



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

**Forty-third Session – Quarante-troisième session - 43.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 1-7 July 2023  
VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS  
OF THE CONFERENCE**

**Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023  
PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES PLÉNIÈRES  
DE LA CONFÉRENCE**

**Roma, 1-7 de julio de 2023  
ACTAS TAQUIGRÁFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS  
DE LA CONFERENCIA**

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*Arab Republic, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Zambia, Malaysia, Rwanda, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Bolivia, Angola, Argentina, Spain, Costa Rica, Ireland, Sudan, Belgium, Belarus, Philippines*

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>FIRST PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>1 July 2023</b></p>

The First Meeting was opened at 09:36 hours  
Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La première séance est ouverte à 09 h 36  
sous la présidence de Mme. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Président de la Conférence

Se abre la primera reunión a las 09.36  
bajo la presidencia de la Sra. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Presidente de la Conferencia

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**Item 1. Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons****Point 1. Élection du président et des vice-présidents****Tema 1. Elección del Presidente y los vicepresidentes****DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, I have the honour to declare open the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference.

I would like to welcome back Members physically here at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy after the fully virtual session of the Conference in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic. At the same time, we have kept open the opportunity for delegates to participate virtually, as part of our drive for inclusion, transparency, modernisation and digitalization.

I got updated information at this time. The physically and virtually registered participants are more than 1 400. It is a historical highest participation, especially for those who are far from Rome.

They have a big engagement in the Capital and their Leaders, who did not travel here, have sent their representatives. Therefore, that is something for modernization and digitalization that helps us change this model and build up more transparency, accessibility and solidarity.

Item 1 on our Agenda this morning is the *Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons*.

The 172nd Session of the FAO Council nominated Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food of Canada, as Chairperson of this Conference.

May I take it that the Conference agrees with this proposal, and can confirm by acclamation?

Congratulations Minister. From now on I will call you Chairperson.

I will just say one word. She is the fourth Chairperson from Canada, and this reminds that also the first Chairperson, Lester Pearson, was one of our founders and later became the Prime Minister.

Good luck and good week.

Thank you.

**PRESIDENT**

C'est vraiment un plaisir et un honneur pour moi d'être élue comme Présidente pour notre Assemblée Générale annuelle. Merci énormément pour la confiance que vous mettez en moi, je voudrais vous dire qu'aujourd'hui, c'est la Fête du Canada, alors, c'est d'autant plus symbolique, la première conférence avait eu lieu aussi à Québec, au Canada, alors pour moi, c'est vraiment un honneur de marcher dans les pas de Lester B. Pearson.

C'est aussi, la FAO, extrêmement symbolique. C'est une organisation très importante des Nations-Unies, on est tous conscients, ayant été moi-même ministre du développement international et maintenant ministre de l'agriculture et de l'agroalimentaire, c'est vraiment deux passions qui se rejoignent dans la FAO, mais aussi une organisation qui est absolument critique en ce moment, dans le sens où la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et un enjeu majeur, et que le thème que nous portons cette semaine, la gestion de l'eau, et d'autant plus important, alors qu'on fait face à ces changements climatiques, et on le sait, nos producteurs et nos productrices agricoles sont les premiers à faire face à ces changements, et sont les premiers témoins de ces changements du climat, et ils ont besoin de notre soutien.

On a besoin d'avoir des producteurs, des productrices qui réussissent, qui peuvent bien vivre de leur travail pour pouvoir avoir des communautés qui sont bien nourries et qui sont en santé aussi. C'est d'autant plus symbolique pour moi d'être la première femme ministre à présider cette assemblée. La deuxième femme, et la première ministre.

Alors, ça ne devrait pas être la première en 2023, j'espère qu'il y en aura encore plusieurs autres. Je veux bien assumer mon rôle de Présidente, et je veux vous assurer de ma neutralité, que je mettrais

tous les efforts pour agir de la façon la plus juste possible, la plus neutre possible, et je veux aussi vous prévenir que je serais une Présidente qui sera dure sur la gestion du temps.

Alors, je vous préviens tout de suite, réviser vos discours s'il le faut, ne perdez pas des minutes dans de trop longs remerciements, parce que je serais très stricte sur la gestion du temps. Je vous remercie énormément. On a beaucoup de travail à faire pour contribuer à l'atteinte des objectifs de développement durable.

Bien évidemment, mettez fin à la faim, aussi tout ce qui touche la consommation et la production responsable, tout ce qui touche l'eau, la lutte contre les changements climatiques, le travail descend aussi pour nos agriculteurs encore une fois et agricultrices et un thème qui est particulièrement cher à mes yeux, l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, l'inclusion, la jeunesse. Je crois que c'est bien portant d'inclure toute une communauté, si on veut que cette communauté puisse réussir.

Je vous remercie, et sur ce, je vais passer aux prochaines formalités.

### *Continues in English*

Now let me turn to the remainder of the Item 1 on the Agenda, *Election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons*. In accordance with Rule VIII of the General Rules of the Organization, the Conference, having considered the recommendation of the FAO Council, shall elect three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference.

The 172nd Session of the FAO Council, held in April this year, proposed three candidates for the three positions of Vice-Chairperson of this Conference Session. As a result, the following nominees are now presented to the Conference for approval. Mr Morten von Hanno Aasland of Norway; Mr Khalid Mehboob of Pakistan, Mr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie of Qatar. Can I take it that the Conference approves these nominations for Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference?

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

It is so decided. I congratulate the Vice-Chairpersons and look forward to working with them over the following days.

### **Item 2. Appointment of the General Committee and Credentials Committee**

**Point 2. Constitution du Bureau et de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs**

**Tema 2. Nombramiento del Comité General y del Comité de Credenciales**

### **CHAIRPERSON**

We now proceed to Item 2 of the provisional Agenda, *Appointment of the General Committee and Credentials Committee*. I will now read the nominations for the seven Members proposed for election to the General Committee, as submitted by the 172nd Session of the FAO Council held in April this year. At the outset, however, I would like to inform the Conference that Algeria has withdrawn its candidacy from the General Committee and it is now proposed that Ethiopia represents the Africa region on the Committee.

As a result, the nominations are as follows: Australia, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, United States of America, and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Are there any objections or comments?

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

**Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)**

The United States of America disassociates from the election of Venezuela to the General Committee and we would like this disassociation reflected in a footnote of the Conference Report.

### **CHAIRPERSON**

The disassociation is well noted and will be included in the Report as a minority view in line with established practice.

I will now read the nine nominations for the Credentials Committee as proposed by 172nd Session of the Council: Bangladesh, Canada, Germany, Lebanon, New Zealand, Panama, Russian Federation, United States of America and Zambia. Does the Conference wish to endorse these nominations?

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

**Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)**

The United States of America disassociates from the election of the Russian Federation to the Credentials Committee and would like this disassociation to be reflected as a footnote in the Report.

**Ms Stefanie BECK (Canada)**

Canada would also like to disassociate itself from the election of Russian Federation to the Committee and have this as a footnote in the Report.

**Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

First of all, we would like to congratulate you on your election to the position as Chairperson of this Conference and we do not disassociate from your election.

We would also like to disassociate from the support for the United States of America in this Committee and also express our dissatisfaction with the fact that our Conference is beginning without a desire to find mutually acceptable solutions for problems of food security for political reasons. We would also like to express our position in the protocol of the meeting and if other delegations will also act in this way, we will have to take the floor again.

**Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

This is also just to note that the United Kingdom disassociates itself from the election of the Russian Federation to the Credentials Committee and would like this also to be reflected.

**His Excellency Murray WATT (Australia)**

Congratulations on your election. Australia also wishes to disassociate itself from Russian Federation's election to this Committee and ask that to be noted.

**Sr. Luis PLANAS PUCHADES (España)**

Hablando en nombre de la Unión Europea y los 27 Estados Miembros, quisiéramos también desasociarnos de esta decisión y que quede anotado en el Informe, muchas gracias.

**Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)**

Congratulations on your election. Japan would like to join the United States of America and the European Union and the others on the same issue of the election of Russian Federation.

**Mr Markiyany DMYTRASEVYCH (Ukraine)**

Ukraine also would like to disassociate itself of the election of Russian Federation to the Credentials Committee.

**Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

Unfortunately, my call was not listened to, given these various statements. I also would like to note in the protocol that the Russian Federation disassociates itself from the candidacy of Canada on the Committee as well as, given the statement by Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU), we disassociate from support to Germany being included in the Committee as it is a Member of the EU.

**Mr Philip HOULDING (New Zealand)**

New Zealand also joins in disassociating itself from the election of Russian Federation to the Credentials Committee.

**Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway)**

Norway also disassociates itself from this.

**Mr Matthías Geir PÁLSSON (Iceland)**

Iceland also disassociates itself from the nomination of Russian Federation to the Credentials Committee.

**Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

We must also officially request the Secretariat to reflect that the Russian Federation disassociates from support to New Zealand on the Committee.

**CHAIRPERSON**

The disassociations are well noted and will be included in the Report as a minority view, in line with established practice. It is so decided.

**Item 31. Any Other Matters**

**Point 31. Autres questions**

**Tema 31. Asuntos varios**

*Item 31.1 McDougall Memorial Lecture*

*Point 31.1 Conférence McDougall*

*Tema 31.1 Disertación en memoria de McDougall*

**CHAIRPERSON**

We now move to sub-Item 31.1 of the provisional Agenda, under which the McDougall Memorial Lecture will be delivered to the Conference. This lecture is part of a series which began in 1959 to commemorate the late Frank L. McDougall, one of the founding fathers of our Organization.

The lecture is delivered at each ordinary Session of the Conference. I will now give the floor to the Director-General, who will introduce the McDougall lecture for this 43rd Session of the FAO Conference.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

The McDougall Lecture has been a feature of each Session of the FAO Conference since the Council instituted it in 1958 in memory of Frank McDougall, an Australian economist and one of the founding fathers of this Organization. Since then, leading figures in the field of food and agriculture have agreed to give this lecture to the Members of the Organization gathered for the Conference.

This year's lecture will be delivered by someone who has dedicated his entire working life to public service, and who has a prominent reputation in both the public and private sectors, domestically and internationally.

I have the great pleasure and privilege to introduce the Honourable Tharman Shanmugaratnam – he has a Chinese name, Mr Shan, it is very easy but he is not from China.

He has been Senior Minister of Singapore since 2019, Coordinating Minister for Social Policies since 2015 and Chairperson of the Monetary Authority of Singapore since 2011.

He also served as Chairman of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) from 2011-2015.

Since January 2017, he has chaired the Group of Thirty, an independent global body of economic and financial leaders and academics, which examine consequences of public and private sector policies.

In April 2017, he was appointed by the G20 to chair a G20 Eminent Persons Group on Global Financial Governance.

Furthermore, he co-chaired the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, whose initial recommendations shaped discussions at the UN Water Conference in March this year at the Side Event on *“Turning the Tide: A Call to Collective Action”*, which presented the Commissions’ first report. A report that calls for putting water at the centre of decision-making globally. Our theme for this Session’s General Debate is *“Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life to Achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals”*.

I encourage all of you to listen carefully to today’s McDougall Memorial Lecture as I am sure we will all benefit greatly from his vast experience and wisdom, which will provide much “food for thought” for our discussions throughout the week.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in warmly welcoming our 33<sup>rd</sup> McDougall Memorial Lecturer.

**His Excellency Tharman SHANMUGARATNAM (Singapore)**

Thank you very much, Director-General, Qu Dongyu, and thank you for inviting me to address this distinguished gathering.

Well, thank you, once again, for giving me this privilege of addressing this august group of ministers from Member States. I speak first as a senior minister from Singapore, a former Deputy Prime Minister for several years.

Singapore is a country which is both water and food vulnerable by virtue of our geography, and from our very inception as a nation, as an independent nation, we have treated water and food as central to our national strategies and it has required innovation, it has required public policy reform, it has required a whole of society effort, particularly on water, to understand that water is scarce, water needs to be preserved, it needs to be recycled, it needs to be reused.

I will come back to that very briefly later in my speech but my speech is fundamentally not about Singapore. I also speak here as the current co-Chair of the Global Commission on Water which, as Director-General Qu Dongyu mentioned, helped shape the outcomes of the recent March 2023 UN Water Conference, the first such Conference in 47 years, which tells us how neglected this issue is in multilateral discussion.

I think we now are at a turning point in global food security. We have seen remarkable advances over the last 50 years, indeed since the inception of FAO and since the inception of this lecture, the McDougall Memorial Lecture, 65 years ago, we have seen a remarkable improvement, both through the Green Revolution and the introduction of new seeds as well as through the global spread of nitrogen-based fertilizers, remarkable improvement in yields, in farmers’ incomes but, most importantly, a reduction in hunger.

If you look at it even since 1970, hunger today is about one-third of the level it was in 1970, and most of us are old enough to have been there then. So, we have made progress. But we are now at a point where we risk not just an enduring level of global hunger at still unacceptable levels, after COVID we still have 10 percent of the world’s population facing hunger, about 828 million people. It has come down a little bit since then but the projections for 2030 are still dire.

670 million people facing the prospect of hunger, that is 8 percent of the world’s population. No different from where it was in 2015 when the 2030 Agenda was set out. And that, frankly may be an optimistic projection because it does not factor in the very real risk, not a theoretical risk, the very real risk of accelerating effects of climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the destabilization of the global water cycle.

It is not easy to factor this in in a precise way because even the scientists have been surprised by the effects we are already seeing coming out of accelerating climate change, the extreme weather events at a frequency that was not anticipated. It has something to do, we think, with tipping points, the tipping

points that are happening in the earth's system that lead to accelerating change, and with one tipping point from the Arctic to the boreal forests to even the topics, one tipping point leading to another tipping point. It has something to do with that.

Hard to quantify but we know that the direction of change is in the wrong direction. So, when we think of 8 percent of the world's population at the end of the decade still living in hunger, that is very, very likely and underestimated. And it should concern us greatly, not just because it is a humanitarian crisis in its own right but because it is going to rebound on many other dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as what every country feels is important to human well-being – health, education and human potential development and, very importantly, conflict.

I will highlight what I think is one of the most neglected dimensions of this, which is childhood stunting, very clearly related to malnutrition, both child and maternal malnutrition. It is one of the most neglected facts in international discussions but the fact is we now project that 20 percent of children by 2030, that is about 129 million, will suffer from stunting.

As we all know, once you suffer from stunting at a young age, it affects your life chances. It affects your whole life's trajectory – your cognitive development, your ability to work at an increasingly skilled level, your ability to contribute to the society you live in. So, that is a serious loss of human potential, for individual societies and for the world. 20 percent of the world's young suffering from stunting, it is totally unacceptable.

And our solutions, when we think about food insecurity and conflict, have to bear in mind that ultimately you have to solve this because of the potential of the human's population being vastly underdeveloped and human lives being destroyed.

We can solve the global food crisis. We can solve the global hunger. It requires a few fundamental shifts in our thinking and the way we organize ourselves globally and it requires specific policy interventions. I will talk about each of these briefly in the course of the rest of my lecture.

The fundamental shifts, first addressing food not as a silo, not as a particular SDG, like SDG2 on hunger, but as part and parcel of the broader challenge of ecological insecurity. That is the first shift of thinking required. Second shift in thinking is that we have, by the same virtue, to recognize that this is not just a local problem. It is not just a regional problem, it is a global problem which we have to all take responsibility for.

The third shift of thinking is on the optimistic side. We have to see this not just as a burden on the world, requiring burden sharing, but as a huge growth opportunity, the opportunity of addressing food and ecological insecurity together represents a very significant growth opportunity, a national development opportunity in the years to come, and I will come to that in a short while.

So, those are the three fundamental shifts in thinking required. And there are solutions to translate that thinking into action. Policy reform first. Second, scaling up technologies which are already available or which can be made available, and at low cost, precisely through the scale-up and the tapping onto economies of scale.

Thirdly, new financing strategies, particularly international financing strategies and, fourthly, the strengthening of multilateralism, including our own domestic or local cultures that support multilateral action.

I will address each of these briefly but first the shifts in thinking.

We have to address food and ecological insecurities together because the science is very clear. Food is the first victim of the triple-headed crisis of the global environment. Climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the destabilization of the global water cycle. It is a triple-headed environmental crisis and food is the first victim of this shift in the earth's system represented in global warming, the loss of biodiversity and a destabilized global water cycle.

We cannot solve for food without solving for water. We cannot solve for water without solving for climate change. We cannot solve for climate change without solving for water. They are intertwined and we have to now address this not as separate SDGs, not as agencies working on separate silos, not



as departments in government working on separate Agendas, we have to represent this as a collective challenge of the earth's system and the fundamentals that assure us of human welfare.

The science links them up and our development strategies too have to link them up, taking a whole of government approach, a whole of society approach but also a whole of the global community approach to address this combined challenge.

It has to be said that food is not just the first victim of this ecological crisis but it is also part of the cause because how we produce food is a very important part of the cause of today's problems and an important part of the solution to today's problems. Agriculture accounts, as we all know, for about 70 percent of global fresh water withdrawals. Of the water that is withdrawn for agriculture, largely for irrigation, very often for flood irrigation. About 60 percent of the water is wasted, mainly due to leaks in the irrigation systems or inefficient irrigation methods that go back a thousand years.

If you look at what is happening in manufacturing, in logistics, in commerce, in finance, in many other areas, the technologies being deployed today are unrecognizable compared to what existed 100 years ago, let alone 1 000 years ago. In agriculture it is fully recognizable. They are using the same methods that we used centuries ago, which means it can be changed. It can be changed.

Second, our rivers are being polluted with chemical run-offs due to some of the very solutions that led to improved agricultural yields, the use of agrochemicals as fertilizers in an uncontrolled way, leading not just to the rivers being polluted but to algae blooms in the lakes and in the seas, impacting biodiversity and severely affecting marine life.

Thirdly, another way in which agriculture is part of the cause and now has to be part of the solution is that keeping inefficient methods alive in agriculture simply means that to feed a growing world population, we have to keep expanding agricultural land which has typically meant more and more deforestation.

The loss of the forests and the loss of biodiversity is itself now part of this vicious cycle of climate change and the global water cycle being destabilized. Agriculture is therefore part of the solution. We need more efficient agriculture, more efficient in its own right, higher yield for farmers, more efficient water wise so that for the same yield we use far less water. And more efficient with regard to land use. And solutions exist for each of these. Food is the first victim but how we produce food is also a key solution.

We have to view these now as global rather than local challenges. It is not just a problem happening in the Sahel or part of Southeast Asia or any part of the world that sees extreme weather shocks because we will all face extreme weather shocks. It is effectively a global challenge. We have understood this well with regard to climate change. Everyone knows that carbon produced here is carbon that everyone will see the consequences of. Carbon is carbon in the atmosphere.

It must now be recognized that the same is the case for water. There is a global water cycle. It is not just a local matter. It is not just a matter of transboundary rivers and the occasional conflicts over the use of those transboundary rivers. There is a global water cycle. 40 percent of the rainfall that we see comes not from the evaporation from the oceans and the rivers, it actually comes from what is called green water. It comes from the forests themselves. It comes from the soil in the forests and that evapotranspiration of moisture leads to atmospheric rivers around regions and around the world that are part of the global water cycle.

So, it is not just what we do locally that rebounds on what happens to us locally. What we do locally everywhere in the world rebounds on everyone else around the world. It is a global water cycle and we have to take global responsibility. And because food security is now inextricably linked to these global cycles and these global crises of climate change, water and biodiversity, we have to recognize that solving the food problem is also a global responsibility.

Third point that is a shift in mindset that we require is that we have to see this as a growth opportunity. Economists, when they first started looking at the problem of climate change about 40 years ago used the way of thinking that economists have always used, which is to think of trade-offs. Much of economics is about trade-offs. And the way the issue was framed was there would be a trade-off

between addressing climate change and economic growth. It is one versus the other and you have to decide on the right trade-off.

That was 40 years ago and it was a mistaken framing. It was a mistaken framing because we now know that it is entirely possible to achieve sustainability with economic growth, with appropriate technologies, market development and finance. And, in fact, we have before us the opportunity now to have higher quality growth. Not just for the sake of the global commons but for the sake of each of our own countries. Higher quality growth, less pollutive, much better for the health, much better for sustaining the welfare of future generations.

It is not a trade-off between development and global public goods or the global commons. It is not a trade-off between having food security in a particular location and solving problems somewhere else in the world. The strategies come together. We know this now as economists because we know that, in fact, markets have been imperfect and underdeveloped and we can, in fact, create fuller markets so as to be able to achieve both sustainability as well as national development. We also know, very importantly, that policies, even today, are working in the wrong direction.

Policies on pricing and on subsidies are today encouraging inefficient use of water, quite apart from encouraging, still today, carbon emissions in large parts of the world. And we do know now a lot more about the economies of scale that are involved in green technologies. We know it already from what you see in solar energy. We know that there are significant economies of scale once we get going on green technologies and other new sustainable platforms.

And if you exploit these economies of scale, if we create fuller markets through public/private collaboration, if we scale up the use of technologies that exist, we can actually avoid this trade-off between food security, environmental security and economic growth. And that is our fundamental opportunity because it is going to require more investment.

When you think of it this way, as a growth opportunity and if you think of it as a global issue and not a local issue, it is not to be sold through a call for more aid. This is not about aid budgets, this is about investment budgets. This is a case for investment, investment in future growth that will earn returns, both commercially as well as social returns for society as a whole. It is an investment.

The scale of this investment required or this combined challenge of food security and ecological security, it is a significant scale of investment required, something like three percentage points of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) extra in investment each year for the next 30 years. If we succeed in mobilizing the resources for that purpose and organizing ourselves for that purpose, it will lead to a very significant increase in growth globally, roughly 20 to 25 percent increase in growth with an even further increase in the developing world. So, this is growth opportunity and a national development opportunity that is to be seized.

Solutions next. I start with policy reform because our policies are still by and large in the wrong place internationally. In particular when it comes to water, we today have in most parts of the world pricing strategies and subsidy strategies that encourage the inefficient use of water. The supply of fresh water globally is finite. It is fixed. The demand has been unmanaged or mismanaged. It is either neglected or it is mismanaged in the sense that the incentives of prices and subsidies encourage people to use more water.

So, we have a fundamental problem. The supply is fixed but the demand is uncontrolled and water is going to become more and more scarce everywhere in the world, including in the most advanced countries. Europe already has a severe crisis of ground water. All of us have to address this fundamentally. Politicians and many people commenting on these issues tend to think of pricing water as something offensive, as something that is unfair to the poor, as something that is not good for equality.

In fact, exactly the reverse is the case. The more efficient use of water will be good for the poor. Pricing water so as to be able to get revenue from large corporations, the rich and the middle income group, will provide us the revenues to expand water systems so that everyone has access to clean water. It also provides us the revenues to subsidize the poor and currently we are doing neither. Currently we have systems which either do not price water or price it vastly below its true cost,

leading to excessive use by the largest users and inadequate water, particularly inadequate clean water for the poor and vulnerable populations.

Inefficiency is the biggest threat to the poor, inefficiency in the use of water, and more efficient use of water, encouraged by proper pricing strategies and the withdrawal of subsidies that encourage overuse of water are helpful to the poor. They are helpful to inclusive development and we have to recognize that forthrightly, explain it to our populations, explain why we need proper pricing of water and that you will use subsidies to benefit the poor and to expand our systems to ensure that we have sustainable water systems which do not exist today.

That is a first fundamental policy reform. And the low hanging fruit there is subsidies because we have about USD 700 billion of subsidies in agriculture and water each year, most of which goes towards encouraging unsustainable practices. So, there is low hanging fruit there. Second, we have to use technologies that already exist. Scale them up, particularly in the developing world, and make them affordable. I spoke about agriculture, and I will just focus very quickly on agriculture because the scope to improve irrigation practices so as to improve farmers' yields in income as well as to reduce the use of water is very significant, very significant.

The techniques exist. Whether it is drip irrigation or other techniques, the techniques exist for this. The scope for improved seeds, just like we did in the Green Revolution a long time ago, seeds that allow for crops to be drought-tolerant, to have much less water requirements, to be pest-resistant and yet have higher yields compared to today's seeds is also significant. The scope for sensor-based technologies which we think of when we think of advanced manufacturing and the like, the fourth industrial revolution, actually we need a fourth agricultural revolution.

Actually, it is the first agricultural revolution because we have not had one yet. We need an agricultural revolution that involves these relatively cheap sensors to be used together with more efficient irrigation techniques. And many countries, by the way, including China, have already started implementing this. Having every farmer equipped with these sensors, making it affordable by scaling it up so that you know exactly when you are required to put more water in the soil, it is not some fancy frontier technologies, it already exists.

Urban farming, which countries like the Netherlands are leaders of, and Singapore is also moving into, urban farming solutions which require far less water, what you call hydroponics, using nutrient-rich water recirculated in closed systems to cultivate crops directly. Dramatic reductions in water required, about a 90 percent reduction in water compared to conventional soil-based agriculture.

Finally, regenerative agricultural practices. Crop rotation that can also improve yields whilst improving water retention in the soil are extremely important and, again, doable on a much larger scale internationally. And, besides, improving water retention in the soil also increases carbon sequestration ability because there is not enough water in the soil, the soil is no longer a carbon sink.

So, that is existing technologies that can be scaled down. But I want to highlight a very particular opportunity there. We have to transform the way rice is produced. Particularly in Asia because it is in Asia where over 90 percent of the rice is produced and over 85 percent of the rice is consumed. Asia is both the rice basket of the world but also the rice consumer of the world. And we have a problem because the current methods of rice production are simply not sustainable. They are extraordinarily water-intensive, there is lesser and lesser water available and we have a major problem.

It can be solved and it has to be said, by the way, this is not just a problem of water because rice is also a major source of methane emissions from agriculture. It accounts for 10 percent of methane emissions in agriculture and is also a very significant source of greenhouse gas emissions from all crop production, a main source of greenhouse gas emissions, about 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. So, we have to do something about this. The examples that are already in play are very encouraging.

In Vietnam, for instance, the government strategy of using new irrigation techniques, what they call alternate wetting and drying irrigation – first put irrigation for about five centimetres, you wait until the water has subsided to about 15 centimetres below the soil, then you add a little bit more water, just as an example – has led to very significant improvement in water use. Up to 40 percent reduction in water use. And improved farmers' yields as well. So, it improves incomes, serves national

development purposes but it reduces water use. This is in the Mekong Delta. Very impressive programming.

China is a very good example, and on a large scale. China embarked on a climate-smart staple crop production project some years ago. Again, farmers have benefited. Significant improvement in yield, something like 22 percent. Significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, just like in Vietnam, but reduced water use by about 38 percent, almost 40 percent. They did it mainly in China through drop irrigation but also use of sensors, other techniques, and making it all affordable for farmers. If we do not adopt these known techniques, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in Southeast Asia, is going to become a net importer of rice of the rest of the world rather than a net exporter.

But it is also possible that you will not have net exporters anywhere in the world, so you have a problem. You have a problem with regard to staples consumption. We have to change for the purpose of food security, for the purpose of water security and environmental security, and the techniques exist. They require policy support, they require financing support, for farmers especially.

While these are techniques that do not require a five or ten or 15-year payback, when you invest in them, the payback is six months, one year, maximum three years, depending on the type of technique. It is a fully investable opportunity from the point of view of farmers. So, I really want to highlight that. We need a revolution in the way rice is grown. The techniques exist and in the next decade we have to start making significant moves in that direction.

Finance is the third solution. I spoke about policy reforms, then about using technologies and the particular importance of the transformation in rice production but finance is necessary. And for wherever we are in the world, whatever the level of income, you must always think first and foremost about how we raise domestic resources, both through tax strategies that are fair to the poor, in other words, progressive tax strategies, making sure that tax collection systems are modernized and tax evasion is not prevalent or is not easy. And we have to make more use of domestic capital markets, developing the domestic financial markets, particularly in the lower middle income countries and the middle income countries.

So, that is the first strategy. When you combine the challenge of food security with ecological security, we are all going to have to raise more resources domestically in the public sector. But it is not going to be enough because the scale of investment required vastly exceeds what the public sector alone can provide, nationally or through international institutions. So, we have got to mobilize a lot more private resources for this task, mobilize private resources for the public good and that means it has got to be commercially viable resources.

And for this purpose we really need to update our thinking quite fundamentally in how we use the international financial institutions. We need a greater scale of financing – public, private and philanthropic – but public sector finance because of its limitations in any scenario has to be now used to mobilize public-private finance to improve the investment environment and to help to mobilize private finance. The scale has to go up severalfold.

We are talking about USD 3 trillion a year and that excludes China, by the way. USD 3 trillion a year to invest in the developing world in the next 30 years per year. That is a lot of money. There is no lack of money in the global capital markets which are about USD 280 trillion. But we have got to organize it and incentivize it so that you have enough money flowing into sustainable investments in the developing world.

That scale is not determined by international organizations or by economists, it is scale that is determined by the science. The science is telling us what are the costs of not investing in climate change and ecological security and food security now? If you do not invest now, we know because what the science tells us about the future, that the costs in future are going to be vastly larger.

So, investing now, mobilizing resources now is far more cost-effective than delaying the investment, quite apart from being far more beneficial to human welfare and avoiding the loss of lives that we are going to see from now until then. So, we have got to avoid being myopic about this. You have got to utilize resources that already exist and in particular reorient the multilateral development banks to the task of mobilizing private finance, and there are several studies that are underway on this. In fact, I am

a Member of G20 expert group that will be presenting a Report on this very shortly, on the reforms to the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). Doable reforms. Not pie in the sky, doable reforms.

It also requires that you do not just raise more finance but we also organize ourselves differently. The fact of the matter is international finance today is a fragmented picture, each MDB doing his own thing. Each national development finance institution or Development Finance Institution (DFI) also doing their own thing. The private sector doing their own thing and philanthropies coming in and doing their own thing.

The system does not work as a system. We have got to make the system work as a system because when you organize yourself country by country in a country platform where there is some understanding as to how we are all going to go in together to invest in a coherent fashion, the outcomes are far more powerful. The impact of our investment is far more significant compared to individual investments in individual projects.

So, we have got to avoid taking a project by project approach in the MDB world and move towards a sectoral and country platform approach that involves working together with the DFIs, the national-based development finance institutions, the private sector and, where relevant, the philanthropies. It is a real opportunity.

Finally, we will only achieve this if we strengthen multilateral mechanisms. The UN is planning a Summit for the Future next year that I think will be a very important moment in time. An important opportunity for us to strengthen multilateralism. There was a recent high level panel that was set up to advise the Secretary-General on a more effective multilateralism that I happen to be a Member of.

But the solutions are themselves not complex. They require political will. They require a sense of what we are up against in terms of the scale of the challenge and how every nation is going to be affected. Not just the poorest nations, every nation is going to be affected if we do not get our act together – mobilize more resources, deploy it more effectively. It requires strength and multilateral mechanisms.

The UN Secretary-General coming out of the recent Water Conference, in fact, committed to strengthening the way in which UN agencies organize themselves to solve their water problem, providing a stronger home for water in the UN system, working better jointly across UN agencies and also appointing a UN water envoy to work together with the agencies. It is an important start but it requires all Member States to really join efforts together, and coalitions of the willing to support specific initiatives to tackle the global water crisis.

Ultimately, however, and this is my final point, ultimately we all know... And I am a politician for many years. I interact with politicians all over the world, in both the developing world and the advanced world, and we know that something has gone wrong. And the something that has gone wrong is not just when people gather in New York at the United Nations or gather in Geneva at the World Health Organization (WHO) or gather at any other international organization, the something that has gone wrong is something that has gone wrong domestically, within societies themselves.

There is good evidence to show that the loss of trust in government and institutions domestically is also related to the loss of trust in international cooperation and typically, in fact, there is a greater loss of trust in domestic institutions than there is in international institutions. When trust in government is higher, trust in international corporations is also higher. And even when trust amongst people themselves is higher, people within the society is higher, trust in the idea of cooperating with the rest of the world is higher.

The first set of data that I was talking about came from the World Value Survey (WVS) which, in fact, the UN Human Development Report (HDR) last year highlighted. I was chair of the Advisory Group for that Report. This is not black and white. Surveys are always impressionistic. But you can tell that there is some realism in it. People are not inherently selfish or against communities elsewhere. They are not devoid of humanitarian impulses but where they are getting along better within their own societies and where they have greater trust for their own governments and institutions, they are also willing to see the prospect of improved lives for themselves coming out of international cooperation.

So, we have to fix the problem of domestic polarization and the loss of trust domestically in institutions as well as within society itself. That is fundamental to multilateralism. We will not achieve a less polarized world, we will not prevent a bifurcated world if we do not address domestic polarization, and that requires a certain orientation to politics, it requires much greater emphasis and that is ultimately in our self-interest wherever we are in the world because the global commons are the global commons. They are common to all of us. They will affect all of us.

And food security, in some way in Africa, is something that results not just because of happenings in Africa, it comes about because of what is happening in the global cycle for water, for global warming, in biodiversity. Everyone has to take responsibility for it. And if we do not, we will all be the worse for it. So, let us have that sense of realism, that sense of opportunity, that sense of being able to unleash a new growth opportunity in the global system. It can be done. It requires the political will and it requires a political reorientation at home, wherever we are.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to address you. Thank you.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

Merci, Honorable Monsieur Tharman Shanmugaratnam for delivering an inspirational and thoughtprovoking 33rd McDougall Memorial lecture.

#### ***Poursuit en français***

Je crois qu'en entendant des conférences comme la vôtre, où est-ce qu'on a l'occasion d'apprendre, de renforcer nos connaissances, de pouvoir les élargir aussi, ça nous aide à être plus convaincu et aussi, par le fait même plus convaincant, et ça nous donne le courage comme décideurs, de prendre des décisions qui sont difficiles. Alors, merci pour votre contribution.

#### ***Continues in English***

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as you may know, Frank McDougall was a renowned Australian economist whose work galvanized international opinion on the topic of food security. It is therefore my pleasure, in time-honoured fashion at the Conference, to call upon the representative of Australia to take the floor and offer some reflections on Frank McDougall, and today's lecture named after him.

#### **His Excellency Murray WATT (Australia)**

Distinguished delegates, Director-General, Excellencies, and participants.

Australia is always honoured to provide a response to the McDougall Memorial Lecture, which is an important part of each United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Conference.

It is my privilege to address you here today as Australia's Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

It is an honour to be able to respond to Senior Minister Tharman's speech, which has challenged our thinking on some of the greatest challenges we face today. I would like to start today by reflecting on the namesake for this speech: British born Australian farmer and economist, Frank McDougall.

As you know, Frank was instrumental in establishing FAO, in response to food availability challenges, arising from war and disease. Not unlike the circumstances we face today. In doing this, Frank promoted the crucial role of agricultural production in contributing to food security, human health, and economic development. And he was a staunch advocate for collaboration - creating a mechanism where we, the 195 Members of FAO, can all work together on these shared challenges.

Despite global agricultural production increasing nearly 4-fold since the 1960s, Frank's goal to improve food security remains as relevant today as ever.

Conflict, disrupted supply chains, climate change and pandemic recovery are all impacting on the ability of the world's growing population to access the food and nutrition they need and deserve. Just

as we face challenges like those Frank encountered 80 years ago, there also remain opportunities for us to work together.

In his speech, Senior Minister Tharman highlighted the benefits of collaboration to value water for its efficiency, sustainability, and equity. I recognise and thank him for the work he is doing globally on this critical issue.

This matters a great deal for Australia. As you might be aware, we are the world's driest inhabited continent and one of our most famous poems describes us as a 'land of droughts and flooding rains'. Yet we are also a successful agricultural producer. We have done this by - among other things - embracing water efficiency. Producing more from less. Growing our agriculture sector in the process.

We have not done everything right and we still have work to do, but the changes that we have made relating to water efficiency made the Australian rice growers use fifty percent less water to grow one kilogram of rice than the world average. And we are now working with our Indo-Pacific neighbours to assist them to do the same.

Australia's journey towards recognising the value of water for all of its benefits has been built on reforms that were difficult to implement - both practically and politically. But there are lessons we can share, particularly around establishing water markets, to help improve agricultural productivity, while also delivering for the environment, and communities.

Equally, there are lessons we can learn from each of you - which is the point of forums like this. For if we are serious about achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger, we need to use forums like FAO to seriously reform our agriculture sectors.

So that our food production is not only environmentally sustainable but can also support food security for a growing global population.

This is particularly pertinent given the current global food crisis, with increasing numbers of people that are hungry and starving, or unable to afford a healthy diet around the world.

The challenge is not getting easier, with the OECD estimating global agricultural productivity needs to increase by 28 percent over the next decade if we are to achieve Zero Hunger. And this needs to be done at the same time as we reduce agricultural emissions to meet the Paris Agreement Targets and work to improve biodiversity outcomes.

This is no mean feat. But it is not insurmountable - if we work together.

As a starting point, we should embrace and share innovation and our learnings in climate smart agriculture to improve sustainability, productivity and profitability. We should continue to enhance food market transparency and policy responses for food security, including through the Agricultural Market Information System. And Australia is pleased to invest more funding to support this vital service. But collectively, we will not solve our food security challenge without supporting more open, transparent and rules based international trade.

In particular, we can do this by reforming and repurposing harmful and distortionary practices, such as agricultural subsidies and tariffs.

As FAO's own research - along with many others - shows, this is critical to dealing with our common food security challenge, as well as promoting more sustainable agricultural practices.

FAO's 2021 Report, titled "*A multi-billion dollar opportunity*" proposed a six step process to repurpose agricultural subsidies to transform our global food systems.

Removing distortions to agricultural markets, supported by environmental safeguards, has the potential to increase food production, lower consumer prices, increase food consumption, support economic development, and reduce emissions from agriculture.

This is something all nations can benefit from and all nations have an interest in collaborating on.

I recognise the challenge presented by the prospect of doing this - particularly for smallholder farmers - when they are looking often for more support not less. But Australia offers a case study in how this can be done, in how to weather this storm, in repurposing domestic support.

We lived through the tough times, and we have seen the benefits.

As Australia developed as a nation, including through Frank McDougall's time, successive governments provided a range of supports to our farmers. These policies were well intended. They attempted to stabilise farm returns and offset some of the hardships of living, working and running businesses in rural and regional areas. These policies led to the common refrain that Australia's prosperity "rode off the sheep's back". But it became clear that so-called prosperity was masking significant distortions to our agriculture sector that were holding us back, not taking us forward.

By the late 1980s, high levels of government support in Australia had resulted in overproduction and misallocation of resources. It had, for example, encouraged Australian farmers to produce wool at the expense of other agricultural products, such as meat and wheat.

Our sheep numbers peaked in 1989 at 170 million, we were producing more than 1 million tonnes of wool, and there were around 25 000 wool-producing farms across Australia.

In 1991, Australia's wool price support scheme was no longer sustainable and was suspended, amid much controversy. This drastically changed the face of Australian agriculture. So much so that today, our national sheep flock is around 70 million, we are producing around 400 000 tonnes of wool each year, and wool-producing sheep farm numbers have dropped to around 10 000. This sounds like a disaster, but it was not. It was change and the agriculture sector was supported to make that change. Not all wool growers went out of business or left the sector. Some did. But those that stayed adapted to the new environment.

Importantly, it allowed the sector to innovate and grow, not constrained by government created incentives that were misaligned with consumer or market demands and our producers are now taking advantage of newly-opened high value overseas markets for wool and sheep meat.

I have been thinking about this a bit lately, as we have recently sadly lost two champions of this approach, former Australian Agriculture Ministers John Kerin and Simon Crean.

Across the 1980s, '90s and into the 2000s, Ministers like them led Australia through a period of trade liberalisation and deregulation. Repurposing subsidies into research and development and developing new export markets, removing government control of markets and fostering international collaboration in pursuit of these goals. Supporting our farmers but supporting them differently.

And while these reforms were at times painful, they generated efficiency gains that accounted for around a third of agricultural productivity growth from 1989-1999 and two-thirds between 1999-2009.

And here is the even better news. While wool production declined, Australian agriculture prospered. Our farmers innovated, diversified their production systems, became more responsive to market signals and are now better able to manage risk. They are more competitive. They are more efficient – including by better optimising their chemical, fertiliser, and fuel use. There is greater food diversity. We are getting better environmental outcomes. And importantly, farm incomes have increased.

In short, these actions have helped Australian agriculture to be more sustainable and productive. This is good news for farmers, for consumers and for the global population.

I know I am just one voice here in this Plenary Hall today, but I believe this is an important story to tell. And like Frank McDougall wanted, one that can help us all work together to achieve our Zero Hunger goal.

Through this spirit of cooperation, Australia is working with countries, like Singapore, to deliver more fair and transparent trade.



We are working together on initiatives such as the Singapore-Australia Food Pact and our first of its kind Green Economy Agreement, which are supporting our economic, trade and investment goals. And we are using this to deliver on our respective climate change, agricultural sustainability, and food security objectives. This is the type of collaboration – and outcomes – I believe would make Frank McDougall proud. And as someone who likes to work alongside others – to find solutions together, through strong partnerships – I am keen to continue this collaborative approach.

It is this way of doing things that I would like to replicate with other trading partners, across regions and at other forums internationally. With both developed and developing nations.

I am looking forward to meeting with agriculture leaders from the Southwest Pacific tonight. I am keen to continue the conversation on how Australia can work in partnership with countries across our region to improve food security and address climate change.

I hope to have many more conversations like this with you during my time here in Rome.

In closing, I would like to thank Senior Minister Tharman again for his address.

I would like to thank Mr Frank McDougall and his contemporaries for having the vision to work together to seek to eliminate hunger and improve nutrition and standards of living through increased agricultural productivity.

I look forward to working closely with you all - to make the tough calls that are needed to overcome the world's present day food security and sustainability challenges.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak here today.

**His Excellency Mohammed Hassan KATANA (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

Climate change, our determining factor if we are to achieve food security at the regional and international levels, and a major factor when it comes to implementing plans to tackle the impact of climate change, one of these factors is creating a link between food security, water security and people's security. Real security.

Therefore, water management is truly crucial, especially given that the distribution of these resources internationally is not equitable and is not fair. Therefore, we must better manage the distribution of these resources. If we are to achieve better production a better environment and a better life, we must work in a concerted fashion and draft regional policies to address the impact of climate change.

Most of the time water resources are cross boundary/trans boundary resources shared between and amongst several states. Therefore sharing them equitably in a sound fashion can help forge a path towards greater stability. Again, we must forge common regional policies for water management, as well as to address the impact of climate change – with or without that impact – before climate change causes many country situations to deteriorate further.

**His Excellency Mr Martin KOVÁČ (Slovakia)**

I want just to contribute to the debate that I fully support the idea that was presented by Senior Minister of Singapore about the need to restore global water cycle and to support global water cycle stability. And I want to say that we took part in the UN Water Conference in Europe as well in March of this year, and our contribution to the Conference was a methodology on the opportunity to use small water cycles as a part of this global water cycle recovery.

This is so important, and we can really use a number of methods and techniques how we can take part by country and every country to really take part and to decrease the risk of floods and droughts and to support global water cycle everywhere.

**M. Henri OKEMBA (Congo)**

Je voudrais ajouter ma voix à celle de mon prédécesseur qui a remercié, le Seigneur Shanmugaratnam pour son brillant exposé. Je viens des pays où prendre la parole sur cette question peut-être pousser à interrogation, parce que le Congo est pratiquement inondé d'eau, de part et d'autre. Non

seulement nous avons un grand fleuve, mais nous avons de nombreuses rivières. Mais ce que le Seigneur [inaudible] en termes de globalité m'a interpellé parce que depuis quelques années, avec le changement climatique, le Congo subit inondation après inondation.

Donc, nous avons en fait le problème à rebours, les autres ont un problème de sécheresse, nous avons un problème à rebours, le problème d'inondation qui impact très fortement les systèmes de culture, qui impactent les populations dans leurs lieux d'habitation, qui impactent même la gestion sociétale au niveau des zones forestières. Donc, c'était pour apporter mon soutien à l'analyse du Seigneur que j'interviens sur cette question.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

If there are no further requests for the floor, I would like to give the floor back to Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

#### **His Excellency Tharman SHANMUGARATNAM (Singapore)**

I would just make a very brief comment in response to my colleague from Congo who described a problem which is in fact becoming more common, which is that what we are seeing is not just a growing scarcity of water globally, but also greater extremities of water. More droughts and more floods – often by the way happening in the same place, and the science also explains that because when you have a drought for some period and the soil hardens, it makes you much more vulnerable to a flood the next time.

The basic problem is this: The changes in the global water cycle that are happening are going to produce more extreme floods and more extreme droughts in different places, and sometimes in the same place. But they are all part of the same phenomenon that we are not managing the supply and demand for water in a sustainable way.

The supply of water comes from rainfall but what is critical to the supply of water for decades, was the natural ecosystem, the wetlands and the other parts of the natural ecosystem including the forests themselves, that were stores of water and regulators of water – that is how water was regulated. But because we have been removing the wetlands at an increasing pace in the last two decades, and we have been deforesting the land, we do not have the natural store and regulator of water anymore.

Furthermore, we have been over-extracting ground water. Increasing the shortage of water, what countries have been doing – including countries that were leaders in the green revolution – is simply to extract more and more ground water, such that we are now reaching a very critical point, a really critical point from the loss of ground water.

And of course I say this here in Rome, and Rome as we all know is what brought the world aquifers. We are no longer in a situation where we can count on ground water as a stabilizer and as a predictable source of water for agriculture and for other uses around the world. So we have mismanaged supply and we have left demand unmanaged because we are unwilling to use the basic economic policy tools that we use in every other sector – in every other sector, prices mean something, and when prices of essentials are too high for the poor, we use subsidies to subsidise the poor.

That is the rule of government. But we are unwilling to use these strategies when it comes to water, and instead what we do is we allow the largest users of water to either pay nothing or pay too little for water, and worse than that, most of our subsidies also go to the largest users.

So we are incentivizing the over-use of water, and we are undermining the sources of fresh water and the storage of fresh water at the same time – and this requires fundamentally policy reform and governance reform, failing which we will keep seeing what our colleague from Congo pointed out – repeated and more extreme weather extremities.

So thank you very much for listening to me once again, thank you for your observations, I think we are getting on to the same page of action and we really have to strengthen multilateralism, including the UN system to be able to organize our efforts and address this challenge.

Thank you.

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*  
*Aplausos*

**CHAIRPERSON**

This concludes Item 31.1 and I wish, once again, to thank the Honourable Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam for addressing the Conference.

Before drawing a close to this Plenary meeting I wish to invite the seven Members of the General Committee elected earlier this morning and the three Vice-Chairpersons to make their way to the King Faisal Room for the first meeting of the General Committee. It will start at 11:30 hours.

Furthermore, I wish to remind the nine Members of the Credentials Committee, that the Committee will also meet at 11:30 hours in the Lebanon Room.

