



13 May 2013

**ECOSOC High-level meeting on
"Achieving sustainable development:
Integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions"**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to join you for this high-level meeting via videoconference.

I look forward to working with you on setting the agenda for the post-2015 period, and taking collective action on sustainable development.

Last June's Rio+20 Conference made a clear link between food security and the future we want: we cannot have truly sustainable development unless we eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

The Zero Hunger Challenge launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at Rio+20 underscores this link.

As you know, this challenge has five pillars:

First, 100% access to adequate food all year round;

Second, zero stunted children under 2 years of age;

Third, all food systems are sustainable;

Fourth, 100 percent increase in smallholder productivity and income; and

Fifth, zero loss or waste of food.



These pillars are helping to align the work carried out by the agencies and programs that are part of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security.

The Zero Hunger Challenge can also help us orient our work in the post 2015-period.

FAO is actively participating in this debate by co-leading the Global Thematic Consultation on Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition together with the Governments of Colombia, Spain and the World Food Programme.

In this framework, a High-Level Consultation took place in Madrid last month. A common vision emerged from there: hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition can be ended sustainably by 2025.

It is an ambitious goal, but we need to be bold. And countries around the world are showing that this is possible.

I am happy to say that FAO can report some progress in the fight against hunger.

According to our latest information, 18 countries have already reached what we call the World Food Summit Goal: to halve the total number of undernourished people in the world. These countries are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cuba, Djibouti, Georgia, Ghana, Guyana, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Venezuela and Viet Nam.

It's good to recall that the World Food Summit goal, established in 1996, is even more ambitious than the first Millennium Development Goal.

While MDG-1 proposes to halve the proportion of hungry people, the World Food Summit Goal proposes to halve the total number between 1990 and 2015.

FAO will recognize the countries that have already met these goals next month in Rome during the FAO Conference.

Even though we have advanced, we have a long road ahead of us. Nearly 870 million people are still undernourished.

Today the main cause of hunger is not insufficient production of food globally, but a lack of access: many people do not have money to buy the food they need or the means to produce it themselves.



Today, food insecurity is a multidimensional challenge that needs to be addressed in an integrated manner.

So, at FAO, we are taking a holistic view to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty. This approach is at the heart of our reviewed strategic framework.

This includes a focus on more sustainable production and management of natural resources; on improving the governance of food security and food systems; and on strengthening resilience of rural populations.

Agriculture remains the primary key to addressing these challenges.

To begin with, this sector is necessary to feed a population that is expected to exceed nine billion in 2050. Estimates point to the need of increasing agricultural output by 60 percent until then.

Billions of people depend directly on agriculture for food and employment, including 500 million smallholder farmers.

They are among the most important managers of natural resources. We need them to farm sustainably to guarantee sustainable development.

And, in a cruel paradox, seventy percent of the world's undernourished live in rural areas in developing countries. Many of them are small-scale subsistence farmers that do not produce enough food to feed themselves.

We can use agriculture to promote win-win situations, driving inclusive growth and poverty reduction in economically depressed rural areas.

For instance, supporting small scale production and strengthening social protection programs such as cash for work and cash transfer programs. This way, the extra income can be used to buy food locally produced by smallholders in the same community.



Ladies and gentlemen,

The transition to a sustainable future will also require fundamental changes in the governance of food security and agriculture.

We are already on the right path.

Many countries are committed to ending food insecurity.

Within the UN, agencies and programs are coordinating action through the High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security.

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is a unique example of an inclusive platform, in which governments, institutions, civil society and the private sector are working together to build consensus on issues that impact food security and nutrition, such as responsible governance of tenure.

ECOSOC also plays an important role in bringing together diverse stakeholders and in sharpening the focus on the economic and social dimensions of hunger.

We are all in this together – citizens, companies, governments, civil society and institutions. Together, we can build the future we want. A sustainable and hunger-free future. FAO is prepared to work together with ECOSOC on this.

Thank you for your time.