



[As delivered]

Statement on behalf of the European Union

**39th session of the FAO Conference
(Rome, 6-13 June 2015)**

Item 10: Review of the state of food and agriculture

Mr Chairperson,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

The candidate country to the EU Turkey aligns itself with this statement.
2. We thank FAO for the preview of the State of Food and Agriculture 2015 (SOFA 2015) with its update on trends and issues relating to poverty, in particular rural poverty, and undernutrition.
3. We welcome the theme of the SOFA 2015. The links between social protection and productive support deserve more attention in the years to come. While the two policy tracks are usually developed and implemented independently, their potential synergies and complementarities call for closer interaction, with a view to accelerating the reduction of rural poverty.
4. Further analysis should consider the relationship between social policy and food security. This important issue has been discussed by the CFS during its 39th session in 2012, based on an HLPE report.
5. The EU and its Member States are the major providers of global assistance for rural development, food security and nutrition. In the context of the EU's food security policy, social transfers are regarded as an important tool that is used to increase resilience and reduce food and nutrition insecurity.
6. In 2012 alone, the EU and its Member States spent at least €210 million on 94 programmes in 40 countries to strengthen social safety nets for food and nutrition security (to which relevant emergency interventions, and corresponding funds, could be added).
7. In the light of our experience with these programmes, we share the FAO analysis that 'Social protection can effectively reduce poverty and food insecurity, build resilience, and help catalyse agricultural and rural development'. We call for greater efforts to provide coverage for the poorest, especially in rural areas.

8. Initially, most of these programmes focussed on conditional social transfers, and we see a gradual integration of these social transfers into wider social protection programmes. Within such a "comprehensive approach" the role of partnerships and task division is crucially important. FAO could be part of such partnerships, where appropriate, but always within its core mandate related to food and nutrition security.
9. As has been stated in the SOFA preview, the relative weight of social protection versus other measures designed to alleviate food insecurity and malnutrition remains an open question. This has implications for agriculture policy choices and budgetary allocations in many countries, keeping in mind policy coherence. Building more knowledge to assist decision making in this respect would be welcome.
10. We look forward to the launch of the 2015 SOFA report and to further analysis and discussions on the links between social protection, rural production and food security. As this topic encompasses fields outside the FAO's traditional areas of responsibility, we expect that this work will be undertaken in close cooperation with a range of partners, both within and outside the UN institutions.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.
