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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
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11 April 2019

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 14.39 hours

Mr Khalid Mehboob,

Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La septième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 39

sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,

Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la séptima sesión plenaria a las 14.39
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,

Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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CHAIRPERSON

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen, I call the seventh meeting of the 161st Session of the FAO Council to order.

Item 9: *Address by Candidates for the Post of Director General (CL 161/7 Rev.1; CL 161/7 Rev.1 Corr.1; C 2019/7; C 2019/7 Add.1) (contd)*

We continue our proceedings with item 9, *Address by Candidates for the Post of Director-General*. The first candidate to speak this afternoon is Mr Qu Dongyu of China.

Mr Qu Dongyu, you have the floor for your opening remarks.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Honourable, independent Chairperson of the Council, Excellency, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

I am standing here with my good honour and duty to present my manifesto, how to give FAO more relevance and visibility and how to provide a better service to help our member countries deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Seventy-four years ago, FAO came into business with an original aspiration of building a world free from hunger and malnutrition. Since then, the organization has diligently performed her function as an information centre, normative agency and policy forearm, and promoter of development.

History will not forget the founders, pioneers and all Directors-General from the USA, UK, India, the Netherlands, Lebanon, Senegal and Brazil, along with all the staff of FAO who have worked here tirelessly for the goals of the organization. Nor will we forget the collective responsibility and action taken by member countries to make FAO stronger and better.

Now there are worries and undergoing profound transformation and bigger changes. However, every country is still the most inclusive tool to end hunger and poverty. FAO is well positioned to act as a facilitator and assist all countries to realize the goals of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular SDG1 and SDG2.

However, we do not have much time left. We can never have any single country face the challenge alone nor leave anyone behind in our fight against hunger and poverty and in our pursuit of balanced, inclusive and sustainable development.

It is expected that the global population will approach 10 billion by 2050 and we will face more, new challenges. With these challenges will come greater responsibility for FAO. Time is running short.

The blight of hunger and malnutrition continues, one out of nine people goes to bed hungry each night. Climate change increases risks to agriculture and resource depletion, while environment pollution is increasing our pricing. Risk of transporter, animal, plant and pest diseases are increasing. Eradicating poverty and realising standard rural development remains an arduous task.

In the face of this daunting task, and with the expectations of people all over the world, we must have a stronger political will and a commitment to our vision of building a dynamic FAO for a better world by uniting forces of member countries and integrating functions of government, markets, NGOs and the people.

Our mission should focus on achieving zero hunger and improving malnutrition and the livelihoods of people by four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life. This all serves income driving from low to medium and high, to reach the ultimate purpose of making our farmers happier, rural areas more attractive and our world more beautiful. All roads lead to Rome. FAO should have a package of policies under innovative approaches at hand to target issues in different regions, different countries and different sectors.

I have had a number of free talks with you, visited some member countries and made contact with the expert economy Professor Jeffrey Sachs. He personally agreed with me to be my personal advisor for

my post in Rome. I will hold a more extensive consultation with member countries and other stakeholders for FAO to propose the following actions:

- (1) Focus on zero hunger and target poverty eradication. We must channel resources to the world's impoverished regions and to the vulnerable populations and to the staple food of localized provinces such as root tuber, carbs, legumes. Besides this, we must improve productivity by promoting advanced applicable technologies and turning the experimental years into farmers years. Improve the capacity of smallholder farmers by training the lower value chain operation. ICT application to upgrade the premier capability.
- (2) Focus on tropical agriculture. Tropical countries are the main battleground for poverty and hunger eradication making up a high proportion of the total population. The countries where they grow specialty industry approach, should be suggested for the relevant countries to improve the post-harvest treatment and the technology. Enhance culture logistics.
- (3) Focus on drought land farming. Drought and water shortages post a major challenge for agriculture. We should support countries with arid climates, and establish a reasonable farming structure and cropping systems.
- (4) Focus on digital farming and digital rural development. We should embrace the digital era. The real world is a digital world. We should narrow down the digital divide. ICT should be applied more widely around agriculture's value chains to create new platforms, reduce arable rural disparity. The potential for smartphone as a new farming tool should be tapped for higher productivity. E-Commerce should be promoted in the rural areas for farmers and their start-ups to embrace C2C and C2B opportunities and achieve farmer to fork and further for the production and consumption to serve the consumers from all over the world.
- (5) Improve the environment for sustainable agriculture development and should advocate better land design through transformation of agriculture production, best the resources of the environment capacity, and minimizing the environmental impact of production, processing and consumption. Develop a higher and stable yield through technology to increase productivity and resource efficiency. Promote a circular agriculture and improve layout planning. As the African proverb goes: one single log is not sufficient to build a house.

FAO needs to strengthen partnerships, open its doors, reform, and diversify cooperation. I would like to highlight the following points. First, strengthening north-south cooperation. Second, expanding south-south cooperation. Third, initiate agricultural eco-zone and better cooperation based on the nature and biologic importance in different commodities.

FAO should strengthen cooperation among countries in similar latitudes or agricultural eco-zones. Welcome any public and private partnership for the impoverished regions and the vulnerable populations. Welcome all institutional partnerships among member states and between FAO with other international organizations and NGOs. As in an old Chinese saying goes, it takes a good blacksmith to make a good arrow.

Everyone needs a further built-up, unique experience, specialized knowledge based organization. It has the capacity to provide firm support on policy, technology and information to member countries. But, it mostly needs to become a reliable, beneficial, international organization and build up its strength in collecting and disseminating global knowledge as a public good.

First, here, I stress the global normative work of Codex and the IPPC on standard development. Under some established special international standards, for which I should refer to national contexts and agricultural crisis.

We will reinforce FAO's position as a global response centre for food under an agricultural crisis. Play a stronger role in capacity building to provide a better field service. FAO should build synergy between the public and the private sectors, telling the people and the good at you [...] are the key to every success. FAO needs to develop a new organizational culture to improve its internal governance. To this end FAO should focus on improving its capacity.

In fact it would deliver a rapid response, good service and close cohesiveness. FAO should create a viable working environment for its employees and it must give full play to individual careers while building up team spirit.

FAO should provide opportunities for young employees to grow and allow senior staff to display their intelligence and experience. Meanwhile, geographic representation and gender balance should be improved to promote competence among diversity. I propose to create the worlds Ten Best Young Staff of the Year and the One Hundred Excellent Staff of the Year.

I hereby affirm that I will uphold the organization's zero tolerance to harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of power. As a parable in Latin America says, the power of a ship is in its sail and the power of man in his heart.

I will work for an open, transparent FAO, digital FAO and an integrated FAO and a collaborative FAO to pursue a better coordination among the Rome-based Agencies, RBAs. My interpretation is a real brotherhood alliance and a great complementarity with other UN organizations to jointly improve efficiency and satisfaction. I will work for a trusted FAO, deeper in cooperation with the global financial and development institutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, in light of a new challenges, new expectations, FAO requires a headsman who is energetic, far sighted, experienced, open minded, inclusive, skilled in communicative, strategic and a strong do-er at the same time.

Looking back at my career path in one word, it would be bridging. Bridging between something for the manager, between professional policy maker, between government and farmer, between developing nations or the developed state, stronger bridging towards leading. I will be volunteering my bridging network, for FAO's mandate and mission.

I will bridge it for all of you. FAO, here I am. I come with my passion and commitment to global food, agriculture and farmers. I believe what Benjamin Franklyn said, energy and persistence conquer all things. But, I am also keenly aware that Rome was not built in one day. I will work closely with you to commit, devote and deliver. Give me the chance and I will return you a dynamic FAO for better world.

Thank you very much.

Applause

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of European Regional Group to pose the groups questions. You have the floor, Finland.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

For this statement, we have at least three questions for you. You are aware of certain initiatives to increase transparency and accountability during this election process, like web streaming, this hearing and international think-tank events evidence. What are your plans to ensure transparency? Also, vis-à-vis the civil society, private sector and academia and accountability for members.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Start them one by one?

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

Yes please.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Okay, that is good.

Thank you for your question. In my opinion, we have to respect all key players internationally and nationally. But, this time, I came here for this statement, based on a decision by the committee and a governing body. For other civil society, I have been for many years their friend, when I was a

professor, as vice-president of a Chinese academy, even when vice-minister. We will work closely with all those CEOs of the private sectors and also civil societies.

We will get all the intellectual support from them. But, this summer we have to follow the rules and the Basic Texts. Second, due to the limited time, I have been fully booked. So, that is why I have no time to participate tomorrow, when there is supposed to be a debate.

If next time, our governing body, with the ICC, makes a decision, allowing all the candidates to participate and debate in Europe or in America or in Asia, then I will follow the decision because we have to. After election, I will talk with Chatam House or Brooklyns or [Chung Hua], anything, you name it. We would like to make FAO business more visible and more accessible to societies through different channels.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

Our second question is on fisheries or ocean management. Several important fishing nations have not ratified the FAO agreement on Port State Measures to Fight Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing. How will you contribute to bringing them on board and effectively implement the agreement?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

For fish, fishing industry is one of the important industries for the world's nutrition improvement, especially for the small island countries. I raise the small island countries because in terms of land territory they are small, but their ocean needs are real big. We have to create a good environment for them to enable sustainable development. As FAO D-G, this will be one of my mandates, I should say.

Second, we have to bring all the issues into a more inclusive discussion because fisheries are not a purely economic issue. You have to understand the complications.

Third, the fishery, in my opinion, we only have one planet, so there is no doubt we have to establish restrictive IUU to control and have a more traceable and more tangible result.

Fourth, capacity building because a lot of small island countries, do not have the capacity to even investigate their own biodiversity, resources, natural resources in the ocean and how to divide the aquaculture around the coastal zone.

Fortunately, 23 years ago, I was a consultant for World Bank in China. In the Coastal Zone Development, where you had to install linkage and integrate the agriculture inland and near coast.

There you can establish a technical, manageable, sound pack of solutions. Not a single solution. So, that is why we are much behind on what the real situation for technical support, for management, even for terminology is. Because of my personal involvement the three times of MC, so for World Trade Organization, is also why it is not that simple.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

The third question is, how will you ensure the impartiality and inclusiveness of FAO to serve and engage all members in order to achieve the SDGs and not pursue any regional or national interests?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

FAO was established 74 years ago, but, actually, the initiative came in 1943 by honourable President Roosevelt from great America. So, it is a UN organization. A UN organization, so we should follow the UN Charter? That is our basic law and from there we have to follow the Basic Texts of FAO. That is another more zoomed in, practical text. Then there are regulations and rules, the third.

