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STATEMENT BY PROF. SWAMINATHAN, CHAIRPERSON OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH LEVEL PANEL OF EXPERTS (HLPE)

Mr Chairman

Members of the Bureau and Advisory Group of the Committee on World Food Security
Excellencies,

Director-General of FAO, Dr José Graziano Da Silva

UN Secretary-General Special representative, Dr David Nabarro

President of IFAD, Dr Kanayo Nwanze

Madam the Executive Director of WFP, Dr Ertharin Cousin

Honourable Ministers

Honourable Delegates and Observers

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is now three years since the CFS set up a High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) supported by a Steering Committee which I have had the privilege of chairing. During these three years, the Steering Committee has been able to prepare and submit six reports for your consideration. All these reports are demand driven and the topics have been proposed by CFS.

To recapitulate, the following are the areas covered by our earlier reports. In 2011: our reports (#1) Price Volatility and Food Security; and (#2) Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture. In 2012 our reports (#3) Food Security and Climate Change; and (#4) Social Protection for Food Security.

These reports are designed to enable CFS to base policy on credible scientific evidence. The Food Security Floor recommended by us is now assisting Member countries to shape their social protection measures in a manner that they can help to achieve the goal of Food for All.

At this meeting, you will be considering our reports **on Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security**, and **Biofuels and Food Security**.

In addition, to assist the incoming Steering Committee, we have also done much of the preparatory work including the finalization of the composition of the Project Teams and their terms of reference in respect of the following two reports to be considered by CFS during next year.

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- Role of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition
- Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems

I am glad you have chosen the topic of Food losses and waste for consideration next year. FAO estimates that about 1.3 billion tonnes or a third of all food produced are lost. Food losses at the production and post-harvest stages tend to be high in developing countries, while food waste is high in developed countries. The **zero hunger challenge** launched in 2012 by the Secretary General of the United Nations during the Rio conference integrates a zero-food-loss-and-waste challenge and a 100%-sustainable-food-systems challenge. Similarly, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture require integrated attention from capture or culture to consumption.

The process developed by us for the preparation of these reports has been documented and are available to you. We have given as much importance to the process as to the product. For doing so, we have built up an invisible college of scientists and reviewers, numbering over a thousand and belonging to all parts of the world. The participation of developing country experts in the review of our initial papers and draft reports is truly impressive, thus indicating their deep interest in the topics chosen by CFS.

The Steering Committee of HLPE has tried to fulfill your desire that the best possible scientific evidence based advice should be available to you. We have also been conscious of the diversity of agro-ecological, socio economic and socio political situations in our planet. Therefore, we have tried to provide a Public Policy Cluster from which nations could select those which are relevant to the conditions prevailing in their respective countries. Since our reports are the products of the felt-needs of member states, they have received serious and widespread attention.

Many of our reports are solution-oriented, they have utility for policy makers but also for practitioners, and, because each theme is seen with a food-security angle, they are often relevant beyond the particular theme they address. For example, the report on Biofuels and Food Security has lessons for both the policy maker and the molecular geneticist. Similarly, Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security gains particular importance in the context of the work done by CFS on responsible agricultural investments, as well as the International Year of Family Farming, 2014. A majority of small holders are family farmers.

Let me now draw your attention to a few highlights of our two reports, which are being considered at this Session of CFS.

Smallholder Agriculture

A majority of farmers in the world operate smallholdings. Nearly 50% of them are in India and China. In dealing with this problem, we should make a distinction **between a small holder and a smallholding**. There is first a difficulty in defining smallholder agriculture. Classification of smallholder agriculture based only on farm size can be misleading. A smallholding is ideal for ecologically sustainable intensification. A small holder suffers from several constrains like access to irrigation, technology, credit, insurance and assured and remunerative marketing opportunities.

Our Report calls for a **New Deal to Small Holders**, and a Small Farm Management Revolution, which will make them ecologically and economically sustainable.

Let me cite two examples to illustrate the scope for enhancing the contributions of small holders for their own as well as national food security. India now produces about 130 million tonnes of milk, in contrast to about 20 million tonnes about 50 years ago. This is largely because of small farm families gaining the power and economy of scale through Cooperative

Societies at the production, processing and marketing stages. Also, the spectacular progress in milk production is largely because of the technological and organizational empowerment of women, who generally own 1 or 2 buffaloes or cows. Nearly 75 million women are involved in smallscale dairy enterprises, which illustrate the power of combining the technologies of production by masses - as Mahatma Gandhi said- and mass production in a socially beneficial manner.

Similarly, small holders are largely responsible for a historic transition in India's agricultural history. From what was then described as a "ship to mouth existence" in the nineteen sixties, the Indian Parliament enacted a Food Security Bill this year conferring a legal right to food to over 800 million children, women and men, based on home grown food. This is the largest social protection measure against hunger, so far undertaken in our Planet. Thus, small can be beautiful.

What is however important is to ensure that there is synergy between technology and public policy which can help to improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of small holdings. **Smallholder agriculture is the foundation of the food and livelihood security of rural communities in many countries.** It also forms an important part of the social/ economic/ technological landscape in all countries. To realize the full potential of smallholder agriculture, there is need to reduce or eliminate the constraints to investment.

We have hence recommended a **National Smallholder Investment Strategy** based on a new deal for farm women and men owning and cultivating small farms. The needs of women farmers in the areas of access to land, water, technology, credit, insurance and market require special and urgent attention.

Biofuels and Food Security

Our report on **Biofuels and Food Security** was one of the most challenging to write.

Biofuel production has increased 5 times during the last decade, from less than 20 billion litres per year in 2009 to over 100 billion litres per year in 2011. Can we achieve a Win-Win balance between food and energy security? Can we make the tasks of feeding and fuelling the future mutually reinforcing? Our Report indicates the criteria that could be used by Governments for harmonizing the action plans for food and energy security. Land Use Plans which will help to achieve such harmony are important. **Building and maintaining minimum food stocks** to withstand food price spikes are essential.

