

**H. E. Luis Capoulas Santos**

**Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of the  
Portuguese Republic**

Excellencies,

Chair of the Conference,

Ministers, dear colleagues.

Progress made in the fight against hunger and malnutrition is important but not yet enough. This scourge affects around 800 million people which is unacceptable for humankind and is a call to action for each and every one of us in the long way ahead.

Portugal is naturally in line with the joint positions taken by the European Union and its Member States.

FAO is a major player in this fight and its work is crucial to ensure global food security. Since September 2015, there is a new global framework resulting from the adoption in September of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly and the approval in December of the United Nations Framework for the Convention on Climate Change by the COP 21 in Paris.

This new framework creates a model and a global governance responsibility to reduce poverty, protect the environment, and promote prosperity and wellbeing.

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development requires a global partnership to continue the path towards sustainable, resilient, and inclusive agriculture and reduce food and nutrition insecurity.

Portugal is one of the countries at highest risk for the effects of climate change. Climate models predict a clear decline in rainfall during spring, summer, and autumn with higher concentration of heavy rainfall in the winter.

This scenario leads to an increase in forest fires and the frequency of extreme drought and flood phenomena, and forest fires are affecting us seriously right now.

Portugal has already defined a natural strategy for climate, water, and forests in line with European objectives in which agriculture plays a key role. We have a national strategy for climate change adaptation. One of the key features of this strategy is a program to adapt agriculture to climate change which is being developed with broad participation of public and private entities, representatives of the agricultural sector, universities, and non-governmental organizations.

Through public policies, we seek to adopt resilient practices for climate change mitigation, including sustainable water management, increased biodiversity, and improved ecosystems services.

The world needs to enhance its average productivity in agriculture to meet the growing food demand.

Irrigation is key in this strategy. In the scenario of climate change where it is necessary to increase the resilience of farm producers, this need is even greater in that scenario.

I would also like to mention the importance that Portugal attaches to the food and nutrition security strategy of the community of Portuguese speaking countries which seeks to fight hunger and malnutrition in all Portuguese speaking countries.

It is the first such extended experience to be recognized and supported by FAO since its inception in 2011 when it was adopted by the nine heads of state and government of the countries in the community of Portuguese language speaking countries.

The three development axis are improving governance of food security, supporting improvement of lives, and increasing availability of food based on small farmers and family farming. In Portugal, family farming is also considered an important issue to solve food security problems and combat desertification. By the end of this year, the government will approve a family farming status or statute, which will allow positive discrimination for improving the sustainability of its class of producers.

I would also like to express my strong support for the UN initiative to declare a Decade of Family Farming which is a relevant framework to raise awareness amongst society of this type of – this group of farm producers.

I conclude by restating our intention to keep up our good cooperation with  
FAO for whom I thank for all of the efforts they have made.

Thank you very much.