

Statement by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the occasion of Habitat III Prepcom 2 (April 2015)

Distinguished co-chairs, ministers, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations acknowledges the global trend of urbanization that affects us all, and is committed to support the organization of Habitat III and the process of the development of the New Urban Agenda.

Food is one of the basic needs for humans. Yet, it is often marginalized or ignored in the decision making process for urban development. The importance of food security and nutrition cannot be overlooked in discussing human settlements and sustainable urban development. FAO's mandate to eliminate hunger and malnutrition applies to all citizens of the world, including the hundreds of millions of vulnerable people in the urban areas. Eliminating hunger and malnutrition within our lifetime is one of the goals that our Secretary General has set under the Zero Hunger Challenge which we support.

The increasing urban population will continue to be largely dependent on food produced in peri-urban and rural areas, as well as on the decreasing rural, and ageing farming population. 70% of the global food supply comes from small scale family farmers. This situation requires a balanced urban rural linkage approach, where appropriate investments are made across the rural urban landscape to improve food value chains, and where capacities are developed at all levels from farm to fork. Supporting youth and women's engagement in the food value chain is vital.

Urbanization also affect our diet, as urban populations tend to rely more on heavily processed and convenient foods, as well as animal products, moving away from traditional diets. This can have increasing negative impact on health and environment, with the rise of obesity and non communicable diseases as a consequence while hunger and malnutrition persists in many countries.

This commitment to improve nutritional status globally has been adopted by our member governments in the form of Rome Declaration on Nutrition at the 2nd International Conference on Nutrition held in Rome last year.

Waste management is another issue closely linked to food. Energy required for solid waste disposal is significant, and is a cause for green house gas emission. Recycling organic materials and nutrients back into the production process or green infrastructure is a viable solution.

Food is also dependent on the natural resources, namely land, water, forests and biodiversity. These natural resources are often used in competition with other development sectors, and not considered in the urban planning process. Land and watershed management go beyond the city boundaries, and must be considered in a broader geospatial approach. The Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure is a key instrument developed through a participatory, inclusive process that is available for all stakeholders. Agriculture, including

forestry and fisheries can be a way to preserve these natural resources, providing ecosystem services and increasing resilience to climate change, shocks and disasters.

Multi-dimensional approach to all of these issues through inclusive governance is key for success. This is what is envisioned in the city region food system approach, included in the issue paper no. 10 on urban rural linkages. We believe that food can be a common denominator or entry point to strengthening the urban rural linkage discourse and provide practical application.

In conclusion, we support the importance of the urban rural linkage in the post-2015 sustainable development goals under the human settlements goal number 11, and equally, in the development of the New Urban Agenda, which must be integrated and inclusive .

Thank you