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Agenda item 19:
Review of the State of Food and Agriculture

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**Statement by Mr Jari Leppä
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Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change and more extreme weather patterns are impacting food production all over the world. The climate change impacts people differently and can further deepen inequalities. We have to take that into account in all decision-making.

Food and nutrition security is of critical importance as it is the key for human development. Meeting the targets of the 2030 Agenda to eradicate hunger and poverty and to address the threat of climate change requires a profound transformation of food and agriculture systems, both in the developing and developed countries. This is a global challenge: we need to produce more food while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture provides the livelihood for almost two-thirds of the world's extremely poor people. Smallholder agriculture has to be at the centre of our efforts and especially women and young people need to be empowered.

Innovations in farming systems are important to meet the challenges of climate change. Risk-tolerant plants and production methods as well as social safety nets and affordable risk insurances are needed to increase resilience. Finland has many good examples of productive, carbon-wise and sustainable agriculture systems and innovations. Finland aims at developing a resource-efficient food system based on the circular economy.

We are well aware that over one-third of the food produced worldwide is lost or wasted. This cannot be accepted. Preventing loss of agricultural commodities and food waste are among our main priorities.

On Wednesday the FAO Conference will discuss the Initiative of Finland to declare the Year 2020 as an International Year of Plant Health. Each year almost 30 % of the global harvest is lost to plant pests and diseases. New and emerging plant health risks due to climate change will lead to even greater losses. Plant health related negative impacts present a major limiting factor to food security, not to mention other serious impacts they may have on the environment and the trade in agricultural products. This is naturally the case also for problems caused by animal health risks. In order to improve plant health world-wide I invite all delegations to support the International Year of Plant Health 2020.

Finland is deeply committed at all levels to foster all efforts towards climate-friendly food systems. Finland is pleased that FAO has increased the funding to climate change adaptation and mitigation for the next two years. FAO's work on climate and agriculture in the implementation of the Paris Agreement is of utmost importance. In this work, I encourage FAO to collaborate effectively with other multilateral agencies, especially those in Rome.

Finally, I would like to invite you to the One Health side-event on Thursday, organized jointly by FAO and Finland. I thank you for your attention.