

**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FORESTRY
AND LAND RECLAMATION OF LESOTHO**

MR. RALECHATE `MOKOSE

**AT THE WORLD SUMMIT OF FOOD SECURITY, ROME, ITALY,
16 – 18 NOVEMBER 2009.**

Chairperson,

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The on-going reform of FAO constitutes an overarching priority for the member states. At the outset we would like to thank FAO Secretariat for the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2010-2013 as well as the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011 which are very well prepared and articulated. We also note and appreciate the open and transparent process of the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), carried out by the Conference Committee on the Independent External Evaluation (COC-IEE).

It is obvious that any progress achieved in implementing the Independent External Evaluation follow-up so far, is due to the full and active participation of all member states, working groups and

management. This implies that, the effort undertaken by the management and staff of the FAO as well as by its membership, will lead to a more effective and efficient FAO, where the process of identifying priorities will be easier, and ultimately assist the FAO in delivering substantially responsive results in the field.

This Summit comes when we have less than six years to go before 2015, the target year set at the 1996 World Food Summit, to half the number of the hungry; which was reiterated at the year 2000 Millennium Summit. Statistics show that many developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, are far away from achieving that World Food Summit Goal and the Millennium Development Goal 1. Instead, the food insecurity situation is worsening, compounded by the recent hike in food and inputs prices and the economic and financial crisis.

Achieving both the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals remains a formidable challenge given the challenges of climate change. It requires new commitment, additional resources and effective implementation of reforms in agriculture, forestry, trade and infrastructure to mention a few sectors.

We are all aware that the multifaceted nature of food security emphasizes linkages with poverty eradication, peace, sustainable use of natural resources, and both public and private investments in the agricultural sector and in rural development.

The relationship between hunger and poverty calls for a sharper focus on hunger within the broad objective of reducing poverty. Hunger or lack of access to adequate food is one of the direct traits of poverty. Fighting hunger should, therefore, form a fundamental part of any strategy to eradicate poverty. The African Region uses the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a vehicle for improving and sustaining agricultural growth. In order to achieve the objective of CAADP many African countries have undertaken certain reforms with a view to rationalize improvements and investments in the agricultural sector.

Excellencies,

The least developed countries need to have carefully targeted programmes aimed at increasing the productivity of smallholder farmers to help their millions of the people overcome extreme poverty through increased production, value addition and market orientation. These countries do have substantial unexploited agricultural potential. For the interventions in agricultural

development to succeed they need to be coupled with support for education and health and this can turn the poverty cycle around.

In Lesotho we are making efforts to link investment projects not only with economic benefits but also for their effort on hunger eradication through income generation so that the people's livelihoods as well as the purchasing power are improved.

There is high need for investment in agriculture to strengthen the productivity and capacity of the agriculture sector. Indeed, the role of agriculture in generating additional food supplies and incomes necessary for greater access to food is paramount as the majority of people in rural areas, 55 per cent in my country, earn their livelihoods in the agricultural sector directly as smallholder farmers, as agricultural labourers, or in employment in rural non-farm activities. Mobilizing resources for agriculture is a necessary condition for poverty reduction and successful fight against hunger.

It is now widely understood that the concept of investment to augment the productive capacity of agriculture entails not only the physical assets but also science and technology dissemination through effective extension system, research, marketing, value chain and empowerment of the small scale farmers. In this regard,

the need to create a pro-investment climate to raise productivity levels requires urgent attention.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the importance of this summit to all developing countries. Indeed we are reminded of the importance of restoring and building agriculture through enhanced resources flow into the sector, by the government, the private sector and farmers. In this regard, my country's Growth strategy emphasizes promotion of profitable partnerships between the public and private sectors in order to sharpen focus on a smaller set of reforms that will make a difference. Agriculture is one such focal area where we will enforce rules and regulations that are aimed at creating a safe and conducive environment for investment. We are determined to support cooperatives and out grower schemes in both livestock and crops areas as they already play an important role in our economy.

We are convinced that the challenges before us need urgent substantial resource leverage at the country, regional and international levels, in order to end the suffering of so many people.

I thank you.

