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Statement delivered by

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on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)**

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Madam Chair, Ireland fully aligns itself with the joint statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Let us be clear, the impacts of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine are felt far beyond Ukraine's borders. Millions of people who are already enduring hunger, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, conflict, disease, and the global impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic, risk being plunged into acute food insecurity as a result.

Water is essential for human life. Safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, and prevention of malnutrition are fundamentally connected. The prudent use of water is an essential factor in the transformation of global food systems, including the sustainable production of crops and livestock. This will be an important topic for discussion in the Food Systems Summit Stocktake later this month.

The impact on rural communities on the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine highlights the critical importance of water for agriculture. The destruction of a vital water and irrigation infrastructure has dealt a devastating blow to food security in Ukraine and beyond; with some estimates indicating that it will take 10 years or more to rebuild and to refill the dam to its previous levels.

In Ireland, we acknowledge the critical importance of water management in our own national food systems strategy, Food Vision 2030. This strategy has, as a key objective, the enhanced protection of our waters, including surface waters, from agricultural, forestry, and urban and industrial pollution. It also commits to reduce the risk of agricultural risk of pesticides impacting water, particularly drinking water, in terms of safety and the health of the aquatic environment.

In 2014, Ireland along with Kenya, co-chaired the final intergovernmental negotiations for the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, Sustainable Development Goal #6 commits the 193 signatory countries to achieve, amongst other targets, universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, and to implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

With less than seven years left to 2030, Ireland calls on FAO of the United Nations to redouble its efforts, to partner with Member States for the delivery of all the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal #6 by providing appropriate and country-specific integrated water management and technical support and advice.

Madam Chair, thank you.