

Statement by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the occasion of Habitat III, 17-20 October, 2016, Quito, Ecuador

Distinguished chairs, ministers, delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations welcomes the New Urban Agenda, which recognizes the importance of eradicating hunger as the greatest global challenge and as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

With about 795 million people still suffering from chronic hunger, and 156 million children under five years old stunted and 50 million children under five wasted, we, as FAO, carrying the mandate to eradicate hunger, will continue to work with all of you to achieving this goal.

Alongside this, we are also verifying an increase of obesity and overweight in all population groups, with currently 1.9 billion adults and 42 million children under five in the world being overweight. The trend is stronger in urban areas, because of the culture and lifestyle changes that urbanization brings. The health and economic impact is high; more people die from overweight and obesity related issues than underweight in most of the countries.

Furthermore, the shocking certainty that one third of the food we produce is lost or wasted is simply something we cannot accept or afford. We must work together to reduce it.

The environmental implication of this loss is staggering. The New Urban Agenda states protection of ecosystems and biodiversity is the basis for environmental sustainability. This, undeniably, has a direct impact on the agriculture, forestry and fisheries, sectors which can be proactive contributors to the protection of ecosystem and biodiversity, to the promotion of disaster risk management and to the mitigation of climate change.

We, in agreement with the New Urban Agenda, recognize the territorial specificity of these issues we face today and we want to provide support to integrated territorial development and to strengthening urban rural linkages.

This will become more and more important as urbanization progresses, as we will be relying on less farmers and fisher folk, less land, and more limited natural resources to feed the growing population. The sustainable and inclusive urban economies can only exist if they are fully integrated with rural economies.

Integrating food and agriculture in inclusive urban and territorial planning, using in particular the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security, becomes key in achieving the goal of eradicating hunger and malnutrition in all its forms. Food systems need to become more sustainable and support healthy diets.

In conclusion, we are committed to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, to tackle the greatest global challenge of eradicating hunger and preventing malnutrition in all its forms from our cities and human settlements, through an integrated and multi-sectoral approach. We

are ready to work more closely with all of you, through partnership and inclusive governance, provided this is the only way we can achieve this goal.

Thank you