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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
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CONFERENCE CONFÉRENCE CONFERENCIA

**Fortieth Session
Quarantième session
40.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 3-8 July 2017
Rome, 3-8 juillet 2017
Roma, 3-8 de julio de 2017**

**FIRST PLENARY SESSION
PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

3 July 2017

The First Meeting was opened at 9.07 hours
Mr Emmanuel F. Piñol,
Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La première séance est ouverte à 9 h 07
sous la présidence de M. Emmanuel F. Piñol,
Président de la Conférence

Se abre la primera reunión a las 9.07
bajo la presidencia de la Sr. Emmanuel F. Piñol,
Presidente de la Conferencia

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DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour to declare open the 40th Session of the FAO Conference and to welcome you to FAO headquarters. In particular, it is an honour and a privilege to welcome His Excellency President Paolo Gentiloni, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy, and His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See.

We have also distinguished guests here, sitting in the Plenary, I will not mention all of them, but I want to thank them for their presence.

The first item in the Agenda is the Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons.

At its last Session, the FAO Council proposed that the Honourable Emmanuel Piñol, Secretary for Agriculture of the Philippines, preside over this session of the Conference.

May I take it that the Conference agrees with this proposal and can confirm this by acclamation?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Thank you. I now invite the Honourable Emmanuel Piñol to come forward and take the Chair of this session of the Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

His Excellency, Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Director General Jose Graziano da Silva, Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please allow me to first thank the Honorable Director General Jose Graziano da Silva of the Food and Agriculture Organization for his warm welcome and kind introductory remarks, and on behalf of my President, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, and the Filipino people, express our deepest appreciation to him for leading the FAO in coming to our aid in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan and the continuing support of the Organization to the Philippines.

The gesture of concern and compassion by Señor Da Silva and the FAO, along with the FAO donor countries and partners, during the most difficult times when almost 10,000 Filipinos lost their lives will always be remembered by a grateful nation.

It is with deep humility that I accept this rare honour of presiding the 40th Session of the FAO Conference.

On a personal note, I consider this election to the Chairmanship of the 40th Session as a victory of the ordinary family farmer for I lay claim to the distinction of being the first practicing farmer to be appointed as Secretary of Agriculture in my country.

Let me thank my colleagues and the members of the Asia Group for their trust and confidence and for nominating me to Chair this very important conference.

I also would like to thank the inspirational presence of two leaders of the Philippine Legislature - Senator Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture of the Philippine Senate and Congressman Jose Panganiban, chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture of the Philippine Congress.

We now gather in this historic and hallowed hall during the most critical times in the history of humanity when the ability and capability of nations to produce food for their people face a new threat - Climate Change.

As one of the five countries in the world greatly affected by Climate Change, we have learned our lessons and with modest resources, our government has made adjustments.

We will share these experiences with other countries in my presentation of the Philippine Statement during this conference.

Just as alarming as the threat of Climate Change is the recorded downtrend in the investments made by government in agriculture and fisheries over the last few years.

Over the years, governments have been spending less for food production than they do for defence, infrastructure and education.

Billions of dollars have been spent by governments to perfect precision bombs but the development of precision farming technology has largely been left to the private sector.

Statistics provided by the FAO showed that the average public expenditure for agriculture of 51 countries from 1982 to 2007 steadily went down from 7.8 percent to 4.2 percent.

While we do not have the latest data on this, it is safe to say that if the downtrend continues, people in many countries around the world would suffer from food shortages in the coming years.

If this is left unchecked, the outcome could be catastrophic because it would not only result in reduced food production but also in massive poverty in the countryside and continued migration to the urban centers by people from the rural areas thus creating a serious social problem.

Food security is National Security.

When there are no roads, people would make their own trails; where there are no classrooms, students could gather under the shade of trees; when there is an armed conflict, negotiations could stop the war.

But there is nothing that could stop hungry people from staging riots.

It is a must therefore that we remind our governments that there should be more investments in agriculture not only to ensure availability and affordability of food but also to reduce poverty in the countryside.

Please allow me to end this message with this gentle reminder.

While we are here to represent our governments and our countries, while we belong to different nationalities, while we speak different languages, while we are separated by political boundaries, the truth is that we belong to one global community.

As members of this global family, we all must endeavour to contribute to the attainment of the Zero Hunger Advocacy and the Agenda 2030 as a whole, and ensure that no child and no human being would ever to go sleep at night with an empty stomach.

Thank you and may the Spirit of Brotherhood and the Love for Humanity prevail and guide us in the duration of this Conference.

I welcome you all to the 40th Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Conference.

Thank you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Mr Paolo GENTILONI (Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy)

Senior President of the Conference, Chairperson, Director-General, His Eminence Cardinal Parolin, Ladies and Gentlemen, first and foremost I would like to thank the Director-General Graziano da Silva for his commitment, and the results over the last six years of his term in office have been evident for us.

The Italian Prime Ministry has increasingly worked with FAO and the other two United Nations agencies here in Rome. This cooperation is something that is very important to us. The sustainable development and its link towards food and nutrition and the very close link to climate change and conflicts and migration are very much at the heart of the international agenda.

Before our eyes, near 800 million people still suffer from hunger and near two billion are malnourished, many of them children and women. At the recent G7 Summit in Taormina in May, we

stressed the need to make a common effort to combat malnutrition and food insecurity particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the region in the world with the highest percentage of malnourished people.

We expressed high concern for countries like Nigeria, Yemen and others who are suffering situations of great food shortage that could bring about the worst food crisis since the Second World War. More than 20 million people run the risk of extreme shortage of food and there are certain areas specifically in South Sudan where these food shortages have already been declared.

In the face of this outlook, we must not be resigned but rather make renewed efforts to make extraordinary efforts as we have seen over the last 20 years. More than a million people have made their way out of extreme poverty over this period and the percentage of people around the world suffering from under-nutrition has been roughly halved and all of the world access to drinking water and having primary education and shortening the gap between girls and boys has also been fostered.

We know that we have a new ambitious objective ahead of us looking towards the horizon of 2030, food security improving malnutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. Zero Hunger is what will enable us to pursue peace, justice and equality and be able to conserve our planet for future generations.

If we deprive people of food we will be depriving them of justice, equality and freedom. Peace in and of itself is an objective and yet it is a prerequisite at the same time. In this challenge, Norman Borlaug Nobel Prize Economist, father of the Green Revolution said some years ago that to attain peace we need to cultivate justice yet at the same time we need to till the land to produce more bread, otherwise there will never be peace in the world.

The relevance of the nexus between food security and peace is very sadly confirmed by hard facts today. Conflicts are determining factors in ten out of 13 crises around the world today, including those underway before our eyes today. Conflicts tend to push migratory flows and increase them. We support FAO's choice to support the World Food Day and bring to light this nexus. Men and women who are forced to leave their land because of war, prosecution or famine have nearly always lost everything except hope, which is their only and very precious good.

I am very proud to be able to remind you today in front of this FAO auditorium that here in Italy we very proudly are welcoming those who are arriving on our shores day by day. We have mobilized to face this migratory flow in the central Mediterranean and I will call upon Europe to share in this effort if Europe wants to be faithful to its own principles, to its own history and to civilization.

It is necessary for Italy to prevent these flows from being unsustainable. We must take care of our own society that has thus far reacted in an exemplary fashion showing humanity, a capacity to be welcoming and cohesion. The Italian initiative has born its first fruits and I certainly hope that these results will generate specific effects. But Italian welcoming is not enough.

Of course we must save human lives and welcome those who are crying out for help. We need to make joint efforts to offer new horizons to those who particularly in Africa are struggling day by day for their survival, offering them the possibility not to have to flee. This is why we are very much in favour, as non-permanent Members of the Security Council, for the United Nation's increasing interests and the FAO's interest to promote closer ties between peace and security with sustainable development along the lines of the 2030 Agenda.

