

**Statement delivered by
Her Excellency Olena Kovalova
Deputy Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine
on the occasion of the
41st Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy (22-29 June 2019)
25 June 2019**

Thank you Chair.

Dear Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, Honorable Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman,

It's my honour and pleasure to address the distinguished audience of 41st Conference. Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to express gratitude to outgoing Director-General José Graziano da Silva for his commitment and leadership in the fight against hunger in the world. Also I'm pleased on behalf of Ukraine, to congratulate the newly elected Director-General and wish to Doctor Qu Dongyu all the best on his responsible and really important position in leading FAO and assisting member countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ukraine joined the Agenda 2030 and has launched an inclusive and comprehensive process of the Sustainable Development Goals implementation. I would like to emphasize the significant role of FAO in this process.

We are thankful to the organizers of the Conference for highlighting the close connection between migration, agriculture and rural development.

Migration is part of the development process: urbanization and de-urbanization, migration within countries and international migration, migration causing economic, climate and security issues have become a reality.

Each country's case is individual. Ukraine faces migration nowadays and our country has undergone migration waves in the past centuries.

One third of Ukraine's population lives in rural areas, of which three million are employed in agriculture. The work of these people forms 15 percent of the country's GDP and about 40 percent of the total exports of the country. It should be noted, that small and medium-sized producers in agriculture account for half of agricultural output. There is direct dependence on the provision of agriculture with employees and migration processes.

We welcome the attention that FAO is giving to address migration issues, including the minimization of consequences on the one hand, and exploiting new opportunities on the other hand.

I am convinced that the following are priority tasks:

First, the improvement of the quality of life in rural areas through rural development policy realization, and strengthening the economic capacity of local communities. It is important to take measures for solving socio-economic and environmental issues as enhancement of proper maintenance and rational use of objects of social, transport, communication infrastructure in rural areas. In Ukraine, with this aim the Rural Development Plan 2025 was adopted. It is a broad document that includes some measures and it also contains the measures for stimulation of off-farm activities. As well, within decentralization reform, both the budgetary system and the land relationship were changed. The local authorities in Ukraine receive more resources, but also more consciousness of responsibility for local development.

The second point is inclusive employment expansion in the agricultural sector, of course taking into account the gender dimension. Therefore, the issues of support for the small and medium agricultural entrepreneurship development, including family farming, are crucial. Ukraine welcomes the United Nations initiative to determine family farming as the strategic priority of the decade.

The agrarian policy of Ukraine is formed according the SDG achievement and three regional goals. Supporting the development of SMEs is one of the key pillars. The concept of the farms development, small and medium, provides appropriate measures and tools. It also fixes the minimum amount of the state support for these very purpose, without, however, any limitation of access to farmers to other state programmes. Today the SMEs budget is equal to one fifth of the total agricultural budget of Ukraine.

With the aim of creating jobs in agriculture, of course in rural areas, we are using some tools:

- priority of access to resources for SMEs;
- support of cooperative movement, value added chains development and market access;
- stimulation the of industries with a high level of employment and high added value, like horticulture, value products, livestock and the dairy and meat sector;
- assistance in adaptation to European Union standards;
- maintenance in access to information, new knowledge and new technologies, innovations; and,
- funding of young farmers.

FAO in Ukraine is actively involved in implementation of the SDGs. Once again, I would like to thank FAO for its efficient and fruitful work in Ukraine. Dear colleagues, I wish the organization and the all Member Countries prosperity and “zero hunger”!

Thank you!