

Director-General's Speech
Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding
between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and FAO
17 May 2012

Your Excellency, Mr. **Fahad Balghunaim**, Minister for Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

Your Excellency **Waleed bin Abdelkarim El Khereiji**, Director-General of the Grain Silo and Flour Mills organization,

Your Excellency Dr **Khaled bin Mohamed Al Fuhaid**, Assistant Deputy Minister for Animal Resources,

Distinguished members of the Saudi Delegation,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you today to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to the signing ceremony of this Memorandum of Understanding which represents the renewal of the fruitful cooperation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and FAO.

2. The first technical collaboration agreement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and FAO was signed in (NINETEEN FIFTY) 1950 for the development of an irrigation project in Wadi Jiza. Since then our collaboration has seen a continuous expansion through several successful technical cooperation agreements.

3. The last five year plan (2006-2011) aimed at achieving sustainable agricultural development and food security mainly through human capacity development, technology transfer and rational use of natural resources.

4. This new phase of the Programme, which comprises 17 projects for a total budget of 66.7 million dollars, will focus on the following priorities: management of natural resources, intensive and sustainable production of agricultural crops, sustainable development of animal resources and aquaculture and capacity building.

5. Particular attention will be given to post-harvest management and marketing activities to address the expected increase and diversification of agricultural production.

6. The Programme will also focus on the private sector, given its important role in agriculture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

7. Your Excellency, the success of the Saudi Arabia-FAO Programme encouraged other member countries to develop similar technical programmes with FAO. This would not have been possible without your personal support to the programme and the full engagement of the National Programme Coordinator, Mr Al Fuhaid.

8. FAO is honoured to be one of the main partners of the Ministry of Agriculture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and is fully committed to providing the Ministry its full technical support to meet the priorities of its National Development Plan 2010 – 2014 and Strategy for the Agricultural Sector 2010-2030.

9. I trust that this new agreement will reinforce cooperation between the two partners and will lead to further possibilities to achieve our common goal of a world free from hunger and malnutrition.

10. I wish to thank you, Excellency, for the trust given by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to FAO, and wish our future collaboration every success.
