

*Original language Arabic - Checked against English interpretation*

**Statement delivered by  
His Excellency Saleh Hussein Jebur, Minister for Agriculture,  
Inland Fisheries, Marine Fisheries and Forestry of the Republic of Iraq  
on the occasion of the  
41<sup>st</sup> Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy (22-29 June 2019)  
24 June 2019**

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Mr Director-General of the FAO,  
Excellencies,  
Heads and Members of delegations from the represented countries,

May the peace and grace of God be upon you.

It is my pleasure to Head the delegation of the Republic of Iraq, which is participating in this 41<sup>st</sup> General Conference of the FAO, and I would like to convey to you the greetings of the Government of Iraq and we wish you success in this Conference.

First and foremost I would like to express to Mr José Graziano da Silva, my deep thanks for his excellent leadership of the organization in the past few years, and he is not passing the baton to a new Director-General. We recognize that the organization achieved a great deal during his term on many levels, especially in terms of fighting poverty, hunger and the effects of climate change and also crises emanating from natural catastrophes and wars.

Food security is one of the most important challenges the international community will have to chase for many reasons, one of them being a rise in population, a rise in the cost of living and a reduction in the production and productivity of livestock and plants.

Another challenge is climate change throughout the world, which leads to environmental catastrophes, they change in the forms of agriculture and this leads to changes in the availability of water in many countries.

Agriculture is one of the biggest contributors to the economy in all countries, and it is important to achieve food security through local food production, and to improve the agricultural sector in order to diversify the economy in an attempt to reduce poverty and improve the balance of trade. And we know that improving the agricultural sector improves sectors that are related to it directly, or indirectly, in other words, developing the agricultural sector leads to combating unemployment, and the return of displaced people to their lands in order to contribute in achieving a developed agricultural sector that can reduce imports and also create job opportunities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ministry of Agriculture in the Republic of Iraq has tried to create real opportunities in the liberated areas in my country, with the assistance of national contributions as well as regional and international contributions and we know very well that local products and local production is better for the health of consumers and for the local economy.

We have achieved a great deal through putting in place plans which are adapted to the current phase we are in and we have concentrated on some strategic crops. We have a national plan to develop the production of wheat, and also to produce higher grade seeds of wheat. We have a programme to develop yellow corn, and also rice, and to encourage local varieties of vegetables. This has come as a result of international and local scientific studies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

FAO through its representation in Iraq and its regional bureau has helped the experts in our Ministries through training programmes and the implementation of projects and programmes which led to the transfer and adoption of some new techniques in agriculture, for example, with floating cages. This has contributed directly in increasing the availability of fish and the reduction of the prices of fish. Also, techniques related to the transfer of cow embryos and also artificial insemination of cows.

We would like to congratulate Dr Qu Dongyu, who was elected to become the new Director-General of FAO and we look forward to more cooperation and support for our plans, agriculture and development plans which are sustainable. Since we have put behind us decades of an emergency situation, because of that we are receiving less development aid for our emergencies and less development to rebuild the agricultural sector in Iraq.

Therefore, we need the transfer and adoption of technology. This requires support from FAO through more qualitative development projects and experts in order to increase the capabilities and skills of those working within the agricultural sector so that we can arrive at a sustainable agricultural sector in light of climate change, lack of rain and water resources coming from neighbouring countries, except this year.

Lastly, I wish this Conference success.

Thank you for listening to me and may the peace and grace of God be upon you.