



5 June 2013

**4th Global Forum
of Leaders for Agricultural Science and Technology
Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences
Opening speech**

Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

During my visit to China last year, I was able to see first-hand some of the facilities of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), such as the Institute of Crop Sciences, the Gene Bank and the National Agricultural Technology Demonstration Park.

I am very pleased to be back at CAAS, this time for the 4th Global Forum of Leaders for Agricultural Science and Technology (GLAST).

GLAST was initiated by CAAS in 2006 with FAO and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) as co-sponsors.

FAO has been happy to support this Forum, as science and technology are fundamental to achieving the Organization's mandate.

In its 68 years of existence, FAO has seen how innovation can help developing countries address the many challenges they face in agriculture and in natural resource management.

The world has made strides in the fight against hunger and in increasing agricultural production, and yet nearly 870 million people still suffer from chronic undernourishment.



FAO is committed to ending hunger, guaranteeing food security for all and increasing sustainable agricultural production. We are sharpening the focus of our work and changing the way we work to give a more concrete contribution to these goals.

This means focusing our efforts on five strategic objectives, promoting multidisciplinary work in FAO's different areas of expertise and engaging much more with external partners, including the scientific and academic community.

With the transformation that is taking place, I believe that FAO will make a greater contribution to tackling the root causes of hunger and malnutrition and finding sustainable ways to guarantee food security.

One of the factors that will determine the success of our efforts to fight hunger and malnutrition will be our capacity to develop new ideas for improving agriculture and to share them with one another, across national borders and institutions.

Most importantly, to share them with the over 500 million small-scale farmers who exist today.

So, the theme of this meeting is very relevant: "Science Innovation, Technology Transfer and Agribusiness Development".

This GLAST meeting also marks the 30th anniversary of collaboration between China and the CGIAR.

I congratulate you both on this long and fruitful relationship, and wish you many more years of good work together.

FAO also shares a long history with the CGIAR. It goes back to 1971 when the Group was set up under the co-sponsorship of FAO, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program.

This collaboration remains extremely important and active. Earlier this year, FAO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the CGIAR Consortium to improve strategic collaboration on international agricultural research for development.

Among other things, through this agreement, FAO will provide the CGIAR Consortium with advice on priorities for agricultural research. On the other hand, the CGIAR Consortium will advise FAO on the potentially more important areas for scaling up innovation in agriculture.

Another particular area of cooperation between FAO and the CGIAR will involve making new technologies developed by CGIAR available to small-scale farmers.



Also, FAO and CGIAR, together with CAAS and many other institutions, were active partners in the preparation of the Roadmap of the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD).

This roadmap was developed through our collaboration in the multi-stakeholder Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), whose Secretariat is hosted by FAO.

It addresses the need for transformative change in the way our systems of research, extension, education and enterprise operate, so that they have greater impact for smallholder farmers and help eliminate hunger around the world.

Collective actions catalyzed through our partnership in GFAR address key needs such as: better understanding of future challenges; effective partnerships for action between different sectors; increasing investment in agricultural innovation; embedding research more directly into development agendas; strengthening advisory services; opening access to information; and fostering enterprise, particularly for women farmers and young people.

Through these actions, in line with our FAO Strategic Objectives, we are creating the pathways required to turn international and national research, and innovation, into impacts on eliminating hunger, reducing poverty and sustaining the environment.

Our work together underscores the value of partnerships.

Partnerships are essential for FAO. No one can eradicate hunger and extreme poverty alone. But together, we can.

This is why this Global Forum is so important.

I am confident that your presence here will help to bring the benefits of agricultural science and technology closer to the world's most vulnerable people.

I thank you all.