

**STATEMENT BY THE HON MINISTER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
OF GHANA AT THE 38TH FAO CONFERENCE IN ROME**

15TH TO 22ND JUNE, 2013

TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2013

Mr. Chairman

Director General of FAO,

Your Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates,

1. On behalf of our President, I wish to register our deep appreciation to the Director General Jose Graziano da Silva and the FAO for the invitation to this meeting and for the prestigious award that we have received. We also join others in welcoming the Brunei Darussalam, Republic of Singapore and South Sudan and congratulate them for their accession into the FAO family.
2. Mr Chairman, despite the concrete achievements of the FAO and its member countries in reducing hunger and malnutrition over the years, we still have hunger, under nutrition in many parts of the world which calls for greater work to be done in the coming years. Ghana therefore congratulates the Director General for putting forward very bold reform initiatives within the FAO to show his preparedness to deal with the challenges ahead. Ghana therefore supports these reforms and the proposed budget as being in the right direction
3. Mr Chairman, Ghana has been active in its quest to end hunger and malnutrition since the nineties. Its persistent efforts have resulted in Ghana not only reaching the target set out in the United Nations Millennium Development Goal One of halving the proportion of its population suffering from hunger but also the more ambitious target in absolute terms set during the 1996 World

Food Summit held here in Rome of halving the number of its undernourished population.

4. Despite these achievements, Ghana continues to have pockets of poverty, hunger and malnutrition especially in the three northern regions of the country. Additionally, the population of Ghana is growing at the rate of 3.2 % per annum which calls for more mouths to be fed as well combating the effects of climate change on agricultural productivity. Ghana is therefore not resting at all on its oars but continues to fight relentlessly to deal with the remaining pockets of poverty, hunger and malnutrition until all Ghanaians can go to bed without being hungry.
5. Mr. Chairman, in line with the CAADP framework, Ghana launched its medium term investment plan, in 2011. The plan is currently undergoing a mid-term review to inform prioritization and focus of the programmes. We are happy to say that key stakeholders, including government, development partners, private sector and civil society have demonstrated unparalleled commitment to the implementation of the investment plan. In order to meet the challenges ahead, Ghana has implemented a number of policy and legislative reforms to create the enabling environment for accelerated investment into agriculture by both public and the private sector in seed production, commodity value chains and post harvest loss management. These are yielding results and Ghana is now self sufficient in the production of cereals (except rice) and roots and tubers for consumption as food. There are plans to upscale production geared towards providing raw material for industry.
6. Government's expenditure on agriculture as proportion of its total expenditure has consistently exceeded 10% in 2009, 2010 and 2011. The President of the Republic of Ghana has further demonstrated political commitment to the

development of the agriculture sector by instituting performance contracts with the Ministers for Food and Agriculture and for Fisheries and Aquaculture development to ensure that they deliver on agreed targets in the agriculture and fisheries sub sectors.

7. Mr. Chairman, an estimated 60 % of Ghana's labour force is in agriculture of which the majority are smallholder farmers. Agricultural transformation envisaged under Ghana's METASIP should not by pass the smallholders but must carry them along in order to result in increased smallholder productivity and incomes, social equity, reduction of poverty and improvement in standard of living of majority of agricultural operators. Hence, the policy focus of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture is the Nucleus Farmer Out-Grower model and Farmer Based Organization development to result in overall agricultural transformation and smallholder improvement.
8. The government therefore identifies the mobilization of Farmer Based Organizations as crucial to improve their access to agricultural services and their influence on public policy. This will also strengthen their participation and integration into commercial agriculture in the coming years.
9. In support of the Government's agricultural transformation agenda, attention is being paid to key strategic areas of investments and these include increased investment in agriculture related infrastructure such as feeder roads, irrigation development and storage facilities to improve market access and reduce post harvest losses. To address this we have launched a 150 million Dollars Ghana Commercial Agriculture Project (GCAP) to support private sector investors with needed production infrastructure to boost investment. We take this opportunity to invite our development partners to support this noble initiative

10. Mr. Chairman, to boost the fisheries sub-sector, and particularly to develop aquaculture, the Government has established a Ministry specifically for fisheries and aquaculture development. Ghana intends to meet the current deficit of 400,000 metric tonnes in her fish requirements in the next five years with investments in various interventions including aquaculture development in our inland Volta Lake and lagoon water bodies, where current annual production stands at 27,000 metric tonnes. Current initiatives include the FAO supported aquaculture development plan to meet a target of 100, 000 metric tonnes by 2016; the West Africa Regional Fisheries Programme funded by the World Bank and supported by NEPAD which aims at improving sustainable fisheries management, reducing illegal fishing and increasing value addition. We are therefore calling on investors and development partners to support the implementation of the plan and other initiatives.

11. To improve market access for smallholders, Government has established the National Buffer Stock Company limited in 2010 to enhance market access to small farmers by providing a guaranteed floor price each season. The company's operations are also aimed at ensuring price stability and availability of emergency food stocks. Linked closely to market access is the need to address the high post harvest losses in the range of 10-25% prevalent in our country. Government is partnering with private sector to increase community grain banks and warehouses. The introduction of the warehouse receipt system in Ghana in 2012 is addressing postharvest losses. Initiatives are also under way to woo private sector into agro-processing to reduce post harvest losses as well as increase economic opportunities in the agriculture sector.

12. In order to identify the remaining poor and hungry households in Ghana, the World Food Programme (WFP) supported the Government of Ghana in undertaking the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis.

This survey has become a reference point and a planning tool for Districts Programmes to address the remaining pockets of poverty, hunger and malnutrition in Ghana.

13. Government is also implementing school feeding programmes in collaboration with other development partners, including the World Food Programme and the Dutch Government. Ghana has developed a National Nutrition Policy to provide a framework for coordinated investment in nutrition programmes in the country. The Women in Agriculture Department of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture also works closely with the Ministry of Health to address food utilization and nutrition through extension services at the smallholder farmer household levels.

14. To encourage Public Private Partnerships, the Government has developed a PPP policy within which framework, local and foreign investors are being facilitated to increase productivity in the agricultural sector.

15. In conclusion, Ghana will continue to collaborate with the FAO and the UN Agencies to do its utmost to ensure that the remaining pockets of poverty, hunger and malnutrition are removed from the face of Ghana.

I thank you for your attention