

STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

SECOND COMMITTEE

**ON AGENDA ITEM 26:
"AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY
AND NUTRITION"**

DURING THE

70TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

Kenya associates itself with statements delivered by South Africa and Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group respectively.

We welcome the Secretary General's report A/70/333 examining the progress and challenges facing agricultural development, food security and nutrition.

My delegation believes the report provides useful framework for addressing challenges facing this sector - one of the unfinished businesses of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Food security and nutrition are essential elements for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. Most people in developing countries including the Least Developed Countries rely on agriculture for livelihood.

However, food security remains a challenge. This is in part, caused by the high cost of production due to expensive inputs. In addition, global food prices are beyond the reach of the poor, who are the majority.

Almost 800 million are hungry or lack sufficient food to conduct an active and healthy life. Many of these people live in developing countries. It is estimated that almost 1 out of 4 people who are hungry live in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Our continent spends close to US \$ 35 Billion annually on food imports despite having between 50-60 per cent of the world's unused arable land. Addressing food insecurity is therefore one of the areas of focus in our development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation recognizes the importance of food security in sustainable development. We welcome the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and Framework for Action. Agriculture is the mainstay of Kenya's economy. It contributes 24 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has strong linkages to manufacturing, distribution and other service sectors.

Agriculture generates 45 percent of Government revenue. It contributes 75 percent of industrial raw materials and more than 50 percent of export earnings. It generates more than 60 percent of employment opportunities in the economy. It is also a very important source of livelihood for the majority of our people in rural areas.

In recognition of the important role played by this sector, the government is finalizing an Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS). We believe it will enable the sector to contribute 10 per cent of the annual economic growth. We envisage the strategy to transform the sector into a profitable economic activity that will attract adequate and sustained private investment and provide gainful employment. This is in line with the economic pillar of our development blueprint-Vision 2030.

Other, equally significant interventions include subsidizing farm inputs, offering research and extension services to farmers, improving rural infrastructure, developing rural agricultural markets and agri-business skills, reviving and expanding existing irrigation programmes.

Despite the interventions cited, the government is fully aware that speculation continues to exacerbate food insecurity. It is committed to ensuring that commercial actors have a limited role to in the food market. We are convinced that a well regulated market can address distortions, while protecting the interests of both the farmer and consumer.

Market distortions are being addressed through purchase of produce from farmers when there are surpluses to stabilize market prices. Plans are also underway to raise the levels of strategic grain reserves.

We are also working towards increased productivity and incomes, especially for smallholder farmers. This is being done through commercialization and intensification of production using appropriate and participatory policy formulation.

In addition, we are encouraging diversification into non-traditional agricultural commodities. The government has initiated measures to re-introduce the hiring of Agricultural Extension Officers to help build the capacity of small holder farmers.

Mr. Chairman,

As part of the Kenya's efforts to address food nutrition, we are coordinating actions across government ministries. A National Nutrition Action Plan is being finalized by the government. Nutrition budgets have been mainstreamed in the government's broader Medium Term Development Plan.

We expect more than half of the population to access nutritionally fortified wheat flour, vegetable oil and maize meal over the next five years through a partnership between the government and private organizations.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that although Kenya and I believe, many countries are fully committed to initiatives to address the challenge of food security at the national level, our efforts will not be meaningful unless there are adequate resources.

We urge the international community and multilateral institutions to devote resources to support agricultural projects in countries that have historically been left behind especially the LDCs and African countries. We call for the Elimination of all forms of Agricultural Subsidies and other Market-Distorting Measures taken by Developed Countries that contravene WTO rules.

Finally **Mr. Chairman**, my delegation is convinced that the agricultural sector is very important and can play and can play a catalytic role in tackling the socio-economic challenges facing many of our countries.

We believe Ending hunger, all forms of malnutrition and achieving food security and sustainable agriculture should be at the heart of our efforts to address these challenges. This is line with our new development agenda that seeks to leave no one behind.

I thank you.