

**Statement delivered by
The Honourable Said Hussein Iid
Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation of the Federal Republic of Somalia
on the occasion of the
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Mr Chair,
Ministers, Ambassadors, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentleman,

On the onset, let me congratulate the newly elected Director-General of FAO Dr Qu Dongyu. We look forward to working with him on the realisation of the Zero Hunger Agenda and all other FAO programmes. I also pay tribute to the outgoing Director-General Dr Graziano da Silva for the leadership and hard work he has shown during his tenure as Director-General of FAO.

Mr Chair,

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address this august gathering focused on migration, agriculture and rural development. As you are aware, migration is a historical global phenomenon, which is very closely linked to stability, equal development and opportunities.

Therefore, the theme of migration, agriculture and rural development is a timely one, in this 41st Session Conference of FAO, because they are all interlinked. Hence, to overcome the challenge they pose both individually and collectively to the world and turn them into the opportunities, it is critical to approach them holistically.

Somalia is a country which understands the impact and opportunities presented by rural migration and general migration across borders. As a recovering post-conflict state, our recent history teaches us all that conflict is the greatest displacer of people, including rural communities.

Similarly, conflict has led to great socio-economic and political difficulties in Somalia, which the Federal government is now working tirelessly to reverse. Yet, we must recognise the challenges, benefits as well as costs, for migrants themselves and for societies in general.

Somalia, as many other African countries or developing countries, has the highest rates of urbanization in the world, because the rural population continues to migrate to the cities for employment opportunities and better public services.

Consequently, this creates a dire need for sufficient services and infrastructure. In addition, the conflict against the scourge of terrorism is generating an increasing amount of internally displaced persons (IDP), which adds to the demands and challenges that stem from rapid urbanization.

Somalia, like most African countries, has a youthful population, which is about 20% of the population which is aged being 15 and 29. As a result, the dependency ratio is high and the strains on resources are acute, as demand for education, health care, housing, infrastructure and employment is elevated.

Mr Chair,

The internal migration is today a global phenomenon the youth who lack opportunities in rural areas are moving on unprecedented scale, it is important to understand two important factors:

- As a famous Somali saying: The City lives depends on the countryside; and
- Unemployment and hopelessness can be a fertile ground for criminal organization, or lead into terror indoctrination and radicalisation.

Food security, employment opportunities and the protection of Somalia's beautiful natural resources and heritage depends the efforts of its farmers, herders and rural communities to produce sustainably for the

rest of the country and protect the natural environment. Where once families farmed together, today many have been split by migration to the cities and even abroad across seas.

This has a huge impact on the ability of the family to produce, especially, as most rely on traditional labour-intensive farming techniques due to limited access to new technological farming processes and systems.

Mr Chair,

For Somalia, while migration from rural communities to urban centres has benefited a few, most people who have made this shift, and those they left behind, are experiencing socio-economic challenges due to limited opportunities in all major cities across Somalia.

We as policymakers must create an enabling environment through policies and through national and international partnerships to bring the promise of rural development to fruition.

Mr Chair,

We would not be doing ourselves justice in this Conference if we did not highlight the importance of addressing climate change as a matter of priority to advance rural development and community resilience. Today, Somalia's rural communities regularly suffer from drought and the effects of climate change, which hurts their livelihoods, and even took their lives through famines in the past.

Mr Chair,

This is unacceptable given how much knowledge we collectively have on climate change and rural development. We need to work on strengthening the political will and cooperation to turn this knowledge and commitment into tangible solutions.

Through our National Development Plan, we are exploring ways to better coordinate these socio-economic efforts alongside managing our environment, especially water resources, to offer opportunities to both urban and rural communities. This very attractive option will connect communities, strengthen resilience, grow the economy and, above all, promote sustainable development in rural areas.

I thank you all for listening.