Excellences, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, this brings us to the end of our work this morning. The second plenary meeting of the Conference will reconvene in this Plenary Hall at 14:30 hours this afternoon.

With this, I declare our first plenary meeting closed.

*The meeting rose at 11:11 hours*  
*La séance est levée à 11 h 11*  
*Se levanta la sesión a las 11.11*



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منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Roma, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>SECOND PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>SEGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>1 July 2023</b></p>

The Second Meeting was opened at 14:42 hours  
Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La deuxième séance est ouverte à 14 h 42  
sous la présidence de Mme. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Président de la Conférence

Se abre la segunda reunión a las 14.42  
bajo la presidencia de la Sra. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Presidente de la Conferencia

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**First Report of the Credentials Committee**  
**Premier rapport de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs**  
**Primer informe del Comité de Credenciales**  
(C 2023/INF/2)

**PRESIDENT**

Mesdames et Messieurs, je déclare ouverte la deuxième séance plénière de la 43ème Session de la Conférence de la FAO. Je vais maintenant faire une brève déclaration concernant la participation de l'Union Européenne.

L'Union Européenne participe à cette réunion en vertu des dispositions des paragraphes huit et neuf de l'article deux de l'acte constitutif de la FAO. Je souhaite attirer l'attention des membres sur la déclaration faite par l'Union Européenne et ses états membres qui figure dans le document C 2023/INF/2.

Avant d'examiner le prochain point de l'ordre du jour, je souhaite donner la parole à Monsieur Joachim Bleicker, Président de la Commission de Vérification des Pouvoirs, qui va présenter le rapport à la Conférence.

**Mr Joachim BLEICKER (Chairperson of the Credentials Committee)**

The Credentials Committee held four meetings to examine the Credentials received on 23, 27, 30 June and 1 July 2023. This Report is contained in document C 2023/LIM/12.

The Report provides information on the rules and practices of the work of the Committee and on the fact that on this matter FAO follows Rule III of the General Rules of the Organization as well as the practice and criteria followed by the Organization with respect to the acceptance of credentials, in accordance with the prevailing practice in the United Nations system, in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3965.

Up today 188 Member Nations, one Member Organization, the European Union and one Associate Member have submitted credentials or information on their composition of their delegations. Six Member Nations and one Associate Member have not provided any information on their participation or representation in the Conference Session.

The Committee recommends to the Conference that the credentials of the delegations listed in the Annex as contained in document C 2023/LIM/12 be accepted and if those delegations be authorized to participate fully in the Conference.

I would invite the Conference to approve the Report of the Credentials Committee as document C 2023/LIM/12.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Does anyone have any comments to provide following the Report?

**Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)**

The United States wishes to disassociate from credentialing of the Maduro regime and would like this disassociation reflected in a footnote to the Conference Report.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Would the Representative of the United States be clear about the country that he is referring to?

**Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)**

The Maduro regime purports to represent the country of Venezuela.

**Sra. Haifa Aissami MADAH (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de)**

Mi Delegación lamenta que desde el inicio de esta Conferencia en la mañana de hoy y ahora, nuevamente, en la Sesión de la tarde la Delegación de Estados Unidos rompa con la buena armonía

que debería imperar en esta reunión que nos convoca, luego de un período de tiempo tan prolongado, por primera vez en modo presencial nuevamente.

Mi país pregona la diplomacia bolivariana de paz y hemos querido distinguirnos para no caer en el juego de quienes bajo los argumentos estrictamente políticos quieren polarizar y politizar los discursos y los debates de esta Organización. No puedo sino lamentar que esta práctica se haya convertido en una práctica reiterada. Sin embargo, por reciprocidad, mi Delegación se desasocia de la referencia a las credenciales de la Delegación de los Estados Unidos y solicito muy respetuosamente que en los récords de esta Conferencia así quede expresado.

Asimismo, solicito que cualquier expresión irrespetuosa, injuriosa y contraria a las prácticas diplomáticas con las que se pretenda etiquetar a un gobierno soberano sean suprimidas de las notas de pie de página.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

The point made by the two countries will be included in the footnotes of the Report.

#### ***Poursuit en français***

Je remercie le Président et les membres de la Commission de Vérification des Pouvoirs pour le rapport et pour le travail effectué et je déclare le rapport adopté.

#### **First Report of the General Committee**

##### **Premier rapport du Bureau**

##### **Primer informe del Comité General**

*(C 2023/LIM/13)*

#### **Second Report of the General Committee**

##### **Deuxième rapport du Bureau**

##### **Segundo informe del Comité General**

*(C 2023/LIM/14)*

#### **PRESIDENT**

Nous allons maintenant aborder les deux points suivants de l'ordre du jour. Le point trois, Adoption de l'ordre du jour et organisation de la Session. Et le point quatre, Admissions d'observateurs.

J'informe les délégués que le Bureau s'est réuni pendant la pause et a élaboré son premier et deuxième rapports contenant des recommandations aux fins de leur examen par la Conférence. Le premier rapport contient des recommandations à la Conférence, concernant l'organisation de la Session, tandis que le deuxième rapport traite du rétablissement de droits de vote des états membres, en retard dans le paiement de leurs contributions.

Les rapports sont disponibles dans toutes les langues de la FAO sur le site web de la Conférence et sont également mis à disposition sur le portail des membres et sur l'application mobile de la Conférence. Je suppose que vous avez les documents *C 2023/LIM/13* et *C 2023/LIM/14* devant vous. Je vous invite maintenant à adopter *en bloc* le premier et le deuxième rapport du Bureau. Je vous remercie, alors le premier et le deuxième rapport du Bureau sont maintenant adoptés.

Je remercie les membres du Bureau pour le travail effectué jusqu'ici et je me réjouis à la perspective de travailler avec vous tout au long de la semaine.

#### **Item 5. Applications for Membership in the Organization**

##### **Point 5. Demandes d'admission à la qualité de membre de l'Organisation**

##### **Tema 5. Solicitudes de ingreso en la Organización**

#### **PRESIDENT**

Nous passons maintenant au point cinq, Demande d'admission à la qualité de membres de l'organisation. Le Secrétariat nous informe qu'aucune demande d'admission à l'organisation n'a été reçue.

**Item 6. Appointment of the Director-General**

**Point 6. Nomination du Directeur général**

**Tema 6. Nombramiento del Director General**

**PRESIDENT**

Nous pouvons donc passer au point suivant. Pour le point 8, *Nomination du Directeur Général*, communication du candidat au poste de Directeur Général. Les documents dont la Conférence est saisie portent la cote C 2023/7, C 2023/7 Add. 1, C 2023/7 Add. 2, et C 2023/INF/10. Conformément à l'article 37 paragraphe 1, alinéa C, du règlement général de l'organisation, et aux dispositions adoptées par le Conseil à sa 171<sup>ème</sup> Session en décembre, qui ont été récemment confirmées par la Conférence lors de l'adoption du premier rapport du Bureau, le candidat disposera de 15 minutes pour s'adresser à la Conférence, et il n'y aura pas de séance de questions et réponses, ni d'interventions des participants après son allocution.

J'invite donc Docteur Qu Dongyu, actuel Directeur Général de la FAO à s'adresser à la Conférence en tant que candidat au poste de Directeur Général.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Dear Madame Chair, dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to stand before you now and present to you in this Ministerial Conference my next manifesto because my manifesto is very long and I could not finish here within 15 minutes, but I will just go through it and then deliver it on the web afterwards.

From vision to action building a modern FAO and during the past four years a One FAO with new Strategic Framework, for the next ten years seek to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, better environment, a better life, leaving no one behind, endorsed by the last FAO Ministerial Conference.

My sincere appreciation to all the FAO members, to all FAO employees and all partners. We tackled the challenges together during the past four years.

Now the new vision, new structure and new initiative have helped us speed up, scale up to build a new FAO. You see, we have endorsed the three thematic strategies, on private sector engagement, science and innovation, climate change and mainstreaming biodiversity across agri-food sectors.

A number of initiatives have been launched, so now we need the outcome with the action plan and more deliverable and tangible results. We have walked the talk in communication and outreach to make FAO historically visible forever, and much highest in the history. I introduce the Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) to help us to look in a holistic way and adopt a zero tolerance policy for all misconducts.

A new Office of Ombuds, an Ethics Office established, and also we strengthened the capacity of Office of Inspector General (OIG) and let them work capably and independently. Now a flat, modular and flexible structure for the Organization established, especially a Core Leadership, three Deputy Directors-General (DDGs), two Chiefs plus the Director of Cabinet. It is a new and innovative way within the UN system and we established three new offices, one for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDC) and one Office of Innovation (OIN). That is the first in history and first in the UN system.

We strengthened existing offices – Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP), the Office of Evaluation (OED), the Fish and Aquaculture Division and the Land and Water Division, and the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) and the Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER). The FAO Investment Centre established, jointly with the World Bank and now we have reformed it to fit the purpose. Then we upgraded the joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre.

We have achieved extraordinary achievements especially FAO's flagship Hand-In-Hand Initiative has now become one of the top six initiatives in the UN system. We will promote it among the whole UN system at the next UN Food System Stocktaking meeting here. Now 65 Members identified voluntarily will participate in this meeting and we have helped them to establish comprehensive investment plans and others.

Of course, we have addressed the COVID-19 pandemic and we established the Crisis Management Team (CMT) for the corporate coordination and ensure FAO continues to operate efficiently, effectively and agilely, and of course FAO was the first UN Agency, to host the virtual meeting globally, and in all six UN languages in April 2020.

The World Food Forum (WFF) established with three pillars to promote the global agri-food system transformation.

The FAO "1000 Digital Villagers" Initiative (DVI) was established.

Now FAO is fully operated paperless as a digital FAO. You can get all the news, information, updated programmes through the Digital FAO.

One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) has become the new branding initiative for the countries and the Green Cities Initiative now has started to integrate with the Green Economy and urban food security.

All the data based information and products to support the transformation of agricultural systems in the world.

In addition, you see the first virtual meeting in the UN system and we participated actively in all the important events and of course resources mobilized is now at an historical high. We have increased 51 percent. I promised 10 percent annually and in only one year, we increased to 51 percent. I appreciate all the big donors and especially we changed business model to strengthen the cooperation with international financial institutions and also the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and others. That helps us.

Now the new people-centred culture has been established, you can see, with the principles of respect, understanding, inclusiveness and appreciation.

The gender parity, we are one of the best in the UN system after the evaluation, and all the recruitments are openly announced and then through the panel review before reaching me with the shortlist.

Also, not only from the Headquarters, also to the field. I visited, together with my colleagues, about 400 000 kilometres during the past one and a half years. You can see we have not stopped working.

Women and youth will always be my priority, so FAO Women's Committee, FAO Youth Committee are two first things in the UN system. We are going to strengthen this aspect. We count on their support, especially as they played a particularly important role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We made many firsts in the FAO history: Town Hall meetings, Employee Recognition Awards. 400 young, 400 young-at-heart and about 50 Best Teams.

Based on four years' experience, I have ten points, which I want to share. However, the key words are ownership, trust, rule-based approach, professionalism and recruit the global talents openly and merit-based, One FAO culture and others.



Of course, I got spiritual support, not only from the resources of the Donors, but also from the Holy Father and other senior staff and also the UN system and all the key partners. You can see that for all the important Members and the important platforms, I tried my best to participate and, of course, we have built very close relations with the host country, at Headquarters here, and with all those who host us in the country offices.

Of course, looking ahead, we still have a big job needed to be done more and better, and the figures by 2030 probably have 670 million people would be still in hunger. That is not acceptable. Of course, the challenge is mainly focused on sustainability, climate change and also water, food loss and waste, others, but from the crop to the biodiversity.

We have key transformation drivers, Digitalization, Urbanization, Industrialization and Carbon Neutralization. That is above all of the agri-food systems transformation and rural development.

Urbanization: In 2019, it is only 56 percent and in 2050, it will be 70 percent. That means 2.4 billion to 2.8 billion will move from the countryside to the city. That is a big scenario. We need more food, better food, more diverse food and quality control. That is the future. A big challenge, especially from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Industrialization: you speed up in the new emerging economies and that will change the food availability and food accessibility.

Digitalization: So, speed up quickly and now LDCs and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) are still left behind.

Carbon Neutralization: we have many bubbles, especially red bubbles. That is most closely linked with agri-food systems and we need to look at this holistically.

Agri-food Systems had been transforming for decades. Now it is time to speed up and scale up together with all the holistic ways in different sectors.

Projections for the future based on the population increase, that we have produced more plant products with less.

Different regions have different perspectives. You can read it afterwards. I will put it online.

We have several recommendations for you to consider because you are Ministers, so to look at the global scenarios.

Of course, the fisheries and aquaculture. That is why I changed the name of the division. Not only fisheries but also aquaculture. You can see that by 2050 we will share about 60 percent of the fish consumption. That is our future. That is why I strongly encourage you to learn from the leading region, Asia Pacific, which shares about 95 percent of aquaculture production. The rest of the regions still have a big potential.

We need sustainable growth and effective management.

For animal proteins, also we need it more, at least a 20 percent increase, mainly coming from Asia, America and Africa.

I have several recommendations and solutions for producing more with less. Less impact on environment, less input. That is the way of producing Carbon Neutrality.

The five action plans I have discussed with my colleagues already. The next few years we will speed up the action on the ground, in not only the Headquarter or regional offices.

I welcome you to the first ever FAO-hosted Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation. Yesterday I had a very good discussion with the European Agriculture Commissioner. He recommended it as the first area to strengthen collaboration. So, make use of this.

Also, this time the Ministerial Conference will focus on water, water resource management, for the Four Betters. You can see this morning we invited the most comprehensive politician from Singapore to come with experience, to share it and jump out of the box for his delivering the traditional

McDougall Memorial Lecture. You can see that flooding has hit about 30 percent of the population of the world for many years. About 600 million people annually are at flooding risk.

We have several recommendations for the next week to discuss and there we need more Crop Water Requirements, at least based on two scenarios: 35 percent to 24 percent, depending on the different business model. Of course, we need to have some more irrigated areas.

Then, we need Integrated Land, Soil and Water Resources Management. That is the backbone pillars of a professional FAO since we started.

Land-based contributions to the decarbonisation of three ecosystems. This morning we had the discussion on forestry, the wetlands, and the dry land. Those are three situations.

We have to work together more to strengthen our Agroforestry. That is also to bringing the short-term economic return and improve livelihoods. And not only forestry. We need both.

And to integrate forestry to the key climate actions. We strengthened collaboration since COP25, COP26, and now COP28 together.

Speed up the transformation of the agri-food system for the Four Betters, Leaving no one behind. We need more best practices from Members.

With One FAO, we can provide a professional service, learning among the Members. Build a world-class modern Organization and we already said the Four Betters and the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), and identified Value-Added Impact Areas (VAIAs) we are working on with more focus.

We have the five key dimensions for the next four years: to increase resource mobilization, that is why we need to strongly encourage you to help me to get a little bit more increase of the budget. Accelerate technology. We are going to establish an agriculture museum together with others.

We want to strengthen the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration. Luckily, now I appreciate the new Executive-Director (ED) from the United States, Ms Cindy McCain, and the new President of IFAD from Spain. Now we really have a close coordination at Headquarters and we want to work together at the country level together. After this conference later in July, we will work together also for the field trip, with other UN Agencies as well.

We have five critical entry points. I do not want to repeat it here because that is not new for you because two months ago I already delivered.

Of course, I appreciate that we need more strong and adequate support from the host country, of the Headquarters, and other host countries in the Members and offices and so on.

FAO is your FAO. I am fortunate to be the FAO DG to offer the service for you. I always encourage my colleagues we are not bureaucrats, we are not officials, even if I was a Vice Minister, but we should be a service provider. Remember four years ago! I said, "I walk the talk."

*Thank you very much, shukran, 多谢 (duō xiè), merci, spasiba, gracias, grazie mille.*

Then I want to use the last two minutes to show you how beautiful, even when you face a challenge, with my mobile phone photos. I know you come here, you do not have time to enjoy that special moment of taking photos, but with my lockdown time, I made a lot. However, I select only a few because I collected more than 10 000.

I present first the screenshot to the Office of Communication (OCC). I was a professor. I know how to handle those things. First the virtual meeting with the G20 Summit. I made the screenshot photo for them because you can see I arrived July 28, 9:28 PM hours in Rome. I know some of you; maybe you do not see that.

That is my first dinner with my wife. I changed from Minister Level to the FAO humble service people. So simple. However, a very typical Italian dinner, lemon, and I promote Italy with the five Fs – food, football, fashion, friendly people, and famous relics.

Famous relics because it was number one. Equally now I share with China but the Italians also FAMA. So, the five Fs. I remember Italy with good memories each time.

That is the first Minister who came to my office. That is the old terrace. That is the first week of August in 2019 and 12 August I said hello to all the Muslim brothers and sisters for Eid Mubarak. That is the old cafeteria.

I really admire my colleagues that can deliver with just a simple cafeteria so many years. However, during past two days, again, we come to Eid Mubarak. I really thank all the Muslim brothers and sisters that you escape your holiday to come for this Conference. I really thank you.

In addition, you can see, that is also just before the sunset. At 21:30 hours tonight you can see the most beautiful sunset in Rome. Have you seen the UN Headquarters like this? And the ocean. I met the Honourable John Kerry together that time in Norway. Moreover, UN Headquarters in Geneva. Fortunately, I am from the East. You are fortunate to see the Buddha Aperture in the aeroplane. I had two times to see that. If you see it one time in one life, it is lucky enough but I had two times to see. I want to share with all of you to see this picture. It is bringing luck to you. Believe it.

Then here is a good place to watch the rainbows because it is peninsulas of the Mediterranean. And Italian people are very innovative.

That is one of my life-long hobbies, to make photos and calligraphy.

And more with sunsets and also sunrises.

That is Villa Pamphili.

So, I invited all your Ministers to come in October, and your leaders, we will establish an FAO forest park with my colleagues from Italy. For the first time we will have an FAO forest park in Villa Pamphili. Walk the talk. Sustainability, green carbon issues, start to plant trees and flowers, ornamental plants. So, you will make your history when you plant trees or flowers in Rome. 2 000 years later, like myself, that is my first poem when I arrived here.

Also, do not forget the history. The new deal for 3R, that time President Franklin Roosevelt chaired the first United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture to propose the establishment of FAO by 44 Members. Unfortunately, he died on 12 April 1945. Later the Canadian Prime Minister Lester Bowles Pearson, he took the responsibility to prepare the FAO under the UN System on 16 October in Ottawa. That is why Ottawa is formally the place to establish FAO. I will introduce four – Recovery, Reform, Rebuilding and Renaissance. We need a renaissance of a new Organization.

And that is my ancestor, Qu Yuan. A lot of people from Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia know that. 2 300 years ago he wrote a famous poem.

### *Continues in Chinese*

路漫漫其修远兮，吾将上下而求索 (The road ahead will be long and our climbing will be steep).

### *Continues in English*

That is our mission. The road ahead will be long and our climbing will be steep. Let us go together and climb it together to end the poverty and the hunger. Thank you very much.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

### **PRESIDENT**

Nous avons déjà terminé pour la journée et nous nous retrouverons demain matin dès 10 h 30 pour poursuivre l'examen du point six, en procédant au vote, scrutin secret, en vue de la nomination du Directeur Général. Nous allons nous retrouver demain matin à 10 h 30 pour procéder au vote, je vous souhaite un agréable fin de journée.

*The meeting rose at 15:16 hours*

*La séance est levée à 15 h 16*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 15.16*



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>THIRD PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>2 July 2023</b></p>

The Third Meeting was opened at 10:39 hours  
Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La troisième séance est ouverte à 10 h 39  
sous la présidence de Mme. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Président de la Conférence

Se abre la tercera reunión a las 10.39  
sous la présidence de Mme. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Président de la Conférence

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**Item 6. Appointment of the Director-General (*continued*)****Point 6. Nomination du Directeur général (*suite*)****Tema 6. Nombramiento del Director General (*continuación*)**

(C 2023/7; C 2023/7 Add.1; C 2023/7 Add.2; C 2023/12; C 2023/INF/10)

**CHAIRPERSON**

I call the Third Plenary Meeting of the 43rd FAO Conference to order.

Before we move to Item 6, part two, I wish to inform the Conference that the Credentials Committee met once again last night after the close of our Session, to review late submissions of two Member Nations.

The related recommendation of the Credentials Committee, for approval by Conference, is contained in an addendum to its report that you approved yesterday, namely in document C 2023/LIM/12 Add.1.

May I take it that the Conference approves the recommendation in this document?

So decided.

We open this morning with Item 6, *Appointment of the Director-General*.

As you are aware, there is only one candidate for the post of Director-General for the period 1 August 2023-31 July 2027, namely Dr QU Dongyu of China.

We shall now proceed to a secret ballot to elect the Director-General for the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2027.

In accordance with Article VII.1 of the Constitution and Rule XXXVII of the General Rules of the Organization, the Conference appoints the Director-General.

Additionally, in accordance with paragraph 10 (a) of Rule XII, the appointment of the Director-General is decided by a secret ballot vote, even in the case of a sole candidate for the position.

I give the floor to the Elections Officer to run through the voting procedures, and to carry out the necessary quorum check.

**ELECTIONS OFFICER**

The voting procedures to elect the Director-General will be in full accordance with the Basic Texts of FAO, as well as in accordance with established practices, including practices applied since the election of the Director-General in 2019.

Before running through the voting procedures, I need to remind all Members and delegates of the fundamental importance of complete secrecy of the ballot.

I also wish to recall the obligation that all those responsible for the supervision of any vote by secret ballot they have to not disclose to any unauthorized person any information, which might tend, or be presumed to tend, towards destroying the secrecy of the ballot, as it is set out in the General Rules of the Organization.

Voting delegates will be asked, at the entrance of the voting area, to hand over electronic recording or communications appliances such as mobile phones and tablets. Electronic appliances will be kept under the supervision of a security guard and will be returned to the delegate at the exit of the voting area, immediately after the delegate has deposited their ballot paper in the ballot box.

I will now describe the voting procedures.

Delegates will be called one by one in alphabetical order starting with the letter "A" to go to the voting area at the corner to my right, around.

Delegates must bring their Conference registration pass to show to the teller at the entrance for identification. A ballot paper will then be issued by one of the two Tellers.

The ballot paper contains the name of the candidate and three boxes with the words “Yes” for a vote in favour; “No” for a vote against; and “Abstention” to abstain in the vote.

Delegates are invited to mark the box of their choice with an “X”. Ballot papers that are left blank will also be considered abstentions.

Under paragraph 4(c) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, the ballot paper shall not carry any notation or mark other than that required for the purpose of indicating a vote, as this would invalidate the ballot paper.

Paragraph 10 of Rule XII states that should any delegate invalidate their ballot paper, they may request a new blank ballot paper from me, as Elections Officer, while they are still in the voting area and before they have deposited their ballot paper. The invalidated ballot paper will then remain in the custody of the Elections Officer.

In accordance with Rule XXXVII, paragraph 2, of the General Rules, the Director-General is elected by a majority of votes cast. The term “votes cast” means votes the “Yes” votes for and the “No” votes against, but do not include abstentions or defective ballots.

I should also like to remind delegates that, in accordance with paragraph 14 of Rule XII, once voting has commenced, no delegate or representative may interrupt the voting except to raise a point of order in connection with the vote.

Before we proceed, we must establish the quorum. In accordance with Rule XII.2, the quorum required for this election is a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization. This means that at least 98 Member Nations must be present at this time.

We will now establish the number of Member Nations present and I am going to request that each Member Nation here that they press their touch screens, that is the ribbon on the touchscreen that says “Present” in all languages. The electronic voting system can then verify the number of delegations present. Please press the ribbon on the touchscreen.

Have all delegations pressed “Present” ribbon to indicate their presence?

The electronic system indicates that there are 180 delegations present in the room. We can thus proceed to the vote.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

In accordance with paragraph 10(c) (i) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, the Chairperson appoints two tellers from the delegates or representatives. Accordingly, I have appointed Her Excellency Carla Barroso Carneiro, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, and Her Excellency Patricia O’Brien, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland as tellers for this election. May I now ask Ambassadors Carneiro and O’Brien to proceed to the voting area.

The Assistant Secretary-General will now call the voters to the voting area. Assistant Secretary-General, you have the floor.

#### **ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will start calling out the names of the countries in alphabetical order.

*Vote*

*Vote*

*Votación*

#### **PRESIDENT**

Nous allons attendre quelques instants pour vérifier que tous les pays aient bien voté, et on vous revient dans quelques instants. Ne quittez pas.

*Continues in English*

Now the names of the countries which did not respond the first time will now be called again. Assistant Secretary-General, you have the floor.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Thank you Madame Chair.

*Vote*

*Vote*

*Votación*

**CHAIRPERSON**

Voting has now been completed. The tellers and the scrutineer appointed by the candidate will leave the Plenary Hall to the counting room, where the tellers will count the vote, with the support of the Elections Officer, a representative of the Legal Counsel, and Secretariat support staff.

We will now suspend this meeting temporarily while the vote is being counted.

*The meeting was suspended from 12:03 to 12:51 hours*

*La séance est suspendue de 12 h 03 à 12 h 51*

*Se suspende la sesión de las 12.03 a las 12.51*

**CHAIRPERSON**

We will now continue with Item 6, *Appointment of the Director-General*.

I will now read the result of the ballot:

The number of ballot papers deposited: 182

Abstentions: 13

Defective ballots: 0

Votes for: 168

Votes against: 1

The total number of votes cast: 169

We needed 85 for the majority and there is 168 votes for. So, Dr QU Dongyu is elected.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

REPORT OF BALLOT RÉSULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACIÓN	<b>1</b>	ELECTION OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ELECTION DU DIRECTEUR-GÉNÉRAL ELECCIÓN DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL	1.8.2023 – 31.7.2027
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	<b>182</b>
2. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	<b>13</b>
3. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	<b>0</b>

4. Votes for Votes pour Votos en favor	<b>168</b>
5. Votes against Votes contre Votos en contra	<b>1</b>
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	<b>169</b>

7. Majority (more than one half of the votes cast)	<b>85</b>
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**Mr QU Dongyu (China)**

is accordingly appointed Director-General  
est nommé Directeur général  
ha sido nombrado Director General

**Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores**

Ms Carla Barroso Carneiro (Brazil)

Signature.....*Carla Carneiro*.....  
Date.....*July 2nd 2023*.....

Ms Patricia O'Brien (Ireland)

Signature.....*[Signature]*.....  
Date.....*02/07/23*.....

Mr Iija Betlem (Elections Officer)

Signature.....*[Signature]*.....  
Date.....*2/7/2023*.....



**CHAIRPERSON**

Dr QU Dongyu of China is accordingly appointed as the Director-General for the term of office from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2027. Congratulations Dr QU Dongyu.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

During this time that are uncertain on many fronts with climate pressure, with so many people suffering from food insecurity, your work is very important as the head of FAO but you have got the support of Members and we want to congratulate you. We recognize your leadership, your passion, your dedication to make this institution always more efficient, more transparent. This is such an important mandate at this time and I want to congratulate you. I wish you the best and you can always count on our support.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Dear Madame Chair, Vice Chairpersons, Excellences, Ladies and gentlemen, Thank you all for the right time to make a right decision.

It is beyond my surprise and happiness. I calculated, I am a transparent person always, I just gambled with my Chinese colleagues. I said maybe 150 votes in favor and at least 10 votes against me, but I really hope that the one against me, if you are willing to, I want to discuss why you are against me.

I just want to figure out if there is something wrong that offended you. It is a way in Chinese culture, we call it, “Every day we have to learn asking yourself three times, is it something wrong?” “吾一日三省。” It is difficult for the young Chinese to translate a classical poem.

Furthermore, I just checked ChatGPT, and found out there is no other important event happening today in the history since Tang Dynasty, and as what you did today. Therefore, you should be proud of yourselves to have made a historical event for the future.

Food availability, food accessibility, food affordability are essential for the people in the world. As a Chinese proverb said, “民以食为天, *guoyiming wei ben*”. I will translate it for you. Do not worry. Food is a top priority to the people, for the people, and the countries are based on the people. You and your Governments are game changers.

FAO Director-General with my teams and colleagues are committed to be your facilitator and promoter. I have been thankful to my humble family now, the noble ancestors and family since 2 800 years ago from the Chu Kingdom.

I have been proud of my original nation with a great civilization and bright future after implementing 45 years of opening-up policies and the reform. I am very much appreciative that I was born in the family of hardship, smallholder farmers to grow rice, with less than 0.9 hectares. I grew up most of the times with my grandmother because I was the second son, there was an older son. Therefore, I am the only FAO Director-General from smallholder farmers. I am proud of that hardship. It taught me how to change.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

Of course, I am happy to grow up in a greater time. I am so fortunate. Many years ago, I travelled to South America, Peru, Chile, Argentina and Mexico. I said, “Your life standard was much higher than in China”. They could not believe it. And then 20 years ago I travelled some of Africa, and I said, “Your life standard is higher than Chinese farmers.” They could not believe it. So I am so fortunate to have a chance to offer my lifelong experience for the smallholder farmers and family farmers for the world.

That is why I can tell you this morning at 2:30 AM I was still cleaning the document sent by my Director of Cabinet and the Chief Economist. Only for three days I remember I did not wake up at midnight. But I am fortunate, I can sleep after working two hours. However, my Director of Cabinet and the Chief Economist, they could not. Therefore, you see, I am still full of energy. I am older than they are, and that is why I said ‘young at heart’ is very important. You cannot change your age, but you can change your psychological age, physical age and social age, if you do more for the society, for the people.

Four years ago, I came to FAO to change it to be dynamic with my manifesto. I kept my promise and realized that no matter how difficult it has been during the past months, years, with all the support from you, from partners, from my colleagues.

You can see I also changed the FAO culture – three Deputy Director-Generals (DDGs), from the previous administration, and I remain them, no matter that they are from Europe, Africa, or America, even Dan Gustafson, I still invite him to be my special representative.

So being consistent with the institutional memory, knowledge and experience are very important, otherwise they just get the whole life experience at 60 plus, and then they left. Imagine, you invest so much money and you let them make many big or small mistakes. You did not harvest them.

I thank you for your tolerance, your permission. I remain them to work for you, for the people who need this high quality experience, and being the Principle of the Organization, the human resources management is number one. Otherwise, I could not do everything on my own. I count on them, I trust them and sometimes I push them. Even the flowers in front of the gate, and each step, I always come and Mr Laurent Thomas, at the beginning he could not get used to it, because normally the Director-General considers himself a big potato.

But I am a small potato. I learned from the Canadian DDG for Research at an International Potato Center for the first time. I said, “I am a small potato”, and he said, “You are not a small potato” and I said, “I am a small potato” and he said, “No, no, small potato has another meaning”.

Now, with my new manifesto, I will be devoted to modernizing the Organization from Headquarters to the country branches. Together we will be more deliverable, more accountable and more impactful under FAO’s Basic Texts, Constitution, and Rules and, of course, FAO mandate. With your continued strong support, empowerment of youth and women will be a systematic solution. I am fully committed to zero tolerance to any misconduct.

I was the Vice-President of CAAS responsible for discipline and investigation 20 years ago. You can see, any misconduct I always ask the relevant office to look at and investigate first. So far, I did not touch any cases, because I know to let them do their job. They get paid by you, let them be functional for us, for accountability, transparency and reputation protection. In FAO, we need trust based on the reputation and accountability.

FAO will be a service provider with more knowledge hubs and professional products.

Let humanity help to light each dark corner, let passion pass through everyone among us, let solidarity be solid together, individually united.

A noble Organization needs a noble spirit for a noble mission.

FAO is your Organization, it is our Organization, let us make it proud and fit for purpose.

I stop talking here now. Let us walk the talk to take actions on FAO Strategies and the Four Betters.

Let us unite to build a better world with more people centric, a much healthier planet, and more prosperity.

You can count on me and my teams. I will count down the clock to run for my commitment.

多谢 (*Duōxiè*), *Thank you, Merci, Grazie and Spasiba.*

*Applause*  
*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos***CHAIRPERSON**

Thank you and congratulations again Dr QU Dongyu. I will now, as tradition tells us, invite the Minister from China to say a word.

**His Excellency Renjian TANG (China) (Original language Chinese)**

Just now, the Conference elected Dr QU Dongyu to become the new Director-General of FAO. On behalf of the Chinese Government, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Dr QU.

*Applause**Applaudissements**Aplausos*

Dr QU Dongyu has been successfully re-elected. This is a recognition to his dedication and hard work during his past term. It is also hope for his better work in his second term. I believe, in the next four years, with the support of all the Members of FAO, Dr QU will surely be able to lead FAO into an open, innovative, inclusive and sustainable future at an even higher level of development.

China as ever, will support the work of FAO, and work with all the Members of FAO to uphold our responsibility as developing nations in development, and we will also safeguard multilateralism, and safeguard world food security and eliminate hunger and achieve zero hunger to make our positive contribution to the 2030 Development Agenda.

**CHAIRPERSON**

So I see the list of countries who would like to share their thoughts and congratulate the Director-General. The list is getting long and people are getting hungry, so I will invite all of you to maybe do it in less than three minutes please.

**His Excellency Francesco LOLLOBRIGIDA (Italy) (Original language Italian)**

I would like to greet the delegates and the Minister in attendance and on behalf of the Italian Government congratulate warmly Dr QU Dongyu upon his re-election as Director-General of FAO, that Italy has the honour to host.

Food security is a common goal that requires a collective commitment. FAO and the other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) have therefore a key role in putting an end to the deterioration of global food security which remains a fundamental priority also for our government.

In order to be up to the task we firmly believe that FAO has to be increasingly transparent, efficient and capable of gaining the complete trust of governments and institutions; I am certain that during your next mandate as Director-General you will work in this direction and I wish to assure you from now that Italy will always be by your side in the fight against hunger and for the transformation of food systems, which is going to be the main theme of the summit meeting that FAO will host between 24-26 July.

Please allow me to address the Director-General directly: Director-General we met a few weeks after my designation as the Minister of Agriculture and since then I have always appreciated your special relationship with the City of Rome and Italy. It is one that you wanted to reiterate in the presentation of the candidacy that you offered yesterday, and I therefore wish to thank you for the sincere appreciation for our country and I wish you all the best for a fruitful second term of office.

**Her Excellency Angela Thoko DIDIZA (South Africa)**

I extend our sincere and heartfelt congratulations on your re-election Director-General QU Dongyu, as a Member of the developing world you have a unique understanding of challenges confronting us on advancing food security and nutrition. The reform you undertook at FAO and its strategic reorientation based on the Four Betters have advanced our common goal of eradicating poverty and inequality.

FAO today is not only improving from those past achievements, but has been transformed to a responsive, agile and cost effective organization, as evident by FAO's proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges of conflict, climate change and increasing cost of food.

The Africa Regional Group looks forward to continuing its close cooperation with you as a strategic partner, to advance food security and nutrition and agriculture in Africa, guided by the agreed Strategic Agreements in Africa, such as the *Malawi Declaration* and the *African Continental Free Trade Area*. The priorities for Africa are sustainable production systems, efficient and equitable nutrition system, climate action and sustainable natural resource management, and building resilience towards ending poverty.

In this context we underline the importance of the *Africa Solidarity Trust Fund*, the utilization and development of *African Agricultural expertise*, *African Orphan Crops* as well as advancing the *Management of Livestock*, control of *Regulatory and Transboundary Animal Diseases*, and undertaking support programmes in African Fisheries, Agriculture and Forestry.

Together all of us here as Member States, not only Africa but globally as Members of the UN Family, would like to congratulate you and show our commitment to constructively work with you in your next term as the Director-General.

**Her Excellency Fosters SIKWESE (Malawi)**

I wish to convey my congratulations to you from the Government of Malawi, and also of course to the pride of China in this respect, and we expect, being an agricultural country, to work with your staff more strongly and to deal with the issues that affect agriculture, particularly in the latter years as we have experienced cyclones and natural disasters. We will be expecting to collaborate with expertise from this illustrious organization to deal with those issues.

**Ms Boineelo SHOLE (Botswana)**

I wish to take this moment to congratulate the new Director-General on an election that was very successful. As an agricultural country, Botswana wishes to continue to work with you in your new mandate and I wish you all success as you continue with your new mandate.

**Mr Thai LIM Kok (Singapore)**

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Singapore, the Singapore delegation, I would like to congratulate Director-General QU Dongyu on his re-election as the Director-General of FAO.-We wish to convey our thanks to the Director-General, Dr Qu for his significant contributions as FAO Director-General, particularly his efforts towards agrifood systems transformation and urban food systems.

We really look very much forward to continue working with you closely on key areas such as food safety, in keeping food trade unimpeded, to ensure robust food supply chains for food security and resilience.

**Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (San Marino)**

On behalf of the European Regional Group, I would like to congratulate you Director-General on your election for the second mandate. We look forward to the continued cooperation with you and with the whole staff of FAO.

First of all, we would like to congratulate you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, preserving staff wellbeing while providing professional support to all Members and recognizing employees as a critical asset of the Organization.

You have adapted FAO to the new challenges in line with its core competencies, a FAO more inclusive and resilient in the fight against hunger and inequalities. Food security is now high on the international Agenda, and we welcome the adaptation of the FAO Strategic Framework showing inclusive commitments in supporting the transformation of the global agrifood systems as well as Strategies on Biodiversity, Climate Change, Science and Innovation.

With those important tools we look forward to working with you and your team for as you said, an accountable FAO, an inclusive organization focused on its mandate and on the regional priority as Members we have endorsed.

We will wish you all the best and assure you full support in your second term for reaching the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for ensuring a sustainable future and food security for all of us.

**Su Excelencia Luis PLANAS PUCHADES (España)**

Quisiera, en nombre de la Unión Europea y de sus 27 Estados Miembros, cuya presidencia rotatoria ocupa España, felicitar al Doctor QU Dongyu por su reelección como Director-General de la FAO.

Quiero aprovechar la ocasión para subrayar el compromiso de la Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros con la FAO para afrontar el reto que supone alcanzar los Objetivos del Desarrollo Sostenible y, de modo especial, el objetivo número dos que persigue poner fin al hambre en el mundo. Al mismo tiempo estamos preparados para trabajar juntos en el logro de objetivos comunes, tal y como se recoge en las conclusiones sobre las prioridades de la Unión Europea para una FAO más eficaz y más eficiente que asegure el futuro sostenible y de seguridad alimentaria para todos.

Queremos desearle, Doctor QU, lo mejor para los próximos cuatro años en los que su éxito al frente de la Organización será el éxito de todos los Miembros que formamos parte de ella.

**Her Excellency Maria Do Céu ANTUNES (Portugal)**

Dr QU Dongyu, Portugal wishes to congratulate you and your country for this election for the second term as FAO Director-General. The support you got from this General Assembly is a testimony of trust from the international community. After the first term for very particular circumstances, you have shown leadership for facing tremendous challenges. We also compliment you for that.

We are confident that under your leadership and together with all the staff, FAO will continue to deliver the public goods we all need in food system transformation towards global sustainability, biodiversity and solid water sustainable management.

Count on us, Director-General, for working cooperatively, facing together trustfully and positively the challenge we all have in front of us in the next four years and beyond.

**Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)**

Israel would like to welcome and to congratulate our Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, for his re-election. We have so many tasks and aims in front of us to achieve. We need to stand together and to work together to achieve the 2030 Agenda and to bring this world to a better place.

Dear Director-General, Israel is sure that under your leadership and experience we can achieve that. You can count on Israel. I would like to wish you great success and good luck - your success is ours.

**Son Excellence Mohamed SADIKI (Maroc)**

Monsieur le Directeur Général, le Maroc se félicite de votre réélection à la tête de notre organisation, qui, à vrai dire, n'est nullement une surprise pour nous, au vu des réalisations de l'organisation sous votre leadership et surtout pour la conviction et la confiance qu'a manifestée la quasi-totalité des membres en votre potentiel et votre esprit novateur, qui a permis à l'organisation de servir les plus démunis et ce, même dans les pires situations qu'a traversées l'humanité ces dernières années.

En effet, depuis le début de votre mandat en 2019, vous avez apporté des changements structurels à l'organisation, faisant de la FAO une organisation plus dynamique, plus transparente et plus inclusive, ayant permis l'élaboration d'une nouvelle vision stratégique pour le cadre organisationnel autour des quatre meilleurs. Meilleure production, une meilleure nutrition, un meilleur environnement, et une vie meilleure, sans laisser personne de côté.

Des progrès considérables ont été réalisés sous votre leadership dans les transformations des systèmes agroalimentaires, les rendant plus efficaces et inclusifs, résilients et durables dans la lutte contre la faim, la pauvreté et les inégalités. Aussi, les nouvelles stratégies sur les changements climatiques et

sur la science et l'innovation, font partie d'une série d'initiatives phares qui compte efficacement aider les membres à relever des défis de longues dates et à répondre aux priorités émergentes.

Le Maroc se félicite de votre engagement, Docteur Qu pour traduire lors de votre second mandat, les stratégies en action et les initiatives en résultat, le Maroc se réjouit d'un avenir meilleur pour tous les membres avec une meilleure production, une meilleure nutrition, un meilleur environnement et une vie meilleure, ne laissant personne derrière, le Maroc vous exprime son plein soutien pour votre mandat et exprime toute sa disponibilité pour une collaboration fructueuse.

**Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)**

En nombre del grupo de América Latina y del Caribe, permítame felicitarle Señor QU Dongyu por su reelección como Director-General de esta digna Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura. El Grupo de América Latina y del Caribe (GRULAC) valora que desde su toma de posesión en 2019 como Director General de la FAO haya promovido importantes transformaciones administrativas y operacionales en la Organización, impulsando su modernización y renovando esfuerzos para acompañar a sus Estados Miembros en la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la Agenda 2030 y la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Confiamos en que bajo su liderazgo la FAO continuará desempeñando un papel crucial en la lucha contra el hambre, la pobreza y la promoción de la seguridad alimentaria en todo el mundo, así como también mejorar de forma sostenible e incluyente la productividad de la agricultura en su sentido más amplio. Queremos una Organización que se centre en las necesidades de todas las regiones y de todos sus Miembros.

América Latina y el Caribe es una región que cuenta con la combinación perfecta de recursos naturales y capacidades humanas, instituciones que permiten considerarla como el granero del mundo. Sin embargo, también enfrenta desafíos y retos al interior de todos sus países que requieren el acompañamiento decidido de la FAO para poder avanzar en la atención de los retos en materia de seguridad alimentaria, malnutrición y pobreza rural para desarrollar un nuevo sector rural que responda a la nueva dinámica del mundo actual para cuidar la diversidad en nuestros recursos naturales y para atender los urgentes retos generados por el cambio climático.

Esperamos que usted en este segundo período como Director-General de la FAO que comienza, le dé a nuestra región una atención particular para, por un lado, ayudar a nuestros países a reducir la brecha de bienestar que aún afectan a miles de nuestros hermanos y, por otro, fortalecer la cooperación técnica de la región facilitando procesos para que el conocimiento y la experiencia de los países del GRULAC puedan ser aprovechados por otras naciones hermanas en todo el mundo.

Cuento con los países del GRULAC para seguir trabajando conjuntamente con usted, su equipo cercano y con todo el personal de la FAO para alcanzar las metas superiores del desarrollo plasmado en los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sustentable, así como para alcanzar las prioridades de América Latina y el Caribe, según lo acordado por nuestros Ministros en la Conferencia Regional de Quito y a la que estamos delineando de cara a la Conferencia Regional de Guyana el próximo año. También tenga la seguridad que seguiremos trabajando para lograr mayor eficiencia y transparencia en la Organización y para mantener los intereses de nuestra región en la Agenda de Cooperación Mundial sin dejar a nadie atrás.

Aprovecho la ocasión para formularle, Señor Qu Dongyu, nuestros mejores votos y deseos de éxito en este nuevo período de su gestión como Director-General de la FAO.

**Ms Alexis TAYLOR (United States of America)**

We look forward to continuing to work closely with you during your second term to enhance global food security, to increase effectiveness and efficiency at FAO, and to ensure that FAO is equipped to build sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems that can withstand shocks, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

At this challenging moment of the global food security crisis, it would be critical for FAO under your leadership, to continue advancing science and evidence-based solutions to increase sustainable productivity growth, agricultural innovation and private sector partnerships.

As a UN specialized agency with a mandate to end global hunger and malnutrition through agricultural development FAO has a unique role to ensuring long term global food security.

Again, we look forward to continuing to ensure FAO's work to enhance sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems, which provide available, accessible and affordable food worldwide.

**Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)**

Pakistan joins other delegations in congratulating Dr QU Dongyu on your election for a second term as Director-General of FAO.-Under your leadership FAO has made extraordinary achievements over the last four years. We commend you Director-General for setting FAO on a visionary strategic path with the *FAO Strategic Framework* and its strategic narrative of supporting the *2030 Agenda* through the transformation to more efficient inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems.

We congratulate you for building a new and dynamic FAO to support Members. You have been a champion of openness and transparency and you have been involved in introducing milestone reform and modernization at FAO, setting out a new strategic vision for the Organization, framed around the *Four Betters*. The latter encapsulate FAO's strategic direction and place the transformation of agrifood systems at the centre of the Organization's work. This is supported by approaches such as the *Hand in Hand initiative*, *Science and Innovation*, the *Strategy on Climate Change and Digitalization*.

We look forward to working with you Director-General, during your second term, on the many priorities of FAO to reach our common goal in overcoming hunger and eradicating poverty.

**Mme. Stefanie BECK (Canada)**

Le Canada a le plaisir de se joindre aux autres membres pour vous féliciter sur votre réélection, Monsieur le Directeur Général. En tant que membre fondateur de la FAO, le Canada croit fermement dans son mandat, et la capacité de la FAO à livrer ces fonctions est cruciale, surtout à ce moment-ci, le monde a besoin de la FAO efficace, transparent et courageux, un avocat des connaissances et analyses basées sur l'évidence et la science. Nous sommes confiant que la FAO peut livrer son mandat sous votre leadership.

***Continues in English***

Canada is pleased to continue to work with you on our shared priorities. In addition to food security, this next biennium is critical for advancing collective progress on issues of water, on FAO's implementation of the ambitious Climate Change and Science and Innovation Strategies, as well as on making further inroads on gender equality and women's leadership in the agricultural systems, a constructive engagement with the private sector and fostering the innovation and actions needed to meet our global sustainable development goals. So your leadership on these issues will be paramount and Canada will continue to work with you as a solution-oriented partner.

**His Excellency Floyd GREEN (Jamaica)**

Let me congratulate you Dr QU Dongyu, on your re-election, it is a testament to your hard work and dedication and that of your team. I think your focus on small island developments states, landlocked countries and least developed countries has been exceptional and has shone a new light on our challenges across the United Nations.

The solution-oriented approach that you have taken through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, has made a framework for reform in agrifood systems in this countries and we look forward to the ministerial task force that was agreed in our meetings prior to this Conference.

Importantly Dr QU, in an age where youth and people have largely given up on leadership, your first term has restored hope through you taking action on all that you committed four years ago. Mitigation and adaption to climate change, access to water, and financing for small farmers are shared priorities for your new mandate. This re-election is for the smallholder farmers and they depend on you and FAO to continue and accelerate the work towards making their lives better.

**His Excellency Mohammed Hassan KATANA (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

My congratulations to the Director-General for his second term in office. We would like to thank him for his efforts, which were deployed in his first term. We are confident that the Director General will continue his work to meet the aspirations of the peoples in the world, especially in the developing countries. Agriculture is a priority and the problems of food have become the priority of all governments.

This is affected by technology, innovation and we need to find solutions – innovation, science, technology, moving from policies to implementation today, before tomorrow. This would require mobilization of funds from other sources to support FAO in implementing its activities and projects, to start at the level of the small farm unit as the small farmers, the youth, the women, the rural women are the nucleus of this development we all seek.

**His Excellency Gerald Geoffrey MWELI (United Republic of Tanzania)**

I want to take this opportunity to submit my humble congratulations to Dr QU Dongyu for winning the re-election. Your victory is the subject of commitment, hard work, and trust you have earned from the previous assignments.

We are re-affirming our commitment and support on your new leadership. As you are starting your new term, I am humbly requesting you to lead and change the narration that developing world should not continue depending on imported seeds, imported fertilizer and rain-fed fertilizer.

It is important to start thinking and answering key questions we have not solved for a long time, such as how can we build internal countries capacity to multiply seeds, produce and subsidize their farmers, as well as adapting new technologies. But also, without forgetting very important questions of how can we encourage youth participation, which is our advantage for most of us participating in agriculture, as youth comprises more than 50 percent.

For example for Tanzania, we are like many other countries, depending on agriculture, 26 percent of our GDP is contributed by agriculture, 30 percent of our export is from agriculture. So, it is very important because from your manifesto you have presented yesterday, urbanization is one of the areas for you are looking for to deal with. We do believe investing in agriculture has a lot of potential in not only providing food but also increasing employment, internal capacity to create employment for our youth, but also can improve the condition of our villages to reduce urbanization.

As I am concluding my remarks, I do believe that your leadership will be focus on farmer centred because I do believe that farmers know their problem and they can provide the solutions.

May I conclude my remarks by welcoming you to Tanzania, from 5-8 September, to attend the African Food System Forum. I am looking forward to seeing you.

**Mr Philip Harsama KELLO (Kenya)**

I am honoured to represent the Republic of Kenya at this 43rd FAO Conference. I extend warm greetings from Kenya, and especially from His Excellency, Dr William Ruto, the President of the Republic of Kenya, to all Members of FAO led by the Director-General and the Government of Italy.

Please Director-General, accept my country's warm congratulations on your victory and our best wishes for your success as you prepare to continue with the responsibilities and challenges of your office. We look forward to working with you not only to develop and foster the already cross relationships between my country and FAO, as we concert our efforts to achieving food security for all.

The Constitution of the Republic of Kenya explicit guarantees the right to adequate food. Indeed we appreciate the cross ties between FAO and Kenya, which has translated in tangible outcomes that have not only changed the livelihoods of our farmers, but also cushioned us against hard and unprecedented times – notably the COVID-19 pandemic, droughts, desert locusts invasions, among others.

Kenya finally appreciates your transformative leadership which has led into FAO being recognized as a globally professional trusted partner by all stakeholders working to eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition.



**Mr Fredrik ALFER (Sweden) (On behalf of the Nordic Countries)**

On behalf of the Nordic Countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden – let me congratulate you on your election to another period as Director-General of FAO.

We are looking forward to continue to work with you and all colleagues in FAO in the coming four years. We also look forward to the discussions this coming week, where we hope to arrive at a consensus decision on the Programme of Work and Budget as a means to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, which form the normative basis for FAO.

For the Nordic countries it is particularly important that the Strategy on Climate Change and the Science and Innovation Strategy are implemented forcefully across the Organization including at regional and country level. We expect gender equality and a human rights approach to be at the centre of all FAO interventions. Furthermore, it is critical that FAO builds on its comparative advantage, including its role as a normative and standard setting organization. We want FAO to be a global knowledge hub of excellence, providing science-based evidence and statistics.

Under your next term, we expect to see FAO coming out even stronger as a modern, transparent, and efficient organization. Dr QU, you can count on the support of the Nordic countries in your hard work in achieving the goals of the Organization.

**Su Excelencia José Juan NDONG TOMO MEKINA (Guinea Ecuatorial)**

En nombre del gobierno de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial, la Delegación que me acompaña y en el mío propio, tengo el alto honor de expresar nuestro profundo agradecimiento a la FAO por la invitación formulada a esta Delegación en la participación del 43 Período de Sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO que coincide con la reelección del Director-General de la FAO, Doctor QU Dongyu.

Aprovecho la ocasión para felicitarle y a todo su equipo por su acertada reelección unánime por el grueso de los países Miembros de esta organización. Estamos seguros y confiados que continuará, como hasta ahora, consolidando la labor y el seguimiento de los objetivos de la FAO en la lucha para la erradicación del hambre y la pobreza con el fin de alcanzar la soberanía alimentaria en nuestros países como un proceso y camino en la consolidación y la consecución de la seguridad alimentaria sostenible.

La República de Guinea Ecuatorial estará siempre a su lado para brindar todo tipo de apoyo y cumplir con sus compromisos.

**Son Excellence Sanctus NIRAGIRA (Burundi)**

La délégation du Burundi souhaite présenter ses vives félicitations au Docteur QU Dongyu et son pays, la Chine, pour sa réélection à la tête de la FAO. Nous sommes contents, Monsieur QU, de vos réalisations sous votre mandat et nous vous souhaitons plein de succès dans votre nouveau mandat. Nous sommes conscients que les défis qui hantent le monde, surtout le monde en développement, en matière de sécurité alimentaire, seront adressés convenablement pour la souveraineté alimentaire de ces pays en développement.

**Mr Rwamirama Bright KANYONTORE (Uganda)**

On behalf of the Republic of Uganda and my delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Dr Qu, upon your re-election as the next Director-General, the overwhelming vote in your favour is a sign of confidence Member States have in you and your manifesto. Your pledge to find the one no vote and to talk to him is a sign and describes who you are. And we wish you a productive transformative tenure of office. Uganda pledges total commitment and support to your manifesto programme.

**Mme Tassadit AIT YAHIA (Algérie) (Langue originale arabe)**

Je vous présente tous nos hommages, toutes nos félicitations au nom de l'Algérie pour cette élection, pour la deuxième fois, et qui est au combien méritée. Nous avons renouvelé notre vœu de confiance à votre égard. Soyez assuré de notre soutien et de notre confiance, à nous, les Membres de la FAO, nous serons à vos côtés pour le déploiement de vos efforts au nom des objectifs nouveaux qui sont les

nôtres. Je terminerai en confirmant l'appui de l'Algérie, qui demeure à vos côtés. Tous nos vœux les meilleurs.

**Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)**

First of all, we would like to express our sincere congratulations on the election of Mr Director-General and wish His Excellency all the best in his second term. Now we, the global society, are in a crisis of food insecurity and malnutrition. The risk of the insecurity has been elevated by the various factors such as COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the conflict.

The situation has been even worsened by aggression against Ukraine. In this crisis, the role of FAO has become forever important in addressing the complex issues and tackling the various challenges. In particular, Japan expects that FAO will make even more efforts to work on repairing the damages on the production and the distribution of the foodstuff in the global food system through its long-lived expertise and experiences.

Given the importance of FAO, we, the Japanese Government, have decided to re-establish the Permanent Representative Office to Rome-based agency in order to further enhance our capability and engagement through the work with FAO and others. With this regard, we are very much looking forward to working even more closely with FAO under the extended leadership of Dr Qu.

We have a couple of humble requests to the Secretariat in the light of strengthening the unity between the FAO and its Member States. First, the work of FAO will clearly be focused on the given mandate and those by the Member States. Second, the transparency of the governance is the key for the mutual trust between the Secretariat and the Member States. Also, we would like to see a democratic operation of the Organization in which each of staff will have the Mr Director-General's ears for the sake of openness of the Organization.

Last but not least, we expect that the work of FAO will be human security driven to serve human individuals in need, not just the particular state of society leaving no one behind. Dr Qu, you can count on our support.

**Ms Nigina ANVARI (Tajikistan)**

On behalf of the Government of Republic of Tajikistan, we congratulate you on your election to this position as leadership of such a representative organization, which is so important at this time.

We also thank China for this worthy representative of the great Chinese people. This is a great step, the beginning of a new path to achieve new heights in ensuring food security, transformation of food systems. Tajikistan will continue to actively support the new initiatives of the FAO in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Distinguished Dr QU Dongyu, you can be happy and proud of your new and old position. We will always support you for your success.

**His Excellency Mansour bin Hilal AL MUSHAITI (Saudi Arabia)**

On behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I am pleased to extend my congratulations for the Director-General on his re-election, and we commend his efforts during the first term. We wish him all success.

Our close collaboration with the FAO and our solid support will not cease to achieve the common goals. In our Kingdom, and under the *Vision 2030*, we witness structural changes to build more resilient agrifood systems while preserving the environment and its sustainability. We have experiences, and we believe that it is important to share them with the countries in the world for mutual benefit.

We will rely on the FAO and on the Director-General to work towards these goals, namely sustainability for all.

**Son Excellence Carmen SACRAMENTO NETO (Angola)**

Donnez-moi l'honneur de féliciter Monsieur le Directeur général, le Docteur QUDongyu, au nom du gouvernement de l'Angola, parce que cela confirme notre mandat de continuer des dialogues pouvant atteindre des compromis de notre Agenda et des stratégies globales. Je vous félicite et je vous

souhaite beaucoup de succès dans ce deuxième mandat. Je vous encourage à trouver des solutions pour nos priorités de façon à garantir la sécurité alimentaire et même combattre les impacts du changement climatique dans notre pays. Nous soutenons la déclaration du Groupe africain et les priorités avancées surtout dans la décentralisation, la sécurité alimentaire, et la nutrition de tout le monde, particulièrement de la population.

**Mr Saywan Sabir Mustafa BARZANI (Iraq)**

We are happy to make this statement on behalf of the Near East and North Africa Group. We congratulate the Director-General, on his re-election, Dr QU Dongyu. We welcome your efforts, including through the steps you have taken to modernize the FAO and a new strategy and the launching of various initiatives, the *Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, *One Country One Priority Product*, *1 000 Digital Villages* in order to transform our agrifood systems.

Our group would like to take this opportunity to express its full support for you, Director-General. We trust in your skills, in your work, to make our organization be able to serve the entire world.

**M. Madiagne TALL (Sénégal)**

Mesdames, messieurs les Ministres, chers participants, le Sénégal, par ma voix, exprime ses vives et sincères félicitations au Docteur QU Dongyu, qui vient d'être plébiscité avec cette brillante réélection, qui traduit, à n'en pas douter une expression de satisfaction et une réelle volonté des Membres de cheminer encore avec lui pour d'autres défis à relever.

Monsieur le Directeur général, vous avez convaincu le monde à travers vos initiatives et programmes dès lors de votre premier mandat. Vous avez su faire preuve de détermination, d'engagement et de persévérance, dans un contexte extrêmement difficile marqué par la pandémie de la COVID-19, les conflits, les aléas climatiques et le renchérissement du coût des produits alimentaires.

Face à cette situation difficile, vous avez réussi la prouesse, Monsieur le Directeur général, d'atténuer le choc et de tenir la bonne direction pour garder l'espoir d'atteindre les objectifs de développement durable (ODD). Sous votre leadership incontesté et incontestable, la FAO se porte mieux et les perspectives augurent des lendemains meilleurs. C'est pour toutes ces raisons que le Sénégal vous réitère son soutien total et s'engage résolument à travailler à vos côtés pour l'atteinte de vos objectifs dans le cadre de cette nouvelle mission qui commence.

Le Sénégal reste et demeure confiant quant à vos capacités à relever les défis de l'heure pour arriver à une sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle durable.

**His Excellency Hussain Rasheed HASSAN (Maldives)**

As the Minister of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture of the Government of Maldives, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General, His Excellency, Dr QU Dongyu, for your well-deserved re-election.

As you have been a special friend of the Maldives, Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and other climate vulnerable communities worldwide, we wish you well and look forward to working with you to achieve your new mandate, making life better for everyone on the globe.

**PRÉSIDENT**

Je ne voudrais pas être impolie, mais je vous encourage à garder quand même vos félicitations courtes. Je vous avoue que la liste des pays qui souhaitent féliciter le Directeur Général est encore longue, alors je vous encourage à être bref dans vos félicitations.

**Mr Md. Shameem AHSAN (Bangladesh)**

On behalf of the Government of Bangladesh, I warmly congratulate Dr QU Dongyu, for his re-election as Director-General of FAO. We recognize your extraordinary achievements of turning FAO as a key and dynamic organization in supporting the Member countries, especially the developing countries, in achieving *Agenda 2030*. As Permanent Representative (PR) and Ambassador of Bangladesh to FAO, I

reiterate our full, continued and strong support to Director-General for his continued discharging of his onerous responsibilities in the coming days.

**Ms Nella Pepe LEVY (Samoa)**

On behalf of the government and people of Samoa, I congratulate you, Director-General Dr QU Dongyu on your re-election to lead this important organization. We look forward to working with you in your new mandate, including with smallholder farmers in Samoa and the Pacific through the FAO subregional office for the Pacific Islands in Apia. As well, Director-General, to strengthen and build the capacity of Small Island Developing States in the face of global challenges.

**Ms Demitu Hambisa BONSA (Ethiopia)**

At the outset, let me join my colleague to congratulate Dr QU Dongyu for his re-election and I look forward for further productive collaborations in the years to come.

The Government of Ethiopia highly appreciates Dr QU Dongyu's performance and achievements so far in building a dynamic FAO to support the Members, especially the developing countries, in achieving the *2030 Agenda* for Sustainable Development, in spite of many natural and manmade challenges, complex and overlapping crises that affected the food and nutrition security in Africa, especially in Eastern Africa.

Since Dr QU Dongyu took office in 2019, he has initiated many flagship programmes that are quite helpful for the developing countries, like *Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, *One Country One Priority Crop*, and many others. After this appointment, he has introduced and managed different reforms that speed up the transformation of FAO and implemented a new strategic vision for the Organization focused on the Four Betters.

As a result of the implementation of these strategies, many progress has been made towards this transformation to more resilient, inclusive, efficient and sustainable agrifood system and reducing hunger, poverty and inequality. I believe that your re-election gives you better opportunity to translate FAO's Strategies into actions and initiatives to create a better future.

**His Excellency Ildephonse MUSAFIRI (Rwanda)**

Dr Qu Dongyu, on behalf of the Republic for Rwanda, I would like to congratulate you for your re-election as the Director-General of FAO. Rwanda is committed to support you as we strive together to fight the uphill battle towards better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life.

Rwanda is looking forward to work with you to put more effort to move our partnership to next level. Rwanda has positioned itself to be a laboratory for innovation testing. So, Dr Qu, do not hesitate to try anything in Rwanda as far as food and agriculture are concerned. We wish you all the best, and, once again, congratulations.

**Mr Bharat Kumar REGMI (Nepal)**

On behalf of the Government of Nepal, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to Dr QU Dongyu for his re-election as the Director-General of FAO. Dr QU, your dedication, leadership and outstanding contributions have earned you the trust and support of the Members, almost all of them. Nepal is committed to extending its full support and cooperation to you during the next ten years and is confident that you will continue to focus on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries,(LLDCs), and other countries highly vulnerable in terms of food security and nutrition.

**Mr Mustaf Ahmed IDOW (Somalia)**

On behalf of the Government of Somalia, allow me to join my colleagues in conveying our warmest congratulations to Dr Qu for your re-election as the head of the United Nations FAO. On behalf of Africa and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), we would like to thank you and commend you for your transformative leadership, efforts and hard work to tackle hunger, malnutrition and food security during your first term.

Your election comes at a time of huge global challenges. However, with your commitment, dedication and experience, you are up to the task ahead and we will support you along the way. We welcome your strategies and initiatives, including your commitment to reform FAO at the country level, which we believe will enhance effectiveness and efficiency on the ground. We look forward to working with you closely during your second term as you embark on a journey of transformative leadership. I wish you all the best and good luck.

**Mr Sergey LEVIN (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

Distinguished Dr Qu Dongyu, on behalf of the Russian Federation, we warmly congratulate you on your successful re-election to the position of Director-General of the FAO. We would also like to congratulate the People's Republic of China, our strategic partner. In recent years, you have brought to the work of the Organization many important initiatives. You have given new dynamic to the work of the FAO.

You have raised the authority of the Organization around the world, and we are convinced that your experience, energy and strategic vision will, in coming years, allow us to make new achievements in the work of the FAO in order to ensure food security, the sustainable development of food systems and fighting hunger. We assure you, Dr QU Dongyu, that you can rely on a full support from Russian Federation in your work as Director-General.

Once again, congratulations on your re-election to this new term. We wish you success in all your endeavours.

**Son Excellence Kobenan Kouassi ADJOUANI (Côte d'Ivoire)**

Monsieur le Directeur général de la FAO, il y a quatre ans, nous étions ici pour vous porter à la tête de cette importante institution. Aujourd'hui encore, nous sommes là pour rééditer l'exploit. Nous l'avons fait parce que nous avons fait un travail remarquable à la tête de notre importante institution. Et vous auriez pu faire des [inaudible] n'eurent été les crises successives que nous avons connues avec la crise de la COVID-19, et la guerre en Ukraine.

Nous vous faisons confiance, c'est pour cela, sachant que vous allez au-delà de nos espérances, nous voudrions, au nom de notre pays la Côte d'Ivoire, vous féliciter pour le travail que vous faites, et profiter du micro pour vous inviter en Côte d'Ivoire, parce que nous allons organiser notre salon de l'agriculture qui va se tenir du 28 novembre au 8 octobre, nous vous avons déjà écrit, et nous savons que vous y serez. C'est l'occasion aussi pour moi d'inviter tous mes collègues ministres à y être pour découvrir les potentialités agricoles de notre pays.

**Her Excellency Jinelle ADAMS (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)**

Excellencies, Distinguished Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to you as Director-General for a second term. We have confidence in your leadership and look forward to working with you in addressing global food security and nutrition and the challenges facing small island states in this area.

Dr QU Dongyu, you have the full support and commitment of the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Best wishes for your tenure.

**Mr Majnun MAMMADOV (Azerbaijan)**

On behalf of the Government of Azerbaijan and on the delegation from Azerbaijan, I would like to congratulate Director-General for being re-elected for the next term with such a big consolidation and agreement of all Members. I wish you success in fighting poverty, defeating hunger and securing food systems around the world.

As you said, dear Director-General, stay young at heart so that you can continue overcoming mentioned challenges for years to come. Azerbaijan will be at the forefront in supporting you in all beginnings.

**His Excellency Indar WEIR (Barbados)**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, let me add my voice to the messages of congratulations on behalf of Barbados and all Members of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to you, Dr QU Dongyu. It is indeed a pleasure to be working with you again. I do recall that as you were elected the last time, you were the only Director-General that has been confronted with a challenge that affected the entire world, the COVID-19 pandemic, where all economic activity had ceased for two years during your stewardship.

You are indeed a small potato but a big man because you were able to continue your work equally as we battled with the COVID-19 pandemic. I am indeed pleased with your leadership, especially the work you are doing towards the support for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), least developed countries and landlocked developed countries. It is indeed incumbent upon all of us today in this room to lend a strong voice to you, Director-General, and the work of the FAO if we are to achieve our Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2).

Therefore, I make the call that all of us with one clarion voice call upon all global financial cash flows to give agriculture its first space and first take and commitment to all global financial cash flows, so that we can achieve our SDG 2. If we are not going to do this, Dr QU Dongyu, then I am afraid to tell you that we will have to rethink how we achieve SDG 2 by the year 2030.

I support the establishment of a Ministerial task force to carry out the work, and I also support your Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the one country, one priority product, and the green cities initiative. Let us work hand-in-hand to make sure we help you, after electing you, to achieve your goals. I congratulate you.

**Ms Merene BENYAH (Ghana)**

Ghana warmly congratulates Director-General QU Dongyu on the unanimous re-election as Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Ghana aligns with the statement presented on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

Your re-election, Dr QU Dongyu, is a testimony to your passion, your strategic vision and your unrelenting efforts to build a dynamic, innovative and, importantly, an all-inclusive FAO, during a particularly complex and challenging period when the world has been facing global economic headwinds.

Ghana pledges its full support in the implementation of your second mandate. In this next phase, we look forward to collective action under your leadership to achieve our common goals, to build and develop capacities, to build resilience, to enhance livelihoods, particularly in the rural areas, and to achieve gender equality and effective inclusion of women and the youth.

Ghana looks forward to working with you in the quest to ensure the building of sustainable food security, eradication of poverty, to improve nutrition and enhance livelihoods, particularly in the rural areas, leaving no one behind, particularly the most vulnerable.

We look forward to the implementation of the strategic actions as encapsulated in your manifest to ensure improved access to education and health, factors that militate against and compromise the resilience of agrifood systems and exacerbate the global economic challenges.

Dr QU, Ghana wishes you all the very best.

**Ms Marieta STEPANYAN (Armenia)**

Dear Director-General, I would like to warmly congratulate you on behalf of the Armenian Government on your very much deserved re-election in this high and responsible position and wish you every success in your new tenure. Let me seize this opportunity to thank you for what you did for this Organization during your last tenure.

Armenia attaches great importance to the collaboration with FAO in all the areas of the Organization's mandate and we are hopeful that successful cooperation with the Organization will continue. I am confident that during your second mandate, you would continue working with equal devotion to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we rely on your commitment to particularly the SDG 2 of the 2030 Agenda as well as its steadfast principle of leaving no one behind.

**Ms Jacqueline FRIZELLE (New Zealand)**

New Zealand congratulates the Director-General on his re-election. We strongly believe in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s mandate, including its normative and standard-setting work supporting a rural space system. We particularly support FAO's focus on climate change, on Small Island Developing States, and on sustainable livestock. We look forward to working collaboratively with FAO over the coming term.

**His Excellency Clay SWEETING (Bahamas)**

I would like to join the voice of other countries to congratulate Dr Qu Dongyu for re-election. I would also like to congratulate, Director-General, on the work you have done to include Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s focus. As a small island development State and a Member of the Caribbean region, we will continue to work with FAO to have greater access to technical support and collectively build resilience to climate change and food insecurity.

This needs to be accomplished through a Ministerial taskforce. In the Caribbean region, we have made a commitment to reduce imports by 25 percent by 2025. However, we cannot do it alone. The Bahamas continues to advocate for strengthening our partnership to work together to eradicate hunger by 2030. But SIDS continue to face great challenges impacted by climate change.

I look forward to a continuous strategic partnership and like I stated two days ago and to echo the sentiments of Barbados, there must be greater access to funding to develop agriculture and the fishery sector and to combat climate change in countries such as ours. We look forward to a better future for us all. Congratulations.

**Mr Sedthakiat KRAJANGWONGS (Thailand)**

On behalf of the Government of Thailand, we would like to congratulate for the re-election of the Director-General for the second term. We are confident in your wisdom and leadership to lead the Organization and look forward to working in collaboration with you and your team to transform agricultural and food systems to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dr QU Dongyu, we wish you success in your next term.

**Ms Bevon MCDONALD (Guyana)**

On behalf of the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation and congratulations to Dr QU Dongyu on your re-election to the post of Director-General. We look forward to working with you on issues relating to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), climate change and food and nutrition security. We are also, as a Member of the Caribbean community, working on the 2030 Agenda's food system with you and the FAO team, we also look forward to working with you on the 2024 Conference and we hope that we will see you in Guyana at that time.

**Son Excellence Paul Valentin NGOBO (République démocratique du Congo)**

La République démocratique du Congo, avec sa délégation présente également ses vives félicitations au nouveau et réélu Directeur général, et voudrait seulement présenter son potentiel dans l'agriculture, surtout dans le changement climatique, le climat que nous avons à notre structure, donc en jonction avec la FAO, pour ce potentiel climatique mais aussi son nombre de terres arables, plus de 80 millions de terres que nous avons, qui sont disponibles et même plus de quatre millions qui sont irrigables, qu'on peut mettre à la disposition de l'Organisation pour lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire.

La République démocratique du Congo, reconferme la participation active à notre structure. Bon vent au nouveau Directeur général.

**Mr Georges MANIURI (Vanuatu)**

Thank you for the opportunity to convey the warm accolades of the Government of Vanuatu to Dr QU Dongyu for his renewed mandate as Director-General of the FAO. As a country prone to natural

disaster, Vanuatu is being in a reconstruction mode since 2015 due to natural disasters. FAO knowledge-sharing is crucial in ensuring speedy recovery following these events. Furthermore, as a small island developing state, Vanuatu looks forward to working closely with you, Director-General, in addressing the formidable challenges facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from climate change to food security, in maintaining the livelihood of our people and country.

**Ms Mira DAHER (Lebanon)**

In the name of the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese people, we would like to congratulate Dr QU Dongyu for the very well-deserved re-election for a second mandate, proving that your vision and leadership proved to be remarkably successful in the first mandate. As a founding country of FAO since 1945, as the first country to establish an office of the FAO in 1977 in Beirut, Lebanon is very much positioned to appreciate all the hard work and innovative vision you practised in your first mandate.

We all know that food will never be a luxury, it will always be a necessity. Yet with time, it is becoming for many an unaffordable commodity. So, you can count on the full support of Lebanon to work hand-in-hand in all the steps you are making to preserve the most two valuable treasures on earth, and we all care for the human being and his dignity.

Congratulations again.

**M. Aly COULIBALY (Mali)**

Monsieur le Directeur général, je voudrais, au nom du gouvernement du Mali, vous dire d'abord merci. Merci d'avoir tenu parole, tout ce que vous avez promis en 2019, je pense que les résultats sont là pour prouver la suffisance de ce que vous avez fait, merci pour le chemin parcouru.

Félicitations pour votre réélection, et surtout vous pouvez compter sur notre accompagnement indéfectible pour la réussite de la suite de votre mission. Je voudrais faire miennes également, toutes les recommandations formulées par l'Afrique du Sud au nom du Groupe régional africain. Merci, bon vent pour la suite.

**Mr Aziz Botirovich VOITOV (Uzbekistan)**

On behalf of the Government of Uzbekistan, I would like to congratulate Mr QU Dongyu for the re-election of this important position. Indeed, countries today did the right decision. Today I feel more than ever that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is our organization. We witnessed that FAO is changing at all levels, global, regional and national. We look forward to implementing together with FAO's new strategy for innovation and climate change in our Central Asian region. We fully support you in the coming four years in your new term.

**Mr Chon Gil KIM (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)**

On behalf of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), congratulations on the re-election of the Director-General. I am confident that you will lead FAO to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the development of agriculture during your second term. Congratulations again.

**His Excellency Amanuel NEGASSI (Eritrea)**

Excellencies, on behalf of my government and particularly the Minister of Agriculture, I warmly congratulate Dr QU Dongyu for the re-election. We are confident for what he has done before now that he will strengthen the activities that he mentioned earlier, particularly food and nutrition security in our area. Gender equality and youth employment are also a priority.

Where we normally talk about soil and water conservation in our region, that is East and Central Africa, because water is a priority of priorities in our region and more effort should be done on that. But particularly the one that is left behind is research. You should attach more research and strengthen the capacity that goes with it. Your effort in smallholder farmers has been commendable and I wish to continue on that smallholder farmers.

We will work closely with you, and we wish you success in the coming years.



**Mme Hawa DIALLO SYLLA (Guinée)**

Au nom du gouvernement guinéen, je vous adresse mes vives félicitations Monsieur le Directeur général pour votre réélection. Cette brillante réélection marque l'aboutissement de vos réalisations enregistrées au cours du mandat achevé. Le chemin est long, et je sens que cette nouvelle mandature ne sera pas une promenade de convalescence, les attentes sont grandes et les défis à relever sont immenses. D'autant plus que nous sommes à sept ans de l'atteinte du deuxième objectif de développement durable (ODD 2) et donc quatre seront sous votre mandature. Je vous souhaite beaucoup de courage et d'avance, je suis persuadée que vous et votre cabinet recevrez plusieurs messages au-delà de la Guinée. La Guinée réitère sa disponibilité à continuer à collaborer avec la FAO et nous vous souhaitons plein succès dans l'accomplissement de votre noble mission.

**Ms Temarama ANGUNA-KAMANA (Cook Islands)**

On behalf of the Government and people of the Cook Islands, we offer our sincere congratulations to our Director-General for his re-election. The Cook Islands looks forward to the ongoing partnership, collaboration and support with you at the helm of FAO, FAO headquarters and the Pacific office in Samoa for the next four years.

**M. Mohehd EL BECHIR EL HADJ (Mauritanie)**

Monsieur le Directeur général, au nom de la Mauritanie, j'ai le plaisir de vous féliciter, Monsieur le Directeur général pour votre réélection. Notre pays a hâte de travailler avec vous pour concrétiser les priorités de la FAO, pour un monde débarrassé de la faim, un monde plus résilient face au changement climatique à la désertification, aux ravageurs et aux autres fléaux de la faim et de la pauvreté. Nous nous félicitons d'avance de pouvoir mettre en œuvre les plans que vous avez proposés pour l'Organisation, le but étant ainsi que garantir un développement durable. Et une fois de plus, bravo à vous, et nous vous souhaitons tous le succès possible.

**Mme Onipatsa Helinoro TIANAMAHEFA (Madagascar)**

Monsieur le Directeur général, au nom du gouvernement de la République de Madagascar, je me joins au message de félicitations de Son Excellence Madame la Ministre, représentant le Groupe régional Afrique, en vous adressant les félicitations les plus vives pour votre réélection pour un second mandat à la tête de notre organisation.

Madagascar exprime sa disponibilité entière de travailler de concert avec vous dans la mise en œuvre du cadre stratégique de la FAO, de la consolidation des quatre améliorations et des autres initiatives en cours au sein de l'Organisation. Nous tenons à remercier la FAO pour les projets actuellement menés à Madagascar, pour une meilleure inclusivité, résilience et durabilité.

Pour les actions menées en faveur du sud de Madagascar, victime des aléas climatiques accrus et particulièrement, Monsieur le Directeur général, pour l'appui institutionnel de la FAO, en vue de la mise en œuvre de la feuille de route pour la transformation inclusive et durable des systèmes alimentaires à Madagascar. Monsieur le Directeur général, nous avons pleine confiance dans votre professionnalisme, diligence et pragmatisme déjà prouvés lors de votre premier mandat et je vous souhaite pleine réussite dans votre noble future tâche.

Que Dieu vous bénisse.

**His Excellency Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki AL-SUBAIE (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)**

On behalf of the State of Qatar, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to His Excellency the Director-General for the renewed trust put in him and his re-election for the upcoming four years. I wish him all success in his new term. I also highly value the role that he played during the past four years in achieving the lofty goals of the Organization and in developing them in the various Members.

We highly value our partnership between FAO and Qatar and stress Qatar's support to FAO while working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the state of Qatar, we believe that food security is a national priority, and this has been proved by the various efforts that were crowned by Qatar's advanced role in the Arab world and in the Near East.

It would be remiss not to mention that Qatar will host the World Expo next October under the title A Green Desert A Better World, and we invite all the Members to attend this very important event that is to be held for the first time in the Middle East.

Once again, we congratulate His Excellency the Director-General, and we reiterate our support to the Organization under his leadership.

**M. Dindioque Kombaté KONLANI (Togo)**

Je voudrais, au nom du gouvernement et du peuple togolais, féliciter le Docteur QU Dongyu pour sa brillante réélection. On dit souvent qu'on ne change pas une équipe qui gagne, n'est-ce pas? Au vu des résultats positifs engrangés ces quatre dernières années, pour promouvoir la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde, vous êtes aujourd'hui, Monsieur le Directeur général, reconduit à votre poste pour des résultats encore plus probants, afin de libérer effectivement le monde de la faim.

Le gouvernement togolais reste déterminé à vous soutenir dans toutes vos initiatives, notamment celles liées à la transformation profonde des systèmes agroalimentaires pour le bien-être des populations, surtout des petits producteurs. Encore une fois de plus, toutes nos félicitations et plein succès dans votre nouveau mandat.

**Ms Alexandra VALKENBURG (European Union)**

Congratulations to Dr QU Dongyu on your re-election for a second term at the helm of FAO. Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States has already referred to some of our joint priorities for FAO in the next period. The EU is FAO's only Member organization. Being ourselves a supranational body, we are strongly committed to a rules-based international order with the UN at its core.

We look forward to FAO's continued contributions to the achievement of 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and especially those Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where FAO has a custodian role. Hosting the UN Secretary General's forthcoming UN Food Systems Stocktake later this month and hosting the Committee of World Food Security are excellent examples of how FAO contributes to the wider UN system.

We remain strongly committed to taking the five priorities of our EU/FAO strategic partnership forward for a shared vision for more inclusive, efficient, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems and to advance the required transformation jointly in these areas, on food systems and one health, on climate change, biodiversity and natural resources.

This was very much linked to I think the triple challenge that we heard yesterday in the McDougall lecture. Thirdly, on food crisis, food security and resilient livelihoods. Fourth, sustainable agrifood food value chain investments and policies, and food systems transformation through digitalization.

Let me finally thank you for putting the FAO premises at our disposal for the fifth European Union/African Union (AU) Agri-Ministerial meeting two days ago. Director-General, the EU stands ready to continue cooperating closely with you and the whole FAO team.

**Ms Juvita Rodrigues Barreto DE ATAIDE GONÇALVES (Timor-Leste)**

On behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I wish to congratulate Dr QU Dongyu for his re-election as Director-General of FAO. Thank you for the contribution you have made to Timor-Leste, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue working alongside FAO. We wish you great success.

**Mme Fatimata CHEIFFOU (Niger)**

Le gouvernement du Niger vous félicite Monsieur le Directeur général pour votre brillante réélection à la FAO. En cette année 2023, l'année du lapin chinois, qui symbolise l'espoir dans ce monde. Ce monde a mis donc tout son espoir en vous pour la transformation d'un système alimentaire mondial plus efficace, plus durable.

Ceci est une bien lourde responsabilité, mais nous n'avons aucun doute sur vos capacités personnelles pour relever le défi de zéro faim au niveau mondial. Permettez-moi donc de réitérer mes plus

chaleureuses félicitations au nom du gouvernement du Niger et vous assurer le plein soutien de mon pays dans vos efforts pour réaliser les objectifs ambitieux de la FAO. Pleins succès, toutes mes félicitations.

**His Excellency Flavien JOUBERT (Seychelles)**

On behalf of the Government and people of Seychelles, I would like to warmly congratulate Dr QU Dongyu on his reappointment as Director-General of FAO. We have witnessed a renewed vision and vibrancy at the FAO during the Director-General's previous mandate that has given us new hope for the future.

We are confident that the FAO, under the continued leadership of Director-General QU Dongyu, will grow in its ability to deliver better and deliver for all, especially the most vulnerable and the least developed. Seychelles, as a small island developing state, remains committed to supporting the work of FAO in delivering on the four betters, especially for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). We thank Director-General QU Dongyu for his commendable work thus far and wish him and his team success in this coming four-year mandate.

**His Excellency Demba SABALLY (Gambia)**

On behalf of the people of the Republic of The Gambia, we want to congratulate Dr QU Dongyu for his re-election. The result of the election is a testimony of your resolve and also of your hard work.

We align with the statement by the representative from South Africa on the common African position but, again, your focus on developing countries, especially on climate change, your transformative 2030 Agenda, your focus on food security, and especially your special affinity to smallholder farmers has not gone unnoticed. Be assured of the support of the people of the Republic of Gambia.

And once again, we congratulate you, Dr QU Dongyu.

**Ms Karen-Mae HILL (Antigua and Barbuda)**

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda commends the Director-General in his re-election. I want to join with all countries in affirming the good work that has been done in your first term of leadership of the FAO, and especially to affirm the work supporting small island states and other vulnerable states. As we approach the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we think of building local capacity and increasing food security. We want to especially affirm work in these areas that they will continue and be expanded. Again, Director-General, Antigua and Barbuda wishes you every success.

**Her Excellency Jeanine Milly COOPER (Liberia)**

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, the Ministry of Agriculture, and on my own behalf, as Minister of Agriculture, I want to congratulate Dr QU Dongyu on his re-election as Director-General of FAO. As my government embarks on transforming its food systems, I am delighted to accept, Dr QU, your invitation to work with FAO in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative under your proven transformative leadership and armed with a renewed mandate. Congratulations. We look forward to the next four years of partnership with FAO.

**Mr Taalai BAZARBAEV (Kyrgyzstan)**

On behalf of the delegations of Kyrgyzstan, I congratulate Mr QU Dongyu on your successful re-election for a new four-year term. I am sure that under your leadership the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will successfully continue to work in accordance with all mandates. I want to assure you of the support from Kyrgyzstan for the work of FAO in general and to you personally as the Director-General. I wish you continued success in your work.

**Mme Chantal MOUKOUTOU (Gabon)**

Monsieur le Directeur général, vous êtes le guide qui nous mènera vers l'objectif de faim zéro. Nul besoin de rappeler ce que vous avez accompli pendant votre mandat et ce que vous pourriez accomplir

lors de votre second mandat. Alors, je profite de cette tribune pour vous souhaiter au nom du gouvernement gabonais, nos sincères félicitations pour votre réélection.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Dr QU Dongyu, this is an impressive recognition from the Members. You can count on all of us to support you in your big mandate. And all together we can feed the world sustainably.

Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes Item 6 of our Agenda and the work of the Conference for today.

I wish to thank the tellers, the scrutineer, and all those who took part in the secret ballot for the way in which the electoral process was run. The fourth plenary meeting will begin tomorrow morning at 9:30 hours with the statement of the Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, followed by that of the Independent Chairperson of the Council, Mr Hans Hoogeveen, and a message of His Holiness Pope Francis. This will be followed by the first of three roundtable discussions held in conjunction with Item 10.

I wish you all a good afternoon and see you tomorrow.

*The meeting rose at 14:53 hours*

*La séance est levée à 14 h 53*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 14.53*



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>FOURTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>3 July 2023</b></p>

The Fourth Meeting was opened at 09:11 hours  
Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La quatrième séance est ouverte à 09 h 11  
sous la présidence de Mme. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Président de la Conférence

Se abre la cuarta reunión a las 09.11  
bajo la presidencia de la Sra. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Presidente de la Conferencia

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**Director-General's Statement to the Conference  
Déclaration du Directeur General a la Conférence  
Declaración del Director General a la Conferencia**

**PRÉSIDENT**

Je déclare ouverte la 4ème séance plénière de la 43ème Session de la Conférence de la FAO. Ce matin, le premier point inscrit à l'ordre du jour est le discours du Directeur Général. J'ai donc l'honneur d'inviter Docteur QU Dongyu à présenter son discours.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

I am honoured to address the 43rd Session of the FAO Ministerial Conference. I wish to thank you once again for the confidence you have placed in me to lead FAO for the next four years. I will make every effort to fulfil the promises and commitment I have set out in my Manifesto, in pursuit of FAO's mandate for a world without hunger, together with you.

I stand before you this morning as the Director-General of a new, reinvigorated, dynamic, modern and fit-for-purpose Organization. An FAO that has put Food back into the Food and Agriculture Organization, and Agriculture back at the top of the global agenda, after four years, together with the UN SG, DSG and all colleagues across the system.

FAO continues to advocate for food and agriculture to be recognized as part of an inter-related system, to redirect transformation of global agrifood systems to be more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable.

The emergence of a new vision of agriculture that will work towards the Four Betters: Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment and a Better Life. An Organization that is ensuring that no one is left behind.

To do this, we need to assure food security for all. This is at the core of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 that you endorsed at the last session of the Ministerial Conference, and which guides the work of the Organization to ensure a better future for all.

To achieve these objectives we need to rewrite the narrative on food security. We need to define the concepts that will enable a better understanding of how FAO is moving into the future.

First of all, food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Many concepts are behind this definition of food security, and there are four key drivers that we normally refer to when we look at food security:

The first driver is availability, the second one is accessibility, the third one is utilization and the fourth is stability.

When we refer to food availability, we mean that sufficient quantities of appropriate and quality food are available for domestic production, commercial import, food assistance or emergency food reserves on a consistent basis.

This is clearly reflected in Better Production.

It means that we have to provide the science, innovation, technologies, and know how to be able to accelerate production.

However, it is not only that, we are also talking of the best possible quality food and that requires that we have to focus on its nutritious content.

That is our concept of Better Nutrition.

It is essential that we have all the necessary micronutrients in the food we consume, and that it is available in all the varieties needed, so we can have affordable healthy diets.

The affordability of healthy diets is the result of supply and demand, and clearly the supply of the diverse food required to achieve food availability, and the access to healthy diets, will be essential.

This is where we need to bring all the different elements together that can help us to achieve local, regional and global production.

This definition also brings in the concept of trade, and how optimal combinations of local, regional and global production are essential to assure food availability and accessibility.

It is important not only to produce locally where there are comparative advantages, but also to try find all the diversity that is needed through trade, at global and regional level - because it is not only about global trade, it is also about the facilitation of intra-regional trade.

In this regard, food safety is critical because the food we need to supply the world and ensure food availability, must not only be nutritious, but also safe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear that production, food safety, and health are interrelated. This is why it is so important that we speak of the “agrifood system” as a whole. And our agrifood systems cannot be looked at individually – we need to view them in relation to the health sector because of the food safety dimension.

That is where FAO, through its work on food safety, the One Health approach, and the Codex Alimentarius, has to excel in setting standards and norms. The normative role of FAO is of central importance to ensure that we have the needed quantities of healthy food required to achieve food availability.

In addition, food availability requires that there be access to the nutritious food also in emergencies, and for this our joint work with the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as the proper design of emergency food reserves, are essential.

But we must do even more and better, together.

That is why our work on Emergencies and Resilience is so important, and I strongly encourage donor countries to support this work.

The second component in our definition of food security is food accessibility.

This means that people need to have adequate income or other resources that enables access to proper food domestically through home production, and through buying food at local, regional or global markets.

Food access is one of the major challenges we are facing today. We have seen how prices have been increasing. Fortunately, the FAO Food Price Index has indicated a steady decrease in food prices over more than 12 months. Yet, the price of final food products is not decreasing due to a food accessibility problem.

In some high-income countries we are starting to see it, but not across the world, and especially not in the poorest countries. Moreover, what it means is that we have a problem of the most vulnerable import dependent countries facing a significant increase in their food import bill, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where countries are not able to cope with the increase in their food import bill as a result of the increasing prices and the exchange rate devaluation of their currencies.

For this reason, I was pleased that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) established a Food Shock Window. We need to support these countries - this is why FAO proposed the Food Import Financing Facility to help the most vulnerable countries.

That is also why in the medium and long term we are proposing mechanisms to increase resilience so that countries will have the necessary income, and why the definition we use of “agrifood systems” is so important.

We cannot only focus on food production, we also need to include non-food production because it improves food access for farmers, and improves their purchase power.

All these pillars are directly related to Better Production and Better Nutrition, and a Better Life.

Dear Colleagues,

We need to accelerate trade, not only at the global level, but also inter-regionally. This will bring significant opportunities for regions to move commodities across borders. And it applies not only to the output commodities that we consume, but also to the inputs that we need for production.

We have seen a significant crisis in terms of fertilizers in the last couple of years, even before the pandemic. Fertilizer prices went up four times since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, they were twice their cost six months ago, and now finally they are at market levels.

This unexpected situation created a challenge to the agriculture sector, and a challenge to farmers' affordability - and trade has been essential in resolving this. For this reason, it is important that we keep the international supply chain operating smoothly.

We need to find solutions for the mobility of the outputs and the inputs to ensure that we can have local value chains, medium-term value chains and global value chains. To achieve this, it is critical that we work collectively to facilitate trade.

Dear Colleagues,

The other two dimensions of food security are utilization and stability.

Utilization refers to the proper storing and processing of food, with appropriate knowledge regarding nutritional health, sanitation, social, cultural and other parameters.

It is in this dimension that the reduction of Food Loss and Waste is essential.

Proper utilization means that we use what we need; and that we have the science, innovation and technology required to ensure we have food available, accessible and affordable. For this reason, our accelerators on innovation and technology in the FAO Strategic Framework are fundamental.

FAO needs to keep increasing its efforts through our new Science and Innovation Strategy to support Members in identifying evidence-based solutions to the challenges they face in the way they produce, process and commercialize food.

Finally, the fourth dimension of food security is stability.

Stability of food refers to the availability of adequate food at all times, ensuring that access to and utilization of proper food is not hampered by any shortage, emergency or sudden crisis.

It is in this dimension where the core concept of agrifood systems is operating.

Global agrifood systems are operating under risks and uncertainties.

We have seen this in the last two years, and we will keep seeing an increase in the frequency of shocks in the future.

The cereal world is characterized for being very concentrated, that is: a few big producers supply the world and are therefore more vulnerable to climate shocks.

Climate shocks will affect agrifood systems in four ways:

One: extreme temperatures;

Two: lack or excess of water;

Three: variability of the climate conditions; and

Four: the evolution of pests and diseases.

To ensure stability it is essential to be prepared to cope with these challenges. Here is where a Better Environment, and a Better Life, plays a critical role.



We need to find solutions to increase resilience. To be resilient implies two core concepts:

First: Prevention. This is where our efforts in early warning systems to climate shocks, the One Health approach, and new insurance tools, play a crucial role. In this regard, we have recommended that the G7 in Italy next year looks at these insurance tools for agriculture.

Second: Being able to absorb a shock when it occurs. This is where we need to prioritize investments to increase productivity and production across the world, reduce bottlenecks for producers, and produce more with less.

FAO is working intensively to address these problems, and we have launched many initiatives over the past four years to provide the required adequate support to Members.

Dear Colleagues,

I started six core initiatives in my first mandate:

ONE: The Hand-in-Hand Initiative that supports the implementation of nationally led, ambitious programmes to accelerate agrifood systems transformations by eradicating poverty (SDG1), ending hunger and malnutrition (SDG2), and reducing inequalities (SDG10).

It uses advanced geospatial modelling and analytics, as well as a robust partnership-building approach to accelerate the market-based transformation of agrifood systems, to raise incomes, improve the nutritional status and well-being of poor and vulnerable populations, and strengthen resilience to climate change.

Currently, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative comprises 64 countries, and is accelerating and aims to provide the link between needs and proper investments plans, and those who can provide the required resources through the private sector, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and other mechanisms.

Two: The Green Cities Initiative that focuses on improving the urban environment, strengthening urban-rural linkages, and improving the resilience of urban food systems, services and populations to external shocks.

Three: The 1000-Digital Villages Initiative that promotes digitalization in rural areas for the benefit of the local community, enabling them to apply, deploy or harness digital innovations and technologies, services and solutions, to improve their economic livelihoods, individual wellbeing, and create social cohesion through better connectivity. We are looking at how to facilitate production, and how we can create digital agriculture, digital villages and digital communities. In other words, all the potential digital services that can reduce bottlenecks and try to accelerate transformation.

Four: The One Health approach, as part of agrifood systems transformation for the health of people, animals, plants and the environment. This involves a spectrum of actors and a range of work on sustainable agriculture, animal, plant, forest, and aquaculture health, food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), food security, nutrition and livelihoods.

Ensuring a One Health approach is essential for progress to anticipate, prevent, detect and control diseases that spread between animals and humans, tackle AMR, ensure food safety, prevent environment-related human and animal health threats, among others. A One Health approach is critical for achieving the SDGs.

Five: The One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative that places the production, distribution and marketing models of smallholders and family farming at the centre of interventions. It helps countries leverage their potential and identify Special Agricultural Products (SAPs) adapted to their agro-ecological production systems, and national or cultural heritage, ensuring improved access to stable markets and acting as a key entry point for reaching their defined priorities.

We also need to recognize the importance of fish, and how efficient the production of fish is. And that is why our sixth initiative is Blue Transformation. This is central for increasing nutrients, through fisheries and aquaculture, in an efficient way in relation to input and output, so as to allow us to achieve a diverse diet and increase food availability, and especially to improve access to healthy diets.

Now, we are working on the implementation of all these initiatives, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Dear Colleagues,

We are in a world with more than 800 million chronically undernourished people.

In a world where 255 million people are in acute food insecurity, that could turn into chronic hunger.

In a world where 3.1 billion people do not have access to healthy diets.

In a world that we are putting a lot a pressure on water and nature.

In a world where agrifood systems are facing shocks due to climate, and continuously from different dimensions.

We need to start the transformation!

We need to find opportunities and solutions, and take action to move forward. This is my objective today in setting out these core concepts for our common discussion.

At this Ministerial Conference I am asking two things:

One: a small increase in our budget, after 12 years of no increase, to ensure FAO can continue to effectively carry out its work;

And two: to concentrate on the key issue of water – with many countries in the world currently facing flooding and drought, it is now time to draw urgent attention to water and to keep it high on the international agenda.

To help us understand the way forward, and how FAO is going to support Members in implementing actions going forward we need to look at the opportunities, not only the challenges.

In English the word crisis is only one word, but in Chinese it is two words: one is damage and one is opportunity.

Let us identify the best solutions, together, so we can move forward into a world of better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Thank you.

**Statement of the Independent Chairperson of the Council to the Conference**  
**Déclaration du Président indépendant du Conseil a la Conférence**  
**Declaración del Presidente Independiente del Consejo a la Conferencia**

**PRÉSIDENT**

Merci Docteur QU Dongyu pour votre vision et votre engagement à faire une différence et à réduire l'insécurité alimentaire dans le monde. J'invite maintenant Monsieur Hans Hoogeveen, Président Indépendant du Conseil, à prononcer sa déclaration.

**INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL**

Good morning, Madame Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. It is my honour to address this important 43rd Session of the Conference. It is the first hybrid session in the history after COVID-19 and it is great to see so many people here in the room participating in person.

I congratulate the Director-General on his re-election. I wish him all his success in his second term. You can and have to build on the successes in your first term.

With the Strategic Framework, strongly based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we have a clear strategy for the Organization towards 2030. With your new manifesto, you can make the Organization even more fit for purpose.

The new approach of FAO is clearly driven by the Director-General's vision of the Four Betters, which frame the strategic direction and places transformation of agrifood systems at the centre of the Organization. It is promulgated by new approaches such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and Digital Food and Agriculture, which, in turn, are galvanized by a relentless drive for innovation and digitalization.

FAO has gained a stronger role at the international political level. I have seen FAO grow and flourish to what it is today, even more relevant than ever on the world stage, needed more than ever by those we serve. FAO should lead efforts, together with the other Rome-based Agencies, to deliver on resilience at country level, working shoulder to shoulder. On a personal note to Dr QU, we know each other now for 30 years. We share our passion for innovation at Wageningen University but we share also our love for potatoes, whatever size.

Excellencies, let us not forget the last two years we were confronted with the perfect storm of crises with devastating consequences for many, especially in developing countries. In the news, we see and read every day about the climate crisis but almost never about the most severe crisis we are confronted with and that is the food crisis. We know that we cannot cope with a climate crisis without food security and we cannot achieve food security without coping with climate change.

With 860 million people living in hunger, the world is clearly off track. On top of this, already said by the Director-General, we have 245 million people at the edge of starvation and more than 3 billion people which do not have access to healthy diets and food. It is amazing that to the contrast, we are losing every year one-third of our produced food with a value of USD 1 trillion. Think what we can do and invest with USD 1 trillion.

Despite our efforts for fighting global warming, farmers, especially smallholder farmers are on a daily basis confronted with drought, heat and flooding. That is why it is so great that we are discussing today and tomorrow the water issue. But let us not forget that we need to feed a growing population, USD 10 billion in 2050. We need to produce more with less.

Ladies and gentlemen, we know our challenges. With Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, we have set our goals and targets and we know the solutions or at least we think that we know the solutions. But what about the how? How are we going to implement those? How are we going to get the action done on the ground?

We need to transform our food systems on the ground and we have to do it especially to support developing countries, as clearly was stated yesterday by many Ministers. Only the support from a strong multilateral system can bring us at a desired action at country level and we need FAO more than ever, and even a stronger FAO.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Independent Chairperson of the Council over the last two years, and I do hope that I served the Members of this Organization with the passion and enthusiasm that you were expecting from me.

Over the last two years the Council has risen to the challenges and continues to rise. It took decisive related policy guidance to provide global public goods from norms and standards to statistics and with technical competency across a broad set of themes relating to agriculture, malnutrition and natural resources.

We had a strong focus on the critical issues and challenges before us. We improved openness, transparency and inclusivity. More achievements were related to substance, governance and working methods. And we saw an even greater collaboration between Members to achieve the shared goals, through informal and formal discussions we tried to, despite competing priorities, to reach consensus.

When we look to the substance, we took the substantive major milestone decisions, amongst others the approval of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change and the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy. Stronger involvement of Members via informal consultations gave a stronger commitment of the Members, especially for the implementation. Of course, we are looking now to a speedy implementation of the action plans.

The Council highlighted FAO's Comprehensive Response and Recovery Programme for the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasized the importance of FAO's work in the production and dissemination of information, including through monitoring systems and data information platforms to assess the impact of the pandemic on food security and nutrition and to take action where necessary.

The Council recognizes major drives of the current and long-term global food security conflicts and insecurity, climate change, weather extremes and economic shocks. We have noted with concern the growing rate of acute global food insecurity and malnutrition and the need to reserve the strength to make progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially number two, to end hunger, to achieve food security and to improve malnutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Of course, in four Sessions of the Council, the Council discussed the devastating war in the Ukraine. The Council noted with grave concern the continued devastating impact of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine on global food security. The Council stressed the achievement of comprehensive lasting peace which could improve the availability and affordability of food, fertilizer and energy, particularly for the poorest countries and most vulnerable populations. In its last session, the Council recalled its decisions on the 169th, 170th and 171st Session and asked for their speedy implementation.

Ladies and gentlemen, the most important principle of the UN is deciding by consensus and I do hope that the next Councils can decide all Items by consensus as a clear sign of unity. By adopting the Programme of Work and Budget by consensus during this Conference, the Conference could also give a powerful political signal.

When we look to the governance of the last two years, we were able to improve the governance of our organization. For example, after 30 rounds of informal consultations, we reached consensus on the Draft Conduct of Voting for the Position of Director-General, and this Code is in front of you for adoption. Also after several rounds of informal consultations and through the Governing Bodies, we reached consensus on a draft resolution for the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Members in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions. It is also in front of you for adoption.

The third element is the working methods. We tried to improve the working methods of our Council. These new working methods have been refined to maximize and effectiveness of the Council sessions and, more broadly, the governance of FAO. First and foremost, a more rigid timetable has been introduced, allowing for two and a half sessions in the morning, afternoon and evening and avoiding lengthy and costly sessions in the night.

In addition, we created a novel procedure of the Council in a final written procedure to have more focus on the substantial issues during the Council. We have a more streamlined approach for the adoption of the Council Reports of the Committees of the Council. With regard to the Report of the Council, the Secretariat has initiated a new method for its preparations, including professional editing.

We introduced more briefings by the Secretariat to prepare for the Council so that the Members are fully informed about the topics to be discussed. And, finally, our Council meetings have been approved through advance technology, of course created by the Secretariat so that all documents are available virtually and we can work paperless.

Why am I mentioning these efficiency savings? Because every dollar saved for meeting times is a dollar to be used for action on the ground. The hybrid modality of our Council sessions has become well established and has allowed record participation at sessions. This hybrid approach gave the opportunity for all Members to be more included in the sessions, not only here in Rome but also from the capital.

To conclude, ladies and gentlemen, the past two years of the Council has shown a growing involvement and commitment of Members. Many substantive decisions have been taken, important changes in governance have been agreed and many improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of the FAO Council have been implemented. FAO, including the Council, has risen to the occasion and continues to rise. FAO is and continues to be the global platform for dialogue and negotiations of

all matters relating to food security, agrifood systems, agriculture and nutrition and certainly also to what we see today.

But FAO must continue to be a dynamic and fit-for-purpose organization based on science, facts and experience, striving to achieve its noble and most noble mandate, and I think that future Councils also have to be much more forward-looking. Our successes have been made possible by increased dial-up between and amongst the Members but let us not forget that we can only get results on the ground with the strong support and involvement of our stakeholders, especially the private sector, NGOs, civil society and academia.

We should give special attention to our youth. They have the future. They are our agents for change. They can do better than we have done. And it is great to see that FAO has established the World Food Forum by and for the youth. But further steps are needed, for example bringing the youth to our table in our policy and business talks, make them partner in creating opportunities such as the support for capacity building.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, let us not take it for granted. Let us applaud the staff of FAO in Headquarters but especially in regional and national offices. They are often confronted with more severe circumstances in which they have to do their work on a daily basis. They are the basis to support countries in transforming their food systems, achieving food security and nutrition for hundreds of millions of people worldwide. They implement thousands of technical cooperation projects which have got critical know-how at country level. They have supported eradicating transboundary diseases and staff hire costs. Let us give a big applause to the FAO staff.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

To conclude, I hope that I will be able to serve you in the next two years, and I wish you all the success during the Conference but let us not forget, at the end of the day it is all about people, people with passion, people who are dedicated to serving the Organization and to serve those who need it the most, making leaving nobody behind a reality.

Thank you.

**Message by His Holiness Pope Francis**  
**Message de Sa Sainteté le Pape François**  
**Mensaje de Su Santidad el Papa Francisco**

## **PRÉSIDENT**

Merci Monsieur le Président pour tous vos efforts pour renforcer la gouvernance de cette organisation qui nous tient tant à cœur pour vos efforts pour plus de transparence, plus d'inclusion et je regardais la salle en me disant, "Oui, il faut inclure les jeunes." Alors ce serait peut-être important pour la prochaine session qu'on se donne le défi d'avoir un peu plus de jeune à l'intérieur de cette salle avec nous. Maintenant, mesdames et messieurs, j'ai le plaisir de vous annoncer la présence parmi nous de Monseigneur Fernando Chica Arellano, observateur permanent du Saint Siège auprès de la FAO, qui va prononcer le message de sa Sainteté le Pape François aux participants de cette 43ème session de la Conférence. Monseigneur, la parole est à vous.

**Monseñor Fernando CHICA ARELLANO (Santa Sede) (Observador)**

Tengo el honor de dar lectura al mensaje de Su Santidad, el Papa Francisco, a los participantes en el 43.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO.

Dice así: "Señora Presidenta, Señor Director General de la FAO, ilustres señores y señoras. Deseo saludar cordialmente a todos los participantes en el 43.º período de sesiones de esta Conferencia. Venidos a Roma de los cuatro puntos cardinales. Saludo a la Presidenta de esta Conferencia, Señora Marie-Claude Bibeau, Ministra de Agricultura y Agroalimentación de Canadá y al Señor Director

General de la FAO, Doctor Qu Dongyou, a quien felicito por haber sido elegido para un segundo mandato al frente de esta Organización, alentándole al mismo tiempo a continuar su labor en un momento en el que es ineludible una acción decidida y competente para erradicar la plaga del hambre en el mundo que avanza en lugar de retroceder.

Millones de personas siguen padeciendo la miseria y la malnutrición en el mundo debido a conflictos armados, así como al cambio climático y a los desastres naturales resultantes. Los desplazamientos en masa sumados a los otros efectos de las tensiones políticas, económicas y militares a escala planetaria debilitan los esfuerzos que se realizan para garantizar una mejora de las condiciones de vida de las personas en razón de su dignidad intrínseca. Vale la pena repetirlo una y otra vez, la pobreza, las desigualdades, la falta de acceso a recursos básicos como el alimento, el agua potable, la sanidad, la educación, la vivienda, son una grave afrenta a la dignidad humana.

En nuestros días son muchos los expertos que afirman que el objetivo de Hambre Cero no se logrará en el plazo fijado por la comunidad internacional, pero permítanme decir que la incapacidad para cumplir las responsabilidades comunes no debe llevarnos a convertir las intenciones iniciales en nuevos programas revisados que en lugar de beneficiar a las personas respondiendo a sus necesidades reales no las tengan en cuenta. Por el contrario, debemos ser muy cuidadosos y respetuosos con las comunidades locales, con la diversidad cultural y las especificidades tradicionales que no pueden alterarse ni destruirse en nombre de una idea miope de progreso que, en realidad, corre el riesgo de convertirse en sinónimo de colonización ideológica.

Por eso, y no me canso de subrayarlo, las intervenciones y los proyectos deben planificarse y ejecutarse saliendo al encuentro del clamor de las personas y sus comunidades y no pueden ser impuestos desde arriba o desde instancias que solamente buscan su propio interés o lucro.

El reto al que nos enfrentamos es la acción conjunta y colaborativa de la entera familia de las naciones. No puede haber lugar para el conflicto o la oposición cuando los enormes desafíos vigentes requieren un enfoque holístico y multilateral, por ello la FAO y las demás organizaciones internacionales únicamente podrán cumplir su mandato y coordinar medidas preventivas e incisivas en beneficio de todos, especialmente de los más pobres, gracias a una sinergia leal y pensada con modo consensuado y con altura de miras por participar por parte de todos los actores interesados; los gobiernos, las empresas, el mundo académico, las instituciones internacionales, la sociedad civil y los individuos deben hacer un esfuerzo conjunto dejando a un lado lógicas mezquinas y visiones sesgadas para que todos salgan beneficiados y nadie quede postergado.

La Santa Sede, por su parte, continuará ofreciendo su contribución en favor del bien común brindando la experiencia y el quehacer de las instituciones vinculadas a la Iglesia Católica para que en nuestro mundo nadie carezca del pan de cada día y se otorgue a nuestro planeta la protección que requiere, de modo que vuelva a ser el hermoso jardín que salió de manos del creador para deleite del ser humano. Que Dios todopoderoso bendiga copiosamente sus trabajos y sus esfuerzos en aras del auténtico progreso de toda la familia humana.

Vaticano, 3 de julio de 2023. Papa Francisco.”

## **PRÉSIDENT**

Nous vous remercions Monseigneur d'avoir porté les sages paroles de sa Sainteté le Pape François vers nous. Je souhaite maintenant informer les délégués que la première réunion de la Commission I commencera le plus tôt possible dans la salle verte et que la première réunion de la Commission II débutera à 14 heures dans la Salle Rouge.

Je donne maintenant la parole à Monsieur Máximo Torero Cullen, Economiste en Chef, qui, en tant que modérateur, présentera et conclura la première table ronde de la Conférence, à savoir la table ronde consacrée à la rareté de l'eau, faire affluer l'eau pour les Hommes et pour la planète. Les Hommes avec un grand H, bien sûr.

Pour les membres du Bureau, veuillez noter que la deuxième réunion se tiendra à 12 h 30 dans la salle du Roi Faisal. Alors, je me réjouis donc de vous retrouver ici, cette après-midi à 14 heures, pour présider la 5ème séance plénière de cette 43ème session de la Conférence de la FAO, qui commencera

avec l'examen du point X à l'ordre du jour. Et je vous rappelle que je serais très sévère sur la durée de vos interventions. Alors, préparez-vous en conséquence. Nous faisons maintenant une pause de quinze minutes pour permettre à l'équipe de préparer l'estrade pour la venue de la première table ronde.

Celle-ci sera présentée, comme je le disais tout à l'heure, présentée et modérée par notre Economiste en Chef.

### **Round Table on Water Scarcity: Making water flow for people and planet**

### **Table ronde sur la rareté de l'eau: Faire affluer l'eau pour les hommes et pour la planète**

### **Mesa redonda sobre la escasez de agua: Hacer que el agua fluya para las personas y el planeta**

#### **Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Excellences, my name is Máximo Torero Cullen, I am the Chief Economist at FAO and I welcome you to this Roundtable on Water Scarcity: making water flow for people and planet.

Excellences, distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome you to the Roundtable today on Water Scarcity, making water flow for people and planet. Water is a foundational component of the agrifood systems and is facing increased challenges.

Water scarcity, as well as droughts, floods and water pollution, has been exacerbated by climate change and undermines our efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year, 2022, has witnessed the greatest water challenges due to climate change and weak water governance. The long lasting and unprecedented droughts in China, the United States of America, East Africa and Europe Union, as well as the floods in Australia, Madagascar, Pakistan and South Africa, took thousands of lives and massively affected agriculture livelihoods.

This year, several countries are bracing for a second consecutive year of drought, and the annual amount of freshwater resources available per person has declined by more than 20 percent in the past two decades.

This trend is projected to continue. The agricultural sector accounts for roughly 70 percent of the world's water withdrawals, and population growth and change in diets will increase agricultural water needs, which will compete with water demand of other uses – cities, energy, industry and ecosystems.

FAO's strategy has been calling on a lot of us to transform our agrifood systems to achieve the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Addressing water challenges is central to the vision of the future we want. At the 171st Resilience meeting in December 2022, the FAO Council recommended the focus for the general debate at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Conference, as well as a theme for 2024/2025, be water resources management with the *four betters – better production, better nutrition, better environment and better lives* – be achieved by 2030 and SDGs.

Together with the Roundtable on Integrated Flood Risk Management, and the Roundtable on Water Infrastructure, this Roundtable for Water Scarcity, making water flow for people and planet, opens an opportunity to provide ideas and direction for taking bold and innovative initiatives for addressing water resources management holistically, and advancing towards sustainable and inclusive water governance.

Ladies and gentlemen, we will need to find innovative solutions to solve increasingly complex water problems. FAO is committed to accelerating actions in catalyzing such innovative solutions combining water investments, data and information, capacity development and governance. Together, such actions are key to addressing the triple challenge of sustainable water use, climate change resilience and food security and nutrition.

Delivery on these three fronts requires policy coherence, institutional coordination and investment. It also requires considering the synergies and trade-offs between water, agriculture, trade and other pertinent policies to better align incentives and behaviours towards more sustainable management of scarce water resources. And when we refer to trade-offs, it does not mean that we cannot solve these, and the what we are trying to do here is to try and find solutions so that we do not have those trade offs, or at least allow us to minimize them.

This roundtable provides a platform with the aim to facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned, and generate ideas that can contribute to sustainable and inclusive water governance. I very much look forward to discussions and your thoughts and interventions, as well as a successful, productive meeting – and I hope we can have a very interactive meeting today.

Before I start the roundtable discussion, I have the pleasure to give the floor to the Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu to give some welcome remarks.

### **DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Chief Economist, ladies and gentlemen, dear panellists, the UN Secretary-General pointed out that as the humanity's most precious global common good is water, it affects us all. This is why water needed to be at the centre of the global political Agenda.

More than 3 billion people live in the agricultural area with high or very high level of water shortages or scarcity. In already irrigated agriculture, ground water depletes, deteriorates water quality, and the competition for water resources all pose significant threats.

The increased pressure on water resources and the water stress can deepen already severe inequalities in getting access to water. Increasing existing social disparity, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as women, small scale farmers and the indigenous peoples.

It is estimated that by 2050 more than half of the global population, 57 percent, will be living in an area that is suffering from water scarcity, at least one month each year.

The growing incidence of extreme prolonged droughts is also stressing ecosystems with daunting consequences for both the planet and animal species. Agriculture is the largest consumer of freshwater resources, accounting for 70 percent of consumption. Of course, I always say that sometimes that 70 percent is not only for agriculture but also for the environment, but we have to look at that 70 percent and what proportion is really for food production – that is something we really have to get more details on and investigate.

Agrifood systems are therefore central to address the water scarcity challenge we are facing. As you can see from my CV, I was born in a place with flooding areas, 1600-2 000 mm of rainfall in a year. But in my whole professional career of 40 years I have always worked in the drought areas, especially when I was local leader in Ningxia – only 200 mm rainfall in a year.

I think water is essential, that is why the coming World Food Day focuses on water is food, water is life. It is building the momentum coherently from this Conference to stocktaking and the SDG Summit and then the World Food Forum, World Food Day of course and then also COP28. The Presidency of COP28 this year is the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is also a very drought area. Like also my friends from Jordan.

Water scarcity is a very old topic in this planet, since I think 7 000 years ago, but now we have to bring this issue on how to professionally discuss, how to innovatively handle, and how to improve efficiencies. There is no other alternative unless we find economic ways of desalinating water from the sea.

Before that, we have to have some pragmatic solutions and together – that is why the water cycle around this planet still is in need of scientific investigation. And to deal with wetlands, which are also one of the big ecosystems, so it is called a water cycle. However, we need to transform our agrifood systems first urgently, to make them more efficient, more inclusive. That is why I always say we should produce more with less. Number one is less water consumption, in my opinion – because it is a natural resource and we took the water from the ground for many thousands of years and the price of water is a very challenging reform.

I had five years on how to reform the water price in Ningxia. There is so much water scarcity. I know many countries, many member countries who also have some political pressure even though water is so limited, then you start discussions on how to press for a different purpose, different consumption of the water and how it should have a different price.



That is why I said we want to keep the Rome Water Dialogue. FAO Governing Body is a very serious place, but they will need a Forum, dialogue and different parties and partners to discuss, to find a consensus before coming to the Governing Body. That is my aim, the steps towards the Rome Water Dialogue.

Today I would like to let you focus on water forward, and with your political support we can move ahead.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, addressing water scarcity presents a complex challenge. Secure sufficient water for agriculture and agroenvironment also, and agroecology. That is also very timely, when concerning the water needs of the other economic activities – because urbanization will speed up and people will need a more consistent water supply in the city, rather than in the countryside.

And preserve the sustainability of water resources, presenting trade offs as well as the opportunities. The way water needs the relevant sectors are addressed will determine the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1 and 2 and others.

There is no simple solution to complex problems, but they are smart professional choices.

Key reports of the past few years, such as State of Food and Agriculture 2020, as well as the 2030 Agenda have complementary perspectives on water scarcity challenges before us. They help us recognizing and understanding why we are in a crisis today, and we will be in a deeper crisis tomorrow, if we do not undertake more ambitious and more effective actions.

Therefore, I would like to suggest three areas for action:

- 1) Good governance is crucial for sustainable and equitable water allocation through an integrated and inclusive approach with all the partners. Water tenure and water accounting, the glaciers, incentive measures are needed to drive change, and ensure equitable access to water resources.
- 2) We need to implement integrated water resource management through coordinated management of water land and related resources, to maximise human wellbeing without a compromised sustainability of ecosystems. Based on my experience of 40 years, we also need the regional, national design, especially in sub-tropical and tropical areas – how to turn the flooding to a consistent water supply as a resource. That is when you need the national and the regional design.
- 3) We need to invest in innovative water management approaches and practices including modern integration technology to address water scarcity.
- 4) And I should add one more also – build a water saving society. It is not only agriculture people or farmers; we have to build a water saving society. All investments, all the industrialization should be based on water limits, water quotas – so a water quota system is also very important for Members. Of course, FAO you can share your best practice or enabling policies with other Members. That is why FAO is a platform for policy consultation.

I encourage all of you to make your best practices available, and through FAO, to share with other Members.

Dear colleagues, these three or four action plan proposals need to be supported by the robust institutional and legal frameworks, and targeted increasing investments will be needed for delivery. Therefore, we need to mobilize to increase the resources, make the water flow for people and the planet, realizing the full potential of water for sustainable development across the socio economic and environmental dimensions, leaving no one behind.

FAO stands ready to provide all the technical and professional support needed.

Today's Roundtable provides the opportunity to discuss together what we can go and do together. Dialogue is good but we need action. Concrete actions to achieve tangible outcomes on the ground. And water is food, water is life. Thank you.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you very much Director-General for your inspiring words.

We are now going to give a small presentation, just to set up the panel discussion. I am now pleased to give the floor to Mr Andrea Cattaneo, Senior Economist of the FAO Agrifood Economics Division, who will give a technical presentation to set the scene before opening the panel discussion.

**Mr Andrea CATTANEO (Senior Economist)**

Urgent action is needed to make water use in agriculture more efficient, equitable, and sustainable. At stake are both global food security and nutrition and environmental sustainability. Rain-fed areas, which occupy 80 percent of total crop land, are threatened by water shortage in the form of inadequate rainfall patterns and persistent drought.

Irrigated cropland, which generates more than 40 percent of food production value, is challenged by increasing water scarcity, which is the imbalance between supply and demand for fresh water. FAO has developed two indicators to measure water constraints in agriculture, which show that about one billion hectares of agricultural land are facing severe water constraints. More specifically, almost 800 million hectares of rainfed cropland and pastoral land, which represents 14 percent, are severely affected by recurring drought. 171 million hectares, or 62 percent of irrigated cropland are under high to very high water stress.

Where in the world do these people live? The Director-General already mentioned the number of 3.2 billion people being affected by water scarcity, by water constraints. These are in high or very high areas of drought frequencies for water stress. We have approximately 1.2 billion people living in agricultural areas with very high levels of water shortages or water scarcity. These are the areas most vulnerable and most in need.

Out of the 1.2 billion people living in agricultural areas most affected, more than one billion live in Asia. So, 520 million in Southern Asia, and about 460 million in Eastern and Southeastern Asia. That makes for about 25 percent of the total population in Asia. And we should also not forget Africa, where it is 82 million people, but it does represent seven percent of the total population - where, for example in East Africa, water shortages are a very serious challenge.

Several countries in Asia also combine very high levels of freshwater stress and drought frequency, and so that is a multiplier in terms of vulnerability. Examples can be Yemen, Uzbekistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Türkiye– and more countries around the world face this very serious challenge.

Innovative options for addressing water constraints exist. We can do it. But adoption is widely influenced by the overall governance and policy environment. Addressing water constraints in agriculture requires a range of responses. Three main entry points for actions exist: 1) the technical and management options at our disposal; 2) the institutions and legal frameworks that are needed for adoption; and 3) the overall policy environment to promote sustainable water use.

These are like three legs of a stool: if one is missing the stool cannot stand. And water resources management, as already mentioned, is complex. It is where the hydrological cycle meets biophysical processes and economics, institutions and governance. This makes water quite unique in terms of how we can address these challenges.

Concerning the first entry point, many technical and management options exist to ensure efficient and sustainable use of water. However, in order for these options to be adopted, we need effective institutional and legal frameworks. This is the second leg of our stool.

You cannot manage what you cannot measure. Water accounting and auditing can create the proper information base for improved water resource management. That is a very important first point in setting up the right institutions and information base.

Also in conditions of water scarcity, we need the proper incentive systems, including financial support and favourable credit terms, especially for small scale farmers; and as the Director-General mentioned, it is also a question of prices, how we price water.

We also need secure and transparent water and land tenure that can empower users and to promote efficient water use. Furthermore, community-based water resources associations can bring together

users to collectively manage water. Here, particular attention should be given to engaging women and non-consumptive water users, such as fisher folk who are often disadvantaged and ignored.

The third and final leg of our stool is the overall policy environment to promote sustainable and equitable management of water, which I will talk about a little bit more in the next two slides.

But first, let me touch on policy and institutional priorities, which are often underestimated. These depend on the production system being considered. Upgrading rainfed cropland may involve, for example, water harvesting and conservation techniques combined with best economic practices. But the right incentives and mechanisms must be put in place for this adoption. For example, 20 percent of cropland in East Africa and Southeast Asia is viable for water harvesting techniques, thereby reducing risks.

In pastoral lands on the other hand, better use of feed and drinking water and improved animal health can save water. But this also needs to be combined with early warning systems to help prepare for drought. Again, we go back to the type of institutions that are set up to address water scarcity and water shortages.

Rehabilitating and modernizing irrigation can reduce water consumption if preceded by water accounting and auditing, along with effective and equitable water allocation. Again, here we come to measuring water, the complexity of its flows, but also thinking about allocating that water to different stakeholders, users, sectors and sub-sectors.

And finally, protecting inland fisheries and aquaculture requires regulating environmental flows and water quality and integrated solutions, such as aquaculture and crop systems. How do we make improved water management work for all? Policy coordination and coherence will be key to effective policy making. The example of inland fisheries highlights the importance of policy coherence and coordination. For example, it is often the case that through irrigation development projects that water for inland fisheries is reduced and livelihoods are threatened.

Another example along the same lines – water harvesting upstream may reduce water viability for water users downstream. Other examples provided, like the Director-General said, are how the water sector is affected by policies and apparently unrelated demands in sectors; for example, by trade, energy, agricultural subsidies and urbanization. However, impacts on water supply and demands of such policies and developments are often not considered.

A series of elements are key for policy coherence as we can see in this slide. First is that transforming agrifood systems to achieve the SDGs sustainably will require integrated water resources management and efficient water use in both irrigated and rainfed agriculture –it is not just about irrigation.

Improved governance of water resources can strengthen trust between actors and ensure effective coordination and prevent conflict. However, the adoption of water accounting and water auditing is key, as well as clear water tenure. Coherent strategies are also needed across agricultural subsectors, rainfed and irrigated cropland, livestock, forestry and inland fisheries and aquaculture – they all need to be viewed within the same context.

And finally, the provision of proper incentives is of critical importance, for example through targeted investments, financial support and appropriate pricing. One potential important policy tool is also payments for services provided to farmers or landowners who agree to manage their land or watersheds for environmental protection. Actually, effective regulation must also be put in place to protect these environmental flows and water related systems.

We have multiple tools to address water scarcity and here I conclude, recalling the image of a stool and its three legs – the technical, the institutional and the overall policy environment. All three have to work to make water flow for people and planet, so to ensure food security and nutrition and sustainability.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you very much for bringing the concept of the three legs of a stool, the knowledge of water strategies, the policy and environment, and institutional legal framework. As you correctly said, we need a three-legged stool to comply with what is supposed to be done and design for.

Please let me now introduce our distinguished panellists. Honourable Excellency Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment, Republic of Cap-Vert; Honourable Excellency Khaled Hneifat, Ministry of Agriculture, the Kingdom of Jordan; Honourable Excellency Christianne van der Wal Zeggelink, Minister of Nature and Nitrogen Policy, Kingdom of the Netherlands; Honourable Excellency Paulo Teixeira, Minister of Rural Development and Family Farming, Republic of Brazil; Honourable Excellency, Mr Ma Youxiang, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Peoples Republic of China; Honourable Excellency Alexis Taylor, Undersecretary for Agriculture and Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, United States of America; and finally but not last, Honourable Excellency, Ms Nigina Anvari Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Dear colleagues, we are a little bit late so my target is to finish at 12:30 hours so you can have your lunch. So, we will start with some of the questions that we are going to present to enable our excellences in the panel to be able to support and help us on how we can design this water strategy and water policy for the future.

There are three questions we have shared with the panellists, and let me start with the first two, and I will invite one by one the panellists to answer any of the two, or the two if they wish to.

The first question is: how can countries enhance policy coherence and coordination across sectors to address the water crisis and transformation of the agrifood system sustainability?

The second question is: what innovative and realistic mechanisms and investments are needed to implement and integrate water resources management, improve water productivity, and ensure equitable water allocation?

Now I will pass the floor to each of the Excellences in our panel and I would like them to answer one or two of these questions, whatever they feel is the best way to bring their insights to the discussion.

Let me first start with our first panellist from the Republic of Cabo Verde.

**Son Excellence Gilberto Correia CARVALHO SILVA (Cabo Verde)**

Je suis très honoré d'être ici parmi les grands pays et les pays avancés en tant que «Small Islands Developing States» (SIDS) pour pouvoir participer à ce panel. Je commence pour dire que parmi les pays africains, et même parmi les pays du monde, Cabo Verde est l'un des plus touchés par le problème rareté de l'eau. Nous sommes un petit état insulaire en développement qui est situé dans la région du Sahel, où le climat est aride avec une pluviométrie annuelle moyenne inférieure à 250 millimètres, où les sécheresses sont devenues plus fréquentes compte tenu du contexte du changement climatique.

Paradoxalement, nous sommes un grand état océanique, 99 pour cent de notre territoire est constitué de mer. Nous sommes donc entourés d'eau, mais elle est salée. Alors, la mobilisation de l'eau potable en quantité et qualité suffisante pour la population et pour l'économie a toujours été un grand défi pour notre pays, et pour répondre directement à la question de façon plus générale, je dirais qu'il faut un cadre juridique et institutionnel adéquat pour les secteurs de l'eau, basé sur les meilleures pratiques.

Ça veut dire, il faut des instances de conseil, des instances nationales de la gestion, de l'administration de l'eau, des entités de gestion, ce sont des entités entrepreneuriales ou associatives, aussi bien que des entités de régulation. Il nous faut aussi un système de planification où l'approche de gestion intégré des ressources civiques est là, mais un système de planification stratégique et opérationnel très efficace avec une forte participation de toutes les parties. Il faut aussi les instruments de suivi, de suivi et évaluation et de conseil fonctionnel.

Ce sont des instruments techniques pour faire quand même le monitoring des ressources hydriques, mais aussi de la qualité des services qui existent, et même la qualité de l'eau. Des systèmes de régulation, comme j'ai déjà mentionné, régulation technique et aussi bien régulation économique,

assurant la nécessaire transparence du processus. Bien sûr, la politique d'inclusion sociale et politique sensible au genre, renforcement aujourd'hui du nexus énergie, eau, alimentation et environnement.

Pour revenir à Cabo Verde, permettez-moi de partager rapidement avec vous notre expérience honorifique. Nous avons commencé par la notion d'un code de l'eau et d'un système gestion intégré des ressources en eau. Les investissements ont été réalisés sur la base de plans stratégiques et d'actions à moyen et long terme, et considérant les limites d'exploitations des eaux souterraines, nous avons commencé à dessaler l'eau de mer pour l'approvisionnement public il y a 50 ans. Aujourd'hui, nous utilisons cette technologie sur sept des neuf îles habitées et l'année prochaine, nous allons commencer dans une huitième île.

Alors, à travers les réformes successives, nous avons amélioré le cadre juridique et institutionnel de l'eau, en essayant de nous aligner sur les meilleures pratiques avec un impact très positif sur l'amélioration de la gouvernance de l'eau. Nous avons réussi à assurer l'eau potable à plus de 90 pourcents des familles. Chez nous, tout le monde paie l'eau, mais pour que le service soit accessible à tous, le gouvernement a mis en place aussi le système de tarification sociale. Le rapport annuel sur le service d'eau et d'assainissement, avec une série d'indicateurs est préparé et publié sous la coordination des régulateurs.

La rareté de l'eau pour l'agriculture pose aussi des grands défis pour les pays, face aux sécheresses plus fréquentes et à la réduction drastique de la disponibilité des eaux souterraines, nous avons adopté la stratégie de diversification des modalités de mobilisation de l'eau pour l'irrigation et renforcés le nexus énergie-eau, notamment à travers l'investissement dans les énergies renouvelables.

Nous en sommes au premier stade du dessalement de l'eau de mer et de la réutilisation des eaux usées traitées pour l'irrigation. De même, nous avons introduit des subventions pour l'installation des systèmes d'irrigation goutte à goutte, ainsi que d'autres mesures pour renforcer la résilience et adaptation des systèmes agroalimentaires aux changements climatiques. Voilà, ce sont des interventions, c'est notre parcours, et vous pouvez voir que nous avons bien sûr tenu en compte les trois piliers essentiels pour la gestion de l'eau chez nous.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you so much, given the challenges you face, for bringing clear solutions, and especially the way you frame it, bringing the three legs of the stool. I think it was essential, the technology you are doing, the legal framework and the policy environment investing in a big challenge which is the utilization of water in a small island development state will be central – and that is what will bring you significant returns and also how to use it more efficiently – through mechanisms and proper incentives. Thank you very much for that.

Let me now pass the floor to the Minister of Agriculture of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

**His Excellency Khaled HNEIFAT (Jordan) (Original language Arabic)**

Allow me first of all to express two wishes. The first is a success to the Director-General of the FAO, and we hope there will be another improvement for the FAO in the coming years. The second wish, I hope we will not deal with political issues and remember in this context that we are facing humanitarian challenges – malnutrition, hunger and other issues. We have a saying, that big people make mistakes, and the small people pay for these mistakes, and I ask the big countries, the major countries, to work for the benefit of humanity.

There were many numbers that were mentioned by my colleagues so I will not repeat what has already been said. What I wish to say is that we are suffering from lack of water at the world level and the average in household is 50 to 100 litres per day, which is what is being used. But in most of Africa and the Middle East we have really very little water. In Jordan, we have 62 cubic metres, which is one of the lowest water availability in the world. We have tried to use technology in order to improve the situation as well as adopted policies to the benefit of agriculture and food security and the very dangerous and strong challenges that we face, which is also influenced by immigration in a country that suffers from lack of resources. We work to the end of guaranteeing equity.

The sector of agriculture needs water desperately, and this means that we have less water for agricultural production. This of course constitutes a major threat especially if we consider that world population will increase tremendously. Unfortunately, the coming conflicts will be over water and its uses, whether for drinking or for ensuring food security.

Jordan is one of the poorest in the world. One out of ten billion cubic metres is the use, and underground water is extremely important, 51 percent of the water used goes to agriculture. 62 cubic metres is the use of the individual in Jordan. Of course, this is one of the worst in the world and of course it influences negatively and directly the life of the citizen. One of the major reasons for this is climate change and of course immigration towards Jordan. The Dead Sea Basin is used for Maan and the Northern Districts. This is the biggest in Jordan and we have put pipelines in with the project of BOT, in order to allow the water to reach from the Dead Sea to Maan. We also have adopted technological innovation so as to furnish water that is extremely of great quality. The agricultural sector uses 72 million cubic metres, which is a huge quantity.

We also have excavated wells for farms and for households we have also used barriers in order to increase the humidity of the soil. We have also excavated wells even in the semi-desert areas. There are around 63 wells and, in order to aid the farmers in the irrigated areas, we have adopted new technologies. The Ministry of Agriculture has created six training institutes with the cooperation of the FAO in order to train the farmers in the use of these new technologies in irrigation.

As for the Ministry of Agriculture, it is working on the creation of an early system in order to focus the drafts and other issues. We are also working on the creation of a seed bank. In order to face the problem of water scarcity, we are working on the project of desalinizing the Red Sea waters and creating a pipeline for the capacity of 350 million cubic metres so as to irrigate all of the area of Jordan and the cost will be around USD 2 billion.

In conclusion, the projects that the Government of Jordan have implemented in order to help the farmers are many, and despite the fact that the agriculture sector uses 570 million cubic metres of water, it exports to 97 countries in the world. I believe that this is a success story, and we are ready to give you an idea of our experience.

I wish to thank the FAO for organizing this meeting. I wish to thank all the participants to this meeting and I hope you will be able to help the countries that are most hurt by the climatic changes, and we are open to working for the benefit of all people.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you very much for bringing the humanitarian challenges that we are facing, you are facing significant challenges in trying to host migrants but also in trying to see what technological solutions to achieve equality, and the importance of water in agriculture – which is central, and that is why we need to be so careful in managing the water.

But you brought one new topic which is capacity building, which is extremely important for us, it is part of the accelerators of this FAO - human capital, capacity building is there – and is essential. But the other topic which is coming across is the importance of desalinization. Just imagine how much we can cooperate across countries to try to learn the best technologies and accelerate these processes - which is becoming so important.

Let me now pass the floor to the Minister of the Kingdom of Netherlands.

**Her Excellency Christianne VAN DER WAL ZEGGELINK (Netherlands, Kingdom of the)**

I am very happy that you have placed this important theme of water on the Agenda, because our food systems and water are inextricably linked – rainwater, irrigators, agriculture are highly dependent on water availability – and at the same time agriculture accounts for about 70 percent of all freshwater withdrawal. It is time to pivot the role of water in our food system. During the UN Water Conference, the global commission on the economics of water presented its Report and concluded that the global hydrological cycle is out of balance.

Water and soil are the basis of our existence and its quality and availability have a major impact on our shipping, agriculture, energy supply, industry, nature and our daily lives. But we are increasingly reaching the limits of the water and soil system. Moreover, the change in climate creates huge challenges.

As the challenges ahead become more and more complex they require also holistic and integrating policies at municipal levels. To answer these challenges, and in order to maintain a safe environment of healthy soil, sufficient and clean water, the Government of the Netherlands has decided to use water and soil as guiding principles in spatial planning policy, because climate change and biodiversity laws reinforce each other. Our farmers are facing everyday problems with heat, drought, flooding.

We have to share knowledge and data information because we have to prepare for the effects of climate change and the question is how do we act? We have to act. We have to invest in transformation to a more sustainable agricultural system and a more sustainable agrifood system. Because we have reached boundaries we need a more holistic approach, rebalanced economic activities and nature and our living environment – and it is not about doing it more efficiently, or just innovation, it is also about creating new systems.

Water is and will be one of the biggest problems I think. It only can be solved with an integrated approach to food, soil, water and nature. And in the Netherlands we have learnt that fighting against too much water is not always the best solution. We need to invest in nature-based solutions, space reservations for future adaptation and constructions for water buffers.

Water connects regions and countries, cooperation is crucial, actions upstream always affect the areas downstream or in deltas, and after almost 50 years the UN Water Conference was a unique opportunity to discuss water and its connection to all life on our planet. Urgent action is required as the water cycle remains out of balance. The deliberations of the Conference and the comments made as part of the Water Action Agenda, demonstrate that the world stands ready to act and deliver.

The Netherlands is committed to maintaining the political momentum on water, securing the follow up and monitoring of the water action Agenda through active monitoring with UN agencies and other stakeholders and therefore we appointed a special envoy for water.

Let us capitalize on the momentum and cement the change we all want, an inclusive UN home for water, a UN wide strategy on water, and more regular global meetings on water to sustain the momentum of water related actions. The FAO in my view has a crucial role to play the advancing the UN 2020 Water Action Agenda in all its work and its support to the countries.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you very much Minister and you said something which applies across the board, not only to water but also to FAO – it is not only gaining efficiencies but creating new systems – and that is extremely important because sometimes when you create a new system you have to invest more, but in the future you will get higher returns. That is exactly what we want, we are looking to a future and trying to bring to the present the returns of that future.

You also mentioned the importance of synergies. We have been talking about three of those, against and in favour, but the opposite of that is synergies and they can be gained and learned through all the UN agencies in that sense have a crucial role, and FAO in that sense is going to take significant lead in trying to move forward in this new Agenda.

Let me now pass to the Ministry of the Republic of Brazil.

**His Excellency Paulo TEIXEIRA (Brazil) (Original language Portuguese)**

I would like to salute the Ministers of Agriculture from the Netherlands, China, the United States, Cabo Verde, and I am very happy to be here in Rome representing Brazil and the Government of my country and President Lula. When discussing the issue of water Brazil is generally considered a [inaudible 0:58:50] country; our country covers 12 percent of the volume and six percent of the service of fresh water in the world. Now despite this, our water resources are not uniformly distributed: in the Northeast of Brazil, we have one of the most populated semi-arid regions in the world, which occupies

12 percent of the national territory and where almost 30 million people live. We are therefore aware of the challenges to enable the productive reality in this environment, in a sustainable way.

At the same time, we have important challenges within the regions with an abundance of water, where quality, and universal access are still lacking. In the Amazon region despite the wealth of rivers and aquifers, we have the lowest recorded rates of access to water and sanitation in the country. We need investments to serve the tens of millions of inhabitants in the region. Due to the climate change the scarcity of water resources is no longer a localized problem; this is a global challenge which requires extensive international coordination.

Brazil saw on average a 15.7 percent reduction of water surface in the last 30 years, and furthermore, the years between 2013 and 2021 were the driest since 1985, affecting Brazilian biomes and river bases. The snapshot not only describes the Brazilian reality, but also reflects the situation in most countries in the world. There is a growing perception that water scarcity is increasingly common, interspersed with episodes of intense flooding.

In this scenario the sustainable management of water resources is one of the most important topics in the international debate. One of the requirements for sustainable management is reliable data. Therefore, we welcome FAO's initiative to improve the aquastat platform to monitor water productivity, through remote sensing.

The idea of expanding the scope of solutions developed within the global framework for water scarcity in agriculture is also promising. For these initiatives to be really successful with a concrete and broad impact, it is essential that efforts are coordinated and well-publicized. In addition, it is imperative for the focus to be kept on supporting developing countries principally, in taking the right decisions and measures in accordance with their context and capabilities.

This type of platform needs to be built in close contact with the most effective countries. Likewise, it is necessary to take into account the data that these countries produce, the existing local knowledge and specific demands of these countries.

In order to obtain concrete results, we need adequate means of implementation; generating reliable data is an expensive activity, the sources of financial resources need to be the centre, at the heart of the debate. Taking into account the central role of climate change and the occurrence of extreme climate events, it is important to advance already agreed mechanisms such as the Santiago network, focused on providing technical assistance, or the Loss and Damage Fund.

Another fundamental aspect of this debate to which FAO can also contribute, is cooperation between countries that share water resources. In Brazil for instance, we have 83 border and cross border rivers and transboundary watersheds that occupy 60 percent of our country.

We have great appreciation for bilateral and regional cooperation involving water. The Itaipu Treaty Binational Hydroelectric Power Plant shared by Brazil and Paraguay, and the Guateneac River [inaudible 1:03:42] Agreement between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, as well as cooperation projects within the scope of the Amazon Common Cooperation Treaty Organization, are recognized examples for this type of cooperation.

FAO should encourage dialogue and the sharing of experiences and Brazil, like many other developing countries, has successful experiences – very successful. There are no single solutions to complex problems, such as the sustainable management of water resources. Long lasting solutions need to reflect the environment, social and economic needs and challenges of each country region.

An example of a long-lasting solution was the creation in 2003 of the Cisterns Programme, which prioritized Brazil's semi-arid region. Its objective is to promote access to water for human consumption and food production through the implementation of simple and low-cost technologies. The programme's target audience is low-income rural families affected by drought or the lack of water on a regular basis, and priority is attached to traditional people and communities. These families live with scarce access to rainfall and the programme promotes the use of reservoirs which store rainwater. Brazil has already worked with FAO to share this experience with other countries in South-South cooperation activities that could be resumed.



Another noteworthy initiative is the water producer programme created in 2001 by the National Water and Basic Sanitation Agency. This project encourages actions to conserve water resources in rural areas, focusing on water security, it recognizes and encourages the environmental services provided by rural producers through actions to conserve water and soil on their properties. This programme is also part of our international cooperation endeavours.

For example, Brazil's technicians were in the Dominican Republic in June as part of a project to support the implementation of the water producer programme in that country, and likewise the new Rural Womens Productive and Economic Organization Programme aims to promote economic empowerment of women. Among the planned actions is the promotion of rural women's access to water infrastructure support programmes.

Lastly, I cannot fail to mention the role of Embrapa, which studies the theme of water resources in almost all of its more than 40 units. We even have a unit specialized in the production of regions with water scarcity, Embrapa Semiarido as it is known. Over the decades Embrapa has been developing specific technologies to enable sustainable agricultural development in context of water scarcity – such as management practices to increase soil moisture, small scale irrigation with alternative water sources, forage conservation strategies and others. There are elements that further enrich Brazil's technical capacity to contribute to South-South cooperation.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you very much for bringing something, which is essential and is at the core of FAO, which is data, and the importance of AQUASTAT and how we can keep improving in that. But also of course the South-South learning, South-South Co-operation, the dialogue and sharing experiences which will be central to find the solutions and leapfrog on those solutions rather than to assume additional costs. Thank you so much for that.

Let me now pass the floor to the Vice Minister of China.

**His Excellency Youxiang MA (China) (Original language Chinese)**

Certainly, water resources are the basis of human survival, and the agriculture accounts for 72 percent of the global water consumption, according to the latest FAO Agenda. Over three billion people worldwide live in areas with severe water shortage. I am certainly pleased to notice that FAO attached great importance to the challenge. On behalf of China, I would like to share what we have done in terms of managing water. China faces two outstanding problems in water resources. On one hand our water resource per capita are insufficient. Although China accounts for six percent of the total water resources in the world, however, our per capita water resource holds only over 2 000 cubic metres, which is only a quarter of the global average.

On the other hand, the original and geographical distribution of water resources is uneven. We have more water in the South and the East, whereas far less in the North and the West. For example, 21 out of 34 provinces are in great water shortage. The problem of mismatch between the spatial distribution of water resources and the layout of the population is a bottleneck that restricts our economic and social development.

Considering all this, China has formulated a national water resources strategic plan at the macro level. First of all, we highlight crucial areas and crops, pay close attention to key links and measures and strive to take the path of modern agriculture development with equal emphasis on water conservation and efficiency. We first of all promoted the developing of high standard farmland. We attach great importance to developing farmland water conservancy and water saving irrigation.

We constructed high standard farmland in coordination with planning and implementing efficient water saving irrigation. Based on the local conditions, we used different irrigation methods to strengthen the intensive and economical farmland irrigation. At present, we have built nearly one billion mou of drought and flood resilient high standard farmland. Second, we promote dry farming water-saving technology.

In the past 10 years, a total of four billion Yuan has been invested to support the promotion of agricultural dry farming and water conservation techniques. We promote the mulching to conserve

moisture in the soil and water and fertilizer integration and rainfall collection as well as replenishment. We have also accelerated the selection and promotion of drought and recession-resistant and other water saving varieties.

Annually, over 400 million mou applies water saving technologies. The efficiency of water use has increased significantly, and the demonstration area of the technology has increased grain yield by 70 to 100 kg/mou, saving costs of nearly 100 Yuan. Thirdly, we optimized variety selections based on the water resources available. In water shortage areas, we reduced high water-consuming crops, but we increased the planting of water production efficiency crops, such as corn, potatoes, and other crops. For example, in 2019, the plantation of corn increased by about 0.8 billion mou compared with that in 2011.

We also increased the plantation of potatoes. At the same time, we increased the proportion of autumn food crops, which grow in the hot rainy season to make better use of the natural precipitation. After years of efforts, this share has increased from 63 percent in 1990 to 74 percent in 2019. We also utilize crop rotation and fallowing according to the local conditions to better contribute to water conserving in agriculture.

Dear colleagues, water is the most precious resource in the world and the resource of life for all. It is the common responsibility for all countries to protect and make good use of water resources and improve the productivity of the agriculture sector, which is crucial to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to make three suggestions on behalf of China. We should first of all plan better and strengthen supporting facilities.

We should support FAO to develop a water resource road map, strengthen data analysis, and elaborate country-specific water resource planning and designs. We should improve agriculture drainage and irrigation facilities and also promote the construction of efficient water-saving irrigation projects. Secondly, we are to cooperate and share experience and to launch trainings on specific water uses.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you very much for your recommendations, data is something supporting facilities and promoting construction on efficient water uses, that will be central activities that FAO has to pursue.

Let me now pass the floor to the Undersecretary for Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs of the United States of America.

**Ms Alexis TAYLOR (United States of America)**

Thank you for allowing the United States to participate here today. Water is fundamental to our ecosystems, our agricultural and food systems, but also our communities. Whenever farmers, ranchers, or foresters face water scarcity, no matter the cause, it is an issue of critical concern. And it is usually a complex problem since there are so many inherent and competing demands for water.

In many regions, climate change is increasing water scarcity and intensifying water competition. One example of water scarcity that we are all familiar with is droughts. Not only are intense droughts a major concern to our agricultural producers, but they also disrupt water supplies that forests, wildlife communities, and even whole regions depend on. Drought also endangers public health, jeopardizes critical infrastructure, and exacerbates other natural threats such as wildfires and floods. But we know water scarcity is not just a problem for US farmers.

FAO's own Report in 2021 shows high levels of stress in many regions of the world with growing demand on groundwater depletion. FAO's Report also highlights equity challenges for water access, particularly for women. For rural families, water infrastructure often directly affects both agricultural production, but also health and nutrition of all family Members who use water for irrigation, sanitation, cooking, and cleaning. This makes water scarcity not just an agricultural issue, but an issue central to the health and well-being of families and communities. We know that the ability to adapt to water scarcity is shaped by gender inequalities.

Globally, women are more sensitive to water insecurity. Rural women for example, who are generally responsible for water collection, experience disproportionate exposure to challenges in water

availability. Similarly, women living in vulnerable urban households tend to experience more harm and health risks from flooding. Focusing on the impacts of drought for a moment, this is something the United States has unfortunately been impacted for many decades, and particularly over the past decade.

While some of the Western US has recently received some precipitation, moving states potentially out of the mega drought conditions we have experienced for the past decade, still today over 22 percent of the United States is experiencing drought conditions, covering 266 million acres of cropland and 90 million Americans. There are many impacts of this multi-year drought. For example, last fall, barge traffic backed up along the Mississippi River due to drought-driven historical low water levels. That drought caused significant delays and exacerbated shipping costs for many US products, especially grain destined for export.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service has analysed both data loss from USDA's Risk Management Agency, which administers the US Crop Insurance Programme, and disaster assistance from the farmer support programmes at USDA for over the past 50 years, and they found that drought was the largest driver of USDA's disaster assistance and indemnity payments. The US Drought Monitor is a good example to help navigate this problem. It is a map updated and published weekly that shows the occurrence and level of drought across the United States and its territories.

The Drought Monitor collects and analyses multiple types of data, like precipitation, stream flows, soil moisture, temperature, reservoir levels, and forecasts of future conditions. This tool is utilized heavily by US farmers and ranchers and allows the agriculture community across the country to make better decisions when facing water scarcity with local, state, and federal leaders. In general, I think about effective tools to help support our producers in three general categories.

First is information, whether that is research, data collection and analysis, as both my colleagues up here from Brazil and China have mentioned, or education for effective, efficient water resource management. The US Drought Monitor is an example of this, and research and deployment of drought-tolerant species, breeds, and varieties. Second are resources to help adoption of that information and best practices of our producers. Programmes focused on soil and water and wildlife conservation incentives, like USDA's Conservation Reserve Programme; extension services to support producers adopting those practices; programmes which support irrigation efficiency like drip irrigation or low energy precision application systems, like the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives programme.

And finally, programmes which help producers deal with extreme weather variability. Programmes like crop, forage, livestock and tree insurance programmes. I think these tools are complementary. USDA is focused on helping producers adapt and mitigate to climate change as well. We have launched and invested USD three billion in the Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities, which will also provide many water benefits.

For example, one project on climate-smart rice production is targeting methane and water use reduction through the adoption of more efficient irrigation and alternate wetting and drying. Other projects will replace water-intensive crops with crops that use less water, such as sorghum. And while these projects are on US lands and US crops, what we learn will be shared globally. The new Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities will have a learning network to document and share evidence-based best practices for water efficiency and water quality, along with other sustainability objectives.

I think key to answering these two questions is to first identify that there are multiple stakeholders who are impacted by water scarcity, not just our agriculture sector. And it will take bringing them to the table along with governments to navigate equitable solutions which also support sustainable agricultural productivity growth. There is not just one tool to solve water scarcity, it will take a suite of tools backed by evidence-based solutions to help food systems.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you for bringing the importance of gender and gender inequality and how important this is for water. And also, of course the challenges that we face are across the world, high-middle-income countries, low-income countries, and that is where we need to be prepared and that is where the South-South, North-South Co-operation will play a crucial role.

The three elements that you mentioned, data, education, best practices, resources to help adopt, is something that is really important. Normally we forget that we need to change behaviour of farmers. That is what makes agriculture different, that you have individuals who must change their behaviour to adopt these practices and we need to invest on that.

And of course, to deal with extreme temperatures and variability, which is something extremely challenging. So, thank you so much.

Let me now pass the floor to the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan.

**Ms Nigina ANVARI (Tajikistan) (Original language Russian)**

On behalf of the Agriculture Ministry of the Republic of Tajikistan, I would like to greet the Members of this Conference and express our gratitude to the UN FAO for having given us the opportunity to share with you the position of Tajikistan on this question of the effective management of water resources so as to protect biodiversity and ensure food security.

Since we are in the homeland of the great Leonardo Da Vinci, I would like to start with his words, which show the importance of tackling the water issue, and I quote, "*Water has the magical gift of becoming the elixir of life on earth.*" For Tajikistan, this is a particularly topical issue because over 90 percent of our arable land needs to be irrigated, and drought and floods have an effect on our agricultural production.

We understand the importance of water resources to achieve sustainable development and have therefore actively put the water issue on the global Agenda when it can. At the mid-term review Conference held in March in New York, under the leadership of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, our President drew the attention of the high-level panel to the close connection between water and climate, the melting of the glaciers, the heating up of the climate, and the problems that those things cause for the development of the sustainable and green economies, and dealing in a comprehensive way with issues of water, energy, food security, protection of the environment and the climate.

Up to 60 percent of the water resources of the Central Asian region are developed in the territory of Tajikistan and therefore the issue of food security is strongly affected by this, not only in Tajikistan but in the region as a whole. However, the lack of access to sufficient water resources is one of the major reasons, which is stopping us increasing the yields of our agricultural production in Tajikistan and in the region as a whole.

Managing the river basins in our region is one of the main areas of activity we have been working to coordinate our policy and have better inter-sectoral co-operation in order to develop and protect water resources in the region. We have a government programme for the reform of the water policy in our country, and we have adopted many laws to that end. This is to try and make our agriculture more sustainable over the next few years and this is part of our overall reform of the water sector.

If we are however to do this, we need to have sufficient resources, and this is true particularly of Tajikistan, where most of the water resources we use in Central Asia are used for irrigation and agriculture. We have taken several measures to tackle this issue. We have set up in our five river basins, basin councils, and we now have a river basin organization, which is attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

In enhancing the management of our water resources and ensuring that we have fair distribution and sharing of water resources, we have various mechanisms and investment systems coming into operation. Let me share with you what we have been doing in Tajikistan. With support from our development partners and the private sector, we have brought in new technologies for example, including more effective irrigation systems, better land management and the preparation of databases for assessing our water needs.

We also have an exchange of data underway, including remotely, to ensure that we have better information available to people on the water resources available for agriculture, and that is particularly important in helping to meet the water needs of our farmers. We are also looking at issues of pricing for water resources and subsidising thereof. We are moving to commercial billing and accounting for water resources by those who use them.

We are also taking other initiatives to build awareness and understanding of water resource issues of the need for better and more effective management and use of the resources available to us. We are obviously very actively co-operating with our development partners such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the German Technical Co-operation Agency and others, and we would hope that FAO could more actively cooperate with us to this end as well.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Thank you very much for sharing what you are doing in your country and how you are trying to increase effectiveness in the use of water. And especially again, these are recurring topics, not data, a better use of land, exchange of experiences, exchange of data, extremely important. And especially the beautiful words of Leonardo Da Vinci, which I think applies to now and are extremely important.

Colleagues, please, if you want to talk from the floor, start clicking the button so that we know who is going to come, and we can invite you as soon as we finish the next round of a question. And the question that we have, the last one, and I ask all of the panellists please if you can do it in three minutes, how can international co-operation and partnerships be fostered to mobilize resources, share experiences and support countries in addressing water scarcity challenges?

Let me change a little bit the order and start with the United States of America, please.

**Ms Alexis TAYLOR (United States of America)**

First and foremost, I think international co-operation is critical to making progress on water security. In the United States we are stepping up for water security in a multitude of ways, and I will highlight a few, but this is certainly not an exhaustive list.

At the 2023 UN Water Conference, the Biden-Harris administration announced USD 49 billion in commitments for water security and sanitation, both at home but also internationally. This commitment will support local solutions to water security and sanitation challenges in 22 high priority countries across Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa. But we are also making those investments at home, making resources available for every state, tribal nation and US territory to develop infrastructure to ensure climate resilient water and sanitation are a priority.

We have also prioritized international collaboration with partners like the FAO. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), FAO, and over 110 other partners are collaborating in the Sustainable Productivity Growth Coalition for Food Security and Resource Conservation, which was launched at the 2021 Food Systems Summit. Earlier this year the coalition published a compendium of actions and lessons learned from a broad scope of projects.

This compendium is full of information about water use efficiency and conservation best practices. You can find some of these best practices on USDA's newly-launched International Climate Hub, an extension of USDA's existing Climate Hub programme, which is helping USDA and our partners promote climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices at home, but now globally as well. Not only are soil and water management and watershed restoration priority topics on the International Climate Hub, but it also has access to an assessment tool, which helps predict the environmental impact of land use changes, land management practices and climate change.

Also at the intersection of soil health and water security, USDA continues to collaborate with FAO and many others in the global soil partnership to promote sustainable soil management. USDA has capacity-building programmes like the Food for Progress Programme, the Borlaug Fellowship Programme and Scientific Exchange Programme currently include climate-smart agriculture among their priority topics, with several projects either directly or indirectly addressing water scarcity. For example this past May, fellows from USDA's Scientific Exchange Programme participated in the

Water for Food Global Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska, where FAO also convened a side meeting about collaborations on the global framework on water scarcity in agriculture.

USDA is pleased to be among the framework's partners to help accelerate solutions for sustainable water and food security. The United States is committed to being an active partner in the ongoing collaborations on sustainable water and food security at the local, national, and the international level.

**His Excellency Paulo TEIXEIRA (Brazil) (Original language Portuguese)**

Brazil has had very significant international co-operation work in family agriculture, in the southern region of our country, in the Latin American region through the [unclear 00:25:00], and in the systems we have participated in both within FAO and the Group of Twenty (G20).

Recently President Lula launched a Safra plan for funding family agriculture and promoted lower interest rates for agroecology to recover all different elements of our natural ecology. Strong investments went to agroforests. These processes are things that we want to debate throughout Latin America and also in the framework of South-South co-operation.

Now in August we are preparing for the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to be held in Brazil in 2025, and the Amazon will be at the heart of debate there. We are making a very significant effort and achieving very positive results to diminish deforesting. We are placing the virtuous idea of agroforestry and productive forests at the heart of that. This is why we want to further deepen all debates, particularly on technology, irrigation technology, conservation technology, reuse of water, technologies to conserve water, and also on climatic conditions that might help, not only Brazilian farming and agriculture, but also farming and agriculture elsewhere.

We want our farming and agriculture to appropriate itself of that technology.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Let me now to pass the floor to Cabo Verde.

**Son Excellence Gilberto Correia CARVALHO SILVA (Cabo Verde)**

Nous sommes très convaincus qu'il existe un fort potentiel de coopération dans ce domaine. Nous pensons que la rareté de l'eau est aussi une opportunité. C'est pourquoi nous soutenons fermement le cadre mondial contre la Pénurie de l'Eau dans l'Agriculture, en anglais «Water Scarcity in Agriculture», abrégé en anglais WASAG. C'est une excellente plateforme pour le partenariat, le partage des connaissances et des technologies, et l'alignement des politiques. Cabo Verde a coorganisé, avec la FAO, deux forums internationaux de WASAG.

Le premier en 2019 et le deuxième en février de cette année à Praia. L'élan croissant de l'engagement des partenaires de WASAG nous a amené à accepter la demande exprimée de l'appel à l'action de Praia de février 2023 que Cabo-Verde devienne le premier président de l'Assemblée de WASAG qui se réunira pour la première fois ici à Rome les 29 et 30 avril 2024. Donc, en attendant, nous vous invitons à vous impliquer activement dans le WASAG et à participer à cet événement.

Pour ce qui concerne bien sûr la coopération entrepreneuriale pour le financement, nous supportons aussi tout ce qui concerne le partenariat public-privé, les émissions des obligations vertes et obligations bleues, aux échanges de dettes contre les investissements durables dans le secteur de l'eau, production agricole et chaîne de valeur. Ça, je crois qu'on peut négocier très bien avec nos partenaires ces modalités, et bien sûr, l'accès au fond climatique.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Let me now pass the floor to Tajikistan.

**Ms Nigina ANVARI (Tajikistan) (Original language Russian)**

We think that in order to step up efforts on partnership and co-operation to tackle water scarcity is essential in Tajikistan and in other countries of the Central Asian region. Increased co-ordination and inter-alia through our river basin organization is a *sine qua non*. We also have a fund for the saving of the Aral Sea, and at the moment the presidency of that is held by Tajikistan.

Some of the measures taken by the Fund could be very effective and very useful, but financing and mobilizing resources is always a problem. We need funds that can be used to develop infrastructure for the use of water, including the building of reservoirs, and technical support and advice would be helpful too. We do need partnerships between what is representing our state, scientific research institutions, financial institutions, and when we have got the financial input, we need monitoring and help with it.

We think FAO could be a major contributor here, and that would help us to better tackle the issues of water scarcity we face and develop more effective approaches to tackling this issue in the wider region. We also naturally cannot do without political will, and we can always have more help with building that. If we are to attract more resources, we need it, and we would support any ideas about taking more innovative decisions, which will help all of us to take what are complex and comprehensive decisions, if we are to really effectively tackle this issue of water scarcity.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Let me now pass the floor to the Kingdom of Jordan.

**His Excellency Khaled HNEIFAT (Jordan) (Original language Arabic)**

It is important to create a network between the countries of the region in order to limit the effects of Climate Change on water. We had a meeting with Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, in addition to the Palestinian Authority. We had a meeting and we hope that in the next meeting we will create an observatory with the co-operation of the FAO. We hope this will be based in Jordan.

I believe that we in Jordan, through the numbers that I shared with you on the scarcity of water, I believe that we have made many achievements, despite the different problems that we have faced over the years, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war. Despite all of this, we have overcome the crisis and we have tried to give an added value to every drop of water, so as to channel it towards the products that have a better revenue. Despite the fact that we have faced major economic problems, we have overcome them.

We have the National Centre for Research that has given positive experiences through the co-operation with many international organizations and neighbouring countries. We will continue on this road.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

To finalize, the Minister of the Netherlands, please.

**Her Excellency Christianne VAN DER WAL ZEGGELINK (Netherlands, Kingdom of the)**

The aim is that in 2050 the physical living environment of The Netherlands will be structurally less vulnerable for climate change through the use of climate adaptation measures. This means that damage and disruption caused by Climate Change are limited as much as possible and that opportunities are seized.

We aim to ensure that all agricultural entrepreneurs and those responsible for nature areas, prepare themselves to deal with Climate Change in a sustainable and effective way. We recognize more and more that the global water cycle connects regions and countries over national borders. The global implications of local interventions therefore require that new views and policies on trans-boundary governance need to be considered.

Co-operation across borders is crucial since river basins or catchment areas are trans-boundary by nature. An example of such an integrated approach in delta areas is the co-operation of Vietnam and The Netherlands, combining forces in the agricultural transformation in the Mekong Delta, integrating food, soil, water and nature. This goes beyond any National Water Road map. Any country can develop and implement on national level.

It is crucial that we are prepared to discuss sensitive issues, as co-operation and governance of trans-boundary water management issues. We could learn for example, from the International Commission

for the Protection of the Rhine. This is an intergovernmental body for all Rhine countries, which is France, Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Switzerland.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Colleagues, before I move to the Members that have the floor, please join me, in thanking all the panelists for all their great interventions, and especially for bringing solutions and new ideas.

Now let us move to the floor. We have six countries asking for interventions, and please, I would really appreciate if you can keep your intervention to three minutes.

**Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

Estoy muy contento de que en esta Conferencia el Director-General haya propuesto el tema del agua y la agricultura. Permítame felicitar las excelentes presentaciones de los panelistas que han dado una excelente ruptura del hielo para empezar el debate sobre el agua en esta Conferencia. Desde un punto de vista técnico, el agua se articula sobre el único ciclo hidrológico de regeneración que involucra no solo a la agricultura sino también a otras actividades como las industriales, las energéticas, navieras, logísticas, etcétera. Pero la FAO tiene un rol relevante en las discusiones globales sobre agua y está claro que, de acuerdo con su mandato, tiene claras ventajas comparativas en la promoción de usos más eficientes del agua en la agricultura y en la provisión de soluciones para lidiar con el estrés hídrico.

Los países en desarrollo, víctimas principales del cambio climático necesitan transferencia de conocimiento, reforzamiento de las capacidades nacionales, acceso a las más modernas tecnologías y financiamiento adecuado para llevar adelante las acciones que cada gobierno requiera hacer. La innovación requiere todo ello. Argentina, que tiene un 70% de su territorio árido, semi-árido, en la última campaña agrícola sufrió pérdidas enormes por la sequía y otros países de la región como consecuencias de grandes inundaciones. Argentina toma muy en serio el tema del uso eficiente del agua en la agricultura. Por ejemplo, desarrollamos el trigo HB4 resistente a la sequía, tenemos un programa hídrico nacional y tenemos un mapeo satelital de los recursos hídricos con los que contamos entre otras cosas.

Argentina tiene una gran vocación para cooperar y compartir nuestros conocimientos y mi región es un ejemplo de respeto a la soberanía de los recursos a través de acuerdos bilaterales y multilaterales. No entendemos, a veces, cuando escuchamos expresiones como la gobernanza del agua, como si hubiera un modelo único de gobernanza porque cada recurso hídrico tiene su propia gobernanza. Precisamente en mi país, y en mi región, cada recurso hídrico tiene su propia gobernanza y refleja un sistema de equilibrios que captura los intereses de todos los países involucrados en dichos recursos; por ejemplo, a través de los Comités de Cuencas y por eso sería extraño imaginar una eventual gobernanza global cuando en cada país existen, muchas veces, más de un tipo de gobernanza según el recurso hídrico.

Para terminar, Presidente, en Argentina promovemos una filosofía político-social inclusiva y el acceso de nuestra población al agua es parte de dicha política y algunas ideas sobre la monetización del agua para nosotros son complejas porque no están incluidas dentro de nuestro contrato social.

Muchísimas gracias, Presidente, y vuelvo a felicitarlo por la manera de conducir esta mesa y por excelentes presentaciones de los Panelistas.

**Ms Julia IMENE-CHANDURU (Namibia)**

We in Namibia, just like many countries, recognize the right to water by all for Social Economic Development and the maintenance of ecosystems. We recognize that water unites us and water defines us. Every one of us in the world today is a stakeholder of water. The challenge is that some have it in abundance and others have it in scarcity. As a highly climate change impacted country, Namibia has it in scarcity.

As we are at the halfway mark of the International Decade for “Action on Water for Sustainable Development”, we have to pause and take stock of the progress, and I believe that is exactly what we are doing here today, with the hope that we are working toward meeting our set goals. Water should therefore be an enabler.



Permit me to briefly underscore the following points highlighted from the high table. That is that we have to act, and we have to act now. Gender equality and capacity-building, improve data analysis, and that we have to invest in nature-based solutions.

**His Excellency Mohammed Hassan KATANA (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

We believe that climate change has been caused mainly by us, because we have all contributed at some point in time in over utilizing natural resources, in all its kinds. Now we are looking for the basis that we have to adopt in order to conserve the water resources that are the basis in developing the agricultural sector and guaranteeing food security, because they are the most stable in providing food, but I believe that water available now in the world is relatively fixed, unless we adopt the practice of desalination.

We must look into two points. The first is research. We must enhance the scientific research in producing cultivars that are adaptable to water scarcity, because the availability of water is fixed, but there is an increase in population, especially in certain parts of the world. This increase in population will not be met by our food production, unless we find new agricultural systems that are more apt and more adaptable to draft. This is essential in order to provide for our needs. We need to look for water harvesting and new methods of agriculture in order to provide for our needs in animals and food from agriculture.

In 2015, we have issued new laws in the conservation of water and the use of new irrigation methods in agriculture for better use of water. As was said, we have heard that there is an idea of pricing water. We do not think that this is necessary because this is a challenge to farmers. So we have to concentrate on better management of water resources in the field and to make sure that the users of water are better-equipped to better manage water in the areas where agriculture is more intensive. so as to use water according to the real needs of the cycles, because pricing waters will raise the price of production, and this is a big challenge to farmers who are small farmers and the poorest in all societies.

We have to give the weaker governments the financing since they are not capable of modernizing their irrigation networks. This will enable them to save on water. It is necessary that certain international funds and international organizations intervene to help the weaker countries so as to enable them to develop their irrigation systems.

We are looking into partnerships with neighbouring countries. Syria has signed an agreement with Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq for trade exchange, and this will allow us to plant the crops that need more water in the places where there is more water available.

**Mr Philip Harsama KELLO (Kenya)**

Kenya is among the water scarce countries across the world with per capita availability of below 1 000 cubic metres annually. Water shortage in Kenya is largely pronounced in rural areas and largely in arid and semi-arid areas, which has led to the strain on women and children having the task of searching for water, especially for domestic use. Agriculture and fishing are the main sources of food in Kenya, with up to 80 percent produced by small scale farmers. An estimated 98 percent of Kenyan farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture.

For the last four years, the country has experienced seriously depressed precipitation, resulting in reduced production. One of the strategies the government has adopted to address food security is by ensuring that irrigation contributes to the attainment of national targets from the current irrigated area of 161 840 hectares to 1.3 million hectares by 2030. In overcoming water challenges in agriculture, the Government of Kenya has also embarked on flood water harvesting in order to continuously make water accessible by small scale farmers for supplementing irrigation.

The country has a strategy for the development of water harvesting structures such as dams and water pans spread throughout the country. The Government of Kenya has been very focused on water management for resilient agrifood systems and in March this year approved the Agricultural Soil and Management Policy, which we look forward to implement with our stakeholders and partners.

We have also initiated the process of enacting a law that will protect our soils. As a country, we have set a target to annually plant 15 billion trees to protect our water towers. Kenya therefore agrees with the proposals, particularly on addressing flood risks and water quality deterioration. As a country we look forward to partner with FAO and other Agencies, both in the public and private sector, as we seek for sustainable solutions in availing quality water for food production.

**His Excellency Demba SABALLY (Gambia)**

I think this topic of water has been well-treated and the panellists have done justice, especially for semi-arid parts of the world. Coming from a country like Gambia, where like my Kenyan brother said, over 90 percent of our farmers depend on rain-fed, it is the similar situation we have. And of course, Gambia getting closer and closer to the Sahara Desert, it is a concern and it is a challenge for our water source.

Apart from being rain-fed agriculture, there is the River Gambia, which we use mainly for our rice production and its irrigated area. Of course, underground water is highly exploited in my country. Topics that have been dealt with here are really applicable to our environment and that is one, the issue of desalination. We are challenged with salt intrusion due to rising ocean levels and climate change. This has almost the first 200 kilometres of the coast are getting off production because of salt intrusion.

So desalination is a very applicable technology and it is a very applicable topic for the Gambian context. And also the issue of trans-boundary water sources, like the River Gambia cuts across about three or four countries and there are dams up land, and it has an impact on the low land. Issues of trans-boundary water sources is a very pertinent subject to us. Other issues that were discussed that are related to Gambia were issues of technology, that is harvesting of rainwater.

Technology is rudimentary as far as water harvest and storage is concerned, and also its gender dimension. The majority of our farmers are female and also the majority in rice production and vegetable producers are women. So the issue of water and gender dimension is very, very applicable.

But again, like I said, the legal and policy framework, a country like Gambia, there are many non-food actors also playing a part in water management, like the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Fisheries, Forestry, Environment and even the local governance. So, the subject was well-covered, but I think the main thing has been access to technology and funding so that water management can be expanded and smallholder farmers will benefit.

**Mr Lottie VAISEKAVEA (Solomon Islands)**

My intervention is more a philosophical one, hearing the excellent presentations, and so I want to allow each one to have a mirror, that thing that we stood before we came to this meeting in the morning. So, using the analysis of the Titanic and the Iceberg, and really put before us that what we see in the iceberg, the top part that is visible is only 10 percent. The 90 percent is underneath, it is that one that sank the Titanic. Today we are almost like at a crossroad, like when this ship was heading towards the iceberg. So, all of us are on the boat, but also all of us are on the iceberg, and so it is important for us to look at this issue.

The question is in our hands, we need some radical instruments, radical response. That is lifestyle, and that really emphasizes the slogan from our Director-General, is ask us to walk the talk. So what I am wanting us to see is when the iceberg is just 10 percent at the top, that is where I come from. Solomon Island is part of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) community. The effects are large there, but that is only 10 percent. The real issue is the 90 percent, the one that is making the thing that we are trying to deal with.

So going forward, it is for really all of us to see how we can do it. It is the same on the boat. The Small Island Developing States countries are just passengers, but the captain and the crew of the ship, which would either navigate us safely, are the ones that carry 90 percent of the weight. So yes, as a lifestyle thing, we are transforming our agriculture in Solomon Islands, using whole community mobilization that can make our agriculture more relevant to what is happening at the family level, but also asking everybody that we go beyond cosmetic, we go to the fundamental, the philosophical.

Can we do it in this generation, the generation that has and sold us the responsibility? Can we do it? And that is a question for us.

**His Excellency Salem Abdullah Eissa Salem AL-SOCATRI (Yemen)**

I would like to mention the different issues on water and water challenges. First of all, Yemen is among the countries that face water scarcity, which is a major issue for us, in addition to other problems we face. However, I just heard the Minister from the Netherlands, the Minister of Jordan, and all of the other panellists, mentioning the different challenges that we are facing and how we can find solutions and face these challenges.

If we do not adopt, and you know now that all international conferences mentions climate change and its impact on food and climate and environment and so forth, however, we need to adopt solutions and policies that can lead us to solutions. All regions have problems with water resources and food that can have an impact on other countries. However, the ecological impact on the soil and water waste have not led to a clear road map to face all of this.

There are many countries here that are facing these problems, these challenges, how can we find throughout the world solutions for very specific regions? For instance, countries that need water the most, countries that are facing desertification and rising temperatures, or countries that are facing cyclones? We have different issues and there are countries that have very few means to face these same hazards and disasters.

We are entirely unarmed to face this. Collecting rain water is one issue. The seasons that have an impact on agriculture and also we have mudslides and this affects run-off, this all affects our soil. We have extreme climate and weather events that we need to face. We have a great amount of surface area to devote to agriculture. We do have our National Plan. We are also in the process of building dams and collecting rainwater.

When we hear about regional and international policies and institutional capacity building, we think this is tremendously important, and this is most important for the countries who most need it. How to correct rainwater, how to build different types of dams, how to work in countries with water scarcities. The results that we have seen have been difficult to apply in the field, on the ground. We must be clear about this and this is why we need to work in the field, on the ground, and face the challenges, and this includes FAO, so that we get much more useful and concrete results.

**Mr Dan SCHUSTER-BEESLEY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

I would like to reiterate just how pleased the United Kingdom is to see the FAO driving this critical Agenda forward. It really is fantastic to see this, so critical for the next two years, and playing a leading role across the UN agencies on driving this forward.

I will not repeat the key reasons as to why we need to do more on this urgently, but I just wanted to stress three key issues for us to keep working on. First, we must keep driving this Agenda up the political Agenda and own up to the political failures in this sector of the past. Whilst the UN Water Conference went some way in achieving this, we must build on this momentum and ensure that the next UN Water Conference, for which we obviously cannot wait another 47 years, ensures more global leaders are present, recognizing that water security lies at the heart of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as at the heart of our climate mitigation and adaptation goals.

Secondly, whilst much of the ongoing debates including here today have focused on blue water, the water found in lakes, rivers and reservoirs, not enough global attention has been put on green water, the water captured and stored in our soils for plants. We need to change this, especially in agrifood sectors, if we are to make meaningful difference.

Lastly, I just wanted to also flag the importance of the private sector in driving forward reform. On the one hand, we will need the private sector to mobilize the required funding for new technologies, many of the technologies which have been mentioned today, and critically for investment in nature-based solutions and green infrastructure that will win for both people and planet. But we also need to build an environment that drives forward better water stewardship by the private sector at the basin level, and better manages and understands the importance of critical water footprints.

The critical importance of the agrifood sector and water footprints is something the United Kingdom is driving forward through the innovative Fair Water Footprints Initiative, that aims to drive forward water stewardship standards across the globe. We need to drive forward the UN Water Conference water action Agenda, and in particular the game-changing inclusive multi-stakeholder initiatives that came out through it, many of which are reflected in the Water Action Plan, if we are to bring about a lasting change for people and the environment.

**Sra. Sonia Silvia BRITO SANDOVAL (Bolivia, Estado Plurinacional de)**

Saludamos su conducción y las importantes exposiciones que hemos estado escuchando durante la mañana. Creo que estamos tratando uno de los temas más importantes para la humanidad, si no el más importante.

Estamos todos preocupados porque este recurso tan importante se va acabando, afectando la agricultura en todo el mundo, pero también estamos conscientes que no todos somos responsables de la misma manera. Hay algunos países más que otros, algunos sectores más que otros que hacen un uso irracional e indebido del agua mientras otros pueblos mueren de sed.

También creemos que no se puede hablar de una gobernabilidad única en relación con este tema y menos de poner precio al agua. Estamos hablando de un recurso que es un derecho humano porque el agua es un derecho humano, inalienable, y los derechos humanos no se comercializan. Lo que se debe hacer es promover que los gobiernos de los países que envenenan los ríos de las aguas dulces tengan que tomar medidas urgentes, rápidas, contundentes para acabar con este flagelo.

Estamos conscientes que sí esta vez todos estamos llenando de basura los ríos y de plástico los mares. Este es otro de los puntos que debe necesariamente acabarse. Por ello la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO) y todos nosotros debemos seguir promoviendo, impulsando medidas urgentes para cuidar este importante líquido, elemento para toda la humanidad, y pedir a los gobiernos medidas mucho más fuertes y contundentes para cuidar el recurso que va a permitir garantizar la vida en el planeta.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

Before I give you some of the final closing remarks, there are two events happening, one at 12:30 hours in the Sheikh Zayed Centre, which is The Potential of Aquaculture in Africa, and the second one at 13:00 hours. in the Flag Room, which is the Amazing Potato Exhibit supporting the World Food Potato Day, where you can taste different types of potatoes coming from the Andes. Thank you so much to all and let me close by saying that it was a pleasure for me to wrap up what has been an inspiring, thoughtful, provoking session of challenges and learning. I would like to thank all the panellists and all of you for your participation and open participation of dialogue. The round table shows that water issues intersect with numerous complex global challenges, each with regional country and within-country specificities. No continent on earth has been untouched by water scarcity and will be untouched in the future because of water scarcity.

An increasing number of countries or regions within countries are reaching the limit at which they can provide Water Services Sustainably, especially in arid regions. Turning water-related problems into opportunities will require a balance between the short-term co-ordinated measures to respond to intermediate water needs, and longer-term measures to address structural and institutional water issues, can turn water-related problems into opportunities.

We have to walk the talk and we have to accelerate the actions to achieve this goal, both in the short-term, the medium and the long-term. Investment in innovative practices and technologies is key. All the panellists have talked about it and the solutions they are trying to bring. But we need to bring them together. We need to learn from them so that we can leapfrog. Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) is a case in point to enhance water management practices, soil restoration and resilience to climate variability and change.

We need to improve water productivity, but as it was mentioned by the Netherlands, we also need to transform the system. Sometimes transforming the system could take us some time, but we can benefit in the future from the good actions that we have done to be able to achieve that. We need innovation

and better data, and every country has its own specificities. So when we refer to governance, it is a general term. Every country has its own governance, its own ways of doing things, and management of the resources.

Our job is to bring the best practices and bas this on science and evidence. It is also important to understand that these innovations should be supported by robust institutional and legal frameworks. And let us not forget that policy coherence across sectors and domains is a key factor in ensuring the equitable and sustainable allocation of water resources. Improving inter sectoral co-ordination in local, national and regional policies that integrate water and related issues, can be a gamechanger.

We are committed to supporting countries with unprecedented vigour and dedication for transforming towards more sustainable and inclusive water governance, to ensure sustainable and equitable water allocation, integrated management and efficient water use. I invite you to engage to broaden our collective efforts to scale up water-related action in the agricultural sector and provide inspiration to tackle water scarcity and agrifood system transformation challenges of the coming decades.

I can assure you the full support of FAO every step of the way. Thank you so much for your participation and let us work together because we can learn so much from each other.

*The meeting rose at 12:41 hours*

*La séance est levée à 12 h 41*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 12.41*



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Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
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Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>FIFTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>3 July 2023</b></p>

The Fifth Meeting was opened at 14:18 hours  
Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La cinquième séance est ouverte à 14 h 18  
sous la présidence de Mme. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Président de la Conférence

Se abre la quinta reunión a las 14.18  
bajo la presidencia de la Sra. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Presidente de la Conferencia

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**Item 10. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture****Point 10. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture****Tema 10. Examen del estado de la alimentación y la agricultura**

(C 2023/2)

**CHAIRPERSON**

Excellences, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I call the 5th meeting of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference to order. We will now commence with Item 10 on our Agenda, *Review of the State of Food in Agriculture*. There are two background documents for this Item C 2023/2 and C 2023/12.

The latter sets out the theme the Council proposed for the general debate that is Water Resources Management for the *four betters, better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life*, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the sustainable development goals.

Before giving the floor to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, I wish to remind delegates to submit a copy of their statements in advance to assist the interpreters and Verbatim Reporters. Statements should be submitted to [Conference-statements@FAO.org](mailto:Conference-statements@FAO.org).

I will now give the floor to Mr Torero Cullen, Chief Economist of FAO to introduce this Item.

**Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)**

The Item today of the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) is *Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)* and it has two sections. One in overcoming what are the challenges in agriculture and the second one on Integrated Flood Risk Management (IFRM) for agrifood systems and Role Development. As all of you water, a condition of agrifood system is facing increasing challenges. Water is scarce and drought, floods and water pollution they will undermine our efforts towards achieving sustainable relevant goals.

The first section of this document presents how agriculture is increasingly required to make its case for a share of water to ensure food insecurity and nutrition, for mitigating and adapting to floods and for addressing agriculture induced water pollution. Today more than 3 billion people live in agricultural areas with very high or high levels of water shortages or waters scarcity.

Around 1.81 billion people are directly exposed to floods which pose a significant risk to lives and livelihoods. The impact of climate change is expected to worsen this picture with precautions for agrifood systems, the planet and well-being around the world. The key to all of these entangled challenges is Integrated Water Resource Management that contributes to inclusive and effective water management governance.

The second section of this document presents a broad perspective on the impact of flooding on agriculture, on Food Security and how to address them in a way that delivers multiple long-term benefits for people, food, water and economic security and nature. A more accountability modest approach to Flood Risk and Disaster Management is presented which is based on a paradigm of planning that connects the short and long term, seeks to manage Flood risk to people and economy whilst promoting the positive role of floods by playing in maintaining productive agriculture, aquaculture and Ecosystem Health.

The Conference is invited to recognize that this severe scarcity of Flood Risk and Water Pollution, the water system it is at breaking point effecting Food Security, livelihoods and the lives of billions of people. It is also invited to know that policy priorities relating to water depend on the interplay between Water Resources and value social economic drivers and Climate Change ensuring access to water resources in a sustainable manner, acknowledge that in transforming agrifood systems to achieve sustainably will require Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and efficient water use in both irrigated and agriculture, emphasize the Water Resources Management needs to be integrated at all levels inclusive of all the stakeholders and across all sectors of agriculture.

Forestry, fisheries and agriculture, land and soil, environment, biodiversity, Climate Change amongst others. Also we stress the growing competition for water and disaggregation of its quality calls for

Members and governance to ensure sustainable and good water location, integrated management and efficient use.

We emphasize the Integrated and Inclusive Water Resource Management needs to be supported by improved governance. Seize the International Momentum to take both and a more initiatives regarding long water management in agrifood systems to support Member governance of water.

Request FAO to find and develop problematic initiatives on Flat and Disaster Risk Management and utilization of flooding water and to fully integrate this work in the areas of water, land and soil and climate change, biodiversity, fisheries and agriculture, Forestry Emergency and Resilience towards a holistic and innovative solutions. Finally request FAO to mobilize resources needed to implement problematic actions on flood and integrated land and water management including from International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to source Partners and voluntary contributions by Members.

### **CHAIRPERSON**

It is so important for us to have access to these important data and evidence, it is the best way to make the right decisions being well informed.

I shall now give the floor to the heads of delegation who requested speaking time in advance.

In view of the number of speakers and the limited time at our disposal may I appeal to you to respect the five minute limit set by the Conference when it endorsed the first report of the General Committee on Saturday afternoon. If you look right on the top of your picture when you speak you will see the time you have left. We will pause at 16:30 hours for 30 minutes and we will end today at 19:30 hours.

### **Statements by Heads of Delegation**

#### **Déclarations des chefs de délégation**

#### **Declaraciones de los jefes de delegación**

*Italy, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Mexico, Barbados, Thailand, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Portugal, San Marino, Norway, Hungary, Cuba, Congo, Brazil, France, Cameroon, Uzbekistan, Cyprus, United States of America, South Africa, Azerbaijan, Republic of Korea, Finland, Canada, Denmark, Peru, Syrian Arab Republic, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Zambia, Malaysia, Rwanda, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Bolivia, Angola, Argentina, Spain, Costa Rica, Ireland, Sudan, Belgium, Belarus, Philippines*

### **His Excellency Francesco LOLLOBRIGIDA (Italy)(Original language Italian)**

Ministers, Ambassadors,

Delegates.

I would like to express my congratulations of course to the Director-General and I would like to wish him fructiferos next four years and of course the Italian Government pays great attention to the FAO. Considers it a fundamental element in this entire architecture dealing with numerous different challenges, geo political challenges which are ever so key in our times.

Italy would like first of all to condemn the war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and would like to express our support and our solidarity to the people of Ukraine. Food security is one of the priorities of the Italian Presidency during the G7 Presidency of 2024. We will of course support all concrete measures adopted in order to fight hunger, and what is most important of course in dealing with hunger is fighting against all of the problems that exist that on particular front including water.

Water resources have to be managed effectively, in other words we will work in that particular direction, Professor Andrea Rinaldo will receive the water prize, the Nobel Prize for Water because of the excellent work that he has done as far as putting together a hydrological system of an independent nature. We have seen droughts and floods throughout the world, 3 billion people throughout the world



are at risk of water scarcity in agricultural areas and approximately 1.8 billion are exposed to the threats of floods.

So it is necessary for us to intervene and to act at the national level and there has to be international cooperation as well in order to deal with these adverse weather circumstances that exist. Floods cause disasters, disasters like that which took place in Italy in Emilia Romagna, just to note the most recent flood event in our country, and this of course has strengthened the conviction of the Italian Government that a major role has to be played by the authorities working together with farmers and with producers in order to have proper management in the various areas in order to deal with the flood circumstances that exist.

For us these issues are environmental issues, the policy for water management has to be part of an integrated development programme that is adopted and good water quality is absolutely imperative for life as well, and we do feel that the FAO has and will in the future adopt numerous different projects and programmes in order to mobilize the necessary resources to manage water resources, partners have to exist, private and public in order to carry this out.

Investment for sustainable management of water is absolutely key as well. We need more efficient use of water. At the same time it is necessary for us to develop the existing technologies and new innovative technologies are necessary as well. We have to focus on the possibility of looking at the hydrological reality and dealing with it as we know up until now in a more effective fashion and once again adopt more innovation approaches as well. It is necessary for us to move quickly to deal with the risks that are out there, predict risks as well.

I simply wanted to remind you that the meeting that will take place and will be co-chaired by the United Nations and Italy that on transformative systems in food production that will take place between 24 and 26 July, it comes at an extremely important moment as well, taking into consideration the vulnerabilities in the food supply system and the food chain system as well that was exposed all the more so after 2021.

So, we have to look at the idiosyncrasies, the diversities that exist between the different countries as well, and the presence at that particular event at the end of July of Antonio Guterres the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and numerous Members, heads of state and government altogether they will underline the very importance of having proper management in order to deal with the issues of food security for a more just world. At this point I would like to wish you a fructiferos week and I welcome you to Italy. I welcome you to Rome.

Thank you.

**Son Excellence Gilberto Correia CARVALHO SILVA (Cabo Verde)**

Excellences, distingués Chefs de délégations, chers Participants. Cabo Verde, comme la plupart des pays, a subi les effets des crises causées par la pandémie et la guerre, aussi bien que des effets de quatre années de sécheresse. Malgré la situation nationale et internationale défavorable, pendant laquelle nous avons souffert et nous souffrons la hausse des prix des produits alimentaires, le pays a réalisé une légère réduction de la malnutrition chronique et aiguë.

Cette constatation revient du Conseil national de Sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle qui s'est réuni ce mois-ci et a publié les résultats de la cinquième enquête sur la vulnérabilité alimentaire des familles et auquel a participé la représentation de la FAO. Ces résultats résultent des efforts d'atténuation des effets de la crise et du renforcement de la résilience déployée par le gouvernement, par les municipalités, par les partenaires dont nous soulignons la FAO et le PAM, par d'autres partenaires multilatéraux et bilatéraux et par la société civile.

Concrètement, je parle du renforcement des cantines scolaires, les élèves représentent 20% de la population du pays. De l'aide alimentaire, et des facilités de paiement des factures d'eau et d'électricité pour les familles les plus vulnérables, de l'augmentation de la capacité de stockage des céréales, de la subvention de l'alimentation animale et de la promotion des travaux publics pour l'augmentation des revenus familiaux et la promotion de l'agriculture familiale. Nous profitons pour remercier la FAO, les

responsables et techniciens du Siège, du Bureau régional et la délégation au Cap-Vert pour le bon travail mené et la coopération exemplaire entamée.

La recommandation est de renforcer le réseau de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et continuer à investir dans les mesures visant à renforcer la résilience des systèmes alimentaires et leur adaptation aux changements climatiques, notamment en ce qui concerne la mobilisation et la gestion durable de l'eau pour l'agriculture. Pour cela, nous comptons sur la poursuite de la coopération très fructueuse des partenaires, notamment la FAO. Je profite pour réitérer les félicitations au Directeur général QU Dongyu pour sa réélection, je lui souhaite plein succès pour son second mandat. Merci beaucoup.

**Son Excellence Kobenan Kouassi ADJOUANI (Côte d'Ivoire)**

J'ai l'honneur de faire cette déclaration au nom du Groupe des 77 et de la Chine. Selon le rapport 2022 du SOFI, le nombre de personnes touchées par la faim dans le monde a augmenté pour atteindre 828 millions en 2021, soit une augmentation d'environ 46 millions depuis 2020 et de 150 millions depuis l'apparition de la pandémie de la COVID-19. Selon les projections, près de 670 millions de personnes, huit pourcents de la population mondiale seront toujours confrontés à la faim en 2030. Ce chiffre est similaire à celui de 2015, lorsque l'objectif de mettre fin à la faim, à l'insécurité alimentaire, à la pauvreté d'ici la fin de la décennie, avait été lancé dans le cadre de l'Agenda 2030 pour le développement durable.

L'augmentation de l'insécurité alimentaire et de la malnutrition dans le monde est un problème structurel, persistant et multifactoriels, y compris ceux décrit au paragraphe 30 de l'Agenda 2030. L'impact des chocs et des crises mondiaux affecte de manière disproportionnée les populations les plus vulnérables car ils se combinent à l'absence ou à l'insuffisance des filets de protection sociale. L'accès limité à l'éducation, à la santé, l'approvisionnement adéquat en eau, la précarité des infrastructures et l'absence de numérisation dans les zones rurales sont autant de facteurs qui compromettent gravement la résilience des systèmes agroalimentaires entiers face au ralentissement économique, les conflits et les extrêmes climatiques.

Madame la Présidente, malgré les informations actualisées fournies par la FAO, sur la manière dont les conflits, y compris en Ukraine, ont un impact sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition, en particulier dans les pays en développement qui dépendent des importations de denrées alimentaires, et des [inaudible] agricoles. Nous assistons depuis 2022 à une politisation et à une polarisation dans l'ensemble du système de gouvernance de la FAO, qui nous a empêchés de parvenir à un consensus, [inaudible] ainsi notre capacité à traiter de nos intérêts au cœur du mandat de l'Organisation.

Par conséquent, nous rappelons l'importance de traiter les questions relevant du mandat principal de l'Organisation, à savoir, la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition, et de revenir au principe fondamental de la prise de décision par consensus. Comme nous le savons tous, l'éradication de la faim est d'une importance capitale pour la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable et de l'Agenda 2030.

Les progrès de la production agricole rendent la faim tout à fait évitable à condition, bien sûr, que nous travaillions ensemble pour conduire, sinon construire, développer et utiliser les capacités, transférer les technologies et fournir une assistance financière aux pays en développement. La COP27 et la COP15 ont clairement reconnu le fait que les systèmes agroalimentaires sont profondément affectés par les crises climatiques et environnementales, et en même temps, une partie fondamentale de la solution pour y faire face.

Les impacts du changement climatique, combiné à la nécessité de nourrir et d'alimenter une population mondiale croissante en période d'incertitude, conduiront à une réduction de la production alimentaire et de la nutrition, ainsi qu'à un accès limité à la nourriture, en particulier pour les vulnérables, et les plus pauvres.

Madame la Présidente, nous demandons à la FAO de continuer à fournir une assistance technique dans le cadre de son mandat, à l'élaboration et l'exécution des travaux conjoints, Charm el-Cheikh, relatif à la mise en œuvre de l'action climatique sur l'agriculture et la sécurité alimentaire. Nous reconnaissons les activités menées par la FAO, au profit d'un pays en développement, à cet égard, nous pensons que le débat sur la gestion de l'eau au cours de la Conférence est d'une grande importance et devrait rester

lié aux mandats et aux avantages comparatifs de la FAO en vue de promouvoir l'efficacité dans l'utilisation de l'eau et de fournir des solutions pour surmonter les situations de stress hydriques.

Madame la Présidente, le Groupe des 77 et la Chine, souhaite également mettre en évidence et souligner les priorités identifiées par nos Conférences Régionales car leurs mises en œuvre améliorera les systèmes agroalimentaires pour une meilleure production, une meilleure nutrition, un meilleur environnement, une meilleure vie, sans laisser personne de côté. Nous pensons par exemple, que le débat sur la bioéconomie au sein des organes Directeurs et des Comités Techniques de la FAO peut être un puissant catalyseur pour les pays en développement membres de l'Organisation d'accéder plus facilement au marché, à la coopération technique et aux ressources concessionnelles des fonds pour le climat et la biodiversité.

Nous proposons donc que ce travail soit mené au sein des Comités Techniques existants de la FAO, en gardant à l'esprit la collaboration en cours entre le COAG et le COFO sur les liens entre l'agriculture et la sylviculture conformément au cadre stratégique de la FAO pour 2022-2031, et aux résultats prévus par le programme de travail et budget 2024-2025. Nous devons nous efforcer de veiller à ce que les divers points de vue soient pris en compte d'une manière inclusive dans les produits de connaissances de la FAO. Cet objectif peut être atteint grâce à l'intégration progressive, y compris par le biais d'instruments financiers, d'un groupe d'institutions universitaires plus équilibré sur le plan régional pour l'élaboration des documents, études stratégiques, codes volontaires et définitions de méthodologies pour la mesure des indicateurs.

Cette question a été soulevée lors de la dernière Session du Comité du Programme, incluse dans son rapport et nous nous attendons à ce qu'elle évolue de manière significative. Avec ces remarques, le Groupe des 77 et la Chine réaffirme que les efforts conjoints pour lutter contre les multiples crises auxquelles le monde est confronté doivent prendre en considération les préoccupations et aspirations légitimes que le Groupe a fait valoir auprès des organes du système des Nations Unies.

Je vous remercie.

**Her Excellency Christianne VAN DER WAL ZEGGELINK (Netherlands, Kingdom of the)**

The Netherlands align itself with the statement of Spain, on behalf of the EU Member States that will be delivered later this afternoon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Minister,” my advisers said some time ago ... “On the third of July, you are speaking at the FAO in Rome and you only have five minutes.”

“Five minutes?” I said. “Okay ... No problem.”

Of course, I know: the world is facing so many challenges. We are looking for so many answers. Droughts, flooding, crop failures, wildfires, food insecurity because of war, hunger, plastic waste, nitrogen, CO<sub>2</sub>, toxins, – you name it.

So, what do you do, as a Dutch minister, when you have five minutes and when some might say it's five minutes to midnight on the Doomsday Clock? You go back 800 years in time.

About 800 years ago, the Dutch had to find ways to protect their new “polders” – their self-made land – and manage the flow of water. To keep their feet dry, the Dutch just reached out their hands and started working together: in local water councils. And these councils for water governance still exist today.

Over the course of the centuries, we became famous for our water management skills. But nature will sometimes put those skills to the test. For instance, we built the now famous Delta Works after the disastrous North Sea Flood of 1953, that killed many hundreds of people. That disaster made us rethink. Improve on our skills again. Innovate.

In a way, the Dutch are fortunate to face the constant threat of floods. Why? Because I believe our tradition of cooperating will help us tackle today's new challenges.

We've always been happy to cooperate internationally. Regionally, we work with countries along the Rhine basin. And on a global scale, we cooperated with Tajikistan, co-hosting the Water Summit in New York last March, for a sustainable development agenda.

Famous for water management, we are not so famous for ... wildfire management. Yes: due to climate change, our usually very wet country is facing more and more droughts.

So once again, we do what we do when nature challenges us: we cooperate. Because last June, I joined some Dutch firefighters on a visit to Spain – where Catalanian experts gladly shared their knowledge of wildfire prevention.

We reached out to each other.

And reaching out is exactly what the world did in Montreal in December – at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference. All those people from all over the world putting their heads together. Attending the summit, I felt energy. I felt commitment. I felt the will to make things work, to protect nature – the cornerstone of our existence – together.

I felt a wow.

Today, I'm feeling a new wow. Thanks to you, thanks to all of us – putting our heads together for the management of our precious water resources. Water flows downhill ... but thanks to New York and thanks to today, it's now streaming all the way up to the top of the political agenda.

The massive problems and major challenges that the world is facing – they're all connected. In order to overcome them, we need to be exactly that: connected. Because we do not know what the coming years will bring us. But I do know that together, we will succeed in protecting our land, our water, our wildlife – and our agriculture, our economies, our people. By learning from each other.

I am not naïve. I know that cooperating can be difficult. Very difficult. Just look at all the armed aggression. Conflict is part of our nature. But a stronger part of our nature, is that we all want to find a future.

Let's do this together – because on our own, we will not succeed. And together is simply more fun.

The Netherlands is willing to invest in a global effort. To invest in us, to invest in the world.

Fiat panis – let there be bread;

Fiat aqua – let there be water;

Fiat manus – let there be a hand – a helping hand.

**Su Excelencia Victor VILLALOBOS ARÁMBULA (Mexico)**

Sra. Presidenta de la Conferencia: Sra. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Ministra de Agricultura de Canadá:

Sr. Director General de la FAO, Dr. Qu Dongyu.

Sres. Ministros y jefes de delegación:

Amigos todos:

Me es grato concurrir a esta Conferencia, como máximo órgano de gobierno de la FAO, para analizar las contribuciones al combate del hambre y la pobreza y al desarrollo de la agricultura, y también aportar nuevas orientaciones con la esperanza de hacer más eficiente, transparente y significativa su labor en beneficio de todos países miembros.

Saludo con particular deferencia a la Presidenta de la Conferencia, Señora Marie-Claude Bibeau, Ministra de Agricultura y Agroalimentación del Canadá, con quien nos une una larga amistad y lazos de colaboración.

Saludo con igual aprecio al Dr. Qu Dongyu, a quien felicito por su reelección como Director General de la FAO. Confiamos que, bajo su liderazgo, la FAO continuará desempeñando un papel fundamental en la lucha contra el hambre, la pobreza y la promoción de la seguridad alimentaria.

El documento sobre el estado de la alimentación y la agricultura, así como el documento técnico sobre el estado del agua para la agricultura preparado para esta Conferencia, presentan un preocupante escenario que nos demanda no solo una profunda reflexión, sino también un nuevo compromiso de cooperación multilateral en favor de aquellos que más lo necesitan.

Es urgente encontrar soluciones sustentables a la multiplicidad de los retos a los que nos enfrentamos y buscar nuevas formas de colaboración multilateral para enfrentarlos. La FAO puede y debe ser parte de la solución sin dejar a nadie atrás.

Para el gobierno de México, encabezado por el Presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador, la seguridad alimentaria y soberanía alimentaria son dos de sus más importantes prioridades y para atenderlas se han implementado nuevos programas y alentado novedosos instrumentos centrados en las personas.

El agua constituye una alta prioridad para el desarrollo del País y su gestión integral es llevada a cabo con la concurrencia de diversas instancias federales, estatales y de los usuarios, particularmente aquellos en el sector agrícola. Estas acciones han sido plasmadas en el Plan Nacional Hídrico que es coordinado por el Sector de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales. El mes de junio pasado, con motivo del día mundial de la lucha contra la desertificación y la sequía, el Presidente de México, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, presentó 15 nuevos proyectos hidráulicos prioritarios para México, con los cuales se beneficiará a 21.3 millones de personas e impactarán 135 mil hectáreas de riego, ratificando el compromiso de su gobierno por asegurar que todos los mexicanos cuenten con el agua que requiere para llevar una vida digna y justa.

Somos conscientes de que la disponibilidad de agua para la agricultura se encuentra en una compleja encrucijada y que lo que hagamos o dejemos de hacer en el sector impactará al futuro de la humanidad y del planeta.

Aprovechando el marco de esta Conferencia, me permito proponer a los miembros y todos los Ministros sumemos nuestras voces para pedirle a FAO se enfoque en brindar cooperación técnica en las siguientes áreas prioritarias:

- Fortalecer las capacidades técnicas de los ministerios de agricultura para obtener y atender el tema del agua en el sector.
- Promover diálogos de políticas para el diseño, implementación y evaluación de acciones para el uso integral de los recursos naturales en la agricultura.
- Fortalecer la innovación, la creación la gestión de conocimiento, en materia de uso del agua para la agricultura con el propósito de mejorar la productividad y su uso integral, mejorando su sustentabilidad y dando particular atención a los impactos negativos que el propio sector causa al recurso hídrico.
- Participar en los procesos de diálogo en foros internacionales para cuidar los intereses de la agricultura y del sector rural en materia de agua. Es decir, que sea el vocero del interés de todos los productores agrícolas del mundo.

El agua es un recurso vital que se está agotando. Estoy convencido de que, si no actuamos conjuntamente y de manera urgente, poniendo el interés colectivo por encima del interés individual, en un corto plazo nos enfrentaremos a una realidad que será irreversible y la falta de agua será motivo de grandes problemas sociales, incluyendo hambrunas, conflictos armados y migraciones, acentuando aquellos ya existentes.

Les invito a instar a la FAO para pedirle que actué de manera inmediata para atender, con responsabilidad, el reto del agua en la agricultura. ¡De esto depende nuestra soberanía!

¡Muchas gracias!

**His Excellency Indar WEIR (Barbados)**

Excellencies,

distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to participate in this conversation about water resources and water resource management, and how do we adapt and build resilience in the face of the most complex existential threat to mankind, climate change. The late great Bob Marley said and I quote “the greatest of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires but in his integrity and his ability to effect those around him positively”.

I bring to you today my views on where we are and how we shall proceed given the fact that I recognize that we are falling behind in our SDG targets particularly SDG2. It is of paramount importance that we recognize that the whole world face similar issues as it relates to water resource management. In listening to the McDougall lecture I was convinced more than ever that unless we put in the effort now at a time when we are particularly against the movement of the clock we shall find ourselves even further behind.

Our Sustainable Development Goals, SDG2 Zero Hunger, SDG3 Good Health and Well Being and SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production are paramount in everything we do. The world food security must also embrace the SIDSs the LDCs, the LLDCs and we must be careful that in everything we do we do not leave them behind.

Above all in the global context you may recognize that these prolonged effects of climate change has given all of us similarities, prolonged droughts, prolonged floods and indeed limited rain falls to do rainfed agriculture. There is a need of course for us to respond. In responding to building resilience and making sure that all have adapted carefully we must also make sure that we do the things that would involve proper investments and proper spending in bringing about change.

Thirdly within a domestic context and what happens in Barbados, we are making all efforts to make sure we respond, adapt and build resilience. To this end we are recognizing that in the face of climate change there may very well be limited production of food at times. We also face good health care challenges, obesity NCDs and alike. Non Communicable Diseases will continue to effect not only Barbados but the world over. We must now seek to reduce NCDs, and also make sure that we produce healthy clean foods. This of course means reaching food sovereignty.

So, we are challenged to make sure we have food security, nutrition and food sovereignty. To reduce the costs of production Barbados is faced with reducing its food import bill. I believe we can do better and effort is being made at my Ministry to make sure we reduce our food import bill from USD 445 million by taking the first step by the year 2025 across an entire CARICOM effort to reduce the region's food import bill by 25 percent.

Barbados is listed among the 10 most water scarced country in the world. This in itself speaks to the challenge that we face. In an effort to make sure that we keep our farmers empowered and in franchise the Government of Barbados and through my Ministry sought to develop a water augmentation programme that resulted in millions of dollars being spent across the entire country in rural Barbados and urban Barbados to make sure farmers have access to water through irrigation systems.

To this end we have developed reservoirs in water scarced areas so that farmers can have access to water on a daily basis. One such reservoir to the east of the Island has resulted in the Government spending USD 1.1 million in order for us to allow farmers on 60 acres of land to have access to irrigation water. We have also spent close to or USD 1.5 million at another location to the North of the Island, which will give us an opportunity to produce our own planting material by developing a state of the art orchard facility and at the same time building a reservoir to provide water. Equally we have started an urban project that allows for us to use technology and introduce new agrifood systems across the island, thus giving us opportunities for young people and females to participate.

Therefore we have started the farmers empowerment and in franchise drive is feed, which is deliberate, to hold farmers and help young people participate. I believe collectively we all can do it, we must move at pace.

I thank you.

**His Excellency Chalermchai SRI-ON (Thailand)**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, water security is a big challenge particularly since climate change has disrupted the global water cycle. Thailand although blessed with abundance of water is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Our agricultural sector relies on 70 percent on rain effected agricultural and is particularly effected by the chain of precipitation patterns. Thailand is determined to achieve the sustainable development goals through the implementation of the sufficiency economy philosophy.

In respond to the crisis, Thailand has adopted a concrete national water resources management plan for implementing effective mechanisms and action to uphold water security for consumption and production, water disease prevention, water quality management, water conservation and restoration and water resources administration and management both in the short term and long term plan. In the short term we aim to increase the effect and efficiency of water use in the agricultural sector and to increase the yearlong stability of water supplies. In the long term we will invest in water infrastructure and water use efficiency.

In the past 40 years, Thailand conducted successful re-forestation projects aimed at restoration and rehabilitation of water and resources through the implementation of nature based solution. We would like to share our experience with all Member countries and work in collaboration with FAO in addressing the big challenges of sustainable and efficient management of more domestic and transboundary waters.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year marks the 10 years anniversary of the United Nations designation of the 5 December as World Soil Day to raise awareness on the key role of soil for the SDGs. World Soil Day 2023 highlights the interlinkage between soils and more land that brings soils and water a source of life. On occasions of the General Assembly of the Global Soil Partnership, Thailand will organize a side event on healthy soils for healthy food and nutrition. We will promote the concept of speeding up soils and speeding up partnerships. You are kindly invited to attend the side event on 13 July 2023 to create the partnerships for the sustainable management of soil and water resources to collectively achieve the SDGs. Thank you.

#### **Su Excelencia Wilmar CASTRO SOLTEDO (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de)**

A nombre de nuestro país, Venezuela, y a nombre de nuestro presidente constitucional, Nicolás Maduro Moros, enviamos un caluroso y una sincera felicitación a su excelencia Qu Dongyu. Le deseamos el mejor de los éxitos en este nuevo período de sesiones.

Honorable Doctora Marie-Claude Bibeau, quisiéramos en esta oportunidad compartir tres breves reflexiones desde la patria de Bolívar. La primera de ellas tiene que ver con la revisión a fondo de los conceptos que utilizamos en la elaboración de nuestros informes y diagnósticos. Si realmente es válido seguir utilizando el concepto de seguridad alimentaria o trascendemos al concepto de soberanía agroalimentaria en aras de acelerar la sagrada misión de erradicar el hambre en el mundo. De ser así, deberíamos focalizar los esfuerzos en el rescate de los patrones ancestrales de consumos de los distintos pueblos del mundo y potenciar la producción de sus rubros tradicionales facilitando todos los procesos administrativos, logísticos, sanitarios de aquellos productos que se requerirían para complementar su dieta de manera más fácil.

En segundo lugar, quisiéramos sugerir a este honorable cuerpo la gestión del conocimiento como una tarea fundamental. Y, en tal sentido, deberíamos impulsar el intercambio de saberes y acceso a tecnologías pertinentes y limpias que puedan ser asimiladas por nuestros campesinos y nuestras campesinas sin que esto implique una dependencia de otros países o de las grandes transnacionales.

En nuestro caso particular, ponemos a disposición de aquellos pueblos del mundo nuestros avances en la producción de semillas de papas y otros tubérculos bajo la metodología de clonación de dichas semillas en lo que hemos llamado la alianza científico-campesina. Hasta la fecha hemos alcanzado la cifra de 67 variedades de papa bajo esta modalidad y bajo la técnica de hidroponía que alcanzan rendimientos entre 30 mil y 35 mil kilos por hectárea. De la misma manera, ponemos a disposición, con mucha humildad, nuestra modesta experiencia en la agricultura y la ganadería regenerativa en lo que nuestros productores han llamado la cosecha del agua y la captura del dióxido de carbono.

En el tercer punto o tercera reflexión, el impacto en la crisis alimentaria no solo obedece a los efectos del cambio climático, la pandemia y los conflictos en algunas regiones. También hay un factor perverso y criminal que ha impactado de manera muy severa la producción y tiene que ver con las medidas coercitivas unilaterales como nuevas formas de guerra impuestas por algunos países que pretenden mantener el control hegemónico sobre el mundo y se atribuyen la potestad de saquear los recursos financieros y naturales de los países y que han asumido el rol histórico de construir sus propios proyectos.

En este sentido, pedimos a este órgano, bajo el liderazgo de su nuevo director que interceda para el levantamiento de las sanciones y la recuperación de los recursos financieros destinados a la agricultura que se encuentran secuestrados en estos momentos en bancos de Europa y que asciende a un monto superior a los 2 000 millones USD, incluyendo 37 000 kilogramos de oro. Estos recursos destinados a la agricultura deberían ser reintegrados de manera inmediata y sin restricción alguna y que se respete el principio de autodeterminación y soberanía de los pueblos de acuerdo a lo que establece la Carta de las Naciones Unidas y transitemos a la resolución de los conflictos por la vía del diálogo y la política de paz que tanto demanda la humanidad.

Cabe destacar que estas medidas han causado un daño patrimonial a nuestro país por más de 600 000 millones de dólares. A pesar de ello, hemos alcanzado un nivel de abastecimiento del 100% en nuestro país, que está en el orden de los 13 millones 420 000 toneladas de las cuales un 84,3% de ese abastecimiento es producción nacional. Esto lo hemos logrado gracias a las políticas de nuestro presidente, Nicolás Maduro, que entre otras están el Decreto de rubros de guerra y rubros estratégicos, son aquellos rubros propios de nuestro país. El avance y consolidación de la agricultura de pequeña escala y alto rendimiento. El tercero, la migración de los agroquímicos a los bioinsumos. Y el cuarto, la internacionalización de la agricultura que contempla no solo la exportación de estos rubros excedentarios, sino que pone a disposición de los pueblos del mundo que así lo deseen más de 2 millones de hectáreas con alto potencial para desarrollar la agricultura vegetal, pecuaria y acuícola. Gracias.

#### **Her Excellency Maria do Ceu ANTUNES (Portugal) (Original language Portuguese)**

Madame President, colleagues, Portugal is fully aligned in recognising the progress made in the fight against hunger and malnutrition but they are solely insufficient to achieve the goals and targets we have set ourselves under the Agenda 2030. Spain are speaking on behalf of us. Mr Luis Planas from Spain, as current President of the European Union, will be presenting our latest common EU position. The number of people suffering from hunger and food insecurity has been growing. The COVID-19 pandemic, the global economic slowdown and food supply difficulties resulting from the invasion of Ukraine has worsened the situation. Thus we have moved further from achieving the Sustainable Development Goal number 2 to eradicated hunger globally.

The FAO believes that the fight against world hunger is of the utmost importance and we need to transform food systems. I do congratulate the theme chosen for this Conference specifically the management of water resources which is paramount to achieving the Agenda 2030 goals and for the transformation of food production systems. In this context we understand the need to increase food production. We see that water resources in periods of drought as well, which are increasingly frequent, and also associated with periods of very intense rain means that we have to try and find a way to better have integrated water resource management, we need to see better how we use our water to reduce water pollution of the existing available water.

Now, the European Environmental Pact has meant that we are trying to find a sustainable and neutral way to develop as we move forward towards carbon neutrality in 2050 – this means that Europe is leading the transition and a process to try and move to a more efficient and competitive economy, particularly in terms of soils and land and water and this means that we will have improvements in the European agro-food system.

Portugal is aligned with the legislation for water, air and climate within the framework of European policies and objectives. Now, we are a Mediterranean country, so we are naturally more susceptible to the effects of climate change and agriculture is one of the sectors which is most affected by climate change with the recurring situations of severe and extreme drought, such as the one which is currently



being felt in our country. So investment in modernisation of irrigated land management is very, very important.

We have made significant investments in existing irrigation systems whilst trying to modernise our system, trying to make sure that the farming sector is less faced with uncertainties whilst elsewhere providing the yields and making our different regions more productive and trying to also combat desertification of rural settings. The investment in new technologies and innovation when it comes to the creation of infrastructures which are essential to the development of productive activities will be decisive in trying to face these new challenges.

The importance of the issue of water resources is growing worldwide and as part of the Agenda of various international organisations. I cannot fail but to highlight the need for the management of water resources to be anchored by a model of water governance and holistic approach transversal to various levels and sectors of decision-making and calling for the participation of a wide range of public and private actors. The need for equity and governance must be translated either at the level of the various sectoral policies – agriculture, industry, tourism, transport and energy – as well as in the context of its multiple uses in agriculture.

Food security, energy security, health and ecosystem conservation and also keeping in mind that the regions, the territories are important here. I am certain that the comprehensive knowledge of sharing and putting together strategies will contribute to overcoming difficulties. We can reach our goals which will be so important for our rural areas, for our farming systems, for producing safe, healthy and nutritional food for all.

Having comprehensive strategies will be the road to finding success in these areas, making sure that our territories and our farming sector is healthy and safe and trying to produce more healthy, more economically sustainable food. Madam, Chair, if I may conclude by saying this is a bit off the theme before us today, of water, but not taking the spotlight off sustainability, well, I would like to put on this scarf – now this scarf is the do which is given by FAO to women, women in Turkey, given to a community of women who are represented today.

We have got a representative of their group, and we have also got the Deputy Director-General, Maria Elena, here with us as well. This reflects the great importance that we all have, men and women – we've got to fight, altogether, for a more just world and where we also take into account gender equality, cross-cutting holistic and for this I would just want to salute the women farmers of the world on this occasion.

Thank you.

**His Excellency Stefano CANTI (San Marino) (Original language Italian)**

President of the Conference, Director-General, Ministers –

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his re-election to a second mandate. Now, as has been underlined already as the President of the Regional Group and also the representative of San Marino, we would like to express our desire to continue to work with FAO, which is ever more effective, transparent and dynamic, when it can be up to the challenge of meeting the world's crises and challenges.

Now, FAO in line with Agenda 2030 and SDGs which will contribute to the transformation of the food system meaning thereby the different challenges which are before us including climate change. Now, we know that we're seeing problems linked to this - migratory flows, destruction of biodiversity and a lack and waste of water - water an essential right of each and every human.

Today, more than 3 million people are living in rural areas which are affected by droughts, lack of potable water, and more and ever frequent flooding, so we've got to do something, we've got to face this problem. We are at a crossroads. We need national policies, we need national governance, which can put this issue at the very heart of the international Agenda, it is so related to food security.

Now, floods and droughts, we recently had one in Emilia-Romagna, unprecedented in terms of a destruction of culture and crops and also people and their suffering. The droughts and floods are two

sides of the same coin. Members of the FAO have then adopted a strategy to fight climate change at the heart of its science and innovative efforts. Now, digitalization of agriculture can help, it can make our agriculture more resistant.

Yesterday, the speaker at the McDougall Lecture said very good things about this; we have got to take action. Perhaps the July Summit will be a good time. San Marino will be in attendance there, we can assess the progress made as we try to transform the processes and systems to improve food security. Agriculture and its impact on resource uses, has to improve its training and development, has to help young people, help women in agriculture and livestock raising.

San Marino has promised via the UN Resolution to try and do what it can to try and fight food waste, and then also naming the day of 29 September as the day to celebrate that issue. Also, we have ratified the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris agreements, and also been involved in the setting up of an international body on achieving the SDGs. All of this has been developed in accordance with Agenda 2030 with the involvement of civil society.

Now, the proper use of resources will require us to also pay attention to the role of cities, that's why we have argued for discussions between experts and international architects. Now in 2022, the San Marino Declaration was the fruit of that effort under the guidance of the architect, Norman Foster, for a more holistic urbanisation, better use of resources, including water, plastic and pollution reduction. In September, we will be hosting the UN FAO Conference on forests and the impact that they can have on ecosystems.

I would like to conclude Madam Chair, by renewing our commitment as the country of San Marino to helping FAO meet its four goals here for the four Bs to try and improve and ensure a better future.

#### **Her Excellency Sandra BORCH (Norway)**

Chairpersons, excellences, guests, ladies and gentlemen, this is a time of rising insecurity, food system are greatly affected by climate change, conflicts, loss of biodiversity, pollution and diseases. The poor and the vulnerable suffer the most. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has caused a humanitarian crisis and worsened the global food crisis. Norway strongly condemns Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

The complex challenge means that FAO is needed more than ever to be fit for purpose and working closely with the wider UN system. We call on FAO to build on its corporate competitive advantage as a normative knowledge organization with a mandate to ensure future food security and nutrition and sustainable management of natural resources within agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture. Chair, Norway welcomes the report on integrated water resources management.

We urge FAO to take a right based approach to water management and to promote sustainable landscape approaches. Security of natural resources means that all countries must make use of its available resources for food production. In Norway, only 3% of the land is arable land and therefore is a scarce resource we need to protect. Family farming is a key to ensure a sustainable solution for agriculture and we have put women and youth among main priorities for the coming years.

In Norway, where I come from my family runs a small farm; even though winters are long and the growing season is short for us, it is important to have food production in the whole country. This is food security in practice. We encourage FAO to scale up sustainable practices supporting family farming, in particular, agro ecological, approaches.

Chair, Norway wishes to underline the need for ambition follow up of FAO's climate strategy. Agriculture relies on biodiversity and is the key to help worsening biodiversity loss. FAOs role in the implementation of the convention of biological diversity will be even more important in the future. See the diversity is fundamental to global food security. This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Svalbard global seed vault. The seed vault now houses more than 1.2 million seed samples from gene banks all around the world.

Furthermore, Chair, we need to realise the ocean's potential and make sure that the fisheries and aquaculture is a central part of the future food security. Norway will also stress FAOs vital role in providing global statistics and information on forest resources, as well as capacity building for

sustainable forest management. As a final point, Norway will stress the need of combat AMR - this requires global action with One Health approach.

We call on FAO to contribute actively to the One Health Partnership. The goal must be prudent and responsible use of antibiotics in order to minimise the threat of AMR. Good animal health build security is fundamental. We must end all the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in animal food production. Finally, Chair, let me affirm Norway's commitment to FAO's work, we look forward to continuing our work with FAO and its Member States.

Thank you.

**His Excellency István NAGY (Hungary) (Original language Hungarian)**

Dear Director-General,

Ministers and distinguished colleagues,

It is a great honour for me to represent my country at the 43rd session of the FAO conference. The relevance of the conference is shown by the fact, that its topic is water, like the central element also of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The role of water as a resource of strategic importance has been significantly upgraded from a social, environmental and economic point of view, the protection and utilization of water resources has become one of the key factors of sustainable development.

We are well aware that the global climate change presents the farmers with challenges, as agricultural production is an increasingly risky activity due to the uneven distribution of precipitation.

Thanks to its fortunate environments and its location, Hungary is rich in high-quality water sources, so we regard clean water as a national treasure. Despite this, Hungarian agriculture also suffered last summer due to the drought, as the result, the most important task of water management is to keep the water in the landscape, in the backwaters of the rivers.

In order to maintain water security and safe food production, our goal is the sustainable development of agriculture, which anticipates and keeps up with the expected effects of increasingly extreme weather conditions. We can achieve this primarily through the development of irrigation management, so that the start of investments in this direction is always preceded by comprehensive analyses and complex decision-making work.

Hungarian regulations favour irrigation from surface waters, thus reducing excessive use of underground water sources. We have created the legal foundations for farmers to organize themselves into groups, that is, the establishment of irrigation communities. Until the beginning of July 2023, I have approved more than 200 irrigation communities that practice irrigation farming on an area of more than 80,000 hectares.

Sustainable irrigation management, thus primarily effective water retention solutions, typically require high-cost investments. The importance of irrigation communities therefore primarily lies in the fact that the necessary developments can be implemented in a more cost-effective way.

In order to reduce the financial burden of irrigation communities, the Hungarian Government also helps farmers organize into irrigation communities with non-refundable subsidies that can be used to support investments.

In addition, for the sake of sustainable agricultural water management, we also consider it important to improve the water retention capacity of soils and ecosystems, which we want to achieve primarily by encouraging different land uses as well as encouraging the alteration of land into mosaic-like surfaces and the use of water conserving agro techniques.

In addition, we have developed a new investment and maintenance support program for the creation of new areas where it is not worthwhile to continue arable production and where wetlands and small-scale water facilities for regional water retention can be created.

In addition to surface water, the possibility of using purified wastewater and grey water for irrigation has also appeared as a new element, for which various studies and pilot projects are currently underway in Hungary.

The appropriate agricultural practices of farmers are essential for sustainable agricultural water management: the use of natural water retention methods, e.g. infiltration within the field, protection against erosion and territorial water retention, and in general the adaptation of that mosaic method in cultivation are all extremely important.

In the field of increasing the efficiency of agricultural water use, the role of research development and innovation is of fundamental importance. The precision technology, which has been adopted, enables less and targeted water use, as it adapts the irrigation to the real needs of plants. In this way, safer and more predictable agricultural production is a possibility.

In Hungary, we launched the “National Laboratory of Water Science and Water Safety” in 2022, which is a complex large-scale project extending until 2026, with the participation of 11 domestic institutions.

A total of around five hundred researchers, PhD students and support staff are involved in carrying out the tasks. The National Laboratory carries out research activities taking into consideration Hungary's location, water management and water resources. The work takes place along six main pillars, affecting the issues of rivers, lakes, groundwater, rainwater, urban management and watershed management.

Dear Colleagues, I would like to thank you, ever so much for your kind attention.

Thank you.

#### **Su Excelencia Ydael Jesús PÉREZ BRITO (Cuba)**

Distinguida Presidenta, estimados ministros y representantes, invitadas e invitados. Constituye un alto honor para mí en nombre del gobierno y del pueblo cubano participar en este 43.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO. Cuba se alinea a la declaración del Grupo de los 77+ China.

Hoy mi país se encuentra en un complejo escenario económico producto, en primer lugar, del bloque económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por el gobierno de Estados Unidos y de su recrudescimiento en los últimos tiempos, así como de la injustificada inclusión de Cuba en la lista unilateral de países patrocinadores del terrorismo, lo cual constituye el principal obstáculo para avanzar hacia nuestro desarrollo sostenible. Inciden, además, en nuestra economía circunstancias de las que no está exenta nación alguna, tales como los efectos de la pandemia, la crisis medioambiental y los temas demográficos, entre otros.

Sin embargo, el Estado y el gobierno cubano tiene como prioridad garantizar el desarrollo humano y universal de la alimentación de todo nuestro pueblo. En correspondencia ha aprobado un grupo de políticas públicas con la finalidad de obtener mejoras en nuestra economía y de esta manera contribuir al desarrollo de nuestro país como nación socialista próspera y sostenible. Muestra de ello resulta el reconocimiento expreso del derecho a la alimentación de las personas en nuestra vigente Constitución de la República, derecho desarrollado en el Plan de Soberanía Alimentaria y Educación Nutricional de Cuba y en su consecuente instrumento jurídico, la Ley de Soberanía y Seguridad Alimentarias y Nutricional y su reglamento aprobado el pasado año.

Cuba agradece la contribución que durante este proceso ha recibido de las agencias especializadas de Naciones Unidas, fundamentalmente de la FAO. Acorde con la temática de esta Conferencia puedo referir que en nuestro país se gestiona el agua de forma integrada a escala de la sociedad, la economía, el medio ambiente, proporcionando desarrollo sostenible y seguridad a la nación.

Tal es así, que la Ley de Soberanía y Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional reconoce la inclusión entre los alimentos del agua potable. Además, fue aprobada la Ley de las Aguas Terrestres para su gestión integrada y sostenible, su protección y establecimiento de medidas para la reducción de desastres derivados principalmente de eventos hidrometeorológicos, lo cual materializa la voluntad hidráulica de nuestro proceso revolucionario. La aprobación por nuestro país del Decreto-Ley de la Mecanización, el Riego, el Drenaje Agrícola y el Abasto de Agua a los Animales y de la política a la cual instrumenta constituye otra muestra de la voluntad de Cuba en la contribución a la gestión eficaz del agua.

En tal sentido, se adoptaron medidas y acciones a corto, mediano y largo plazo para el incremento de la producción de alimentos y el uso racional y productivo del agua, así como la eficiente explotación de las infraestructuras hidráulicas que poseemos en correspondencia con la Agenda 2030 y el Plan de Estado aprobado, conocido como Tarea Vida.

Estimados colegas, reitero mi agradecimiento a las organizaciones de este evento y ratifico la voluntad política de nuestro gobierno de asumir y de enfrentar los desafíos identificados para el cumplimiento a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible de la Agenda 2030.

Me despido recordando una de las interrogantes del comandante de la Revolución cubana, Fidel Castro Ruz, en torno a los recursos hídricos: “¿Cómo alimentar los miles de millones de seres humanos cuyas realidades chocarían irremisiblemente con los límites de agua potable y recursos naturales que necesitamos?”. Interrogante que a todos nos compete solventar de forma mancomunada.

Muchas gracias.

### **Son Excellence Paul Valentin NGOBO (Congo)**

Madame la Présidente, Distingués Délégués, au nom du gouvernement de la République du Congo, je souhaite féliciter Madame la Présidente et les membres du Bureau de cette Session pour leurs élections, ainsi que le Docteur QU Dongyu pour sa réélection à la tête de notre Organisation. Nous espérons que ce deuxième mandat bénéficiera aux millions de petits producteurs, car la FAO est avant tout leur Organisation.

Il est essentiel qu'elle se rapproche d'eux face aux défis actuels. Le Congo fait face à des défis complexes en matière de gestion des ressources en eau, des inondations dévastatrices dans le nord et une rareté de pluie dans le sud du pays qui nécessite des solutions adaptées. L'irrigation intelligente est devenue une priorité absolue pour notre pays, afin de garantir une sécurité alimentaire. La maîtrise de l'eau est cruciale pour la production agricole.

La préservation des écosystèmes et l'accès à une eau potable de qualité, nous devons adopter une approche holistique en reconnaissant les liens entre la santé humaine, animale et environnementale. La préservation de la qualité de l'eau et la prévention de la pollution sont également essentielles. Nous devons mettre en place des réglementations strictes et investir dans des infrastructures pour assurer la disponibilité d'une eau propre pour tous.

En tant que ministre de la République du Congo, je m'engage à améliorer la gestion des ressources en eau. Nous investirons dans des infrastructures d'irrigations modernes, promouvoir des pratiques agricoles respectueuses de l'eau et sensibiliserons la population à l'importance de la préservation de cette ressource vitale.

La gestion des ressources en eau nécessite une collaboration internationale. Agissons donc de manière concertée pour assurer une gestion durable des ressources en eau et pour créer un avenir meilleur pour notre planète.

### **His Excellency Paulo TEIXEIRA (Brazil) (Original language Portuguese)**

Madame Chair,

Excellencies, Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Development,

Mr. Director-General and Permanent Representatives,

It is a great joy to be here today. As this is the first FAO Conference held during President Lula's third term, it is especially symbolic that the Ministry of Rural Development and Family Farming has been entrusted with the task of leading the Brazilian delegation in the main international arena for the fight against hunger.

Overcoming food insecurity in Brazil and the world is not just about quantity. It is, above all, a question of quality and price of food. It is about generating income in the countryside. We want and must ensure that everyone has access to healthy and sustainably produced food.

Almost 20 years ago, here at FAO, we agreed on the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food. In Brazil, this right is enshrined in our National Constitution, which guarantees everyone an adequate and nutritious diet, capable of providing a healthy and dignified life. This guiding principle underlines the entire strategy of rebuilding public policies in President Lula's new government.

Alongside the fight against hunger, we have been instructed to implement actions to combat climate change in all areas. It is our government's commitment in Brazil to reverse the deforestation process, creating incentives for sustainable production, productive restoration and the agroecological transition.

Today, the most vulnerable populations live in the most vulnerable areas in terms of biodiversity. We are trying to move forward on bioeconomy, working in agriculture and our forests. We want to make sure there are possibilities to help the most affected by the effects of climate change.

In the Amazon, our government is committed to finding income solutions for 30 million inhabitants, including 1.5 million indigenous people and more than 5 million people of African descent. It is against this backdrop that President Lula will convene the Amazon Summit in August. In addition, following this guideline, we are proposing the elaboration of a Pan-Amazon Strategy for Food Supply and Food Security to enhance the value of products of the local bioeconomy. FAO is a key partner in this process, with its experience in building the Regional Network of Public Systems for Food Supply in the Americas.

Madame Chair,

We are exactly halfway through the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, celebrated by FAO between 2019 and 2028. In Brazil, 77% of rural establishments are family farms. For the next five years of the Decade, we will insist on a direct and permanent dialogue in order to strengthen family farming and food security in Brazil.

For the Brazilian government, valuing family farming is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Global Biodiversity Framework.

The very structure of family farming, with its production methods based on short chains and crop diversity, is a synthesis of the indivisibility of the three pillars of sustainable development, in its social, environmental and economic aspects.

It is with this permanent dialogue that we can fight against hunger and climate change and that is why we designed the new rural credit program for family farming with better financing conditions aimed at sustainability, social and biodiversity, organic and agroecological products. Rural technical assistance is also being directed towards biome recovery solutions. In total, more than 70 billion reais were allocated to small Brazilian producers.

Mr Director-General, On the theme of this year's Conference, as head of the Ministry of Agrarian Development, I have been following closely the issue of infrastructure. With these challenges before us, this is going to require coordination and adaptation.

Not only FAO is involved, but also the other United Nations agencies based in Rome – IFAD and WFP – should play a more relevant role in water management.

Now we have a programme in its third phase in Brazil, the IFAD's work in the “Dom Hélder Câmara” Project. It involves US\$ 45 million in investments to try to help the farmers in the northeastern semi-arid region.

Thank you very much.

**Son Excellence Marc FESNEAU (France)**

Madame la Présidente, je suis honorée de lire ce message au nom de Monsieur Marc Fesneau, Ministre de l'agriculture et de la souveraineté alimentaire. Je cite:

Chère Marie-Claude Bibeau, Monsieur le Directeur général, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je suis très heureux de participer au débat général de cette 43e Conférence de la FAO, et à ce titre, je soutiens la déclaration que prononcera l'Espagne au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 Etats membres.

La situation exceptionnelle que nous vivons aujourd'hui, marquée par des crises multiples, COVID, guerre en Ukraine, crise climatique, érosion sans précédent de la biodiversité, pèse sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition partout dans le monde.

En particulier, la guerre menée par la Russie contre l'Ukraine affecte gravement la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et je tiens à rappeler la pleine solidarité de la France envers l'Ukraine et son peuple.

La France, avec ses partenaires européens, est au rendez-vous de la solidarité:

- avec les corridors de solidarité, pour faciliter la sortie des céréales ukrainiennes;
- avec le renforcement de la plateforme AMIS pour garantir la transparence des marchés et limiter la volatilité des prix;
- avec, enfin, les initiatives FARM et Save Crops, pour apporter un soutien concret permettant de faire face aux besoins de court terme et de consolider les capacités de production, tant en Ukraine que dans les pays les plus fragilisés par la crise.

Je salue la mobilisation des trois «organisations romaines» qui appuient ces efforts, et j'appelle la conférence de la FAO à faire siennes les décisions sur l'Ukraine prise par le Conseil de la FAO.

Nous devons aussi nous mobiliser pour répondre aux crises climatiques et de la biodiversité qui sont des crises structurelles, profondes et de long terme.

Ces crises affectent les systèmes alimentaires, qui doivent s'adapter et renforcer leur résilience.

Notre enjeu commun est de produire suffisamment et mieux, en préservant les ressources naturelles et l'eau en particulier.

Il s'agit de garantir la capacité de production alimentaire à long terme et d'assurer l'accès de tous à une alimentation saine, diversifiée, équilibrée, produite en respectant l'environnement, en quantité suffisante, et à un prix abordable.

Très concrètement cela demande d'accompagner la transition vers des systèmes diversifiés, écarbonés, efficaces et plus sobres en intrants, en nous appuyant davantage sur les écosystèmes.

C'est le sens de la transition agro-écologique dans laquelle s'est engagée la ferme France, c'est aussi l'objectif du Pacte vert européen.

Le rôle de la FAO pour proposer des réponses à ces défis et contribuer à atteindre les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD) est primordial.

Je terminerai en félicitant le Directeur général pour sa réélection. La France est un membre fondateur de la FAO, elle y est attachée et y a toujours été particulièrement investie.

Je veux réitérer notre soutien à la FAO et rappeler combien nous sommes attachés à la transparence, la redevabilité, l'efficacité et l'impartialité de l'Organisation : nous attendons de la FAO et de son Directeur général un engagement total pour relever les défis de la durabilité et de la sécurité alimentaire, pour être exemplaire en matière de gouvernance, pour jouer pleinement son rôle d'enceinte neutre et ainsi appuyer l'ensemble de ses Membres pour atteindre les objectifs de l'Agenda 2030 et de l'Accord de Paris.

Je vous remercie.

**Son Excellence Gabriel MBAIROBE (Cameroun)**

Madame la Présidente,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres, Chers collègues,

Monsieur le Directeur général,

Honorables délégués,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le Cameroun, par ma voix, est heureux de prendre la parole aux travaux de la quarante-troisième session de la Conférence de la FAO.

Permettez-moi, à l'entame de mon propos, de féliciter chaleureusement Monsieur Qu Dongyu, pour sa brillante réélection comme Directeur général de la FAO, pour un second mandat de quatre ans. Au cours de son premier mandat, nous avons engagé une coopération soutenue dans le cadre des initiatives «Main dans la main» et «Un pays, un produit prioritaire» que nous comptons renforcer davantage, y compris dans d'autres domaines. Je puis assurer à nouveau, au Directeur général, Monsieur Qu Dongyu, du soutien constant du gouvernement camerounais à l'endroit de la FAO et de son engagement à œuvrer pour le plein succès des missions contenues dans son *Manifesto* et son programme d'action.

Dans le cadre du débat général de cette quarante-troisième session de la Conférence, le thème central qui a été soumis à notre réflexion porte sur : *«La situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture: La gestion des ressources en eau à l'appui des quatre améliorations – production, nutrition, environnement et conditions de vie – pour concrétiser le Programme de développement durable à l'horizon 2030 et les objectifs de développement durable»*.

Sachant que les deux sous-thèmes à savoir: 1) *Relever le défi de l'eau dans l'agriculture*; 2) *Gestion intégrée des risques d'inondation pour des systèmes agroalimentaires et un développement rural résilients*, seront examinés au sein des deux tables rondes organisées à cet effet, je vais, dans le cadre de la présente déclaration, partager des informations et l'expérience camerounaise sur la question de l'eau en agriculture.

En effet, le Cameroun dispose de vastes ressources en eau soit 56 milliards de km<sup>3</sup> d'eau souterraine et 265 milliards de km d'eau de surface. De ce fait, le Cameroun dispose de l'une des plus importantes réserves de ressource en eau de la sous-région Afrique centrale. Il lui revient cependant d'assurer une gestion rationnelle de ce précieux liquide, en partageant avec ses voisins, notamment dans les bassins du Congo, du lac Tchad, du Niger et du Cross-river. Conscient de l'impératif du choix de partage de ses ressources en eau, le Cameroun a opté pour une coopération mutuellement bénéfique avec ses voisins, à travers des organismes tels que la Commission du bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha, l'Autorité du bassin du Niger et la Commission du bassin du Lac Tchad.

Cela fait partie de la réponse du Cameroun à la mise en œuvre de l'Objectif de développement durable 6 (ODD 6) cible 6.5 qui est «assurer la gestion intégrée des ressources en eau à tous les niveaux, y compris au moyen de la coopération transfrontière selon qu'il convient ».

Il existe néanmoins des contraintes majeures inhérentes à la gestion intégrée de l'eau au Cameroun:

- l'insuffisance dans le suivi et l'évaluation des ressources en eau;
- l'indisponibilité quantitative et qualitative des ressources en eau pour des actions de développement dans les régions de la partie septentrionale du pays;
- l'assèchement et la diminution des débits des cours d'eau;
- les changements des régimes hydrologiques;
- la sous-utilisation de l'abondante ressource disponible;
- les inondations/sècheresse pour ne citer que celles-ci.

Face à ces contraintes, le Cameroun a mis en place un Cadre institutionnel, législatif, et réglementaire, avec une batterie de textes juridiques pour la gestion de ses ressources en eau.

En 2019, le Cameroun a bénéficié de la FAO, d'un TCP «Schéma directeur sur la valorisation intégrée des ressources en eaux centrée sur l'irrigation et d'autres usages en République du Cameroun: régions de l'Extrême-Nord, du Nord et de l'Adamaoua», qui a permis d'intensifier et



d'améliorer de manière durable l'apport de biens et de services issus de l'agriculture, de la foresterie et des pêches par la mise en place des systèmes intégrés d'utilisation des ressources à travers la gestion des ressources en eaux et la conservation de la fertilité des sols.

Par ailleurs, le Cameroun vient de finaliser un programme d'approvisionnement en eau potable et d'assainissement avec le soutien de la Banque africaine de développement.

Permettez-moi, à la fin de mon propos, de féliciter Mme Marie-Claude Bibeau, Ministre de l'agriculture et de l'agroalimentaire du Canada, Présidente de la Conférence, pour la bonne conduite de nos travaux, et le top management de la FAO et le Secrétariat, y compris ceux œuvrant dans l'ombre, pour le bon déroulement de la Conférence.

Merci de votre aimable attention.

**His Excellency Aziz Botirovich VOITOV (Uzbekistan)**

Honorable Chair Madame Minister Bibeau, Director-General Qu Dongyu,

Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to join colleagues from all over the world in this first after Covid-19 pandemic meeting of the FAO Conference.

We congratulate FAO for promoting and integrating the issues of integrated water resources management into its core activities for the next biennium and beyond. Today's agenda is both urgent and touching every nation in the world.

Water use efficiency in the agrifood sector globally became the most critical element as we are facing the climate emergency, water scarcity, droughts, floods, pollution, and many other challenges.

Agriculture is central to those challenges because it is the largest sectoral water user.

The main question is what kind of innovations, incentives and investments are needed for integrated water resources management to adequately transform our agrifood systems.

The historic visit of President of Uzbekistan His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev to FAO headquarters and discussions with FAO Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu last month clearly signified to what extent Uzbekistan attaches on the issues of agrifood systems.

In this context, I would like to share with you number of developments in addressing the water challenges in agriculture.

In recent years, in the history of New Uzbekistan, we have managed to carry out fundamental reforms in the agricultural sector.

We are consistently implementing our Agrifood Development Strategy for 2020-2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.

The key pillars of which remain diversification of crops, integration of science and innovation, digitalization, introduction of water-saving technologies, and creation of effective value chains.

In the last six years we increased the coverage of water saving technologies at the country from 10 percent to 30 percent.

In 2022, such technologies were introduced on a total area of more than four hundred fifty thousand (450,000) hectares, which made it possible to save more than 2 billion cubic meters of water.

We set a goal to at least double the income of farmers in the next five years, as well as ensure sustainable agricultural growth by the end of 2026.

The Government of Uzbekistan is pursuing this goal and ensuring the support to farmers through its policy, investment, tax incentives and subsidy programs.

Dear colleagues,

Our region has become a global climate hotspot, because of an ecological disaster caused by the drying up of the Aral Sea. The region is warming faster than the world average.

We need to be prepared, first and foremost, by utilizing our capabilities and internal resources, as well as relying on international cooperation, to mitigate its consequences for our country.

We call upon FAO to enhance partnerships and mobilize resources to implement initiatives on integrated water resources management as well as scaling up green agriculture, digital technologies, and innovative approaches.

Last, but not least, I would like to highlight that Uzbekistan is organizing the High-Level International Conference on Food Security in the historic city of Samarkand on 7-8 September.

We are going to share our experience, technologies, and successful projects in the sector in this important event, which will contribute to address the food security issues at the national, regional and global levels.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to invite all of you to visit Uzbekistan in September.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize our commitment and readiness to continue fruitful dialogue and interaction with all stakeholders in this direction.

Thank you for your attention.

**His Excellency Petros XENOPHONTOS (Cyprus)**

Madame Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am honored to represent the Republic of Cyprus at the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by Spain on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

Let me, first of all, congratulate the Director-General, Dr. Qu Dongyu, for his re-election. We wish him every success and look forward to continue working actively and constructively together in the coming years to ensure that FAO supports Members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Water is a foundational component of agrifood systems, which is facing increasingly complex challenges. Water scarcity, droughts, floods, and water pollution, impede our efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Increasing pressure on limited water resources has diminished the availability of water for the sustainable development of agrifood systems.

To overcome these challenges, we must recognize the urgent need for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), which is the cornerstone of comprehensive and effective water governance and vital for transforming agrifood systems sustainably to achieve the SDGs. We must advocate for the integration of water resources management at all levels, across all sectors, including all stakeholders. Enhanced water governance can lead to both the long-term sustainability of water resources management and the use, and agrifood systems that are more effective, resilient and equitable.

Agriculture, as the world's larger water user, must make its case for its fair share of water resources and become part of the solution. We need to ensure that water is allocated efficiently, equitably and sustainably to ensure food security, mitigation and adaptation to floods, biodiversity and wetland conservation and address agriculture-induced water pollution. It is crucial to prioritize inclusive and effective water governance.

Cyprus faces the severe impact of climate change, which increases significantly the problem of water scarcity and droughts already faced on the island. Through its National Sustainability Strategy and Action Plans and the tools provided by the new Common Agricultural Policy, the European Green Deal and its initiatives and strategies, Cyprus paves the way for the efficient transformation of its agrifood systems.

Furthermore, through the implementation and coordination of the River Basin and Drought Management Plans developed through the framework of the EU Water Framework Directive and the Flood Risk Management Plan of the EU Floods Directive, Cyprus aims to proceed with an integrated water and flood management approach on a river basin level.

To that end, our Government continues to invest in the efficient management of our water resources, utilization of non-conventional water sources like reclaimed waste water and desalinated sea water, applies water-saving measures, promotes education and awareness campaigns, supports the use of modern irrigation techniques, invests in water infrastructure, implements soil conservation practices, invests in early warning systems, floodplain mapping, natural water retention and flood water storage in upstream areas, and flood-resistant infrastructure, and advocates for diversified farming systems, resilient crop varieties, and agroforestry to recover from flood events and maintain sustainable agricultural practices. Moreover, we promote cooperation with our neighbouring countries, which can become the driving force for knowledge sharing and technology transfer, in the field of water scarcity.

We urge FAO to develop innovative initiatives for water management in agrifood systems, including flood and disaster risk management and utilizing flooding water, reclaimed waste water and desalinated water. Water management Integration across sectors is essential. Furthermore, we ask FAO to implement actions for flood and integrated land and water management by mobilizing necessary resources.

Your excellences, dear colleagues, dear friends,

Feeding a growing global population by producing more with less will be a great challenge, as both chronic and acute food insecurity have increased. Our vision for a better tomorrow will only become a reality if we all work together.

Let us commit to robust and transformative actions to address the pressing water challenges in our agrifood systems. By embracing integrated water resources management, we can ensure food security, protect livelihoods, and safeguard the well-being of future generations. Now is the time to act and pave the way to secure a sustainable and water-secure future for all!

Thank you for your attention.

**Her Excellency Alexis TAYLOR (United States of America)**

The world continues to face unprecedented global food security challenges, commodity shocks, climate events, conflicts, supply chain issues, and rising energy and input costs have driven up the cost of feeding people around the world. Furthermore, as FAO's data analysis shows and as recognized by the FAO Council in multiple decisions, the devastating effects of Russia's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine has only exacerbated global food insecurity. Russia must end this war and it should do so immediately.

We commend the UN and Türkiye's efforts in brokering the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has facilitated the delivery of more than 31 million metric tons of food from Ukraine to the global marketplace since July. We support calls for its renewal and expansion. The United States commends the high-quality programmes and support UN agencies provide and encourages continued effective investment and technical advice that is necessary to address this food crisis.

The status quo cannot meet the unprecedented needs now facing us, nor can it put us on the path to achieve the sustainable development goals of zero hunger by 2030. We strongly encourage Member States to increase their contributions to UN agencies.

Critically, we need to work together to keep food and agriculture markets open and avoid unjustified restrictive trade measures. Export bans or quotas on food or fertilizer only increase market volatility and threaten food and nutrition security at a global scale. We need to examine existing barriers to trade. Rules and standards that may be outdated or not based on science.

The United States remains committed to working with our partners and fellow Member States to confront the continued need for urgent humanitarian assistance and to build more resilient and productive agricultural systems. The United States provided USD 13.5 billion in food security

assistance in the past year alone, with more than 7 billion of this total supporting FAO, the World Food Programme, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development Initiatives.

Still, there is a large gap between global resources and global needs stemming from these multiple crises. More efficient, resilient agriculture that produces more with less, less land and water, fewer inputs and resources is essential to meet the world's growing food needs while also alleviating poverty, shrinking agricultural's environmental footprint, and combating climate change.

Agricultural productivity growth can achieve these objectives while also boosting rural livelihoods and local markets. Through innovative new approaches and collaboration with farmers, the private sector in other countries, we can grow agricultural productivity to nourish people and the planet. It is why the United States is investing in climate-smart agriculture at home and around the world and innovative new technologies and approaches.

With technological progress and innovation not only can we improve agricultural yields, but we can also create opportunities to better manage land, soil health, and other inputs needed for agricultural production while reducing environmental impacts. Water security and responding to climate change are also interconnected.

The United States is committed to advancing sustainable water management, improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and fostering international partnerships to enhance water security. Gender equity and equality are also essential in agricultural systems. As agricultural systems are a major source of income for women around the world investing in women is not just the right thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do. Making our efforts more inclusive will also make them more effective. President Biden has requested more than USD 3 billion to advance gender equity and equality globally.

FAO has a crucial role in addressing these challenges facing our agricultural and food systems. The United States has nearly tripled its voluntary contributions to FAO in response to the global food security crisis. And why the United States supports an increase in FAO's budget at this Conference, we welcome FAO's efforts on climate change, resiliency, science and innovation, and private sector engagement, and the transformative impact such efforts can have on the ground.

Supporting international standard-setting organizations of Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Production Convention are critical. We welcome efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of FAO including through improved governance, oversight, and management within FAO, including the passage of the code of conduct for voting and adoption of guidelines on the restoration of voting rights for Members and arrears.

We applaud FAO's welcoming of two ongoing reviews of the Organization's operations and encourage timely uptake of their recommendations. In a world facing rising food insecurity, a strong FAO is needed now more than ever. Let us collaborate to build sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems, our futures and the futures of those around us depend on it. Thank you.

**Her Excellency Angela Thoko DIDIZA (South Africa)**

Your Excellency, FAO Director-General, QU Dongyu, our Chairperson, or Honorable ministers, distinguished guests, representatives from the civil society and private sector, Excellences, ladies, and gentlemen, it is indeed an honor and privilege to address you at this 43rd Session of the FAO Conference. Let me once again recommit South Africa and its people to support the fresh mandate given to Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu to lead the FAO.

Chairperson, the theme of this year's Conference is Water Resources Management for the *four betters*, Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment, and Better Life. It is more than relevant in the face of the crisis that impacted negatively on the Agrifood systems and very chains.

The triple-seen challenges of COVID-19 conflict and climate change have all exposed the fault lines in our food systems. These challenges have also galvanized us to refocus on shifting the world into a sustainable and resilient path inquest to fast-track the achievements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in our case in Africa, the goals of Agenda 2063. These include addressing the water, energy, climate and food environment nexus.

Water resources management is important for South Africa as we are a water-scarce country and the third-year driest country in the world. South Africa has approximately 14 million hectares under cultivation. It has generally low rainfall and limited underground aquifers. South Africa also depends on water transfers from our neighbouring nations to supplement our needs and that we appreciate.

This has both economic and social impacts where choices are to be made between the demands of agriculture, key industrial activities such as mining and power generation, and large and growing urban centres. The scarcity of water compels us to explore water use efficiency strategies as we work towards building a resilient food sector affected by the effects of climate change. To this effect, we've embarked on many initiatives to address this issue, including but not limited to the use of rainwater harvesting, and grey water reuse techniques in various communities.

We have also invested in the development of a software-based decision support system to provide both generic and site-specific risk-based delegation water quality guidelines for South Africa. A discussion on water resource management would not be complete without reference to flood risk management. Floods have proven to be a formidable challenge for Agrifood systems through disruption of production and destruction of infrastructure and threat to lives and livelihoods.

South Africa has witnessed the destructive power of floods in recent years with severe flooding in provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo causing immense devastation. We've recognized the importance of integrated flood risk management and have taken a significant step towards its implementation. One of our key initiatives is the establishment of early warning systems that alert farmers and communities about impending floods.

We largely rely on South Africa weather services, weather forecasting technology. It is our desire to employ modern technologies such as remote sensing, to provide timely information, enabling farmers to take proactive measures to protect their crops and livestock. Furthermore, we also need to invest in the development of resilient infrastructure and agricultural practices that can withstand flood events.

This include the construction of flood resistant storage facilities, the promotion of climate smart farming techniques, and the adoption of sustainable water management practices, notwithstanding these challenges. It is our assessment that by incorporating flood-risk management into our agricultural policies and programmes, we can be better prepared.

Addressing the impact of floods on Agrifood systems requires a collaborative effort at both national and international levels. We must share our perspectives, strategies, and solutions to enhance our collective knowledge and learn from each other's experiences. We must ensure that we have a sound global water management governance framework supported by robust national policies.

South Africa stands ready to collaborate with other nations and international organizations to foster knowledge, exchange capacity building, and technical assistance in the field of flood risk management. Moreover, we must prioritize the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as small-scale farmers and rural communities, especially women in our flood risk management strategies. We also have to de-risk the public pest by ensuring that we optimize public-private partnerships in flood risk management.

In conclusion, Madame Chair and honorable Members let us seize this opportunity to recommit ourselves to integrated water resource management in the Agrifood sector by raising awareness, sharing perspectives, and building consensus. Together we can develop and implement robust strategies and solutions that protect our farmers, secure our food supplies, and build resilient Agrifood systems that can withstand the challenges of the future. I thank you.

**His Excellency Majnun MAMMADOV (Azerbaijan)**

Distinguished Madame Chairperson, Excellences, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to attend the 43rd session of FAO Conference and to have a chance to deliver the speech on this important theme.

Land and water are the vital resources to meet the food demand of growing world population. These resources are limited and subject to decreasing.

Most pressures on the land and water resources comes from agriculture itself. If we refer to the FAO State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture report, we see that, in 2019 the global agricultural land area has decreased by 3 percent, compared with 2000. Against this background, the total primary crops production increased by 53 percent between these years.

Besides that, we will need to produce almost 50 percent more food by 2050 for meeting the nutritional requirements of 10 billion people around the globe. It means the rising human demands put tremendous pressures to the water by pushing its productive limits.

Agriculture is a significant contributor to water stress. Water in agriculture poses a challenge in Azerbaijan as well, due to limited water resources, water loss and lack of efficient water use by farmers. The country's aggregate water resources per capita are relatively low and about 70% of this water supply comes from sources that originate outside Azerbaijan's borders.

Keeping in mind the effective use of our finite water resources, we put strong political willingness to achieve advanced water governance. Responses also include investment in climate-smart agriculture management. In its turn, the Government of Azerbaijan invests a lot into the development of its climate friendly agrifood systems. The main portion of our investment goes to digital and smart agriculture transformation. Our major state support mechanisms also addressed the stimulation of our farmers for application modern irrigation technologies. Moreover, replacement of soil channels with concrete channels, installation of underground water pipes, and promotion of drip and pivot irrigation remains priority in our efficient water governance policy. Azerbaijan is now entering into strategic phase in its new post-conflict recovery period. Now the main goal for the coming years is the rural development and reconstruction of the liberated territories. Those territories also increase our agricultural power by restoring more than one hundred twenty thousand hectares of agricultural lands. Climate friendly and green agriculture development in those territories stays on the top of our evolution agenda. The 'smart cities' and 'smart villages' concepts being implemented in the liberated territories can be shared as one of the best examples contributing to the FAO One Thousand Digital Villages Initiative.

New technologies and digital solutions play significant role in sustainable land and water management. Azerbaijan now actively investing into digitalization of country's agriculture. The recently launched e-agriculture system allows Azerbaijani farmers to get an easy access to all services with mobility at anytime and anywhere. In our turn, we are ready to share our best practices and know-how in digital agriculture. Taking this opportunity, I wish to thank Mr. Director General for supporting and attending the first FAO International Digital Conference held in Azerbaijan back in May 2022.

Today global climate change scenario puts tremendous challenges to agricultural production. Due to climate change this year, our country also suffered from floods and droughts. Climate mitigation and adaptation measures stands priority in our agro development agenda. The Government of Azerbaijan approaches responsibly to its undertaken obligations within the framework of the Paris agreement and COP 26.

Excellencies,

We are convinced that, the sustainable agrifood system should be achieved via transformation. To this end the fundamental transformation should also be part and parcel of global partnership. There are many international treaties and strategic narratives within the framework of which we are collaborating effectively. However, it is time to change paper strategy into concrete actions, matching the challenges nowadays and stepping together with the requirements of the modern era. The partnership within the frame of the global policies and strategies shall also strive to achieve FAO four betters which anchored to support 2030 SDG Agenda. Hand-in-Hand Initiative, From Farm to Fork Strategy, One Health Initiative and other related strategic narratives are the modern guides for responding the critical drivers affecting agrifood systems. Azerbaijan joins these initiatives with great enthusiasm and ready effectively collaborate within these multilateral platforms. At the end by highly appreciating the great efforts of FAO Director General on global protection of natural resources, I feel confident that, the work of the conference will have substantial impact to global thinking and changes on the ground via agricultural transformation. I wish success to the work of the conference and look forward to fruitful cooperation within the ambits of this outstanding event.

Thank you for your attention.

*The meeting was suspended from 16:29 to 17:04 hours*

*La séance est suspendue de 16 h 29 à 17 h 04*

*Se suspende la sesión de las 16.29 a las 17.04*

**His Excellency KANG Hyoung-Seok (Republic of Korea)**

Excellencies, honourable ministers, and distinguished delegates. I have the honour to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea at the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Chair, Director-General, and the staff of FAO for their hard work.

First of all, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Director-General for his re-election. My sincere appreciation goes to you Honourable Director-General, for your dedication during the past four years. I hope that you will continue to make a significant contribution to the transformation, to more innovative, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood system, leaving no one behind.

Honourable Chair, Excellencies and distinguished delegates, climate change is a key driver behind food insecurity and has a negative impact on all forms of agricultural resources, including water resources and land in both direct and indirect ways. Taking this opportunity, I would like to introduce the policies and efforts of the Korean Government for the integrated water resources management in order to better respond to climate change.

Based on the framework on water management, Korea established the first mass plan for national water management. The plan focuses on a mature balance between surface and ground water, the establishment of a digest prevention system for droughts and floods, management and efficient use of agricultural and domestic water, and the preservation of water quality.

The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea recently announced the improvement of the Agricultural Production Base Plan for decades, which encompasses water safety, water use, water environment to advance agricultural water management.

First, in response to droughts and floods, we are continuously reinforcing our digest preparedness and the response capability of the related facilities.

Second, we have been adapting major land and T-Based Smart Water Management Systems to save water resources, and promoting collaboration with governments which includes the government, farmers, water management agency and various experts.

Third, we have improved the water quality for the reservoirs that failed to meet the quality criteria with regular monitoring.

Through these efforts, we are striving to improve the water quality that can contribute to the production of ecofriendly agricultural products and the rural environment.

Lastly, Korea will continuously expand its contribution to global food security, nutrition improvement and agricultural and rural development. Together with the K-rice belt project that the Korean Government has been promoting in African countries from this year. Korea will continue to jointly walk with the FAO and its Member countries to provide support for developing countries grappling with the climate crisis, including supply of high yielding crop varieties, transfer of climate change mitigation and adaptation technology, and establishment of a water resource infrastructure.

I truly hope this Session will serve as an opportunity for honourable ministers and distinguished delegates to pool wisdom together and take a leap forward based on concerted discussions.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Ms Jaana HUSU-KALLIO (Finland)**

It is a great honour for me to speak on behalf of Finland and our newly appointed Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Mrs Sari Essayah, who unfortunately could not be here today.

Finland aligns itself with the statement that will be made by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. I would also once again like to congratulate Dr Qu Dongyu for his re-election as Director-General of FAO. Finland stands ready to continue working constructively with the Organization in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, and in reaching the SDGs.

As we all know, the world has experienced a food crisis, exacerbated by different conflicts, in particular also the Russian Federation's war of aggression in Ukraine. The Russian Federation must immediately stop its illegal war, withdraw its forces from the entire territory of Ukraine, and fully respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I will concentrate on water. Without water there is no food, without water there is not life. The progress towards SDG 6 targets on water and sanitation. That is alarming, alarmingly off track. Among others, progress towards target 6.5 to implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transborder cooperation, has to be accelerated.

To that end, as countries, we all must continue to strengthen and implement national water policies and programmes that are supported by targeted and effective financing. Moreover, we have to intensify integration across sectors and indeed, international cooperation.

Development and application of integrated water resources management has to be a country-owned and driven process. Critical for the process are multistakeholder and multidisciplinary cooperation and an enabling policy environment. Ideally, working across sectors should go a step further.

Finland stresses the nexus approach of food, water, energy and forests. There is not one without the other. In order to solve the great global and local challenges, it is important to see the synergies, but also the trade offs, and take the decisions in an inclusive manner.

To advance the realization of SDG 6, we must turn the positive momentum from the United Nations 2023 Water Conference into action. We need to have regular, high level intergovernmental meetings on water, and a UN special envoy on water should be appointed as soon as possible.

The UN systemwide approach to water should be strengthened to ensure the UN system delivers as one. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, within the UN System, FAO's role as a specialized knowledge based organization targeting at zero hunger is vital. Finland highlights especially FAO's role in establishing global norms and standards based on scientific evidence and knowledge.

We strongly support the renewed attention to water in the work of FAO. Climate change is disrupting the cycle of water and concurrently climatological extremes become more frequent and pronounced. To respond requires adaptation, capable prevention, preparedness, efficient use, protection of available resources, as well as robust monitoring systems, and up to date data.

The agricultural sector is currently the largest water users we have heard, and so the practices and the action taken really matter.

Water flows across administrative borders, the two UN conventions are among the key means to foster progress worldwide where a lack of transparent cooperation is constraining intercredit water resources management implementation in shared bases.

In particular, the 1992 Helsinki Water Convention with its institutional framework and exchange of practice as well as its guidance, can be of great practical assistance.

Madam Chair, in Finland effective water management and high water quality are among the key factors guaranteeing food security and safety, and the sustainability of our food systems. We stand ready to share our experiences and solutions internationally.

Thank you.

**Son Excellence Stefanie BECK (Canada)**

Honorables ministres, Vos excellences, Chers collègues,



Je suis honorée de participer à cette rencontre historique: la première conférence de la FAO présidée par une femme ministre. Ceci témoigne manifestement de la place importante que les femmes occupent depuis toujours dans les systèmes agroalimentaires, et de la nécessité de promouvoir et de renforcer leur rôle égal dans la gouvernance de ces systèmes. Bien entendu, la Conférence de cette année est importante pour des raisons plus graves étant donné les pressions sur nos systèmes alimentaires.

Le nombre de personnes confrontées à une insécurité alimentaire aiguë n'a jamais été aussi élevé que depuis une génération, et les changements climatiques, les répercussions de la pandémie de COVID-19 et les conflits qui sévissent mettent les systèmes alimentaires mondiaux à rude épreuve. À cet égard, le Canada est particulièrement conscient des graves conséquences de l'invasion illégale de la Fédération de Russie en Ukraine sur la sécurité alimentaire et énergétique mondiale. Le Canada espère que le rapport final de cette conférence traitera des conséquences de la guerre sur les systèmes alimentaires, y compris l'importance vitale de l'Initiative céréalière de la mer Noire. Sachant que cette crise a touché les gens partout dans le monde, le Canada a fourni plus d'un milliard de dollars [canadiens] en aide humanitaire et en aide au développement pour soutenir ses partenaires du monde entier, nous cherchons, par exemple, à renforcer la résilience des petites et moyennes entreprises agroalimentaires en Afrique, dont les chaînes d'approvisionnement ont été interrompues. Le Canada fournit également des solutions pour faciliter les exportations et il a investi dans le déminage pour que les producteurs ukrainiens puissent Produire les céréales pour nourrir le monde.

Madame la Présidente, le Canada attend de la FAO qu'elle défende avec efficacité, transparence et courage les connaissances et les analyses fondées sur des faits pour relever ces nombreux défis. Nous allons continuer à renforcer sa gouvernance pour qu'elle soit bien préparée à le faire. Nous allons aussi continuer à travailler en étroite collaboration avec la FAO pour atteindre les Objectifs de Développement durable (ODD), en particulier l'objectif de développement durable no 2 sur la faim zéro; d'atténuer les répercussions des changements climatiques sur l'agriculture. Reconnaisant ces défis et opportunités et soulignant les débats approfondis tenus sur ces sujets pendant la période intersession, nous réaffirmons les conclusions des sessions précédentes du Conseil. A propos du thème, une eau douce accessible est essentielle à l'agriculture et à beaucoup d'activités des industries de la pêche et de la sylviculture.

Toutefois, la pénurie d'eau devrait s'aggraver en raison des changements climatiques, de la perte de biodiversité et de la biodégradation des sols.

Six years ago, Canada launched a Freshwater Action Plan to protect and restore freshwater quality in the Great Lakes and seven other major watersheds across our country. We are also creating a new Canada Water Agency to find the best ways to keep our water safe, clean, and well-managed. We are developing a sustainable agriculture strategy to improve agriculture environmental performance and farmers livelihoods. Water is one of our strategy-focused areas. All of these efforts rely on collaboration of farmers, ranchers, women and youth, sub national governments, scientists and regulators, indigenous people and other stakeholders. Which enabled Canada to make informed, smart decisions. We are a world leader in water-oriented research that we share with all those who are in need. Our research is helping farmers to adapt to droughts through precision irrigation technology, which aims to get "more crop per drop" and through innovative work to breed drought-resistant crop varieties. We are also exploring how to manage water surpluses through engineering and drainage, as well as natural solutions such as restored wetlands and buffers, while reducing nutrient-loading in water that leaves the fields. We are measuring real-time soil moisture availability using RadarSAT technology, and modelling future water excesses and deficits under both low- and high-carbon climate change scenarios. We are also looking at how changing farm practices can maintain healthy soil levels. Canada has also launched the "Wheat Research Accelerator Fund", a new gender-responsive collaboration to improve the resilience of wheat production systems to the impacts of climate change. Canada's experience has shown that leveraging innovation and collaboration with farmers and all stakeholders – including women, and youth – are essential to manage water resources effectively, achieve sustainable agrifood systems.

Merci beaucoup.

**Mr Nis CHRISTENSEN (Denmark)**

Ministers, Excellences, and Delegates, let me start out by congratulating Dr Qu on his re-election as Director-General, also echoing previous speakers from EU Member States, Denmark is aligned with the Statement to be made by Spain as the EU Presidency country. Now the world is suffering from multiple crises including global food insecurity, climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as a severe cost of living crisis highly exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The scale of the current global hunger and malnutrition crisis is enormous, more than 345 million people now face high levels of food insecurity. In line with the EU Council conclusions on FAO, Denmark acknowledges that FAO has an essential role to play in relation to achieving the sustainable development goals.

We appreciate the theme for this year's Conference, Integrated Water Resources Management, which serves as a foundation for sustainable development by addressing the complex interconnections between water, ecosystems, human wellbeing, and socio economic development.

It helps integrate water considerations into broader development strategies and ensures the sustainable and equitable use of water resources, thereby contributing to the achievement of multiple SDGs.

Denmark calls on FAO to intensify its work in the following key areas:

- 1) Drive the transition towards sustainable food systems which ensure food security for all at local, regional and global levels. This includes a strong focus on sustainable agricultural productivity, biodiversity loss and climate change.
- 2) Provide effective and timely responses to the global crisis through analysis of the global trends and challenges, including the consequences of the war in Ukraine and other conflicts as well.
- 3) Address related issues such as food loss and waste, and healthy diets for all, as well as a threat for man's microbial resistance and deforestation's free value chains.
- 4) And finally, focus more on decentralized actions, including anticipatory actions to prevent famine and adapt to climate shocks. Increase cooperation with other UN Agencies, especially the other Rome-based agencies, in order to deliver joint results.

FAO can rely on Denmark as a Member of the European Union to do our part. Our new agreement on a Green Sensation of the Danish Agricultural Sector contains a binding climate target for the agricultural sector of 55 to 65 percent CO2 reduction by 2030. The agreement has a very strong focus on climate smart agriculture and green technologies and includes also a strategy for green proteins and a new fund for plantbased foods.

We also work intensively with food loss and waste and implementation of climate friendly dietary guidelines through a public pride partnership and voluntary agreements. And I believe we are one of the first countries that develop a national voluntary climate label on food.

As part of Denmark's strategy for developing cooperation, we aim at preventing poverty and inequality along with conflict, displacement and irregular migration, while strengthening resilience towards climate change. The strong links between food systems and climate change underline the importance of putting food systems transformation high on the international climate Agenda, including at the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit, the SDG Summit and COP28.

Thank you very much for your kind attention Chair.

**Su Excelencia Christian Alfredo BARRANTES (Perú)**

Muchas gracias, Señora Presidenta.

Estimados ministros y ministras de Estado, distinguidos Delegados. Es para mí un honor intervenir a nombre del gobierno del Perú en el 43.o período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO y referirme al estado de la alimentación y la agricultura y la gestión de los recursos hídricos.

El Perú acoge la estrategia de la FAO para la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios respaldada en la Agenda 2030 a través de las cuatro mejoras propuestas. Reconocemos que los sistemas

alimentarios representan el mayor sistema económico en términos de producción de alimentos, generación de empleos, medios de vida e impacto en el planeta. No obstante, la pobreza y la desigualdad siguen siendo endémicas en la población más vulnerable. De los 8 000 millones de habitantes en el mundo, más de 2 300 millones viven en países que sufren escasez del recurso hídrico, principalmente en la época de estiaje.

El Perú está incluido entre los 10 países más vulnerables del mundo al cambio climático y presenta siete de las nueve características de vulnerabilidad reconocidas por la Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre Cambio Climático, como son, el cambio de la temperatura del mar, el fenómeno del Niño y la Niña, la desglaciación, la desertificación, la remoción en masa y la elevación del nivel del mar.

Nuestro país se encuentra afectado por diversos fenómenos hidrometeorológicos. Este año, el Niño costero oficialmente ya iniciado, y se espera generará precipitaciones superiores a lo normal en las regiones del norte del país; mientras que, en el sur, el déficit hídrico manifestado en los últimos tres años se espera se agudice aún más con la presencia de este fenómeno.

Es importante destacar que se prevé que estos eventos sean cada vez más frecuentes y con mayor intensidad, lo que pone en riesgo la seguridad alimentaria del país y el bienestar de la población, principalmente rural, situación que se comparte con varios países de la región andina y de otras regiones del mundo.

Frente a las repercusiones del cambio climático y en el marco de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible, el gobierno peruano trabaja intensamente para superar el reto que significa garantizar la disponibilidad y acceso al agua de consumo y riego para 34 millones de peruanos. Aunque se cuenta con una enorme variedad de fuentes de agua provenientes de ríos, lagunas y acuíferos, el 68% de las tierras de cultivo no disponen de agua de riego. Por esta razón, nuestro gobierno está comprometido con promover la gestión integrada de recursos hídricos con soluciones basadas en la naturaleza y la valoración de los servicios ecosistémicos mediante la búsqueda de modelos cada vez más innovadores que sirvan de base para resolver la problemática del acceso a recursos hídricos en la región andina.

Reconocemos la necesidad de avanzar hacia sistemas alimentarios sostenibles y resilientes para que nadie pase hambre en el mundo del mañana promoviendo la conservación de nuestros recursos naturales y la agrobiodiversidad.

Creemos que todas estas transformaciones deben de tener en cuenta la amplia diversidad de los sistemas alimentarios, los diferentes contextos locales y ser realizadas bajo una adecuada evaluación de los impactos económicos y sociales, así como de las capacidades nacionales para lograr una transición adecuada.

El Ministerio de Desarrollo Agrario y Riego, con el acompañamiento técnico de la FAO en Perú, ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas de política vinculadas a la agricultura familiar, la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional y el manejo sostenible del patrimonio forestal y de fauna silvestre.

Actualmente, con el apoyo de la FAO se vienen implementando dos proyectos en sistemas alimentarios y uso de la tierra para aumentar el bienestar humano y la resiliencia en los bosques amazónicos potenciando el valor de la biodiversidad y para lograr cadenas de valor en productos básicos libres de deforestación en la Amazonía peruana. Nuestro país reconoce que la cooperación técnica internacional con la FAO ha sido fructífera y se valora positivamente en tanto representa un importante apoyo al sector agrario, principalmente para los productores de pequeña escala.

Para terminar, Señora Presidenta, a nombre del Perú alentamos a la FAO a seguir trabajando y apoyando a sus Miembros para alcanzar el objetivo común de lograr sistemas agroalimentarios sostenibles y resilientes para el bienestar de todos y sin dejar a nadie atrás.

Muchas gracias.

**His Excellency Mohammed HASSAN KATANA (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

it is my honour to represent the Syrian Arab Republic in this 43rd Session of the Conference of the FAO and while wishing Mr QU Dongyu all the best we aspire to draw together an action plan for the future. We add our voice to the Group 77&China. At a time when the Member States and the FAO are endeavouring to achieve their objectives and to help the poor countries in creating strategies and programmes to improve the food systems and to reduce the number of the hungry in the world, we are witnessing many crises and wars that have negatively influenced our ambition to eliminate hunger. These threats are no longer feasible, it is essential to create peace and raise stability in the world.

Fighting terrorism is one of the most important elements in order to create peace. Syria was subjected to a terroristic war and to a series of different crises that have destroyed infrastructure and service posts and production industries. The terrorist attacks have been detrimental and they were followed by the COVID-19 pandemic and other many crises, the last of which was the earthquake on the 6th of February 2023. The international community has continued its siege and its unilateral illegal measures that have hindered the governmental efforts to help the Syrian people. The UN Organizations including the FAO that has work in Syria have helped us in facing these crises, although such help was limited.

The Ministry of Agriculture in Syria gives great importance to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative that was launched by the FAO and it is coordinating directly with the investment centre, with the aim of creating one product in one country that aims at raising the levels of value chains for olives and olive oils. We believe it is extremely important to support the urban food systems and the green cities initiatives that can actually constitute good framework for this and that can reduce loss and waste in foods.

This is why we insist on the importance of integrated projects that can improve value chains and face the consequences of climate change. The Ministry of Agriculture has set an agricultural strategy for 2021-2030. In line with local and regional changes this comprises 65 programmes.

We call upon all of you including the CM Institute and the Italian, German and Japanese Cooperation Agencies, we call upon all of you so as to help us in implementing this strategy and to provide technical, financial and expert aid. We also hope to be able to raise the financial contributions of the FAO and other organizations currently and after the Arab Summit in Jeddah in 2023 and with the participation of the President of Syria and the return of the Syrian Republic in its work for food security.

Thank you.

**Mr Rasoul ZARE (Iran, Islamic Republic of)**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, honourable delegates, I am honoured to present this statement on behalf of our newly appointed Minister of Agriculture. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran to express my appreciation to all those involved in organizing the 43rd FAO Conference with its focus on managing water resources for better production, better nutrition, better environment, better life, with the aim of achieving the 2030 SDGs.

Today we are witnessing an unprecedented strain on water resources worldwide. Climate change, biodiversity loss, land use changes, urbanization, expansion and numerous other factors have disrupted natural water cycles and intensified competition for water resources.

Simultaneously, the global population is rapidly increasing and projections indicate that if current trends and practices persist, there will be a 40 percent shortfall between projected demand and available water supply by 2030.

According to available statistics, by 2050 half of the world's grain production and nearly half of the global GDP may face the risk of water insecurity. The scarcity of water at global and regional levels underscores the necessity for enhanced collaboration among all nations. Water is not only a human right but also a right for plants, animals, micro-organisms, and the environment from a biodiversity standpoint. Preserving water resources is undeniably crucial for future generations.

Ladies and gentlemen, today the world needs to embrace illustrative and rejuvenating model of development. We must immediately halt the destruction of water and other essential resources,

adopting an integrated approach to water resources management coupled with improving water security can ensure sustainable food security for all.

This approach necessitates the involvement of women and men from all economic sectors, respecting the culture, social and economic diversity.

Excellencies, to address the challenges associated with limited water resources due to population growth and climate change, we must seek innovative nature-based solutions. SDG 6 underscores the need for universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation by 2030. The report emphasizes that global water demand is increasing and will continue to rise in the next two decades due to population growth, economic development and shifting consumption patterns.

Ensuring access to water, food and energy is a significant concern for the expanding global population, including many countries like Iran. In Iran, several measures have been taken to enhance water efficiency in the agricultural sector, such as deploying new technologies, reforming irrigation systems and implementing water allocation management. In line with these efforts we have also undertaken initiatives to renovate and consolidate agricultural lands.

Madam Chair, in the Islamic Republic of Iran our foremost priority is the completion and implementation of a sustainable value chain and a knowledge based food system. Iran stands ready to collaborate with all countries, particularly those in the region within the framework of FAO, to enhance water efficiency in agriculture and natural resource management and to find ways to preserve water for future generations. Once again, I express my gratitude to the Director-General, the President and the colleagues for hosting this meeting, and I wish a better life for all.

Thank you.

**His Excellency Mtolo PHIRI (Zambia)**

Madame Chairperson,

The Director-General of FAO,

Distinguished Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen.

Madam Chairperson, first of all allow me to congratulate you for having been elected as the Chairperson of the Conference. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General on his re-election. My country, Zambia, stands ready to support the Director-General during his tenure, to achieve his very clear objectives for the Institution.

Chairperson, in Zambia we believe that war anywhere in the world is war everywhere. In the same vein we believe that the usage of water, be it wastage or inefficient in any part of the world, affects every other part of the world. Therefore, we take the issues of water very, seriously. The theme of the Conference on Integrated Water Resource Management is timely and critical to our efforts of addressing the challenges of water shortages, scarcity, degradation of quality as well as floodings, which is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Zambia in the last planting season Madam Chairperson, lost well over 800 000 hectares of planted land, due to floods and then, later on, due to heavy drought that we experienced. This is a tragedy, Chairperson, that we must avoid in the future, and the solution for us is irrigation. The Development Madam Chairperson of a National Policy that outlines the strategies and principles for sustainable water resource management, which aims to have policies to ensure equitable access to water, promote Integrated Water Resource Management, and the protection of water, are vital. Further, the government has established water resource management authority, a regulated body responsible for managing and regulating water resources in Zambia.

Zambia wishes to invest heavily Madam Chairperson, in water infrastructure development, including the construction of dams, reservoirs and water treatment plants. These projects will enhance water

storage capacity, improve water supply and increase access to clean water for domestic, agricultural and industrial use.

Chairperson, billions of litres of water in Zambia every rainy season, just wash over into the oceans and we see it go in our case, into, in our case, the Indian Ocean. We need to harness this water. If there is any support that we need from other countries and FAO, it is in the direction of water harvesting so that we can utilize that flow of water which we see pass through our country.

The Government is promoting water conservation and efficiency practices to minimize wastages and to ensure sustainable water use. This includes raising awareness among communities about water saving techniques, promoting the use of water efficient technologies, and encouraging responsible cultural practices.

Madam Chairperson, at regional level Zambia is engaged in bilateral and regional agreements for transboundary water management. For instance, Zambia is a Member of the Southern African Development Community(SADEC) and participates in initiatives that the SADEC water sector tries to coordinate in order to have efficient use of water.

In conclusion Madam Chairperson, allow me to say that water is an indispensable input in agriculture, serving as a lifeline for crop production. Water is a common asset for all of us and it is an asset therefore that we need to manage - and manage well. Here is a country, Zambia, that is food secure; here is a country, Zambia, that has very good weather and is able to produce and support southern parts of Zambia in terms of grain and food supply, the eastern part of Africa, and now the northern parts of Africa.

We are here to say we have the good weather, we have the water, help us harness it, help us gather it so that we can continue supporting food in Africa and supporting food at a global level.

I thank you.

**His Excellency Mohamad SABU (Malaysia)**

Madame Chair,

Excellencies,

distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I join others in congratulating Dr Qu Dongyu, on your re-election as Director-General of FAO for the second term. Malaysia welcomes the overarching theme of this year's FAO Conference, Integrated Water Resources Management, which includes overcoming water challenges in agriculture, and integrated resource management for resilient agrifood systems and rural development.

The theme should serve as a reminder to all FAO Member States of what needs to be done and the long road we have. Ladies and gentlemen, it is imperative that we recognize the impact that water scarcity has on agricultural practice. The world is facing water scarcity and more than 3 billion people live in agricultural areas with very high or high levels of water shortage in addition.

In addition, about 1.2 billion live in areas where there is a high drought frequency in rain fed, cropland and pastureland areas of high water stressed integrated areas. In Malaysia the agricultural sector contributed 6.6 percent - the equivalent to USD 21.7 billion to the Malaysian GDP. The agrifood industry currently represents 3.5 percent of Malaysian GDP with a value of USD 11.25 billion in 2022.

In this relation, Malaysia firmly believes that water resources should be strategically managed to sustain agrifood systems that are more productive, inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

Ladies and gentlemen, the integrated water resources management, IWRM, is crucial for addressing water scarcity and transforming agriculture, as well as for reducing risk from flood. In this regard, Malaysia acknowledges the adverse impact of climate change and agriculture practice, particularly the competition for water resources for agriculture, with heavy usage of water that directly contributes to stress as river water levels fall. As for reduction of that risk, we have relevant experience where the

national flood forecasting and warning programme has been established for selected major river basins to provide early warning of flooding events.

Water resources being one of the crucial farming inputs of the agrifood sector has been managed more efficiently through the Malaysian National Agrifood Policy 2.0 for 2021 until 2030. This is reflected through several initiatives to promote sustainable water use in the agriculture, which includes the promotion of water efficient irrigation techniques, such as drip irrigation and the use of precision farming technologies.

In addition, Malaysia has seen efficient progress in increasing agricultural productivity through the implementation of technology and innovative agricultural practice, that promotes sustainability.

Through the National Agrifood Policy 2.0, as part of our action to expedite the development of agrifood related infrastructure, particularly to increase accountability for the management of infrastructure, Malaysia actively continues to increase the investment in agrifood related infrastructure, particularly for the purpose of irrigation.

Further, in advancing towards sustainable agriculture practice, Malaysia has implemented a robust certification scheme, namely Good Agricultural Practice - my gap and my agony – by incorporating the element of ESD into this certification it helps the stakeholder to add more responsible and less damaging in agricultural practice for future success.

Malaysia recognizes the population growth and urbanization, industrialization and expansion of irrigated agriculture and increasing demand and pressure on water resources, beside contributing to the rising water position, the infrastructure and facilities are challenges to the agrifood industry.

Thank you very much.

**His Excellency Ildephonse MUSAFIRI (Rwanda)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings, Allow me to first start by thanking FAO leadership for giving me this opportunity to address this respected audience on the topic of the state of food and agriculture seen through the lenses of water resources.

The global food and agriculture sector plays a critical role in ensuring food security, promoting sustainable development, and addressing various socio-economic and environmental challenges. In the same vein, Water is a vital resource that holds immense significance in the context of food and agriculture.

In Rwanda, where agriculture is predominantly rainfed, the management and sustainable use of water resources are key in achieving agricultural productivity and resilience to climate variabilities.

Recognizing the importance of water in agriculture, Rwanda has implemented a series of policies and initiatives to improve water management practices. The government has prioritized investments in irrigation infrastructure, including the construction and rehabilitation of water reservoirs, small-scale irrigation schemes, and water harvesting techniques. These measures aim to enhance water availability, especially during dry seasons, and reduce the vulnerability of farmers to climate variability.

