

Original Language Russian – checked against transcription of English interpretation

**Statement of
His Excellency Alexander TKACHEV
Minister for Agriculture of the Russian Federation
to the
40th Session of the FAO Conference
Rome, 3-8 July 2017**

Chairperson,
Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear that today addressing climate change is one of the most important factors in ensuring sustainable socioeconomic development and eradicating hunger and poverty throughout the world.

The facts attest to the relevance of this theme. According to the World Meteorological Organization, the average temperature of the earth's surface in 2016 was the highest it had been since records began. That said, the rate of warming in Russia is two and a half times higher than the world average.

Such processes have a large impact on agriculture which depends on weather conditions to a far greater extent than any other industry.

At the same time, the agriculture sector itself contributes to global warming. According to FAO, almost one third of greenhouse gas emissions are in one way or another linked to the agricultural sector. It is of utmost importance that detailed analysis be conducted into the possible negative consequences for the global economy and comprehensive measures to counteract those consequences.

Russian research into the consequences of climate change for our country's economy by 2030 indicate a possible average loss of 1% to 2% of GDP per year. The agricultural sector will be threatened by more frequent extreme climate events, soil degradation, and the proliferation of plant and animal diseases and pests.

In this context, our country considers FAO to be the best platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices in adapting the agro industrial climate to climate change and mitigating its negative consequences.

We appreciate the Organization's regulatory work and welcome the endorsement by FAO Council in December 2016 of the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management. We believe that the guidelines will make a large contribution to the conservation of soils, the largest carbon sink on earth.

I note that the FAO's proposed approaches to climate and agriculture on the whole are in line with our national priorities. Russia's current climate doctrine in 2020 state agricultural development programme foreseen measures to support smallholder farming, reduce risks for producers, restore soil fertility and improvement and introduce new crop varieties and technologies.

Progress is also being made in the development of the social sphere and rural infrastructure using outputs from the agricultural sector to increase the energy efficiency of the economy. In accordance with a decree from the President of Russia, in 2017 we have declared a year of ecology. This is a year of reform for our country. Our main goal is a real reduction in the scale of contamination entering soil, water, and the atmosphere, reducing the number of land fill sites, and restoring national parks.

Another aim is forming a more effective system of ecological monitoring, state and community level as well and we have conferences, ecological conferences all around Russia. We are also working within the framework of a clean village action. Our country attaches a lot of attention to issues of food security and we provide assistance to agricultural producers.

In 2016, we achieved record levels in many areas. Total agricultural production reached USD 88 billion. We have a forty year record of cereal harvest, over 120 million tons. Russia maintains a status as a world leader of exporting in wheat.

We also have livestock farming, pig breeding and poultry breeding which are very strong.

In accordance with the Food Security Doctrine, we are not only providing for the needs of the internal market but we are also exporting internationally. In 2016, exports of our own agricultural production reached USD 17 million.

We believe that the Paris Agreement will be able to unite all world powers to hold back climate change. Guided by the agreement, our country has developed a national strategy on adapting to climate change, state regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. We are prepared to cooperate with all interested stakeholders for joint work to overcome the global negative impacts of climate change.

We are looking forward to continuing discussions on this issue at FAO events, including the 31st Regional Conference for Europe which will take place in Russia in May 2018.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite all interested parties to this conference in Russia. Thank you for your attention.