Under the UN system, no matter if you are a big or small country, we are equal. That is why I wanted to mention the Pacific Island countries because some countries have less than 10000 people, but they should be ignored.

So, we respect that every member is equal, and remember the entity of this body, its governance, and the decisions it makes ensure that no country can mislead and make sure that the concerns from different members are well addressed and are paid due attention.

They are individual members' preference. That is not so easy because we have to believe our systematic power.

That is what I consider.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

We have time for, at least, a fourth question. What concrete steps would you take to address management and oversight deficits in FAO?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Management of FAO is not simple. You know better than I do. All the issues related to FAO management from human resources to money, projects, from the external or internal, all these issues. But, while you talk about the specific management, we have to issue all those concerns to our Members first and ask the Professional Committee to propose suggestions. They will decide. We, as FAO D-G or DD-G are servants, we are not the boss.

It is like FAO is driven round by Members. That is why all the power, all the mandate, should be empowered by our Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of the Latin-American, Caribbean Group. Uruguay, you have the floor.

Sr Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

Siguiendo el criterio adoptado por el Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe formularé al señor Qu Dongyu las mismas preguntas que le hemos efectuado a los candidatos que comparecieron esta mañana. Por lo tanto, la primera pregunta es la siguiente: ¿cuál será el rol de FAO durante su gestión en favor de los países en desarrollo de renta media y media alta?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

I already mentioned the earlier answers. FAO is a United Nations organization. But it is a professional organization. We should respond to and address all the concerns, suggestions from different regions, different countries, even different development stages, of your regions or your countries. So, that means we have to serve the all the members from developed nations, middle incomes, less developed, most developed or least developed or land locked, you name it. But, as a professional organization we have to focus on different regions and different groups that have different priorities.

We have to figure out what is your real interest. We want to assist you with all the capacities here, or with the other corporate, other key players in this planet even. So, for the middle, high income countries, as you may understand it, you have to upgrade your economic quality of development in the sector of agriculture, in the sector of industry, in the sector of tourism, even.

So, your demand is, of course, different from less developing nations and, therefore, the high quality of development of your agriculture, you need innovation in driving it. That is essential and how do you improve your innovation capability and, also, new business models. Now they, on the one hand, you can learn it from a developed nation, on the other hand, also, you can learn it from new emerging economic development regions, other countries.

The third, of course, you have to integrate all those new developments, new business models, to adapt to your local conditions. In that science, FAO has a comparable advantage. We can invite different experts as you request, to assist you to develop adequate and tangible policies. Now, they will get affordable, reliable and advanced technology and there, of course, with that we will transfer your requirement, and not only from the technological approach, but to the developed approach, based on the integration of value chains development because you are not single element shortage.

We need you to establish a package of solutions. That is my primary consideration.

Sr Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

Nuestra segunda pregunta es la siguiente: en un contexto de presupuesto congelado, ¿en qué proporción la FAO debería dedicarse a la elaboración de normas y estándares —o sea, standard settings—, y a las actividades de desarrollo en el terreno?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

During the past three months, while I have been preparing this meeting, I read a lot of books and materials. I got a feeling that at FAO you put a lot of things in contradiction, to each other. But, I am a simple person. I try to get a simple, one solution. Just by a different stage or different parts of the whole business.

That is why, norm setting is one of our backbones, in my opinion, for FAO. Where we established during past years, in 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, we did a lot of WHO and international standards. Early 1980s, I was personally involved in introducing the Codex and all those international standards as a reference in the national context for China.

That is very important, it is basic stuff. It is basic business, in my opinion. So, it is one for our professional organization. But, of course, we have to use this for development and also as a driving force for enterprise, for serious society to follow.

Even for international trade so, therefore, development, of course we face we now have development deficit in the developed nations. So, once we develop the international norms, especially standards, then we have to make use of them. To push or to promote the development of less developed nations. So, in that sense, the issue is just the question of the different development stages and, of course, we have to balance the proposal between two aspects.

But, in my opinion, both of us, we have to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness.

The third I want to mentioned, for developed nations, for the less developed nations, we have to find consensus which comes first and then we can follow their prioritization to work together, not against each other. That is when we need more internal discussion, dialogue and then we will seize the confliction.

That is my suggestion. I hope with me as a bridge between developing nations and the developed nations because China, twenty years ago, when I started out there was a lot of complaints from China. Saying we are suffering from quantity, why is started doing those kind of things, which maybe for twenty years later. But, I say, if you do not decide now, it is little bit late when you are ten years later and so we have to balance two aspects.

Sr. Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

La tercera pregunta es, ¿cómo evitar que el trabajo de la FAO en temas ambientales y nutricionales se utilice como pretexto para la creación de barreras al comercio internacional?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Just, as I say, I involved in the discussion here on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture when we attended the meeting of WTO. But, I thought environment issues, nutrition issues, we have to keep the basic standard. That is, and somehow it is good for international trade because consumers, either in Europe, in Asia, in America, in Africa, they require the consistent supplier with certain quantity, quality, sorry. Quantity and of quality, especially quality, minimum quality.

If you go to the supermarket, today you purchase one kilo tomato you pay EUR 2 the next week you want to pay EUR 2 with the same quality. For this you have to follow the standard, for trade, not only international trade, domestic, supermarket channel, also you have to follow the certain, basic, standard. And the second you cannot make anything added to the trade...

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the Near-East Group.

Mr Yousef JHAIL (Kuwait)

I will ask question as time permits. My first question is, how will you enhance the role of the private sector in order to serve the objectives of the Organization and support further funding without compromising these objectives?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

When I made my statement I said FAO need open door and reform. Open door for FAO is one area we should address more on the private sector because if you look the capital flow, technology original and, even capacity building, besides government, besides the civil society, besides the NGO and institutions, we have one strong source from private sector, especially multinational companies.

They come with investment, technology and capacity building follow their standard, international standard, because they have an international market. That is also way, to driving force to help us to get smallholder farmers to connect with a bigger market, domestically and internationally.

But, of course, if you want to get business doing better and smoothly we need to follow responsible investment and, also, keep our staff are more nicely, not only to the farmers and, also, to the partners. So, I think the, we have to keep our staff also, more traceable, in my opinion, because then we can have a sustainable cooperation with private sector.

Thank you.

Near East Group

My second question is, in your opinion, do you see there is a need to restructure the Organization and how to revitalize the Regional Offices in particular the Near East region?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Facing a new challenge, new priorities. I am a biologist. The principle of biology is cell function should be shift or based on cell structure. Any organization in the world, big or small, you need a restructure in a three years or five years or ten years, it depends the size and the normal size or whatever, their capacity or their mission. But, anyway, in principle you have to restructure.

But, how to rational restructure is another issues. Not only come from the request of one aspect, one group of Members, but you have to consider whole picture which feed the requirement of a global agriculture and food development and our SDG mandate. That is one.

Second also once you adjust, you have to consider is the staff feeling. Now there is all the FAO staff has to follow passively or actively, that is what you have to consider their feeling.

Third, of course, for the different regions. Always some regions they want to have it enhanced or increase their staffs or representatives and some others also, no any region say, please reduce, unless I say I had to engage a listening and I was especially our best on the consensus and the decision made by our Member countries and the Governing Bodies.

I said, if I elected as the FAO Director-General, I am a number one servant for you. I am not your boss. I follow the decision, whether you are Member countries going to be deliver over to me and there I will make more efficient and more humanitarian way for restructure of the organization. Luckily, I had a three or four time of reforming in China during my 30 years, more, experience. You know, I started with the institutional reform in China.

So, we have to follow some set regulation and, of course, when you for practical, pragmatical, procedure, you have to care the people. We are human being, we are not animal. Once, also, I had a reform experience when I was a Governor, I was governor of Ningxia and for all those intellectual person, for TV person, we had to, also, to recognize them for, to feed the requirement of a new situation.

The third experience, also, I had to, restructure of the enterprises in China, Chinese Three Gorges Dam, which was invest about USD 40 billion, with 32,000 staff. So, you can see, at the beginning it was a headache. But, you have to talk with different groups and then come to consensus and then you had to

take care of the which in somehow they are suffering from the reform and there you will keep them stable.

So, that is why my experience, when you restructure organization, big organization, like FAO, you need reform, you need a good policy with the *[human herd]* and you need it stable Otherwise reform, it is just a reform, maybe create new problems, you didn't solve the older problem. That is why we need another real reform.

Thank you.

Near East Group

My following question is, you talked about the importance of innovation and modern technology. How, in your opinion and where can we rely on these technologies to improve agriculture development?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Especially, I mentioned there are two actions. One is for tropical region, which are composed the, more than 137 countries, 94 is pure territory with tropical climate and 20, partially, even United States, China, India, Brazil, we are partial territory tropical. And then another 20, they are not located tropic region but it have a agricultural meaning, they are tropical. I said, you have to focus the issues of regions and develop the suitable technology.

Biotechnology, cultivation technology and storage, post-harvest treatment technology cover a whole channel and they make real things happen, otherwise individual technology, you cannot, nowadays is not so easy to make a real sense. And for your region, I had a very strong experience because I was seven years in Ningxia, which is land-locked, it is dry area, less than 200 mm in year and very high salinity, high PH value in the water.

So, for your region, you need the water saving technology. We said *[cutting wire, tourist]* to the drought. So, you have to have a labour intensive, land intensive technology. So, and there you can integrate all those innovation, technology innovation with innovation in management and marketing. So, in general things, the innovation is not only technical innovation.

CHAIRPERSON

I pass the floor to North America Group. United States you have the floor.

Mr Kevin MOLEY (USA)

The investigation by your government of the former head of Interpol, like you, a Vice Minister of your government, revealed that one reason he was arrested was, and I quote your Minister of Public Safety, "is absolutely not allowed to make decisions without authorization." How can you assure FAO that you will make decisions without authorization of your government?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

You tell me, I didn't know that.

But, I am a Mr Qu, not a Mr Mong, definitely. You, I am a professional scientist. You can trace me my track, yeah? And I am not a typical Chinese official, you know that, yeah? For FAO, China is a founding members of FAO, they have follow the UN charter and FAO regulations and rules.

I think Chinese government, they can play the role based on the FAO Basic Texts or UN Charters that is one. Second, I am a scientist, I always do express my own judgement. Even I am a Vice-Minister. That is why I strongly push the digital farming in China. I think it is good for Chinese people, it is good for Chinese farmer. You believe, you have to believe my professionalism because I got education from Europe and American and China.

So, we are established the professionalism.

