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**III. MINISTERIAL SEGMENT: STRENGTHENING COORDINATED POLICY RESPONSES TO THE FOOD CRISIS  
–THE STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD 2023 (for information and discussion)**

Madam / Mr. Chair,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Finland fully aligns itself with the Statement by the European Union.
- We have **strongly condemned Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine** from the beginning. The world is still recovering from a global pandemic and is now wrestling with the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which has dramatically aggravated the food security crisis.
- Furthermore, food insecurity affects women more than men in every region of the world. A positive sign is the slightly narrowing gender gap in food insecurity at the global level. **Gender equality** plays a significant role on this plenary's agenda as well. Finland sees advancing gender equality as a central element of our response to the ongoing food crisis.
- Allow me a short glance in the rearview mirror: At the dawn of its independence in the early 20th century, Finland was a poor rural country with small family farms and a large landless population. Gender equality became a key development asset for Finland, and women contributed to the growth of our economy by becoming, eventually, about half of the workforce.
- We are looking forward to the discussion on the voluntary guidelines, which the members of this committee have reached together after long and thorough negotiations.
- I would also like to emphasize that **innovations and digital solutions** can transform food systems more sustainable, inclusive and resilient. Finland welcomes the policy recommendations on leveraging the use of data.
- For example, bringing data in the hands of farmers enables better decisions and digital services can improve value chains and provide access to digital payments. Digitalization can also bring solutions that benefit women and girls in rural areas, including women and girls with disabilities.
- In food systems, **both private and public sectors have roles to play**. Initiating and implementing major changes requires collaboration and joint efforts of governments, civil society and private sector actors. Close coordination between all relevant stakeholders is vital.
- Finally, there is **no food security without water security**. Working across sectors is crucial and Finland stresses the nexus approach of food, water, energy and forests. I would like to underline

action by agriculture and food sector for more sustainable management and use of water, and congratulate FAO for adopting Water as the theme for the years 2024-2025.