

The Italian Republic

Positions for the Food and Agriculture Organization

I. Utilizing Technology to Eliminate Food Insecurity

The Italian Republic recognizes that food insecurity is one of the most pressing topics today. As climate change continues to alter our ways of life, we must alter how we produce food. As the home to FAO headquarters since 1951, we are keen to further the organization's mission. We believe that there should be a focus on utilizing new and existing technologies in an effort to reduce food insecurity and increase agroecology. Creating more arable lands, tracking weather patterns, and increasing food production from individual plants by increasing yields and reducing environmental impacts are key to combatting food insecurity. Italy recognizes the importance of sustainable value chains and public-private partnerships as we work to ensure global nutrition. Domestically, we have prioritized environmental protections and safeguards for natural resources in addition to further development of our rural regions in our Programming Guidelines and Directions for Italian Development Cooperation, 2016-2018 and 2017-2019. This approach seeks to combine traditional knowledge and methodologies with technological innovations to better further agro-biodiversity and nurture local crops. However, we acknowledge that our undernourishment rate is still at 5 percent despite food safety net programs and new technology. While we have made progress domestically, Italy knows there is still much to be done.

Internationally, Italy has committed significant financial support and our own expertise to the actions of the FAO and other international organizations in their quest for achieving sustainable agricultural development, particularly using technological advancements, in even the most difficult environments around the globe. The UN notes that we have contributed to 39 projects in this area that have reached 85 Member States in the Middle East, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Caribbean and Pacific regions. Each of these projects aims to address poverty and improving food security by enhancing agricultural productivity. The Italian Development Cooperation has made many additional contributions to the FAO, including over \$16 million USD to the FAO Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety. In 2017, Italy was the venue for an agreement between the FAO and Telefonica, one of Italy's biggest telecommunications companies. This agreement expanded the amount of technology available for use to better predict threats to the agricultural system, including negative weather patterns. We have also contributed a total of \$546 million USD to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), funding more than 220 initiatives as of 2015. These initiatives include helping smallholder farmers receive new tools, technologies, and, importantly, risk management training. Italy and the IFAD have collaborated to increase the resilience and risk management capacity of rural people in a number of ways. Our projects with the IFAD in Africa have helped increase the climate resilience of smallholders via resistant crop varieties, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable land management practices. Italy also contributed to the production and distribution of the *Food Security and Agricultural Mitigation in Developing Countries: Options for Capturing Synergies* report from FAO which covered technological developments in water conservation. The publication specifically advocated for the technology of water harvesting structures that are long-lasting in communities that experience even the harshest weather conditions. In recent years, water shortages in South Africa have highlighted the need for greater technological advances in water harvesting and conservation in developing nations. We are strong supporters for increased collaboration between the FAO, the IFAD, and the World Food Programme in order to find innovative ways to merge their resources to take on multilateral ventures for food security and rural development and to combat rising issues like the role water security plays in food security.

The Italian Republic proposes implementing the CST initiative. C, for Creating, encourages the creation of new technologies by more advanced Member States that have the experience and resources to develop new methods for combatting challenges to food production. New technologies will help ensure better crop yields, longer shelf lives, better weather predictions, and greater water harvesting, storage, and conservation. S, for Sharing, supports the dissemination of knowledge from developed Member States to developing states and those in need of agricultural solutions. As we have learned through decades of international cooperation, the sharing of knowledge, information, and experience is crucial for the more

efficient development of Member States. Changes, improvements, updates, and troubleshooting can all be accomplished with constant sharing and collaboration. T, for Training, suggests a database for training information. As Member States are able to purchase or receive the latest agricultural technologies, many find themselves without the necessary knowledge on how to get the most out of these resources. The Italian Republic believes that the greatest possible impact on food insecurity requires a system to ensure aid-receiving Member States know how to properly install and use these technologies to fully reap their benefits. The proposed CST initiative would promote technological innovation, increase food security, and boost economies by allowing for specialization in new agricultural areas and the creation of jobs in the field of food technology. We urge our fellow Member States to continue the fight to end hunger using the technological advancements and communications made possible by globalization.

II. Addressing Climate Change's Impact on the Agriculture Industry

As a part of the European Mediterranean region, the Italian Republic has already begun to experience the devastating effects of climate change because our region is one of the areas most affected by the significant impacts of extreme events. Our coastlines, agricultural industry, and tourism have all been negatively affected by rising seas, increasing temperatures, and variable weather patterns. Our region has seen increases in the frequency of extreme climate events that have specifically impacted crop development stages. Strong rains during traditional sowing times and high heat levels during flowering windows have negative effects on summer crop yields. In our northern provinces, olive trees, citrus trees, and traditional vines have been able to thrive thanks to shorter, milder winters. Tuscany is particularly vulnerable to soil erosion, so increased rainfall has led to growing concerns about rainfall erosivity. Meanwhile, staple southern crops like corn, olives, and wine grapes have suffered greatly from rising heat levels, shortened growing seasons, aridity, and soil degradation. Both the quality and quantity of crops in the south have decreased and are expected to drop further in coming years without interventions or mechanisms for mitigating the effects of climate change. The Italian Republic recognizes that without addressing climate change, these circumstances will worsen.

Internationally, Italy has recognized the dangers of climate change. In 2005, established the Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change, whose aim is to find solutions to combat climate change. The Center publishes annual research reports which are compiled from universities across Italy that detail agricultural changes that need to be made to address climate change. Italy is also strong supporter of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that aim to combat climate change by investing in sustainable technology. In 2015, as a result of our funds, SIDS met in Milan to make a formal declaration to implement the Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway, which works with these states on sustainable development and climate change. Since 2014, Italy has worked closely with the FAO to fund and build the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture. In 2015, we signed the Paris Agreement to continue international cooperative efforts to combat climate change. We are committed to the 2030 SDGs, especially SDG 13 which addresses climate change, and we work to ensure that Italian Official Development Assistance funds honor the policy actions laid out in the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The European Parliament declared a climate and environmental emergency in Europe and across the globe at the end of 2019. We are working tirelessly to address this crisis.

In order to mitigate the impacts of climate change on agricultural industries internationally, the Italian Republic recommends that Member States evaluate their current environmental status, agricultural productivity and sustainability, and take note of their region's standing on addressing climate change. While we understand that these are obvious steps, Italy feels as though solutions are best achieved when Member States are aware of their circumstances. Aid and assistance from international organizations are best achieved when states have already identified sectors that need assistance. Whether it is land management, weather-related issues, or educational gaps, these organizations are better able to help with greater information. For these reasons, the Italian Republic encourages Member States to keep records of their current agricultural and climate struggles. We seek to promote adaptation to climate change by helping Member States reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Technological solutions, the diversification of agricultural production, efficient water usage, and other practices can help states grasp that climate change is a force we must adapt to in order to combat. While we understand that policy changes will have impacts, we seek to emphasize changes in implementations and practices. Climate change is a global issue that must be addressed in order to reduce its negative impact on agriculture and economies across the world.