Mr Kevin MOLEY (USA)

Doctor Qu, a recent UN survey showed continuing staff concerns about sexual harassment and a fear of report incidents at FAO. As a Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, how did you deal with accusations of sexual harassment and can you give us an example?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

I think the sexual harassment is coming very internationally recognized, the issues. For FAO, management and governance, we have to follow the international rule, UN rules. Yeah? As a Vice Minister of Chinese Agricultural and Rural Affairs. We are Chinese. We keep a little distance. And from man and woman we, we are not closely, we shake hand, that is our custom. So, I think for here, we have to be nice to each other, where you had to follow the set of rules.

Mr Kevin MOLEY (USA)

Doctor Qu, will you give up your government post as Vice Minister when you take the role of FAO, should you be elected?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Please, my friend from America. I am a qualified candidate as any other three candidates based on the FAO Basic Text. Any candidate proposed by a government, that is our regulation, right? So, please respect my own rights because I am a person, you read my CV, you are America, you know all things what I have surrounding me.

So, I am son of rice grower. I come Rome, not like you, you fly to Rome but I first take a train from my hometown to Beijing and at that time more than 14 hours by train. But, now with the bullet train, still nine hours. So, it is not easy for me to come to Rome like lots of majority here, the Ambassador from developed nations when they are travel, they always say, we say we come to the town but on foot. Not by truck, not by airplane.

So, I think, as a son of a rice grower, I appreciate, I value what I have got and also I am willing to have, serve, offer my service for developing nations, especially. Of course, I say that, also, I offer the service for other members. But, I think, people need me because I have 40 years' experience, just the 40 years ago in 1979, I was participate national examination. Only two person of student from high school had chance to go to university.

So, I am, of course, for that, I will shift my position. For sure. I will quite. You cannot keep the two position at the same time. That is not allowed, that is a regulation of FAO. If you want to serve the FAO post, I have to quit. I must quit. I do for good of FAO.

That is my short answer, to you.

Mr Kevin MOLEY (USA)

Doctor Qu, to my previous question, will you give us an example how you have handled, in organizations in which you have run, accusations of sexual harassment.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

I, simply I really do not know how do it. But, I will ask you, your advisor, okay?

Mr Kevin MOLEY (USA)

I think we have our answer, thank you.

On another issue, how will you guarantee FAO's neutrality with respect to science, as a geneticist specifically, I would like to have your views on GMOs.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

You know my long term work with scientific sector as a scientist in biology. And we, FAO, is a professional organization. We had to establish a more close cooperation with CGIAR, I used to serve as ex-member of CGIAR, seventeen years ago and also, other civil societies, NGOs, to get all the

professional, scientific answer and to answer all the concerns from civil society and from the public. That is my first consideration.

Second, we had to be careful, or responsible, for any new products, not only GMO, other products for pesticide, for chemicals, even for fertilizers. We have to consider their biosafety, their environment influence.

Let us be responsible to the Society, to the world and the last, not the least, we also have to exchange dialogue through the platform, professional platform, and FAO should be one of the initiative for those kind of platform to lead the people to understand each other. There is a Chinese saying, while you think in the black room by your own, you never found answer. When you come out of the black room and you find the sunshine, you talk with people and then you got the answer.

So, I think, please come out from the black room. Talk with the people, talk to the public. That is what I suggest. I'll be prepared to do so because I have a strong scientific background to help you, to assist you, especially partners.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to the representative of the Southwest Pacific.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

The Southwest Pacific has a number of questions for you. The first one is, what are your perspectives on the food security and nutrition challenges in the Pacific and what are your intentions for the region, if elected?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Yes. That region is different from others.

I found their food security, they import a lot of food, staple food, rice, wheat, corn and others. But that regions, they have plenty of protein, animal protein, fish. But they much like their vegetables. So, for this specifically region, except Australia and New Zealand, the other island countries, we have to establish assistance for their policy, for their political willingness to get their self-supply of their food security for their localized staple food. That is why I said in my one sentence, there may be taro. Taro is not internationally big crop, but in that region, Taro is so important.

I do not know, somewhere, maybe did not eat a taro. But it is really good. So, and they have them to develop their rice because they have a lot of rainfall there. But, they didn't have suitable rice cultivars Fiji, Micronesia or Samoa, all those countries.

So, I think you have to develop a suitable tiller technology, and a policy to have them solve the problem of food security.

Second, also, it is a far away from the market. So, it is difficult for them to develop the cash crop to exchange their staple food. So, we have to go there to bring the technology, even investment to enabling policy to that region.

Third, I think Australia and New Zealand, you have more responsibility. You are developed nation. You have a power and a capability to do so. So, FAO is really dependent on your volunteer contribution.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

The next question I have is in relation to markets and trade. We would like to know what your view is on the role of markets and trade in achieving global food security and how you see FAO's role in helping countries to build their capacity to trade.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Trade and markets, for food security. Now there is, in general in the world, we have enough capacity to produce food. But, the point is and the situation is some areas it is not sufficient. So, how to solve this, insufficient area and the vulnerable population? One hand, we have to help them to increase their comprehensive production, locally. Second, for emergency, our brotherhood, sister organization WFP

is here is. They offer some emergency help and then enforce sustainable suppliers or generate trade also, another alternative.

So, for the market, the local market, we have to build up their capacity. For the international market, we have to reduce the barrier for them to import. But, sometimes we have to help them regarding affordability because in poor regions, it is difficult to afford to import. So, that is why I really, strongly suggest, you, from developed members, where you have a trade surplus, you have more exports, please offer some discount, some humanitarian proportion to the impoverished areas and to the vulnerable populations.

And this will be, we can integrate all the solutions together and then seize and solve the problem of food security. That is what I think for trade and the market. Furthermore, to increase the affordability, we have to have then one country, or several others, with cash crops to open the market for them, especially rich countries. You have to open the market for them to help them to increase their incomes and then they can afford to import the food.

So it is not a simple solution, when I am elected I will put that on the map, urgently. We will have a round table discussion with certain groups and the key players and then we try to find the most precise consensus to help them.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

I would like to now turn to how FAO assesses its effectiveness. So, if you were the Director-General, how would you assess the effectiveness of FAO's programmes in countries to ensure they were delivering what countries need and that the programmes were delivering value for money for all members?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Please, do me a favour. I think we need an external review, a third partner can come to review all the issues, programme running, effectiveness and efficiency over the past years, and then we will find out where we are and how we are going to do. That is one, second, also, we have decided a timeline, a road map, and with a consensus of the member of countries and then, through the procedure of the governing bodies and the decision makers, we can have a predictable and enforceable, tangible, result.

That is, we are going to, for the next four years or eight years, ten years, because we are in the critical point for SDG2 and SDG1. By 2030, we have to end hunger and poverty, especially hunger. There is no doubt that is our bottom line, for the international consensus through the 2015 UN Resolution. That is a UN consensus. So, we have no alternative and for that, I really ask you, no matter if you are from developed or developing or even member of a state who has a really attacked area, we have to work together and we will make things happen.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

One last, quick question. How would you ensure that FAO provides evidence based advice to farmers on all options available to them for their production methods?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Agriculture is not simple. I cannot answer you in ten seconds.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the African Group.

M Seydou CISSÉ (Côte d'Ivoire)

Monsieur Qu, le Groupe Afrique a trois questions. Je vous livre la première: comment garantir que la vision africaine et son cadre stratégique, notamment l'agenda 2063, le CAADP et la stratégie de mise en œuvre de la Déclaration de Malabo, vont inspirer d'une manière cohérente et constante le programme de travail de la FAO en Afrique, et avec l'Afrique, en collaboration avec les institutions régionales africaines, en particulier le NEPAD, le Nouvel agenda de développement de l'Union Africaine, et les communautés économiques et régionales, comme partenaires de choix?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

First of all, I say to Africa, over the past years, you have had a lot of regional initiatives. I am really happy to see and acknowledge all the efforts you develop in your own way with assistance from FAO and other international organizations and of course, partially, also, from Chinese assistance. I was personally involved when I was a scientist in the institute, 22 years ago, and then I was a vice-president for CAAS (Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences). We also have to train people and, also, offer technical assistant to the demonstration centre and the south-south cooperation.

But, all initiatives, regional initiatives, is a real backbone and interior force. Any other help should like a horticulturist would say “we need graft on your stock” and then come to the beautiful trees. Second, I think for any specific initiative in the future, FAO should put on more emphasis and more close cooperation with Africa because Africa is in a special moment of its development. Africa is our future and also is one of the priority area for SDG goals and also rural development. For that, I think, FAO has no doubts to martial more resources to help you, to assist you.

M Seydou CISSÉ (Côte d'Ivoire)

Deuxième question: l'Afrique est actuellement, en général, sous-représentée au sein de la FAO en termes d'emplois. Au cas où vous seriez élu au poste de Directeur Général de la FAO, qu'envisagez-vous, en tenant dûment compte de l'équilibre du genre, pour garantir que :

- a. plus d'Africains soient recruté, en particulier les cadres supérieurs et moyens, au niveau de l'Organisation et,
- b. des opportunités soient offertes aux fonctionnaires africains pour diriger les bureaux décentralisé en dehors du continent africain?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

FAO is, I said, a UN organization. We have to follow the rules and the regulations for equality, gender and, also, regional representation. We have an action plan for FAO, for that and, also, for the regional representation, geographically, we have to consider, not only Africa and also others and we, of course, we have to, we should, keep their Africa post as it is. Whether we restructure or adjust the proportion from different levels and it is a good question, not only for Africa, we wanted to exchange it horizontally, across regions and let the people or managers from other regions understand the issues, situations in Africa or in Asia or in Latin America.

That is very good for human resources development especially among the middle and young fellows. When they are young, they get an experience in different regions. Later they want to move on their career on a higher post. They will create an international scenario. So, I figure you raised the question, it is really good for young fellows. Of course, a senior one, also, we can have a more horizontal rotation or exchange post around, of course, all those best at the qualification. Around the different professional sectors, that is also because we have human resources guidelines. As D-G, I am not personally involved in that interface. But, we have to establish some kind of benchmark to get in the human resources development.

