



2 June 2013

Thematic Session 3: Towards the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Mr Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to thank you for inviting me to speak at this session. I would like to share five messages with you today, which reflect the common vision of FAO, IFAD and WFP.

Our first message is that we believe that we can end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Many countries think the same way and have embraced the Zero Hunger Challenge, launched by the UN Secretary-General last year at the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Conference.

Latin American and Caribbean countries have committed to a hunger-free region by 2025 and the Asian and Pacific countries have recently launched their Zero Hunger Challenge. I believe that Africa can do the same, with the right kind of planning and the right kind of support.

If we learned something from the Millennium Development Goals process, it is that setting ambitious targets can mobilize us, and help us to achieve concrete results.

Our second message is that we believe that food security and nutrition should remain at the core of the post-2015 agenda.

We simply cannot call development sustainable while millions of people are left behind, affected by hunger, malnutrition and extreme poverty.

So we believe that we should be even bolder when setting targets for after 2015. We believe that we should aim for the total eradication of hunger, malnutrition and extreme poverty.



Our third message is that for food security to be sustainable we need to take a hard look at our food production and consumption systems.

FAO estimates that we will need to increase production by 60 percent to meet the projected food demand for 2050, when the world will have more than 9 billion people.

Every year, the world loses or wastes between 30 and 50 percent of all food produced. Reducing such loss and waste would immediately increase food availability, without the need to produce more.

With regards to production, we need to find ways to ensure higher yields with lower adverse environmental impacts. We already know of ways in which agriculture can help to build healthy and dynamic ecosystems, producing more with less.

This leads me to our fourth message: we need to increase the resilience of rural communities so that they are better able to cope with - and respond to - climate change and extreme weather events. "Save and grow is our theme."

And this brings me to our fifth and final message: it is time to invest in the critical agents of change: small producers, traders, and their organizations; family farmers, including women; fishers and livestock keepers; forest users, rural workers, and indigenous peoples. And we need to encourage entrepreneurs, both small and not-so-small.

Investing in agriculture is still one of the most effective strategies for reducing hunger and poverty in rural areas.

And, when agricultural programs are nutrition-enhancing, they help to make quality food available to all people, at all times.

Today, the largest share of agricultural investment is made by small-scale farmers in the developing world: They invest more than four times what their governments contribute. But that is far from sufficient, and they cannot do this alone.

In a cruel paradox, 70 percent of the world's undernourished live in rural areas in developing countries.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Africa is the only region of the world that has registered an increase in the number of hungry people since the early 1990s, from 175 to 239 million people. It has the highest prevalence of hunger: one out of every four persons.



The widespread social costs of hunger and malnutrition are a considerable burden for Africa's economic development.

Africa embodies many of the challenges we all face, but it also reminds us of the vast potential that we have to overcome them.

Although the hunger figures for the region have gone up since 1990, 11 African countries have already met the MDG hunger target of halving the proportion of hunger. Three of them have also met the World Food Summit target of halving the absolute number of hungry people.

These 11 African countries will be among the 38 countries that will have their progress in the fight against hunger recognized by the FAO Conference, later this month.

Countries that have met the Maputo Declaration target of allotting 10 percent of its national budget to agriculture and that have implemented the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) have shown more progress.

Another additional positive factor to consider is economic growth: According to the IMF and World Bank, Africa should see growth of 5.5 percent this year and over 6 percent in 2014.

We can use economic growth to spur more inclusive social development and, with it, promote food security.

However, food insecurity and malnutrition will not be eliminated through inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction alone. It is important to recognize the fundamental importance of sustained and responsible investment.

There are signs that this will happen. In a welcome show of solidarity, many African countries that are experiencing higher economic growth have already announced they will provide financial support to promote food security in other nations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

TICAD has made an important contribution to food security and nutrition in Africa, and FAO, IFAD and WFP are committed to supporting this effort.

The discussions here will also help to inform the high-level meeting that will take place in Addis Ababa at the African Union, co-organized with FAO, with the support of IFAD, WFP, the Lula Institute, and other partners.



There is no doubt in my mind that together, we can end hunger and malnutrition, and improve lives.

Let us work together to take these messages from TICAD forward to the post-2015 discussions before the UN General Assembly.

You can count on us. Thank you.

Thank you for attending this press conference. It's a pleasure to be in Japan and to speak with you with my friends Ertharin Cousin from WFP and Kanayo Nwanze from IFAD.

FAO, IFAD and WFP form what are called the Rome-based UN food and agriculture agencies. We are working closely on a number of subjects and have brought joint messages to TICAD.

I know I speak for my colleagues when I say that there can be no sustainable development, in Africa, Asia, or anywhere else, unless we address the root causes of chronic hunger, malnutrition and extreme poverty.

The world has reduced the number of hungry people between 1990 and today from one billion to 870 million people, and the proportion from 18.6 to 12.5 percent.

However, progress has been different among regions and within regions.

Asia has seen the biggest fall in undernourishment, while Africa is the only region in which hunger has increased in recent years: from 175 to 239 million people.

But the rise of hunger in Africa hides many successes.

In fact, 3 out of the 18 countries that have already achieved the World Food Summit to halve the absolute number of hungry people in the world are from Africa: Djibouti, Ghana and Sao Tome and Principe.

Also from Africa are eight out of the 20 countries that have reached the Millennium Development Goals hunger target, of halving the proportion of hungry people.

All these successes will be recognized in a special event that will take place on June 16 in Rome during the next FAO Conference.



Nations that have most progress share two things: high level of political commitment and higher investments in agriculture and food security. This is also true for Africa.

The single, most effective way to reverse hunger and poverty in developing countries is for governments and the private sector to invest in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, GDP growth generated by agriculture has been shown to be eleven times more effective in reducing poverty than GDP growth in other sectors.

Today, most of the agricultural investment in the developing world is made by small-scale farmers themselves: they invest three times more than all other forms of investment combined. That includes governments, official development assistance and the private sector.

Hopefully, this TICAD will make a strong commitment to further investment in African development.

The discussions here will also help to inform the high-level meeting that will take place in Addis Ababa at the African Union, co-organized with FAO, with the support of IFAD, WFP, the Lula Institute, and other partners.

I want to end by saying that as we start looking at the post-2015 development agenda, we need to keep the Millennium Development Goals process in mind.

If we learned something from the MDG process, it is that setting ambitious targets can mobilize us, and help us to achieve concrete results.

So we believe that we should be even bolder when setting targets for after 2015. We believe that we should aim for the total eradication of hunger, malnutrition and extreme poverty.

Thank you.