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Economic and Social Council**

**Special meeting
on
the Global Food Crisis**

Statement on behalf of the European Union by

H.E. Ambassador Sanja Štiglic,
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I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. President,

Please, allow me to thank you for your initiative to organize this special ECOSOC meeting on food crisis. [We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary General, the President of General Assembly, the President of Security Council and to all the keynote speakers for addressing us today.]

Distinguished President,

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger remains one of the greatest challenges of our times and therefore the European Union is gravely concerned about the current food crisis. While rising food prices have affected the lives of people in every corner of the world, it is evident that the ones who suffer most are the poor. The implementation of urgent short-term and mid-term/long-term coordinated measures are needed to effectively address this problem. If the response of the international community is not immediate, the security situation in a number of countries could be gravely jeopardized. Equally important is the fact that the progress made so far in achieving the first Millennium Development Goal (*MDG1*) could be at risk in alarmingly short time. Higher food prices will also put at risk the achievement of education targets (*MDG2*), child and maternal mortality reduction (*MDG4 and MDG5*), and the spread of major diseases (*MDG6*). As a consequence, sustainable development of many countries could be seriously affected.

The international community, including EU institutions, is analyzing the magnitude of the problem. The solutions that are to be proposed need to look at the underlying causes. Evidently there are temporal and structural factors, and implications vary across countries and impact commodities differently. Many of the factors that are behind the rise in food prices are likely to have a lasting effect. While a certain supply response at world level can be expected, it is also expected that higher agriculture and food prices are here to stay and that their volatility will increase.

Food production and prices have also been affected by climate change. The present situation highlights the urgent need to reach ambitious, global and comprehensive targets for reduction in CO2 emissions, and for assisting developing countries in adapting to the effects of climate change – including in the agricultural sector.

Although there is an immediate need to provide a short term response to the urgent requirements of people threatened by famine, long term sustainable measures, which will benefit the overall development of the agricultural sector, especially in developing countries, urgently need to be initiated. For too many years agriculture has been neglected in large parts of the world.

We should also see the challenge of high food prices as an opportunity for the timely conclusion of the Doha-Round. In this respect, the DDA (Doha Development Agenda) needs to be brought to a successful conclusion with an ambitious, comprehensive and balanced outcome, including a reduction of trade-distorting subsidies. Agriculture is an

* * Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process."

area where many developing countries have a potential comparative advantage; we need to work together to ensure that the sector can make its full developmental contribution.

In order to ensure international mobilization, we consider of vital importance an increased coordination of all international stakeholders, including states, institutions, private sector and NGOs, while fully respecting the whole-of-government approach. The UN system has a key role to promote coherent response to the crisis. We see the High Level Conference on food security on 3rd to 5th June in Rome as a milestone towards reaffirming the political will to achieving the world food security and MDG1 in particular. Furthermore, the EU looks forward to the outcomes of UNSG high level task force on food security, which it hopes will result in a fully joined up response enabling the UN to deliver an effective and workable solution contributing to the alleviation of the world food crisis, taking into account regional and local singularities.

Mr. President,

The European Union is alerted by the gravity of the problem and its potential impact. The European Union have already provided food aid to the regions in which situation is most critical and will mobilize substantial resources to finance measures going beyond food aid, safety nets for poor and vulnerable population groups. With respect to the short-term responses, EU and its member states are currently the major donors of additional funding for food aid (in 2008), in response to the WFP Executive director appeal made early this year.

Moreover, the European Union is considering additional short term, medium term and long term measures that can contribute to a reduction of imbalances in the food markets and the resulting high food prices. As such measures we consider: enhancing its support and promotion of more investment in agriculture and rural development, including rural infrastructure, agriculture research and advisory services, and supporting the development of strong agricultural policies, including risk managements schemes in developing countries, particularly in LDCs, and especially in Africa. We recall that agriculture is the main economic base for the majority of Africans and accounts for about one third of Africa's gross domestic product.

The European Union's support will be provided in the framework of countries' own policies and strategies as well as in the framework of regional programmes like CAADP (*Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme*). Also, the EU Development Ministers will address rising food prices and food security in developing countries at their meeting on 27 May 2008 in Brussels.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, rising food prices and food security needs our long term attention. It is important that our actions are reflected in easing the hardship and improving the lives of people in distress. In this regard, EU stands ready to constructively and actively contribute to the global effort.

Thank you, Mr. President.