M Seydou CISSÉ (Côte d'Ivoire)

Troisième question: il y a trois décennies, la FAO fut, au niveau international, une véritable référence en termes d'expertise scientifique et de compétences techniques, mais force est de reconnaître aujourd'hui qu'elle a perdu pied et tend à devenir une Organisation plus bureaucratique. Que pourriez-vous envisager pour ressusciter ce potentiel tant reconnu et ses capacités, et ce dans l'intérêt des Membres, en particulier de l'Afrique?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Thirty years ago, FAO was very good. It is good. But, it is changing, the world is changing. Thirty years ago, there were not so many international professional organizations, NGOs and big multi-national companies, key players, and so on. So, that is why, I once said to my friends: we are facing the world. It does not mean we are not so good, it means the world changes so fast. If you do not adapt, and catch up with the new wave you are dinosaur, you will be extinct. That is what Darwin's evolution

tell us. So, for FAO, first, we wanted to be more professional which covers the concerns for all the member countries.

Second, we have to offer good service, professional service, because if you did not offer good service, the other players, they will fill in. Third, we have to change our way of working. I said, I am not the boss of the FAO. If elected as FAO D-G. We will be number one servant. So, as servant, we have to follow the orders of the real boss, you are real boss, and we have to come down from our high horse because people thought they were very unique, high, but we have to offer real service to the member countries, no matter if they are big or small, rich or poor and if you can offer the value added service, the Member States, farmers, they will restore our value and they will praise our contribution.

That is my real thinking and to improve the professionalism.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of Asia group.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Observer for Thailand)

The Asia Group have several questions for Dr Qu, this afternoon. The first one, Agenda 2030 is just ten years away and if you assume office, the important responsibilities of eradicating hunger and reducing poverty will be on your portfolio. How would you utilize your experience and knowledge to achieve this, please?

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Thank you for your tick-tock.

The real concern for me, is our job is done well or not, how to measure our accomplishment. In my opinion being in the post of FAO D-G means you have to finish that within the next several years. But, a critical time is the next four years. You know, we have to assist the number of states which have more challenge tasks to build up new strong political willingness. That is very important because if the Member States do not have strong political willingness, the other people, we are outside, we are assistant, we are promoter. We have to build up an internal capacity and force. That is my first consideration.

Second, based on my experience, we have to assist all those member countries who have a larger proportion of poverty and starvation. They have to produce enabling policy. Policy, not only for production, also policy for investment, policy for capacity building, policy for attracting more talent to work in their country origins, from their government, their local government.

The member government. That is also very important because you look at the successful story of the national members in this planet. If you wanted to solve starvation and poverty, the member countries policies play the key role and the third is innovation because now 85 percent of the population are smallholder farmers. There is strong pressure between the population and natural resources, especially land and soil, soil and water.

How to improve the efficiency and the productivity, the most economic approach is to develop technology which can improve the efficiency of bio-resources and natural resources and the fourth, you need a new business model. Nowadays we have an alternative to develop all this and new business models through E-Commerce, through the share of investment, C2C investment, the agriculture OEM because it was all the products you produced, you have to go through a traditional logistic and a business. Through the wholesaler, retailer, it takes time and is less efficient.

But, now, you can produce in Asia mountainous regions small holders, small farmers, and there you can sell directly to United States, from C2C. So, you can save a lot of energy and money and you can benefit both producer, farmers and, also, consumers. So, I think, for that it is also, quite the promising and the last, not the least.

I think for the development offer, we have to create a platform to identify case sharing and that is why I propose an agriculture eco-zone partnership because products in the world, in this planet, the farmers that can share, a cooperative, that can share. That is more efficient, we just need to be the organizer, with local government, always local society or association, whatever.

For wine, for tea, Carnation flowers, you name it. So that is, I think, in summary, I really agree, it is not made up of money, it is made of innovation of the thinking and aware of the business.

Mr Thanaway TIENSIN (Observer for Thailand)

We have another two questions.

As you mentioned about our small holders, family farmers and, also, innovations, as we know that small holder and family farmers, especially in Asia and other developing countries, are facing difficulties in accessing technical assistance and innovative technologies to tackle impacts of climate change.

How would you strengthen FAO's role in this regard and the next question, capacity building is important to assist member states. In particular, in small island developing states and also other developing countries. As such, as the rich range of capacity building centres and other knowledge sharing platform at the regional level, such as the World Fishery Universities, could provide education service to support this effort, please share your views about the importance of capacity building.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

I try to answer quick, you have two questions.

First, I think small holder farmers, I said, we have more than 500 million small holder farmers in the world. But we have to realize that this is a historic phenomenon. We have to have a historic appreciation. Second, we have to offer a special policy to integrate the small holder farmers in a way of cooperative or in a way of the legal or illegal, legal entities. Legal entity of the marketing and the production. Or, you just have a linkage of contract growers with multi-national companies.

So, for small holder farmers, you have to offer the case to have them to offer them a social service that is a second. Third, also, for technology, you have to organize in the field, a school or somewhere where they can offer night school to train the farmers, especially women because majority now in Asia, or in all the small holder farmers country, the majority are women. In China, it is 68 percent labour force in the country are women.

Globally, in developing nations more than in 60 percent. So, we have to train women in the countryside, offer the financial assistance and service for the small holder farmers and for the capacity building of the small island or other developing nations, small holder farmers capacity. . Is capacity for training, capacity for technical service, capacity for marketing service?

So, we have to analyse the specific requirement from different regions, pass on different crops, different sectors for some country it may be palm oil, for some country it is Arabic dates. So, it is different products, you have different capacity building for the community level, availability level. So, it is, we have to focus on one commodity and there it is, and then integrate all the sectors from down to the grass roots. They will be the one, right to be...

CHAIRPERSON

I now would like to give you the floor for your closing remarks, Dr Qu, you have five minutes.

Mr Qu DONGYU (China)

Thank you very much dear representative from member countries. Through this hearing I got six conclusion.

First, there is the trust. Trust among the member countries, among the FAO staff and among the key players which relate to SDGs. That is our common mission. We have to work together because nowadays human beings, civilization is entering a new era. We have enough power, capability to finish, to end starvation. So, if we have accumulated enough trust and especially be united all the force among the member countries. That is first.

Second, we have a lot of mission, vision, slogans, now it is time to take action. That is why I had an intensive discussion with Professor Jeffrey Sachs. He now, he establishes solution network for SDGs. He tried to coordinate all the countries who are having more concrete actions, solutions. I fully agree with him. That is why FAO will want to change, to be dynamic FAO for a better world, we have to

follow there and, of course, all the action will have to get approval from the member countries and your consensus and especially action more precisely, more targeting and, also, more effectiveness and more efficiency.

Third, we have transparency. Transparency, that is why the first time I come to Rome, last month, and I separated five groups to listening. I said to you, I have two ears, one tongue. But I did not say too much, that time. I said I want to listen to you first because professional through the dialogue, through the careful listening. Actually I collect more than four hundred questions. But, today you only ask me about twenty. So, that is why I respect all your participation, especially who is not the chairperson of your region. I will be listening, I wrote down your concern and analyse it and also this dispute of my CV table.

Some countries are not so familiar with that, say, oh, I come here to listen to your vision. But, I say, no, I have enough patience and tolerance that I listen in first. So, transparency and dialogue are participatory and they are running by member countries, not only talking. I say that is was my first step. Now is my second step, I will go tomorrow to listen to other small countries, poor countries, that did not have a representative here and they have an office in Geneva. I go there. I went to small island countries, in Fiji and I talk with them. They were so happy.

The fourth is partnership. Partnership not only about members and there is also PPP or with other international organizations, with the financial institutions. I had a talk with JP Morgan, the World Bank and others because SDGs for agriculture and rural development. Not only our FAO function, we need integration.

The fifth, value chain because value chain for innovation, for farmers livelihood. If you only offer the single technology, it is only beautiful paper. That was so ten years ago, but we want to make a beautiful story, have the farmers that can benefit newer technology, newer innovation under your manager. So, you need the value chain development.

The last is commitment. Commitment from developed nations, from donors and all who come from the rural areas. Come to Rome, we want to go from Rome to all the front of the rural areas in the world.

Applause

CHAIRPERSON

Colleagues will now a fifteen minute break. The plenary session will resume at 4:30.

The meeting was suspended from 16.15 to 16.36 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 15 à 16 h 36

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.15 a las 16.36

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite Ms Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle of France to join us on the podium. In fact she is with us. You have the floor for your opening remarks.

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, Mesdames, Messieurs, je suis heureuse de me présenter devant vous aujourd'hui, en tant que candidate au poste de Directeur général de la FAO. Comme vous le savez, ma candidature est présentée par la France et soutenue par l'Union européenne, et par ses États membres.

Je me suis préparée, je me suis engagée dès le mois de juillet dernier dans une campagne active et transparente. J'ai personnellement rencontré plus de 150 représentants des pays membres à haut niveau. J'ai rencontré les responsables des organisations internationales et régionales, ainsi que les agriculteurs, les pêcheurs, les entreprises agroalimentaires, les investisseurs, les opérateurs du numérique, ainsi que la société civile.

Ces rencontres ont nourri ma réflexion et mon projet pour la FAO. Aujourd'hui, je veux vous dire comment j'analyse les défis que nous avons à relever. Je veux vous décrire mon projet, et l'ambition

que je porte pour la FAO. Je veux enfin vous dire pourquoi je pense être à même de devenir Directrice générale de la FAO.

Suite en français

You are well aware of the challenges we need to face. What I heard during my campaign was a sense of urgency for action. Urgency because food systems are facing considerable challenges. 821 million people continue to suffer from hunger. That number has begun to rise again since 2015, mainly as a consequence of conflict. Malnutrition affects 2 billion people.

At the same time, the epidemic of obesity and overweight continues to progress alarmingly. Demographic growth, shift in diet, climate change and the need to regenerate our ecosystems are all challenges that we can and must address.

Over the last few decades, we have considerably stepped up the amount of food production, threefold since 1960, while the world population was multiplied by 2.5. We've not yet succeeded in eradicating hunger and we have often degraded our natural resources.

The starting point lies with food systems. Faced with continued global population growth, we do of course need to continue producing more, especially in regions where food supply remains insufficient such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South East Asia and Western Asia.

But we do not simply need a supply driven policy. Demand for food is no longer driven solely by demographic pressure. It is evolving with the needs of an increasingly urbanised global population. Consumption is changing with more vegetable and animal proteins, more diversity and the greater taken into account of the links between food and health although much remains to be done in this area.

Moreover, we need to foster the efficiency of our food systems, reduction of waste and losses, the development of circular economy and energy saving. Agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry are essential for protecting our climate, our oceans, our soils, water and biodiversity. That is the idea behind the 2030 United Nation agenda for sustainable development with which you are all familiar.

I was often asked about our ability to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, SDG 2 of course, but also all 17 SDG's. I have every confidence that we have solutions and that we have the will to face these challenges altogether, and where there is a will there is a way.

