

Her Excellency Lyudmila Nizhevich

Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Bureau. I would like to welcome everyone in this room. Belarus highly values the work of the FAO to insure food security around the world.

Now the agricultural sector is an important part of our economy and plays a very important role in our economic and social development. Every year the agricultural sector accounts for about 9% of our GDP, about 2.3 million people are involved in agriculture.

Now there are agricultural organizations and household farms. There are approximately 5,000 companies involved in agriculture. There are about 1,250 large farms with an average of about 5.5 hectares.

Overall, they use approximately 8 million hectares, however 1/3 of all gross productionism in individual land plots there are over one million such plots and although the share of such plots in production of grain, milk and meat does not exceed 15% in production of potatoes, fruits and vegetables, it is up to 80-90%.

Over the past few years, Belarus has been active in creating food production companies that span the whole agricultural cycle from production processing and logistics.

We have completely changed our approach to the development of rural areas and we have moved towards the concept of developing rural regions as a whole and developing infrastructure based on central principles. We are currently implementing the state program of sustainable development of rural communities for 2011-2015.

The main goals of the program are enhancing the economic performance of the agricultural agro-industrial complex and increasing exports, increasing income of rural population and making it more attractive to live in rural communities and insuring socioeconomic development.

The framework for the state program we are implementing 22 national and regional programs that cover all aspects of agricultural production. Over the past seven years, we have created more than one and a half thousand new types of agricultural settlements, agricultural towns and their infrastructure makes it possible to meet our standards for their population.

Now thanks to the work of the State, we have insured the food security of the country. Now we have to say that we are meeting our medical standards. We are producing per capita 108 kilos of meat, 687 kilos of milk, 396 eggs, and 815 kilos of potatoes.

The results of the monitoring of food security show that we are managing to meet our food security up to 83% food supplies. Today already we are moving towards an export oriented agricultural production. In 2012, we have exported goods worth five billion USD. That is 55% of the overall volume of agricultural production. About 65% of exports in meat and milk products, 75% of the cheese produced is sold outside the country, 74% of dry milk whey, 48% of beef, 21% of pork meat, and 32% of poultry. Exports are sent to over 50 countries around the world.

Last year this was expanded to include Vietnam, Qatar, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, Lithuania and Latvia.

Our main goal is to continue diversifying our export markets and promoting our production on markets around the world. To enhance the trust of consumers Belarusian producers are seeking to introduce quality control standards. As of the first of January of this year, an international quality control system was introduced.

Now we have also focused more and more on the green economy. We have developed a system of measures to enhance the technological potential of our economy. In other words, to continue developing our economy but on the principles of green economy.

Belarus is a fairly recent Member of FAO but we have been trying to be very active both for the benefit of the FAO and Belarus. Thanks to the FAO, Belarus has received access to very useful information, statistical data on agriculture, on forestry, fisheries and new technologies.

We are happy that the FAO administration has begun a process of rethinking the strategic approach of the Organization and focusing its efforts on areas where it has a natural advantage. We also support the decision by the FAO to grant Russia the status of official language which has made it possible to exchange information and facilitate our Membership in the Organization.

I would like to thank the administration for the understanding in concluding technical assistance agreement with Belarus. We hope that this agreement will provide further impotence to our cooperation aimed an insuring our common goal, that is food security and enhancing the well-being of our people.

Thank you very much.