

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Your Excellencies,

For the sake of time there is no need to stress in this audience the intensity of the problem of food security. A problem made severe every day due to wars, social unrest, weather conditions and climate changes, thus making our work here today more urgent.

Agricultural markets also have frequent repercussions on the prices of farm inputs and food. All participants in the agri-food chain are affected, including the consumers. Farmers and rural communities are often further affected due to limited access to public goods, market access, access to innovations among others. Institutional and capacity building can mitigate the repercussions and encourage the development of sustainable local communities. Investment to these communities should be encouraged via the most appropriate for the local economy, production and population financial schemes, such as micro-financing, groups of production, cooperatives, innovation partnerships among others.

Experience gained from substantial work undertaken at the FAO level, as well as work in progress in the Committee for Food Security can contribute to the fight of hunger and malnutrition in both developing and developed countries. Investment in agriculture is also a factor of paramount importance for food and nutrition security and development. Work on the subject should continue being a matter of priority.

Investing particularly in breeding seeds should be a priority. Improving locally well-adapted varieties by making use of currently available genomic technologies is the best way to achieve the goal of food security in a sustainable way with limited inputs and money availability.

Investing in Agriculture, particularly in knowledge and innovation, this is what we are doing back in our country to get out of the economic crisis that Greece has experienced lately. We use Agriculture as the major pillar, together of course with tourism, to get out of the crisis. As I had the opportunity to inform you during our last meeting, we have assigned a high priority on Research and Innovation. Indeed, young scientists with doctoral or post-doctoral experience or graduate degree holders along with young educated farmers found working positions funded by the State or European funds. Their mandate is to work for further advancing sustainable rural development and Agricultural Growth.

Dear Colleagues,

While productivity growth and innovation are of paramount importance, trade and the functioning of the markets have also been recognized as major aspects for the management of unstable food prices. Moreover, the role of smallholders in value added chains, particularly climate change effects, could contribute significantly not only to financial sound and sustainable rural communities, but also encourage young and more educated people to enter agricultural production. Substantial amount of work has been completed on the subject of risk assessment and management internationally. Further cooperation on the subject at multilateral level could provide the appropriate tools for improving our practices, providing at the same time a shield against price volatility for both farmers and consumers.

Thank you very much for your attention.