I would like to share with you how I envision the FAO's roadmap for the next four years. I have two main objectives. First and foremost, we need productive food systems that protect our natural resources and our resilience to climate change. Our food systems need to be more efficient in particular by reducing losses and waste.

My second objective is to develop value change in rural areas to eradicate poverty. We must enable farmers and fishermen and women who are still too often subsistence centred to access the market. By developing the processing of agriculture and fisheries product, retail and services, including digitalisation we can create jobs and a future for young people and the women and men who live in rural areas.

I want to take action in several directions. I want to reaffirm the FAO's role to put agriculture, livestock farming, fisheries and forestry back at the top of political agendas. These sectors are not sectors of the past they are our future. They provide solutions and they will play a decisive role in the success of the UN 2030 agenda. I want the FAO to remain at the forefront of scientific and technical knowledge so that it offers innovative and robust solution adapted to local contexts.

To that end, we need to forge partnerships and use digitalisation to value the scientific knowledge available in every region of the world as well as to bolster and disseminate FAO's knowledge. I want the FAO to help us to bring together governments and stakeholders, because only the farmers, fishermen and women and the Private sector as a whole, will be able to transform our food system.

I want to put them at the back at the centre of all the FAO's activities. They bring project and solution. We need them and they need us. In order to leverage our resources, our synergy, and cooperation. More south-south cooperation, more south-north cooperation, more triangular cooperation.

I wish the FAO to remain our common house where everyone can share their expertise and solution. I want the FAO to belong to you, to belong to all of us. And FAO faithful to the United Nation commitment.

As many of you said to me, we need to boost our technical cooperation. I want to make this programme even more relevant, more effective, and more inclusive in particular for women. I would also like to explore with you with, the governing body of the organization, how we can diversify its financing sources so that we can deploy it more widely and amplify its impact. I want to scale up FAO's action for economy development in all areas.

The FAO needs to help us to attract more investment in the agri-food sector, fisheries and agricultural sectors. It must put its expertise at the service of investors in order to assist them designing and implementing responsible, sustainable and inclusive investment programme.

Investment which will contribute to build a value chains, agri-food chains that will create jobs and enable farmers and fishermen and women to access the market. The FAO already works with public investors, the World Bank, the EBRD, the IFAD, and support them for a portfolio of investment around USD 6 billion per year.

I want to significantly increase its portfolio with public as well as private investors, many of whom I met during my campaign. They are willing to work and partner with us. I will support FAO's normative activities by strengthening their scientific basis and capacity building for governments to ensure a more effective implementation.

Finally, I will strengthen the corporation and the synergy between the FAO, the world food programme and IFAD, as well as with the other UN organizations. We need more efficiency and a more integrated approach which is the overall objective of the UN development system reform.

As I want to work with you to ensure that the FAO plays an active role in implementing this reform, I will pursue effectiveness, optimal use of our resources and compliance with the mandate and the governance of the FAO.

Why do I consider myself up to the challenge of becoming the director-general of the FAO? Over the last 30 years I have dedicated my career to agriculture, food, forestry and rural development. I am passionate about these sectors. I was born in a family of scientists. My parents were researchers in biochemistry and I love science, research and innovation.

I know what it brings to the food sector and I am convinced they contribute to decisively improving our livelihood. I have worked at the European Commission. At home, I have held leading roles in ministerial cabinets as Director-General for food and then for the economic and environmental performance of enterprises.

As Director-General, I managed over 4 500 staff members in Paris headquarters as well as in regions. I was also elected as executive director of the European Food Safety Authority, EFSA, which I led and developed for seven years. At the end of my mandates, EFSA employed over 500 staff members mainly scientists, and relied on a network of more than 2000 scientific experts.

I am known for my capacity to implement change. I have in particular transformed the organization I have led and got my teams is on board to strive towards the vision shared with partners and stakeholders. In a European and international environment, I have demonstrated the capacity to mobilise governments and all stakeholders. This was the case at EFSA when I built a stakeholder platform to enhance dialogue with partners.

In the context of COP 21 and COP 22 on climate change, I contributed to the creation of the global platform "4 per 1000: Soils for Food Security and Climate". It brings together over 200 members, including FAO, and other international organizations. I have also managed several crisis both economic and sanitary crisis like BSE, foot-and-mouth disease and pests. Over my career I have worked with ministers, commissioners and members of Parliament.

I know the FAO and its work well. I have represented my country and the European Commission at the organization many times. As Director-General, I was responsible for the cooperation with the FAO and

I renewed the strategic partnership France has with the organization. I also chaired the Committee of the Codex Alimentarius on general principles.

In all the organization that I led I created a working environment centred around commitment, result, mutual respect, trust, diversity, and gender equality. As I did over my career, I will implement policies and take concrete steps to prevent and fight all forms of harassment and discrimination at the FAO. I like and I know how to create a working environment which enables each individual to give the best of their ability and deploy their talent, their boldness and creativity for the collective success.

I would now like to conclude. I am the first female candidate since the creation of the FAO 70 years ago. Never a woman led this organization. As you know, women play an essential role in food systems and I'm proud to represent them.

I want to be elected to work with you with all member countries with stakeholders. I want to give a new impetus to this organization and take action. I want the FAO to be more effective, responsive, accountable and open. I envision the FAO as a provider of science-based knowledge and innovative solution. I envision the FAO as a platform for dialogue, as a hub that empowers stakeholders including investors for concrete action.

As a booster for cooperation to leverage resources, I envision the FAO as an engine for development through technical cooperation and assistance for governments, as a facilitator of food trade and as a catalyst for the creation of jobs in rural areas. Yes with the FAO we can succeed together and deliver sustainable food for all. This is a commitment I wish to make to you today. Your support is key. You can count on my listening, my commitment and my determination.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group to pose the first set of questions to the candidate. Uruguay you have the floor.

Sr. Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

Voy a formular las preguntas según el criterio adoptado por el Grupo Latinoamericano y del Caribe en el cual se ha tomado en cuenta la sugerencia contenida en el documento CL161/7, respecto a la ventaja de plantear las mismas preguntas a cada candidato ya que esto podría facilitar la comparación. Hecha la aclaración, la primera pregunta por lo tanto sería la misma que le hemos hecho a los otros tres candidatos. ¿Cuál será el rol de FAO durante su gestión en favor de los países en desarrollo de renta media y media alta?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I think it is important to the way I see the role of the FAO is to ensure that you take into account the diversity of the situation of the countries, the reality of their agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture sector. You take into account their priorities and then you provide solution, recommendation, advice, option for action that are adequate to the needs of the countries. So that's what I will do. I will ensure that the FAO is not imposing any 'one size fits all' solution, but fit for purpose solution to recommendation and advice that are recommended in particular for the category, if I may say that way, of countries that you have mentioned.

Sr. Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

La segunda pregunta es: ¿cómo evitar que el trabajo de la FAO en temas ambientales y nutricionales se utilice como pretexto para la creación de barreras al comercio internacional?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

For me it is clear that – first of all trade is very important. It's a source of prosperity it's also important, it contributes to food security. I will ensure that any action that the FAO is taking, is relying on sound scientific basis and evidence. And obviously the work of the Codex Alimentarius is very important with regards when it comes to a trade.

And I will ensure that we will be able to strengthen the scientific basis of its activities that will also ensure a better and more effective implementation of the rules of the Codex Alimentarius. So that we facilitate trade.

So I think it's essential that this organization, because it's part of this mandate will provide support to governments to facilitate trade. And again, based - every activity of the organization both the standardisation but also solution, recommendation options should be science-based.

Sr. Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

Una tercera pregunta. En un contexto de presupuesto congelado, ¿en qué proporción la FAO debería dedicarse a la elaboración de normas y estándares —o sea, standard settings— y a las actividades de desarrollo en el terreno?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

The zero nominal growth budget is not something new. The FAO has lived with it, as far as I am aware, since 2008 and has not and rightly has made no choice in terms of whether it should only dedicate its resources to the so-called standard-setting or normative activity and technical cooperation and development. And I think we should continue. We need to be provided with the diversity of the tools you have mentioned, so normative, as well as cooperation and development activities, they are essential. They provide solution fit for purpose for the needs of the countries.

Of course in that context, we need to continue to ensure that we optimise the use of our resources, that's very important. As I mentioned in my initial statement, I wish to explore with the governing bodies of this organization how we can diversify the funding sources for the technical cooperation programme.

I have met with a number of stakeholders, in particular here I am referring to non-profit organization foundation, which are very willing to work and partner with the FAO and if the governing bodies of this organization would agree this will provide possibly extra resources for the technical cooperation programme. But again, I don't intend to make a choice between a normative - or too give up with normative activities or cooperation and development activities, I think they are both important for the different countries depending on the reality of their needs.

Sr. Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

Veo que tenemos tiempo para una cuarta pregunta, que sería la siguiente: ¿cómo proyecta incorporar en los trabajos de la FAO todos los enfoques y herramientas disponibles, incluida la agroecología, la innovación y la biotecnología?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I would like to stress again, that I think that considering - well first of all I know what science and innovation has brought to the food sector. They wouldn't have been able to achieve what we have achieved as I said, multiplied by 3, the amount of food produced since the 1960s without science and innovation. And I do think with the huge challenges that we have ahead we will continue to need more innovation and more science to achieve these challenges.

We will need to ensure obviously that we increase the productivity of our agriculture, particularly in some region, we maintain high productivity where it is highly productive while at the same time we ensure its sustainability and its resistance to climate change. And for this we will need to use some of the techniques or technologies that you have referred to.

We will need to improve agriculture practices to make them more sustainable and in particular agroecology can provide solution. But there are other ways to do it, conservation agriculture, precision agriculture, are also techniques that help to achieve these objectives.

Biotechnology is also very useful. I will support biotechnologies, of course, including GMO and gene editing, I think it's important. When it comes to - we will need to provide farmers with seeds which are more resistant to drought, more resistant to certain plant pests which are more nutritious so we might also wish to use these techniques and technologies.

And of course, I will rely on science and evidence to make sure that all these techniques are bringing real benefits and protect the health of our consumers, our farmers, our fishermen and as well as the environment.

Sr. Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

Una última pregunta. A pesar de su rol fundamental en la producción de la mayor parte del alimento mundial, con frecuencia el suelo no ha recibido la necesaria atención en lo referente a su uso y gestión. ¿Cómo planearía abordar este tema en las actividades de la FAO?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I'm sorry sir, I missed part of the question. You were talking about soya, and you said that it didn't?

Sr. Gastón LASARTE (Uruguay)

No, suelo.

