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Organización de las
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منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
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COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

Seventy-second Session

Rome, 26–28 September 2018

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL (OPERATIONS)

Mr. Chairperson,

Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives,

Distinguished delegates and guests,

Colleagues from FAO and other sister organizations,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to FAO for the 72nd Session of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP), and wish to thank you for your participation.
2. The Director-General regrets he cannot address you, as he is on duty travel attending the United Nations General Assembly. He sends his best wishes for a successful meeting and looks forward to receiving the results of your deliberations.
3. In the last Session of CCP, you reviewed developments in the global commodity markets and related policies, and discussed FAO's programme of work in trade and markets.
4. You also took note of the progress report on the implementation of the Multi-year Programme of Work for 2012-2016, and reviewed and approved the MYPOW for the period 2016-2019.
5. On that occasion, FAO presented its Corporate Strategy on Climate Change. The Committee welcomed the discussion paper and endorsed its outcomes. In discussing the item, the Committee considered that further analysis on the interfaces between climate change, trade, commodity markets and food security was needed. This year's edition of FAO's flagship report The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO 2018) responds to this call.
6. Much has happened since you last met in October 2016.

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7. New evidence shows that hunger has been on the rise over the past three years, with the number of undernourished people in the world reaching 821 million in 2017 or one in every nine people, according to the new State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report released on 11 September. The report also finds that only limited progress has been made in addressing the multiple forms of malnutrition. These range from child stunting to adult obesity and put the health of hundreds of millions of people at risk.

8. In a recent report that we issued last week, our assessment shows that 39 countries, of which 31 in Africa, seven in Asia and one in Latin America and the Caribbean, are in need of external food assistance. The report stresses that protracted conflicts, extreme weather events and population displacements continue to hamper access to food for millions of vulnerable people.

9. These findings send a clear message that more needs to be done and done urgently, if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030.

10. New risks are also emerging. For instance, there are increasing uncertainties with respect to agricultural trade policies and concerns about the possibility of rising protectionism globally. International agricultural trade can play an important role in our fight against hunger and food insecurity, underlining the need for a rules-based, open, predictable and fair trading system.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. You have a full agenda before you.

12. You will review the short- and medium-term outlooks for agricultural commodity markets. Your feedback will be important, as up-to-date and credible market information is key to promoting market transparency and enabling evidence-based policy decisions.

13. You will receive an update on the latest developments in agricultural trade negotiations under the WTO and on regional trade agreements. This will also include a discussion on FAO's activities in supporting member countries in the formulation and implementation of trade-related policies and agreements.

14. You will also review the analysis presented in SOCO 2018. As per your request when you last met, the release of this flagship report has been aligned with the CCP cycle to allow discussion of the findings and policy recommendations by the Members.

15. The new edition of SOCO focuses on the complex and under-studied intersection between agricultural trade, climate change and food security. It is clear that the effects of climate change on agricultural production will be uneven across crops and regions. Agricultural trade will also be affected.

16. The report shows that the net trade position of countries may shift or deepen due to climate change – turning a net exporting country into a net importer or deepening import dependence, for instance. Climate change could exacerbate the food security challenges that developing countries already experience and widen the gap between developed and developing countries.

17. More importantly, the report contributes to the policy debates on climate change adaptation and mitigation under the Paris Agreement and the multilateral agricultural trade rules under the WTO. It discusses policies – both domestic support and trade measures that can promote food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation, while improving the livelihoods of family farmers around the world.

18. You will receive the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 39th Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Hard Fibres and the 41st Session of the IGG on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres, held in Tanzania in November 2017, and the Report of the 23rd Session of the IGG on Tea, held in China in May 2018.

19. You will also discuss FAO's work programme under the Committee's mandate and discuss possible themes for the next edition of SOCO, to be published in 2020 in conjunction with the next CCP session. Your views on these two agenda items will be very valuable to us.

20. Another important item is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). You will review FAO's support to the implementation of this new development framework and provide guidance to CCP's contribution to the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

21. Let me finish by recalling that the CCP, as FAO's oldest technical Committee, has a long history of serving as a platform for dialogue on commodity markets and policies.

22. Through the years, the Committee has made substantial contributions to addressing commodity problems.

23. Today, and after almost 70 years from its establishment, this Committee remains an important venue for debating the problems facing global commodity markets and agricultural trade, and for identifying workable solutions and approaches that match the contemporary challenges we face.

24. Your deliberations are of great importance to the global commodity community.

25. I wish you a successful and constructive meeting, and we look forward to learning the outcomes of your deliberations.

26. Thank you for your kind attention.