In order to overcome or be up to the task of this 2030 challenge, we must promote sustainable agriculture beyond just responding to emergencies. We must avoid future shocks. These systems indeed are fragile and they will not have as much of a possibility to resist future impacts.

The meeting of the G7 Ministers of Agriculture in October will be in Bergamo and we have the Minister of Agriculture with us organizing it. At that meeting, the FAO is offering very significant contributions. We will be speaking about resilience, the protection of agricultural products through more effective risk management. We will also be confronting the positive effect that agriculture may have on migratory phenomenon in terms of leverage for development for countries.

All of this will lead us to look towards more resilient eco-sustainable and diversified agro-food production. We must not deny the fact that these systems thus far have produced a great amount of food for global markets but we must also acknowledge that these same systems continue to generate perhaps negative aspects on the environment and human health, a degradation of land, soil and water, high gas emissions, greenhouse gas emissions that is, loss of biodiversity, persistent hunger and nutritional failures.

We must work on diversifying crops and promote biodiversity to build healthy ecosystems and ensure fertility of soil for the long-term. A key dimension for this transformation is also combating malnutrition. In November, our country will host a high level meeting on nutrition with the objective of bolstering our common commitment to this issue. Perhaps not all of you are aware of this but there is an increasing number of Italian youth who are turning towards the land. Many urban youth and this is something characteristic of Italy. We are in an opposite trend not towards cities but towards the land. These young people value local traditions using innovative technology. They work on, of course, a global food market.

Our cooperation politics are congruous with this sustainable agricultural approach. This is why we are specifically concentrating on spreading technology and practices in crop growing in this direction. We are supporting small producers and bringing out the value of women's contribution, the involvement of local communities as well. This for us is a seal of Italian cooperation. At the heart of all of our relations, we must always place human dignity, which is central to decent work, the respect of different cultures and traditions, and the sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems.

The recommendations made by Pope Francis, and his conception of harmony with nature, around which all human production must hinge, as he stated before, the United Nations should encourage our work. This way, we can look towards transforming the land around the world into a land for hope instead of pushing people away towards huge cities or far off lands. They can look towards staying on a sustainable land of their own.

The Milan Expo in 2015 with the cooperation of our international partners put nutrition and sustainable development at the heart of its agenda. In the Milan Charter signed by more than a million people from around the world incarnates this shared conviction. Italy together with FAO and other agencies here in Rome share these very ideas.

I would like to convey to you, to the millions of men and women of different nationalities who are serving often times in risky difficult conditions who are working towards these goals with Italians, I would like to greet you. We are working in synergy with other United Nations agencies and very recently, at the IFAD and WFM agencies summits, we have had a very valuable opportunity to push forward integration here in Rome including working towards food security and international biodiversity.

We should not take for granted just how important food and sustainable development are on the international agenda. There are many contingent factors involved. All of you here can play a very significant role in this sense, working with your Capitals to get a strong clear message across when priorities and lines of action are set.

For Italy, being a host country for the FAO, means promoting not only debate but also commitment. Our presence in the G7 has placed us in a complex international situation and we are looking towards goal two which is maintaining food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. We will carry forward this commitment at the end of this week in Germany at the G20 meeting. This challenge that we have ahead of us is extraordinarily ambitious. It requires exceptional efforts but we will be up to the task.

We were working on lowering the number of people who are hungry or malnourished. There are not an acceptable number of people in this position. When we have Zero Hunger our task will be over, and that, will depend on each one of us as Governments, international organizations, associations, civil societies and private companies as well as local authorities and individual citizens, each man, woman, child be they young or old, people must work towards the goal mentioned by Franklin Roosevelt when

the United Nations was being founded. We must all work together with conviction along this path towards Zero Hunger.

I wish all of you a very fruitful type of work here at this conference. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much your Excellency, Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni of Italy.

I now have the honour to invite His Eminence, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See to deliver a message to the Conference from His Holiness Pope Francis.

Sr. Pietro PAROLIN (Secretario de Estado de la Santa Sede)

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia, Señor Director General de la FAO, Señor Presidente del Consejo de la República Italiana, Señoras y Señores Embajadores y representantes permanentes, Señoras y Señores.

Agradezco la acogida recibida y las palabras de bienvenida que me han dirigido, cumplo con agrado la tarea de dar lectura al mensaje que Su Santidad, el Papa Francisco, dirige a la Conferencia.

Señor Presidente,

Me complace dirigirle mi deferente y cordial saludo, así como a cada uno de ustedes, Representantes de los Estados miembros de la FAO, reunidos para la cuadragésima Conferencia de la Organización.

Extiendo también mi saludo al Director General de la FAO y a los Responsables de los otros Organismos internacionales presentes en esta reunión, que está llamada a dar respuestas precisas al sector agrícola y alimentario, de las que dependen las expectativas de millones de personas.

No pudiendo esta vez estar con ustedes, según la consolidada tradición que se remonta al inicio de esta sede de la FAO en Roma, he pedido al Señor Cardenal Pietro Parolin, Secretario de Estado, llevar mi palabra de estímulo y apoyo, y manifestarles toda mi estima y consideración por la ardua tarea que deben realizar.

La Santa Sede sigue con mucha atención la actividad internacional y quiere cooperar a orientarla para favorecer no un simple progreso u objetivos teóricos de desarrollo, sino una real erradicación del hambre y de la malnutrición. Todos somos conscientes de que no basta la intención de asegurar a todos el pan cotidiano, sino que es necesario reconocer que todos tienen derecho a él y que deben por tanto beneficiarse del mismo. Si los continuos objetivos propuestos quedan todavía lejos, depende mucho de la falta de una cultura de la solidaridad que no logra abrirse paso en medio de las actividades internacionales, que permanecen a menudo ligadas solo al pragmatismo de las estadísticas o al deseo de una eficacia carente de la idea de compartir.

El compromiso de cada País por aumentar el propio nivel de nutrición, por mejorar la actividad agrícola y las condiciones de las poblaciones rurales, se concreta en el impulso del sector agrícola, en el incremento de la producción o en la promoción de una distribución efectiva de los alimentos. Pero esto no basta. En efecto, dichos objetivos lo que están pidiendo es que se considere cada día que el derecho de cada persona a ser liberada de la pobreza y del hambre depende del deber que tiene toda la familia humana de ayudar de forma concreta a los necesitados.

Entonces, cuando un País no sea capaz de ofrecer respuestas adecuadas porque no lo permita su grado de desarrollo, sus condiciones de pobreza, los cambios climáticos o las situaciones de inseguridad, es necesario que la FAO y las demás Instituciones intergubernamentales puedan tener la capacidad de intervenir específicamente para emprender una adecuada acción solidaria. A partir de la conciencia de que los bienes que nos ha entregado Dios Creador son para todos, se requiere urgentemente que la solidaridad sea el criterio inspirador de cualquier forma de cooperación en las relaciones internacionales.

Una mirada a la situación actual del mundo no nos ofrece imágenes consoladoras. No podemos, sin embargo, permanecer únicamente preocupados o acaso solo resignados. Este momento de evidente dificultad debe hacernos también más conscientes de que el hambre y la malnutrición no son

solamente fenómenos naturales o estructurales de determinadas áreas geográficas, sino que son el resultado de una más compleja condición de subdesarrollo, causada por la inercia de muchos o por el egoísmo de unos pocos. Las guerras, el terrorismo, los desplazamientos forzados de personas que cada vez más impiden o, al menos, condicionan fuertemente incluso las actividades de cooperación, no son fruto de la fatalidad, sino más bien consecuencia de decisiones concretas. Se trata de un mecanismo complejo que afecta ante todo a las categorías más vulnerables, excluidas no solo de los procesos productivos, sino también obligadas a menudo a dejar sus tierras en busca de refugio y esperanza de vida. Como también están determinados por decisiones tomadas en plena libertad y conciencia los datos relativos a las ayudas a los Países pobres, que siguen mermando cada día, no obstante los reiterados llamamientos ante las situaciones de crisis cada vez más destructoras que se manifiestan en diferentes áreas del planeta.

