

**Statement by the Minister of Agriculture and Food of the Kingdom of Norway, Her Excellency
Ms Olaug Vervik BOLLESTAD
on the occasion of the
41st Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy (22-29 June 2019)
24 June 2019**

Excellencies, Chairperson, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating the Director General elect, Dr. Qu Dongyu. We look forward to cooperating with you. To the outgoing Director General, Dr. José Graziano da Silva, we thank you for the hard work and the results delivered, especially towards achieving zero hunger.

Human dignity is fundamental for all development. Poverty and human rights are at the heart of the Norwegian government's agenda for development. Here in FAO, I want to point out our support to fulfilling every human being's right to adequate food.

Chair,

For years, hunger and malnutrition has been reduced, but this has changed in the last few years. Migration has increased, as an effect of poverty and hunger, but also because of war and conflict, and effects of climate change. This impacts heavily on food production and food safety. I am deeply concerned about this.

Chair,

The spread of AMR is increasing. This reduces our access to effective cures for human and animal diseases. This is one of the greatest global health threats of our time. It is essential we work for reduced and more correct use of antibiotics. We must end all use of antibiotics as growth promoters and routine prophylaxis in animal food production.

The AMR challenge can only be solved through coordinated global action with a One Health approach. All relevant sectors must cooperate. We strongly support the scaling up of efforts through the cooperation between the Tripartite Plus organizations. Allow me therefore to say, that we regret to note that the Conference resolution on AMR should have been more proactive. The goal must be to promote prudent and responsible use in order to minimize the threat of AMR and to ensure effective and life-saving antibiotic drugs in the future, for both animals and humans.

Chair,

The International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has been important for the global efforts to protect our seed diversity. In 2008, Norway established the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. After 11 years of operations, the Seed Vault is now a safe back up of more than 1 million seed samples from gene banks from all over the world. Norway is also actively supporting the further realization of Farmers' Rights as recognized in the International Treaty.

Chair,

Agricultural development is one of the most powerful tools to end extreme poverty. We must address the entire food chain to achieve SDG2 and the rest of the 2030 Agenda. To this end, I am happy to inform you that last Friday, the Norwegian government launched a new action plan for sustainable food systems in Norwegian foreign and development policies. The main emphasis of the plan is to contribute to increased food security through sustainable food systems.

Chair,

Norway is and will continue to be a strong supporter of multilateralism. We see the UN as the backbone of our global order. Presently isolationism and protectionism challenge our efforts towards working for common solutions like the SDGs. Good cooperation is extremely important. We continue to emphasize that, on the ground, FAO needs to cooperate with all relevant UN organizations. This could maximise the impact of actions and programmes to cope with irregular migration and other global challenges.

To end where I started, food is fundamental for human dignity. We are in the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. Still the number of hungry people is on the rise. We need to step up our efforts. 151 million children stunted are 151 million too many.

Thank you!