



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-fourth Session
"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 9-13 October 2017

**STATEMENT BY THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER HIS EXCELLENCY
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Madam Chairperson of the CFS, Madam Amira Gornass;
Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO);
Mr. Gilbert Hungbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD);
Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP);
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

The current century has begun with the launch of certain remarkable game-changing and far-reaching trends that must be classified as phenomenal because they aim at reconciling the globalization process with the well-being and security of the human individual . These are:

The nations of the world, in spite of geopolitics, are investing the UN with leadership of global governance to marshal them collectively to tackle some looming existential challenges to humanity generally, and the planet Earth, in particular.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris COP 21 Climate Change Resolutions were all passed with time lines, virtually unanimously, by all the nations of the world on basis of centring human dignity and security as the *raison d'être* of governance at all levels both nationally and internationally.

In particular, the over-arching impact of climate change on the planet would devastate without exception to either the developed or developing worlds, all aspects of human endeavour and the planet itself as it has been known so far .

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Therefore, the nations of the world agreed to adopt collective strategies, albeit varied, according to their capabilities, in fighting it within a scientifically advised time frame to achieve its containment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the topic before us - "Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition (under the UN Agenda 2030), falls squarely within the current challenges facing mankind as a whole, and against which, the clarion call has been sounded for all of us to rise as individuals, nations and globally, to contribute our utmost.

The facts as given us by expert bodies such as the FAO and other UN organs are that, since 1950 the world population has increased threefold from 2.5 billion to the current 7 billion plus and even though food production has also jumped dramatically enabling a 40% rise in food intake per person, there are still some 800 million persons worldwide suffering chronic undernourishment, 790 million of them living in the developing world of Africa and South Asia.

The problem worsens by the galloping population explosion which the UN estimates will reach 9.3 billion by 2050, with as much as 85% of the increase taking place in the current developing world.

Africa alone, will account for about half of the absolute increase by 2050, and thus be home to nearly one-quarter of the entire world population then.

Ladies and Gentlemen: the axiom is that "we are what we eat" but the further fact is that "it is not everything we eat that is food."

Hence the problems of MALNUTRITION and UNDERNOURISHMENT plague the world with OBESITY, STUNTING, HUNGER and INFIRMITIES, in people everywhere.

It is this conundrum that lies central to the DEBATE before the Forum we are engaged in now.

The issue, in other words, is how to produce on sustained basis into the future, the requisite quality and quantity of food to overcome the hunger, malnutrition and undernourishment, menacing humanity.

Demographic studies show that given the rate of population growth of the world, food production must keep abreast by an estimation of 60% increase to sustain current levels of feeding by 2050.

To attain this means enhanced agricultural best practices, with commensurate agro-industries supplies, to service human development which is getting more urbanized with complex dietary changes.

The problem as detailed by the UN is that global agriculture is predominated by small scale farmers who tend to be conservative in practice, and particularly in the developing world, are aged and not too educated to easily absorb new ideas for efficiency in their occupation.

They also lack access to credit which impairs their ability to purchase and utilize new technology.

Further, the solution lies not just in production, but more in productivity of both the crops, workforce and also the land and other inputs.

For example, land and water for agriculture in many parts of the world are fast becoming scarce because of many factors including environmental abuse and also rapidly increasing diversified demands to meet the population explosion.

Therefore, from the same limited acreage of land for farming and volume of water for irrigation, there must be increased tonnage of harvest.

The imperative for sustainable solutions, then lies squarely in application of science and technology which national governments must use policy to equip farmers at all levels with.

Such collaboration between a government and farmers, albeit private, exemplify the concept of public-private-partnership working to improve the socio-economic development of nations.

The UN and its agencies, the donor community, the private agricultural scientific corporate entities, and philanthropic organizations, must encourage such partnerships by extending well-directed technical know-how and resources, to them.

Such support should not be perceived in the currently doubtful image of AID, but rather as one for empowering the recipient to be productive on business lines and sustainability.

Unfortunately, such wrongful imaging has tarnished much of the support that the developed world has offered the developing world so far.

For instance, in 2010 the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to deliver equal amounts of funding for mitigation and adaptation, under guidance of the Convention's principles and provisions to assist needy countries.

Developing countries however, find it difficult to fully access the fund aimed to support their efforts to respond to the challenge of climate change because they lack the technical know-how to unlock the complex modalities under the Convention's guidelines.

Also, not many of the developed pledgers have redeemed the pledges they made to the Fund.

Even more difficult for developing countries to access, because of similar constraints of technical know-how, is the carbon credit procedure adopted at the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 under which 'credits', financial benefits are awarded to countries that have reduced their greenhouse gases below their emission quota.

A system which otherwise would have enabled African countries to access badly needed finances for their development thus lie fallow accruing little benefits to them. Unfortunately, the UN administering authorities do not show the sensitivity to ease the blockages.

This is not to say that African countries by themselves are not putting in any efforts. Far from it. The AU for instance in 2003, endorsed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) under its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to harmonize agricultural policies of member countries for integrated development.

CAADP is aimed to "help African countries reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculture-led development, which eliminates hunger, reduces poverty and food insecurity, and enables expansion of exports."

