

Checked as delivered

FAO Conference 3-8 July 2017

UK Statement to Plenary

**Delivered by Her Excellency Ms Terry Sarch, United Kingdom Ambassador to the
UN Agencies in Rome**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is proud of its record on international development and fighting global poverty.

We continue to contribute 0.7% of our gross national income to official development assistance. We are committed to the United Nations and our record on assessed and voluntary contributions clearly demonstrates our commitment.

But whilst our support to the system remains steadfast, we are also committed to its improvement. Almost two years on from agreeing the SDGs, we require more from the UN system than ever before.

Climate change, natural disasters, and poverty have combined with conflict to generate unprecedented levels of need. We need better outcomes and more effective response to crises and the challenge of climate change. The system needs to step up and meet this challenge. The world's poorest people, and our taxpayers, deserve nothing less.

It is our commitment to the UN that explains why the United Kingdom is working to raise system-wide performance, we want the sum to add up to more than its parts. The UK is calling for greater collaboration between our UN partners and in particular between FAO, IFAD and WFP. Action to support members address climate change is a priority area where we would like to see the three Rome Based Agencies increase the joint planning and coordination of their work. Eighty percent of undernourished people in the world live in rural areas in developing countries and they are most likely to be affected by climate change. The world needs FAO to work in partnership with its Member States to implement integrated policies that address agriculture and climate change, and build resilience.

On the humanitarian side, the UK is asking for the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit to be implemented and reported on. How risk is managed, how resilience is built and how preparedness is strengthened are UK priorities. We

are asking for greater accountability to affected populations and to ensure that your programmes always target the most vulnerable, including girls and women.

The UK Multilateral Development Review – or the MDR - was published last December. The MDR recognised FAO's global leadership in responding to threats facing agriculture and food production. These threats include climate change and threats like the recent Fall Army Worm infestation in Africa, this was highlighted at the EU-AU Ministers' conference this weekend. And I would like to take this opportunity to invite all of you to the side-event on the Fall Army Worm that the UK is co-hosting with Ghana, South Africa and Zimbabwe in the Sheik Zayed Centre at 19:00 this evening.

The MDR also recognised the progress FAO has made with organisational reform. We welcome FAO's attention to value for money, and to ensuring that resources are effectively spent for the benefit of the people we serve.

The UK is calling on all multilateral agencies for a new openness about management and administration budgets. In this light, we would like to congratulate FAO for publishing its financial expenditure information with the International Aid Transparency Initiative for the first time in May this year.

And we commend FAO management on keeping the level of the Programme of work and budget flat. And within this, for allocating resources for combatting antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is particularly welcome. The UK will continue to encourage FAO to achieve the organisational excellence to which we all aspire. This will move us closer to our shared goal of a world with zero hunger.

I will conclude this statement by assuring Conference that the UK will continue to be one of FAO's strongest reform supporters. We support FAO's alignment to the SDGs, we support FAO's commitment to the Grand Bargain and we support FAO's work to assist its members to meet the commitments we made in Paris. Finally, I would like to congratulate FAO again, on the launch of the Climate Change Strategy later this week.