



(Check against delivery)

Statement by H.E. Mr. José Luís Rocha,  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cabo Verde  
to the United Nations on the occasion of the Fifty-fourth Session of the  
Commission on Population and Development  
***“Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development”***

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Mr. Chairperson,

Cabo Verde would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election, and wish you success during the Commission's work.

Mr. Chair

The theme of this session touches on a historical sensitivity for my country. From the 15th to the middle of the 20th century, frequent cycles of drought and the consequent periods of extreme hunger left only two ways out for the majority of its population: death and migration.

It was only after independence in 1975 that successive governments placed food and nutrition security at the center of the country's development policies.

Small island developing state, located in the Atlantic extension of the African Sahel region, Cabo Verde's nine inhabited islands are plagued by the lack of regular rainfall, followed by drought, desertification and soil degradation, limiting agricultural production to just 10 to 15 % of the population's food needs

In fact, drought is a silent natural disaster, of progressive installation and multidimensional in its consequences, within the wide range of climate changes and impacts, which obliges the country to establish constant mitigation and adaptation measures, in addition to guaranteeing food and nutritional security as top priorities.

In order to promote social and economic development in the context of persistent drought and of Cabo Verde's insularity, the government has put in place strategic plans and programs, driven by various sectors where opportunities for growth are

present, those related to food production and supply included. However, the dependence on imported food remains high.

In that same context, the National Strategic Plan for Food and Nutritional Security aims to guarantee food and nutrition for all. The Plan foresees investments in agriculture and fisheries, agribusiness and incentives for family farming. In addition, a successful agriculture and school-feeding program was essential for education and the consolidation of human capital.

Mr. Chair,

Available data show that 135 million people suffer worldwide from acute hunger due to conflicts, climate change, economic crises or slowdowns. The COVID-19 pandemic has been worsening this global situation, with the interruption of food supply chains and school meals, massive loss of livelihoods and reduced investments in food and nutrition.

Against the above, it is worth highlighting the following points for consideration by the Commission and in the way to the Food System Summit next September:

**First**, that access to food and nutrition security must be guaranteed everywhere and for everyone, as an essential public good, as it represents a fundamental and basic human right, as well as being a vital component of human security, contributing to the survival , livelihood and dignity of people in general.

**Second**, the interconnection between access to food security and nutrition and health, while not requiring further explanation, deserves consequent attention, including in areas of relevance for women and girls such as the sexual and

reproductive health and rights. It is also particularly true with regard to the fate of vaccine divide as opposed to the need for a global approach ensuring vaccine for all.

**Third**, that access to food and security and its interconnection with other SDGs are incremental to the achievement of the global sustainable development enshrined in the 2030 Agenda.

**Fourth**, that national ownership and leadership can pave the way for achieving sustainable access to food and nutrition, with the support of international cooperation and global partnerships. Implemented through this complementarity, the Cairo Program of Action will have the possibility of placing the most vulnerable populations or those at risk of hunger and malnutrition at the center.

**In closing**, Mr. Chair,

We recall the commitments to implement the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the main actions for its subsequent implementation, as well as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa after 2014.

To this end, Cabo Verde stresses the critical need to not only promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, without distinction of any kind, but also to combat poverty, food insecurity and inequalities, ensuring that people can aspire and have a better life, leaving no one behind.

I thank you for your kind attention.