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Statement

By:

Mr. Han Win Naing

Advisor to the Delegation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

On Agenda item 25: Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

At the Second Committee of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

(New York, October 2013)
Statement on Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his insightful and comprehensive reports on this agenda. My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Fiji on behalf of G77 and China and the Philippines on behalf of ASEAN respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

In the past 20 years, the international community has made great efforts in reducing global hunger. We are optimistic that if this trend continues, we will be able to achieve the first MDG target of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015. However, it is still sad to learn that 842 million people, about one in eight people in the world, still do not have enough food to lead active and healthy lives. Therefore, eradication of hunger continues to remain as a major global challenge. In this regard, Myanmar wishes to echo the world leader's voice at the Rio+20 Conference reaffirming the need to promote, enhance and support more sustainable agriculture that improves food security, eradicates hunger and is economically viable. Myanmar also welcomes the successful approval of two crucial documents at the 40th session of the Committee on World Food Security which was held in Rome last two weeks ago, endorsing the recommendations on investing in small-holder agriculture and on bio fuels and food security linkages.

Increasing agricultural productivity, sustainability, cutting food loss and waste, mitigating the impact of food price volatility, promoting nutritious diets and building resilience to shocks are key aspects to achieving food and nutrition security. There is an emerging consensus within the international community that actions along multiple dimensions are required to ensure food security. It is encouraging to note that some countries and multilateral organizations have adopted programmes in line with the Zero Hunger Challenge aiming to unite the global effort for food security and an end to hunger.

In addition, we are pleased to learn that progress in the movements of “Scaling Up Nutrition” encourages increased political commitment and programmatic alignment to reduce global hunger and under nutrition. Myanmar is of the view that continuous focus on addressing the problem of food security and the move towards sustainable agriculture, including increased food
production in developing countries, are essential issues in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and in the SDGs framework.

Mr. Chairman,

Agriculture has been turned into an increasingly market-driven sector rather than a policy-driven one. This shift offers developing countries important investment opportunities and economic benefits, the potential for expansion of production and their comparative advantage in many global markets. That is why providing market access to developing countries, particularly for agriculture products, is crucial under the multilateral trading system. In this regard, Myanmar wishes to strongly emphasize the necessity of a timely conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations and urge the outcome of the Bali Ministerial Conference to fully respect the development mandate and take into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

Production shortfalls, price volatility and trade distortions remain a threat to global food security. We note with caution that agricultural subsidies and other trade distortions by developed countries have severely harmed the agricultural sector in developing countries, limiting the ability of this key sector to contribute meaningfully to poverty eradication, rural development and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth. We firmly believe that elimination of such subsidies is a fundamental part of the global effort to promote agriculture, rural development and eradicate poverty and hunger.

Increasing agricultural production in a sustainable manner is central to meeting the nutritional needs of a growing world population, especially in developing countries, which will also contribute significantly to the poverty eradication efforts. Revitalization and diversification of agricultural production in developing countries are also vitally important for food security and sustainable development and will strengthen their capacity and performance to achieve MDGs.
Mr. Chairman,

The mainstay of Myanmar's economy is agriculture with about two-thirds of the population depending on it. Agriculture remains the largest contributor to the country's GDP. Myanmar is blessed with abundant natural resources including plentiful water supplies and vast agricultural lands favourable for production of various crops, livestock and fishery. The government of Myanmar has given top priority to the development of agricultural sector and uplifting the livelihood of the rural population with a view to alleviate poverty. The government has been undertaking a series of comprehensive reforms in agriculture, including enactment of land reform legislations, liberalization of market and mechanization of farming. In an effort to increase productivity, the government has been undertaking rural infrastructure development. In addition, the government is taking measures to give farmers greater access to affordable agricultural inputs and microfinance credit.

Myanmar is not only self-sufficient in food but also a leading exporter of rice and some other agricultural products such as pulses and beans. Notwithstanding this, medium and long term plans have been formulated for sustainable agricultural production with a view to ensuring food security for the increased population of Myanmar in the coming decades.

Mr. Chairman,

Myanmar fully subscribes to the need of transferring public financing and transfer of appropriate technology by developed countries in order to facilitate adoption of sustainable agriculture and to put in place the required infrastructure, communications and other enabling conditions in the developing countries. Myanmar is convinced that with the concerted and collective efforts of the international community, the Zero Hunger Challenge can serve as a platform to craft the new agenda for the future world with no hunger.

I thank you.