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Statement delivered by

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Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Colleagues.

The most important task facing FAO is to get rid of the obstacles which are on the road to completing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, *The Eradication of Hunger and Increasing Food Security and Promoting Sustainable Development in Agriculture*.

I would like to draw attention to the conclusions reached by the United Nations in a document coming out of the summit on sustainable development. They said that economic sanctions and universal coercive measures imposed on some countries by the West were an obstacle in the way of achieving SDG 2. FAO, at its 75th session, agreed to look at this problem as being a serious one and decided to carry out a study on the results of universal coercive measures on achieving food security. However, unfortunately, since the decision was taken, absolutely no work has been done on this issue.

We call upon all states who are working to increase their own food security to offer support to what FAO is trying to do to work against the effects of unilateral, economic and coercive measures and sanctions. We urge all delegations to take part in the special event which will be on the influence of such measures on food security and nutrition of the population, to be held on 3 July and say a strong no to such illegal measures, and their imposition.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to illustrate the influence of such illegal economic sections by giving you a specific example which affects the interests of many developing countries. Belarus is one of the major producers of fertilizers which has soared around the world over the last few years. A lot of these fertilizers produced in Belarus were purchased by African countries. We all know that prices have risen since 2022, mainly as a result of the decision taken by the European Union (EU) to prevent the transit of Belarusian fertilizers through its territory. We might be able to get technology which would help us to bring the price down, but unfortunately that is impossible as a result of Lithuania and other countries of the EU preventing us from using their ports. If we had a shorter maritime route to Africa, we would be able to provide farmers in that continent with the less expensive fertilizers as we did in previous years.

We want to provide Africa with better conditions for access to fertilizers but that is not something we are in a position to do today unfortunately, but the more these illegal restrictions on the export of Belarusian fertilizers is something that is having, as I have just described, a negative effect on farmers who are a very long way from Belarus and Europe. Using food problems as a weapon is unacceptable and we have seen the EU in the past is still doing it, and it is causing considerable harm to developing countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, using such sanctions to put pressure on other countries, and as I say, it is done by countries in the EU and the West, is affecting the provision of good food and nutrition to many countries.

We want those people who live in these other countries to have access to good nutrition and food, and we can indeed produce a lot of what they need at home in Belarus. A very clear example of what I am seeing is the joint work we have been doing with Zimbabwe to mechanize agriculture in that country.

Over the last few years, our technology has made it possible for Zimbabwe to bring in record levels of a cereal harvest. We have also helped them to set up their processing industries. Just a few days ago, we provided Nigeria as a result of our bilateral roadmap on increasing cooperation in agriculture for the next five years. Quite a lot of technology – tractors, combined harvesters, etc. – and we are also helping them to use the technology and are planning to set up joint enterprises.

The same kind of mutual beneficial cooperation exists between us and other countries, and we would be happy to set it up with any states interested.

We come as friends. We want to help the countries solve their problems on the basis of a mutually acceptable approach, and in any way which is acceptable to the governments of the countries concerned.

Thank you very much for your attention.