His Excellency Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, President of Egypt  
His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of Palestine  
His Excellency Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt  
His Excellency Borge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway  
His Excellency Ban-Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations  
His Excellency John Kerry, Secretary of State of the United States of America  
Her Excellency Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for the European Union  
His Excellency Nabil Elaraby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States  
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen  

On behalf of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), José Graziano da Silva, who couldn’t personally attend this event, I would like to thank the Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Kingdom of Norway for taking the initiative and organizing this Conference which will hopefully lay the foundations for reconstruction and development of Gaza and lasting peace.  

FAO has a long-standing partnership with the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture as a major provider of humanitarian and developmental assistance to farmers, herders and fishers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, thanks to generous contributions from the Governments of Canada, European Union, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom and many others.  

FAO is deeply concerned about the food security of all people in Gaza. The livelihoods of farmers, herders and fishers were devastated by the seven-week conflict. Gaza’s agriculture is at risk of collapse without solid emergency interventions.  

The estimated damage and losses to the agriculture sector amount to approximately USD 500 million. The scale of destruction has worsened above the already alarming levels of food insecurity and poverty.  

The summer harvest has been largely lost and the winter season is already partially compromised, while ongoing programmes are not sufficient to restart production, rehabilitate land and agriculture infrastructure and encourage private investment. A few hours after the ceasefire on 27 August, FAO began distributing fodder and water tanks and focused on reactivating production through provision of seeds and the rehabilitation of wells, power generation and marketing facilities.
Additional donor support is indispensable to (i) immediately provide key inputs to reactivate production and (ii) encourage private investments required for sustainable reconstruction and resilient growth of the agriculture sector.

FAO and the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture signed yesterday in Cairo a Letter of Intent reaffirming their commitment and cooperation to support the early recovery and development needs of the Palestinian farmers, herders and fishers, in close collaboration with resource partners.

FAO strongly supports the Palestinian National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza and is part of the Emergency Appeal for Gaza and of the UN Support Plan for the Transformation of the Gaza Strip.

We call on the international community to support a transformational change of Gaza’s economy by ensuring the protection and promotion of resilient livelihoods. Immediate reconstruction and development of agriculture in Gaza is key for building the foundation for sustainable peace and prosperity.