Hay que ser conscientes de que en estos casos la libertad de elección de cada uno se conjuga con la solidaridad hacia todos, en relación con las necesidades, cumpliendo de buena fe los compromisos asumidos o anunciados. A este respecto, animado también por el deseo de alentar a los Gobiernos, quisiera unirme con una contribución simbólica al programa de la FAO para proveer de semillas a las familias rurales que viven en áreas donde se han juntado los efectos de los conflictos y de la sequía. Este gesto se suma al trabajo que la Iglesia viene realizando, según su vocación de estar de parte de los pobres de la tierra y acompañar el compromiso eficaz de todos en favor suyo.

Este compromiso nos lo pide hoy la Agenda para el Desarrollo 2030, cuando reitera el concepto de seguridad alimentaria como objetivo impostergable. Pero solo un esfuerzo de auténtica solidaridad será capaz de eliminar el número de personas malnutridas y privadas de lo necesario para vivir. Es un desafío muy grande para la FAO y para todas las Instituciones de la Comunidad internacional. Un reto en el que también la Iglesia se siente comprometida en primera línea.

Deseo, por tanto, que las sesiones de esta Conferencia puedan dar un nuevo impulso a la actividad de la Organización y ofrecer aquellos instrumentos deseados y esperados por millones de hermanos nuestros que ven en la acción de la FAO no sólo una contribución técnica para aumentar los recursos y para distribuir los frutos de la producción, sino también el signo concreto, a veces único, de una fraternidad que les permite confiar en el futuro.

Que la bendición de Dios todopoderoso, rico en misericordia, descienda sobre ustedes y sus trabajos y les dé la fuerza necesaria para contribuir a un auténtico progreso de la familia humana.

Desde el Vaticano, 3 de julio de 2017.

Papa Francisco

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Y como conclusión de mi intervención quiero anunciar oficialmente que el próximo 16 de Octubre, con motivo de la Jornada Mundial de la Alimentación, que propone este año reflexionar sobre el tema “Cambiar el futuro de la migración” y la presencia de los ministros de la agricultura del G7, el Papa Francisco vendrá aquí a la FAO, acogiendo la invitación que le ha dirigido el Director General, el Profesor José Graziano Da Silva. Muchas gracias.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Your Eminence.

I am now honoured to invite Dr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, to deliver his statement to the 40th Session of the Conference of the FAO.

Director-General you now have the floor.

Director-General's Statement to the Conference
Déclaration du Directeur General a la Conférence
Declaración del Director General a la Conferencia
(C 2017/INF/3)

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I would like to start by welcoming and thanking all of you for the great turnout at this Conference. I am most grateful for the commitment you all demonstrate by being here today.

During the week, we will have the presence of 1 President, 1 Prime Minister, 1 Deputy Prime Minister, 82 Ministers registered at the moment, 16 Vice-Ministers, 176 Member delegations, and the total of 1.109 (one thousand one hundred and nine) participants registered, including many international organizations, the Private Sector, and Civil Society Representatives.

This is a clear reflection of the importance of food and agriculture for Sustainable Development, as we have just heard from Prime Minister Gentiloni, and also from the Cardinal Pietro Parolin. We have to fully explore all the contributions that sustainable agriculture and food systems can give towards implementing the 2030 Agenda.

This is why we have prepared 19 side events throughout the week. At least 6 of them are linked to climate change, which is the theme of this Conference. Climate change is today one of the main challenges we are facing. We will have opportunities to discuss the relationships between climate change and food security, nutrition, water scarcity and migration, among other issues.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish I could announce here today some good news regarding the global fight against hunger, as I did in the last Conference in 2015. But, unfortunately, it is not the case. Preliminary data available indicate for this year that the number of undernourished people in the world has increased, rising again. The final number will be released in September, with the launch of the State of Food Security and Nutrition, SOFI 2017. But, unfortunately, that is not good news.

I am sure that you are not completely surprised. Earlier this year famine was declared in parts of South Sudan. And by the time famine is declared, it means that thousands of people have already died from hunger. Alerts of high risk of famine were also issued for Northeast Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen. Nearly 20 million people are heavily affected in these four countries.

And this is happening less than two years after we agreed to eradicate hunger by 2030. Strong political commitment to eradicate hunger is fundamental. But it is not enough. Hunger will only be defeated if countries translate their pledges into concrete action, especially at national and local levels. It is there where the people are in need.

Today, conflicts and the impacts of climate change pose increasing challenges to our global efforts to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty. FAO currently identifies 19 countries in a protracted crisis situation. All of these 19 countries are engaged in internal conflict and violence, often combined with adverse climatic events.

Almost 60% of the people suffering from hunger in the world live in areas affected by conflicts and by the impact of climate change. They are predominantly rural people. Their livelihoods have been disrupted. Many of them have found NO option other than increasing the statistics of distress migration. In fact, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has doubled from 2007 to 2015 to nearly 60 million people.

Peace is of course the key to ending these crises. But we cannot wait for peace to take action. There is much we can do to fight hunger during conflicts and protracted crises.

FAO, WFP, IFAD and partners are working hard to assist these vulnerable people. We combine humanitarian assistance with development actions to protect and restore their agriculture-based livelihoods. It is extremely important to ensure that these people have the conditions to continue

producing their own food where they live. To save lives, we have to save their livelihoods. We cannot save people and put them in camps.

It is a great pleasure to have with me on podium today Mr Gilbert Hounbo, President of IFAD, and Mr David Beasley, Executive-Director of WFP

At lunch time today, during the Zero Hunger side event, we will elaborate better our ideas to advance in the fight against hunger. On Thursday, FAO is also organizing a special event on conflict and famine. We will present concrete actions, and also share the results that have been achieved so far.

Excellencies,

This Conference marks another important step in the FAO transformation process. The Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for the next biennium, as well as the Medium Term Plan 2018-2021, have been designed to align FAO's work with the Sustainable Development Goals. In other words, our five Strategic Objectives will have the same targets as many of the SDGs. FAO's work is projected to contribute to the achievement of 40 targets of 15 SDGs.

This alignment has been possible because of the centrality of food and agriculture to the sustainable development agenda 2030. And also because, over the last five years, FAO has adopted an integrated, interlinked and interconnected approach, similar to the SDGs.

In the next biennium, FAO intends to increase its technical capacity in the 10 priority areas. This includes climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable agriculture production, poverty reduction, water scarcity, migration and the support of conflict-affected rural livelihoods. We will continue our work on nutrition, fisheries, forestry and the one-health agenda, including Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). And we are bringing the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to 14 percent of the core budget, as requested by the last Conference.

Let me also observe that the SDGs will greatly impact on the volume of our work in statistics. Just to compare, FAO was responsible for only 4 indicators under the framework of Millennium Development Goals, the MDGs. In relation to the SDGs, FAO is custodian or co-custodian of 25 indicators. This is six times more.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Programme Implementation Report 2014-2015 presents the results achieved by the Organization during the past biennium. I am glad to announce that almost 90 percent of the output targets were fully achieved, with two thirds of these exceeded. This helped Members to accomplish nearly 80 percent of the expected outcomes. So FAO is delivering, and this is producing an important and measurable impact at the global, regional and especially national level.

This is also a result of the decentralization programme that we have put forward. And it is a great satisfaction to see that Member Countries are officially recognizing that today FAO is much more efficient and effective. National reports from many developed and developing countries now list FAO as an Organization that gives value-for-money.

This performance is also a result of an internal restructuring effort, while sharpening the focus of the Organization. And more important, we have been able to rearrange the Organization without affecting our overall technical capacity. This is the conclusion of the Independent Assessment of our Technical Capacity, presented earlier this year. The report indicates that, in quantitative terms, FAO has increased its technical capacity in the period from 2012 to 2016, both at Headquarters and in Decentralized Offices. We are missing a qualitative approach and this will be undertaken internally at the next possible opportunity.

