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"Food Diplomacy & Conflict-Induced Food Insecurity:
Strengthening Cooperation for Peace & Security"
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Greece's statement delivered
by H.E. Ambassador Aglaia Balta,
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, New York

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Let me begin by thanking our three briefers, Mr. Mina Rizk, Ms. Ertharin Cousin and Mr. Stefanos Fotiou, for their valuable insights. I also wish to thank the FoodDiplomacy Network for its technical support and partnership, as well as our co-sponsors Bahrain, Denmark, Egypt, India, Italy, Kuwait, Panama, and Portugal.

Greece is pleased to convene today's discussion in order to highlight that food systems are no longer simply a matter of agriculture, development or humanitarian assistance. They are an integral part of the geopolitical landscape, with direct implications for international peace and security.

Allow me to highlight three points.

First, on the geopolitical dimension of food systems. Food is a strategic asset. Dependencies on food production, agricultural inputs, energy, water, supply chains and trade routes can translate into significant geopolitical leverage, with implications for the sovereignty and strategic autonomy of States. Such dependencies can become sources of vulnerability, particularly for countries with limited capacity to absorb internal and external shocks.

We must therefore look beyond food availability and consider the broader structures of power and dependency affecting who produces food, who controls its supply and who has access to it. Recognizing the strategic significance of food systems is precisely why they deserve greater diplomatic attention.

Second, on the role of food diplomacy. Food diplomacy proposes to move beyond managing the consequences of food insecurity and towards addressing the political and structural vulnerabilities that generate it. This requires not only cooperation among major

producers and exporters, but also ensuring that countries most exposed to external dependencies have a meaningful voice in shaping the systems on which they rely.

It also means bringing governments, international organizations, the private sector, and scientific institutions together to anticipate risks, manage interdependencies and build equitable and resilient partnerships. The *Black Sea Grain Initiative,* that you have mentioned, for example, demonstrated how diplomacy can overcome political obstacles and sustain vital food flows, even during armed conflict.

Greece has translated its commitment to global food security into practical solidarity, including through its participation in the *Grain from Ukraine* and *Food from Ukraine* initiatives and the provision of food assistance to vulnerable populations in Gaza and Lebanon. In 2026, Greece has further supported WFP food assistance operations in Jamaica, Cuba and Sudan.

Third, on a principle that must remain non-negotiable. However strategic food systems may be for States, access to adequate food will always remain a fundamental human right for every individual. Their strategic importance must never justify the weaponization of food, the starvation of civilians or the obstruction of humanitarian assistance. Resolution 2417 (2018) provides an essential framework in this regard, and its full implementation remains imperative. Food diplomacy can therefore only complement, never replace, humanitarian action and the parties' obligations under international humanitarian law.

At the same time, scientific evidence, reliable data and early-warning mechanisms, including tools such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Cadre Harmonisé, should continue to inform diplomatic engagement, particularly within the Security Council, allowing us to anticipate vulnerabilities and act before they escalate into crises.

Excellencies,

Today's discussion seeks to broaden how we think and talk about food in international affairs: not only as a humanitarian necessity or a development challenge, but also as a matter of geopolitics, sovereignty, interdependence and diplomacy.

Greece stands ready to work with all interested partners to advance this conversation in the appropriate UN fora, in full respect of existing mandates. Let us ensure that the strategic importance of food becomes a reason for greater cooperation, rather than a source of division.

I thank you.