

*[Transcribed from English language. Original in Russian]*

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Distinguished Chairperson, Distinguished Participants in the Conference, the food issue is a subject of special attention for each sovereign state upholding its independence and sustainability of its development. Modern day conditions guaranteeing high quality food in the necessary amounts and at an affordable price for the consumer has become an issue of food security. In Belarus, agricultural land occupies more than 40% of the territory with some 9 million hectares; 24% of the population live in such areas. Every year the agricultural sector creates between 8% and 9% of the Gross Domestic Product of the country. Food security in the country is guaranteed thanks to the production of the required volumes of safe, good quality agricultural production, raw materials, and food, thanks to sustainable, innovative development of the agro-industrial complex and by creating the necessary reserves and stocks. Results of annual monitoring bear witness to the fact that, beginning in 2005, the Republic of Belarus has been stably guaranteeing its food security.

We should point out that the production of grain has exceeded approximately twofold the domestic needs. There are similar indicators for sugar, milk and dairy products, and meat and meat products. Belarus remains dependent on the import of certain types of foods, such as vegetable oil, fruit and berries, and specific vegetables and fish. Our production and processing of these foods is not possible because our natural and climatic conditions. The composite indicator of agricultural output, taking into account the critical optimum levels of need, is constantly growing, while in 2000 we stood at the level of 0.95%. In 2005 it went up 1.25%. While in 2014, it's now 1.37%. The agriculture production is enough to guarantee the diet for the purposes of a calculation to a tune of 3,250 kilocalories on average per person per 24 hours. Almost all food producers have certificates consistent with the quality management system of the ISO Standard 9001. In order to integrate into the international food markets and to raise the balance of domestic production, competitive production, and replenishment of the global market with high quality food, we are carrying out work constantly in the Republic to improve the foreign economic activities of the agro-industrial complex.

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The volume of food export from Belarus has increased fourfold over the last decade. The geography of Belarusian export of agricultural products is constantly widening and it now encompasses 73 countries.

Moreover, the main markets for agricultural production and raw materials are countries in the Eurasian Economic Union and have portrayed a reduction in customs barriers. As well as simplification of procedures for movement of goods across borders in the Eurasian Economic Union have contributed to significant growth in reciprocal trade and agriculture production.

The basis for export supplies from Belarus to countries of the Eurasian Economic Union is constituted by dairy and meat products, sugar, meat, and fish, eggs, and flour. We're seeing active development of the marketing and logistic infrastructure and the section for agricultural production is operating now on the Belarusian Universal Trade Exchange.

The foreign trade network of Belarusian food is represented by 150 structures of which 40% have Belarusian investment. This includes food companies, trading houses, and trade missions and dealers. At the same time, with the globalization of the world economy and the increasing problems in the world food system, it is difficult, indeed virtually impossible, to avoid the influence of negative trends and we are trying to resolve these problems especially thanks to expert assistance in the FAO.

We are counting on the support to this end from the newly reelected Director-General, José Graziano da Silva. We congratulate the FAO on this jubilee year, its seventieth anniversary.