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**ADDRESS BY MR. ANDREW DOYLE, T.D. MINISTER OF STATE AT THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND THE MARINE, IRELAND
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 40th SESSION OF THE FAO CONFERENCE IN
ROME**

3rd JULY 2017

Topic of the Debate: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security

[Director General],

Your Excellences,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here today, to represent Ireland on the occasion of the 40th
FAO conference.

Climate change has made a significant impact on how agricultural activity is being
carried out on a global basis. The increasing frequency of events such as rising sea
levels, heat waves, droughts and floods has meant the conditions for agricultural
production have worsened. These detrimental changes have been most pronounced
in countries that can cope with them the least and which already have high levels of
poverty and food insecurity.

Without climate change most regions in the world would expect to see a reduction in the number of people at risk from hunger by 2050. However, with climate change, it has been conservatively estimated that an additional 40 million people plus could be at risk from undernourishment.

Addressing this very real dual challenge of ensuring food security for all and preventing dangerous climate change is something that has been acknowledged across the globe in both the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. If we are to combat climate change we will need to do so through a variety of measures. Agriculture needs to become more efficient. Otherwise food insecurity may increase and it is the most vulnerable that will be affected.

If we are to reach the goals we have set we will need to make serious efforts towards reducing emissions intensity. This is something that we have been focusing our efforts on in Ireland where we have made significant improvements in reducing the emissions intensity of our food output. Indeed the FAO itself has recognised the efficiency of our temperate grassland based production system.

We must also be prepared to innovate. My Ministry and its agencies continue to develop innovative measures and programmes. You may be familiar with our Origin Green initiative. This is a national food and agriculture sustainability initiative. At this point in time, most livestock farmers and major food processors

in Ireland have signed up to this initiative. They are measured for sustainability indicators such as carbon, water, waste, biodiversity and their impact on the local community.

Over 95% of Irish food and drink exports are from companies, which have committed to individual and independently accredited targets to reduce the use of water, energy and natural resources consumption. Companies also engage in programmes to reduce raw material usage and improve processing efficiency. Ireland held a side event at last year's FAO Council with Kenya to promote sustainable, 'green' agri-food systems.

Alleviating the effects of climate change and contributing to food security is something we must all work towards. In Ireland our ambition is to be a global leader in sustainable food production. This means that not only must our actions be coordinated and ambitious they must also be environmentally, socially and economically responsive.

Social responsibility is something we take very seriously in Ireland, both at national and international level. My Ministry is a long-term and committed partner to overseas development. We have close links with the FAO and its work

resonates strongly with Ireland's commitment to contribute to the eradication of the global problems of hunger and food security.

Together with Irish Aid, my Ministry set up the African Agri-Foods Development Programme to develop partnerships between the Irish Agri-Food Sector and African countries, which supports sustainable growth of the local food industry and mutual trade between Ireland and Africa.

Ireland is also supporting a FAO project to build agri-food capacity in Africa through the African Agribusiness Incubators Network.

We have provided extra budgetary funding to the FAO on projects such as supporting vulnerable households affected by the Syria crisis in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, and funding immediate seed planting in Ethiopia due to a severe drought.

We also have a strong relationship with the World Food Programme (WFP) UN agency and in 2016 doubled our funding to the WFP to €20m for the subsequent three years.

Climate change, agriculture and food security require a coherent approach. Realising the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development goals relating to food

and agriculture will not be easy. While there are many challenges there are also many opportunities. I would ask each and every one of you here today to focus on the opportunities.