

**STATEMENT BY  
THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA, PROF. DOCTOR OF  
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES DIMITAR GREKOV,  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD**

**PLENARY OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION  
OF THE FAO CONFERENCE  
ROME, ITALY, 15-22 JUNE 2013**

**ITEM 9  
REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
/ BULGARIA /**

**HONOURABLE CHAIRMAN,  
DEAR MR. DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO,  
DEAR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

Mr. Chairman, kindly allow me to congratulate you on your election to this responsible position and wish you successful work during the 38-th session of the FAO Conference.

I would like to express my satisfaction with the honour rendered to me by the Bulgarian government to be the head of the Bulgarian delegation to this session.

Please allow me, Mr. Chairman, to present to your attention the state of agriculture and food in Bulgaria.

The location and the climatic conditions are good preconditions for the development of agriculture.

The agricultural sector accounts for about 5% of gross value added (GVA) generated in the economy of Bulgaria. In 2012, GVA in the sector amounted to 2 148 million euros, registering an increase of 21.2% compared to the year of 2011. Cereals, industrial crops, farm animals, milk and dairy products have the largest share in the value of the production in the agriculture sector for 2012.

Investments in the sector are aimed at: modernization of farms, increasing the safety of food and feed; protection of the environment; animal welfare; introduction of new technologies.

Employed in agriculture account for about 19% of all people employed in the economy of the country.

Although incomes of Bulgarian farmers are still among the lowest in the EU, as a result of the support provided by various instruments, Bulgaria is one of the Member States of the EU with the largest increase in the average income in agriculture over the last three years.

Agriculture traditionally forms a positive foreign trade balance and it has a significant contribution to improving the foreign trade balance of the country. Agricultural trade turnover accounts for about 13% of the total trade of the country.

As a result of the improvement of the investment climate in Bulgaria, as well as due to the modernization of the food industry and the improvement of the legislation, there has been achieved food security and ensured food safety.

I would like to emphasize that FAO has a considerable contribution for the implementation of national and regional projects in the field of animal breeding, fisheries, forestry, institutional building.

We believe that reforming the Organization on the basis of the conducted Independent External Evaluation of FAO will contribute to more effective action for:

- The elimination of hunger and malnutrition worldwide;
- An even more significant contribution of agriculture to sustainable economic and social development;
- The preservation and sustainable management of natural resources;
- Strengthening the role of agricultural science in agriculture;
- More efficient use of specialized skills and expertise for the modernization of the agricultural sector worldwide.

We welcome the holding of international forums of FAO that examine the status of food security and provide guidance to facilitate the access to food for all population groups in the world. A good example of this is the Policies Against Hunger Conference.

In this regard, I would like to express the readiness of Bulgaria to host in the autumn of 2013 a Regional Workshop on Land Management in the Field of Fisheries and Forestry, a topical issue suggested by FAO.

Regarding the issue of the FAO budget for the 2014 – 2015 period, I have to emphasize our hope that this conference will lead to understanding

and a resolution, relying on two main elements - the view of the Director-General on the work of the Organization and the realistic assessment of the financial and economic situation in which the Member States are placed. Bulgaria, as well as the European Union as a whole, has repeatedly demonstrated its support for the Work Programme and the key priorities set out in it. We will continue to work actively and give our contribution, but we are convinced of the need to have the strictest budgetary discipline - a line that we follow both at the national level and in all international organizations we participate in.

Focusing its efforts on improving the state of food security in Bulgaria, as well as regionally and globally, I would like to categorically state that the Bulgarian government is ready to participate actively in the implementation of concrete actions to achieve food security in the world. It is therefore necessary to further consolidate and specify the efforts of individual governments which shall work together with the other international organizations, the NGOs, the financial institutions, the civil society, the scientific community.

In conclusion, I would like to express our general support for the proposals and decisions on the agenda of the 38-th Session of the FAO Conference.

I wish success to the Conference.

Thank you for your attention.