



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-fourth Session
"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 9-13 October 2017

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO

Ambassador Amira Gornass, Chair of the Committee on World Food Security;
Mr. Gilbert Houngbo, President of IFAD;
Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of WFP;
Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild, UN Assistant Secretary-General;
Dr. Patrick Caron, Chair of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts;
I would also like to recognize the presence of the former President of Ghana, John Kufuor;
Honourable Ministers;
Heads of Delegation;
Distinguished Participants and Observers;
Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is an honor to welcome all of you to the 44th (forty-fourth) Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

This CFS Session takes place in a critical moment for the fight against hunger and malnutrition in the world.

As you already know very well, hunger is on the rise, after more than 10 years of decline.

Eight hundred and fifteen million people in the world suffered from hunger in 2016. Thirty eight million people more than in 2015.

SOFI 2017 also indicates that other forms of malnutrition are also increasing. This is the case for overweight and especially obesity.

More and more adults, and particularly children, are becoming obese in all parts of the world, including developing countries and developed countries.

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We cannot forget that the Sustainable Development Goal number 2 is universal.

All countries have targets regarding the eradication of hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

And to reach these targets, it is vital to put in place food systems that can provide nutritious food for everyone.

We have to promote healthy diets.

And this is a huge task that Governments alone will be not able to fulfill.

It is fundamental to have civil society and also the private sector fully onboard.

Each stakeholder has an important role to play.

This includes not only producing healthier foods, but also keeping consumers fully aware of what they are consuming. And also following clear rules regarding the advertising of food products.

The CFS can play a central part in this process by defining specific roles for each stakeholder in order to promote healthy diets.

This is the power of the CFS: to be an invaluable platform for discussion, agreements and global commitments.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Second International Conference on Nutrition, the ICN2, put nutrition back at the center of the international agenda.

As a result, we declared the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016 – 2025.

And now, the CFS must step up, lead the discussions, provide guidance, and deliver concrete policy products on nutrition.

We need to make the Decade on Nutrition meaningful, action-oriented and impactful.

Also to this end, we brought back to Rome the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition to work in close partnership with the CFS.

The UNSCN has an important mission of coordinating UN agencies positions' on different nutrition issues. The Committee should not be distracted from its mission.

Let me also highlight that we need to focus on food safety issues, pushing for the full implementation of CODEX standards.

And I would like to take this opportunity to inform that FAO and World Health Organization will co-organize in the first trimester of 2019, an International Conference on Food Safety.

This will build on many aspects that were discussed during the ICN2.

And I urge the CFS to scale up its work on Food Safety in order to provide subsidies to the Conference in less than 2 years-time.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since its reform, the CFS has reached consensus on very important agreements.

They have proved to be of high value in promoting food security and sustainable agriculture.

This was the case of the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), and also the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land Tenure, just to mention two very important achievements.

It will be my pleasure to celebrate tomorrow the fifth anniversary of the Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure together with European Commissioner Neven Mimica.

During this session of the CFS, some other important results are expected to be endorsed. And they will be very relevant to our work.

Members are discussing policy recommendations on sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition. These recommendations will certainly provide reference in this area.

And I also invite all of you to the launch of the 2017 Edition of the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) that will take place today during lunch time.

SOFA 2017 will present opportunities and challenges regarding food systems, urbanization and rural transformation.

It will very useful to CFS, as the Committee undertakes further work on this topic.

Excellencies,

I conclude by reiterating that FAO will continue to provide the best technical support possible to CFS, and also support the implementation of the decisions and recommendations taken by this Committee.

All of us, CFS Members, participants and observers, have a lot do to ensure a world free from hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

You have a busy week ahead.

I wish you all success in your deliberations, and I am looking forward to the outcome of your discussions.

Thank you very much.