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It is my pleasure to come together with you all this afternoon, to discuss a topic that is pivotal to all countries and to our three groups of countries in particular. Food Security enshrined in Goal 2 of the the 2030 Agenda is a basic necessity, that is crucial in addressing poverty, education, health, human security, gender inequality, climate change and ultimately sustainable development.

I thank Mr. Torero for his comprehensive presentation. I could not agree more with him as he articulates the magnitude of the impacts of COVID-19 on the food and nutrition security and the agricultural sector of LDCs. We also take note of the specific initiatives and support measures undertaken by the FAO in addressing the impacts of the pandemic. Let me share with you the unique challenges that LDCs have been facing in the face of COVID-19.

We note the crucial role food emergency/humanitarian response has played in previous crises. And further note the role of WFP in ensuring that those in need are seen and their needs met. We thank Mr. Husain for his presentation and cannot emphasize more the multistakeholder

Globally in 2018, more than 113 million people across 53 countries experienced acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance; and an estimated 821 million people – approximately one in nine people in the world – were undernourished. Of the 113 million 80 million were from LDCs accounting for 29 LDCs countries. Furthermore, the number of undernourished people in LDCs increased by 32.7 million during the period 2011-2017. The LDCs are already suffering severe consequences in the form of commodity price shocks, loss of exports, investment and remittances along with a rapid plummet in tourism, with long-term ripple effects. With these pre-existing conditions, LDCs are particularly exposed to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic at a disproportionate magnitude.

As we watch COVID 19 unfolding and its reach continue to grow in LDCs, our governments recognize the need to triangulate social, economic and environmental issues to create policies that address COVID 19 but also take into account pre-

medium and long run. FAO can be an important partner in the implementation of these areas of the stimulus package for LDCs.

We look forward to increased and tailor-made support of FAO and WFP to LDCs in the days ahead.