

Mr. Ministers, dear participants, dear Ukrainian and Danish friends

I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to all of you to this seminar on agricultural cooperation between Denmark and Ukraine.

I am the ambassador of Denmark and I have been asked to be your moderator this morning at this opening session.

Before I open the floor for opening speeches, I wish to thank Ukraine's minister of Agrarian Policy and Food, Mr. Mykola Solskyi and Denmark's Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Mr. Jacob Jensen.

You have both travelled a long way to be with us this morning. Mr. Solskyi has travelled from Kyiv. That is a seven hour drive. Mr. Jensen has travelled even longer from Copenhagen, leaving yesterday.

Your presence this morning despite the geographical inconvenience is a strong symbol of the close Danish-Ukrainian partnership that has grown even stronger and more comprehensive since the full scale Russian attack.

Denmark is one of Ukraine's closest partners and Denmark's support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is unwavering.

The reason is very simple: The Danes know that Ukraine's struggle is also our struggle and Ukraine's freedom is also our freedom.

The Danish-Ukrainian partnership is broad and comprehensive. The bulk of our support is defense equipment, but our support also has important civilian and humanitarian components. That includes Denmark's partnership with the city of Mykolaiv.

But we also have a strong partnership in agriculture.

Danish farmers have been active in Ukraine since the nineties. They are proud to be part of the dynamic transformation of Ukrainian agriculture. The Danish farming community in Ukraine stayed on after the full scale Russian aggression.

Like their Ukrainian colleagues they continued farming their lands despite the challenging wartime conditions.

Let me take this opportunity to salute all farmers in Ukraine for your resilience and tenacity in keeping agricultural production going. This is crucial for Ukraine's fighting power.

There is also a prod and hard-working community of Ukrainians working in Danish agriculture. Many Ukrainian agricultural students and interns have come to Denmark to develop their competences and to learn new skills. And many stay in Danish agriculture as farm managers making an important contribution to Danish agriculture

So Danish-Ukrainian relations are not only about official relations at the governmental level. It is just as much about people-to-people contacts and business and professional contacts as we witness this morning.

Let me also thank the Danish Agriculture and Food Council for organizing this seminar. This is the first Danish commercial delegation with ministerial participation coming to Ukraine.

There have been many commercial events outside Ukraine, both in Poland and in Denmark. But if you want to do business here you need to come here in person and meet your Ukrainian partners on their home turf.

Warm thanks to the director general of the Danish Agriculture and Food Council, Ms. Merete Juhl, a true friend of Ukraine and a former ambassador in Kyiv, as well as to all Danish participant who have travelled here despite the logistical obstacles.

By coming here, you are hopefully setting an example for others to follow.

I also wish to thank the Ukrainian participants. I know very well that this a busy time for farmers due to the ongoing harvest. Nevertheless, you have made it a priority to take part in today's seminar.

I also wish to thank the acting Head of the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection, Ms. Olha Shevchenko. You and your team have been instrumental in preparing today's event and I look forward to work with you on strengthening Danish-Ukrainian agricultural cooperation.

Finally, I wish to thank my own team for their efficient work.

Once again thank you for inviting me and thank you for your attention.