Excellencies,

Since 2012 when I took office, we have been operating under the same nominal regular budget. This means a real budget decrease in the last 3 biennia. Despite that, we have found USD 116 million dollars over the last five years in savings, due to efficiency gains, the re-profiling of administrative jobs and also the use of consultants.

But we have cut to the bone. We cannot continue on this path for the future. For the next biennium, we are also de-emphasizing some specific activities to be able to invest in priority areas. We know the reality. We know that countries are facing difficult financial constraints. This is why I have proposed to maintain once more the nominal regular budget for the next biennium. FAO Council has endorsed this proposal, and recommended this Conference to approve it.

In this context, I ask you to remember that voluntary contributions are increasingly vital to FAO. We have elaborated an Information Note that explains the priorities, and also indicates the areas and activities in which we are expecting to allocate voluntary contributions. And let me renew my appeal to countries to invest their money in FAO. OECD countries, for example, will pay almost 70 million dollars less assessed contributions in the next biennium, due to the new scale that will be approved in this Conference. I urge all countries to keep here at FAO their financial resources that will exceed the total of their new assessment contributions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying that despite the recent setbacks in the fight against hunger, I am still very confident that we can become the Zero Hunger Generation.

We have the global commitment, and we have the tools and knowledge to achieve it. And this is a fight of everyone not just for FAO, WFP and IFAD. We need everyone on board. The SDGs are universal. And it could not be different. Today, what happens in the rural areas of Africa, Asia or Latin America has impacts in many other parts of the world. Migration shows that.

There is no peace without sustainable development, and there is no sustainable development without peace. Vulnerable people, rural people cannot be left behind, especially youth and women. We have to build conditions for them to thrive, for them to have hope. For them to exercise their human right to food.

Ending hunger is the core of FAO mandate. Promoting sustainable agriculture development also. And we will remain firmly true to our mandate, in order to contribute to a better, fairer and safer world for everyone.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Item 1. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons

Point 1. Élection du président et des vice-présidents

Tema 1. Elección del Presidente y los vicepresidentes

(C 2017/12; C 2017/LIM/5)

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much Director-General.

In accordance with Rule VIII (eight) of the General Rules of the Organization, the Conference, after having considered the recommendation of the FAO Council, shall elect three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference.

The 156th Session of the FAO Council held in April this year proposed three candidates for the three positions of Vice-Chairperson of this session of Conference and consequently the following nominees are now presented to the Conference for approval: Mr Aziz Akhannouch of Morocco; Mr Thomas Duffy of the United States of America; and Mr Matai Seremaiah of Vanuatu.

Can I take it that the Conference approves these nominations?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Thank you very much. It is so decided. I congratulate the Vice-Chairpersons and look forward to working with them over the following days.

Item 2. Appointment of the General Committee and Credentials Committee
Point 2. Constitution du Bureau et de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs
Tema 2. Nombramiento del Comité General y del Comité de Credenciales
(C 2017/12; C 2017/LIM/5)

CHAIRPERSON

We now proceed to Item 2 of the Provisional Agenda, Appointment of the General Committee and the Credentials Committee. I will now read the nominations for the seven Member Nations proposed for election to the General Committee as submitted by the Council.

The nominations are as follows: Australia, Egypt, Malaysia, Peru, San Marino, Uganda, United States of America.

Are there any objections?

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

It is so decided. Congratulations.

I will now read the nine nominations for the Credentials Committee proposed by the Council: Austria, Canada, Cuba, Guinea, Indonesia, Jordan, New Zealand, Nicaragua, San Marino.

Does the Conference wish to endorse these nominations?

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

It is so decided. Congratulations.

Item 34. Any Other Matters
Point 34. Autres questions
Tema 34. Asuntos varios

Item 34.1 McDougall Memorial Lecture
Point 34.1 Conférence McDougall
Tema 34.1 Disertación en memoria de McDougall
(C 2017/INF/5)

CHAIRPERSON

We now move on to sub-item 34.1, under which the McDougall Memorial Lecture will be delivered to the Conference.

This lecture is part of a series which began in 1959 to commemorate the late Frank L. McDougall, one of the founding fathers of our Organization. The Lecture is delivered at each ordinary session of the Conference.

I will now give the floor to the Director-General, who will introduce the McDougall Lecturer of this 40th Session of the FAO Conference.

Director-General you have the floor.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I have now the honour to introduce Mr Achim Steiner, recently appointed Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Mr Steiner, is a development economist, has been a global leader on sustainable development, climate resilience and international cooperation. Over nearly three decades, he has worked to champion sustainability, economic growth and equality.

He has served across the United Nations system, looking at global challenges from both humanitarian and development perspective. Prior to his recent appointment he led the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) from 2006 to 2016.

His 10-year term saw UNEP upgraded to universal membership and brought the voice for the environment of the UN system and the main global authority on the environment. His tenure was marked by many strong achievements, to the new global treaty on Mercury and, not least, the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015.

The UN REDD programme, a partnership between FAO, UNEP and UNDP, was launched during Steiner's tenure in 2008 to combat deforestation, and forest degradation.

Mr Steiner has also been a vocal advocate for Sustainable Development Goals. Under his leadership, the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development launched the process that culminated in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

It is indeed an honour for FAO that he accepted our invitation to address FAO Conference. Furthermore, the Members have also proposed the same theme "Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security" for this biennial team 2018-2019 conference.

It is now a privilege for me to invite Mr Achim Steiner to address the Conference.

Mr Achim STEINER (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme)

I am honored to deliver this year's McDougall Memorial Lecture. I feel some affinity with Frank McDougall who, like I, spent part of his life on a farm. He was an advocate of using science and analysis to inform policy decisions. And he was a forceful believer that better policies could improve both food production and distribution. He inspired the conference convened by US President Roosevelt in early 1943 that laid the foundations for the establishment of FAO after World War II. I am also humbled to deliver this lecture, given the stature and knowledge of so many who preceded me, starting with President Lula two years ago, and including two UN Secretary-Generals (Kofi Annan in 2011 and Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1999), Indira Gandhi, and the "father" of the green revolution, Norman Borlaug. I was also preceded, in 2013, by Nobel Laureate in Economics Amartya Sen, arguably the most influential voice in the definition of UNDP's Human Development concept and practice - I will have more to say about Prof. Sen's lecture here later in my remarks. But let me tie my lecture, Amartya's teachings and Frank McDougall's legacy with the thread that has, in the near and recent past, allowed us to understand – and fight – hunger and poverty with renewed energy and ideas. That is what I intend to do, again, today with these remarks.

Taken at face value, agriculture may not appear central to today's global development and sustainability challenges. How relevant is agriculture, a sector which accounts for less than 4 percent of global GDP?

Yet, today I will argue that agriculture represents much more than what is measured as a sectoral contribution to GDP— first, because we all depend on the availability of and access to food, and second, because it represents one-third of global employment. Most importantly, it is on farms, big and small, around the world that the interaction between people, planet, prosperity and peace can unfold in ways that will either take us to sustainable development or will make our task virtually impossible.

It was the first agricultural revolution, more than 10,000 years ago, that enabled the emergence of civilization. As humans domesticated plants and animals, they built settlements and accumulated surpluses that advanced progress. Greater food production has arguably been the driving motivation for farmers for millennia and may be seen, by some, as the solution to feeding a growing global population. Seen from this perspective, all we should expect from agriculture is to continue to produce more.

I think the challenge, however, is more complex. The world's population is expected to grow to almost 10 billion by 2050, with two-thirds living in cities. This will boost and change agricultural demand, with some estimating that the world will need to close a 70 percent food gap by 2050. With further income growth and urbanization in low- and middle-income countries, a dietary transition will happen towards higher consumption of meat, fruits and vegetables, relative to that of cereals, requiring commensurate shifts in output and adding pressure on natural resources. Within the complexity of this challenge we can unlock opportunities to advance sustainable development by transforming agriculture.

