Statement

by

Delegation of Thailand to the United Nations

before the Second Committee

of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Agenda Item 25: Agriculture development,

food security and nutrition

New York, 28 October 2013

Please check against delivery
The delegation of Thailand wishes to align itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the statement made by the distinguished representative of the Philippines on behalf of ASEAN.

Food security remains a major global issue. According to FAO’s report on the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013, 842 million people in the world – around one in eight people – are still suffering from chronic hunger. The demand for agricultural products is inevitably increasing as the result of the growing world population. However, global food production and supply systems have been undermined by increasing volatility in the international commodity markets, partly as a consequence of climate change, water scarcity, soil degradation and urbanization.

Given that food insecurity is a complex phenomenon, some of its issues can potentially be addressed domestically, while much more remain in the hands of international efforts. The international community must, therefore, focus on how to address the challenges of food security in a more comprehensive manner. It is only through well-coordinated global efforts that the problem of food insecurity be tackled most effectively. Sharing of best practices on appropriate policy directions and having open discussion to exchange views and information are therefore necessary.

In our view, the challenges of food insecurity must be addressed in a holistic manner, both from the aspects of food availability and food accessibility. On the availability front, we believe that substantial gains in agricultural and food productivity can be realised through increased investment and technological improvement. The international community must continue its efforts to reverse a long decline in investment in agriculture. It is also important to support intensified research and development efforts in agriculture while remaining mindful of biodiversity.

Thailand attaches great importance to the advancement of the agricultural sector. We recognise the role of the agricultural sector in promotion of food security and poverty eradication, especially in the rural areas. We are currently implementing a national agricultural zoning program by mapping out areas around the country to identify suitable zones designated for each crop using satellite data. Based on such information, farmers are encouraged to plant crops that are most suitable for their respective areas. This will help increase revenues and production from agricultural products through greater productivity, cost reduction and more efficient use of land, as well as address the oversupply of certain agricultural products.

On food accessibility, amidst the current slow global economic recovery, many countries could resort to implementing growth-oriented policy that could induce protectionism and trade distortion. Hence, it is crucial that we remain committed to non-intervention policy to ensure free, fair and open international food market to the extent possible. My delegation looks forward to the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda which hopefully would ensure a fair agricultural market and a mechanism to redress market distortions including domestic support and export subsidies.

To cope with growing challenges in production and resource supply, sharing of reliable and updated information on production, consumption and food reserves can cushion the impact of food-price volatility. Thailand supports the mechanism to address food and agricultural market uncertainty such as the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). UN agencies, particularly FAO and UNIDO, can also play an important role on the coordination of national policies on agricultural development and food security to be more attuned to global trend.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm that promoting food security is central component to our international development policies. Thailand therefore supports the inclusion of food security as a key element for the post-2015 Development Agenda. Thailand is committed to improve the agricultural
sector, both in our country and in other developing countries, through providing various financial and technical initiatives. We stand ready to extend our contribution by sharing our experiences and expertise, particularly on sustainable agriculture and food production as well as to work with all partners to enhance global food security.

International Year of Soils and International Day of Soils.

As a major producer of agricultural product, we are fully aware that healthy and fertile soils are essential component to promote food security for all. We are concerned with the current soil degradation situation resulted in the reduction of agricultural productivity in many parts of the world. We firmly believe that it is necessary to have an enhanced strategy on resources conservation and management in order to prevent potential impacts from soil degradation.

In this connection, Thailand fully supports that the Second Committee and subsequently the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly to consider declaring the year 2015 as the International Year of Soils and designating the 5th of December as the World Soil Day to raise awareness on the importance of soil for food security, nutrition, essential eco-system functioning and sustainable development.

In closing, my delegation is of the view that in order to eradicate poverty and hunger, each country should incorporate food security and agricultural development comprehensively into their national development agenda. Thailand stands ready to extend our cooperation and share our experiences in this field. We look forward to working closely with the international community, the UN and other international organizations to address this serious and important global issue in a comprehensive manner.

I thank you.