



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa

### Closing Remarks

By

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*Your Excellency, the Chairperson of the Regional Conference,  
Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,*

1. I am happy to say that the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa has been a success.
2. Congratulations to all of you!
3. To those here in Malabo and those joining us online.
4. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this success.
5. In particular, I wish to thank the government of Equatorial Guinea for hosting the Regional Conference, and the people of Malabo for the warm welcome.
6. We were honoured that His Excellency the President of Equatorial Guinea opened the Regional Conference.
7. I wish to thank Her Excellency Minister Efua for her role as Chairperson of this 32<sup>nd</sup> session.
8. I also wish to thank the outgoing Chair, His Excellency Minister Masuka of Zimbabwe, for his leadership during the inter-sessional period.

9. This Regional Conference was held at a particularly difficult time for Africa.
10. With a war thousands of kilometers away from here, in Ukraine, destabilizing Africa's food security,
11. Further exposing the vulnerability of Africa's agrifood systems because of their reliance on imports, and to the high prices of agricultural inputs.
12. We are also meeting as the severe drought in the Horn of Africa continues to threaten rural families,
13. And as many other protracted crises continue to impact food security across Africa.
14. Recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remains a priority.
15. As we heard throughout this Regional Conference, the modernization of agriculture and rural transformation will reduce poverty; develop new decent jobs for the youth; boost access to nutritious and affordable food; help to rebalance inequalities, including gender; and build resilient and sustainable livelihoods.
16. Agrifood system transformation will also drive progress towards the SDGs, and the Malabo commitments that were made in this room back in 2014.
17. We must act quickly and effectively to deliver on these promises that were made to your communities, your farming families, young Africans, women, and the rural poor.
18. As the son of a farming family, I have rural people in my heart, and I want to see agricultural and rural transformation in Africa address the multi-dimensional inequalities: between city and rural areas; between men and women; and between rich and poor.
19. Agrifood systems transformation can only be achieved through your ownership and action, and success requires us all working together.
20. There is no other way!
21. I have listened carefully to your views and priorities, and have taken note of your guidance.

22. FAO is a Member-based organization, and your contributions are vital in shaping our approach and actions.
23. During your deliberations, I was pleased to note the emphasis placed on implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework by Members, in line with the region specific conditions, priorities and needs.
24. The successful implementation of the Strategic Framework requires your ownership, your political commitment, and your action plans.
25. You must take leadership, because FAO is your Organization and is fully committed to your priorities.
26. I was particularly pleased to see the launch, together with the African Union Commission, of the *Investments Guidelines for Youth in Agrifood Systems in Africa*.
27. These guidelines must now be integrated in your policies and programmes.
28. The youth are the future of Africa!
29. We must harness this enormous energy and the necessary resources to ensure a better life for the next generations.
30. I was pleased to hear of the fruitful exchanges between countries on best practices and lessons learned in striving for the Four Betters: *Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all, leaving no one behind*.
31. Through the newly launched *Regional Technical Platform on Common Agricultural Policies and Practices*, and through other regional fora, I encourage the continued exchange of ideas and experiences.
32. I welcome the Ministerial Declaration that has come out of this Regional Conference, and recognize the efforts put into reaching consensus.
33. Your renewed commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda, and the African Union Agenda 2063 is clear!

*Dear Sisters and Brothers,*

34. Thank you for welcoming me to Africa on my first visit to the continent as FAO Director-General.
35. And thank you for supporting me in this role.
36. Above all, thank you for your work in supporting your farmers, herders, fishers, foresters and rural communities.
37. We have a lot more work to do, and we must continue to work together efficiently, effectively and coherently.
38. We can only succeed when we work together in the spirit of African Solidarity and Unity to build together a prosperous and food secure continent.
39. Thank you.