

ICN -2

STATEMENT OF GREECE

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(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Mr. /Madam Chair

Greece subscribes to the statement delivered by Italy on behalf of the EU and its Member States and wishes to underline the importance of this Conference for the future of Food and Nutrition in the World. We also applaud the unanimous approval of the Rome Declaration in the beginning of ICN2.

Greeks from their earlier history have been aware of the preponderance of Food and Nutrition. As the ancient Greek poet Hesiod (around 700BC) stated in his poem «Works and Days», a sort of a «farmer's almanac», Greeks, when meeting used to wish each other not only good health but in particular : « that Hunger may hate you and Venerable Demeter (the Goddess of Agriculture) richly crowned may love you and fill your barn with food ».

That indicates that for us Greeks, Zero hunger has always been a priority. Zero hunger should be the ultimate goal for all of us. Hunger and malnutrition exist worldwide, exacerbated by natural and man-made disasters, climate change or rapidly spreading viruses. These constitute challenges that we have to face.

We should be aware that all countries, societies and people are interlinked and if there is a danger somewhere, nobody is safe. As the economic crisis in Europe and elsewhere made quite clear, even in countries and regions of the World, where the danger of hunger and malnutrition was considered overcome, its specter lurked just behind the door.

The answer to such challenges lies in multi-sectoral cooperation of all of us in the way towards Sustainable Development.

In this respect I should like to bring to your attention some relevant information, concerning my country, Greece, and in particular the conclusions and

recommendations of the High Level Conference on Nutrition and Physical Activity which was held in Athens in February of this year while Greece was holding the rotating Presidency of the European Union.

In particular, I would like to highlight the importance of the Plan of Action 2014-2020 to combat child obesity which was adopted by all EU member countries on 24 February 2014. This plan of action is expected to contribute decisively to the adoption of healthy nutrition patterns and of physical activities and in the limitation of present obesity trends through voluntary action of member states and concerned stakeholders.

Similarly, the Athens Conference recommended as a top priority the adoption of healthy diet and sport policies in conjunction with the promotion of effective policies that can contribute to the reduction of chronic diseases in the coming years. In this connection the relevance of the Mediterranean Diet as a healthy diet was emphasized and the adoption of incentives to promote it was recommended.

Also, the importance of inter-sectoral actions and policies involving overweight and obese citizens, across all age groups and all socio-economic strata was underlined. So was the necessity of collaboration among all those involved in the food chain: farmers, especially family farmers, producers, retailers, caterers, consumer associations, health professionals and academia. Their involvement in order to effectively promote the redefinition of types of food which have a positive impact on health was emphasized. In this regard the importance of research that deals with the eating behavior of vulnerable subgroups such as children and the elderly was widely agreed.

Finally, the need to keep under evaluation the cost-effectiveness of policies and activities oriented to promote healthy eating and physical activities in different socio-economic and socio-demographic groups was reiterated.

Mr ./Madam Chairman,

I thought it important to inform this Conference of the outcome of the deliberations of the Athens Conference and their guidelines for Food and Nutrition as they are of close relevance with ICN2.

Furthermore we just completed in Greece our national health survey. Our National Nutrition Policy Committee takes into account all relevant FAO and WHO texts in the development of its planning and strategies.

We should all be aware that,

combating hunger and malnutrition should be continuous till their disappearance. In this respect, our choices in support of better nutrition including coherent policies linking agriculture, trade, health, and environmental protection with the involvement of all stakeholders, will make a difference in ensuring sustainable food systems and consequently our future and the future of our children.

Thank you, Mr/Madam Chair