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

You were saying it did not deserve the appropriate attention. Well I think the FAO has made some interesting and relevant activities with the global soil partnership. We'll come back to that.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of the Near East Group.

Mr Yousef JHAIL (Kuwait)

Thank you Mr Chairperson and we welcome Ms Catherine for our questions. My first question, you talked about the private sector. In your views, what is the mechanism to attract the private sector without enforcing their own special agenda on FAO?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN- LANÉELLE (France)

It's important you rightly mention the private sector and I stress that I strongly believe that although I will make sure that I'm leading an intergovernmental organization like the FAO, you need to ensure that I will work within the framework and the guidance of the governing bodies of this organization. I am convinced we need to engage more and work more further with the private sector because only as I said the farmers and the fishermen as well as private sector will be able to transform the food system and deliver what we want to achieve.

Of course this dialogue should take into account what you said which is this organization needs to remain impartial. No way that this organization will be delivering service, or advertisement, or defend any particular commercial interest, but we need to work more and further with the private sector if we want to make a difference and to make an impact.

Mr Yousef JHAIL (Kuwait)

My second question is, as there is more and more demand by members on various issues to be implemented by FAO, and with the budget constraints that we have currently, how are you going to cope with such a situation?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN- LANÉELLE (France)

I think there are different actions to be taken and I am going to list them quickly. I think you need to ensure, continue to ensure, that we will optimise the use of our resources. I think we need also to ensure that we will be able to find, to diversify the sources of funding for some of our activities.

I mentioned in particular the technical cooperation, of course that needs to be decided and approved by the governing bodies of this organization. I think also we shall leverage our resources, cooperating and building synergies with other key players, with other UN international organizations as I said also with investors.

I think we can build on the solution that we have identified and demonstrated in the Technical Cooperation Programme and attract investors and help them to build and to design and implement

investment programme that will then help to scale up the outcome of the Technical Cooperation Programme. And that's important because we really need to scale up the good result we have already achieved.

Mr Yousef JHAIL (Kuwait)

My following question is in case you are elected, how would you utilise your experience and knowledge to address hunger eradication and poverty reduction to achieve SDG 1 and 2, given the fact that we have about 10 years to go. Time is running.

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I will work with the farmers, I will talk and work with the farmers, the fishermen, the representatives with the private sector and the government. I will gather them around two priorities I have identified which is first building on the tools that the FAO has to increase the productivity of our agriculture while making it at the same time, more sustainable as well as more resistant to climate change.

And I will work to attract more investment to develop the value chain, to develop economic activities, processing food, retail, services linked to agriculture, fisheries and agriculture, because I think it's a way to give access to the market to the farmers and the fishermen as well as to create jobs in rural areas.

Mr Yousef JHAIL (Kuwait)

My following question is making decisions in this organization sometimes you run into a wall of rejections, by members of course. How would you deal with that and where would you find energy and drive to continue work with members for 4 years let's say, if not more?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Well energy I have and I will work relentlessly with the members of this organization. I have already enjoyed it and I might not concur with you on the fact that we always disagree. I recognise that we sometimes disagree, that we have different approaches, views, but at the end of the day I think that we agree on the essential. And anyway as the Director-General of this organization, I will ensure that I will not create division. That I will gather as many countries as I can around common views and projects. That will sometimes take a bit more time but at the end when we all agree, it's so powerful.

Mr Yousef JHAIL (Kuwait)

I have no further questions. I thank you for the special lights Mr Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to North America Group.

Mme Alexandra BUGAILISKIS (Canada)

En 2015, vous avez redéfini la vision et la mission de la Direction générale au sein de nos Ministères de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation. Pouvez-vous expliquer concrètement comment vous avez géré le changement durant cette transition et comment vous avez motivé le personnel adapté aux nouvelles visions?

Mme Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

J'ai pris beaucoup de plaisir à travailler avec les 350 agents de la Direction générale de la performance économique et environnementale des entreprises, qui ne s'appelait pas comme ça lorsque j'en ai pris la responsabilité. Pendant plusieurs mois, tout en maintenant la continuité des activités de la Direction générale, nous avons travaillé ensemble pour définir une nouvelle vision, des nouvelles missions, des objectifs stratégiques, et aligner ensuite l'organisation.

Et comment est-ce que nous avons fait? Nous sommes partis des besoins de ceux que nous servions. Donc, nous avons interrogé ceux que nous servions: les agriculteurs, les forestiers, les entreprises agroalimentaires et tous les partenaires de ces acteurs-là pour savoir quels étaient leurs attentes et leurs besoins, ce que nous faisions bien, et ce que nous faisions moins bien.

Ensuite, partant de là nous avons redéfini, comme je l'ai dit, la vision, la mission et les objectifs stratégiques, et nous avons aligné l'organigramme de cette grande maison, pour l'aligner à la nouvelle stratégie. C'est ce que j'aime faire avec les équipes, les mobiliser autour d'un projet, d'un cap, d'une orientation et donner du sens à l'action quotidienne pour réussir ensemble.

Mme Alexandra BUGAILISKIS (Canada)

Quelle serait votre approche pour élaborer une stratégie efficace en matière de genre? Tout d'abord, afin de prévenir et lutter contre le harcèlement sexuel, et de deuxièmement afin de renverser le pouvoir d'agir des agricultrices, les femmes qui travaillent dans le secteur rural?

Mme Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Les femmes, on m'en a beaucoup parlé pendant la campagne. Je n'osais pas trop en parler au début, mais finalement beaucoup de pays m'en ont parlé pour me dire l'importance de la place qu'elles ont dans les systèmes alimentaires sur tous les continents, pour me dire aussi les difficultés particulières auxquelles elles sont souvent confrontées: difficultés d'accès aux ressources, à la terre, au foncier, aux ressources naturelles; difficultés d'accès aussi parfois aux forums de décision, s'agissant des questions agricoles, alimentaires et de pêche.

Donc, je crois en effet que nous devons renforcer l'action de la FAO à cet égard. Moi ce que je veux vous proposer - mais évidemment, c'est quelque chose que j'aurais plaisir à discuter avec vous, le moment venu -, ce n'est pas nécessairement un nouveau programme pour les femmes, c'est plutôt d'aller inclure, inscrire dans toutes les actions de cette Organisation, la question du genre et de voir comment dans chacune des activités, des actions et des décisions que cette Organisation prend, au service des secteurs agricoles, de la pêche et de la forêt, nous pouvons tenir compte des besoins particuliers des femmes.

Nous pouvons être attentifs à ne pas créer de nouveaux obstacles pour qu'elles participent au système alimentaire, parce que c'est ainsi, aussi, que nous réussirons mieux à atteindre les objectifs en matière d'éradication de la faim et d'amélioration de la nutrition.

Ensuite, vous avez raison de dire qu'il y a aussi les femmes dans cette Organisation. Il y a les femmes en dehors de cette Organisation que nous servons, et il y a les femmes dans cette Organisation. Si je voulais faire une réponse très courte, je vous dirais, vous avez une occasion exceptionnelle d'élire une femme, la première femme à la tête de cette Organisation. C'est peut-être un peu court. Donc, je vais compléter ma réponse.

Je dirais qu'il y a de bonnes choses qui ont été faites dans cette Organisation au regard de la présence des femmes, je crois qu'il y a un peu plus de 40 pour cent de femmes dans cette Organisation. On peut faire mieux, on pourrait monter à la moitié, puisque les femmes, c'est la moitié de l'humanité, n'est-ce pas?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Now when it comes to management I think we can do better. Only a quarter I think of the managers in this organization are women. I think we can do better. We shall do better. It should be half.

Suite en français

Donc ça, je vais m'en occuper. Mais bien sûr ça doit se faire en respectant la transparence des procédures, en s'assurant aussi qu'on recrute les meilleurs talents, les meilleures expertises, et qu'on a la bonne adéquation. Il ne faut jamais renoncer à ça, c'est très important. Ensuite, vous m'avez interrogée sur le harcèlement, en tant que femme, et les discriminations plus généralement, et les abus de pouvoir, j'y suis particulièrement sensible.

J'ai une expérience dans ce domaine, j'ai géré des organisations, dans lesquelles j'ai été confrontée en tant que manager à des plaintes. J'ai géré, j'ai pris des mesures pour protéger les victimes, mais aussi pour écarter les managers qui se comportaient mal. J'ai une expérience et je la mettrai à disposition de cette Organisation pour m'assurer que ces situations-là ne soient pas tolérable, n'existent pas, et que les managers de cette Organisation y soient particulièrement sensibilisés et que les mesures soient prises.

Mme Alexandra BUGAILISKIS (Canada)

Merci beaucoup. Vous avez déjà partagé vos vues sur l'importance du commerce.

Continues in English

Perhaps I will repeat in a different way the question. I think we really do want to hear a little more about your views of how the FAO could help countries participate and use international trade as a means to address poverty and nutrition, climate action and food insecurity?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Yes, I'd like to stress again that trade is important for me. As I said it's a source of prosperity that contributes to food security. I think the role of this organization is important. With the Codex Alimentarius standards I think it's important. So I shall stress on the scientific basis of the activities of the Codex Alimentarius.

I'd like also to make sure that the Codex standards are better implemented more effectively so we need here capacity building. I think there are – there will be also new developments, I'm thinking about the development of new free-trade zone in Africa and the African Union has decided to create a new free-trade zone, just as an example that I'd like to illustrate. This is a fantastic opportunity and the FAO should help support the African Union and African countries to deliver on this free-trade zone.

Then I went to Geneva a couple of weeks ago to discuss with the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, because I think it is important. It is clear for me that trade is part of the mandate of this organization, not of course with the same mandate as the WTO, obviously. But I think it's important to raise the awareness and the activities and build more activities in relation with this, and I discussed that and explored with the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, how we could work better in order to boost trade of food stuff all over the world.

Mme Alexandra BUGAILISKIS (Canada)

J'ai eu une autre question sur les biotechnologies, mais vous avez déjà répondu. Merci.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of Southwest Pacific group.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Thank you Chair and welcome to the candidate from France. The Southwest Pacific would like to ask what are your perspectives on the food security and nutrition challenges are in Pacific, and what are your intentions for the region if elected?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I'm going to build on the work and the exchange I've already done with some, not all but some, quite a number already of representatives of the Pacific countries and I will also visit the Pacific in the coming weeks.

As I see it we have - climate change is a huge challenge in this region and we need to make sure that not only we will not lose in fact the efforts and progress that we have made when it comes to food security and nutrition, with the growing impact of climate change.

