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Department of International Cooperation

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Speech of Mr. Jan Krzysztof Ardanowski, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, at the 43rd Session of the IFAD Governing Council

Discussion of Delegates to the Council during the inaugural session – theses to be used

Investing in sustainable food systems to eliminate hunger in 2030

11 February 2020, 11:00 a.m., Rome

According to the IFAD guidelines, speeches should focus on experience in supporting sustainable, efficient, nutritious and inclusive food systems to achieve sustainable development goals, especially SDG2, eliminate hunger, achieve food security and better nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased that for the first time I am speaking to you as a representative of an IFAD Member State. Poland wants to join in the efforts of the IFAD to meet the global challenges of the agricultural and food sector. Referring to the subject of this debate, I would like to highlight the following issues.

Proposed theses of the speech

One of the most important global challenges in the 21st century is ensuring food security. This was reflected in both the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and European Union and national strategies. The documents emphasise the need to eliminate hunger and improve nutrition of the most vulnerable people, wherever such phenomena occur in the world, and the need to fight the root causes of conflicts, such as inequality, climate change or resource deficit.

Unfortunately, the challenges that we are facing in the context of achieving the goals of sustainable development, including Goal 2. – “zero hunger,” are currently very large. Due to the increase in world food prices, only between 2015 and 2018 the number of malnourished people in the world increased by 35 million to the level of 820 million in 2018, especially in countries dependent on food imports. On the other hand, the expected rapid growth of the world's population – exceeding 9 billion by 2050 – may result in increased competition for access to limited resources, such as water, energy and natural resources.

Eradication of hunger and poverty by 2030 will not be possible without changes in the production, distribution and consumption of food. An evolution is needed towards sustainable food systems which are more efficient and more resilient to climate change. To do this, it is necessary for countries to provide adequate financial support for farmers, while countries which do not have the resources to carry out such changes on their own should receive assistance. According to estimates of the FAO, in order to eliminate hunger in the next 15 years, additional investments of \$160 a year per person living in extreme poverty will be needed.

However, on behalf of Poland, the country that feels great respect for freedom and democracy, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that any aid granted to the countries affected by poverty may not be dependent on the adoption of any ideology. Forcing African countries to the adoption of gender, abortion, sterilization or euthanasia ideology and making the aid dependent on these ill forms behaviour that are not part of these countries' tradition must be strongly opposed.

Support for the transition to sustainable food systems concerns all interrelated activities in the field of production, processing, transport, storage and

consumption, and marketing of food. The role of global consumption trends is also recognised as a factor influencing the way food is produced and the types of food produced.

The evolution of food systems should be accompanied by efforts to raise public awareness of the principles of healthy nutrition. Healthier eating habits reduce the risk of diet-related diseases, lower health care costs and slow down the reduction of worker efficiency in the economy.

Food systems affect the climate, inevitably remaining under its influence. Climate change will affect the availability of basic natural resources (water, soil), which will lead to significant changes in the conditions of food and industrial production in some areas. Extreme climatic conditions, such as floods, droughts, soil erosion, fires and strong winds, as well as further climate-related spread of plant and animal diseases are already affecting food production, and their impact will increase in the future.

Therefore, when taking measures related to the creation of sustainable food systems in order to eliminate world hunger and achieve related sustainable development goals, the following issues should be taken into account in particular:

1. Promoting resource-efficient and climate change-resilient food production.
2. Promoting the reduction and prevention of food waste.
3. Promoting healthier and more balanced nutrition.
4. Promoting local food systems.
5. Fighting animal and plant diseases to increase the resistance of the food system.
6. Food self-sufficiency.

7. The role of investment in scientific research.

In the era of hunger and malnutrition still prevailing in the world, respect for food gains particularly significant dimension. Food waste has negative social, economic and ecological effects. A food product entails production, packaging, transport, energy and industrial waste emissions. Discarded food means wasted huge amounts of water and energy used for its production, transport, storage and preparation. Food waste has a negative impact on the environment – 8% of greenhouse gas emissions heat our planet because of our waste, and 30% of the world's cultivated area produces food that is wasted anyway. At the same time, 25% of water necessary for entire agriculture is used to produce this wasted food.

In Poland large stores and wholesalers must conclude a contract with a selected NGO and give it food (products which are withdrawn from the sale but still fit for consumption) for free. Since 1 March 2020, regulations will be sharpened and sellers will have to pay for every kilogram of wasted food. The provisions of the Act imposed on food sellers, i.e. shops, wholesalers, the obligation to conduct educational and information campaigns for rational food management and prevention of food waste. Shops have five months to sign the first contract with a non-governmental organisation which will manage food. Sellers will not be able to give expired or spoiled food, but only products still fit for consumption, e.g. with damaged packaging or a short expiry date. Non-compliance with this requirement will result in high fines.

Another solution aimed at preventing food waste in Poland is the possibility of deducting VAT by all donors giving food to a Public Aid Association from October 2013. This applies to food producers, but also distributors, wholesalers, restaurateurs and catering companies.

So far, anti-food waste regulations have been introduced, among others, in Italy, France, the Czech Republic and Belgium. Larger and larger number of countries are undertaking initiatives to raise public awareness of the causes and consequences of food waste, how to reduce this negative trend and promote a scientific and civic culture focused on the principles of sustainable development and solidarity. In the modern world, consumption determines the level and quality of life of society when it should become one of the elements of human socialisation by the acceptance of certain norms and rules regarding socially responsible consumption and the use of goods and services with respect for the environment.

I hope that Polish experience of creating sustainable food systems will be an inspiration for you. Once again, I would like to emphasise that in order to move to sustainable food systems, extensive cooperation between international organisations, countries and the involvement of as many entities as possible is necessary. The IFAD should play an important role in investing in sustainable food systems, due to many years of experience – both its own and of its Member States – in combating global hunger.