

Statement by His Excellence Abdi Ahmed Mohamed
Minister of Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Somalia

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is particularly a great pleasure for Somalia to be represented here today at this important gathering of the Second International Conference on Nutrition. In 1992 Somalia was at the beginning of a conflict that nobody could have predicted would last for more than two decades. During this long period, the population has suffered from a combination of civil war, displacement, drought and famine. Food insecurity and malnutrition have characterized the lives of family members in both urban and rural areas.

The food security and nutrition challenges we face are enormous. Cyclic droughts combined with conflict perpetuate the vulnerability of the farming communities and prevent them from fully recovering their capacities to withstand shocks and ensure food and nutrition security at the household level. The collapse of the irrigation infrastructure means farmers suffer even when the rains are so good for production, because of uncontrolled floods. The livelihoods of our fishing communities are undermined by illegal fishing that destroy their nets and threaten the marine resources they depend on. Dumping of industrial and perhaps nuclear waste along the coast has been reported. The increased importations of food commodities, to compensate for the reduced local production, expose our people to a variety of unsafe food.

Today, this Conference coincides with the country emerging from that conflict and embarked on rebuilding its governance institutions at the national and regional levels. The positive narrative is that the trend is clear: gradual restoration of peace and stability and strong commitment to rebuild the economy and address the needs of the people for a dignified living.

The Somali Government is committed to bringing substantial changes in its approach to tackling food security and nutrition. We will provide the required leadership in addressing drought and famine issues, ensuring that current and planned resilience programmes are well targeted and coordinated in order to meaningfully affect the lives of the vulnerable population. Necessary measures will be taken to regulate trading in food commodities, and enforce standards for quality and safety of food imports. Special attention will be given to protect the marine environment and the livelihoods of our fishing community. To realize these goals, the Somali Government will collaborate very closely with FAO and other relevant institutions.

Despite the enormous challenges we are confronted with, we believe that getting our politics right will lead us to the path for reconstruction and ultimately development. Successful stories of achievements from countries such as Rwanda and Cape Verde are very inspiring and encourage us to be determined in our

pursue of the goals of realizing a better future for our people. A future where everyone enjoys food security and nutrition.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen allow me to conclude by extending my appreciations to FAO and WHO for organizing this important Conference, and to thank the Mayor of Rome and the Italian Government for hosting us.