



22 June 2013

38th Session of the FAO Conference

Closing Statement

Your Excellency Mohammad Asif Rahimi, President of the 38th Session of the FAO Conference and Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of Afghanistan

Ms Nomatamba Tambo, Permanent Representative of South Africa and Chair of Commission One,

Ms Gerda Verburg, Permanent Representative of The Netherlands and Chair of Commission Two,

Mr Louis Gagnon Secretary-General of the Conference,

I want to thank all of you for conducting this Conference and its Commissions this week. Let me also thank FAO staff that supported the work.

Mr Luc Guyau, outgoing Independent Chair of the Council, I want to thank you again for your valuable contribution to FAO during the past four years. In particular, those efforts leading up to this Conference.

Mister Wilfred Ngirwa, incoming Independent Chair of the Council. You previously played an important role as Vice-Chairperson of the CoC-IEE. Now let me congratulate you on your new role. I look forward to working closely with you. But starting Monday. All of us deserve a Sunday of rest.

Your Excellencies Ministers, Permanent Representatives, Ambassadors,
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,



I wish to thank all of you for making this 38th Session of Conference a real success. This has been a long but constructive week. We are all tired, but also happy.

And I want to thank the strong support that you have given to what is now, clearly, our shared vision for FAO.

The approved Reviewed Strategic Framework sharpens the focus of our work for the years to come. And the Program of Work and Budget for 2014-2015 lays out how we will transform our words into concrete action.

Approving them by consensus, with the committed support of all of FAO's Members, is of great political importance.

As encouraged by the Report of this Conference, I also call on you to support with voluntary contributions the full achievement of the Strategic Objectives and the full implementation of our Program of Work, which have received unanimous and vigorous backing by this Conference.

In the 18 months I have been in office, we have been able to do many things, together.

Now, our focus will shift from preparation to implementation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We started the week with an inspiring McDougall Lecture by Professor Amartya Sen. He reminded us that increasing food production is not enough to put an end to hunger, which is why FAO will strengthen its work in social protection.

Thursday, at the audience conceded to us, Pope Francis also addressed this issue. He called it scandalous that people starve in a world that produces enough food for everybody.

The words of Sen and of the Pope call for our reflection.

And when we look at the policy decisions taken by the countries that have made greater advances in the fight against hunger, we see that they tackle this problem.

They have carried out a combination of actions that increase food production and strengthen social protection. This improves access to food by those that did not have the income to buy it or the means to produce it for themselves.

This is a new vision that we have to apply.



And it is part of the reason that explains the success of the 38 countries that we recognized this week for reaching the 2015 hunger targets three years before the deadline.

Their experiences show that by acting on the basis of strong political commitment and leadership we can win the war against hunger.

And this is the war that is worth fighting, because the right to food is the foundation of life itself.

We now have 922 days left to the Millennium Development Goal deadline.

We need to ride this momentum forward towards the complete eradication of hunger, in line with the new global goal of FAO, changed from the reduction to the elimination of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

We are stepping up our efforts around the world, including in Africa.

On June 30 and July 1st many of us will meet again, in Addis Ababa, for a high level meeting of African and international leaders to help push the anti-hunger efforts forward in the region.

I welcome you to join this partnership that already counts on the participation of the African Union, FAO and the Lula Institute and other actors, including IFAD and WFP, our UN sister agencies in Rome.

Ladies and gentlemen

We are the first generation that can end hunger. This is our privilege. Let us seize this opportunity.

To end, I want to thank you for your support.

I want to thank you for your trust.

And I want to thank you for your commitment to FAO and to working together to achieve consensus on what is most important for the organization: the work that FAO needs to do to contribute to the total eradication of hunger and malnutrition.

I look forward to seeing you all again in 2015, at the next session of the Conference.

To those travelling, I wish you a safe journey home.

Thank you very much.