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Committee on World Food Security

Director-General Remarks on the Zero Hunger Challenge

Thank you, Ambassador Yaya Olaniran, Chair of the Committee on World Food Security.

Minister of Agriculture, Environment, Sea and Spatial Planning of Portugal, Your Excellency Assunção Cristas,

Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil, Your Excellency Antonio de Aguiar Patriota.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I will take a few minutes today to speak on the Zero Hunger Challenge, launched by the UN Secretary General at the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Conference in June

Many of you have asked for additional information on this challenge. Let me start by putting the Zero Hunger Challenge into context.

The right to food is an inherent human right.

We have all the means to end hunger.

In fact, we all know that the world already produces enough food to feed all.



But, still, 870 million suffer from hunger.

Zero hunger is an ambitious goal, but different countries around the world show that it is not an impossible dream.

The question is: how can the Zero Hunger Challenge help us achieve this goal?

First, I see it as a powerful advocacy tool.

A tool that can mobilize our efforts towards the world we want: a world in which every person has his or her right to food and adequate nutrition guaranteed.

The challenge has the urgency we need, calling for the eradication of hunger in our lifetimes. And the bold goal it sets can inspire society as a whole to take on the challenge of a hunger-free world as its own.

The Zero Hunger Challenge is made up of five elements.

First: 100 percent access to adequate food all year round.

Second: zero stunted children

Third: make all food systems sustainable

Fourth: increase smallholder productivity and income by 100 percent.

Fifth: zero loss or waste of food.

These five elements are not new, but as they are combined in one challenge we can more easily coordinate ourselves.



And that is the second way the Zero Hunger Challenge can help us: it offers us a point of convergence in these different efforts – in what governments are doing locally, in what the international community is discussing here at the Committee of World Food Security and other multilateral forums, and in the action that civil society, farmer organizations and the private sector are engaged in.

Actions that involve supporting small-scale production, empowering women, promoting decent work, reducing waste and building resilience, among others.

The Zero Hunger Challenge also focuses on the concrete results. That is what we should work to achieve; that is what we should be judged against.

The elements encompassed in the Challenge are also directly linked to sustainable development.

The Zero Hunger Challenge offers a platform that can help transform into action the commitments we made at Rio+20, especially in terms of food and nutrition security and sustainable production.

FAO is committed to the Zero Hunger Challenge. In fact, if you look at the five strategic objectives that we are proposing, they converge to it.

The third important contribution of this Challenge is that it will also help us work together with other partners, outside the UN and within the UN System – the Secretary General has asked the High Level Task Force on Global Food Security to contribute towards the challenge.

In the globalized world that we live in, we need to work together to improve global food security governance. Isolated action will not take us far.



This has already led to important developments.

The Committee of World Food Security has been reformed to include civil society and the private sector, consolidating itself as the cornerstone of the new global governance of food security.

The Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) contributes to better international coordination, information sharing and market transparency.

And different regions are tackling together the challenge of ending hunger. For example, the Hunger Free Latin and America and the Caribbean Initiative, sets the target to eradicate hunger by 2025.

The Initiative helps mobilize political support for the right to food. Today, nearly 20 of the 33 countries in the region have food security laws. The Initiative also backs the Regional Parliamentary Front Against Hunger, which has supported the creation of around 10 national fronts.

We are working to implement hunger-free initiatives in other regions.

In Africa, we have just launched the Hunger-Free Initiative for West Africa within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan. This initiative involves ECOWAS and Germany, who has generously contributed the funds needed to start the project. We hope that other countries will come onboard, too.

In July, the Committee of Portuguese Speaking Countries launched a food and nutrition strategy and announced the creation of a Food and Nutrition Security Council, with the participation of representatives from civil society and the private sector.



As you can see, we are implementing the tools that we need to move into the direction of a hunger-free world.

I believe that we can use the Zero Hunger Challenge to help us achieve this.

Thank you.