

Speech by Commissioner Phil Hogan at G7 Agriculture Ministers Meeting - Plenary Session 1

23rd April 2016, Niigata, Japan

- Check Against Delivery –

- Ministers,
- For many decades now, a stronger global consciousness, and indeed a stronger global conscience, has been emerging to address the great issues of our time.
- Astonishing technological advancement allows us to accurately measure scientific data relating to our planet, and transmit that information with the click of a button.
- As a result, an ever-increasing number of people around the world are aware of the challenges we face, and are willing to be part of the solutions.

- When it comes to issues such as food security, climate change, environmental sustainability, soil management, or water conservation, there is a strengthening global understanding that **we're all in this together.**
- And it is clear that a **smart and holistic global agriculture policy** will be absolutely central to any lasting solutions.
- I would like to thank the Japanese G7 Presidency for their sterling work in preparing the Niigata Declaration. **This document will serve as an important building-block for deeper international cooperation.** Nothing less is required if we are to build a **functioning global agriculture policy fit for the 21st Century.**
- The publication of the Niigata Declaration is particularly timely as we strive to implement Agenda 2030 and seek an end to hunger.
- We are all familiar with the challenges:

- As global population growth accelerates, the world needs to produce more and better food. In the 21st Century, with our wealth and our technology, no-one should have to experience systematic hunger.
- But that same population growth will put even greater pressure on our environment and resources. So the way we think about food, and the way we produce food, has to adapt accordingly.
- The Sustainable Development Goals provide a good roadmap, notably with the zero hunger target by 2030 outlined in SDG 2.
- To achieve zero hunger, we must:
 - prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets;
 - Eliminate all agricultural export subsidies and tackle any measures with an equivalent effect;

- And ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets.
- In SDG 12, there is an emphasis on the sustainable use of resources and climate action through responsible consumption and production.
- Climate action is the priority of SDG 13, while "life on land" - in other words how we manage forests, tackle land degradation, and stop biodiversity loss is the focus of SDG 15.
- **The Sustainable Development Goals are universal, and must be reflected in both our internal and external policies.** At home, we must empower our farmers and agricultural systems to play their full part.
- Abroad, particularly when it comes to our relationship with developing countries, the Sustainable Development Goals have correctly moved beyond the notion that donor aid should drive agricultural improvement.
- **Instead, the emphasis is now firmly on "Agriculture policy", as distinct and complementary to development from donor aid.**

- Our work on agricultural policy should complement the G7 Development stream, achieving synergies and avoiding overlaps.
- In the European Union, this is very much the integrated approach we are prioritising. Today, I want to reaffirm the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into our policy priorities.
- Whether it be our shared Common Agricultural Policy, our agricultural research and innovation policy, our international development programmes or our agri-food trade policy: all these areas are tasked with making a contribution.
- Within the 28 Member States of the European Union, sustainability is now prominently reflected in the Common Agricultural Policy. It guarantees a decent livelihood for farmers without distorting markets and trade.
- We aim to achieve:

- Viable food production contributing to food security;
- The sustainable use of resources;
- And balanced territorial development of our rural areas.
- And through our rural development policy, the CAP provides a blueprint for maintaining rural livelihoods. We aim to support sustainable rural communities by providing them with the economic opportunities and social and cultural cohesion they need.
- I believe these priorities will resonate strongly with the member countries of the G7. **Change begins at home.**
- Looking abroad, the G7 members have clear responsibilities on a global scale.
- We must make international agri-markets work, galvanising responsible private investment to improve infrastructure and add value.

- We need to make farming more attractive to young people and women, highlighting its possibilities as a modern, fulfilling and rewarding career.
- Through the enhanced use of technology and data management, precision machinery, improved varieties and breeds, and better inputs, farmers can innovate and add value as never before.
- Farmers also need to occupy a stronger link in the global food chain. We need stronger policies and structures to encourage them to be better organised and have a stronger participation in food value chains. This is one of the key issues to assure farming remains an attractive profession for young entrepreneurs.
- The EU pledges to play its part. Indeed we are already doing so.
- We negotiated an end to export subsidies at the Nairobi WTO meeting in December 2015.

- We contribute to the AMIS system, operated by the FAO and the G20, to monitor agricultural markets and provide alert to fluctuations in price.
- By putting reliable data in the hands of traders and markets we have shown we can reduce price fluctuations.
- On a related note, the functioning of commodity markets, especially those relied on by developing country farmers, is a work in progress and one we must address collectively.
- To conclude, colleagues, I believe the Niigata Declaration rightly acknowledges the importance of sustainability, research and innovation, rural development, migration, professionalization of farmers, the food chain, and agri-food investment in developing world.
- It recognizes that job creation and growth in the agri-food sector of developing countries can alleviate the causes of rural exodus and irregular migration;

- It underlines that investment is vital, and can be encouraged through simplified rules and requirements, and through appropriate financial instruments matching the capital needs of farmers and rural enterprises;
- It emphasizes the central role of G7 agriculture ministers in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals and COP21 Paris agreement on climate change,
- It references specific goals on zero hunger, gender balance and women's empowerment, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, and land and forest use;
- And it references the creation of a G7 forum to encourage access to finance and agri-food investment, notably in developing countries.
- With these building blocks, we can build a solid foundation. I encourage you all to seize this opportunity, and I am happy to assure you that the EU will play a full and active role.
- Thank you.