So we need to boost the work in the activities of the organization in this region on climate change and see how we can offer solution that helps maintaining the productivity of the agriculture while we have the impact of climate change. How we can build systems which are more resilient farming practices, diversify the crops also. So that's the first priority that I will see in this region.

I also realise that in this region there may be also an important challenge when it comes to nutrition which is both linked with, and of course there is a great diversity of countries in this region as in many other regions. But you have the coexistence of undernutrition as well as over nutrition if I can say that way, obesity and overweight that has been mentioned to me when I had a working session with the commission of the South Pacific, which mentioned to me that some of the countries are the champion

in the world when it comes to obesity and overweight. So that is something on which we need to foster the support, the recommendation that we provide to the different countries.

I think there is also another challenge in this country and maybe some of you will tell me it's not only in this region and of course I'll be ready to listen to that, which is how do we ensure a better presence of the organization, the FAO, in the Pacific, taking into account that this is a very, very large region with a great diversity, as well as how do we ensure also the presence of people from the Pacific in the organization, in the FAO, so that we can take into account integrate in the way this organization works the approach, the view and the specific challenges that this region has.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

The next question we would like to ask you is, what are your priorities for building FAO's technical capacity to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I think that the FAO has accumulated over the last 70 years unparalleled expertise and knowledge about the solution. It doesn't mean the organization knows everything and there is here an issue we might discuss later on which is about how we maintain the scientific and technical knowledge in this organization. But the way I see it is that this organization has accumulated a sum of solutions which are very important, and that we have also showcased in for example, in the development action as well as the Technical Cooperation Programme that it works. That we have solution to increase productivity while not compromising with sustainability and resilience to climate change.

So now what we have to do in addition to possibly as I said on diversifying the funding of the technical cooperation programme, is to scale up the implementation of this solution. And that's where I think that attracting more investment, public and private investment, to these sectors might be very powerful because it helps obviously to disseminate a good solution, to empower the stakeholders and to achieve the objectives they have mentioned.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

A follow-up question to the previous one is, in doing that how would you ensure that FAO provides balanced evidence-based advice on all production versions available to farmers?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I think that the way I understand the question you are raising, is in fact related to how do we ensure that this organization maintains and further develops its scientific and technical knowledge. So on the one hand, maybe I shall say that science and evidence should remain at the core of our activity because otherwise it's very dangerous, we can make big mistakes. So any recommendation, any work that this organization is developing should be based on science and evidence.

At the same time and maybe come back to my first point, I think that we need to ensure that this organization remains plugged into the knowledge which exists all over the world. I think there are many innovations and many new knowledge which is produced in many regions of the world, in many countries, and that's where we need to make sure that we forge partnerships and ways so that the organization get access to this knowledge which is also fit for purpose because it's coming also directly from the countries from the region.

And here I am obviously not talking only about the North but also the South. I think that many, many new solutions and innovation nowadays come from comes from the South. So we need here to forge more partnership and plug the expertise of the organization into the scientific community all over the world.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

We'd also like to ask you, how you would assess the effectiveness of FAO's programmes in countries to ensure they are delivering what countries need and that the programmes are also delivering value for money for all members?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I think it is important that we include in the different programmes that we are developing, when it comes to technical cooperation or development activities, that we include systematically an assessment, or we include the fact there is need to assess the outcome as well as the impact and see how the objectives have been met and if not that we learn lessons from that experience. And I guess this is something the FAO is not discovering in 2019 and not the first one to say that I guess, but I think as far as I can see from some of the reports made by the Bureau of the Inspector General, as well as MOPAN assessment although there has been progress, I think we can do better. And I think it's important when it comes to the Technical Cooperation Programme just to illustrate what I'm saying, I think it is important because it is today a bit underutilised. So there may be also reasons why it is underutilised and it is important that we learn lessons from and we assess as part of the management cycle of programme and activity.

So I make sure that we stress this and we put systematically in activities and programmes the assessment, the lessons learnt so that we feed then our future activities with these evaluations.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the Africa Regional Group.

Ms Anna-Marie MOULTON (South Africa)

The Africa Group is asking basically the same questions to all four candidates and I will continue in that vein to a large extent. First question how would you ensure that Africa's vision and strategic frameworks such as Agenda 2063, CAADP, and the Malabo Declaration Implementation Strategy would inform in a coherent and sustainable approach FAO's work with and in Africa with African regional institutions namely NEPAD and the regional economic communities as partners of choice?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

First of all, I'd like to stress that I have met with many representatives, including ministers of African countries, and I was very much impressed by the fact that many of them had clear vision of what they wanted to achieve, clear policies, objectives, strategies and were requesting, requiring the FAO to help them to operationalise these policies and strategies and provide support so that they deliver success. So that's very important. So it means starting with the needs, the policy and the priority of the countries.

Then I realised how important is also the activities of regional organization in Africa as well as the African Union. And that's why I met, for example with the African Union, met with commissioner, Josepha Sacko, to see, to explore with her and with the African Union, how we can ensure that the FAO is more and more supportive to their work. That's where we have discussed in particular the creation, the entering into force of this new free trade zone where I think there are many opportunities for the continent to develop.

So the way I see it – and I met also with NEPAD, with the executive director of NEPAD – so the way I see it is that in fact it's a fantastic, we are lucky that we have both this national policies, strategies but also we have regional as well as strategies from the continent. And you mentioned Agenda 2063, the follow-up of the Malabo Declaration, the CAADP, and the FAO needs to work with this regional and continent also to leverage the resources and the work and deliver more effectively when it works also the countries.

So there is no opposition for me, it's just helping to be more effective and I intend to strengthen the relationship both with regional organizations as well as with the African Union.

Ms Anna-Marie MOULTON (South Africa)

The second question, Africa is currently grossly underrepresented in FAO in terms of employment. If elected to the post of Director-General and taking into account the issue of gender, what are you going to do to ensure that more Africans are employed especially in middle management and Africans are also assigned to lead the centralised offices outside Africa?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

It is a very important point and a very sensitive one. If we want this organization to remain our common house it is clear that it needs to make sure, we need to make sure, that we maintain or improve the representation, a fair representation of our regions and countries of this organization. And I know it's very sensitive.

I've had an experience of leading and managing a European organization. There were only 28 member states but still you have to make sure that while you recruit the best talent, the best experts, the most adequate profiles, you ensure that you keep and build the diversity of the representation of the different countries in that case, of Europe. That's very important.

And it's at all levels. And as you are saying it's not only you know, the junior position. You need to be able to see at a glance that middle management position, senior management position, reflect the diversity of the world, of the approach, of the views, of the realities of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and aquaculture. So I think here I would be tempted to propose, because it's not just short-term action. It's not just talking. You need to walk the talk. And here not sure the FAO has built yet a strategy or a policy that would address both on the short and the medium term this issue which is how do - what is the expertise, knowledge, and the talent that we need to have in this organization in the next 10 to 15 years?

How are we going to get access to the best talent while at the same time ensuring that we have a fair representation? And that's something that you don't just build with publishing a call, and then just regretting that you had no candidate from an African country.

You need also to build through partnerships, through the advertisement of the calls and the job offers. Through also the traineeship, through the scholarships, through also working with countries, how you are going to be able to raise the visibility of the organization, attract the talent from all regions of the world and prepare the future. So that's something I will propose, I would like to build a policy, a specific strategy dedicated to knowledge management, talent and expertise, which will include of course the fair representation of nationality. In that context, I will not forget gender, of course.

Ms Anna-Marie MOULTON (South Africa)

Next question: Should you be elected Director-General and during your tenure, how will FAO marshal its resources including institutional capacity and technical expertise, to specifically address the issue of agriculture, and specially agro-processing emerging as a significant contributor to generating job and entrepreneurship opportunities for Africa's youth and rural populations, and Africa's securing levels of food production necessary in moving towards the Zero Hunger target, while on the other hand reducing dependence on food imports?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

It is a very vast question, so maybe I will try to address it in a very specific manner. I would say, again, it is about optimizing the use of the Organization's resources - ensuring that we can for - technical cooperation as well as development activities; diversify the funding of the funding sources; leverage our resources; more cooperation with other UN agencies, other organizations, partnership, work with investors because it helps to scale up our efforts, so this would be some of the key points that would help to work in a context where I would reorganize that there - this Organization has important resources but there are many expectations. So you need to make sure that you are going to leverage the resources that you have of cooperating, building synergies and work also with partners including the private sector.

Ms Anna-Marie MOULTON (South Africa)

I think time is basically up. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of the Asia Group, Thailand.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Observer for Thailand)

Dr Geslain-Lanéelle, we would like to start with a follow-up question from the previous one on soil, not soya that you missed to answer. Soil is an important resource for agriculture and often neglected element of agricultural productions, food system and climate system. What is your view on FAO roles to address on sustainable soil management and soil pollution?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

So now it's about soils? Thank you. So you are right in saying that collectively we've paid not enough attention to soils. Although this very general statement is not true if we consider the fantastic work that in some countries, some farmers, have done in relation with soil.

And here I refer to some farming practices which are extremely - that I have personally observed in many continents, in Africa, in Asia, on the American continent, too, where there has been fantastic farming practices to further develop healthy soils.

So, the Global Soil Partnership that the FAO has built, initiated should be enhanced, I think it is a good initiative. I also think that the work of the "4 per 1000 platform", which is an international platform including the FAO but also many governments, as well as international organizations is important. It is a platform for research but it is also a platform for action where, in fact, we share experience.

And I have been participating to some of their workshops and seminars, recently in Johannesburg, for example, where I find that there were excellent initiatives that were adapted to the local context. So this is the kind of initiative that we should support and enhance.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Observer for Thailand)

The second question is: Smallholders and family farmers and fishers, especially in Asia and other developing countries are facing difficulties in accessing technical assistance and innovative technologies to tackle impacts on climate change. How should FAO strengthen its role in this regard?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

It's an important question [...] represent an overwhelming majority of the farmers in the world, so they also contribute significantly to our food security. So we need to focus our energy and our resources. Not saying that the other ones do not need our attention, but I think that it is important that we support the smallholders. And here, there are many ways, of course, to achieve what you say which is how do we have these smallholders to get access to advice, training, and to build their capacity.

There is one innovation, which I think can bring a lot to this, which is digitalization. And it has already started, although there is a lot to be done. But I think that this is a fantastic innovation, a very transformative one. It's not just another innovation because for the price of a phone call, you can access too many information and services. It has already started, I have met with many start-uppers but also farmers who are already using these digital services and I think that here the FAO has a role to play here to make sure that we work with governments, as well as a digital stakeholders so that we develop connectivity in rural areas, so that also we ensure that we make these techniques and technologies affordable.

