

High Level Political Forum Sustainable Development Goal 2: Food Security

United States Draft Intervention Statement

Thank you Mr. Chairperson and good morning colleagues. I'd like to congratulate the esteemed panel on their remarks and for framing our discussion today. The United States recognizes the fundamental role of ending hunger and malnutrition to achieving sustainable development.

This year we face challenges that reinforce just how vulnerable much of the world remains to the threat of food insecurity. Conflict, violence and fragility have led nearly 21 million people in Somalia, northeast Nigeria, Yemen and South Sudan to famine or near-famine conditions, with each crisis forcibly displacing at least two million people, further exacerbating levels of food insecurity. These crises require a global response. The United States recently announced nearly \$639 million in additional humanitarian assistance for these four crises, bringing the total U.S. humanitarian assistance to over \$1.8 billion since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2017. We encourage other countries to step up and join us in responding to these crises, and addressing global food insecurity. Also, the Democratic Republic of Congo is an overlooked humanitarian crisis suffering from widespread food insecurity and massive displacement.

While the world responds to these regional crises to alleviate immediate suffering, we must also take preventive action that leads to lasting food security for future generations. This is not a new message, but it is a vital one – we must bridge the gap between humanitarian and development action, we must get better at building resilience and build on lessons being learned from progress in places like Ethiopia and Kenya. For example, in Ethiopia's lowlands, households in communities reached by comprehensive resilience programs were largely able to

maintain their food security status during the severe drought in 2016, whereas households in other communities experienced a precipitous, 30 percent decline. We must break the cycle of emergency and response so that we can not only save lives, but also save our precious resources and invest in solutions that last. These solutions should strengthen the resilience of farmers, systems, communities and governments so that countries can protect the most vulnerable and won't face predictable and recurring crises year after year. More than ever, our efforts are an investment in our shared future -- from security to prosperity.

In the United States, the Global Food Security Act reinforces the continuing U.S. commitment to reducing hunger, malnutrition, poverty, and food insecurity. As we implement the Global Food Security Strategy, we are mobilizing an array of tools and approaches across the U.S. government, including, partnering with the U.S. research and university community, leveraging investments from the U.S. private sector, and working with host country governments and civil society to achieve tangible results.

Investing in agriculture is one of the most effective ways to reduce hunger and poverty and to generate the type of growth that has a real impact on livelihoods, economies, and security. However, we need agreement on how to measure improvements in sustainable agricultural production that recognizes a range of economic, social and environmental contexts. We note that several indicators associated with target 2.4 on Productive and Sustainable Agriculture are still under development and discussion. We urge the FAO, a custodial agency for this target, to continue to work through the IAEG-SDGS, member countries, other relevant agencies, and stakeholders to propose, test, evaluate and recommend a set of indicators that will fully address

the scope of the target and yield robust and accountable data to thereby spur more sustainable agricultural production across diverse agricultural production systems worldwide.

We know what is at stake over the next 13 years. To achieve our goals of ending hunger and malnutrition we must adapt to our changing realities. We must build on what we know to address the new challenges that we face. We know that the world is rapidly urbanizing and our solutions to food security and nutrition must take into account food systems that link rural and urban areas and meet the nutritional needs of all consumers, whether they are smallholder farmers or the urban poor. We know that food security and conflict can no longer be seen as separate issues and we must address the root causes of conflict to achieve our goals on hunger and malnutrition. We know that agriculture and the food sector need to secure equitable land tenure rights and be resilient to changing natural conditions like soil depletion, environmental degradation and extreme weather events. We must all do our part. The United States stands strong in our support of the goal to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms.

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