The "Agriculture Economy" that we inherited from the 20th Century.

The decisions made by a farmer anywhere around the world may appear to her as voluntary or under her control. Her decisions are, in fact, influenced – even determined – by a vast array of factors beyond her control. There is no question that her motivation is to provide for the livelihoods of those that live off the land, be it a small farmer or those that depend on a major agricultural corporation. But past practices, existing incentives and regulatory frameworks, some global in nature, are leading to behaviour that is resulting in the following central challenge: the need to feed more people and to end hunger against agricultural practices that deplete the natural resource base on which the future of agriculture itself depends upon.

Agriculture was transformed over the last century, leading to greater production and distribution of food and other agricultural products for a rapidly growing population with ever higher incomes and more diversified tastes. Agricultural research, both public and private, became a major enterprise, leading to more efficient production, greater mechanization, and better resistance to pests and environmental stresses. Complex economic and social interlinkages developed, downstream and upstream – downstream in industries linked to seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, and mechanization, and upstream in activities such as food distribution, packaging, cold-chains, retail, food and beverage hospitality, and tourism. Many of these industries are global in nature, with sourcing and distribution of agricultural produce crossing countries and continents. Container ships, trucks, trains and airplanes move around the world enough maize, wheat, rice, and soybeans (the largest source of animal protein feed) to feed 40 percent of today's population. Sophisticated regulatory systems were developed, including those aimed at ensuring food safety. This is the "agriculture economy" under which farmers operate, where economic incentives and a regulatory context, for the most part, are pushing inexorably towards more production.

I will argue that the dominant practices that emerged over the course of the 20th century will need to change on at least three dimensions: improving sustainability, ending hunger, and enhancing peace and stability. I will illustrate linkages across economic, environmental, and social issues and conclude by suggesting possible pathways for transforming agriculture.

Transforming agriculture to transition towards sustainability

The animals and plants upon which agricultural output depends use land and water and are at the mercy of weather conditions. Through human ingenuity, agriculture has evolved to make better use of these resources and to make production less vulnerable to climate conditions. While technological change and innovation will continue to enable progress, we are confronting a more fundamental challenge: an "agriculture economy" that leads to choices that are "mining" unsustainably the very natural resources upon which agricultural output depends.

Agricultural investments and technological innovations have boosted agricultural productivity, and there is more room to grow, both by continuing to raise the frontier of productivity and by helping farmers achieve higher standards of efficiency. The needed acceleration in productivity growth, however, is hampered by the degradation of natural resources and the loss of biodiversity. The risk goes beyond using natural resources in a way that harms agricultural production in the future. It is about us not being able to maintain the ecological infrastructure that underpins our economies and societies.

Agriculture today accounts for 70 percent of fresh water use at a time when one third of the world's population lives under water stress, with this percentage set to increase to two-thirds by 2025. Over

the last century, three-quarters of the genetic diversity in agricultural crops has been lost, and we depend on only 15 plant and 8 animal species for 90 percent of our caloric and protein intake. Agriculture continues to claim more land, including forested land, at a time when a quarter of existing agricultural land is already highly degraded. One-third of the world's arable land has been lost to erosion or pollution over the last four decades.

Another “self-defeating” dynamic has to do with agriculture and climate change, the well-chosen topic for the latest State of Food and Agriculture Report published by FAO. More than one-fifth of greenhouse gases emissions can be linked to agriculture, including changes in land use and deforestation. While higher latitudes may see net increases in yields in the short run, the overwhelming impact of climate change on agricultural production – especially in regions where local production is already under stress and over the longer run – is negative. Climate change disproportionately affects food-insecure regions, jeopardizing crop and livestock production, fish stocks and fisheries. And given that soil is a major repository and storage for carbon, soil erosion and changes in land use linked to agriculture can further undermine efforts to reduce greenhouse gases concentrations in the atmosphere.

But the challenges of sustainability extend beyond natural resource use and climate change. For instance, in the US, 80 percent of the antibiotics consumed are used in agriculture. Some of the major global health concerns at present have to do both with the transmission of infectious agents from animals to humans, as well as the threat of anti-microbial resistance. This has been recognized not only as a major threat to our wellbeing, but also as a potential major economic challenge in the future. Widespread, often unregulated, use of antibiotics in agriculture compounds these challenges.

Transforming agriculture to end hunger and reduce poverty

For all its achievements during the 20th century, agriculture and the “agriculture economy” of the 21st century have failed to eliminate hunger. Even though the prevalence of undernourishment dropped from 19 percent in 1990 to 11 percent today, close to 800 million remain undernourished.

Again, this is a case in which the “agriculture economy” is, at times, signaling to farmers to produce more when the challenge is elsewhere. The challenge is that local production is not taking place where it needs to happen to feed currently hungry people, and the globalized “agriculture economy” is not making food accessible everywhere and at all times. As Amartya Sen argued so forcefully in an earlier McDougall Lecture (in 2013), the main reason why there is so much hunger in the world is that a focus on “food production” detracts from considering the manifold challenges that preclude people from having access to the calories and nutrients they need. Ultimately, in Sen's assessment, lack of access to food can be explained by what he calls a loss of “entitlements,” either because food prices are too high, income is not enough, or a combination of both. What Sen's analysis clearly demonstrates – even if it may not be a complete or exhaustive diagnostic of the problem – is that many of the challenges that need to be addressed to end hunger lie beyond agriculture as such, and are much more within the realm of the “agricultural economy.”

A bitter irony is that many of the people living in hunger or that are food insecure are themselves engaged in agriculture, either farming or livestock. In many African countries, where there is high prevalence of hunger, up to 80 percent of poor Africans depend on agriculture for income. There is a dual challenge in many of these settings.

The first is that agricultural productivity is typically extremely low, with yields having been stagnant for many years, trapping people in low value-added, family farming. Here agriculture needs to be assisted to transform itself in a similar way to what happened in much of South and East Asia. During the second half of the 20th century, sustained increases in agricultural productivity were the engine that reduced massive extreme poverty, generated income for the development of rural non-farm activities, and ultimately enabled the structural transformation towards manufacturing and higher value-added services. Of course, while technological change and innovation will need to play a role, charting this pathway will require more than a mere replication of these “green revolutions.” Agriculture has to be transformed so that the massive sustainability challenges now faced by Asian countries are not replicated elsewhere.

The second is the confluence of rapid population growth in environmental stressed areas, as in the Sahel or in the Horn of Africa, and its interaction with natural hazards and conflict that leads to recurrent acute food security crises. In 2016 more than 100 million people globally were facing crisis-levels of food insecurity, 35 percent more than in 2015. Areas harvested for cereals, as in parts of the Sahel, have grown, because gains in agricultural productivity have not kept pace with increases in populations. This has resulted in encroachment on traditionally grazing lands, with detrimental effects on land quality and social and political tensions. Higher weather volatility and environmental shocks also generate acute food crises, as illustrated by the impact of El Niño last year in Eastern and Southern Africa. And conflict was, and remains, a main cause of food insecurity in many parts of the world. There is a need to enhance the management of transitory food production shocks. The recurrent inability to access food relates to the reduction in purchasing power, either due to drops in income or increases in food prices, or both. Often, these come together and are self-reinforcing, taking us back to Sen's loss of entitlements.

To address recurrent inability to access food, we need risk management options that help buffer farmers against production variability (e.g., through weather-based insurance), as well as social protection mechanisms (e.g., cash for work, food for work) or other cash-transfer mechanisms. Greater efforts are needed to develop and expand social protection. The income provided by social protection can be instrumental not only in maintaining "food entitlements," but more broadly in improving livelihoods and the resilience of the poor to shocks.

Transforming agriculture to enhance peace and stability.

Political and social instability, which can result in violent conflict, is the result of complex interactions among people, ecosystems, and economic and political factors. Environmental shocks and/or other factors that lead to sharp increases in food prices or loss of income have triggered social and political instability. This is exacerbated when there is competition over water or land, between competing claims over the use of these resources for agriculture, especially in environmentally stressed areas.

