

U.S. Explanation of Position
UN General Assembly Third Committee
Resolution on the Right to Food
November 22, 2010

--Thank you, Mr. Chair. The United States is pleased to be able to again join consensus on this resolution on the right to food.

--Improving global food security is a key foreign policy objective of President Obama and his Administration. At last year's "G8 Plus" Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, the United States, along with more than 25 countries and organizations, forged a strong and swift global response to hunger and food insecurity based on five key principles, and collectively pledged over \$20 billion in support of a common approach. In September 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon co-hosted an event entitled "Partnering for Food Security," attended by more than 130 countries, to build further support for the principles which were adopted at the World Food Summit in November 2009. Now known as the Rome Principles, they constitute the foundation for collective, global action on agricultural development and food security, and for the Obama Administration food security initiative entitled "Feed the Future".

—The United States is committed to accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, including by investing in country plans to boost agricultural development as a means for achieving MDG 1--reducing by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and who live in extreme poverty by 2015.

—The United States is not a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and by joining consensus on this resolution does not recognize any change in the current state of conventional or customary international law regarding rights related to food. It is our objective to achieve a world where everyone has adequate access to food, but we do not treat the right to food as an enforceable obligation.

—We interpret this resolution's references to the right to food, with respect to States Parties to the aforementioned Covenant, in light of its Article 2(1), in which they undertake to take steps "with a view to achieving progressively the full realization" of economic, social, and cultural rights. We interpret this resolution's references to member States' obligations regarding the right to food as applicable to the extent they have assumed such obligations. And while the United States has

for the last decade been the world's largest food aid donor, we do not concur with any reading of this resolution that would suggest that states have particular extraterritorial obligations arising from a right to food. We interpret this resolution's reaffirmation of previous documents as applicable to the extent countries affirmed those documents in the first place.

—The United States is committed to international trade liberalization and to achieving an ambitious and balanced conclusion to the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Doha Round negotiations. By joining consensus on this resolution, we highlight that opening markets through international trade agreements, like the Doha Round, can generate the economic growth necessary to spur development. At the same time, we wish to clarify that this resolution will in no way undermine or modify the commitments of the United States or any other government to existing trade agreements or the mandates of on-going trade negotiations.

—Similarly, the United States wishes to reiterate its view that the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) supports comprehensive approaches to food security by encouraging policies that will enable countries to use tools and incentives, including biotechnology, that increase agricultural productivity. By joining consensus on this resolution, we support countries' continued implementation of the TRIPS Agreement, which provides for patent and plant variety protection systems that generate many benefits for researchers, producers, consumers, and society, in the drive to promote global food security.

—I thank you Mr. Chair.