

STATEMENT

**by H.E. Tigran Sargsyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of
Armenia at the World Summit on Food Security
(Rome, Italy, November 16-18, 2009)**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues and Participants,

I have the honor to greet you all and extend my gratitude to the management of FAO for the invitation to the Summit and the warm reception.

The Republic of Armenia, which has been involved in the activities of FAO for about two decades, highly appreciates the mission of the Organization, aimed at poverty reduction, fighting hunger and malnutrition, global climate changes and economic crises. These require continuous reforms in the agrarian sector to address the issues with regard to food security, as well as the improvement of efficiency in agriculture.

It is common knowledge that food production is at high risk all over the world including Armenia. The shortage of agricultural lands and water, and the lack of improved infrastructures and processes of urbanization, impose serious obstacles on the way towards the organization of sustainable food production. The current financial and economic crisis adds its negative impact on the issue of food demand. To address these challenges the increase of food production and coordination of efforts in the framework of food security in

international, regional and national levels, becomes more and more important.

In this regard, the role of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization in finding solutions, is invaluable. The current summit is a vivid evidence of that.

The prices of agricultural resources and services have increased as a consequence of the world economic crisis, the private transfers have diminished and the demand in the international food market has decreased. In this respect, the streamlining of efforts by governments and coordination of policy making are critical under these circumstances.

It is obvious that the crisis impacts most acutely on developing countries in terms of food security as a result in the decrease of agricultural production. Therefore, the improvement of the process of agricultural food production through the enhancement of cooperation and strategic coordination among states, and fostering effective partnership with key stakeholders including the private sector, utilizing financial, technological and labor resources, is of vital importance.

Mr. Chairman,

The settlement of the issues related to food security continues to be on the agenda of the Armenian Government, which includes a large number of relevant projects. Many of them are currently in the process of implementation. Formulation of the competition environment, the increase in the attractiveness of investments, the increase of competitiveness in the agricultural economy and the

consolidation of highly fragmented lands, are specifically under the constant focus of the Government.

In order to find solutions to these problems with regard to food security, we should enhance comprehensively the regional cooperation. I believe that the recent developments in Armenia – Turkey relations will contribute to the amelioration of the atmosphere throughout the region and trigger changes towards the settlement of various problems including that of food security.

The Government of Armenia consistently reinforces the ongoing reforms in the agrarian sector with the aim to eradicating hunger and the food crisis and in protecting one of the basic human rights - having access to adequate, safe and nutritious food. Within the framework of the New Neighborhood Policy of the European Union, we conduct legislative, institutional and integration reforms. Meanwhile, we pay special attention to environmental issues to decrease the risk of polluting lands, water and air and by increasing the use of natural resources to the maximum extent possible.

Within the framework of institutional reforms the Government attaches special importance to the implementation of functioning systems for controlling food quality and food safety for consumer protection, which is considered to be one of the main pillars of food security in any country, together with the physical and economic accessibility to food, including through safety nets, that ensure proper food consumption as a social protection measure for maintaining a sustainable proper diet for the population.

The Republic of Armenia has become more vigilant towards the goal of ensuring adequate food quality and food

safety over the last few years. In particular, the functions of state governing bodies in this domain are well defined. There has been tangible work done for the harmonization of national legislation to meet international standards for addressing the benefits of biodiversity for food and agriculture for enhancing the sustainable use of rich cultivars and species present in Armenia, for re-equipping laboratories, for building the capacity of human resources and the encouragement of public involvement, and for the betterment of accountability, participatory practices, and transparency, as well as improved surveillance and control.

We believe that an added support to guaranteeing food security is the employment of the best international experiences and the activation of interstate cooperation particularly in the fields of veterinary and phyto-sanitary disciplines. The rapid exchange of information in this regard, the implementation of preventive actions, the coordination of activities, the mutual aid and, state to state cooperation, are among our priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

The global climate change and its negative impact on the production of agricultural food are also the destructive factors of food security. The viewpoints and proposed solutions on the mentioned problems are very different and sometimes even contradictory to each other.

I am convinced that the role and possibilities of the Food and Agriculture Organization for the mitigation of the impact of the expected climate change, the implementation and management of preventive and adaptive actions, as well as risk diversification, are achievable. In this regard, we find it

necessary to launch sustainable activities for the mitigation of gas emissions into the atmosphere, in order to avoid harvest losses in developing countries and to consider also other preventive measures.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia will continue to carry out practical measures for the solution of the following problems in the coming years on the basis of the policies and strategies espoused by this Organization:

- Mitigation of the negative impact of the global economic crisis, gradual eradication of poverty, increase in aid to vulnerable groups, particularly smallholders and women farmers
- Increase of the self supporting level of basic foods ensuring food security from producer to consumer
- Provision of sustainable development in agriculture; equal development of rural societies and gender equity opportunities for microcredit obtention
- Rational use of land, water and biological resources, providing for sustainability of ecosystems
- Increase of competitiveness in agriculture
- Development of the forest economy; increase in forest resources and providing for natural reforestation
- International integration of the agrarian sector of economy through regional mutually beneficial cooperation and strategic coordination

Dear Director General,

We highly appreciate the decision to hold the 36th Session of FAO's European Commission on Agriculture and the 27th European Regional Conference of FAO in Yerevan from May 10-14, 2010.

Let me assure you that the Government of the Republic of Armenia will arrange them in the best way possible.

I hope that the decisions adopted in Yerevan will contribute to the considerable improvement of the level of food security.

We are looking forward to seeing you again in Yerevan.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, to extend my deepest gratitude to the Food and Agriculture Organization and personally to Director-General Dr. Jacques Diouf, to all donor community members and all countries with good will, for their collaborative efforts to find solutions to the world's rising problems.

I am confident that with collaborative efforts of all countries we will be able to meet all challenges of food insecurity and gradually eradicate hunger and poverty in the world.

Thank you all for your kind attention.