While this is a contentious field, evidence suggests at least an association between deviations from expected weather patterns (including rainfall, but especially temperature) and an increase in the risk of an outbreak of violence, especially when these environmental shocks interact with economic exclusion and horizontal inequalities. For instance, research found that while only 9 percent of armed conflict outbreaks between 1980 and 2010 coincided with disasters linked to droughts or heatwaves, this percentage increases to 23 – almost one quarter – in ethnically fractionalized settings.

The interaction between conflict, environmental shocks, political exclusion, and livelihoods has been shown to depend highly on agricultural practices. A recent study found that droughts significantly increase the likelihood of sustained violent conflict in low-income settings where ethnically/politically excluded groups are dependent on agriculture. Another study traced the effect of the worst drought in recorded history in the Fertile Crescent, which started in 2005, on events that unfolded in Syria just prior to the 2011 uprisings. Both the drought and longer-term trends towards warming, reductions in soil moisture, and decreases in precipitation are shown in the study to be linked to climate change. In 2008, during the driest winter in Syria's recorded history, wheat production failed and almost all livestock was lost. As a result, 1.5 million people were internally displaced, moving – along with as many Iraqi refugees – to peripheral urban areas. Facing overcrowding and lack of basic services, with unemployment rampant, these areas faced civil unrest that intensified in March 2011. This does not imply causality between the drought and the conflict in Syria, but illustrates how events and dynamics related to how agriculture is managed can contribute to violent conflict or political instability.

The interaction between environmental stressors, conflict, displacement, and competition over scarce natural resources calls for strengthened joint work in bridging the large-scale immediate humanitarian needs with interventions to build the recovery and longer-term resilience of vulnerable populations. Take for instance, the case of Somalia, where meeting food security needs call for hundreds of millions of dollars in food assistance, when rehabilitating the major irrigation systems in Somalia leading to a more productive agriculture would much less. The current humanitarian aid to guarantee food security could be rendered unnecessary if at some point we manage to break the vicious circle of need and instead invest to repair the five main irrigation systems of the country. The difficulty is to

combine the life-saving assistance needed when the crisis hits with the structural investments in development so that it does not hit again. The UN is already leading joint efforts by humanitarian, development and peace partners to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance and build resilience, in line with the agreements reached at the World Humanitarian Summit.

Pathways to transform our world through the transformation of agriculture.

For agriculture to survive on the right amount of water and land, for the planet to survive on the right temperature and use of resources, and for humankind to survive on the right amount of food, new pathways have to be charted towards agricultural transformation. Let me suggest three elements to consider as we reflect on what it will take to chart those pathways.

First, and perhaps the most important point, is that seeking to transform agriculture in a silo is not going to work. I would argue that this is valid beyond the discussion on agriculture. It illustrates the integrated approaches and the identification of interlinkages across sectors that we will need to consider as we advance towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Agriculture has to be understood as part of the “agriculture economy,” with all its upstream and downstream linkages, and this “agriculture economy” is, in itself, part of a broader economic, social, and political system.

Let me illustrate what I mean with an example. Food consumption preferences, as I argued above, will have a major impact on the future evolution of agriculture. What people choose to eat will have a bearing on the impact of agriculture on the environment, but also on our individual and public health. In fact, increasingly, non-communicable diseases, many linked to dietary habits, are already a major cause of premature death and disability, in both developed and developing countries. So how much of a difference on future pathways for agriculture, the environment, and our health would a change in diets make? One recent study found that shifts in current dietary patterns towards more plant- and less meat-based diets, in line with current health guidelines, could reduce global mortality by 6-10% and greenhouse gases emissions by 29-70% by 2050 compared to a reference scenario. Monetizing these benefits, the improvements in health and environment outcomes could be valued by as much as \$30 trillion dollars by 2050. Yet, acting to unleash these benefits through changes in diets lies largely beyond the purview of authorities with direct responsibility for agriculture, or even with influence on the broader “agriculture economy”, encouraging healthier diets that are more plant-based and shrinking excessive consumption of animal products calls for action in sectors such as public health.

Second, we have to shift market incentives and regulations away from maximizing production, and towards optimizing agricultural production systems to enable an “agriculture economy” that invests, maintains, and sustains the foundations on which not only agricultural but ultimately all livelihoods depend. Clearly, farmers and those working in the “agriculture economy” downstream and upstream are not taking these actions deliberately as an act of self-defeat – for them and, ultimately, for the planet. It only so happens that current regulatory systems and economic incentives are not fully capturing the total costs, including to future generations, of these unsustainable agricultural practices.

The challenge here is to ensure that the future of agriculture reflects true costs and true benefits, and that through both the market system and regulatory frameworks, prices are aligned to make agriculture sustainable, both to farmers, and to all of us. And while all natural resources matter, land has a central place in the future of agriculture, but also on how we manage challenges ranging from climate change to urbanization. After all, it was US President Roosevelt that, in the midst of the “dust bowl” – itself the result of unsustainable and destructive agricultural practices – said that it was critical “to conserve the soil as our basic asset. The Nation that destroys its soil destroys itself.”

A reflection of how much room there is to improve within the “agriculture economy” is reflected in that one-third of all the food produced in the world is lost or wasted. Food losses reflect failures in the agricultural process or downstream to it (for example, in storage or marketing) that impede food to get to consumers, while food waste does reach consumers but is ultimately discarded. This is even more troubling when the economic, and business case is clear: a recent study showed that for every dollar invested by firms in reducing food loss and waste would generate 14 dollars in return. And, similarly, the public initiatives are both effective and cost efficient. An initiative in the UK reduced household

food waste by more than 20 percent between 2007 and 2012, with a 250:1 return on investment. These high rates of return should not be surprising, given the inefficiency of a system in which one in three of everything that is put into it – inputs, resources, human ingenuity and labor – vanishes. Something that would be unacceptable in most settings, but it is tolerated by today’s “agriculture economy.”

Third, we need to leverage agriculture to further enhance livelihoods, in and off the farm, in rural areas. Of the 570 million farms around the world, 90 percent – producing 80 percent of the world’s food - are managed by one person or a family. And 84 percent of family farms are small (occupying less than 2 hectares), with many small family farmers being both poor and food insecure. They are vulnerable to shocks, often hesitant to use new and better crops or methods, in the absence of risk management tools, with intensive resource use threatening the viability of their farms. Yet, this is not the reality everywhere, and we know that farmers can be empowered if they are better connected to markets (for both inputs and outputs), have means to manage risks (including by diversifying their income, having access to insurance, and being provided social protection), and are given access, and a stake in developing, new technologies and farming innovations, including those that can lead to more sustainable use of resources.

With farmers more connected to markets, to information, and to knowledge, lives on the farm can make agriculture more attractive to youth, including young people with skills. Lives on the farm are not condemned to be seen as low-status livelihoods, if through the use of agricultural science, through the deployment of innovative ICTs, and through the development of financial products (from credit to insurance), opportunities are seized to both increase yields sustainable and raise farmers’ incomes, including by adding value to primary products (for example, producing jams out of fruits). Higher purchasing power on the farm will also spur non-farm economic activities in rural areas, as lower food prices and higher incomes combine to increase demand for non-agricultural goods and services that can be produced in rural areas.

The subtitle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is: “transforming our world.” I would argue that through the three elements that I have just outlined, the transformation of agriculture can be a fundamental enabler for the achievement of the SDGs. My main message today is that to transform our world, as called for in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we need to transform agriculture. Doing so cannot be seen as a technical challenge to be addressed within the agricultural sector, but rather as a complex undertaking that calls for integrated approaches considering economic, environmental, and social aspects. It is in many ways a profound political reforms agenda. And an agenda that needs to recognize farmers as agents of change, operating within a larger “agriculture economy,” that with the right incentives and enablers, can leverage agriculture to enhance livelihoods and sustainability.

