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**Statement by Ms Harriet M. Nduma, Deputy Permanent Representative to FAO,
on behalf of Mr Willy Bett, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock
and Fisheries of the Republic of Kenya**

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Thank you Mr Chairperson,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to speak as the last speaker and therefore, I will be very brief.

Let me, Mr Chairman, clarify that I am making this statement on behalf of Mr Willy Bett, the Cabinet Secretary in charge of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries of the Republic of Kenya who would have loved very much to be here with us for this important meeting. Unfortunately, he was not able to join us at the last minute. Therefore, I read the statement as the Cabinet Secretary would have done.

Mr Chairperson, the theme of the Conference aligns the link between the three most important issues of our time, agriculture, food security, and climate change. Kenya is a classical case where the three issues have showed ramifications, especially in arid, semi-arid areas in our region, leading to food insecurity and conflict. Agenda 2030, therefore, underpins the importance of addressing these interlinked issues for promotion of sustainable development and growth of livelihoods. Indeed, the envisioned sustainability where agriculture is expected to play a critical role is a priority if climate change and the resultant impacts are not addressed urgently and in a holistic manner.

Since 1970 for Kenya, we have experienced a total of 41 major floods affecting approximately 6.9 million people. We have also experienced 20 major droughts affecting to date a total of 47 million people. And furthermore, between 2008 and 2011, an estimated USD 6.9 billion in livestock losses, and another USD 1.2 billion in crop losses were experienced under the same period. Over the past 12 years, the government of

Kenya has spent an average of USD 42 million per year on weather-induced disaster relief funding.

Chair, as you may be aware, this year Kenya experienced one of the worst droughts that has left so far about 3.2 million people extremely food insecure. Subsequently, on 10th of February the same year, Kenya declared the ongoing drought in the country a national disaster. Last year, the seasonal rains have been highly depressed and erratic. This has resulted in declined crop and animal production and productivity. Successive failed seasons have equally eroded and reduced livelihoods through livestock deaths and failed crop harvests which has cumulatively precipitated to acute shortage of common food staples, escalating food prices, and general increase in cost of living.

Effects of poor climatic conditions notwithstanding, as we gather here today, Kenya is battling infestation of fall armyworms, a new pest in Kenya. But I am gratified to note that there will be a side event on this very important issue. Kenya will make its contribution at the side event. The erratic nature of the 2017 March to May rainfall has provided favorable conditions for the rapid spread of the pest which has already attacked about 200,000 hectares of the current maize crop and another 650,000 hectares is under threat. The government of Kenya has already disbursed funds to the tune of USD 244 million to respond to the drought. A further USD 216 million is required to sustain ongoing interventions until the end of this year. It is at this juncture that we call the international community to assist Kenya in combatting this menace. Besides, Kenya has also put in place various mechanisms to look at the regional level and the impacts of the drought in the Horn of Africa in particular.

Indeed, as a country of the Horn of Africa, Kenya and countries like Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, we are hugely affected by the impact of climate change. As well, besides having the following programs to be able to make relevant interventions, we require support in the areas of food and safety net programs, access of water resources, livestock support to cushion pastoralists, and support for the various ongoing conflict management initiatives to ensure sustainability.

Mr Chairperson, for Kenya, these issues and the theme of this meeting are not just topics for discussion but they are real challenges confronting us currently and we require a lot of partnerships and support for all of us. Only last month Kenya successfully hosted the Ministerial Conference on Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition whose focus was catalyzing agriculture's transformation for inclusive growth and the theme of harnessing

the demographic dividend through investment and food and nutrition data. The Conference sought to mobilize high level political support to ensure availability, accessibility, and disability of data for agricultural planning and decision-making in the global south. As a country, we are committed to improving our data and information system to enhance informed decision-making.

Chair, Kenya joins the international community in our collective effort of ensuring Zero Hunger in the world, and particularly in Africa. At the national level, the government of Kenya has identified rangelands as an important resource for livelihoods of pastoralists who are dependent on livestock. More than 70 percent of Kenya is classified as ASAL area. Rangelands are facing degradation due to increased pressure from both livestock and humans and changes in the climate conservation management and protection of rangelands. It is in this regard that the government will soon be proposing that we observe an International Year for Rangelands and Pastoralists.

The government, in partnership with our development partners, and indeed with FAO has targeted over 250,000 households with provision of livestock feeds, distribution of water tanks, agricultural insurance, and other emergency and resilience-building strategies. Our partners are also supporting us. In this regard, I would like to appreciate the role of FAO in promoting climate-smart agriculture that targets to intervene and improve resilience to climate change risks in targeted smallholder farmers and pastoral communities in Kenya, and in the event of an eligible crises or emergency, provided effective and immediate response.

Moreover, Kenya is promoting aquaculture development to enhance food security and nutrition by embracing climate-resilient technologies that ensure water and land use in an effective manner. In this regard, we also wish to appreciate the role of FAO and other international partners in this regard. We appreciate that all of us collectively, together with the UN System and development partners, we are fighting food insecurity and drought in our region.

FAO since 1977 has greatly grown its Country Programme Portfolio. Today, FAO is in the forefront of both development and emergency assistance to the countries' agriculture-related sectors and in our region. It is in this regard that we appreciate FAO's work of promoting youth engagement in agriculture to enhance food security as well as ensure employment opportunities for the young Kenyan population.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, let me underline the government of Kenya's commitment in enhancing our relationship with FAO and other partners in supporting our agricultural sector and the role of transformation. It is such efforts that will break the cycle of urban and rural poverty as well as hunger and hence achieve the ultimate goal of ending hunger and malnutrition.

I thank you all for your kind attention.