



Video message by FAO Director General, José Graziano Da Silva

Opening ceremony of the regional meeting

Agroecology for food security and nutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa

King Fahd Palace Hotel, Dakar, Senegal, 5-6 November 2015

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to address the regional meeting on “Agroecology for food security and nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa”. First of all, allow me to thank our hosts, the Government and people of the Republic of Senegal.

I regret that I could not join you in Dakar in person.

This regional meeting is a follow-up to the International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition, organized by FAO in 2014.

It was made possible because of you – governments, farmers’ organizations, researchers, civil society and the private sector.

Thank you for your support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Important advances have been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This very country, Senegal, is one of the 73 that have achieved the MDG target on hunger and malnutrition. But in a time of increasing population, rural exodus, and climate change, much more needs to be done.

The recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals pose us with a new big challenge: I quote - “to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture”. To achieve this by 2030, in 15 years-time, we need to shift to sustainable food systems that produce more with less environmental costs. And we need to do it fast.

Agroecology offers a promising and innovative solution. Most importantly, it recognizes the central role of millions of smallholder and family farmers. They produce most of our food. But

with climate change, farmers need even more the support of public policies / to continue playing this essential role.

Agroecology training, public procurement, secure tenure rights – these are some of the promising avenues of Government support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the next biennium, we will focus on integrating agroecological approaches in the field, based on FAO's ongoing work on sustainable and climate-smart agriculture.

At the regional level, we need to build platforms for capacity-building / and knowledge exchange. We will also promote South-South cooperation / to share promising agroecological approaches and technologies.

FAO stands ready to assist you / in finding solutions to the challenges faced by the global food systems. Working together, we can pave the way to a sustainable future / that leaves no one behind, and become the zero hunger generation.

I wish you a very productive meeting.