

Statement

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Cancun, Mexico, 22-26 May 2017

Mr. Chair, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to make this statement on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It is timely to meet again here in Cancun to outline ways to speed up, intensify and scale up our efforts to turn the Sendai agreements into actions.

Sendai was a milestone indeed in paving the way for enhancing actions on disaster risk reduction through stronger sector involvement in resilience building. It called for more coherent development policies comprising food security, and highlighted the need to protect livelihoods and productive assets. Every year, natural disasters kill people and decimate livelihoods, leaving millions of people food insecure. Small-scale farmers, herders, fisher folks and forest-dependent communities are particularly vulnerable.

FAO's most recent Damage and Loss Assessment shows that in developing countries, agriculture absorbs about 23 percent of the economic impacts of natural hazards. In case of droughts this figure is even higher than 80 percent. In addition, **overlapping and/or concurrent shocks** arising from conflict and displacement aggravate losses and damages, pushing millions of people into destitution. In 2016 alone, about 108 million people worldwide were estimated to be in severe and acute food insecurity, of which nearly 10 million were facing famine – a drastic increase over the 80 million food-insecure people estimated in 2015. **El Niño** and other extreme climatic events contributed significantly to these increases. In the face of **climate change**, the need to build climate resilience of agricultural livelihoods becomes more urgent than ever.

Agriculture's exposure to the vagaries of the weather renders the sector particularly vulnerable to natural hazards (including extreme events) and climate variability and change. Therefore, we need to multiply our efforts to anticipate and reduce risk, prepare for and absorb shocks and mitigate their impact and losses as well as adapt our development pathways – especially in food and agriculture.

Mr. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The agriculture sectors (crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries) offer innovative solutions to tackle the root causes of risks, thereby protecting the livelihoods of some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people in the face of disasters, climate change and crises. Field evidence shows that, specific agricultural technologies for disaster risk reduction do perform on average 2.5 times better than usual practices under hazard conditions. It is crucial to enhance access and upscale those technologies.

Increasing the resilience of agricultural livelihoods to threats and crisis is at the core of our strategic programmes. In the past two years, FAO has increased its supports to countries in translating the Sendai Framework into actions that reduce risks and losses while promoting food security, nutrition, resilient and sustainable agriculture. In 2016, significant progress along the Framework's four pillars was achieved with FAO's support:

- Understanding risks: 32 countries improved their capacities for resilience and vulnerability analysis within the agriculture sectors, enhancing their understanding of disaster risks that threaten agricultural livelihoods;
- Governing risks - sectors were strengthened to manage disaster risk: and disaster risk reduction governance was improved in 27 countries through the formulation of sector specific strategies for disaster risk reduction and crisis management, while 12 countries designed agriculture-related investment programmes for disaster risk reduction;
- Investing in DRR for resilience: 57 countries proactively invested in promoting agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices that prevent and mitigate risks; and 28 countries implemented socio-economic measures to increase the resilience of agricultural communities;
- 89 threat monitoring systems were strengthened at global, regional and national levels, and 34 countries benefitted from FAO's work on promoting the uptake of early warning and emergency preparedness standards, guidelines and practices.

Disaster risk reduction is everyone's business. FAO is of the firm conviction that we need to increase our efforts to move from concept towards tangible delivery of services at all levels. We believe that:

- 1- The agriculture sector provides ample, yet largely untapped opportunities to promote the resilience of the most vulnerable on a much larger scale than at present.
- 2- Continuing to invest in data, analysis, information and early warning systems is the foundation for timely and informed decision-making. In addition to our corporate early warning services, FAO is working towards:

- developing countries' capacity to monitor the implementation of the Sendai Framework indicator C2. FAO is institutionalizing a global mechanism to monitor and report on damages and losses caused by disasters and crises to the agriculture sectors;
 - rolling out an innovative Early Warning-Early Action system in 30 disaster-prone countries over the next five years;
 - scaling up support on resilience and vulnerability mapping, measurement and analysis; and
 - generating greater evidence on the returns of investing in resilient agriculture practices.
- 3- Empowering local communities, men and women, as key actors in disaster risk reduction is vital. FAO continues to promote enhanced access to agricultural technologies and practices for reducing vulnerability and building resilience.
 - 4- Provision of regular funding for disaster risk reduction at national and international level is essential. DRR funds need to flow into national disaster management offices and key sectoral agencies in order to facilitate best possible outreach to the ultimate target groups. FAO ensures that disaster risk reduction is delivered as an integrated and essential element across field programmes and projects.
 - 5- Disaster risk and climate risk considerations should be addressed together within and across sectors. FAO is promoting, where possible, practices for disaster risk reduction that generate co-benefits for climate change adaptation and sustainable development, aiming for an integrated delivery at local level that addresses acute, underlying risks as well as reduce the creation of new disaster risks.
 - 6- Disaster and protracted crisis situations require stronger coordination between development work and humanitarian operations. FAO is supporting global and national efforts to identify more workable incentives and operational pathways to speed up coordinated support by various stakeholders and sectors.

As proactive member of the UN family working on DRR, FAO has contributed to the development of the UN Plan of Action (PoA) on DRR for resilience under UNISDR overall leadership. FAO is well advanced in implementing the plan in collaboration with sectoral agencies in more than 30 member countries as well as on DRR institutionalization within FAO.

FAO, in partnership with other stakeholders and agencies, also contributes to key initiatives such as the Climate Resilience Initiative (A2R) launched by the UNSG at COP21, the Global Preparedness Partnership (GPP), the Capacity for Disaster Reduction

Initiative (CADRI), the UN Rome-based Agencies' partnership for resilience, the One Billion Coalition for Resilience and the 5-10-50 partnership initiative for risk informed development. Together we can do even more and better to reduce and manage disaster risk.

We are committed to continue our support to countries in the coherent implementation of global frameworks on disaster risk reduction and climate change for delivering the universal 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as part of our efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty by improving food and nutrition security and promoting resilient and sustainable agricultural development.

Thank you.