The agricultural transformation has to happen with the same speed, if not more rapidly, than the changes that we saw over the course of the 20th century. The shifts need to be enabled by an “agriculture economy” that makes the enterprise much more than being about producing crops, moving agriculture towards enabling the management of ecological assets, from which we derive ecosystem services for agriculture and beyond. Agriculture has to be transformed to benefit those that have “been left behind,” amidst a world of excessive food production that coexists with the immoral paradox of widespread hunger. And, finally, agriculture has to be transformed to enable risk management, including conflict risk, rather than being a multiplier of cascading threats.

It might be appropriate to end by quoting Amartya Sen, to whom I referred to earlier, and the conclusion of his McDougal lecture. He said that “Doing one thing at a time is never particularly good advice when it comes to economic and social policy.” He went on to say that this is particularly misleading in tackling massive challenges like the prevalence of hunger in the modern world. He called, therefore, for all of us to do many different things – together. It is the same appeal that I leave you with today, so that we can transform agriculture to transform our world.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

I wish to thank Mr Steiner for delivering the 30th McDougall Lecture.

As we all know, Frank McDougall was from Australia, hence I now call upon the Honourable Barnaby Joyce, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources of Australia to take the floor.

Mr Barnaby JOYCE (Australia)

It is a great pleasure to be here. Frank McDougall was not necessarily Australian, he started in England and came to Australia, and did a lot of work in the fruit section, and then he went to the United States of America and did a lot of work there. He lobbied Eleanor Roosevelt and it was part of the process of trying to set up this Organization here. It was instrumental and he did a great job.

I know how these things work. I am a politician but I am also a farmer. My father is a farmer, and I am a farmer. In fact, if we go back to our roots in Europe, when we go to visit them, they are farmers.

But I know how these conferences work. If you can remember all of the speakers, you are doing exceptionally well. If you can remember what they said you are a genius. So, I will try to keep this brief.

It is really quite simple. In the next fifty years, the world will have to produce as much food as it has, in humanity to this point. That is our task for the next fifty years. That is pretty awesome. The result, if you fail in that task is that people will starve to death. You might not see them or know them, but they will exist. Food is fungible like everything else. If you take something out of the stack of food in Europe. If you take something out of the stack of food in the South East Asia, then they might not be in the South East Asia or Europe where someone starves but it might be in the North Africa or in another part, or in one of the islands.

So, we have to take this as an honorable and just cause. An honorable and just cause. There is nothing more honorable than feeding and clothing people. So the task, that you are at, is an honorable task.

As the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, I had a choice of any portfolio. I have chosen this portfolio because it is imperative we get this calculation right. If there are four things that I want to leave with you, I will try to leave you with four things, The first thing is that no one is going to produce anything unless they get a fair return. Unless farmers get a fair return for the farm gate, they are not going to be motivated to grow much at all. They have to be paid, a decent wage, a decent return for the endeavors that they put in. It is an item number one.

I said it to my department when they asked what I was going to concentrate on. I said, get a fair return back to the farm gate and other things will follow after that. So, we concentrate on that.

In our nation since we have been in the Government, we have increased food production by about a third, across the nation. Including in the irrigation areas such as the marine island basin.

The second thing is trade. You have got to trade. You have to think about the logic of it. If Umbria just traded with Umbria there would not be much happening in Umbria. If we just had Tennessee trading with Tennessee there would not be much happening in Tennessee.

You have got to acknowledge that you must trade. You have to have the movement of products. Products have to move. People need to play to their strategic advantages. If we are going to make this task work. And these issues are before you at the moment. We have the free trade agreements coming up. Always push for trade.

Push for trade, if you want it to prevail.

Otherwise, we can go back as I was saying in Brussels the other day. Brussels would have been supplied by people 150 kilometers from Brussels. It was not a great economic model. You would have had beggars on the street and people starving. Not quite the way we want to go.

So let's get that trade moving as quickly as possible.

The obvious one that has already been mentioned by Achim Steiner. It is storage, we could feed about 250 million people extra per year. If we got our storage right. Especially in the tropical areas where you get spoilage. This is something that we were to concentrate on. In our small way, in our own nation we have increased the tax deductibility of storage. Because this is absolutely important. That is the low hanging fruit. Something that you can do straight away.

Final thing is innovation. If we think about what Norman Borlaug did. It was instrumental. Norman Borlaug in the Green Revolution, think about the innovation that he did. From about 1946 to 1963 instrumental in the wheat trade from Mexico increasing six fold. Because he had the capacity to see around corners. He was an iconoclast. Some of the crazy ideas that are out there, he made sure that people looked for the next step.

One of the crazy ideas I had then, was that it was believed that grain needed to rest, before you planted it. So, before you planted it, it had to rest. It had to give it a little bit of sleep. He fought against that idea to such an extent that he resigned. He thought this was crazy, we cannot stick with this crazy idea, however, people said that this was the status quo and you needed to believe in it. He resigned but he was encouraged to come back in. What an incredible endowment he was to the world.

We have to try and work out, how when dealing with this equation, dealing with the fact that by 2050 that we will have ten billion people in the world. In the next fifty years we need to find as much food as we have to be produced to this point now in humanity.

We better start being prepared to be iconoclasts as well and working on how to deal with some of these issues. Otherwise the result of this mathematical equation is quite simple, we are all sustained by protein, carbohydrates, and fats. If the equation is wrong you die. If we are going to try and make this work we are going to have to be iconoclasts as well. We cannot just sit in some sort of religious vessel. Thinking that we can make this work without actually looking around corners.

We are going to have to look at genetic modification. I get very frustrated when people say you should not. Wheat itself, a hexaploid gene. We have been marking about the wheat for about ten thousand years. In fact the genome is so complex, it is more complex than the human genome. Harder to map than the human genome. We do not have another ten thousand years to get to 2050. We do not have even another ten years that Norman Borlaug had in trying to get that increase in weight from Mexico which then he took to Pakistan and then the rest of the world. We do not have that time. We have to move now. We have got to move right now. We have to use the instruments that we have at our disposal. That intellect that resides there at the moment.

We have to make a stand. If you want to be on the side of a person, as happened in Australia, in which one goes and wiper snips the genetic modified wheat crop, as a form of protest. No, that is just another mechanism that will make this equation more difficult. We need to be smart enough to deal with these issues. Remember, even with what we do at the moment, we are trying to get new yields, all we are doing is bombarding it with radiation bombarding it with chemicals and trying to get mutations. Then picking the better mutation to use ourselves. That is what you do with genetic modifications. We need to be brave enough to be the iconoclasts. We need to be aware that we are not going to make this equation work.

So what are the two big ones that I see? Well, part of it relates back to Norman Borlaug. He was looking at the photosynthesis. We should be looking at this again as well. How to get a more efficient use of the genomes of photosynthesis. This will give us an exponential jump in growth. That work is happening at the moment. If you can get the C4 gene and you can splice it in the C3 gene. If you can have the sugar cane, you can manage to splice it into things such as wheat you will have that exponential growth. If you can get that plant to be nitrogen fixation then that is also going to help you as well.

If a Conference such as this wants to concentrate on things such as that. If it was actually focused on the reality of how you create more food, then you are doing a worthwhile job. You have to remember. Global warming whether we can fix it or not, it is going to be there. You have got to deal with it. We have to try and manage it. However, do not think that if you just concentrate on that you can put aside the issue of how you actually feed people. That is going to be a task.

That is what you in this room are going to be judged by. You will be judged by what movements and what actions you took today to try and make sure that by 2050 that people were not starving. If you are doing that than you are part of that noble and just occupation. That noble cause of farming. Farmers that feed and clothe people. That is your part of this process.

I will close with this.

One thing that you all have in common is that you are involved in government. In one way shape or form. You ask yourself where is agriculture in your cabinet? Where is it?

