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# COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

**Thirty-eighth (Special) Session**

**Rome, Italy, 11 May 2012**

**STATEMENT BY THE MR. AMIR ADBULLA, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE  
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PROGRAMME**

Mr Yaya Olaniran, Chair of the CFS, Mr Director General, FAO, Mr Carlos Sere, IFAD, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here today at this special session of the 38<sup>th</sup> CFS Plenary to endorse the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT). As stated in the title of the guidelines, the responsible tenure of land and other natural resources is central to the cause of national food security. The voluntary guidelines represent a key milestone in the policy convergence work of the CFS and its goal to achieve food security and nutrition for all.

I would like to begin by congratulating all those who played a determining role in concluding these guidelines: the various bodies of the CFS and its multiple stakeholders including member states, international organizations, the CSO community and the private sector. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Gregory Myers from the USA who took on the task of chairing the CFS open-ended working group on the voluntary guidelines, as well as the role of FAO's Natural Resources Department in providing key technical backstopping support.

Let me say a few words about the process that brought us to this result, the conclusion of the voluntary guidelines. The CFS has embarked on a fully inclusive and multi-sectoral consultative process, since the endorsement given by CFS 36<sup>th</sup> Session in 2010 to proceed with the elaboration of the guidelines. The process has been truly participatory, comprising extensive multi-stakeholder consultations, thematic, global and regional reviews, as well as an inclusive online consultation, which have all contributed to the comprehensive response that we have before us today in the VGGT. Importantly, the guidelines represent one of the first major results of the unique multi-stakeholder model that is the reformed CFS, and proof of this body's ability to deliver on its common goal and vision of food security and nutrition for all.

These guidelines are particularly relevant at a time of new food security challenges and crises facing the global community, which underscore the urgency for us to not lose momentum in our collective efforts to support country-led actions for food security and nutrition. Land rights and common

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property resources are increasingly affected by the multiple challenges posed by climate change, food and fuel price volatility, violent conflict, and natural disasters.

In times of crisis, access to land also provides a cushion or safety net as a source of shelter, food and income in times of difficulty. Many of the hardest hit by these challenges are the poorest, most marginalised and vulnerable people who are disproportionately affected by the weak governance of tenure of land and other resources.

Land and related resources, such as forests and water play a critical role in the production of food and in the sustenance of livelihoods. Secure access to land and other natural resources through rules of tenure of land and natural resources determine who can use resources and under what conditions; such access is therefore fundamental to alleviating poverty and hunger and to supporting social and economic development.

The lack of secure access to tenure of land and other resources has multiple ramifications. It can contribute to social instability, constitute a brake on investment, especially for small holders, limit broader economic growth, and undermine both the effective use of natural resources and environmental sustainability. Tenure determines whether people will invest in improvements, such as soil conservation measures, creation of homestead gardens, reforestation, or improving watersheds and range lands.

The guidelines (VVGVT) set out principles and internationally accepted standards, thus providing practical guidance to States, civil society and private sector on responsible governance of tenure. We welcome the emphasis given to gender as well as coverage of humanitarian situations and conflicts. In the case of gender, the guidelines will further support efforts to address inequalities in the use and control over land and other natural resources, which persist despite women being the principal producers of food in many parts of the world.

The guidelines will help inform WFP's work in its emergency, recovery and development operations, and we will work with governments and partners to gain the benefits of good governance of land tenure and leverage more productive and sustainable results. Together with our sister Rome-based agencies, WFP will support governments through its related policy, programming and capacity building activities, bearing in mind that strong national leadership and institutional capacity will be key elements in the success of these efforts. In so doing, we fully recognise the key role of national governments in the ownership and implementation of the guidelines.

Mr Yaya Olaniran, Chair of the CFS, Mr Director General, FAO, Mr Carlos Sere, IFAD, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to thank you for this opportunity to address this session on this most important occasion.