

**Statement delivered by
Mr Fredrik Alfer
Director, Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure of Sweden
on the occasion of the
43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)
4 July 2023**

Chairperson, thank you.

We align ourselves with the statement of the European Union delivered by Spain. Let me begin by thanking FAO for the Organization's vital and much appreciated work on food and agriculture in the past. The evidence compiled by FAO often in collaboration with other parts of the United Nations system provide an essential knowledge base for informed policy and decision making.

In these troubling times in which conflicts, economic crisis and climate change intersect and drive rising global food insecurity, reports such as the *Global Report on Food Crisis* produced by the Global Network Against Food Crises and the *Hunger Hotspots Report* issued by FAO and WFP are invaluable tools for efficient Government action and response. FAO's analysis and reporting on global food prices and commodity markets are equally essential.

Sweden welcomes making water resource management FAO's by annual theme for 2024-2025. This is particularly timely and provides and an opportunity to build on the momentum generated by the United Nations Water Conference that was held in March of this year. Considering the projected increase of fresh water demand and that the agricultural sector is the world's largest water user, the importance of FAO's work on integrated water resource management is almost impossible to overstate.

The European Union's recently adopted priorities for its work with FAO, which were developed and adopted under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, also highlights integrated resource management including water as well as the need to find solutions to multiple and transparency water challenges. FAO with its broad mandate is uniquely placed and suited to respond to address those challenges and to find solutions with concerted efforts with the wider United Nations family and other partners.

Echoing the statement delivered by Spain, Sweden deplores the severe increase of food insecurity caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The invasion has devastating effects on agriculture and as was made acutely obvious by the attack on the Nova Kakhovka Dam, water resource management and infrastructure as well. We fully share FAO's deep concern about the impact of the destruction of the Dam on agriculture, fishery, forestry, rural communities and rural livelihoods. We welcome FAO's participation in the United Nations post disaster needs assessment and the rapid assessment of the damage and losses in the agricultural sector.

In conclusion Sweden reiterates its strong support to FAO and underlines the importance of integrated water resource management. Indeed water is the life blood of the Earth and a central component to the entire 2030 Agenda.

Thank you Chair.