



Remarks

by

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Under-Secretary-General

High Representative

for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

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at a

Side Event on “Toward a hunger-free world, with adequate nutrition for all”

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Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Food Security is not only one of the basic human rights; but it is also very much a health and development issue. Vulnerable groups including women, children, disabled and the aged are more affected where there are price increases and access to food is difficult.

Sustainable Development Goal 2 to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” is therefore of central importance to achieving sustainable development and human wellbeing.

Hunger and food security are of paramount concern to the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, due to the specific circumstances and vulnerabilities of these countries.

In LDCs, the agricultural sector comprises an important part of GDP and on average is responsible for 60 per cent of the employed population. The high share of expenditure of the poor on food and their reliance on agriculture for their livelihoods makes them especially vulnerable to poverty and hunger. For example, in 2015, 22 per cent of the LDC population lived with hunger. Furthermore, the high vulnerability of LDCs to climate change can jeopardize hard won development gains. Cyclone Enawo, which hit Madagascar in March 2017, affected half a million people, and destroyed more than 40,000 houses, and in some areas, 85 per cent of planted crops.

LLDCs are also highly vulnerable to climate change, climate variability, land degradation, desertification and drought. Most agricultural land in LLDCs is arid and semi-arid, characterized by high variability in rainfall. Many LLDCs also have a very concentrated export base, centred on a few primary agricultural exports. Farmers’ incomes are exposed to commodity and food price fluctuations, climate change effects and natural disasters.

SIDS are primarily net food-importing countries, and highly vulnerable to climate change, extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion and ocean acidification. Many face the burden of malnutrition. To respond to these challenges, the SAMOA Pathway called for a global action programme on food security and nutrition in SIDS, which was developed by FAO, DESA and OHRLLS and officially launched at the 40th session of the FAO Conference in Rome this July. This initiative addresses pressing challenges related to food security, nutrition and the im-

pacts of climate change, but its implementation will need sustained action at the local, national, regional and global levels.

For the LDCs, LLDCS and SIDS, addressing nutrition and food security go hand-in-hand. If we do not arrest further climate change and scale-up adaptation projects, hard won development gains can be lost in a matter of hours, as we have tragically seen in several recent cases.

Thank you.
