



Remarks by Ambassador Jerry Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, at the Workshop on “Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Enhancing capacity of developing countries to adopt sustainable agriculture through Juncao technology to alleviate poverty and promote productive employment”, 26 May 2017, 10:00 – 12:00, UN Headquarters, Conference Room 6.

Mr Moderator,

We are building up to the 2017 session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that will, for the first time, review and follow-up on the implementation of specific Sustainable Development Goals. This will include SDG2 - *“End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”*. We therefore welcome this Workshop on a particular technology that can assist developing countries in their achievement of SDG2.

Developing countries continue to face the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, including South Africa. The 2030 Agenda therefore resonates well with South Africa’s own National Development

Plan, which aims to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and accelerate economic growth by 2030.

South Africa's roadmap to addressing the underlying causes of the triple challenge includes redirecting the focus of policy making from short-term symptom-based to longer-term policies based on sound evidence, with a core focus on achieving a "decent standard of living", which is also aligned to Africa's Agenda 2063.

South Africa is delighted to participate in this Workshop to discuss the significance of JUNCAO Technology. This technology, which uses various types of grasses as growth medium for different types of mushrooms or fungi for various purposes, is an excellent example of an appropriate technology that can be further scaled up through South-South cooperation to benefit local communities who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods.

As part of South Africa's response to the challenge of climate change, we are improving our research into water, nutrient and soil conservation technologies and techniques, developing climate-resistant crops and livestock, as well as ownership and financing models to promote the development of climate-smart agriculture that also increases agricultural production. This includes the "LandCare Programme", a community-based and government-supported programme to promote the sustainable management and use of agricultural natural resources. This, in turn, also supports the National Strategy on Agro-Ecological Agriculture, which aims to maximize production whilst minimizing the use of external inputs and avoiding the pollution of natural resources. This is based on a "whole-

systems approach” to food, feed, and fibre production that balances environmental soundness, social equity, and economic viability.

In this context, JUNCAO Technology is being implemented successfully in some parts of South Africa, and also in Lesotho, apart from a number of other African countries, to create additional income streams for rural and urban small farmers. There is formal cooperation between the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University in Fuzhou, China on expanding this technology in South Africa. There is also ongoing engagement between the provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the KwaZulu-Natal Province and relevant entities in China in this regard.

This Technology, among others, contributes to preventing land degradation (by substituting wild grass for wood as a growth medium), producing food, fibre and biofuel materials, improving nutrition and health for local communities, utilizing organic waste for energy, fertilizer and soil conditioner, and supporting job creation and value-added products.

It therefore also contributes to the resilience of local communities, by contributing to human activities that are smart, secure and sustainable. Smart in terms of adopting new technologies, secure in terms of building systems that enable communities to better respond to extreme natural events and adopt lasting solutions, and sustainable in terms of being part of the solution to the big questions of sustainability.

In conclusion, this is one of the initiatives undertaken in line with South Africa's commitment toward poverty eradication, and ensuring that no one is left behind, whilst contributing to a better and more sustainable world for all.

I thank you.