



Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

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**Introductory statement by State Secretary Elisabeth Backteman,
Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, at the seminar *Water for Food
Security and Nutrition*, 24 August 2015 at the World Water Week**

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I would like to wish you all welcome to this seminar on Water
for food security and nutrition. And to Stockholm - the City
of Water!

I would like to thank the panellists and representatives of
several international organizations for participating. Some of
you have come a long way to share your views on this global
challenge.

The possibility to present the HLPE report during the World
Water Week is an opportunity to initiate a dialogue, and to
listen to different stakeholders on the necessary steps needed
to solve the issue of competition for decreasing freshwater
resources. This is also most relevant for the theme of the
World Water Week – *Water for development* - where the need
for different sectors to get out of silos is stressed.

The Swedish Government attaches high importance to the work of the Committee on World Food Security, and actively participates in its work. Sweden has also supported some reports of the HLPE financially. That includes financing the development last year of the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and food systems, where considering access to water in investments constitutes an important part.

I am chair of the Swedish FAO Committee, whose task is to spread information in Sweden of the work of FAO. Its latest discussion paper - **Water, food security and human dignity** – is linked to the HLPE report on the same theme. It points out the main challenges but also opportunities. One example is that trade in food and access to modern inputs will furthermore enable farmers to make best possible use of water. The importance of implementing human rights to food and water to meet the basic needs of vulnerable groups is also stressed. It is a valuable contribution to the discussions.

Turning to the topic of today, we must bear in mind that the same amount of water is available on planet earth today as in the past. Freshwater is already in short supply in the world. Water availability varies largely and global warming makes the supply of water more uncertain. The recurrent droughts in the Sahel area are examples of that.

Many sectors compete with agriculture for water resources, including corporate actors who have an increasing influence in water governance. Water governance and food production have traditionally been separate issues, and more communication and collaboration between the sectors are crucial. Agriculture accounts for 70% of water allocations worldwide why more efficient and sustainable use of water in agricultural production is needed.

Huge quantities of food are wasted, and thereby large amounts of water used in the production. One kilo of rice requires 2.700 litres of water to produce. 140 litres of water is required to produce coffee beans to a cup of coffee, and large amount of wood or oil is needed to dry the coffee beans.

Sweden has the resources for a sustainable food production. The production has it strengths in corporate skills and know-how, a high environmental awareness and responsible animal husbandry as well as good resources of land and clean water. Based on these good, and in many cases unique, conditions Sweden can produce safe, high quality products and is able to contribute to sustainable development, both in Sweden and in the rest of the world.

We need to take advantage of these conditions and assets. They are important, if not decisive, pieces in the work of creating the conditions for an increased food production and for global food security.

It takes a number of concerted actions in a number of areas by a number of actors to combat hunger. We try actively to take a comprehensive view on food security throughout the Swedish government. **Agriculture, fisheries and forestry are recognised as being fundamental to food security**, but we need to look into all our policy areas, scrutinising our decisions and practices in order to **be coherent with a view to global development**. Therefore, food security and nutrition and water cannot be solved by one policy alone. Policy coherence is key.

Thank you for your attention!