Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe

to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

ON THE

AGENDA ITEM 25:
"AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION"

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Check against Delivery
At the outset, I wish to associate myself with the statements delivered by Fiji and Ethiopia on behalf of the G77 and China and the African group respectively. Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item and we take note of them.

Mr. Chairman,

Since agriculture is the backbone of Zimbabwe's economy and also an engine for economic growth and poverty eradication, the Government of Zimbabwe has always prioritized the central role of agriculture in the country's national development policy. As a result, several policy measures have been undertaken to enhance the capacities of our farmers to improve national agricultural productivity and food security. Some of the measures being undertaken include land reform to empower more people by giving them access to land; establishment of schemes to assist smallholder farmers with agriculture inputs; the rehabilitation and setting up new irrigation facilities as well as the establishment of credit schemes to assist farmers with loans. The Government of Zimbabwe has also embarked on agriculture mechanization in order to ensure that our farmers use modern agricultural equipment and technology. Lastly, the Government of Zimbabwe is promoting investments in rural infrastructure particularly in the areas of transport and communication, energy and power development, water and sanitation.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe's efforts to improve its agricultural productivity and food security are being hamstrung by several factors, chief among them being climate change, limited financial resources and economic sanctions. Thus, the frequency and severity of droughts and floods continue to have devastating impacts on agriculture in Zimbabwe. The lack of adequate financial resources constrains the Government's ability to fully fund the sector. The economic sanctions imposed against Zimbabwe hamper access to finance, credit and markets. As a result of all these challenges, our farmers continue to produce well below their maximum potential.

Mr. Chairman,
Zimbabwe is deeply concerned about the growing decline of funding for agriculture development by international financial institutions as well as bilateral donors since 1990. Zimbabwe urges all cooperating partners to fulfill their commitments to support sustainable agriculture development in developing countries. We however stress the need for any such support to be depoliticized.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe is also deeply concerned that trade distorting agricultural subsidies of industrialized countries are squeezing farmers in developing countries out of international markets. We therefore call for unwavering political commitment by all countries to address the issue at the forthcoming 9th WTO Ministerial Meeting of the Doha Development Round to be held in Bali, Indonesia. Zimbabwe hopes that the negotiations will lead to sustainable and equitable reforms of policies governing global trade in agricultural commodities and the removal of trade barriers and tariffs on agriculture products from developing countries. We are of the firm view that developed countries should not only give aid to poor countries but must also open their markets to agriculture products from developing countries. What we need most as developing countries is better and enhanced access to international markets.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe calls for an agricultural trading system that guarantees fair prices to our farmers in a manner that contributes towards the economic empowerment of smallholder farmers, the rural people and their communities. We need a new approach to agriculture and international trade that prioritizes the food sovereignty, food security and the enhancement of rural livelihoods especially in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

International support is required to address the vagaries of climate change facing many developing countries whose economies are largely dependent on agriculture. In this regard, we ask developed partners timeously and generously to fund mitigation efforts foreseen in the Green Fund. Support is also needed to enhance the development of drought-tolerant and short-term season crop varieties in developing countries. Furthermore, the support of
development partners is needed in the rehabilitation and development of irrigation infrastructure as well as promotion of water harvesting and water conservation techniques.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Zimbabwe remains committed to upholding its responsibility of ensuring food security and food sovereignty for its people. The challenges we are encountering notwithstanding, we will continue to make sacrifices to support our farmers in order to enable them to increase agricultural productivity which is critical for economic growth, foreign currency earnings and employment creation.

I thank you.