

**Statement delivered by**  
**Ms Marieta Stepanyan**  
**Alternate Permanent Representative of Armenia**  
**on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)**  
**4 July 2023**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Armenia values its long-standing cooperation with FAO in all the areas of the Organization's mandate.

Over the past three decades FAO has been the trusted partner of the Government of Armenia in implementing reforms in the areas of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, aimed at improving rural livelihoods and food security in our country.

Currently Armenia implements a number of promising projects in collaboration with FAO, aimed at improving sustainable land management and restoration of degraded landscapes in Armenia, forest cover increase and sustainable forest management, as well as strengthening capacities for improving climate action for building resilience in agriculture.

Particularly, within the project on Technical assistance of land policy and land management instruments the draft Law on "Increasing effectiveness of utilization of agricultural land" was developed to facilitate the reduction of the abandoned land, to reduce the level of land fragmentation, to develop agricultural land market and to implement measures for effective use of agricultural land.

Ensuring food security is among the crucial components of the national security of Armenia. Numerous legal acts have been adopted to ensure the food security system.

We attach great importance to the project on deployment of digital technologies in Armenia, launched in January 2023, aimed at making rural communities more attractive, smart and sustainable.

With respect to the main topic of the Conference: water is at the heart of everything we do, I can state that Armenia is self-sufficient country with its water resources. This said however, investing in water security means thinking long-term, and we need to build our capacity to respond to the water security risks appropriately. And to this end we rely on the support of FAO in identifying and targeting the challenges with tailor-made projects.

Fish farming is another area of a strategic importance for our country, as fish farms can be established not only in the lowland areas, but also in the sub-mountainous and even mountainous areas and especially in the border villages, where it can be considered as the only profitable sector. The climate conditions of the Republic of Armenia are quite favorable for industrial fish farming, especially for breeding and growing of salmonids and sturgeons, and as a result of the targeted use of the groundwater it is possible to organize the production of commercial fish in all seasons. Currently over 170 fish farming enterprises are registered in Armenia, with a production of about 17,000-18,000 tons of commercial fish annually. Frozen, as well as processed fish and caviar are exported from the Republic of Armenia to a number of countries.

We highly appreciate the emergency humanitarian assistance that FAO has been providing to conflict affected vulnerable groups in Armenia, displaced as a result of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Unfortunately, in the result of the 6 months -blockade of Lachin corridor - the only road linking Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and the outside world, the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh has extremely aggravated, leaving 120,000 Armenian population without food and medicine. The disruption of gas and electricity supply to Nagorno-Karabakh yielded massive cutting of trees, which in turn caused deforestation. After months of interruption in the supply of electricity

and gas, the Sarsang Water Reservoir is reaching critically low levels due to the release of large amounts of water to power hydroelectric stations and meet the energy needs of the people of Nagorno Karabakh. Shallowing of the Sarsang reservoir will have serious environmental consequences for the entire ecosystem of the region. According to estimations, it will take several years to restore Sarsang's waters to the pre-blockade levels.

We are of a strong opinion that the status of this region does not make the people who live there any different from us all. And Armenia, as responsible FAO member and partner is hopeful that the humanitarian crises in Nagorno-Karabakh will be addressed in accordance with the goal 2 of the 2030 agenda.

Armenia is committed to working with FAO and all the partners towards attaining the goals of the Organization, unreservedly respecting its steadfast principle of Leaving no one behind.

Thank you.