



24 June 2013

147th Session of the FAO Council

Opening Statement

Mr Wilfred Ngirwa, Independent Chair of the Council,
Members of the FAO Council,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope all of you had a good Sunday's rest.

I want to start by welcoming the new members of Council and its new independent chair.

Wilfred, you can count on the full collaboration of the Secretariat for Council activities and to your work as Independent Chair.

I am confident that we will build on the constructive dialogue that has marked the relationship between the Secretariat and FAO Members in the last months.

We have just ended a successful Conference. And I want to highlight once more the consensus we achieved last week.

Consensus building is not an easy process, but it is a necessary one for any multilateral organization, especially one with the history and the challenges of FAO.

Now we can say that we have a shared vision endorsed by Conference and an agreed upon program of work and budget.

It's time for a shift of our focus from preparation to implementation.

With the consensus reached at Conference, your unequivocal support and the transformational change we already undertook in the last 18 months, FAO is a much stronger organization.



This helps us help you, our Members, reach your sustainable development and food security goals.

But we are still at the beginning of the road. There are many challenges.

Two of the immediate challenges are directly related to this Council and the FAO Membership.

The first one is the need to identify some 22 million dollars in savings. As requested by Conference, the Secretariat will report to Council on this matter, and others, at your December session. I would like to take this opportunity to ask Members not to be tempted into micromanagement.

The second is a challenge for the Membership: as encouraged by the Report of the Conference, to provide voluntary contributions to support the full achievement of the Strategic Objectives and the full implementation of our program of work.

Rest assured that I will continue working closely with all governing bodies, especially with this Council, its members and its Independent Chair.

Best of luck in your new role, Wilfred. And I wish you and the Council a successful session.

Thank you for your attention.