



## Economic and Social Council ECOSOC

### Operational Activities for Development Segment Substantive Session of ECOSOC 2014 Dialogue with Specialized Agencies 25 February 3.00-6.00 p.m.

#### **"The changing development landscape: what will it mean for specialized agencies in a post-2015 era with focus on sustainable development?"**

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His Excellency Carlos Enrique Garcia Gonzalez, Vice-president of the Economic and Social Council,  
Distinguished moderator and panelists,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen participants to the operational segment of ECOSOC,

We all share a vision of a world free of hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

We may be a long way from realizing this vision fully, but it is a vision which is achievable and one in which the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as a Specialized Organization of the UN system, has a key role to play.

But for FAO, like the rest of the UN Development system, the complexity of challenges and changes in the development cooperation context call for a major review of the way we operate and a strategic repositioning.

My intervention today will focus on three points. **The first** is that food and agriculture, including fisheries and forestry, are at the heart of the challenges of sustainable development in its three dimensions. **Second**, it is our deep conviction that, if we want to succeed, these challenges can be handled only through a wide partnership - a partnership that goes beyond the UN, that encompasses the whole of society including governments, parliamentarians, academia, research centers, cooperatives, civil society - including diasporas abroad - and the private sector, whether we speak of farmers themselves or of domestic, small, medium and large entrepreneurs or of international corporations. A partnership which encompasses not only UN partners working better together, but also development partners from the north and increasingly from the south through South South Cooperation and triangular arrangements. **And finally**, the evolving role the renewed FAO will play to support national and international efforts, as an organization fit for the purpose to support its members in meeting the challenges of a rapidly evolving development landscape.

## **I. Food and agriculture. The unfinished MDG business and looking beyond 2015**

Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition can be ended sustainably within a generation. It is within our reach. However:

### **TODAY, despite progress over the past decades, we are living in an unsustainable world:**

- 840 million people still suffer from food insecurity. One out of eight people in the world lives with chronic hunger and more than two billion people are affected by micronutrient deficiencies;
- 26 percent of the world's children suffer from stunted growth;
- the vast majority of the poor and hungry are living in rural areas and deriving their livelihood from agriculture;
- 70 percent of the world's undernourished live in rural areas in developing countries, many of them are small-scale subsistence farmers;
- 60 percent of malnourished are women who make up 43 percent of agriculture labour force.
- some 1.3 billion tons of food (one-third of what is produced) are lost or wasted each year with enormous financial and environmental costs;
- Some 1.5 billion persons are overweight with at least 500 million obese. Obesity rates have doubled over the last 30 years.

**The world today is a different place from what it was in 2000. It will be even more different in 2050.**

- World agriculture will need to produce 60 percent more food globally, and 100 percent more in developing countries.
- In the future increased productivity will have to factor in sustainability and particularly the impact of agriculture on the environment.
- Agriculture contributes significantly to climate change, which according to some projections could lead to crop yield declines in several regions.
- We will need to produce more with less and with a "climate smart" approach to agriculture.

## **II. The extent and complexity of the challenges of hunger and sustainable food production require political commitment, a large alliance and to work through partnerships**

Why? Because of the magnitude, but also the complexity and multidimensional dimension of the challenges.

The challenges are just too big for any single government or organization to tackle alone. We need to partner, coordinate and complement one another, so that our actions have a greater and lasting impact.

In FAO, partnership is not an end in itself, but a means to ensure results and maximize impact and efficiency.

Two examples of what we consider in FAO as encouraging good practices in terms of partnership.

**First**, the UN Secretary General's Zero Hunger Challenge of eradicating hunger in our life time:

- 100 percent access to adequate food all year round;
- Zero stunted children less than 2 years;
- all food systems are sustainable;
- 100 percent increase in smallholder productivity and income;
- Zero loss or waste of food.

Sustainable agriculture and sustainable food systems lie at the heart of the Zero Hunger Challenge. It links climate smart agriculture, food security and sustainable growth.

To quote the UN Secretary General when he launched this challenge at the Rio + 20 Conference *"Zero hunger in our world will boost economic growth, reduce poverty and safeguard the environment."*

Since the launch of the challenge, the UN together with the World Bank has organized itself in order to have a better impact through partnership. The High-Level Task Force (HLTF) which was set up by the Secretary General in the wake of the food crisis in 2008 - with the Director-General of FAO as Deputy Chair - is refocusing its activities to service the Zero Hunger Challenge. Some UN members will lead working groups reflecting their interest and strength:

- WFP and FAO will co-chair a group on eradicating hunger through access to food;
- WFP, UNICEF and WHO will co-chair the group seeking zero stunting and addressing micronutrient deficiencies;
- The World Bank and FAO will co-chair the group on sustainable food systems;
- IFAD, ILO and UNDP will lead the group on small holders and eradicating rural poverty;
- UNEP and FAO are working with others on the food wastes and losses.

This coordination, in turn, relates to other established initiatives (SUN, REACH, global compact for nutrition, etc.). Different mandates with common goals is the way forward.

**Second**, the renewed Committee on World Food Security, which was set up in 1974 as an intergovernmental body to serve as a forum for review and follow-up of food security policies. Since 2011, it reports annually to the ECOSOC instead of on a quadrennial basis as before. This reflects the importance that ECOSOC is giving to governance of food issues.

