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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OF HUNGARY

SPEECH

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Mr. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates,

It is my pleasure to be here with you today and first of all I would like to say thank you for this opportunity to make my contribution to this Conference

Also I would like to express my appreciation to FAO for placing climate change in the centre of our discussions at this Conference. We have to take care of our Planet. As Pope Francis said, God always forgives, humans can forgive sometimes, but Mother Earth will never forgive.

All states, all people are affected by climate change. Although the effects and amplitude of this change differ from region to region, they force us to change our way of life including our food systems. We are experiencing extreme weather conditions, water scarcity, new animal and plant diseases that do not respect any borders; therefore, concerning these challenges joint actions are needed.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change are important milestones for humanity in creating a global, common vision on how to minimize the effects of climate change and to ensure a sustainable development path for all. Now it is time for action! Our agricultural and food system has to be transformed to a more sustainable and more resilient system.

We believe that applying the agro-ecological approach could be a good basis in this transformation process as it provides a framework where among others biomass recycling, soil management, circular food production, sustainable livestock production and aquaculture, the preservation of biological and genetic diversity and the responsible use of natural resources are present. Most importantly, agro-ecology has an important role in increasing the resilience of small-holder farmers, who are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Furthermore, agro-ecology can assist us to improve the sustainability of our global food system in economic, environmental and social terms as well.

We are pleased to cooperate with FAO also in this field. Last November Hungary hosted the FAO Regional Symposium on Agroecology for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia. I am also pleased to inform you that Hungary, FAO and other partners are intending to hold a side event at the COP 23 Conference in Bonn November **2107** on agroecology. This high level event will focus on how agro-ecological approaches can mitigate impacts of climate change and facilitate countries in meeting their Paris agreement commitments.

FAO can and should take a **leading** role in this process, being the global knowledge organization that assists countries in the transformation and adaptation process. In this respect we welcome the announcement of FAO Director-General to hold a global agroecology event in April 2018. In order to have a stronger impact we call for strengthened cooperation with the involvement of the three Rome-based agencies, other relevant UN bodies and all other stakeholders, including academia, private sector and civil society, and in particular the smallholder farmers, practitioners of agroecology.

We also share the views of FAO that “Adequate climate financing and **agricultural investments** are essential to enable the transition to sustainable agricultural practices”. At the same time we highlight that activities and projects financed through these channels should be mutually beneficial for all affected stakeholders. Therefore, we call for applying and implementing the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure and on the Right to Food, as well as the CFS-RAI principles.

Innovation and knowledge transfer will play a pivotal role in finding solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation. We support innovative technologies aiming to contribute to sustainable ecosystems. We acknowledge the great importance of innovation, developing techniques including biotechnological methods to develop climate resilient crop-varieties, to raise yields, to improve nutrition values and to prevent food and biodiversity losses.

However, in our view genetically modified organisms can have harmful effects to human health and to the environment and can cause serious input supply dependence. This is why we think that the **precautionary principle should** be followed when **applying GMOs**.

According to our standpoint every nation in the world should have the right to decide whether they wish to allow GMOs within their borders or not. Hungary's Fundamental Law contains the ban on the cultivation of GMO plants emphasizing that each citizen has the right to sustain a healthy way of live through consuming safe products.

As far as knowledge transfer is concerned good examples are highlighted by our scholarship programmes. The knowledge obtained at our universities might contribute to the innovative development of the countries in need.

Hungary is also promoting exchange of expertise in the field of sustainable water management. It is a hot issue as water scarcity is becoming a reality in many regions. The importance of providing innovative technologies in water management was also pointed out at the Budapest Water Summit that was organized by the Hungarian Government in cooperation with the World Water Council last November.

In conclusion, as a representative of the Hungarian Government, I would like to assure FAO and all Member States that Hungary will definitely remain committed to the common work in the future.

Thank you very much.