

**MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AT MINISTERIAL
LEVEL**

Paris, 25-26 February 2010

Statement by Helir-Valdor Seeder, Minister of Agriculture of Estonia

For the agricultural sector, the last decade has been one full of constant changes and adjustments. The last couple of years have been characterized by considerable increase in price volatility and a sharp growth in the number of malnourished people, reaching a level never experienced before. In the second half of last century, green revolution gave us hope that we had once and for all solved the global population's concerns about food. Unfortunately, it has become clear, that this was an illusion.

Today, agriculture is facing several economic, demographic, technological and environmental changes and problems, which are challenging the agricultural sector as well as consumers and governments. Our position is that the main priority of the agricultural sector is to ensure in a sustainable way the availability of safe and nutritious food for the growing population of the world. Providing food security for their citizens is the primary responsibility of governments. In a situation where the change of production conditions caused by global warming concurs with constantly growing food demand, new problems arise that agricultural sector has to confront. Sharp food price fluctuations put pressure on governments' economic and trade policy decisions. In our opinion, the role of the OECD should be to analyze and draw attention to the factors impeding the assurance of global food security.

The globalization of agricultural commodities trade is a cross-continental and cross-border process. It is important to ensure the movement of the best possible technology between the developed and developing countries. The economic policy decisions and agreements made on global level should also have an output on the level of an individual agricultural producer. For this purpose, more attention should be paid to the funding of

agricultural education and research. Only focusing on the development of innovation and agricultural research can guarantee increased efficiency of agricultural production, which is vital for ensuring sufficient food supply for the future generations.

In addition to the past and ongoing work focused on making governments' policies more efficient, OECD could also investigate the connections between the operation of the food chain and people's consumption habits, in order to reduce the waste of food that has already been produced. To find solutions to our problems, we need both technological developments as well as changes in the behavior of individuals and businesses. To make the existing food system and the consumer behavior of the Western world more rational, would be a small, but not unimportant step towards achieving our long-term objectives.