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Speech at the 38th Session of FAO Conference

Yu Xinrong

Head of the Chinese Delegation

Vice Minister of Agriculture, P. R. China

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Mr. Chairman, your Excellency the Director-General of FAO,
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon!

It's a great pleasure for me to come to this beautiful city of Rome to discuss with you the state of global food security, share experience and observations of agricultural development, and especially exchange views on how to develop sustainable food systems to improve food and nutrition security.

Food is vital for human survival, and food security is one of the hot issues arousing greatest concerns by the international community. In recent years, plagued by factors such as the international financial crisis, climate change and energy policy, world food supply and demand is under a tight balance, regional shortage is aggravating, food price is high and volatile, and food security situation is not inviting a sense of optimism. Now there are merely two years left before we reach 2015, but there're still 870 million people suffering from hunger. We are facing a grave situation to achieve the MDGs.

The theme for the General Debate of the Conference is "Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition". Food system is an extensive concept, covering the whole process of production, processing, storage, transportation, marketing and consumption. Each component of the process is indispensable for addressing food security and nutrition problems. Governments shall optimize top-down designs, adopt comprehensive measures, and enhance supply effectiveness to improve food security and nutrition.

I wish to emphasize here that in present food systems, particularly in the developing countries, the most important component is still production, and the most central sector is still agriculture. What's impressing now is to focus on agriculture to increasingly build up food supply, if to effectively alleviate the tight food security situation. Against the backdrop of a complicated economic situation and slow growth trend, governments shall increase investment in agriculture to enhance food productivity and supply, and to manage well distribution and consumption. Only by

doing so can we improve food security and nutrition for the whole society, thus contributing to economic growth and social stability.

Mr. Chairman, dear delegates,

The Chinese government has always attached great importance to agricultural development and food security, always putting the subsistence of its 1.3 billion people as the country's top priority. We have been increasing policy support to agriculture, farmers and rural areas to strengthen the role of agriculture as the foundation of the economy, and to protect the initiatives of farmers or motivate them for production. With these efforts, we have gained a steady rise in the comprehensive agricultural productivity, and world-recognized achievements.

In 2012, the total grain output in China was nearly 590 million tons, marking the 9th consecutive year of growth. At present, there is an ample supply of major agricultural products and the prices remain stable in general. The self-sufficiency rate of rice, corn and wheat has reached 98.1%. Though import grew faster for corn, rice and wheat in the past two years, the total amount of import was limited, accounting for only 2% of the domestic production. Grain stock grew as well over the same period in China.

This year, the Chinese government has further intensified policy support to agriculture. The general situation of agriculture and grain production is good. Now another bumper harvest of summer crops is foreseeable, promising the 10th year of harvest we are striving for. China is fully confident and competent to rely on domestic production for its future food security.

As a responsible developing country, besides its own development tasks, China has also tried its best to offer support and assistance to other developing countries under the framework of "South-South Cooperation". China has established over 20 technology demonstration centers, and trained about a thousand of technicians for the developing world. Every year China will send about a hundred of experts and technicians to train the locals in the field.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Food security and agricultural development matters to the well-being of all peoples as well as prosperity and stability of all countries. I hope that countries can join hands and take concerted actions. And I would like to take this opportunity to make the following proposals:

First, to increase investment in agriculture. Governments shall continue to place top priority on agriculture and food production, and enhance the efforts to build infrastructure, promote disaster prevention and mitigation, boost science and technology, and expand investment opportunities in agriculture so as to fuel

agricultural growth.

Second, to improve efficiency in grain utilization. We shall accelerate innovation and extension of post-harvest technologies, and improve management practices in storage, transportation and processing to reduce grain losses. In addition food waste shall be avoided to raise grain utilization efficiency.

Third, to strengthen international cooperation. Countries shall engage in bilateral and multilateral cooperation through sharing of policies, practical techniques and advanced experience. We shall act against trade protectionism, facilitate trade, and build a fair, equitable, sustained and stable agricultural trade order.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

Global food security demands joint efforts of the international community. All countries, particular developed countries, shall honor their commitments and strive for the actual attainment of the Millennium Goals. The Chinese government is ready to work with all countries to make its due contribution to the global food security, and to a long-lasting prosperous world of stability.

Thank you.