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**High-level roundtable on “Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions
through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and
addressing related challenges”**

Statement submitted by

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Vice-Chair - The Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

and

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Overall key messages:

- *CFS as an example of an international multistakeholder body that links science and policy with the objective of eradicating hunger;*
- *Urgent action is needed to ensure food security by 2030. STI can make an important contribution to the means of implementation for achieving SDG2 and the 2030 Agenda;*
- *We must adopt a new integrated approach that addresses the three dimensions of sustainability and that breaks down traditional silos;*
- *Filling the data gap is one STI priority for achieving the SDG and ensuring no one is left behind.*

What are urgent actions needed to ensure food security by 2030?

About 800 million people are still chronically undernourished while more than 1.9 billion adults are overweight, of which 600 million are obese.

Agriculture and food systems need a radical transformation to improve FSN and to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Science, technology and innovation (STI) will play a critical role in this transformation.

STI must contribute by:

- Improving resource efficiency; and
- Strengthening resilience of agriculture and food systems:

For example, food systems contribute 20-30 percent of global annual greenhouse gas emissions. STI can help find ways to reduce those emissions and allow for an increase of agricultural productivity despite the climate change already in the pipeline.

New technologies must be suitable to different contexts and adapted so as to account for the potential risks that they carry and the negative impacts they might have on livelihoods and the environment.

If we look at agriculture in Africa, agriculture is at the heart of addressing poverty. Much more than in any other region, agriculture is a major driver of African economies, typically representing 30-40% of GDP and 65-70% of labor force¹. However, neglecting investment in infrastructure, technology and agricultural research caused setbacks. We must change that.

At the same time, research and technologies are sometime constrained by social and economic conditions. Research cannot limit itself to making new technologies available, but must better communicate its results to overcome possible resistance on the application of those technologies. We must avoid confining the debate to the categories of "favourable" vs "opponents". Given the multidisciplinary complexity of food security, efforts must be aimed at improving communication and information-sharing among the different stakeholders on STI for food security and nutrition.

The challenge is not only to develop new technologies, but also to make existing technologies, including those based on traditional knowledge, accessible for all, wherever they are appropriate, and taking into consideration the specific needs of the most marginalised and food insecure, such as small scale producers. This will require the introduction of innovative practices and new institutional arrangements.

What STI should be a priority?

Filling the data gap is an important STI priority for achieving the SDG and ensuring no one is left behind.

The CFS-HLPE, the expert group that provides scientific evidence-based analysis to support CFS policy development, so far has produced ten reports on various issues affecting food security and nutrition (water, food losses and waste, price volatility, land tenure...). A constant challenge they face is the lack of data, especially data on the most vulnerable, marginalized and food insecure. To inform sound policymaking, we need more accurate and extensive data, especially regarding smallholders, landless, access to markets, financial inclusion and social protection. Too often policies are influenced by aggregated data and evidence that does not highlight the differences/nuances and therefore the policies that are produced are biased against the most vulnerable and neglected groups. Use

¹ Source World Bank.

of innovative technologies and big data could fill important information gaps which would lead to better evidence-informed policies.

In the context of the current famines, that are threatening 30 million lives in South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Northern Nigeria, data and technological innovations can be crucial to save lives by producing early warnings, by allowing greater coordination among humanitarian organizations, by making possible to reach the most vulnerable, monitor the flow of humanitarian assistance and create a system of accountability to affected populations.

New technologies are also leading to an exponential increase in the volume and types of data available, creating unprecedented possibilities for improving humanitarian aid. For example, recent scaling up of the use of cash transfers has been possible by using mobile technologies and other electronic instruments.

What are the actions the international community can take?

A good start would be bringing different stakeholders together and building a stronger link between science and policy.

Looking at the 2030 Agenda, and SDG 2 in particular, the complexity of the issues at stake requires the mobilization of all stakeholders. This was, in essence, the driver of the reform of CFS in 2009 when Member nations agreed to expand participation to ensure that voices of all relevant stakeholders are heard in the policy debate on food and agriculture. Today, CFS adopts a multi-stakeholder model to produce evidence and to discuss and develop policy guidance on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics. Science should do the same, as effective multi-stakeholder partnerships can be a central tool to share knowledge, technologies and innovation. Without expanding participation, science would become ever more elitist as a small number of people will decide what the worthwhile and valid research is. Also, science doesn't work the same for everyone everywhere - there are huge disparities in access to science, and in gender and minority representation in laboratories. Expanding participation will address those issues and allow build scientific knowledge and skills in developing countries, ensuring no one is left behind.

Another action that the international community can take is to narrow the gap between scientific knowledge and policy-making. At CFS, the science-policy gap is filled as our policies are developed starting from scientific and evidence-based reports produced by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) and/or through work supported technically by the RBAs and representatives of the CFS Advisory Group.

The international community should ensure that traditional silos are broken down for more cross-sectoral decision-making. At CFS we explore the nexus between food security and other issues and development goals. Achieving zero hunger by 2030 requires that research brings different research communities together, and looks beyond silos to address real-world problems.

Implementation of SDGs – and SDG2 in particular – calls for an integrated approach which encompasses: enabling policy environment, developing human skills and capacities, mobilization and effective use of public and private finances, stimulating market forces, developing science, research, technology and innovation. We must all strive to achieve that.