



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Toward a hunger-free world, with adequate nutrition for all”

17 July 2017, 8:00 – 8:50am

Conference Room 7, United Nations Headquarters

Ms. Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization moderated the side event and underlined that despite progress, climate change, conflict, lack of appropriate policies and insufficient investment threaten food security and nutrition in many countries. She then reiterated the key messages from the recent EGM on SDG2, namely the need for political commitment expressed comprehensive and inclusive policies and programs, food system transformation, enabling the poor and vulnerable, recognizing the burden of diseases on health systems due to malnutrition, and for urgent actions.

Mr. Gilbert Hougbo, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development underlined that the cause of food insecurity and malnutrition is not the lack of global production, but conflict, poverty, inequality, the exclusion of small scale producers from large food systems, and inadequate investment in rural people. It is thus critical to establish inclusive and sustainable food systems and build the resilience of poor rural people. Success depends on our ability to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships. Three key areas in need of attention are: gender empowerment; youth employment and empowerment; and a holistic approach to Zero Hunger to tackle social inequalities and promote rural transformation.

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States underscored that hunger and food security are of paramount concern to the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, due to the specific circumstances and vulnerabilities of these countries. In LDCs, the agricultural sector comprises an important part of GDP and rural employment. Yet, people are poor and food insecure. LLDCs are also vulnerable to commodity and food price fluctuations, while SIDS are particularly vulnerable to price volatility of food imports. The immense and catastrophic impact of climate change affects all three groups of countries, threatening their food security, nutrition and overall sustainable development.

H.E. Ms Hirut Zemene, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia stated that as an LLDC and LDC, Ethiopia is challenged by climate change –extensive efforts have been undertaken to fight drought, and yet Ethiopia is short of \$1 billion - and the lack of transit corridors, rendering the fight against hunger very challenging. Ethiopia has integrated the MDGs and now the SDGs into its national goals with a special focus on SDG2. Agricultural development is central to the national efforts to ensure food security. Three focus areas are: human resource development; agricultural productivity; and transforming the economy from predominantly agrarian to light manufacturing. Ethiopia has a strategy in place to fight climate change and foster resilience, and continues to develop agricultural programmes, and investing in agriculture. Ms. Zemene closed by calling for the need to collectively implement the Paris agreement for the benefit of all.

H.E. Mr Abdullahi Majeed, Minister of State for Environment and Energy of Maldives stated that a limited resource base, their remoteness, and the fact they are net food importing countries



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constitute challenges for SIDS. Affordable food options are limited and Non-Communicative Diseases are on the rise and “communicable.” Climate change is further exacerbating the situation. Moreover, fish stock is central for food security, but it is being depleted due to among other, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The Maldives are striving to find coordinated solutions to food insecurity and malnutrition. One such example is FAO’s Global Action Programme recommending actions to support implementation at the local, national, regional and global levels. In closing, Mr. Majeed stated that SIDS need support to build resilience and establish sustainable food systems.

H.E. Ms Silvia Velo, Undersecretary for the Environment of Italy stressed that for Italy food security means human dignity, longer and healthier lives and no child being hungry, inclusive and sustainable food systems, reducing food loss, women’s empowerment, sustainable management of natural resources, mitigating climate change, and strengthening resilience, especially for SIDS. SDG2 is the most cross cutting goal in the whole agenda, and Italy is supporting food security efforts financially and politically as it is a key component of the Government’s foreign policy.

H.E. Mr Ruben Ignacio Zamora Rivas, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations stated that the country is fighting to guarantee food security to its citizens as a human right. The Government and civil society are taking climate change into account in their efforts to promote food security. The Government has established a Special Council for food security and nutrition responsible for implementing the policy, with all segments of society contributing, and is working to develop indicators to measure nutrition levels. The Government’s Family Agricultural Programme – a joint venture of the Ministry of Agriculture and other Ministries - has decreased malnutrition among children and improved their growth. El Salvador is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; however, the challenge is ensuring the sustainability of programmes and partnerships. The lesson learned is that agricultural measures alone are not enough; we need financial, market and economic measures to link the farmers to the market.

Ms. Tonya Vaturi, Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development emphasized the importance of collaborating with Member States and other stakeholders in preparation for the HLPF, and underlined the value added of the Expert Group Meeting on the progress in implementing SDG2. She also stressed the interlinkages among the SDGs and the need for a holistic approach to their implementation.

Ms. Elisabeth Rasmusson, Assistant Executive Director, World Food Programme highlighted the need for urgent action in Yemen, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria that suffer from food insecurity. Resources and assistance from governments are needed to ensure access to people in dire situation. Ms. Rasmusson also reiterated the importance of better linking action in crises and long-term food security, and closed by underlining that the engagement on SDG2 during the HLPF is a good sign of agreement on what needs to be done, how and why.

Participants also underscored the positive impact of social protection programmes in fighting food insecurity and nutrition. The need for agricultural extension to give farmers access to markets, water, and knowledge and address food storage and agrifood value chain was also stressed as well that private business entities should be seen as partners in development efforts.