The first generation biofuel technologies depended on the use of food crops, as for example sugarcane in Brazil and corn in USA. The second generation biofuels depend upon agricultural cellulose based biomass like crop residues, or the use of marginal lands for the cultivation of *Jatropha*. The third generation biofuels will involve the use of algae and micro-organisms. New technologies including plant genetics are likely to play an increasingly important role in the development of biofuels, which will complement and not compete with food security requirements.

Development of those biofuels which do not compete with agriculture for land is an area where there is need for greater investment in science, particularly molecular biology which can help to develop new microorganisms capable of generating energy. **The future of biofuels is likely to depend very much on the introduction of new technologies and biotechnologies, and not on the diversion of agricultural crops or agricultural land for the preparation of fuels.**

Our two reports presented at this meeting, will serve as a starting point for discussions among stakeholders having different points of view. They have to **set the stage** by making

comprehensive assessments, encompassing all approaches and opportunities. They have to make it easier for each and everyone in the policy debate to understand the diverse points of view and logic. **Our aim is to help debates move forward by helping policy markers understand why they, sometimes, disagree.**

HLPE reports are thus very special reports. The HLPE does not carry out new research, but undertakes original analysis. Our reports have to show and explain the various perspectives, to uncover the scientific controversies, which often underpin diverse points of view. They aim to facilitate a common understanding of issues and to build consensus among nations with different needs and opportunities.

From our first six reports, I will like to draw a few **key messages that cut across all of them.**

- 1) First, it has become apparent that food insecurity is often linked to vulnerability to many other issues, such as clean drinking water, sanitation, primary health care and nutritional literacy. When you need to spend 70% of your income to buy food, which is the case with many small farmers, and landless labour, even a small change in food availability or food prices can induce mini-famines. Women and children are the first to be affected by price volatility.
- 2) A second lesson comes close to the role of the CFS at the international level. **Policies decided in one country can have an unanticipated impact in a different area of the world** if such policies are developed independent of each other. Crop-dependant biofuel policies serve as one example.
- 3) Third, requests from the CFS have been motivated by urgent issues, problems or concerns the world is facing in terms of food security and nutrition. While, we are working on urgent issues, we also need to view them **from long term demographic and climate change perspectives.**
- 4) Four, One important message, which permeates our reports is the need for collective vision on the future of smallholder agriculture, particularly the involvement of youth. We need to give Smallholders and young farmers hope and optimism, in the interest of safeguarding the future of food security as well as the livelihood security of rural families.

I wish to pay my tribute to the very large number of experts, who have helped us to prepare our reports under tremendous time pressure. Each report is a collective enterprise, involving numerous experts drawn from different parts of the world: the Project Team, the members of the Steering Committee, the external peer reviewers and the members of the Invisible College of Commentators. We take special care in ensuring the diversity of the Study Teams from scientific and regional points of view.

Let me also express my sincere gratitude to the donors namely, Australia, the European Union, France, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Russia, Spain, and Switzerland who have generously funded this exercise. We hope that this interest will not only be maintained but will grow in the future to enable the HLPE to continue its work for the CFS. HLPE's annual budget, (including translation costs) is of the order of 1M USD/year. The budget gap for the next biennium is estimated to be of the order of 1.5 Million USD.

I am glad the CFS has constituted a new Steering Committee, based on the very sound principle of continuity and change. **The current Steering Committee is now finishing its mandate and** transmitting its work to the new Steering Committee. The presence in the incoming Committee of our current Vice Chair, Ms Maryam Rahmanian and Members, Dr Renato Maluf, Dr Sheryl Hendriks and Dr Huajun Tang will help in maintaining the tradition of transparency, widespread consultation and close rapport with the chairman and Bureau of CFS. My sincere thanks go to Ambassador Noel de Luna, former Chair of CFS, and to Ambassador Yaya Olaniran for their advice, encouragement and guidance. I am particularly indebted to the Vice Chair Maryam Rahmanian and to the 13 other Members of the Steering Committee for their active participation in the preparation of our reports and

recommendations. In addition, some of them like Prof Rudy Rabbinge of the Netherlands, Prof Renato Maluf of Brazil, Prof Igor Tikhonovich of Russia and Dr Huajun Tang of China took the trouble to host our meetings at Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, St. Petersburg and Beijing respectively. I also had the privilege of hosting a meeting of the Steering Committee at Chennai, India.

Finally, I must record my sincere gratitude to Dr Vincent Gitz, Coordinator of HLPE and to the young team in the Secretariat for their extraordinary efforts to make the work of the Steering Committee smooth and efficient. Dr Vincent Gitz, in particular, has worked very hard in ensuring that we deliver our reports on time. Many thanks also to Kostas Stamoulis, CFS Secretary for the support provided.

To conclude, my colleagues and I on the Steering Committee are very impressed by the quality of debates on our reports at CFS. These are very serious issues and the strength of CFS in addressing them arises from the involvement of a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the decision making process. This is why I am glad CFS is developing an integrated **global strategic framework for food security and nutrition**. Such a broad framework will help in the formulation of national and local level action plans leading to “food for all and forever”.

Mr Chairman, while handing out the Chairmanship to my successor in the new committee, I can only hope that both CFS and HLPE will continue to regard that achieving a hunger free world is both our duty and our privilege. We believe in this fundamental unity of purpose, although there may be diversity of approaches in achieving our common goal. We have in our Reports, tried to provide to Members of CFS an opportunity for converting the concept of unity in diversity into reality.

Mr Chairman, Thank you very much both for this opportunity and encouragement.