

Original language Arabic - Checked against English interpretation

40th Session of the FAO Conference

Statement by His Excellency Mohammed Bin Abdullah AL RUMAIHI

Minister for Municipality and Environment

Excellencies,

Director-General of FAO,

Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon. My country is undergoing a blockade. I'm sure you're all aware of what is going on, an embargo due to measures taken by Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. There is a blockade on my country. Because our borders have been closed off by air, land, and water, diplomatic relations with the state of Qatar have been interrupted.

The supply of food resources, drugs, as well as staple foods has been interrupted. 60% of what my country imports goes through harbours and airports owned by these countries. This is a clear violation of international rights and above all, of the UN Charter. It is an infraction on international human rights and a violation of the Arab League Charter as well as the Constitution of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 186 countries and organizations who did not give into pressure to take part in this embargo. My country is undergoing an unfair embargo. These are illegal, illegitimate measures. These countries have cut us off from food supplies.

These are unilateral measures which endanger food security across the region and not just in my country. I would like to remind you that 3 million people live in my country. Locals as well as foreigners. Those who live and work in my country are nationals of friendly countries, 500,000 from India, many from Pakistan and the Philippines, 100,000 from Bangladesh, 400,000 from Nepal, 200,000 from Europe, 300,000 from Egypt, 300,000 from Arab countries, 300,000 from other Asian countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, China, Sri Lanka, and 200,000 from the African continent as well as 50,000 who come from the American continent, the Caribbean, and South America.

This food insecurity affects all of these people. Ladies and gentlemen, this crisis triggered by these four countries I mentioned is still underway but thanks to our policies, we have been able to tackle the crisis and this challenge and we have managed to mitigate the effects of the embargo.

We have managed despite it to make up part of the effects of the blockade.

My country has mobilized USD 750 million on a weekly basis to find alternatives to our regular import measures. This of course has led to huge rises in the price of our staple foods and others. Ladies and gentlemen, this crisis has an aim to hinder our

development plans, our construction and development plans for the country, but they have not succeeded.

We will continue to work to achieve food security for all of our citizens. Nowadays we have an important place in the ranking of countries affected by these effects. We all know the food for peace initiative launched during the Regional Conference last year. There all countries were urged to contribute to help countries undergoing crises. We're all aware also of the Rome Declaration from 1996 during the first World Food Summit.

We all know what the UN Charter says.

Based on all of these international tools, we would ask that you condemn this unfair blockade and ask those four countries to lift the embargo as soon as possible. This blockade has negative consequences for the entire region and could endanger food security in the region and the world as a whole.

I would ask all the relevant organizations to do anything they can to end this embargo. We ask that FAO do what it can as this is part of its mandate since what is in play here is food security itself, the right to food. This is a fundamental human right, rights which are essential for the existence of world peace and security.

Ladies and gentlemen, from this podium I would ask FAO and all of its Member States to continue to work to tackle the challenges before us due to climate change. The effects of climate change have a great impact on water resources and on food production.

Climate change also affects livestock and fisheries. We have all seen the effects of climate change, especially on the most vulnerable refugees, displaced persons, the poor. We have committed to putting 0.7% of our GDP toward development aid. We have been doing this since 2007.

This is support that we provide to the poorest least developed countries.

I would like to pay tribute to what our organization does. We are grateful for its cooperation with all countries in seeking to achieve one of the 2030 Agenda goals that is ending poverty, eradicating hunger, and fighting under nutrition.

I would like to ask all countries to do this too and allocate 0.7% of their GDP to such initiatives. I would like to wish you every success in this Conference.

Thank you.