Thank you. It's a pleasure to be with you today. Thank you to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the invitation. It's an honor to share this podium and have the opportunity to share a few thoughts on the value and importance of data to meet our goals for food security and nutrition within the 2030 Agenda.

I want to take a moment to reflect on a statistic shared by Mr. Voorhies. He said 75% of 111 countries surveyed by FAO said they need assistance to produce at least one indicator under FAO's custodianship. This is a shockingly high number, but I'm not surprised because it resonates with what we find when sitting with government counterparts in ministries of agriculture, statistical offices and across government. In some of our most recent meetings in West Africa, hard-working officials responsible for monitoring agricultural performance expressed a sense of helplessness because they cannot supply the information decision-makers need. Why? The data they have is not accurate, it's not up to date, and sometimes it does not even exist.

My organization, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, was born out of the recognition that data is the foundation for the decisions that will enable us to achieve the SDGs. Without good data we're flying blind, implementing programs and policies like extension services, fertilizer subsidies, livestock and crop insurance without knowing if they're reaching the people who need them most or being used as effectively as possible.

Data can no longer be viewed as a technical issue that is best left to statisticians toiling in the backroom. Data needs to become a political priority that is addressed in a holistic and strategic way if it's going to help us design the policies that will reverse the worrying trends in global hunger. When data is an afterthought, we get piecemeal and unsustainable support for statistical capacity and the production of patchy, poor-quality data, which leads to decreased trust in and demand for data by policy makers, ultimately resulting in sub-optimal decisions and lesser progress.

If we think differently about investments in data, if we think strategically about investments in data, we can get there. Here are a few examples.

An investment in data is an investment in productivity. To protect the most vulnerable pastoralists in the drought-prone regions of Northern Kenya, the government is using survey data combined with satellite data to drive a livestock insurance program. When these data are layered together, the program can predict livestock mortality and trigger an insurance payout. Between 2014 and 2018, the program made payouts to 32,000 pastoral households who have seen significant increases in milk productivity with their

income from milk production doubling[1] in comparison with earlier periods. These households also saw fewer cases of child malnutrition.

From the global to the national to the sub-national and even to the household level we should be looking at how to make data a strategic priority for agriculture. What systems, tools, capacities and partnerships are required at each level? Within that strategy, how can stakeholders here in Rome ensure that global institutions are supporting the data needs of the agriculture and nutrition sector in the most strategic way?

There is already a lot of good work underway within FAO, including the 50x2030 initiative, and the other Rome-based agencies. This will go a long way to close the data gap.

The CFS is well-placed to build understanding on the need for a more strategic approach to data. The workstream on data collection and analysis tools offers an exciting opportunity. It provides a forum for member states, civil society and private sector to explore the evidence and define actions that could be taken at all levels to address the data challenge for food security and nutrition.

I very much look forward to seeing how this workstream develops and exploring other ways to make data work for food security and nutrition and to truly change lives. Thank you.

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[1] https://arefiles.ucdavis.edu/uploads/filer_public/4f/8a/4f8a8145-71ae-414a-8c88-ad507db22464/ibli_hsnp_2014_12_19.pdf