

**Statement by Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security to the 29th Regional
Conference for Africa**

Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire

Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Ivory Coast, Director General of FAO, Chair of the Regional Conference for Africa, Your Excellences, Independent Chair of the Council, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to be here with you today, as the Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to address this Regional Conference and to inform you about the most recent accomplishments of CFS and some of the activities that we will undertake in the upcoming months. Before I proceed allow me to thank the Government of Ivory Coast for organizing this conference.

Since the Committee was reformed, few years back, to become more effective and inclusive by adopting a multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder structure, I am proud to say that the Committee has already achieved many remarkable results.

As I update you on the last two CFS sessions (CFS 41 and 42), I would like you to reflect on CFS work of particular relevance to your country and this region, and how, going forward, CFS policy recommendations and guidelines can be used in support of country policies for food security and nutrition. I would also like to take this opportunity to inform you about the CFS Programme of Work for 2016-2017, and encourage regional multi-stakeholder representatives to actively participate, through various channels, in the activities that the Committee will carry out in the next two years.

Thanks to the commitment and the hard work of my predecessor, Ambassador Gerda Verburg, the Committee achieved some important accomplishments in the previous biennium, the most notable of which are the endorsement of the **Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems** and **The Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises**.

A few days back, at the Senior Officers Meeting, we discussed Public Private Partnerships for Inclusive Agricultural Growth. The CFS Principles for Responsible Investment are very relevant. They apply to both public and private financing. And they show for the first time that governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, UN agencies, development banks, foundations, research institutions and academia have reached a common understanding on what responsible investments in agriculture and food systems mean and how those contribute to food security and nutrition.

The Framework for Action for food security and nutrition in protracted crises bridges the gap between humanitarian and development interventions and provides experience-based principles for addressing critical manifestations of food insecurity and undernutrition and resolving their underlying causes in the context of crises and protracted emergencies.

All stakeholders are now strongly encouraged to implement the recommendations included in these two documents. Our governments have endorsed these products and it is UP TO ALL OF US to use them in our policy and planning.

At the Forty-first session of CFS, the Plenary endorsed two sets of policy recommendations, which were scientifically informed by the reports of the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE). Particularly relevant to your region are the policy recommendations on *Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture*, which recognize the primary role of fisheries and aquaculture for protein and other essential nutrients' intake as well as a source of income and livelihoods.

The 42nd session of CFS also marked the beginning of our work in a number of new areas, many of which will also be discussed here in the next days. I will be happy to hear your contributions and I will make sure to keep the Committee informed of the most pressing issues of this region as well as the suggestions that I will hear here in this beautiful city: Abidjan.

At its last session, the Committee decided to put the implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals** at the center of its work. A key feature of the 2030 Agenda is its universality, as it applies to all countries, developing as well as developed, and all actors. CFS, being the most inclusive platform for all stakeholders working on food security and nutrition, has already repeatedly been cited as a reference. A working group on SDGs has been established and your representatives in Rome are currently identifying how CFS can play a constructive role in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs, by supporting country implementation and providing an effective, inclusive, and multidisciplinary platform for discussion.

Following the Second International Conference on Nutrition, the Committee decided to step up its efforts to address malnutrition in all its forms, in particular by better understanding the relationship between nutrition and food systems. To fulfill this mandate, the Committee has requested a report from the HLPE on **Nutrition and Food Systems** for 2017, and it established a working group that is working on how it can better advance the agenda on nutrition within CFS.

A **High-Level Forum on Connecting Smallholders to Markets** took place in June 2015. The Forum discussed policy implications and possible solutions to some of the challenges that smallholders face when trying to link themselves to markets, such as supporting smallholder-targeted credit systems and infrastructure, promoting organic products from a specific geographical region, or facilitating production diversification to increase resilience to climate and price shocks. After the Forum, we are now working on drawing out lessons and best practices that can further help in overcoming barriers and maximizing opportunities in value chains for smallholders and hope to endorse them at CFS 43 in October.

The Committee also foresees work on two pressing topics: Urbanization and Rural Transformation; and Women's Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition. In addition, the **High-Level Panel of Experts** has been tasked to prepare a report on Sustainable

Agricultural Development, including Livestock, in 2016; and another report on Sustainable Forestry in 2017. These will lead to CFS developing new policy recommendations.

Over the course of 2016, CFS will go through an external, independent **evaluation** process to assess its effectiveness. This comprehensive review of the CFS work and model comes at the right time, six years following the reform of CFS, as it will help identify how CFS can continue to evolve and improve to be even more relevant and responsive to the challenges of our time.

As you can see, our work programme is intense but it addresses challenging issues that need global solutions. Since the CFS was reformed, the Committee has achieved some important objectives, but we cannot stop here! There are 790 million people still suffering from chronic hunger in the world, many are from this region. It is for them that we need to continue our mission to ensure that all people enjoy their right to food and nutrition. It is for them that I am here today, to make an appeal to help me spread the voice about the work of CFS and the tremendous impact that we can achieve if we work together. The Committee is strongly committed to bringing the various actors together across disciplines, constituencies and borders and we will do our utmost to increase the level of outreach and to foster collaboration, participation and ownership of local, national and regional stakeholders.

However, we are all conscious that the successful implementation of our bold and rich programme will not be possible without the continuous commitment of all CFS members. As Chair of CFS, I want to thank your countries for the contributions that you have made so far and also take this opportunity to call upon your governments to request any possible and additional financial support that you would be able to provide.

Let me conclude with an appeal to make the plea of the UN Secretary-General, “Leave no one behind by 2030”, our motto for the coming years. If we can make that happen, I can assure you that food security and nutrition will be within reach. So let us start working now. *This* is the future we want!

Thank you for your attention!