**Evidence has shown that the creation of more inclusive fora, where stakeholders voices are expressed, has helped certain countries to make major strides in hunger reduction.** These fora have enabled greater participation, transparency, inclusion and plurality in policy discussions, thus leading to increased ownership of decisions made that ultimately will affect people's future. **This is also true at global level**

In 2009, the Committee went through a reform process to ensure that the global debate on food security and nutrition be focused, result-oriented **and inclusive**.

The principle of the reformed CFS is that food security and nutrition is everyone's business, and that the CFS platform should enable all viewpoints to be heard.

CFS is made up of members, participants and observers. It is supported by a bureau and advisory group composed of representatives of all stakeholders as well as prominent individuals. A high-level panel of experts report to the CFS. The secretariat includes members from FAO, IFAD and WFP.

Today the reformed CFS coordinates a global approach to food security and promotes policy convergence. It succeeded in obtaining consensus on key policy directions such as the approval by the membership of voluntary guidelines on responsible tenure of land, forestry and fisheries.

This is good practice and a model to be studied for future global issues governance arrangements.

### **III. Repositioning FAO in the changing development cooperation environment to contribute better to the achievement of post-2015 sustainable development goals**

Over the past years FAO has engaged in major reforms which were initiated after a review of the evolving development cooperation environment globally and FAO's basic attributes, core functions and comparative advantages. This reform then lead to a change in (or a review of) the Organization's priority-setting, its governance, and its managerial culture and, in sum, the way it operates.

**The first outcome** of this process was the realization by FAO members of the need to commit the organization to the eradication of hunger, by redefining FAO's first constitutional goal from reducing to eliminating hunger.

**The second key outcome** was the identification of a set of five new Strategic Objectives closely aligned with the most relevant and urgent development problems faced by member countries and the development community.

The five Strategic Objectives, as well as, a sixth objective focused on technical knowledge, quality and services, will guide the work of the organization in contributing to the eradication of hunger, increasing and improving production in a sustainable manner, reducing rural poverty, enabling more efficient and inclusive food and agricultural systems, and increasing the resilience of livelihoods.

Two fundamental areas of work, gender and governance, are fully integrated in the way we work through the Strategic Objectives action plans.

**The third key outcome** of the process is a refined set of seven core functions for FAO as means of action for the Organization through i) normative and standard setting instruments, ii) data

and information, iii) policy dialogue, iv) capacity development, v) uptake of knowledge and technologies, vi) facilitating partnerships with SSC reflecting emergence of new actors/resource partners on the development stage, but also as a most powerful instrument of exchange of knowledge and development solutions, and vii) advocacy and communication.

We realize that the world is expecting FAO to change considerably in the way it operates: to be more focused in our priorities, to work as a corporate team worldwide strengthening and empowering our decentralised offices, and to have greater impact through partnerships.

FAO is committed to a full implementation of the policy directions outlined in the QCPR to enhance system-wide coherence in order to improve the relevance and effectiveness of the UN development system. We support the recommendation to improve linkages between operational and standard setting activities. We, obviously, particularly appreciate the resolution (paragraph 71) which calls for "coordinated priority action and scaling up efforts to address the root causes of extreme poverty and hunger".

At the FAO Conference in June last year, our membership noted the progress made by the Organization with regard to QCPR implementation, encouraging the Secretariat to continue supporting increased UN system-wide coherence, expressing support to the Delivering as One model, underlining the importance of the RC system for achieving UN system-wide coherence while noting the need to respect the peculiarities of all UN system agencies mandates and agreeing for FAO to provide financial, technical and organizational support to the RC system.

Now allow me to touch upon a point which will be crucial for the success or the failure of our work: the question of resources. Our integrated budget is formulated on the basis of a ratio of 48/52 percent between assessed and voluntary contributions. It is manageable with the understanding that resources are allocated to support priorities agreed upon by the membership and that resource partners, in line with the principle of aid effectiveness, consider no, or less, earmarking of resources. A number of partners have taken necessary steps in this regard and we are encouraging others to join.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude my intervention on an optimistic note:

Trends show that accelerating progress to reach MDG by 2015 is feasible. Hunger can be ended sustainably. We have had successes. The share of developing countries population suffering from chronic hunger had fallen from 23 percent in 1990-92 to about 15 percent in 2010-12. And some 40 countries have already met the target of halving the proportion of hungry people. We need to build on these experiences. The immediate priority is to complete successfully the unfinished business of meeting the MDG on hunger by 2015.

FAO is fully engaged as part of the UN country team in the MDG acceleration framework exercise driven by UNDP and the World Bank to support countries facing constraints and bottlenecks in achieving MDGs in the run up to the deadline.

The next major step is - in the foot steps of the Secretary General - the eradication of hunger in our life time, in a world where food and agriculture will truly contribute to the well-being of all, especially the poorest in an economic social and environmental sustainable manner.

A large number of countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle or Near East and Asia have declared their intention - with the support of regional and international bodies and instruments - to end hunger. Three weeks ago, the African Union Executive Council urged Member States to commit and work towards achieving a vision of hunger free Africa by 2025. This is the type and level of political commitment we need to frame our actions on the ground.

2014 is the **International Year of Family Farming**, with over 500 million small-scale farmers who are critical to the development process. A sustainable future will require that we address their needs and help them to thrive.

Thank you.

