

## Human Rights Council 25<sup>th</sup> Session

### Intervention for Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living

10<sup>th</sup> March 2014

#### Statement by Ireland

Thank you Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing for their presentations today. My comments on this occasion are addressed to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

Ireland wishes to thank you for the presentation of your final report to the Human Rights Council. We also wish to extend our warm appreciation for your valuable and insightful contribution to this important mandate, and the realisation of the right to food, over the last six years.

We fully align ourselves with the intervention of the European Union, and strongly support your conclusion in the current report that the eradication of hunger and malnutrition in a sustainable manner is an achievable goal. We also note with interest the conclusions which you have drawn throughout your mandate and wish to emphasise two in particular, which we see as essential to reforming food systems to ensure a fuller realization of the right to safe, sufficient and nutritious food.

The first conclusion we wish to highlight is the necessity of increasing agricultural yields sustainably. We agree that the exclusive focus of countries in recent decades on increasing their agricultural production has by and large ignored environmental impacts, in particular the interrelationship between agricultural production and climate change. We support the Special Rapporteur's call for a shift to sustainable food production. Through our overseas development assistance programme, we have scaled up our support for initiatives in Irish Aid partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa which are boosting, in a sustainable way, the agricultural productivity of poor smallholder farmers. Further, as a member of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, we have, together with Denmark and Norway, called for a standalone goal on hunger and malnutrition that comprehensively addresses the multidimensional nature of food and nutrition security. *We would be interested in hearing the Special Rapporteur's views on the illustrative goal and targets related to food and nutrition security set out in the report of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on post 2015 last year. We would also be interested in hearing your views on 'focus area 2' on food and nutrition security and possible 'areas for action' set out by the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on SDGs two weeks ago. How might the right to food be better captured across this focus area and*

*other relevant 'focus areas' for instance on health, water and sanitation, and gender equality and women's empowerment?*

The second conclusion we wish to emphasise is the need to rebuild local food systems. We strongly support your conclusions that we need to improve support to smallholder farmers in order to achieve local food and nutrition security, that food systems must be more inclusive of small-scale food producers, and that addressing imbalances of power in food chains is necessary. In Ireland's view, essential pre-cursors to rebuilding local food systems include supporting smallholders to mobilise and organise themselves to attain their rights, especially in relation to access to land and water. Of paramount importance also is ensuring smallholders' voices are heard and integrated into policy processes and decision making at local and national levels as well as at global level. Local people know what needs to be done and how best we can assist them in realising their right to food. *Can you comment on best practices to ensure the meaningful participation and the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly of those actually facing the realities of rising food prices, failed crops, hunger and under-nutrition and a changing climate?*

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