

Speech by Commissioner Phil Hogan at OECD Ministerial Plenary Session

- *“Better Policies to Achieve a Productive and Sustainable Global Food System”*

8th April 2016, Paris

- Check Against Delivery –

(Introduction)

- Ministers, OECD delegates,
- It is a pleasure for me to be here today and to participate in this plenary session. I believe this gathering represents an excellent opportunity to take stock of where we stand in our shared efforts to build meaningful international cooperation in agriculture policy.
- Six full years have passed since the last Agricultural Ministerial in February 2010.

- And the issues which dominated that meeting, including food security and climate change, remain at the forefront of our thoughts and actions.
- Indeed, recent events have brought them into focus even more sharply. The geopolitical uncertainty on Europe's periphery has reminded us how precious food security is and how we must not take it for granted.
- And the recent COP21 Climate Agreement in Paris has reinforced the need for agriculture to do its part in preserving our planet's resources and environment.
- Our job is to build and refine international policies to achieve these common goals. Doing so will require new policy paths, and building certain bridges of understanding.
- In the European Union, our Common Agricultural Policy is a good example of a successful policy change process. Over 50 years, its evolution has been **gradual, but clear and consistent**. We have tried to build on our successes and learn from our mistakes.

- The CAP provides the framework through which agricultural and food production delivers as a key strategic sector for the European economy and society in general, both rural and urban.
- One key strength is our ability to build consensus on policy matters, using a strong evidence base as a foundation. Indeed, the last reform of the CAP was the first to be adopted by co-decision between the European Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.
- This has brought more legitimacy, and more participation of EU society at large, into the process.
- The question for everyone here today is: what policy consensus do we need to build in this forum?
- Firstly, I would put it to you that agriculture policy is very often seen in a one-dimensional way, exclusively through the prism of farming. In my view, we need to promote the multi-dimensional nature of agriculture policy – emphasising its contribution to food security, economic growth, social cohesion and economic sustainability.

- We must also **build new and stronger bridges between the agricultural sector and the rest of the economy.**
- The evidence tells us that role of agriculture in developed countries is changing. This is due to increasing urbanisation on the one hand, and new consumer patterns and mounting social interest in food on the other.
- We have a real opportunity to build bridges between the urban economy's city-based consumers, and the rural economy's agri-food producers. This will keep agriculture high on the agenda – where it needs to be.
- Secondly, we must continue to develop the **emerging opportunities of global trade.** Successive reforms have increased the market orientation and integration of global markets, bringing real **opportunities for the agriculture sector to provide growth and jobs.**
- We must make the most of these opportunities by continuing to gradually **remove distorting policies,** and by increasing the **resilience** of farmers to risks.

- Thirdly, we need to strengthen the processes for making 21st Century agriculture more efficient, more productive, and friendlier to the environment.
- While access to a more dynamic global market brings increased opportunities, it also increases the exposure of agricultural producers to new challenges.
- Food security is an issue for all of us and it is an enormous challenge for society. It is estimated that the annual growth rate in world agricultural production of at least 1.7 per cent will be needed between now and 2050 to feed the growing global population.
- This has to be seen in the context of the challenge posed by climate change and the fact that only 13 to 18 per cent of the land on the planet is regarded as naturally highly fertile.
- So the **pressure on natural resources like soil and water will be significant**. The gap between global water demand and supply is expected to be 40 per cent by 2030. The water need for food production varies dramatically from 900 litres for 1 kg of potatoes to a staggering 15 500 litres for 1kg of beef.

- In other words, while **there are generally favourable medium to long-term market prospects for agriculture, we need to improve productivity in a sustainable way.**
- To achieve this, we must ramp up our efforts to develop a **knowledge-based response** to climate change and the broader sustainability challenges by:
 - **Making innovation the key** to achieving sustainable productivity growth;
 - Stimulating **climate-smart agriculture**;
 - **And focusing on “public goods”** in the design of policy tools.
- I believe we can also do more to **improve the functioning of the food supply chain, particularly in relation to the position of the farmer.**
- Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to a deeper discussion later today.