

**Statement by Dr. Zynaida Ilyina, Corresponding Member of the National
Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Head of Delegation of the Republic of Belarus
at the High Level FAO Conference on World Food Security:
the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy
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Dear Mr. Chairman!

Dear colleagues!

The problem of the world food security is a common challenge for the world community. Examining the world food security in the context of the planet-scale trends, such as food crisis, global climate change, deficit of hydrocarbons, rise in fuel prices, we should take into account that all the above-mentioned factors have a direct impact on food systems of all states.

The deficit of agricultural products, caused by disbalance of supply and demand, decrease of exports, rise in prices, speculative trends and politicization of commercial dealings, depresses the world market. In these conditions, the food safety of a state can be guaranteed only by dynamic innovative development of its own agricultural production, stability of farm areas and eradication of poverty as a social phenomenon.

Within the framework of international agreements on farm policy and taking into consideration its national conditions, the Republic of Belarus has worked out theoretical grounds and methodology to guarantee food safety and has elaborated a strategy that allows to solve the problem with rational use of the proper economic potential together with the advantages of international specialization of labour.

The Republic of Belarus is solving the mentioned problem by fostering general economic and social conditions related to the agricultural sector development and the sustainability of social-economic growth of the country. The national food safety strategy determines the following guidelines of agricultural policy: enhancing the population welfare, improvement of consumption structure, upgrading the quality of nutrition, providing demographic development, protection and strengthening of population health.

The Republic of Belarus depends on imported energy resources. Therefore their rational use is a priority for the country. It is important to guarantee sustainable, ecologically safe functioning of fuel-energy complex on the basis of effective use of resources and to accelerate the process of modernization of operating energy plants. To achieve this goal we undertake determined steps to secure the rational structure of supply-demand energy balance, including by increasing the use of local and alternative energy sources.

The realization of the planned measures will allow to decrease the GDP energy content by 26-30 percent by the year 2010 with the augment of production volume. It will also enable the agricultural sector to use local energy resources,

including biofuel, to the fullest measure. The local energy sources shall cover not less than a quarter of the national energy demand.

The climate change impact deserves a particular attention. The forecasts tell that in 20–30 years the Republic of Belarus may become agro-climatic analogue of the steppe zone. The average annual river flow may decrease from 3 to 30 percent from the actual level as a result of the diminished rainfall.

Some ecosystems will not have time to adapt to quickly-changing climatic conditions. Therefore some species of flora and fauna could disappear altogether, which will reduce biodiversity. The global warming could also create favorable conditions for animal and plant pests' reproduction. Sharing the FAO concerns over the impact of global climate change and being aware of the inevitability of this challenge, the Republic of Belarus is carrying out a set of measures, which allow to reduce the impact to the environment. For example, a system of national parks and protected areas has been created, the industrial plants have been modernized to diminish dangerous emissions and a range of respective programs is being carried out. Due to protective measures applied, the percentage of forest land is increasing despite the dynamic development of woodworking industry.

The problem of climate change is global in the direct meaning of the word. It does not recognize the frontiers and concerns everybody, because a large scale climate change can, as a result, violate the system of the world ecological security. Preventive measures are highly necessary. The Republic of Belarus possesses high-level scientific potential and can participate in working out of such measures.

To diminish the vulnerability of different industrial branches due to climate change, major scientific research is being carried out in the Republic of Belarus. We are also working out and implementing adaptive technologies and improving the industrial structure.

The consequences of global warming can not but affect the agricultural production, complicating the conditions of cultivating such native plants as barley, potato plants, long-fibred flax. There are different forecasts for the possible impact of the mentioned phenomenon on the agricultural production in the long-term perspective. But we should clearly recognize that the conditions for agricultural production are complicating that will certainly aggravate the food problem.

The Republic of Belarus is a food self-sufficient country. The volume of agricultural production, raw materials and food can entirely satisfy the demand of the population in terms of variety and quantity of goods, offered at prices corresponding to purchasing power of population. The Republic of Belarus guarantees the availability of the mentioned goods and provides systematic supply of agricultural products to consumers. The average ration of the population has been stable since 2005 and is equal to 3100 kilocalories daily with constant improvement of its structure. This trend will continue in the future, moreover, the Republic of Belarus could increase its food export. However the rise in prices for the most important agricultural products on the global market makes the problem of import-

substitution highly acute. The effective agricultural production and guaranteed food safety could be achieved only by implementation of innovations, notwithstanding their complicacy and high costs.

The food problem is a matter of a particular concern for every sovereign state willing to maintain independence and sustainable growth. However, solving this problem requires common efforts of all the states and international organizations. In the present situation it is particularly important. In this regard, the position of the World Trade Organization on measures for liberalization of trade in agricultural products and diminishing state support for agricultural production seems premature.

Thank you for your attention.