

Statement by Laurence ARGIMON PISTRE
Permanent Representative of the Delegation of the European Union to the
United Nations Organizations
Rome, 9 June 2015

Mr Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. As all of us are well aware, 2015 is a crucial year for the development of our planet. The major meetings ahead of us in Addis Ababa, New York and Paris will not only determine how the universal development agenda for the next fifteen years will look like, but also how ambitiously we collectively respond to the challenges of climate change. Obviously, this setting will be of overriding importance for FAO's work on food and agriculture in the years ahead.

2. It is with this setting in mind that I would like to reflect on the preview of the 2015 report on the State of Food and Agriculture (or SOFA) in the World'. In the past days we have taken stock on MDG achievements on the reduction of hunger and have celebrated that a great number of countries have reached the hunger targets set. However, there is no reason for complacency. While the MDG agenda focused on reducing *percentages* of undernourishment, the SDG agenda will target the eradication of hunger *in absolute terms*. In other words: making hunger and undernourishment history by leaving no-one behind. As the figures show, the reduction in the number of undernourished persons has

slowed down in recent years. In sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia the number of hungry people is actually on the rise.

3. Reaching the 795 million undernourished people and providing sustainable solutions will be increasingly difficult. The circumstances are different and often we need context-specific solutions for the problems they face. More than one-fifth of these people live in areas affected by protracted crises. And climate change is not helping either, as many of them are living in areas that will face negative effects of changing weather patterns.
4. The Zero Hunger target is therefore a formidable challenge and something we should not take lightly. It requires us to look at questions of natural resource management, agricultural production, growth, equity and access to food in a much more integrative and coherent manner than before. We expect FAO to play an active role in the implementation of the post-2015 Agenda, in close cooperation with WFP and IFAD – including in the CFS framework- and with other relevant UN agencies.
5. The EU and its Member States strongly support an ambitious global agenda on development and climate change. We recognise the great opportunity that is presented by this post-2015 Agenda in addressing the interlinked challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development. We are committed to an agenda that provides a comprehensive follow-up to Rio +20 and that addresses the structural causes of poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. And we are committed to playing our part in full and to working with others so that an ambitious, transformative and inclusive Post-2015 Agenda can be established and implemented.

6. In the run-up to the three conferences, the EU and its Member States have once again shown their constructive engagement. We are willing and ready to pursue an ambitious but fair agenda on climate change. The EU looks for a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2030, as compared to 1990. We have also shown that economic growth and lower emissions is possible: between 1990 and 2012, the EU's GDP increased by 45% while GHG emissions reduced by about 18%. We are also willing and ready to support an ambitious global development agenda, including financially. While development requires the mobilisation of many different sources of financing, ODA remains important for LDCs and fragile states, which particularly lack domestic capacity to raise finance from other sources. The EU and its Member States have been generous providers of ODA – more than half of global ODA in recent years. As a comparison: the EU represents 20% of the world GDP. And the EU has reaffirmed its collective commitment to remaining the largest donor.

7. Mr. Chairman, 2015 is also the European Year of Development. This year provides an unparalleled opportunity to showcase Europe's commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide and to inspire more Europeans to get involved in development. Last week, the main event of the Year - the European Development Days - was held in Brussels. I would like to share with you the announcement that European Development Commissioner Mimica made about nutrition at that occasion. He reaffirmed EU's strong commitment to fighting undernourishment. He literally said "until every child is properly nourished we cannot reduce our efforts. That's why the EU has committed to provide €3.5 billion in actions towards improving nutrition by 2020". As one concrete initiative, he unveiled a major

partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on National Information Platforms on Nutrition.

8. Mr Chairman, this is the framework in which we look forward to continuing close collaboration with FAO in work on the Sustainable Development Goals. For the past 3 years the EU signed agreements of a value of well over € 150 per annum and the current active cooperation portfolio is close to € 500 million. Many of the projects have yielded good results and we anticipate further joint progress in areas such as sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation, food security and nutrition. Next month, in Addis Ababa, the EU and FAO will sign two new programmes of substantial value; they aim at supporting work at country level in the areas of policies and governance for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, and on food security information respectively.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.