

**STATEMENT OF**

**MR. NAZAR MOHAMMAD GONDAL  
MINISTER FOR FOOD AND  
AGRICULTURE  
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF  
PAKISTAN**

**ON THE OCCASION OF**

**WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY  
(ROME, NOVEMBER 16-18, 2009)**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to participate in the World Summit on World Food Security 2009 and on behalf of my government congratulate FAO for organizing this event to highlight the importance of the issues facing us.

2. Achieving food security and reducing poverty are universal challenges and the global community is striving hard to meet targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the United Nations to reduce hunger and poverty to half by 2015. We also recognize the tremendous efforts made by the UN system and FAO in particular since the holding of the World Food

Summit in 1996 to highlight the issue of food security at various levels and mobilize resources in support of the needy and vulnerable across the globe.

3. Pakistan has always given the highest priority to the problem of food security and has taken all possible measures to improve food security for the poor and hungry. There have been ongoing efforts for many years to mobilize increased domestic resources through special programmes to raise production and food availability, especially for small farmers. Pakistan has also benefited greatly from its collaboration with international development

partners/agencies in support of the vulnerable and marginalized households.

4. Following the period of high food prices and the global economic crisis, we have redoubled our efforts. Among the steps being taken is a major shift in the social protection programme which is moving to providing targeted support for poor and vulnerable groups. Under the new policy for ensuring food security Government is implementing a “Benazir Income Support Programme” and during last year Rs.22 billion were provided to 3.5 million households. This year funding will be increased over three fold to about Rs 70 billion. The Benazir Income Support

Programme targets poor and vulnerable households and gives special emphasis to cash transfers for women. This programme is complemented by other existing safety net programmes such as the Baitul Maal, Zakat and Usher schemes, and provincial food initiatives.

5. While all developing countries have been impacted by the recent negative global trends, Pakistan has had to bear special problems due to its geopolitical role in the world. The war on terror has had a very serious impact on our economy and development process. The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has touched the three million mark having no precedence in the recent

world history. The Government of Pakistan has successfully managed this crisis and the combination of domestic efforts and support by the world community has ensured provision of food and livelihood to displaced people. Support operations and reconstruction/rehabilitation efforts are still under way for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). We are thankful to friendly countries and donors specially FAO, IFAD, and WFP that they have come forward and supported the government of Pakistan in meeting the current challenges.

6. Looking ahead, we feel that over the next few years we need to adopt pragmatic strategies to overcome the impact of growing food insecurity both at national and international levels. Unfortunately, the number of hungry people is rising in the developing countries in particular. The emergency food assistance, though absolutely critical does not provide a long term solution to the problem. The solution lies in enabling the nations to enhance agricultural production. This will be only possible if innovative approaches and programmes are developed to meet the challenges of low agricultural productivity, population growth, land degradation and climate change. Above all we

have to support small farmers for sustainable development of agriculture and food production.

7. These efforts would require major investment for the improvement of agriculture research, water sector development, sustainable use of land, rural roads and infrastructure and modern marketing support services. Provision of modern farm inputs at affordable prices and promoting farm mechanization is also a basic requirement. No country alone will be in a position to struggle with the challenges of food security. There is need for collaborative efforts at international level for which the Summit is a landmark achievement and I once again thank you.