Minister O’Connor’s pre-recorded statement

[Kia ora koutou]

- It is a pleasure to address you today from Aotearoa-New Zealand. We are committed to playing our part in ensuring that food systems contribute to the successful achievement of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

- It is my hope that this Pre-Summit, and the Summit itself, become key moments in time when we better recognise the food system challenges that we face together, and set a course to overcome them for the well-being of people and planet.

- Like for many countries around the world, food is a key part of New Zealand’s identity; it is a key source of economic, social, and cultural wellbeing for our people, and we recognise the wellbeing of our natural environment is the foundation for our food production.

- New Zealand’s primary sector strategy recognises this – it embraces our indigenous Māori concept of Te Taiao, a deep relationship of respect and reciprocity with the natural world.

- Through this Te Taiao lens, we have signalled our commitment to meet the greatest challenges humanity faces: rapidly moving to a low carbon emissions society, restoring the health of our water, reversing the decline in biodiversity, and at the same time feeding our people and many more people the world over in a way that aligns with our values.

- The food system is complex and varied, the challenges that New Zealand faces, and the right solutions to overcome them, will often be different to those in other parts of the world, such as the differing particular challenges of many of our Pacific neighbours.

- We need to recognise that there is often no one-size-fits-all solution to achieving more sustainable food systems, and that instead we need to apply robust evidence-based and context-relevant policy approaches to understand the transitions required.

- For example, it is not as simple as declaring one food type less sustainable than another without assessing the sustainability of its production system and life cycle.

**Agricultural greenhouse gas emissions**

- A key food systems priority for New Zealand is to raise global ambition to tackle agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. We recognise that through international collaboration we can greatly amplify the role of our small country in achieving global climate goals.

- I would like to encourage other countries to join New Zealand as we build a coalition through to the Summit and beyond on our proposed “Game Changing Solution”, which aims to boost capability and capacity to measure food system emissions around the world.
Our proposal recognises that “you can’t manage what you can’t measure”, and involves countries working alongside and through the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases to advance the accurate reporting of emissions from food sectors, and recognise the actions countries are taking to mitigate them.

As well as collaborating internationally, New Zealand is walking the walk at home on tackling agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by committing to implement a pricing mechanism for agricultural emissions by 2025.

How we do this will be determined through our “He Waka Eke Noa”, a world-first partnership between the food and fibres sector, government, and Māori. It will help farmers reduce their on-farm emissions and adapt to climate change while contributing to our domestic climate change targets.

**Importance of trade**

- The past 18 months has laid bare the critical importance of international trade and supply chains for food security and well-being. We know that open and less distortive trade is key to eliminating hunger and lifting people out of poverty, as is reflected in the targets of Sustainable Development Goal Two.

- New Zealand views fair, open, and inclusive trade, and the elimination of trade distortive and environmentally harmful agricultural and fisheries subsidies, as central to delivering food and nutrition security globally. The world cannot reverse negative trends if at the same time we continue to actively fuel them with such subsidies.

**Importance of leadership of indigenous peoples**

- I would like to finish by touching on a key New Zealand priority which I hope you will hear a lot more about throughout the Summit process, and that is the need for Summit outcomes to reflect the importance of indigenous knowledge, participation and leadership in the many aspects of food systems.

- For New Zealand, this means promoting the significant role of Māori in New Zealand’s food sectors and the growth of Māori agribusiness. It also means acknowledging and addressing the challenges we are yet to overcome, such as working to find practical solutions that remove barriers to Māori success and leadership, and improving our government’s partnership approach to decision making with Māori on food system matters.

Thank you and I wish you all the best for a useful and productive Pre-Summit