

WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin's remarks at the World Food Day Ceremony "Family Farmers - Feeding The World, Caring for the Earth."

Your Majesty Queen Máxima,
Your Excellency John Kufuor,
Your Excellency Giuseppe Castiglione,
Your Excellency Archbishop Travaglino,
Mr. Director-General,
Mr. Vice President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Before I begin these remarks, I would to take a moment to confirm that a WFP employee, who yesterday returned from WFP's operations to reach people in Ebola-affected countries, reported himself as sick to WFP Medical Services. Together with the Government of Italy, and following all established protocols, we provided the staff member with full medical assistance. I am pleased to also confirm all tests for Ebola virus returned negative. I would like to thank all of those who called and—in particular—the Italian Government for their support.

It is a great honour to join this panel today, and to acknowledge the unparalleled contribution family farmers make to our world. Because—ladies and gentlemen—family farming is the fulcrum on which our future food and nutrition security pivots.

Already today, we heard of the key social, economic, and environmental challenges family farms face. Yes, the unfortunate truth is that right now—in our world—too many farmers cannot sustainably feed their families or safeguard their communities' resources for the future. Whether the cause is lack of access to equipment, knowledge, credit, or markets, or whether the cause is increasing spells of drought, erratic rainfall or extreme weather

events—the result is clear: the very viability of family farming is now at stake.

But today, we also heard of the enormous potential and the endless possibilities for family farming. Because, with the right on-farm and off-farm investments, family farmers—who manage almost 90 percent of the world's farms—can build-on their existing knowledge, strengthen their capacity and improve their productivity. And the evidence shows—improving family farming significantly benefits the wider economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, in taking the opportunity to establish a new sustainable and durable vision for family farms—one that enhances global food supply and protects the Earth's resources—we must address one universal problem: gender inequity. Because achieving the potential of family farming requires an end to the inequality endured by millions of rural women, which results in massive, widespread and avoidable inefficiencies and losses.

Yes, women's unequal access to agricultural inputs is well documented: women are less likely to own land, to use fertilizers and machinery; and women are less likely to have access to credit—often prohibited from the kind of schemes directed toward poor, rural farmers. But it doesn't stop there. Women also face unequal returns on their inputs—working harder and longer for less. This cannot continue.

Ending gender inequity is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. Because, FAO tells us giving women farmers access to the resources they need would lift up to 150 million people out of hunger. And the evidence shows when women and men have equal status, children's nutritional status improves. Estimates demonstrate equal status would reduce the prevalence of underweight in children in South Asia by up to 28 percent.

Turning the situation around requires transformative policies promoting on-farm and off-farm gender-smart and climate-smart

investments. It also means we must put in place innovative programs, like those implemented by WFP's *Purchase for Progress* initiative. Working with over 200 partners, we targeted women producers, traders and marketers. In five years, we trained over 200,000 women and trebled their participation in farmer organizations, helping women to produce surplus crops, aggregate them and market them collectively.

We cannot stop here. We at WFP have committed to using our purchasing power to help move small farmers, particularly women farmers, forward. Annually, WFP purchases approximately 1.2 to 1.5 billion dollars in commodities. Beginning in 2015, we will purchase a minimum of 10 percent of all commodities from smallholders, many of whom were originally targeted through our *Purchase for Progress* program.

We call this new program, the *Patient Procurement Platform*, where in addition to working with partners like FAO, IFAD and AGRA to increase smallholder yields, we will also provide an identifiable market. But we recognize that as long as WFP is the buyer it is only a program. We must also help identify commercial or government buyers to replace WFP. We take the risk to help smallholders increase the quality and quantity of their yields. We accept the risk and mitigate it through insurance and technology tools. The platform helps us move ever close to achieving the goal of Zero Hunger.

The conversations that go on at the global level are important. But we must remember, the achievement of Zero Hunger will only occur with the implementation of programs at country and regional level that make the difference for the 805 million food insecure and 162 million chronically malnourished children. The global architectures are important, but the work at country level requires us to work together.

We at WFP are committed to doing just that. WFP will continue partnering with the private sector, civil society, all our UN

partners, the governments where we serve but most importantly with the people—the men, women and young people who work the family farms, and who don't get to sit in these rooms, but who deserve our dedicated support.

On this World Food Day, we also acknowledge our mandated responsibility to play a key role in achieving Zero Hunger. Ladies and gentlemen, the 1961 General Assembly resolution that established WFP states that in the administration of the Programme attention should be paid to: establishing orderly and adequate procedures on a world basis for meeting emergency food needs and the emergencies inherent in chronic malnutrition; assisting in pre-school and school feeding; and the multilateral use of food as an aid to economic and social development, particularly when related to labour-intensive projects and rural welfare.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates. The growing threat of food system instability and crises requires us to scrutinize fully every link in our global food and nutrition chain, from farm to fork. Let us make this World Food Day in the Year of Family Farming the turning point—when we all truly commit to moving beyond the challenges of working together at every level. We must bring the best of each of our organizations, our governments and our businesses to the task of addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable—helping poor family farmers. Because the key to achieving Zero Hunger is ensuring small family farmers move beyond the category of vulnerable, hungry poor all year round, even during the lean season. We must work together to ensure the income generated from a small family farm will provide nutritious food for the farmer, and her family, all-year long, and also pay school fees, provide adequate housing and hope for a better tomorrow—without hunger, without malnutrition.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. Let us recommit today to working for an even better tomorrow.

Thank You.