

[Transcription from Slovenian]

**Statement by His Excellency Dejan Zidan, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia,
on the occasion of the 39th Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, 6-13 June 2015**

Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished Colleagues,

I very much welcome this discussion on a matter as important as the role of social protection in eradicating hunger and malnutrition, especially in rural areas where three-quarters of the world's poor live. It is even more important in view of the forthcoming closure of the Post-2015 Development Agenda debate, in which eradication of hunger and poverty rank high among the sustainable development priorities for the next 15 years.

Slovenia wishes to contribute to this with an initiative aimed at the proclamation of 20 May as World Bee Day within the framework of the United Nations. We all know very well that food security depends on bees and that bees have proven to be an invaluable and sustainable resource in agricultural production. All the pollinators, including bees, contribute to world agricultural economy to the range of 150 billion euros per year. Hunger and malnutrition undermine the potential development of individuals and the development of society in general, and measures to help the most vulnerable are therefore not only important but urgent if we want to break the vicious circle of poverty. It is unacceptable, especially considering that there is enough food for everyone, but many people cannot access it, and we have to make every effort to ensure they do.

Although it might seem absurd but food is thrown away. There are millions and tons of food thrown away; food that does not end where it should but in dust bins. That is why we have to think about the just distribution of natural resources and products we have available.

Since most of the poor in this world live in suburban areas or in the countryside, food security and food strategies are important policies, but synergies can only be achieved with effective cooperation between the actors of agriculture and social policy.

We need an integrated approach and a long-term vision which will enable us to address the structural causes of poverty and hunger, not only a short-term treatment of the symptoms.

Food production is facing risks. The risks are caused by climate change and natural disasters, also price fluctuations and the economic and financial crises. I do believe that only with good cooperation we can ensure the basic human right to food for everyone.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am glad at seeing such an important discussion today and Slovenia is prepared to play an active role in that.

Thank you.