



REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY



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STATEMENT BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

AT THE 16th SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here representing my country at the high-level segment of this prestigious Commission, an agricultural country, 88 % of whose territory is rural. It is therefore very significant for me that the 16th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development is focusing on agriculture and rural development. It is necessary for the international community to address the challenges of poverty eradication and hunger, climate change and the sustainability of agricultural production in a coherent and integrated manner paying special attention to the unique situation of the least developed countries with special emphasis on small island developing states. I can assure you that the Republic of Hungary is committed to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Between 2007 and 2013, Hungary intends to put more emphasis on the sustainability of agricultural production, to the preservation of rural lifestyle, culture and heritage. Let me mention that last year we adopted the so called New Hungary Rural Development Program which places special importance to

- the protection of the environment,
- the preservation of forests, natural habitats and biodiversity,
- water protection and management,
- renewable energy,
- modernization of infrastructure and farms,
- organic farming, and
- research and education.

The future of mankind and agriculture is significantly influenced by the responses and solutions we apply to the direct and indirect effects of climate change. In addition to the reduction of atmospheric emissions of greenhouse gases and the increased rate of their absorption, adaptation to the new weather and climatic conditions such as drought, desertification, weather extremities, is also inevitable. Until 2015, Hungary intends to reduce its greenhouse emissions by 15%, of which agriculture will take a proportional share, approximately 10-12%. Besides reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the transformation of energy uses also entails significant savings. The replacement of fossil fuels by renewable energy sources is not only a necessary priority but also a great opportunity for rural areas. Nevertheless, the production of these new energy sources must be reconciled with the provision of food stocks for the world's population, while avoiding any potentially irreversible damage to biodiversity.

Mr. Chairman,

Recent events, such as high food prices and hunger in several regions of the world pose the question whether global agriculture is able to feed 6.5 billion people in the future. In my opinion, the answer is in the affirmative. To reach this goal, however, we have to find a common denominator between local and international policies, alleviate structural differences among different regions of the world and give an opportunity for development even to the least developed nations.

Until recently, people had been talking about overproduction. Nowadays, one of the basic problems is the shortage of food. To enhance food production, on the one hand we need to bring more land under cultivation or to increase yields, which is sometimes very difficult to reconcile with the preservation of biodiversity. On the other hand we may have to reconsider our agricultural policies that restrain trade or production.

We must keep in mind that agriculture and rural life are strongly interlinked. They form a lifestyle made of social, cultural and economic elements that play a crucial role in making global development sustainable. We must preserve this environment and make rural life attractive to everyone. Rural life must not be a synonym to poverty, low education and hopelessness. This is extremely important for the least developed countries and especially for Africa where most of the population in rural areas lives in poverty.

As an emerging donor country, we concentrate our efforts primarily on those activities where Hungary has comparative advantages such as modern plant production, animal husbandry technologies, forestry and fishery programs, water resource management and exploration. It is our priority to promote the economic empowerment of women as well. We established close cooperation with countries such as Vietnam, Ethiopia, Yemen, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, the Palestine Authority, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Eastern European region. We are aware that Africa is a priority for the European Union, thus we wish to deepen our ties with countries of the African continent, in the spirit of the European Development Consensus and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The increasing activity of global agriculture can only offer an opportunity for sustainable development when the current level of harmful emissions is reduced. Hence, all development projects should be implemented along with the conservation of environmental and natural resources.

At the same time, the infrastructural development needs of rural regions and the financing of the basic rural health and education services are beyond the scope and framework of agricultural and rural development. The implementation of the requisite development programs and the realization of the above needs would only be possible through a long-term rural policy taking all sectors of the economy with all environmental concerns fully into consideration.

I believe that working together, we will be able to meet the challenges of our times and agriculture and rural development would become the main drive for sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention.