



**7 December 2012**

**145<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE FAO COUNCIL**

**CLOSING STATEMENT**

Independent Chairperson,  
Members of the Council,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I want to thank you for your participation in the FAO Council this week. The debates you had and the guidance you have given help us shape our future work.

I would like to start by pointing out that the Strategic Objectives which you have endorsed this week set us on the right path to contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Your endorsement allows us to start the preparation of Action Plans for each Strategic Objective as well as the draft Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and the Program of Work and Budget 2014-2015 in January.

Next year, we will also start the transition to the new set of Strategic Objectives, while ensuring the full delivery of the current PWB.

Let me repeat what I told you at the opening session: even a small, real increase in the next budget level will give a strong signal of your commitment to achieve FAO's new Strategic Objectives. I ask you to convey this proposal to your capitals in advance.

Speaking of the budget, I want to thank the Members for responding to my call to pay arrears, the 2012 contributions and anticipate 2013 payments when possible.



In particular, I thank Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Gambia, Israel, Mali, Oman, Sudan and Timor-Leste for the advance full settlement of their 2013 assessed contributions.

I would also like to thank Burkina Faso, Iceland, Mongolia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, and the United Republic of Tanzania for the advance partial settlement of their 2013 assessed contributions.

All your efforts are much appreciated. The good news is that, with the payments received, we will not need to borrow money for our operations until the end of 2012. The bad news is that the current cash level is expected to cover operating expenses only until the end of next January. So I renew my appeal for the timely payment of assessed contributions, regardless of the amount.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Civil society organizations, the private sector and other actors have important roles to play in our quest for a hunger-free sustainable world. Their participation enhances efforts to address food insecurity.

The contribution they can give at the national level is also important.

I want to thank you for understanding the importance of these partnerships and for accepting the civil society strategy we presented to Council.

It gives us a solid and transparent foundation to support the collaboration that already exists and to build new ones, while striving to guarantee the neutrality and impartiality of FAO, that we all agree are essential.

As you have requested, we will submit to the next Joint Meeting a complete and updated version of this strategy for approval. We will also present the revised strategy for partnerships with the private sector.

And I thank you, Chairperson and members of the Council, for your efforts in achieving a consensus and giving a strong, positive message - despite valid, individual reservations. I recognize that this was done in the best interests of our Organization.



Our mission and the best interests of our Organization are what guides my action. That is also what led me to request amendments to the General Rules of the Organization to ensure an adequate transition process.

The new rules regarding the transition period will ensure that FAO keeps functioning and gives incoming Directors-General the flexibility to put in place the senior management team that he or she needs to lead the Organization.

Your confirmation of Dan Gustafson as Deputy Director-General, Operations is important for this effort.

Let me take this opportunity to say that Fernanda Guerrieri, currently our Regional Representative for Europe, will take up office as Directeur-de-Cabinet in mid-January.

In welcoming her, I also want to thank Changchui He for having accepted my invitation to assist me in this first year in office.

On a related issue, at your meeting this week you accepted my request that staff representatives speak to Council. I thank you for this courtesy towards our staff members, who are at the heart of our work.

Staff associations appreciate having been given the opportunity to address Council twice this year. They are also aware that this is not usual practice and that it will not repeat itself at every session.

Let me briefly add that in the next steps of the transformational change process we will review the Apex Structure, as requested by the Independent External Evaluation. This will include:

- First, the review of the current Deputy Directors-General structure;
- Second, the split of the functions currently performed by the Office of Communication, Partnerships and Advocacy;
- Third, the creation of the position of Chief of Statistics and of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Statistics;
- Fourth, upgrading of the Directeur-de-Cabinet post.



These changes will be submitted through the Governing Bodies to the next FAO Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We opened Council this week with the sad news of the death of former Director-General Edouard Saouma. And we are ending this meeting mourning the passing away of Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. But he left a message of hope that I want to share with you.

Niemeyer said, and I quote: “We have to dream, or things don’t happen”.

Working together, we are not only dreaming, but making things happen.

I wish all of us a peaceful end of the year break to recharge our energies for 2013. I look forward to welcoming you back at FAO in the New Year.

Thank you.