CAADP is a growth-oriented agricultural development agenda, aimed at increasing agriculture growth rates to a minimum of six percent per year to create the wealth needed for rural communities and households in Africa to prosper.

While such efforts by the AU and the regional groupings on the continent are commendable, they are still far from enabling the continent achieve food security and the levels of nutrition to help to eradicate widespread stunting and other food related challenges.

It is worth mentioning that this year, the African Development Bank is prioritizing AGRICULTURE and NUTRITION among its objectives.

It is imperative therefore, that specialized UN agencies such as the UN Development Programme, the FAO, international research institutions and philanthropic organizations, intensify their efforts in assisting the continental union and the national governments, to make more sustainable impact in attaining the objectives of the SDGs 2030.

Indeed, such cooperation and support would be to the mutual and enlightened interests of all stakeholders when their positive results impact the destabilizing effects of mass migration caused chiefly by poverty and hunger, on international relations.

Similarly, international peace-keeping in many politically conflicted areas, because of same causes, should be eased.

Further, such support would impart the know-how of Climate Smart Agriculture to the developing world to efficiently adapt to the ravages of the change in current times.

Ladies and Gentlemen; recent events across the world clearly show that not even the most developed countries, are spared the wrath of nature, such as that of climate change, inflicts on the planet.

The change is lumping the entire global community, and in deed, plant earth itself in the same boat there “we all sail or sink together,” so to speak, when the climate wreaks its vengeance, therefore the developed world must accept to extend its scientific, technological and other resources, to support the developing world in hopes that our planet would thereby be saved by our collective efforts.

The role of leadership of nations and international organizations, especially, the UN, becomes paramount in adopting policies that will help mature such cooperation and also help pull humanity out of hunger and all its associated drawbacks.

The UN must, especially, intensify its global communications and education on the serious threat posed to the whole world by climate change and the prevalence of disease, hunger and malnutrition.

It must take the leadership mantle imposed on it by necessity and history and increase awareness that what affects one part of the world affects all others.

Ladies and Gentlemen; I believe fervently that such cooperation between the UN, spearheading global governance, and national government s will succeed.

Here, permit me in all humility to cite some examples from my country, Ghana, to make the point.

I am happy to remark that the current Ghana government, within the past few months, launched its agricultural programme dubbed ‘Planting for Food and Jobs’ in partnership with the private sector of largely small-holder farmers, aimed at solving the twin ills of weak food security and unemployment.

On the cocoa crop aspect, the government extension services are encouraging the farmers all over the country to adopt an innovative pollination mechanism on their existing farms.

It is expected this innovation will increase the yield by 25% this season.

The cereal crops are also expecting bumper harvests this crop season because of similar support of improved and fortified seeds the government is giving to farmers.

Also I recall that during my tenure as president of Ghana between 2001 - 2009, the government adopted a strategy to pursue integrated rural development as the basis for modernized and commercial agriculture, by focusing on opening up a network of rural roads, electricity supply, potable water, health services and affordable credit for farmers and extension services to provide education in agriculture so smallholders could improve production, harvesting, storage and marketing.

My government engaged in a comprehensive school feeding programme using locally produced crops that provided markets for farmers and jobs for women, cooking nutritious meals from these crops, for school children, an initiative that also improved school going for both girls and boys.

Another action that became a cornerstone of success for my government was the decision in 2001 to slash taxation on the country's cocoa farmers who were then suffering from over-taxation.

The producers of the country's main cash crop and agricultural export, Ghana's cocoa farmers, were increasingly shifting to citrus to avoid hefty levies on the world price for their traditional product.

Government ordered the reversal of fiscal pressure on the sector, thereby leaving 60% of the international market price for cocoa farmers rather than only 40% as before. In addition farmers were provided with timely supplies of crucial inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers.

Within four years, cocoa production increased by 133%, resulting in renewed interest in the industry.

By the end of my tenure in 2008, the national per capita income had tripled, catapulting Ghana into Lower Middle Income status of nations.

So good governance paid off; and resulted in a win-win situation for all stakeholders.

Food production was improved along the entire value chain; nutrition for school-going children got better; farmers got better prices; jobs were created for women; there was money and a ripple effect into other areas of the economy; the country achieved both the Millennium Development Goal 1 hunger target and the World Food Summit goals many years ahead of the UN deadline; there was political stability, and the whole world hailed Ghana.

Thankfully, these achievements contributed to earn me the World Food Prize in 2011, alongside President Lula da Silva of Brazil.

By forging better links between decision-makers and the affected population, facilitating the efforts of multi-sector actors with different levels of government, and by providing resources and knowledge through well deployed and monitored extension services and rural banks to farmers, the government succeeded in repositioning the agricultural sector to underpin the attainment of the objectives of food security and continued healthy dieting for the people.

In sum, with sincere and purposeful cooperation among the UN with all its agencies, the developed world of donors, international philanthropic organizations and international civil society organizations, to advance GLOBAL GOVERNANCE using the tools of MONITORING, ADVOCACY and the EMPOWERMENT, they should be able to guide and assist national governments, to pursue policies to eradicate HUNGER and achieve FOOD SECURITY with requisite NUTRITION on sustained basis within the FRAMEWORK of the 2030 SDGs .

Thank You and God Bless.