STATEMENT BY
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TO THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
CANADIAN STATEMENT ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

NEW YORK, 28 OCTOBER 2013

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DÉCLARATION DE
ANAR MAMDANI
CONSEILLER (DEVELOPPEMENT)
DE LA MISSION PERMANENTE DU CANADA AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES

À LA DEUXIÈME COMMISSION DE LA 68È SESSION
DE L’ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DES NATIONS UNIES
DÉCLARATION DU CANADA SUR L’AGRICULTURE ET LA SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE

NEW YORK, LE 28 OCTOBRE 2013
Canadian Statement on Agriculture and Food Security to be delivered on October 28, 2013 at the UN Second Committee, New York

Mr. Chair,

We all recognize that food security is complex and multi-dimensional, and that providing access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food in developing countries contributes to improved health, better education, and greater economic opportunities.

The recently released State of Food Insecurity in the World Report tells us that there has been some progress in reducing the number of hungry people in the world. While this is good news, the report also tells us that the number remains unacceptably high, and that the rate of progress is insufficient to reach international goals of hunger reduction.

A total of 842 million people, that is one in eight people in the world, are suffering from chronic hunger. We will need to keep agriculture high on the international development agenda in order to address current and future food security and hunger challenges.

Canada is uniquely placed to respond to these challenges by bringing to the world stage, decades of experience in agricultural development, and through our international Food Security Strategy. The Strategy applies a comprehensive approach to meet the needs of vulnerable populations by focussing on sustainable agricultural development, food assistance and nutrition, and research and development. We are proud that our investments in food security and nutrition are helping communities address their immediate food needs, while also putting durable solutions in place that help people to rise out of the cycle of poverty.

The shift of the world’s development focus to nutrition is an important contributing factor to saving the lives of women and children, and improving their health. This is why under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, Canada made nutrition one of the focal interventions for addressing maternal and newborn child health under the Muskoka Initiative. In addition, Canada has launched the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund, to support applied research in agricultural production, with emphasis on nutrition and innovation.

At the global level, Canada is playing a leading role with such platforms as the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, and the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. Through the New Alliance, Canada has been: assisting African farmers to improve their yields and sell their crops; strengthening and deepening food security programming in Ghana, Ethiopia and Malawi; and developing a new Canadian-led initiative to support innovative nutrition research and technologies with the International Fund for
Agricultural Development. Canada has also committed funding to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) to support the implementation of country-led investment plans in agriculture, food security and nutrition.

Agriculture development is a key driver of food security and sustainable economic growth. Making agriculture attractive as a business, especially for young entrepreneurs, is part of our efforts to make agricultural growth a driver of poverty reduction and increasing food security. Rural areas need to become centres of economic activity for young women and men, and this requires investment in rural infrastructure, training, and markets to create a robust agricultural sector that contributes to economic growth.

Responsible investment in agriculture has the power to improve nutrition and the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, but these national agricultural development strategies need to be based on the participation of smallholder farmers, and address the critical underlying issues of land governance.

The transformative value of agriculture to alleviate poverty requires a commitment to the basic tenets of private property protections, and a regulatory environment that seeks to encourage entrepreneurship rather than stifle it. Therefore it is important that contributions of all partners - governments, private sector and civil society be recognized in order to meaningfully address the challenges ahead in ensuring food security for all.

Thank you.