



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. ELIESA TUILOMA, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 25: AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION, AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 28 October 2013)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his Report and Note under this agenda item focusing on agriculture development, food security and nutrition

Mr. Chairman,

3. Food security and nutrition are essential dimensions of sustainable development. Despite progress over the past decades, it is of great concern that a total of 868 million people are undernourished and approximately two billion suffer from micronutrient deficiencies. Yet, globally, more than 1.4 billion adults are overweight. The challenges of malnutrition, coupled with the negative consequences of obesity, accentuate the urgent need for a 'people-centered' approach to food security and nutrition. Increasing agricultural production to meet the nutritional needs of a growing world population in a sustainable manner is at the heart of poverty eradication efforts.

4. We take note of the discussions during the third session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals in May this year, which focused on the issues surrounding sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition. The attainment of food security and the move towards sustainable agriculture, including increased food production in developing countries, are important issues in the SDGs framework and in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

5. At our discussion last week under Agenda Item 17 on Macroeconomic Policy Questions, the Group stressed the importance of international trade as a catalyst to development. We pointed out the importance of providing market access to developing countries under the multilateral trading system. This market access includes agricultural products. In this regard, we stress the necessity of a timely conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations and calls for the outcome of the Bali Ministerial Conference to fully respect the development mandate and take into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

6. The Group reiterates that agricultural subsidies and other trade distortions by developed countries have severely harmed the agricultural sector in developing countries, limiting the ability of this key sector to contribute meaningfully to poverty eradication, rural development and sustainable, sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth. Elimination of such subsidies is a fundamental part of the global effort to promote agriculture, rural development and eradicate poverty and hunger.

7. The challenges facing agriculture in the next few decades are complex. With increased global

population growth, there will be increased demand for food, feed, fuel and fibre. While increasing food production is vital to meet these new demands, the Group of 77 and China holds the strong view that the current practice of wasting one-third of food produced -1.3 billion tonnes per year, is not sustainable and must change. We must be less wasteful and should pursue sustainable agricultural practices from a holistic and integrated perspective, encompassing at various scales from the local to the international level, the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

8. We believe that the increasing involvement of non-commercial actors in the market of food and food-related commodities, or the so-called financialisation of the sector, has played a major role in the emergence of the problem of the excessive food price volatility. This large inflow of speculative capital to commodities, particularly food and other agricultural commodities, contributed to a large extent to the worsening of food insecurity. The Group of 77 strongly believes that commodity markets should operate in a properly regulated manner that avoid excessive volatility and speculative activities and serve the real needs of both producers and consumers.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Most agricultural production in developing countries involves small land holdings, mainly producing for self-consumption. Smallholdings account for approximately 85% of the world's farms. To support the economic viability of smallholder agriculture and thus reduce their vulnerability, policy actions are required to enhance smallholder producers, particularly women, indigenous people and people living in vulnerable situations to credit, markets, secure land tenure and other services. Closing the gender gap in access to productive resources in agriculture should be a high priority at both the national and international levels.

10 In terms of policy and investment choices at the national level, eliminating hunger involves investment in agriculture, rural development, decent work, social protection and equality of opportunity. Other enablers include, among others, sustainable agriculture, infrastructure, education, water, health, the empowerment of women and gender equality. In this regard, the role of the State is vital to play a pro-active developmental role in investing and building infrastructure conducive to sustainable agriculture, assist smallholder producers through developmental friendly policies to enhance production capacities, and encourage efforts to diversify and increase the value-added of agricultural products. On this note, the observation and celebration of the International Year of Farming in 2014 which will be launched here in New York on 22 November 2013 will be a step forward towards assisting small holder farmers and producers."

11. Lastly, the Group of 77 and China is of the view that public financing and transfer of technology by developed countries are needed not only for the adoption of sustainable agriculture but also to put in place the required infrastructure, communications and other enabling conditions.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.