agricultural production. His country needed financial and technical assistance so that it could implement the policies that the Government had adopted with a view to increasing food production. The current financial assistance being provided to middle-income countries such as his own could have a far greater impact if provided in the form of grants rather than loans.

81. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) said that the continuous rise in the prices of basic foodstuffs challenged international efforts to combat poverty and adversely affected the food security strategies of developing countries. He called for the international community to play a stronger role in dealing with the complex repercussions of the global food crisis and for coordinated and sustainable measures to provide developing countries with new and additional resources to guarantee food security.

82. The Sudan, which was currently hosting the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development, urged the international community to establish an equitable world economic order that guaranteed access to developed countries' markets for agricultural and industrial products from developing countries, especially Africa. In that connection, now that the rise in food prices had undermined the arguments used as a pretext to maintain agricultural subsidies, the international community had an excellent opportunity to bring about global economic reform. For its part, the Sudan had been engaged in intensive negotiations since 1994 with a view to joining the World Trade Organization. Having met with little success to date, his country called for the removal of the obstacles which prevented it, and indeed many developing countries, from becoming members of the Organization.

83. Recalling the negative impact of climate change on agricultural development, he affirmed that the Sudan was committed to reaching an international consensus on more effective burden-sharing to deal with the negative consequences of climate change.

84. **Ms. Arunsawadiwong** (Thailand), noting that many countries in Southeast Asia were dealing, at that very moment, with the consequences of devastating storms, expressed the hope that the climate change dimension of food security and agricultural development would be addressed in due course.

85. The issue of food security should be approached from two sides: supply and demand. Regarding the former, the most pressing need was to increase market food supply. Responsible private investment in the agricultural sector, including foreign direct investment, could offer significant benefits to smallholder farmers by facilitating access to capital and technology, thereby increasing productivity and food availability.

Governments also needed to address related issues such as land grabbing and environmental degradation. In that connection, she commended the efforts of the World Bank, FAO and other agencies to draft principles for responsible agricultural investment that respected rights, livelihoods and resources.

86. Food security and food scarcity were different but related concepts. According to a report issued by FAO in 2009, post-harvest losses in developing countries could be as high as half of total food production due to such factors as inadequate marketing systems, poor transportation facilities and improper storage facilities. Thus, one step should be to minimize post-harvest losses.

87. Although biofuel production had been blamed as a main contributor to the fluctuation in food prices, her delegation believed that every country had the right to formulate its own policies concerning energy and food security. However, it was important to ensure the stability and transparency of such policies.

88. Turning to the demand side, she said that the key to the availability of food at affordable prices was to ensure the efficient functioning of market mechanisms, to reduce market distortions and to promote greater transparency.

89. Finally, she said that her Government was ready to support international cooperation on agricultural development through South-South, trilateral and multilateral cooperation because, without such cooperation, it would be difficult to achieve such development.

90. **Mr. Quinlan** (Australia) welcomed the efforts to update the Comprehensive Framework for Action and the ongoing reform of the Committee on World Food Security. As previously announced, his Government would be contributing \$50 million to the newly established Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme as part of a comprehensive approach, through its development assistance programme, to help address the root causes of food insecurity.

91. However, reforms to international trade policies were also vital: trade-distorting subsidies and barriers had been instrumental in suppressing agricultural sector growth in developing countries and had thereby contributed to the recent spike in food prices. Reducing subsidies and trade barriers would give farmers in developing countries an incentive to increase

production and thereby increase their incomes. His delegation would continue to work towards a balanced conclusion to the Doha Round and called on all Member States to implement the commitments that they had made.

92. **Mr. Tsymbaliuk** (Ukraine), noting that global food insecurity continued to represent a serious threat, emphasized the need for strengthened global governance of world food security. In that regard, he expressed satisfaction with the work of the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and called for intensified coordination among all United Nations agencies and international financial institutions.

93. Noting that achieving sustainable agricultural development posed many challenges, he said that investment in agriculture must be increased since a healthy agricultural sector was essential for economic growth. Improved access for agricultural products from emerging markets to international and regional markets was also essential.

94. Noting that Ukraine had recently become a donor to the World Food Programme, he said that it would continue working with the international community to meet the challenge of the world food crisis.

95. **Mr. Rosales Díaz** (Nicaragua) said that while the concept of food security meant guaranteed access to food at fair prices, food sovereignty involved developing national capacity to ensure a steady supply of food for the population. The latter was fundamental, given that the structural causes of the recent food crisis and other crises lay in the current international economic order and in economic policies that ran counter to the agro-food sustainability of developing countries.

96. According to the latest report of the World Food Programme, Nicaragua had already achieved Goal 1 of the MDGs. It had done so by opening the doors to microcredit and emphasizing the empowerment of women. Indeed, most of the social programmes being implemented in his country were directed at women. The “zero hunger” programme, for example, provided rural families with such things as cattle, birds, seeds and plants, as well as training and technical assistance on, inter alia, animal health, the environment and marketing techniques, thus providing the dispossessed with the tools they needed in order to improve their lives. The programme also boosted the economy because the families could sell whatever extra food

they produced on the local market. Moreover, participants could ultimately deposit their savings in a credit union, thereby helping to expand the marketing of what they produced. That combination of savings, credit and marketing helped to turn what had started out as a family outfit into a small agribusiness.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.