

39th Session of the FAO Conference
Agenda item 10:
Review of the State of Food and Agriculture

**Statement by Ms Aulikki Hulmi
Head of the Delegation of Finland**

Mr/Ms Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of Finland and our new Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, who unfortunately could not be here today. Finland also fully agrees with the statement delivered earlier by the European Union.

First, I take the opportunity to congratulate Mr Graziano da Silva for being re-elected as the Director-General, and wish him the best success in his second term. Under the leadership of Mr Graziano da Silva the FAO has carried out deep and wide-ranging reforms across the organization.

Our global challenges are becoming more and more complex, which means that a coordinated and coherent approach is necessary. We need to focus on the living conditions and the rights of the poorest and most vulnerable people. Finland strongly supports FAO to further play its role with regard to Post-2015 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals together with the whole UN system and especially with the Rome-based agencies.

Although significant progress concerning the MDGs has taken place, high levels of hunger, malnutrition and vulnerability still persist in many countries. Finland supports the inclusion of nutrition as a cross-cutting theme in the FAO's future programme of work.

Nutrition is an integral part of food security. Ensuring food security and nutrition at the household and global level requires investing in nutrition sensitive agriculture, protecting women's rights and improving their social and nutritional status. Raising women's nutritional status not only benefits them but is a powerful way to improve the human capital of the next generation.

Safety and health aspects of food are becoming increasingly important in our global world. One of the greatest threats to public health worldwide is Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Work against AMR is our common target and, therefore it was utmost important that this Conference adopting the resolution on AMR. This year Finland holds the chairmanship of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). One of the important goals of this agenda is also the fight against AMR.

Each year almost 30% of the global harvest is lost to plant pests and diseases. New and emerging plant health risks will increase these losses even more. Plant health-related negative impacts present a major limiting factor to food security, not to mention other serious impacts they may have on the environment and trade of agricultural products.

Under Item 18 of this Conference Finland will propose that the year 2020 will be proclaimed as an International Year of Plant Health.

Sustainable management of renewable natural resources is one of the key challenges of the international community. We urge FAO to place more focus on the sustainable use of renewable natural resources and to ensure coherence of normative and technical work across divisions. Finland has a long history of cooperation in sustainable forest management with the FAO which is continued. Forests have a significant role in the bio-based green economy, which in our view is not in conflict with food production – we rather see them as complimentary.

The background paper on The State of Food and Agriculture focuses on the role of social protection in fighting hunger and extreme poverty. In our view emphasis should be placed on long-term solutions for social protection. We need an integrated and coherent approach, which links social protection with sustainable agricultural and rural development policies.

I thank you for your attention.