

**Mr José Graziano DA SILVA (Candidate to the position of Director-General)**

Excellencies, members of the Council, members of FAO, fellow staff of this Organization, I stand before you today as a candidate for one of the most significant and challenging jobs in the UN system.

FAO was born in 1945 at the end of the second world war. In an historic document entitled *The Work of FAO*, its founders summed up their vision for the Organization, claiming that “Progress toward freedom from want is essential to lasting peace ...”. We are frequently being reminded how relevant these words still are for FAO nowadays.

FAO has achieved much during its sixty-six years of life. Above all it can claim credit for successfully overseeing an unprecedented growth in food production. Enough food is now being produced to meet the needs of almost seven billion people. The problem, however, is that almost one billion people are unnourished and many more are malnourished. At the same time, the technologies that have made the fast expansion of production possible are damaging natural resources.

I subscribe to the view of FAO’s founders, that ending hunger is entirely possible. This is not a view based on wishful thinking. It is based on my own experience in leading both the design of Brazil’s Zero Hunger programme and its implementation in 2003 when I was appointed by President Lula as the country’s first Minister of Food Security.

Today, Zero Hunger benefits one quarter of Brazil’s population of almost 200 million. All of this has cost less than half a percent of our GDP. The big lesson from this experience is that combating hunger and malnutrition opens the door to fast, inclusive economic growth. It enables people who have been prevented from playing an active role in society to benefit from national prosperity. Ending hunger is not charity, but an investment in our poorest people and a key to sustainable development.

In all continents there are examples of countries that have had comparable success in boosting their agriculture through strengthening small-scale farming and broadening food access.

Hence, the first of the five pillars on which I propose to build my programme is hunger eradication. I have no hesitation in commending to all member countries that they commit themselves to this goal as fast as possible. FAO will need to strengthen its capacity to help countries to design and implement plans for hunger eradication. For this it must deepen its joint work with WFP, WHO and UNICEF in particular, as well as with regional agencies and civil society.

My second pillar relates to the Organization’s role in catalyzing a shift to truly sustainable food production systems. Agriculture and deforestation currently account for one quarter of our annual greenhouse gas emissions. FAO needs to become much more engaged in greening the Green Revolution, enabling farmers, fishermen and other players in the food system to learn how to intensify production while conserving natural resources.

My third pillar concerns the vital role that FAO must continue to play in addressing global challenges in an integrated, coherent and fair manner. I selected what I believe are the high priority issues that FAO will have to address with a sense of urgency over the next four years. Of paramount importance, as has been acknowledged in the reform of the CFS, is the need to arrive to an effective global food and nutrition security governance system.

Mitigation and adaptation to climate change must be addressed more actively by the Organization. FAO must help member countries to find ways to promote sustainable use of natural resources, particularly water, land, forestry and oceanic resources, the so-called “Blue Economy” that small and Island Developing States consider as a matter of their survival.

FAO must also pay more attention to issues related to food safety, transboundary pests and diseases, rural employment and gender. For this FAO must reinforce its alliance with WHO in relation to the Codex Alimentarius, with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and especially with the ILO, the regional UN Commissions and the recently created UN Women.

In approaching these issues, FAO must improve its internal capacity for cross-cutting work, as well as its ability to partner with other institutions, both inside and outside the UN system, including civil society. There must be much closer cooperation between FAO, WFP and IFAD, as well as with all members of the UN Secretary-General’s High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis.

My fourth pillar is to bring the ongoing reform process to a satisfactory conclusion. Having worked in a senior position in the Organization, I am very much aware of the long time that the reforms have taken and of substantial resources, both human and financial, that have been dedicated to this process.

I share the strong commitment of member countries to enhancing FAO’s performance. It must operate with greater transparency and accountability and adopt results-based management systems, putting in place objective monitoring and post-evaluation systems. It must also free staff from time-consuming bureaucratic procedures.

Any reform creates uncertainties and I wish to pay tribute to the responsible manner in which FAO’s staff have continued to dedicate themselves to their substantive duties during this process.

I am also conscious of the need for genuine but balanced decentralization, with delegation of authority to the regional and subregional levels. These offices can also play a bigger role in resource mobilization. Country offices need to enjoy greater autonomy in initiating and implementing projects.

If elected, I will seek to lead by example in introducing a more collegiate style of management, as I have always done throughout my career.

My fifth pillar is to promote South-South Cooperation. We need to bring on board middle-income countries from Latin America, Africa and Asia to share their technical expertise. This

could supplement FAO's ongoing technical cooperation activities and alleviate some of the financing difficulties that might affect the Organization in the near future.

I would like now to draw to your attention some of the reasons why I consider that I am qualified to serve as FAO's next Director-General.

First, Brazil has always been an active member of FAO, sharing its experience in agriculture and food security and offering technical cooperation programmes in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean countries. Our representatives have been always working to build consensus among members of the Organization, as in the recent debate of the reform of the CFS.

My great hope is to see an FAO whose members put aside the distinctions that have sadly grown up between developing and developed countries. As an adviser to President Lula for 25 years, from the time when he was a labour union leader until I was recruited by FAO, I have learned the importance of building consensus for moving forward quickly.

Second, while there is no written rule on this, it is customary for the heads of UN agencies to be rotated between regions. Since FAO was founded it has had seven Directors-General. Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region that has not yet had the honour to provide a Director-General for FAO, nor does any Brazilian at present occupy a top-level post in the UN system.

Third, I have devoted my whole working life to the technical, social and economic dimensions of agriculture, rural development and fighting hunger, that are so central to FAO's mandate. In 2003 I found myself moving from Professor to Minister to set up an entirely new ministry and managing a budget that was, at that time, twice the size of FAO's.

In 2006 I became FAO's Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean where I learned the importance of building partnerships with international and regional agencies, as well as civil society.

Mr Chairman, members of the Council, I feel that I should point out that I am the only candidate who has concrete management experience within this Organization, where I have been working during the last five years. This is particularly important, given that the next Director-General will hold office for a shortened period and that all of us want to bring the reform process to a successful conclusion.

Before closing, I would like to mention that the paper that will be circulated after my speech presents a draft version of my platform. I intend to develop it further in response to the discussions with member countries that I shall have between now and when I would take up office, if elected.

Let me close recalling the words that the then elected Brazilian President, Tancredo Neves, had intended to say at his inauguration in 1985, had he not died a few days earlier, "I will not be able to do anything except what we can do together".

Thank you.