

Speech by Commissioner Phil Hogan at G20 Agricultural Ministerial

3rd June 2016, Xi'an, China

- Check Against Delivery -

- Minister Han, Ministers,
- I'm very pleased to be here with you today - **we have an excellent opportunity before us.** I commend the Chinese G20 Presidency for giving such strong emphasis to agriculture and its vital importance to our economy and society.
- Indeed, this emphasis was already apparent to me **when I visited China earlier this year with a trade delegation of European agri-businesses.** Building stronger and deeper links between agri-economies is vital to expand jobs and growth in this dynamic sector.

- The European Union believes in the importance of a strong agricultural policy. We have reformed our Common Agricultural Policy to be in tune with international markets, to be ambitious and supportive of young innovating farmers, and more focused on sustainable growth.
- We are happy to see that G20, under the Chinese Presidency, also gives a central role to **sustainable agricultural development**, and to **innovation**.
- It is clear that agriculture policy is growing in importance at the global level. And it's recognised that smart regulation and well-functioning markets will create growth and jobs, particularly in rural areas.
- Government's role is to promote a **stable, socially responsible business environment** for the development of food systems. The best way to do so is through robust ongoing policy dialogue - **this is where the G20 is adding real value at international level.**
- So, I particularly welcome the decision to **hold regular meetings of G20 Agriculture Ministers to maintain policy**

coordination and give direction on how to address the major challenges of our time.

[EU integrates SDGs into agricultural policy]

- The two big theme of this G20 Presidency are **sustainability and innovation**. **G20 Agriculture Ministers** are assuming a **clear leadership** role to achieve the agriculture-related Sustainable Development Goals.
- If the world is to meet the Agenda 2030 challenge of Zero Hunger and ending extreme poverty, we have to find new ways to encourage responsible investments in agriculture and rural areas.
- **Sustainability** is already prominently reflected in the European **Common Agricultural Policy**. It guarantees a decent livelihood for farmers without distorting markets and trade.

[Climate action]

- Because today, farmers are also expected to play a role in combating climate change and managing precious resources like soil and water. 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.

- And SDG 12 emphasises the sustainable use of resources and climate action through responsible consumption and production.
- The COP21 Paris Agreement also sets out a global action plan to limit global warming below 2°C, through emissions reduction and carbon sequestration.
- I welcome the G20's strong support for the COP21 Agreement, **in particular suggestions for enhanced cooperation on soil and water research.** We should all encourage these joint efforts and improve cooperation at all levels.
- **Agriculture and forestry are central role to this process.** Ensuring adequate production of food for a growing population is a crucial challenge. It should be achieved in harmony with our climate objectives, and trade-offs are to be avoided.

- In the EU, greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture have declined by 24 percent since 1990, while maintaining and even expanding production. And we aim to improve our performance even further.
- Climate action has become a priority under the European Common Agricultural Policy with a substantial amount of its budget dedicated to this goal.
- In 2015, 16,3 billion Euro were spent to support a wide range of measures to reduce emissions, improve carbon sequestration, reduce energy consumption, and improve fertiliser efficiency - to name just a few.
- So I applaud the G20's backing of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. And I applaud the G20's strong support for the WHO Action Plan on Anti-Microbial Resistance - this is a big step forward.

[Innovation & ICT]

- But public investment can only do so much. The private sector, with its immense capacity for investment in innovation and research, must be mobilised in new and smarter ways. Food security, sustainable development and climate action require new investments.

- The private sector can drive new production techniques, training and advice for farmers, as well as specific support for testing new and innovative approaches for a better and more efficient agriculture.
- The G20 can lead from the front in this policy area, and I warmly welcome the Chinese Presidency's strong commitment to innovation, research and the use of ICT.
- There is a new wave of ICT innovation in and for agriculture, incorporating the Internet of Things, Cloud Computing, and Big Data.
- The Internet of Things is the next step of disruptive digital innovation. And for this reason we are investing in Internet of Things for the agricultural sector.
- In 2016 and 2017 alone, the EU's Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020 is supporting Large Scale Pilots with a budget of up to 30 million EUR, targeting Internet of Things scenarios in Smart Agriculture.

- Precision farming technologies have the potential to help meet increasing global demand for food while ensuring the sustainability of primary production, based on a more precise and resource efficient approach to production management.
- Ministers, if we incorporate these changes, in terms of policy and investment, we can make the G20 a real driver of positive change. I look forward to working with you all in the coming months and years. Thank you.