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**Statement by Ms Victoria Mushibwe, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Representation of
the Republic of Zambia to FAO**

Item No. 9 - *“The State of Food and Agriculture”*

Chairperson,

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Zambia commends the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for maintaining agriculture, food security and nutrition at the top of the global agenda. We also applaud the strong commitment to complement the 2030 Agenda as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

However, the fundamental battle to achieve sustainable development will be fought in the rural areas of developing countries. It is there that extreme poverty and hunger are concentrated. If we fail to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) number 1 and 2, we will also fall short of many other SDG's.

Millions of small family farmers need technical and financial assistance to be more resilient and adapt to the impacts of climate change. They must be able to stay on their land, produce their own food and also have access to markets. This is an essential element to secure social stability and avoid distress migration. Without food security and adequate nutrition for all, sustainable development simply will be difficult to achieve.

The former U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, once said and I quote “We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all”.

Excellencies,

Climate change is already causing droughts and floods that have increased in frequency and intensity. It is undermining the health of soils, forests and oceans on which agriculture and food security depend.

Droughts and floods are more frequent and intense. We have seen first-hand their terrible impacts in the recent past farming seasons, as El Niño hit Africa, Asia and other parts such as the Dry Corridor of Central America.

The rural poor are the most exposed to these threats, and they are the least equipped to deal with them.

An increase in temperature by 0.8 degrees would risk crossing the so-called ecological tipping points for families and communities. Poor family smallholder farmers will be driven off their land as a consequence of prolonged drought. Pastoralists are forced to migrate in search of land on which their cattle can graze. These are not distant scenarios.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Hunger and climate change must be addressed hand-in-hand, and agriculture and rural development are key to doing so. Crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries are what connect human activity and natural resources.

They are the points of convergence between the fight against hunger and the fight against climate change. More sustainable, productive and resilient agricultural sectors can deliver the kind of transformative change we so urgently need. Such change can enhance incomes and food security among the world's poorest.

This is precisely why today's event is so timely because it shows how actions in the agricultural sector can be transformative. Agricultural activities that are resilient and result in the sustainable management of natural resources can deliver the transformative change.

Let me highlight the importance of water management as it is a fundamental part of the agricultural transformation we need to promote. It is this transformation that will help to address hunger, extreme poverty and climate change simultaneously. Zambia hopes and counts on FAO's continued support for this important area of work.

Statistics by the Zambian Living Conditions Monitoring Survey showed a reduction in head count poverty of about 6.1 percentage points. Other indicators of malnutrition such as under five stunting has also been on the decline, from 45 percent in 2007 to 40 percent in 2014. The country has also recorded positive or surplus food to an extent of even maintaining strategic food security reserves.

We urge FAO to strengthen capacity building programmes on measurement of hunger not only with the Ministries of agriculture but also the National Statistics office.

Thank you for your kind attention.