



14 February 2013

**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF ECOSOC AND THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
“FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION: SCALING UP THE GLOBAL RESPONSE”**

Your Excellency Mr. Néstor Osorio, President of the Economic and Social Council,

Your Excellency Mr. George Wilfred Talbot, Chairperson of the Economic and
Financial Committee of the General Assembly

Your Excellency Mr Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Agriculture of Guyana

Your Excellency Mr. Amadou Allahoury Diallo, High Commissioner at Niger President
office for the national strategy 3N Initiative “Nigeriens feeding Nigeriens” for Food
Security and Agriculture development

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you today via videoconference to participate in this important meeting.

Bringing an end to the hunger that affects nearly 870 million women, men and children
worldwide is one of the most urgent challenges we face.

And we have the means to overcome it.

The world already produces enough food to feed every human being. We need to improve
access. And we need to reduce food loss and waste: around one-third of the food produced
today is lost or wasted.

The hunger figures released last year by FAO, IFAD and WFP show that we still can reach the
Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of the hungry population in the
world by 2015.



Around 50 countries are on track to meet the hunger target of MDG1. Niger is one of them.

The advances at the national level need to be complemented and supported by our action in the international scenario.

We have already managed to pin food security and nutrition to the top of the international agenda. There are many reasons for this, I want to highlight three of them:

A growing population and rising income in many developing countries puts pressure for more and more nutritious food.

Climate change threatens food production and traditional livelihoods throughout the world, forcing a change in paradigm: from productivity to sustainability.

And, finally, the link between food security and peace, hunger and conflict that is so evident today and is not contained in national borders.

The fact that hunger and malnutrition today is discussed in the G8, the G20, the UN and other regional and multilateral forums is important.

It means that we now recognize that hunger is a political issue. This is the foundation of any successful effort to promote food security.

But we cannot stop here. Now we need to take the next steps.

One important step is to strengthen the international governance of food security: in a globalized world, we cannot have food security in one country or region alone. We have made progress, but more needs to be done.

The Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) was launched in 2011. It is hosted by FAO and promotes food market transparency and coordinated international responses.

AMIS proved its worth last year, allowing us to react quickly to a sudden rise in food prices caused mainly by extreme weather events.

Coordination prevented panic and harmful unilateral policy reactions, succeeding in calming global markets. This mechanism was not in place in the so-called food price crises in 2008 and 2010.



That is an important lesson: what we do can make a difference. So does when we act.

By acting before emergencies, by building resilience, we can prevent situations from worsening. Such pre-emptive action can stop droughts and floods from leading to famine.

I would also like to highlight the cornerstone of the new global governance system: the Committee on World Food Security, the CFS.

It is the most inclusive international platform for all stakeholders to work together on food security and nutrition.

The voices of governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector are heard in the CFS and taken into consideration by governments in the decision-making process.

Let me add that I believe there is room for a closer relationship between the CFS and ECOSOC and that it would be mutually beneficial.

Last year, the CFS endorsed Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure that are now being implemented at the country level.

The importance of these guidelines was recognized at the Rio+20 Conference and by the United Nations General Assembly.

The CFS has already begun another important global discussion, on Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment.

Large-scale investments may offer opportunities, but require good governance to protect the rights of local communities and to avoid natural resource degradation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The UN system plays an important role in supporting the global governance of food system and in helping that the poor and hungry benefit from the policy decisions that are made.

The UN System has also learnt that it must work together. We are making efforts to promote the synergies in our work.

The United Nations High Level Task Force on Global Food Security, chaired by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, is an example of greater UN coordination.



We are continuously identifying ways to coordinate our work so that the impact of what we do adds up to more than just the sum of the parts.

Initially created in response to the food price crisis in 2008, we are now focusing our attention in longer-term and sustainable solutions to food security and nutrition, without losing the urgency that the fight against hunger needs.

This urgency is what drives the Zero Hunger Challenge that the UN Secretary-General launched at the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012. Promoting this challenge is a top priority of the task force.

There is only so much that we can do alone. Working together, our contribution adds up to more than just the sum of the parts. This way, we can make a difference. I am convinced of that.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are approaching 2015, the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals.

Reaching MDG 1 is possible. Let's make a final push and let's use this momentum to set a bolder goal moving into the post-2015 period.

Let's collectively embrace the Zero Hunger Challenge and fix an established time frame to end hunger and extreme poverty.

FAO fully backs the Zero Hunger Challenge and is ready to actively support countries that commit to it.

Setting a hunger eradication goal reflects the urgency we need and that needs to be present in the post-2015 .

Thank you very much.