I'm thinking about, you know, the cost of mobile phones for very poor smallholders, very vulnerable. It is important that we find solution there. And then it can be fantastic because it helps to provide them service, access to the market, advice, alerts on animal health, plant health, problems. And then the FAO could also put at the disposal of the entrepreneurs in this area its knowledge, its expertise so that it disseminates more effectively the knowledge and the expertise it has. And help entrepreneurs to build new services that help farmers and, in particular, the poorest and the smallest holder.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Observer for Thailand)

I have another follow-up question on climate change. As we know that many international organizations are doing important work on climate change, how would you differentiate FAO role based on its comparative advantage?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I think, you are right in saying that the climate change is making the headlines and there are many organizations regional and international working on this, which is also necessary since we need to take bold action. I think the FAO is responsible for the development and the success of sectors who are providers for solutions for climate change. I am thinking, in particular, about agriculture and forestry. Of course, they are also contributing but they are providing solutions for climate change and they are also the sectors that are immediately and already affected by climate change.

So, the way I see it is that since FAO has initiated work in this area, it should maybe use all the forums where climate change is being discussed, adaptation, mitigation, to make sure that this sectors, agriculture, fisheries, forestry have a voice because they can provide solutions and they need to be supported. That's the way I see the link between FAO and climate change.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Observer for Thailand)

The next question is: Capacity building is important to assist Member States, particularly the small island, developing states, and also other developing countries. As such, establishment of capacity-building centres or other knowledge-sharing platforms at the regional level, for example, like fisheries at university could provide education and technical service to support this effort. Please share your views about the importance of the capacities.

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I see the role of FAO in the fishery sector as very important, very preeminent both in terms of helping to promote and support both governments as well as stakeholders in implementing the call for responsible fisheries.

But there is also a particularity in this sector, which is the importance of regional commissions, which are responsible for conservation and management of fisheries resources. That is very unique. What is also unique, and maybe I shall highlight that, because we've talked a lot about how should we work with the private sector, many of these regional organizations include representatives of fishermen and women, which I find very useful.

I think that we need to continue to support and to strengthen the support of FAO through this regional commission and, not only helping to manage on the basis of scientific evidence on the resources but also to build more capacity in the countries...

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the representative of the European Regional Group. Finland, you have the floor.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

The European Regional Group has the pleasure to put the last questions of this long day. So, Madame Géslain-Lanéelle, our first question is on government structure of FAO. How should the system of delegation of authority and reporting lines be built?

Mme Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Mon expérience d'encadrement supérieur me conduit à dire qu'il est important dans une organisation de cette ampleur-là, de cette taille-là, d'avoir un système robuste de délégation de responsabilité, de l'autorité donc du directeur général aux différents managers.

Donc, un système de cascade de délégation de pouvoir, avec des mécanismes de reporting et de contrôle, évidemment. Mais ce qui est important, dans une organisation comme celle-là, c'est de s'assurer qu'on donne un pouvoir, des responsabilités aux managers; qu'on utilise le principe de subsidiarité; que les décisions soient prises au niveau le plus adéquat et pas tout en haut; à chaque niveau, sa responsabilité, avec évidemment une chaîne de commandement claire, des mécanismes de reporting et de contrôle.

C'est important si on veut être efficace et si on veut aussi éviter la bureaucratie; ça évidemment, c'est une chose contre laquelle il faut se battre en permanence et mon expérience de 30 ans dans les services publics, à la fois français et européens, m'amène à dire que c'est un combat qui n'est jamais fini.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

Our following question is on partnerships. What are the relevant partners and actors with whom FAO should strengthen its cooperation over the next four years and why?

Mme Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Il faut travailler avec les gouvernements. Il faut travailler avec les organisations régionales et internationales. Plus de coopération, d'efficacité, je l'ai dit, les agences des Nations Unies, le PAM, le FIDA, mais aussi le PNUD, le PNUE que j'ai rencontré, le HCR, l'OMS, l'Organisation mondiale de la santé, les organisations régionales, l'OIE que je n'oublie pas, il faut aussi travailler avec tous les acteurs, c'est important. Il faut qu'on parle avec les acteurs, il faut qu'on travaille avec eux, sans perdre de vue qu'on n'est pas là pour défendre des agendas et des particuliers, ni des intérêts commerciaux. Donc, il faut plus de coopération, plus d'ouverture, plus de dialogue et plus de transparence avec tous ces acteurs-là.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

The following question is on management and oversight. What concrete steps would you take to address the deficits in FAO's Human Resources Management that the Inspector General has identified?

Mme Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Dans le rapport auquel vous faites référence, donc le dernier rapport du Bureau de l'Inspecteur général, il y a effectivement un certain nombre de recommandations, en particulier sur la question de la gestion des ressources humaines, et notamment, si je me souviens bien, il y a quelques observations sur la nécessité d'améliorer la bonne adéquation entre les profils recherchés, les besoins de l'Organisation et les recrutements qui sont opérés.

Je crois que plusieurs managers de l'Organisation ont fait état d'inquiétudes qu'ils avaient sur la qualité et l'adéquation d'un certain nombre de personnes recrutées par rapport aux besoins de l'Organisation.

Donc cela rejoint ce que je disais tout à l'heure sur la manière dont je traiterais ces sujets. C'est effectivement de concevoir une politique, une stratégie, pour cette Organisation, de gestion de la connaissance, des talents et de l'expertise qui permette de traiter ces questions-là à court terme, mais aussi à moyen terme.

Une Organisation comme la FAO, qui est une Organisation de la connaissance, a absolument besoin de renforcer sa stratégie et d'avoir une vision à court et moyen termes sur ces questions-là.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

The following question is: How do you want to improve FAO's accountability system?

Mme Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

D'abord, je pense qu'il faut renforcer... No, I will speak English, sorry. First of all, I think it is important to strengthen everywhere in the Organization and in relation with the governing bodies' transparency, access to information.

Then, when it comes to accountability, I think that what is important is that the governing bodies of this Organization are provided with sufficient, but not too much information that is sufficient, well-presented information, taking into account, of course, the strategies, the priorities that we have defined and what we want to achieve.

And here I think when it comes to - having worked, in particular, over the last months very thoroughly on the budget of this organization, I think that we can make it more easy to use and we can improve the accountability and strengthen the result-based management of this organization. So I will take action on this particular subject.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

A question on repositioning as a UN development system, how does FAO need to change to deliver under the new system?

Mme Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

D'abord je pense que la FAO, en tant qu'Organisation des Nations Unies, ne peut pas rester à l'écart de cette réforme du système de développement, dont l'objectif est plus d'efficacité, plus de synergie, plus d'impact, plus de coopération, ce qui va effectivement dans le bon sens. C'est une réforme importante, voulue par le Secrétaire général et donc cette Organisation doit résolument s'engager dans cette action-là. Il faut qu'elle le fasse évidemment dans le respect de la gouvernance de l'Organisation.

Donc je serais attentive à travailler étroitement avec les organes de gouvernance. Je serais aussi attentive à faire en sorte qu'on soit constamment à la recherche de l'efficacité. Je ferais en sorte aussi qu'on s'attache à ce que cela produise des solutions gagnant-gagnant pour tout le monde, pour l'Organisation et pour le travail de coopération avec les autres organisations des Nations Unies. Je pense en particulier à un sujet qui est assez délicat, qui est la question de la présence de l'Organisation dans les différents pays.

J'y suis attachée, au niveau régional, au niveau subrégional, au niveau national, j'ai entendu beaucoup d'entre vous me dire que c'était très important. Je pense que dans beaucoup de pays que j'ai visités, je pense encore récemment à l'Afrique du Sud, on a des bâtiments qui regroupent les différentes organisations des Nations-Unis, quand c'est possible, c'est bien. Mais je note aussi que dans certaines situations, ça pourrait contribuer à accroître les coûts.

Donc il faudra être attentif à ce point-là, et donc une fois de plus, je serais attentive à travailler en étroite relation avec vous, à faire en sorte qu'on recherche l'efficacité, et qu'on n'accroisse pas les dépenses dans la mise en œuvre de cette réforme. Mais une fois de plus, la FAO ne peut pas rester à l'écart de cette réforme-là.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

One last question: What actions would you undertake to overcome the divide among FAO Members?

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

I will gather, I will work, and I will build consensus and I will gather as many countries around the project and my priorities.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Ms Geslain-Lanéelle for her closing remarks. You have five minutes.

Ms Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE (France)

Ministers, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentleman, I would like to thank you for today's exchange. I will continue to listen to all of you as I have done in the recent months.

Becoming the Director-General of the FAO, first and foremost means being at the service of all. It is neither a country nor a region that we lead the Organization. You can count on my enthusiasm, my professional experience, my leadership, my ability to mobilize teams and partners around the shared vision and project to the benefit of the 194 Member Countries. I will be accountable to each and every one of you. I will be a driving force for new initiatives in close cooperation with you, with the governing bodies of this Organization.

My guiding principles will be cooperation, openness, transparency and innovation, all forms of innovation. I will listen, I will develop a reason-based culture, empower teams and mobilize their talents. I will create a working environment, which will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or abuse of power. I will build indicators in this area, in order to be transparent and accountable to you on the progress my action will deliver.

I will ensure that the FAO remains our common house, an important United Nation Agency, which helps us to succeed where everyone feels that their voice is heard, that they are respected, recognized, supported, and fairly represented.

Wherever you live, in a small island affected by climate change, in a forest or a costal area, and a semi-arid region with insufficient agriculture productivity, in a very productive region where you need to restore the quality of water or soil, in a region affected by animal disease or plant pests that damage

your production capacity or in a region where you aim at developing your exports, I want the FAO to assist each country to find and implement science-based and fit for purpose solutions.

I want to be elected to work with you, with the stakeholders, with investors, to transform our food systems and make them more sustainable and efficient. Together, we will roll out robust, innovative, and locally appropriate solutions. Together, we will bolster a technical cooperation and empower stakeholders. Together, we will attract more investment to create jobs in rural areas. Together, we will deliver sustainable food for all. This is the commitment I wish to make to you today.

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen that brings us to the end of this today's very interesting session.

We will reconvene tomorrow morning at 11.00 hours in the Red Room for the Adoption of the Report, followed by the item on *Developments in Fora of Importance for the mandate of FAO* and the Debrief on the Field Visit to Asia.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 18:01 hours

La séance est levée à 18 h 01

Se levanta la sesión a las 18.01