How much of a say does it have? How much resources does it have? What type of resources does it have? What sort of resources are you putting towards it?

How seriously are you taking it? That is what you take back to your countries.

All the best and God bless.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

This concludes item 34.1. I wish once again to thank Mr Steiner for addressing the Conference at its opening meeting, and to wish him well with his appointment as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

I now have the honour to welcome His Excellency, Ambassador Wilfred Ngirwa, Independent Chairperson of the Council, and to invite him to address the Conference.

Statement of the Independent Chairperson of the Council to the Conference

Déclaration du Président indépendant du Conseil à la Conférence

Declaración del Presidente Independiente del Consejo a la Conferencia

Mr Wifred NGIRWA (Independent Chairperson of the Council)

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, Director-General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to begin by offering my congratulations to The Honourable Emmanuel F. Piñol, Secretary for Agriculture of the Philippines, on his election as Chairperson of this Fortieth Session of the FAO Conference. I wish Mr Piñol well as he guides us through this intense week of deliberations.

And I would like to thank Mr Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, for delivering a perceptive and stimulating McDougall Lecture, the keynote speech that sets the tone for the Conference.

I also wish to acknowledge the statement made by the Director-General, which Delegates will bear in mind during the deliberations that will take place in this Plenary Hall, and in the Commissions, throughout this week. I am sure we all appreciated the forward-looking and constructive approach, which characterizes not only Mr Graziano's address to the Conference, but also his leadership of this Organization.

As many of you will know, this is the second time that I have the honour to address the Conference in my role as Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council and now that I have reached the end of my second term of office, I should like to share some reflections on the past four years. But, before I start highlighting Council's recent past, please allow me to reflect briefly on the state of food and agriculture across the globe.

We have already heard from the previous speakers about the challenges impacting on food security and nutrition. Clearly the world has witnessed significant leaps in technology and innovation that have provided incomparable opportunities for increased agricultural production.

These positive trends should not, however, detract our attention from the continuing threats posed by: climate change, to which agriculture not only has to adapt, but also has an important mitigation role;

unsustainable production practices; inequalities in income; displacement and migration – all these factors, and many more which jointly hinder our efforts to fight hunger and malnutrition. FAO is in the middle of this complex situation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, since 2012 FAO and its Members have embarked on a joint exercise to decide how the Organization should be positioned to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness in a world struggling with complex and protracted crises.

Furthermore, as we are all aware from our experience at the national level, resources for development are ever more scarce, and this calls for prioritization of FAO activities and programmes.

Under the leadership of the Director-General, and within the constraints of available resources, FAO Management and Members, in line with the Director-General's "strategic thinking process", re-focused the strategic direction of the Organization.

The outcome of this process was the setting out of five comprehensive Strategic Objectives upon which the work of the Organization was aligned.

The structural reform of the Organization has led to a streamlined and effective headquarters and a further consolidation of the decentralized offices.

The structural reform of the Organization was complimented by the reform of its governance structure and in this regard I believe it is particularly significant that consensus on the budget level for 2018-19 was found upstream of this Session, when, in May 2017, the Council agreed to forward a draft resolution on budgetary appropriations to this session of Conference for approval. This was also the case in March 2015, and was referred to as an "historic consensus" at that time.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this constructive outcome is due in large measure to the willingness of Members to work productively with each other, and also with management, within the context of the Strategic Framework, in order to reach consensus.

I am therefore grateful to Members and Management alike, for your readiness to engage with complex and sometimes divisive issues in a frank and respectful manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like to briefly run through some key issues discussed by the Council over the past four years. My intention is to give you a sense of my perception, also the range and scope of the work covered during the ten sessions I chaired from 2013 to 2017. . Some of these issues became recurring themes over the period, and some were also discussed in informal inter-sessional consultations, often mandated by the Council itself.

I know some Members will recall that it took a decade-long reform process, and many sessions of Council and Working Groups, to develop the Council's present business-like and transparent decision-making processes. Indeed, I am in the privileged position of having seen governance reforms coming to fruition over the past decade, as I was Vice-chairperson of the process.

Looking back over the past four years, I can confirm that positive changes did occur, and that the way Council works today is undoubtedly more focused and more efficient.

For example, Council's constructive approach was very evident during my first mandate when we built up a good team dynamic in the FAO/WHO Joint Working Group that negotiated the two outcome documents of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2). This led to a successful ICN2 in November 2014.

Later, in December 2014 the Council tasked me with leading an Open-ended Working Group on FAO's work on Antimicrobial Resistance. The outcome of these informal meetings was a Conference Resolution adopted unanimously by the Conference at its last session in June 2015.

Subsequently, I was mandated by the Council to hold consultations with the regional groups, and open to all Members, with a view to reaching agreement on the proposed rules for participation of Civil Society Organizations and Private Sector Representatives in FAO meetings.

Again, informal inter-sessional consultations were the basis of the decision by Council to maintain the status quo in this key aspect of FAO's activities.

Likewise, the outcome of the important review of decentralized offices was discussed constructively and negotiated through informal meetings and led to a clear decision by the Council and Conference.

All of the decision-making processes combined informal negotiations among Members, with high value input by Management, in an informal setting before Governing Bodies endorsed our decisions formally.

Chairperson, before concluding these brief remarks, I would like to express my gratitude to the Chairpersons of the Programme Committee, Finance Committee and Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters. I am grateful to them for their unfailing support throughout their terms of office.

I am also very grateful to the Chairpersons of the Technical Committees and the Regional Conferences.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as well as reaching the end of my four years as Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, I am also completing a thirteen-year period in Rome.

Before becoming Independent Chairperson of the Council, I served as Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Rome UN-based Agencies; that is, FAO, IFAD and WFP. I am happy that the collaboration of the three Rome UN-based agencies has enhanced its effectiveness and efficiency.

I am grateful to the Government of Tanzania for having assigned me with this important role and subsequently for having nominated me for the Office of Independent Chairperson.

I am also grateful to all Members for having made my task much easier by coming to talk to me informally about emerging issues. I would also like to thank our Host Country, the Republic of Italy, for its constant and generous support for FAO.

Likewise, I have also had many opportunities, whether as Permanent Representative of my country or as Independent Chairperson of Council, to appreciate how the FAO Secretariat provides highly professional and reliable assistance both during and between sessions of the Council and other Governing Bodies.

Before concluding let me remark on the ability of a multilateral Organization like FAO to work with Members to find solutions to the intricate global issues and crises that afflict the contemporary world in the field of food and agriculture.

The complexity of the challenges we face requires, more often than not, a degree of compromise by all parties. And compromise is, of course, easier to achieve in a forum such as the Council, where respect for diversity of opinion is a guiding principle.

Mr Chairperson, please now allow me to conclude by saying how much I am indebted to my loving wife and family for having constantly supported me here in Rome, and at a distance. I would never have been able to carry out my functions as Ambassador, and then as Independent Chairperson, without their patience, understanding and encouragement.

I am grateful to them for that, as I am grateful to Almighty God for having granted me sufficiently good health to face what have been both rewarding and challenging years.

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much your Excellency Ambassador Ngirwa. Allow me to convey to you our very best wishes for your future endeavours now that your term of office is drawing to an end. Before closing our meeting, I will pass the floor to Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind the seven members of the General Committee elected earlier this morning, and the three Vice-Chairpersons, to make their way to the Lebanon Room (second floor of Building D) for the

First Meeting of the General Committee starting immediately after the close of this plenary meeting. Starting more precisely at 11.30.

I also wish to remind delegates of an important side event on “Zero Hunger: Turning Commitment into Action to Achieve SDG2” which could start at 13.30 and last until 15.00 in this Plenary Hall.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Secretary-General Mr Gagnon. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings us to the end of our work for this morning. The Second meeting of the Conference will reconvene in this Plenary Hall at 15.00 hours this afternoon.

With this, I declare our First Plenary Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11:08 hours

La séance est levée à 11 h 08

Se levanta la sesión a las 11.08