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Statement by His Excellency Mr Christian SCHMIDT

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here at the fortieth Conference of the FAO here in Rome and that we can send out signals for the future.

Today on the fourth of July, the American national holiday, just as a side remark, we find a situation where we are again talking about people who like many of the American citizens, had ancestors in other parts of the world and who, on a voluntary basis or forced, looked for prospects in other parts of the world.

And currently also here in Europe, we see scenarios, situations at Europe's coast that have to do with unrest, peace, unrest, war, migration, and conflicts.

According to the UNHCR, there are currently more than 65 million refugees all around the globe and we need to solve the problems that lie behind those conflicts and we need to create perspectives in order to be able to combat the root causes of migration.

First of all, we need to sustainably promote agriculture that creates high yields and we need to understand that nutrition, good nutrition, balanced nutrition is one of the basic foundations for peace on this globe.

And this is why I believe that the tasks of the FAO are increasing. The FAO has grown beyond sectoral tasks. It has now exceeded an agricultural discourse and this is the right path to go. We need to prepare ourselves for the challenges of the future, especially climate change. We need to react to crisis around the world, especially in order to prevent those crises to be proactive. That is why we need strong agriculture that adapts to our conditions, especially concerning resilience against climate change, also in the question of effective production in using new technologies, and I would like to point out the issue of digitization and the opportunities that come with precision farming.

And agriculture also needs to take into account our obligations that were transferred to us by the United Nations to feed the world and to combat hunger. So ladies and gentlemen, I would like to urge all of us coming together here in Rome to not perceive us as a Rome-based special structure of the United Nations. Instead, we need to see that we are right at the center of the problem, that we have a responsibility here that together with the three Rome-based Agencies, IFAD, WFP, and FAO, need to find joint solutions. We need to create synergies in order to combat hunger in the short-term, in crises, and in the longer run by creating sustainable agricultural structures.

And I believe that this is why the FAO needs to restructure itself, needs to come up with new visions, and needs to be willing to find solutions in collaboration with others. And from my part, in the name of the German government, I can tell you that we will collaborate in the future as well. We are one of the main donors to FAO. We also created the bilateral trust fund and via this trust fund, we also provide voluntary contributions.

When it comes to these issues, to these events, we need to promote them to an international level and I am happy that Germany, as the G20 President right now, we will be able to introduce these issues at the G20 meeting and that we can take up what we already adopted at the G20 Meeting of the Agricultural Ministers in Berlin in January.

And this means the issues of sustainable water management, sustainable farming, and antimicrobial resistance.

Thank you very much. I believe that this Conference is a great stepping stone.