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**STATEMENT BY THE HON. GEORGE ODURO - DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE OF THE
REPUBLIC GHANA, AT THE 40TH FAO CONFERENCE IN ROME, JULY, 2017**

**AGENDA ITEM 9: REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE 2016:
THEME: CLIMATE CHANGE, AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

Chairperson of the Conference,

Director General of FAO,

Excellencies,

We bring you warm greetings from the Government and people of Ghana who appreciate the long standing partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization for the past 58 years.

Our statement is aligned with that of the G-77 and China and all the countries belonging to the Group that have delivered their statements.

Mr. Chairperson, we thank the FAO and partners for compiling the 2016 version of the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) under the theme “Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security”. Coming immediately after the successful outcomes of two landmark processes; the adoption of the SDGs by UN General Assembly and Agreements of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris (COP 21), this publication focus the much needed attention on the issue of Climate Change and its effect on the various sectors of the economies of countries and especially, agriculture, which has a direct bearing on the achievement of SDGs 1 and 2.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a well-known fact that of all continents of the world, Africa is the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate variability and change. This global challenge has the potential in rolling back much of the progress made on the development front.

Appreciating the enormity of the potential impacts of climate change on the continent, the Africa Union in its Agenda 2063 has resolved to participate in global efforts for climate change mitigation that supports sustainable development on the continent. The priority of Africa's effort in addressing the global challenge is adaptation of all our actions to climate change.

Mr. Chairman, Ghana has had its share of the effects of climate change; an erratic rainfall pattern, destructive downpours and widespread flooding, debilitating sunshine, extended dry spells, fire outbreaks, land degradation and threat of desertification, high tides, and pest infestations. We are currently battling a fall armyworm attack, a pest alien to our environment, and the implications for the farmers and country are enormous.

For a country that is heavily dependent on rainfall for its agriculture, the effects of climate change presents continuous challenges. The Ghana National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy indicates that, the total amount of rainfall are projected to decrease or experience great variability which will impact crop production and the livelihood of many in the rural areas.

Mr. Chairman, we do recognise the importance of partnership and collaboration at both country and international levels towards mitigating and adapting to climate change and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture is working closely with other Agencies in this regard.

Early 2016, the Ministry, working with national and international partners, launched a five-year Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security (CSA) Action Plan covering the period 2016 to 2020. This plan will serve as a vehicle for the implementation of the Agriculture and Food Systems Strategies of the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP).

In response to this, various policies are set to be implemented towards enhancing agricultural production and productivity and especially towards achieving climate resilient agriculture. The government is set to roll out the community owned and managed small scale irrigation facilities under the “one village one dam” programme, to guarantee water availability for all-year round agricultural production (crop, livestock and fisheries) across the most vulnerable ecologies of the country. That is just one of many planned interventions. The rehabilitation of existing public irrigation schemes together with developing new ones, especially in the Afram Plains, the Northern Savannah and areas along the spillage path of the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso, are set to be rolled out.

The Government of Ghana recognizes the importance of Science, Technology and Innovation in our efforts at adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change. It is also very important to draw on the tried and tested indigenous knowledge that reside with indigenous communities.

Information, especially in relation to the weather, and other factors of production and distribution of food is crucial in Ghana’s agriculture. It is therefore the focus of the government to ensure the

revamping of the extension service and the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to complement information sharing amongst all actors.

Research and Development will also remain key in government's effort to continuously address the impacts of climate change in general and specifically in agricultural development.

In our national efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, we have worked closely with the FAO and other partners to undertake various programmes, an agenda which we will continue to prosecute. Ghana is currently participating in the FAO implemented project titled "Support transition towards CSA food systems". We are also implementing an FAO Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) on "Resilient Landscapes for Sustainable Livelihoods". All these are assisting us to develop appropriate strategies to adapt to climate variability and change. We believe that other countries have also benefited.

Recognising the potential challenges of the effects of climate change on food security, the government has taken steps to commence the implementation of a programme known as "Planting for Food and Jobs". The programme is designed to encourage all citizens (both urban and rural) to take up farming as a full or part-time activity as a step towards achieving household food security and eventually national food security. The programme also has a job-creation objective along the agriculture value chain that is aimed at encouraging those not gainfully engaged in the labour market to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the agricultural sector to earn a decent livelihood. The programme is initially targeted at value chains of the major staples; maize, rice and sorghum together with soybean and vegetables. The plan is to include other crops in subsequent years.

Ladies and gentlemen, in concluding, we do acknowledge that climate change poses a major and growing threat to food security. We also acknowledge that climate change does present greater opportunities for action. There is therefore an urgent need for action to make our agriculture sector climate-smart and to maximize the benefits that come along with the changing climate to improve the food security situation of Africa and our individual countries.

We thank you for your cooperation and attention