



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-first Session

"Making a difference in food security and nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 13 - 18 October 2014

**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)**

Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Distinguished Delegates.

Let me begin by thanking Chairperson Verburg, and the Committee, for the opportunity to contribute the World Food Programme's perspective to this 41st session. Allow me also to extend thanks to Chairperson Pinstrup-Anderson, and to the High Level Panel of Experts, for their thorough guidance to the CFS, and to CFS Secretary Fulton.

Now all protocol being observed, ladies and gentlemen, the annual session of the Committee provides an opportunity for us all to reflect candidly and benchmark the progress we made and the remaining challenges we collectively face. This is essential. Because the actions and decisions of this Committee—representing member states, civil society, international organizations and the private sector—can make a profound difference, not just at a policy level, but also in promoting actions on-the-ground required to make a real and lasting change in people's lives.

Please allow me to echo the words of the Director-General acknowledging the progress made in reducing both the incidence and impact of hunger for some 37 million people this year. While we applaud this improvement, we must acknowledge the significant work, which lies ahead, to reach the 805 million people without enough food and the 2 billion people without the necessary vitamins and minerals required for a healthy and productive life. Meeting the demands of acute food and nutrition crises remains our biggest challenge ahead. Let us remind ourselves that in the 12 months since we last met as a committee, undernutrition caused the death of an estimated 3.1 million children. This single fact makes clear the need for relentless action on all our parts to transform our food systems and contain the threat of food insecurity and malnutrition.

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



ml208

This session also provides an opportunity to recognize the efforts made by the Committee, member states, civil society—and so many others—in generating the global political will we need to eliminate hunger. Member states, through the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, drafted ambitious yet achievable goals to transform our world. And, if affirmed, draft goal two promises to integrate the multi-sectoral actions required for achieving a Zero Hunger world. By finalizing their proposals, member states can—for the first time—set a date to end hunger, to achieve food security and to end malnutrition in all its forms. This Committee's support is crucial to maintain momentum.

Honorable delegates, this year's CFS agenda is again extensive and includes topics requiring careful consideration. Because the policies we discuss and agree here will influence how food systems produce, process and make food available for both poor and rich throughout our world.

When this Committee examines the critical and emerging issues, we must remember the need to continue to improve our understanding of nutrition and the link between food production, processing, diet and health. We must urgently address hunger's root causes, by—for example—providing real solutions for smallholder farmers to end the year-on-year loss of food—which in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, one year of losses almost equals ten years of food assistance.

We must take the opportunity to redefine our food systems, fully recognizing how gender-, social- and economic inequality impact food security and nutrition. Because inequality within local, national and international systems drives unavailability, inaccessibility, instability—and even underutilization—for the world's most vulnerable people, resulting in food insecurity and malnutrition. To this end, the ten principles for investment in responsible food systems, offer a pathway for member states, international organizations, business enterprise and consumers to readdress this imbalance.

Distinguished delegates, we must also acknowledge that we meet at a time when our world is increasingly fragile. An unprecedented number of shocks, stresses and—ever-more complex—crises now threaten food and nutrition security. This year repeatedly proved that without stability—the fourth dimension of food security—food systems can quickly collapse, engulfing countries in humanitarian crisis, setting back years of progress in hunger reduction in just a matter of weeks.

Places like South Sudan, where conflict conspired to drive millions of people into exodus and a food and nutrition crisis, disturbing food-system stability for years to come. A massive humanitarian operation staved off catastrophe for now; however, the situation remains fragile. In many areas, global acute malnutrition rates for children are above the emergency 15 percent threshold. And we expect by the peak of the lean season—in just three months—2.4 million people will require food assistance. Needs which likely outstrip the available resources.

Of course, the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa requires this Committee's attention. We must steadfastly support and stand in solidarity with the people of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea—where in addition to health crisis, a food and nutrition crisis now looms because of disrupted trade and interrupted food production. The vulnerability of the food poor is increasing. Already food shortages and panic buying contributed to staple food price increases of up to 24 percent. Right now, at least one million people are affected.

In these cases of food system failure, we must provide assistance. We ask for this Committee's acknowledgment that unprecedented action requires unprecedented resources and responses. And we also ask the CFS to continue to promote investment in resilience building and the work that is required to move people out of hunger and malnutrition, so women, men and children can sustainably and durably achieve stable, healthy and nutritious diets. Our greatest challenge of attaining Zero Hunger are the acute hunger needs as a result of crisis and conflict, and the resources invested in these responses which directly impacts global funds available to address resilience and the agriculture and nutrition investments required to achieve Zero Hunger.

Distinguished delegates, solving hunger, food security and nutrition, requires a comprehensive, collective commitment. Our actions in this CFS are fundamental. We must build global momentum and facilitate the global coordination required enabling all our world's poorest and most vulnerable not to stand in line for a hand out but to provide the hand up required to ensure that every mother and father can regularly provide the nutritious food required for their children to live to their fullest potential. Achieving Zero Hunger and making a difference in food security and nutrition demands nothing less.

Thank You.