

Agenda item 9:
Review of the State of Food and Agriculture:
Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition

CHECK AGAINST
DELIVERY

**Statement by Mr Jari Koskinen, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Head of the Delegation of Finland**

Mr/Ms Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be here to speak on behalf of Finland. As a member of the European Union, Finland fully agrees with the statement delivered earlier by the European Commission.

During the past years FAO has been going through a fundamental reform process, which still continues. The reform process has shown us that FAO has become an organisation which can learn and change. Without this ability, the reform cannot succeed.

I would also like to thank the Director General, Mr José Graziano da Silva, for launching the strategic thinking process; as well as for the broad and inclusive process undertaken in revising the Strategic Framework of FAO.

Mr/Ms Chairman,

Finland has always emphasised the role of natural resources and especially forests in the work of FAO, and we have a long history of cooperation in this field. We would like to thank FAO and its partners for organising the International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition last month here in Rome. It is time to recognise the role of forests, agroforestry systems and trees in the fight against hunger. They have a lot of potential and they merit much more attention.

I specifically wish to underline the role of women in ensuring food security and nutrition, especially in forest-dependent communities. Their knowledge on forests and trees, on their species diversity, uses for various purposes, conservation and sustainable management practices have a great deal to offer. Their knowledge will not only contribute to food security and nutrition but it can also be an additional source of income. Trees and forests have been the backbone in the development of livelihoods also in Finland.

The next joint session of the UNECE Committee on Forest and Forest Industry and the FAO Forestry Commission will be held in December in Finland. Parallel to the UN meeting, the second European Forest Week will be celebrated. The week will highlight the contribution of forests, forest products and services to a green economy. I wish to welcome all of you warmly to these events taking place at the Arctic Circle.

Excellencies,

Sustainable management of natural resources is now one of the key challenges of the international community, and it must also have a central role in the strategic framework of FAO. In today's world food security is mainly compromised by poverty. Tomorrow the compromising factor may be the scarcity of natural resources, especially land, water and energy. This is why land and water management and energy policy must be dealt with in an integrated manner.

The growing demand for food, fibre, feeds and biofuels calls for higher agricultural productivity. It is said that only 10 percent of the additional production can originate from new agricultural land. Therefore smallholder farmers, most of them women, producing most of the world's food should be at the centre of the policies on food security and nutrition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change means an additional challenge to food production, and urbanisation competes with agriculture for natural resources. We urge that FAO works together with its partners to improve our understanding of the ways how to improve the resilience of agriculture, while at the same time reducing its emissions with the help of Climate Smart Agriculture. Finland is prepared to continue supporting the work of FAO to find ways to do this.

We also have to pay attention to the fact that about one third of the food produced gets wasted at some point of the food value chain. Each ton of wasted food also contributes to climate change through greenhouse gas emissions. Finland welcomes the proposal of having *Food Losses and Waste in Europe and Central Asia* as the main topic in the European Regional Conference in Bucharest next year.

Mr/Ms Chairman,

There are still realistic possibilities to achieve the MDG1 target of reducing by half the percentage of people suffering from chronic hunger by 2015. However, the issue of food security and nutrition is more complex. Besides sufficient calorie intake, the nutritional quality and safety aspects of food are key elements in this matter. We have to develop policies and food systems that enable sustainable solutions to malnutrition.

Finland is pleased to notice that on the international agenda more attention is now being paid to nutrition questions. We have to ensure that a comprehensive approach to food security and nutrition will also be included in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. FAO and the Committee on World Food Security will have a crucial role in this respect.

I thank you for your attention.