Only 20 percent of irrigable land in Rwanda is irrigated, this accounts to 70 000 hectares. Ongoing irrigation projects in partnership with Exim Bank of India, NETAFIN Company of Israel and the World Bank.

Approximately 30 000 hectares of irrigated land by 2030.

Furthermore, Rwanda has embraced innovative approaches to enhance water efficiency. The promotion of precision irrigation techniques, such as drip irrigation, has helped optimize water use and minimize wastage.

Additionally, the adoption of conservation agriculture practices, such as minimum tillage, mulching and agroforestry, help improve soil moisture retention and minimize water runoff, thereby increasing water efficiency in our farming systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen, three years ago, Rwanda has established the water resources bought with the mission to ensure the availability of enough and well managed water resources for sustainable development.

By adopting a multi-stakeholder approach and promoting dialogue between water users, policymakers, and communities, Rwanda aims to ensure equitable water allocation and sustainable water governance. This inclusive approach contributes to the efficient and equitable distribution of water resources, which also reduces conflict over water use.

However, despite these efforts, water scarcity, inadequate infrastructure in some areas, the impacts of climate change and water-related challenges still persist.

Addressing these challenges requires continued investment in water infrastructure, increased adoption of water-efficient technologies, and the integration of climate-smart practices into agricultural systems.

Our challenges must be similar to those of many countries. For this reason, I advocate for more support to developing countries endeavoring to achieve sustainable water management in agriculture.

Support in the form of financial investment, technical assistance to foster knowledge exchange, and the promotion of partnerships for capacity building would be an apt backing for development in this area of water management.

I believe that if we enhance the existing collaboration with Rwanda and other nations, we can collectively work towards enhancing water security in agriculture, improving food production, and to safeguard our fragile ecosystems.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Su Excelencia Alexis PINEDA (Panamá)**

Buenas Tardes Señora Presidenta,

La República de Panamá extiende un saludo al Director General, a los países miembros y a todo el equipo de la FAO.

Inicio mi intervención enfatizando la interrelación que existe entre los recursos hídricos, la economía de Panamá y el cambio climático. El Canal de Panamá representa el 3.9% del Producto Interno Bruto (PIB) y cada buque que lo atraviesa requiere 200 millones de litros de agua dulce para transitar.

Anualmente, 14 mil buques atraviesan el canal y la demanda de agua dulce se ha vuelto un reto difícil para las cuencas que lo alimentan debido al cambio climático.

Los recurrentes fenómenos del Niño y la Niña agudizan este escenario, generando distorsiones respecto al régimen de lluvias en nuestro país y afectan nuestra agricultura

Estimados Miembros, quiero compartir con ustedes que la administración del Presidente Laurentino Cortizo ha financiado la agenda de asistencia social en los últimos cuatro años con la totalidad de los ingresos del Canal de Panamá, y con ello logramos reducir del 7.5% al 5.8% la prevalencia de hambre en nuestra población de acuerdo con el informe SOFI 2022.

Hoy nos encontramos ante la entrada del fenómeno del Niño y se pronostica un impacto en el alza de la temperatura global, lo que agravará la situación de inseguridad alimentaria.

Solamente en mi región la inseguridad alimentaria afecta a más de 17.8 millones de personas. Hoy más que nunca es necesario que los países cumplamos con los compromisos asumidos en la Declaración de Río de 1992 y que los países industrializados reduzcan sus emisiones de efecto invernadero y asuman los compromisos de una financiación climática accesible para todos los países y sectores afectados por el cambio climático.



Es necesario sentar las bases de un mercado de carbono dirigido a financiar la sostenibilidad de las cuencas que alimentan los suministros de agua dulce, que sin duda son requeridos para los sistemas agroalimentarios. Estoy seguro de que, a través de una financiación accesible, podremos transformar los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Señora Presidenta,

Comparto con ustedes, que el Gobierno de Panamá cuenta con una Estrategia Nacional para los Recursos Hídricos hasta el 2050, así como las herramientas legales para la gobernanza del agua, definiendo un sólido marco legal y regulatorio que amplía las responsabilidades del Estado y el Sector Privado.

También tenemos el Plan de Acción para la Gestión Integrada de los Recursos Hídricos (PAGIRH) de Panamá (2022-2026); el cual tiene como objetivo contribuir al aumento en la seguridad hídrica de Panamá, en función de prioridades nacionales, capacidad institucional y disponibilidad de recursos.

El Plan Nacional contra la Sequía con apoyo de la Convención de las Naciones Unidas de Lucha contra la Desertificación (CNULD) establece un proceso de construcción de acciones de resiliencia para prepararse antes, durante y posterior a la sequía. Panamá declaró Estado de Emergencia Ambiental para enfrentar con anticipación las inminentes consecuencias derivadas de la actual variabilidad climática.

Nos complace informar que fuimos el primer país de la región en adherirse a la Convención del Agua de Naciones Unidas. También Panamá ha dado un gran paso iniciando su proceso de adhesión a la Convención sobre la Protección y Utilización de los recursos de Agua Transfronterizos y de los Lagos Internacionales. Esta iniciativa también aportará al fortalecimiento de los Comités de Cuencas Hidrográficas, como estructura de gobernanza local.

Creamos el primer programa estatal, de carácter voluntario, llamado Programa Reduce Tu Huella Hídrica, el cual busca implementar estrategias de adaptación al cambio climático a través de una evaluación anual de las huellas hídricas, en cumplimiento con los compromisos adquiridos dentro del Acuerdo de París.

También se realizan inversiones importantes en la reestructuración en las principales cuencas hidrográficas. Aprovecho para agradecer la asistencia técnica brindada por la FAO en estas áreas.

Una de las necesidades de mi país es la información real, comprobable y centralizada de los balances hídricos, principalmente en lo que atañe a las aguas subterráneas. Como ya adelantaron algunas delegaciones, es necesario mantener este diálogo sobre las mejores prácticas para la contabilización de los recursos hídricos.

Igualmente, deseamos que se profundice en el programa de trabajo de nuestro organismo en lo siguiente:

1. Se actualicen directrices para el fortalecimiento de los marcos legales nacionales que consideren la planificación del recurso de agua en base a capacidades de cargas y balances hídricos para el uso sostenible en la agricultura, en el marco del plan de acción de la estrategia de Cambio Climático de la FAO;
2. Reiterar la realización intercambios sobre tecnologías de gestión hídrica con énfasis en las aguas subterráneas, relacionadas y apropiadas para la agricultura y ganadería, en el marco del plan de acción de la estrategia de Ciencia e Innovación de la FAO;
3. Analizar los potenciales beneficios de una financiación a través del mercado de carbono para atender las necesidades de una gestión hídrica eficiente, lo anterior focalizando y asociando con los diversos fondos verdes actualmente existentes.
4. Adicionalmente, solicito la FAO para que mantenga su atención sobre las mejores prácticas para la gestión de riesgos en materia de sequías.

Es necesario recibir colaboración técnica y financiera para la subregión centroamericana que nos apoye en la coordinación de redes regionales para la gestión del riesgo agroclimático y de las emergencias agrícolas vinculadas a las sequías e inundaciones.

Finalmente, Panamá desea felicitar al Director General Qu Dongyu por su gestión realizada, así como augurarle éxitos en su nuevo periodo y reiteramos la disposición de continuar trabajando conjuntamente para asegurar alcanzar los objetivos de este organismo.

¡Muchas Gracias!

**His Excellency Manzour bin HILAL ALANAZI (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, peace be with you. It gives me pleasure to participate with you in this Conference to discuss an important issue in relation to the situation of the State of Food and Agriculture, in view of major challenges relating to water scarcity and the need for its integrated management. This is our main issue and we need to have an integrated management of these water resources, as well aligning it with the Sustainable Development Goals, so as to achieve the four betters; better production, better nutrition, better environment, and a better life.

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia grants issues related to agrifood and related issues are great importance in its policies and strategies nationally. It believes that it is its duty, as a Member of the Organization, to work together with other institutions to promote research in these fields and the use of modern technologies. This requires, from all of us, to join our efforts in order to resolve the issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia adopted a number of strategies and initiatives, as well as programmes to promote development of sustainable agriculture as well as increasing the efficiency of the management of water resources and the preservation of water resources and the environment.

The Kingdom now contributes through the Agriculture Development Fund in terms of loans, to over 70 percent of the capital costs of agricultural projects. This increased from 500 million SAR in 2015 to 7 billion SAR in 2022, and this is expected to reach 2.23 billion this year. That is with an increase of 1 billion per year.

We also proceeded to a programme that is called the Rural Development Programme in order to contribute to food security in a more balanced development. We know that water resources are the most important resources for development, and even though the Kingdom is one of the countries that suffer most from water scarcity, we have achieved a development in agricultural investment and we achieved an increase of this part in gross domestic product to 72 billion SAR in 2021.

The Kingdom also adopts an integrated water resources management. This helped reduce agricultural consumption of water from 86 percent to less than 70 percent. It is now working on meeting the changes that are now occurring in the world. It has based its projects on technology so as to achieve efficiency in the use of natural resources.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia now commits to further contributing to the efforts and strategies that relate to the development of agriculture and food and water security. I would like to express our great appreciation to the Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and his assistance on the efforts that are meant to achieve food security and I would like to wish full success to this Conference so as we can achieve sustainability for all. Thank you.

**Son Excellence Christian HOFER (Suisse)**

Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Directeur Général,

Mesdames et messieurs les Ministres,  
Excellences, délégués,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

C'est un plaisir d'être aujourd'hui parmi vous et de pouvoir m'adresser à la 43<sup>ème</sup> séance de la

Conférence FAO. Si vous imaginez une carte postale de la Suisse, vous visualisez peut-être de belles montagnes bien enneigées, des glaciers, ou peut-être une vache dans un pâturage verdoyant en été.

Malheureusement, les changements climatiques et environnementaux qui nous affectent tous mettent de plus en plus à mal ces images. Les neiges sont chaque année moins nombreuses, les sécheresses jaunissent nos alpages et nos glaciers fondent à une vitesse alarmante. Notre agriculture et nos systèmes alimentaires sont de plus en plus impactés par des changements dans la disponibilité en eau, et ce même dans un pays comme la Suisse, considérée comme un des réservoirs d'eau d'Europe. Chez nous aussi de nouveaux défis apparaissent dans la gestion des réserves en eau à l'interne et avec les pays en aval.

C'est pourquoi nous nous félicitons du thème de la gestion intégrée de la ressource en eau. Nous comprenons cet engagement comme un pilier d'action essentiel vers la transformation durable et inclusive de nos systèmes alimentaires. En Suisse, nous venons d'adopter notre nouvelle orientation pour la politique agricole. Notre vision : « La sécurité alimentaire grâce au développement durable, de la production à la consommation ».

A travers des approches systémiques et agroécologiques, nous cherchons à :

- Assurer la résilience de l'approvisionnement alimentaire;
- Encourager une production respectueuse du climat, de l'environnement et des animaux ;
- Renforcer une création de valeur durable et finalement;
- Favoriser une consommation durable et saine.

La gestion de la ressource en eau joue un rôle essentiel dans ces 4 lignes stratégiques. Plus particulièrement, nous misons en Suisse sur:

- Une irrigation planifiée, efficiente et durable, utilisant des nouvelles technologies innovantes et adaptées;
- L'amélioration de l'utilisation des eaux à l'échelle des exploitations ;
- Une meilleure valorisation locale des eaux de pluie, à travers le concept de « Slow Water »;
- L'amélioration de la qualité de l'eau, aussi bien en termes de polluants qu'en termes de gestion de sa température; et finalement
- Une planification et gestion intégrée des risques naturels. Mme. La Présidente,

La Suisse considère trois aspects critiques dans la gestion intégrée de la ressource en eau (la GIRE), et ce aussi bien au niveau national qu'international:

- Premièrement, l'importance d'une gouvernance inclusive, combinée avec une planification concertée des espaces. Les organisations de gestion des bassins versants, y compris les organisations transfrontalières, sont essentielles, notamment pour définir et réglementer l'utilisation de l'eau;
- Deuxièmement, la prise en compte de l'intégralité du cycle de l'eau, dans une perspective eau- énergie-alimentation-environnement afin d'adresser la concurrence croissante entre les différents secteurs et objectifs sociaux, économiques et environnementaux;
- Finalement, l'agroécologie, que la Suisse considère comme une approche clé pour la transformation des systèmes alimentaires, et qui offre des solutions particulièrement pertinentes et innovantes applicables à la GIRE.

Mme la Présidente,

L'agriculture est à la fois co-responsable et victime des problèmes de la disponibilité et de pollution des eaux : une gestion durable et intégrée de la ressource en eau est une nécessité pour la sécurité alimentaire, la transformation des systèmes alimentaires et l'atteinte des Objectifs de développement durable (ODD) des Nations unies. La Suisse encourage la FAO à jouer pleinement son rôle dans cette transformation des systèmes alimentaires, y compris à travers la gestion intégrée de la ressource en eau. Plus particulièrement:

- Par la mise en place de réseaux, le renforcement de ses travaux scientifiques et fondés sur des preuves, et en continuant de soutenir des initiatives multipartites existantes telles que le Cadre mondial contre la pénurie d'eau en agriculture. La compétence normative de la FAO doit être maintenue et renforcée, permettant de faire le lien entre science, expériences pratiques et avancées politiques et normatives;
- Par une approche inclusive, adressant les besoins et contraintes spécifiques des femmes, des jeunes et autres groupes vulnérables. La jeunesse en particulier doit être considérée comme un moteur indispensable du changement que nous souhaitons voir;
- Par l'alignement des actions avec les stratégies Changement climatique, Science & Innovation et Intégration de la biodiversité dans tous les secteurs de l'agriculture
- Et finalement, par la participation et coordination avec UN Water.

Mme la Présidente, la Suisse se réjouit de continuer à travailler avec la FAO, ses Membres et ses partenaires, afin de concrétiser la transformation inclusive et durable des systèmes alimentaires.

Merci pour votre attention.

**Su Excelencia Erwin Freddy MAMANI MACHACA (Bolivia, Plurinational State of)**

En primer lugar, saludar y felicitar la selección del Director Ejecutivo de la FAO.

Las diversas crisis que estamos atravesando en el planeta, crisis sociales, crisis económicas y, por supuesto, también la crisis climática que deriva en la crisis hídrica, alimentaria, energética, entre otros, han generado que las brechas sociales se incrementen y que sean los sectores más vulnerables y empobrecidos quienes, una vez más, se vean afectados. Como Estados nos habíamos puesto objetivos y metas a través de los ODS. Mi país, Bolivia, viene implementando el Plan de desarrollo económico-social 2021-2025, industrialización con sustitución de importaciones.

Para Bolivia la crisis de escasez del agua y la necesidad de garantizar el acceso a esta, es un tema de mucha relevancia ya que nos reafirmamos y promovemos el derecho humano al agua y el saneamiento como un derecho humano esencial para el pleno disfrute de la vida. Las fuentes de agua del mundo se encuentran en un alarmante estrés hídrico y el acelerado deshielo de los glaciares, como los glaciares de los Andes, plantea un escenario en el que a 2050, al menos un tercio de ellos no tendrán más masa glaciar y esto tiene que llevarnos a pasar de la preocupación a una evaluación concreta en el marco de las responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas en una acción inmediata, conjunta y realmente efectiva.

Las consecuencias del cambio climático y sus efectos sobre el ciclo natural del agua agravan las catástrofes, la escasez y las sequías al tiempo que causan daño a las infraestructuras, la producción de alimentos y las cadenas de suministros. Por esto, Bolivia promueve diversas formas de desarrollo en relación estrecha con la visión de vivir bien en armonía con la Madre Tierra, rescatando la ciencia de los pueblos indígenas y planteamos la posibilidad de pensar otros sistemas de producción y equilibrio con la Madre Tierra que garanticen la vida de todos los seres vivos y, por ello, planteamos reafirmar el derecho humano al agua potable y el saneamiento como un derecho humano esencial para el pleno disfrute de la vida.

Reconocer la importante interrelación que existe entre el agua y soberanía alimentaria de nuestros pueblos y el mantenimiento a los sistemas de vida como base fundamental. Precisamente, la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria es un tema crucial en nuestros tiempos debido a la pérdida de la biodiversidad y la creciente demanda de alimentos. Se deben garantizar también mejores condiciones para la producción y el trabajo de nuestros pequeños productores, lo que solo será posible mediante un acceso a tecnología, infraestructura y créditos, pero también de fortalecer los sistemas productivos y alimentarios basados en la agricultura tradicional. Los que se desarrollan a partir de conocimientos ancestrales y una relación de armonía con la Madre Tierra, todo ello nos permitirá recuperar la producción diversificada de alimentos generando sustento y consumo local y regional.

Finalmente, en relación a la accesibilidad de alimentos, promoción de sistemas alimentarios sostenibles y empoderamiento de las comunidades locales, deseo hacer referencia al año internacional de los camélidos 2024 cuya primera resolución fue adoptada en el seno de esta misma Conferencia en

2017 y que recoge la importancia de estos animales para muchas familias como el principal medio de subsistencia, reconoce su aporte en el uso sostenible de los ecosistemas terrestres, su importancia para la identidad cultural y los conocimientos tradicionales de los pueblos indígenas. Bolivia viene impulsando el año internacional de los camélidos 2024 por lo que me permito hacer un llamado a todos los Estados para que continuemos sumando fuerzas y voces para concientizar acerca de la importancia económica y cultural de los camélidos y fomentar su consumo especialmente lo productos comestibles que contribuyen a la erradicación del hambre, la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición.

Muchísimas gracias.

**Son Excellence Carmen SACRAMENTO NETO (Angola) (Langue originale Portuguese)**

Madame la Présidente,

Monsieur le Directeur Général de la FAO,

Excellences et Chefs de délégations,

Mesdames et messieurs, permettez-moi de m'adresser à vous au nom de Son Excellence le Président João Lourenço, Président de la République d'Angola et vous remerciez de l'aimable invitation qui m'a été faite à participer à cette 43ème Conférence de la FAO. Et j'aimerais féliciter tous les membres qui ont été élus. Monsieur le Directeur Général, j'aimerais le féliciter pour son second mandat, et qui nous permettra de trouver des solutions basées sur un développement plus juste et plus équitable.

Excellences, la FAO est un partenaire de longue date de l'état angolais avec un soutien technique et des financements et un partenariat qui nous permet de renforcer le secteur primaire et surtout dans les zones rurales avec des populations vulnérables, avec l'adoption de bonnes pratiques, avec une assistance technique et technologique pour la redistribution des richesses et la diminution de la pauvreté. L'Angola, le gouvernement angolais a l'intention de continuer à investir dans la diversification de l'économie nationale, à travers des systèmes alimentaires de plus en plus résilients et durables et pour améliorer le développement de l'industrie manufacturière, notamment dans le secteur agroalimentaire d'élevage et de la pêche. Notre priorité, l'industrialisation du secteur de l'agriculture et de la pêche et modernisation des infrastructures qui seront les piliers essentiels à l'effort de diversification économique.

En mettant l'accent particulièrement sur la garantie de l'autosuffisance alimentaire nationale et la dynamisation du secteur. A cet égard, la stratégie nationale de la mer en Angola et le plan d'action en 2030, la stratégie de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et le Plan national de 2027, combinés à l'augmentation de la production agroalimentaire et aux actions de soutien intégrés, ainsi que l'inclusivité et la création et le renforcement des marchés et la modernisation de l'agro-industrie, de l'élevage et de la pêche, augmenteront la production de la compétitivité et de l'emploi en créant de meilleurs équilibres et un développement plus équitable dans les régions.

Mesdames et messieurs, nos Programmes nationaux sont mis en œuvre conformément à l'Agenda 2030 et aux stratégies adoptées par la FAO. La création d'une plateforme d'investissement a été créée et mise en œuvre et aux rapports priorités, l'agriculture, la pêche et la petite industrie pour la production en Angola. Nous remercions la FAO et nous sommes certains que ces initiatives permettront d'apporter un soutien à la mise en œuvre de cette économie bleue, qui est l'un de nos objectifs et la réduction des risques que nous constatons si fortement du fait des changements climatiques. La mise en œuvre d'un nouveau programme pour créer une plateforme et pour améliorer les initiatives telles que Hand in Hand de la FAO et d'autres pour améliorer les engagements sont autant d'engagement qui nous permettront de réduire les impacts négatifs causés par la crise sanitaire de COVID-19 ainsi que la crise climatique et financière que nous avons tous traversée pour finalement renforcer notre productivité et participer mieux à l'amélioration de notre PIB. Nous nous efforçons tous de réaffirmer le besoin de stabilité et créer des partenariats avec des programmes qui s'engagent en matière d'ODD, avec les familles d'Angola.

Excellences, Madame la Présidente, l'Angola est un pays riche en eau, en ressources arables et nous utilisons l'eau pour répondre à tous nos besoins. Mais nous rappelons ici qu'à des fins énergétiques, à

des fins de sources énergétiques, nous devons réaliser des stratégies pour que nos populations profitent mieux de l'eau et nous avons besoin d'une reconversion écologique pour créer davantage d'opportunités de distribution pour répondre aux besoins du pays. Nous devons coopérer d'avantage et collaborer pour gérer et profiter mieux de l'eau, pour tous les écosystèmes, et nous devons travailler dans une perspective de maîtrise des ressources hydriques existantes.

Finalelement, l'Angola réitère l'importance de l'eau et souhaite échanger des expériences, des partenariats, des programmes d'initiatives communes autour des systèmes alimentaires nécessitant l'irrigation pour améliorer le développement social et la responsabilité sociale et environnementale. Il est temps d'agir.

Merci Madame la Présidente.

**Sr. Ariel MARTINEZ (Argentina)**

Señora Presidenta, en esta primera instancia deseo expresar que la Argentina acompaña los principios contenidos en la declaración del G77+China. Al mismo tiempo queremos felicitar al Director-General, Doctor Qu, por su reelección; a usted, Ministra de Canadá, Marie-Claude Bibeau, por su presidencia en este evento y agradecer al Economista en Jefe de FAO, al Doctor Torero por la elaboración de este documento sobre el estado de la alimentación y la agricultura que guían los debates bajo este punto.

Nos gustaría comenzar indicando que compartimos la preocupación sobre el estado del tema del agua, clave para fortalecer nuestros sistemas productivos y avanzar en la lucha contra la inseguridad alimentaria. En 11 de los últimos 14 años, Argentina sufrió sequías, las cuales han sido particularmente intensas en los últimos tres años. Otros países de la región están atravesando situaciones similares. Todos los modelos nos indican que esta situación ambiental se profundizará en los próximos años y que, por ende, hay que adaptarse a esta nueva realidad climática.

Creemos que es necesario implementar mejoras en la gestión y el uso del agua mediante sistemas de riego eficientes, especialmente a través de la innovación y el desarrollo tecnológico y las buenas prácticas. Sin embargo, también creemos que los países ya se encuentran avanzando según sus prioridades y según sus capacidades en la implementación de distintas soluciones que se adaptan a sus necesidades y realidades locales.

Nosotros deseamos que la implementación de programas y medidas a nivel global se desarrollen en el marco de una transición justa y adoptando medidas que no promuevan nuevas restricciones al comercio, una disminución en la producción de alimentos o que castiguen, aún más, a los países en desarrollo. La realidad indica que no hay modelos únicos. Cuando se han forzado medidas sin respetar las particularidades y capacidades regionales, estas sistemáticamente han fallado.

Señora Presidenta, nos preocupan los mensajes aislados y descontextualizados que hablan de una agricultura como el mayor consumidor de los recursos de agua dulce a nivel global sin poner en la misma oración el concepto de seguridad alimentaria y 800 millones de personas con hambre. Está claro que la agricultura es un gran consumidor de agua, pero ese consumo está destinado a la producción de alimentos en un mundo con inseguridad alimentaria.

Hemos asumido el compromiso de hacer un uso sostenible del recurso a través de mejores prácticas productivas, el uso de diversas herramientas tecnológicas a fin de seguir construyendo una agricultura sostenible que brinde soluciones a los complejos desafíos económicos, sociales y ambientales, pero bajo la premisa, ni un alimento menos y menos aún con el castigo a menor cantidad de productores.

Desde hace años en Argentina hemos venido desarrollando prácticas y tecnologías para hacer un uso sustentable de nuestros recursos adaptándonos al cambio climático y reduciendo emisiones. Siembra directa, biotecnología, orgánicos, adtech, bioinsumos entre otras prácticas. En nuestro trabajo conjunto entre el sector público y privado hemos desarrollado estas herramientas. En biotecnología, por dar un ejemplo, se logró la creación de variedad de trigo y soja resistente a la sequía mediante el desarrollo de la tecnología HB4. Queremos diseñar enfoques que centralmente sean incentivos y premios y no castigos.

Rechazamos un enfoque sancionatorio restrictivo a nivel global en materia comercial. La cooperación, el fortalecimiento institucional mediante la transferencia de tecnología y las innovaciones, el acceso al financiamiento son las herramientas para alcanzar una mejor gobernanza bajo el marco soberano y nacional.

Con respecto al término gobernanza, entendemos que no existe un concepto en modo singular y consensado. Es decir, no se ha establecido un concepto de gobernanza de agua a nivel multilateral. Existen diversas instituciones, reglas y mecanismos, según las características particulares de los territorios y los ambientes que determinan básicamente cómo se construye la sustentabilidad de las distintas cuencas hídricas. De hecho, por ejemplo, en nuestro país existen decenas de comités de cuencas que regulan y administran de forma diferenciada y bajo paradigmas distintos, pero eficientes, las diversas realidades e intereses que presenta nuestro territorio sobre este recurso.

Vemos como positivo que existan herramientas, ámbito y programas globales de apoyo para fortalecer estos diversos ámbitos de trabajo que implican las diversas gobernanzas del agua, según las particularidades y capacidades regionales. Justamente sobre este punto debemos trabajar. FAO tiene que contribuir en la construcción de herramientas y programas para desarrollar capacidades nacionales y regionales para un mejor manejo del agua de acuerdo con sus prioridades locales achicando las brechas y las capacidades nacionales entre los distintos países.

Por otro lado, entendemos que las menciones en el ámbito internacional del concepto de monetización o cuantificación económica del recurso agua es riesgoso y puede dar lugar a nuevas barreras no arancelarias injustificadas que incrementen aún más las distorsiones en el comercio agrícola mundial que hoy existen y que tanto afectan a la sostenibilidad y la seguridad alimentaria.

Queremos seguir trabajando junto a FAO, Señora Presidenta, pero necesitamos atender a las realidades regionales. Muchísimas gracias.

#### **Su Excelencia Luis PLANAS PUCHADES (España)**

Sra. Presidenta,

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea y de sus 27 Estados Miembros: Ucrania, Albania, Principado de Mónaco, Bosnia y Herzegovina, la República de Macedonia del Norte, Montenegro, San Marino, Islandia hacen suyas también estas palabras. Agradecemos a la FAO su papel en la generación de datos fiables y por la información e informes sustantivos sobre tendencias y desafíos sobre la alimentación y la agricultura en el mundo, como son los informes “El Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación de 2020” y “El Estado de los recursos mundiales de tierra y agua para la alimentación y la agricultura de 2021”. Particularmente agradecemos los “Informes Mundiales sobre las Crisis Alimentarias” y los de los “Puntos Críticos del Hambre”, que han subrayado los crecientes retos para alcanzar el hambre cero debido a los efectos de los conflictos, el cambio climático y las recesiones económicas.

Como demuestran los informes de la FAO, las tendencias negativas preexistentes se han visto exacerbadas por los efectos de la guerra de agresión de Rusia contra Ucrania. Los riesgos para el acceso y la disponibilidad de alimentos y fertilizantes, particularmente para los países en desarrollo y las comunidades más vulnerables, requieren una mención especial, al igual que la importancia de la Iniciativa para el transporte seguro de cereales y productos alimenticios desde los puertos ucranianos. Solicitamos a la Conferencia que reafirme las decisiones sobre las consecuencias para la seguridad alimentaria y la agricultura mundiales de la agresión de la Federación de Rusia contra Ucrania, adoptadas por el Consejo de la FAO en sus sesiones 169º, 170º, 171º y 172º y por la Conferencia Regional Europea en su 33º período de sesiones. Como se menciona en las Conclusiones del Consejo de la UE sobre la FAO, la UE reconoce el papel de la FAO en relación con la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), particularmente el número 2.

En 2022, la UE y sus Estados miembros intensificamos nuestros esfuerzos adoptando una respuesta global a la crisis alimentaria mundial con cuatro líneas de actuación: (i) fomentar la solidaridad, particularmente a través de la ayuda humanitaria; (ii) promover una producción sostenible y resistente en los países socios; (iii) combatir restricciones comerciales no justificadas; (iv) promover soluciones coordinadas a través del multilateralismo. Asimismo, nos hemos comprometido a prestar

un apoyo sustancial, por un mínimo de 18.000 millones de euros hasta 2024. Hemos intensificado nuestra colaboración con la FAO, al igual que con el PMA y el FIDA, destacando la importancia del CSA. Por otro lado, la UE y sus Estados miembros mantenemos un compromiso firme con la transformación hacia sistemas alimentarios sostenibles mediante la aplicación del Pacto Verde y de la PAC 2020.

Agradecemos enormemente que la cuestión de las principales deliberaciones de la Conferencia sea la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos. La creciente escasez de recursos en competición con otros usos, hace que resulte imperativo centrar los esfuerzos en la innovación, la tecnología, las prácticas agrícolas sostenibles y la gestión sostenible de los recursos hídricos, incluyendo los no convencionales. Dado que la agricultura utiliza el 70% de los recursos mundiales de agua dulce, urge mejorar la eficiencia y sostenibilidad del uso del agua en la agricultura. También queremos hacer hincapié en la importancia de la gobernanza inclusiva del agua y el compromiso con todas las partes interesadas.

La reciente destrucción de la presa de Nova Kakhova en Ucrania nos recuerda, por desgracia, la importancia del agua para la agricultura. Esta destrucción de infraestructuras hídricas vitales ha asestado un nuevo golpe a la seguridad alimentaria en Ucrania y más allá. El potencial global de producción de alimentos se va a ver reducido, agravando la amenaza que pesa sobre la seguridad alimentaria mundial. Esperamos una rápida evaluación de la FAO junto con los socios de la ONU, y contamos con que la FAO contribuirá a esta labor evaluando el alcance de los daños a la agricultura y a la pesca.

De cara al futuro, nos alineamos con la perspectiva de la FAO sobre la necesidad de contar con soluciones integradas, holísticas e inclusivas. Para mejorar la eficacia de la gestión integrada del agua, es fundamental que la FAO fomente asociaciones sólidas, coordine y colabore estrechamente con otras partes interesadas, en particular otros organismos de la ONU. En conclusión, la UE y sus Estados miembros apoyamos firmemente la labor de la FAO sobre la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos como parte integrante de la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios.

Muchas gracias, Sra. Presidenta.

**Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

First of all, I would like to refer to you and the Secretariat of our Conference, and at the end of our particular Session, I would like to have the opportunity to respond to some of the issues that have been brought up in the course of the interventions that have been made by a number of different countries and the European Union.

Now, Madame Chair, the Russian Federation is seriously concerned by the acute deterioration of the situation on the food security front. We feel that it is imperative to put aside political differences and join forces in a concerted effort, under the leadership of the FAO of the United Nations, that plays a key role in the United Nations system of food and agricultural issues, calling for all to unite all efforts and above all, bring together the necessary political will to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 2 for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition.

The Russian Federation is one of the world's largest producers of cereals, principally wheat, sunflower, sunflower oil, sugar, milk, eggs, other agricultural products including fisheries, resources, minerals, fertilisers, logging forest products as well. Now as concerns our meeting today that involves water resources, I simply wanted to say that the Russian Federation is one of the main sources or places of fresh water.

Each year we spend huge amounts in order to manage these huge fresh water resources that we have, principally Lake Baikal. Now, irrespective of the various sanctions that have been imposed following the situation with Ukraine, we continue to be a committed and trustworthy partner for most countries in the world. Last year we provided agriculture products to over 160 countries in the world. One fifth of all wheat exported worldwide is Russian so, as you can understand, we continue to provide and provide for food security.

I would like to thank you very much for your attention and of course any further information would be available on our site. Thank you very much.



## CHAIRPERSON

I take note of the fact that you may wish to exercise your right of reply. This right is recognised fully and in the interest of orderly conduct of the Conference, I will give the floor to Members who wish to exercise their right of reply under Item 10 at the end of each day. This way we will be able to proceed with delivery of statements by head of delegation and allow time for Members to prepare their right of reply.

Russian Federation, I trust this is acceptable to you and to all Members who may wish to exercise it during the following days. Thank you.

### **Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)**

Señora Presidenta, excelencias, distinguidos delegados. Quisiera iniciar mi intervención felicitando en nombre del gobierno de Costa Rica al Señor Qu Dongyu por su reelección al cargo de Director-General de esta noble Organización, externándole el total apoyo en sus gestiones.

El agua, tema de esta Conferencia, sigue siendo un bien que desafortunadamente no es extensivo a toda la humanidad pues uno de cada cuatro habitantes del planeta no tiene acceso al agua potable. Las estadísticas de 2023 arrojan que alrededor de 2 000 millones de personas no cuenta con acceso al agua potable y 3 600 millones carecen de acceso a un sistema de saneamiento y almacenamiento eficaz. La gestión del recurso hídrico debe ser integral en todos los sectores de la producción, la agricultura, la silvicultura, la pesca y la acuicultura. Para ello, la gobernanza debe ser inclusiva y la protección de los ecosistemas y la gestión basada en ciencias y datos debe ser prioridad.

En Costa Rica hemos adquirido compromisos multilaterales para un verdadero desarrollo sostenible en lo económico, en lo ambiental y lo social. Entendemos que es necesaria la interconexión entre los diferentes instrumentos y acuerdos internacionales para prevenir desastres y asegurar el acceso del agua en modo eficiente y resiliente.

Nuestro país no escapa a situaciones de emergencia, pues los fenómenos naturales causan anualmente enormes sequías o inundaciones generando pérdidas millonarias en cultivos y en abastecimiento de alimentos. Estamos conscientes que ante las inundaciones no hay una única solución pues estas se originan de diferentes causas, pero definitivamente la prevención y la reducción del riesgo son indispensables para una alerta temprana.

Tenemos el compromiso de incluir a las comunidades rurales y a los pueblos indígenas en la búsqueda conjunta de soluciones y en programas de resiliencia para la toma de decisiones y optimizar resultados. Aun así, es importante destacar que en Costa Rica una parte de la gestión hídrica se realiza a través de la agroecología con el concurso de comunidades en armonía con la biodiversidad. Desde hace años el país ha realizado importantes esfuerzos en la conservación de los bosques y humedales y se ha implementado con éxito sistemas que ayudan a captar el agua de lluvia.

También contamos con la iniciativa de agropaisajes para una agricultura resiliente estructurada bajo un enfoque de soluciones basadas en la naturaleza mediante procesos de producción que se adaptan al clima y restauran la biodiversidad, pero sabemos que quedan muchas acciones por hacer y reconocemos que es vital que se apoye a los agricultores para que se dé un uso más eficiente del agua de forma que se puedan producir más alimentos con menos agua y se tome en cuenta el uso adecuado de la irrigación, la poscosecha, la producción animal, la limpieza de las instalaciones, la agricultura, así como menos descarga de aguas contaminadas con mantener material orgánico o elementos químicos en los cuerpos naturales del agua.

Bajo esta premisa, estamos convencidos de que la cooperación multilateral es necesaria ahora más que nunca para trabajar en la innovación tecnológica e inversión para el uso más eficiente del agua, pero también los procesos nacionales deben ser inclusivos para los grupos más vulnerables como son los agricultores familiares. Costa Rica también cree en la importancia de implementar herramientas innovadoras que permitan obtener una producción de alimentos más favorecedores, implementándose un uso más eficiente de los recursos, especialmente hídricos y del suelo.

Por todo lo anterior, instamos a la FAO a movilizar recursos y seguir elaborando programas de gestión de riesgos de inundaciones, desastres, de utilización del agua de las inundaciones y de la sanidad de

los suelos. Si se logra integrar a la agricultura, la pesca, la acuicultura, la silvicultura, la emergencia y la resiliencia seguramente se encontrarán soluciones innovadoras de cara a los retos actuales y futuros. No lo olvidemos, el agua es un recurso al que todo ser humano debe tener acceso. Quienes tenemos el privilegio de gozarlo, deberíamos ser conscientes de no desperdiciarlo, especialmente en un momento en que tantos padecen necesidades de este bien por largos períodos de tiempo.

Muy claro lo dice aquel refrán, donde llega el agua hay riqueza, donde no, hay pobreza. Muchas gracias.

**Mr Harry O'CROWLEY (Ireland)**

Ireland fully aligns itself with the joint statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Let us be clear, the impacts of Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine are felt far beyond Ukraine's borders. Millions of people who are already enduring hunger, exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, conflict, disease, and the global impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic, risk being plunged into acute food insecurity as a result.

Water is essential for human life. Safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, and prevention of malnutrition are fundamentally connected. The prudent use of water is an essential factor in the transformation of global food systems, including the sustainable production of crops and livestock. This will be an important topic for discussion in the Food Systems Summit Stocktake later this month.

The impact on rural communities on the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine highlights the critical importance of water for agriculture. The destruction of a vital water and irrigation infrastructure has dealt a devastating blow to food security in Ukraine and beyond, with some estimates indicating that it will take 10 years or more to rebuild and to refill the dam to its previous levels.

In Ireland, we acknowledge the critical importance of water management in our own national food systems strategy, Food Vision 2030. This strategy has, as a key objective, the enhanced protection of our waters, including surface waters, from agricultural, forestry, and urban and industrial pollution. It also commits to reduce the risk of agricultural risk of pesticides impacting water, particularly drinking water, in terms of safety and the health of the aquatic environment.

In 2014, Ireland along with Kenya, co-chaired the final intergovernmental negotiations for the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, Sustainable Development Goal #6 commits the 193 signatory countries to achieve, amongst other targets, universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, and to implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

With less than seven years left to 2030, Ireland calls on FAO of the United Nations to redouble its efforts, to partner with Member States for the delivery of all the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal #6 by providing appropriate and country-specific integrated water management and technical support and advice.

Madam Chair, thank you.

**Mr Sayed Altayeb AHMED (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)**

Your Excellencies,

delegations,

ladies and gentlemen.

Sudan would like to congratulate the Director-General on his re-election. It is a reflection of the trust that our Organization has and that is why he has been voted for a second term. We were very convinced by the reforms which have been undertaken to make the management of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations more flexible and to better meet the challenges before us.

We would like to confirm our support to his efforts and indeed the efforts of the Organization to try and achieve food security, particularly when it comes to our region. Your Excellencies, it is my pleasure to take the floor today in this context, this the 43rd Session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Conference.

The theme today is water and the management of water resources. Now, we see important difficulties in the world and problems affecting farming and food production in general. We need to better coordinate, we need to better work together as nations and in multilateral Organizations. We need to create true partnerships for a transformation of the food production sector as we face a number of different challenges. We need to make certain that our food production is sustainable and this as we see food security under threat.

Now I would like to mention some of the measures which have been taken in Sudan, measures which are currently... The country is in a difficult situation, food production and food security is affected. Now, Sudan has been suffering armed conflict since the 15th of April 2022.

This has had an important impact of food production; we have seen that harvests are down, animal production is also down, particularly in the areas affected by the conflict. That said, national production was already under pressure; poor infrastructure firstly, transportation problems, lack of investment, limited production, lack of subsidy; all of that meant that harvests were under pressure before as were trade flows, which were not up at traditional levels. So, harvests are down and food security will also be down, that will pose a threat to the population, particularly in certain regions.

Now, the near east and north Africa as a region are also having problems linked to a shortage of water and conflicts making that worse, as is climate change and economic downturns. The water crisis at present is a threat to stability in the region, particularly to human development and sustainable development in general.

All the countries in the region are really worn out, or rather are seeing that their ground water resources are fully exploited. That is having an impact of agriculture and agriculture is now having to compete with other sectors in trying to obtain sufficient water resources.

Now, you may also know that developing countries, particularly the countries that are really underdeveloped are having a great deal of difficulty in trying to adapt to situations; Sudan is one of those countries. We have a system which reflects a lack of resources to try and deal with climate change. We cannot fight these changes alone. Sudan needs help, we need capacity building, we need to strengthen our agrifood systems, we need to deal with drought impact.

We hope that measures will be taken to try and improve the transfer of technologies to ensure that we do make the best use of our water resources as they are available, and also to help us deal with drought but we need resilience.

**Mr Lieven DE LA MARCHE (Belgium)**

Director General, Madame Chair, Ministers and Secretaries of State, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Belgium aligns itself with the Joint Statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

Belgium welcomes the central theme of the 43rd FAO Conference. We acknowledge that water is the livelihood of the earth and our common denominator. Water underpins in particular SDG 6, but, moreover, is a connecting and determining element in the achievement of the entire 2030 Agenda.

Problems related to water require interconnected and intelligent solutions.

Agriculture demands alone account for some 70 percent of water usage. Adding to the pressure, more than 90 percent of disasters are water-related, with climate change hitting hardest through water. Climate change means that numerous places will either have no water, erratic access to water, or far too much water. As other countries, Belgium, is confronted with both flooding's and water scarcity. Two years ago, extreme rain fall hit the Walloon region of Belgium very badly, with a

heavy human toll. At the same time, drought is a problem for our industry and agriculture sector, especially in the densely populated region of Flanders.

We need a new approach to water management. Therefore, Belgium launched its “Blue Deal” that will bring a systemic shift in our policymaking by implementing a comprehensive plan with specific actions and investment opportunities.

Wishing to bridge the local and international level, Belgium is keen on sharing its expertise and best practices. Belgium and its different regions remain engaged in sharing innovative solutions for water management problems, and in spreading our knowledge and best practices through financial programs and local capacity building. Belgium will target water-related challenges in the fields of health, agriculture, climate resilience and providing clean water and sanitation systems to local communities, in particular the most vulnerable ones. In addition, Belgium will further contribute to the rollout of global early warning systems and assist communities in ensuring preparedness and rapid response to natural disasters.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A transformation to more sustainable food systems is a priority of the Belgian Development Cooperation. Belgium hereby focuses on ecological, social and economic sustainability; by promoting more sustainable practices such as agro-ecology, prioritizing local value chains and local “territorial” markets, promoting sustainable use of natural resources, including water, and more effective use of ecosystem services is essential in the light of Climate Change.

Strong agricultural, food and water governance and effective global frameworks are key to supporting the transition towards sustainable and resilient food systems and to overcome water challenges in agriculture. Belgium welcomes the commitment of FAO in this regard, as a key player in sustainable water management, to look for ways to produce more food with less water while protecting the environment and building resilience in populations possibly affected by floods and droughts. We need to reinforce the right to water as a fundamental human right and reduce the pressures on the hydrological system, and to develop new, alternative food systems to reduce the unsustainable use of water in food production and agriculture.

Belgium was actively engaged in the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York and is committed to its Water Action Agenda. The challenges the world is facing, underscores how important multilateral cooperation is as a means to find solutions. We therefore need a strong FAO, implementing the new fit-for-purpose FAO Strategy on Climate Change, in order to succeed in the fight against hunger, in transforming food systems to be far more sustainable and in overcoming water challenges in agriculture.

To conclude, Belgium wants to congratulate Director-General Qu Dongyu for his reelection. FAO is a longstanding and important partner for Belgium. There are many areas where Belgium’s and FAO’s development visions of its strategic framework align. For many years, Belgium has chosen the modalities that allow FAO to work in the most efficient way possible: multi-year commitment in the form of unrestricted voluntary contributions through the Flexible Voluntary Fund (FVC) and contributions to the FAO Special Fund for Emergency Activities (SFERA), to enable FAO to respond with enormous flexibility and speed to humanitarian crises.

Finally, let me affirm Belgium's commitment to FAO’s work and our willingness to cooperate actively for an increasingly sustainable future. I wish everyone the best for this Conference.

Thank you.

**Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus)**

First of all Madame Chair, I would like to thank you very much for giving me the floor and also we would like to express our congratulations to the new Director-General.

Ladies and gentlemen, your excellencies, friends, the statistics that we have right now from United Nations institutions shows us that the situation as far as world hunger is getting worse. There is no optimism on the horizon today as more than any other time the moment has come to look at all of the

factors which cause hunger and we have to find an effective road in order to resolve this particular situation.

100 percent of the time spent in FAO are to be dedicated to this particular subject, but in reality over a year FAO has presented a sickness, the sickness of politicization, the illness of the ambitions of certain groups of countries, the sickness of certain groups in order to achieve world domination. The Secretariat is doing everything possible to remain neutral but unfortunately that has not been the case, the Council, the various committees are trying to do their best to form policies in order to fight hunger, they are to spend more time looking on that particular issue rather than on accusing different countries of different activities.

Discussions are to be focused on hunger and not on strife or conflicts. I would like to say to you representatives two thirds of the Members here of the COAG and of the FAO are not supporting the particular views that are being pushed by small groups of countries. Please follow the policies of the Security Council as a General Assembly of the UN, then the FAO can be the FAO. This is what we are to focus on.

You are to also be strong enough and courageous enough to admit your errors. There is no reason in creating this particular confusion, this particular uncertainty with these sanctions and with these accusations and the FAO is not the place for those things to be expressed anyway. What we have to do is focus on how we minimalize and get rid of hunger. We have to look at the issues of export, of fertilizers, fertilizers which produce that yield which helps us to fight hunger.

Billions of people are suffering from hunger and that hunger is not in those countries which are exercising these accusations and these accusations have nothing to do with fighting hunger. So, I would like to invite all to be responsible to conduct dialogue, to find resolutions to the problems, resolutions to issues are not those which might be comfortable, they may involve asking questions of oneself, and Belarus as a country which produces important fertilizers for the world is ready to participate in this discussion in a discussion which aimed to truly combatting hunger and providing food security. Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen.

**Ms Mercedes SOMBILLA (Philippines)**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, good afternoon to everyone. The Philippines thanks the food and agriculture organization for the Conference document *C 2023/2* on the State of Food and Agriculture integrated water resources management. We note the recommendations it puts forward to overcome the water challenges in agriculture in its promoting integrated water risk management for resilient agrifood systems to speed up rural economic development.

The Philippines indeed recognizes the importance of water in development and in this regard the need to manage efficiently the precious resource in an integrated manner, successfully address current and emerging complex challenges which include water availability innovations, water quality, and pollution and others. The Philippines perhaps and other countries in our horizon is currently experiencing an El Niño event that is expected to intensify towards the end of the year as informed by our weather office. As an initial response to this climate event the country is embarking cloud city operations to improve water levels irrigation and other water bounding dams, a reverse in ground water deposits especially in production areas critical watersheds and reservoirs.

Long term mitigating measures to respond to the numerous water issues are similarly being put in place by the country nonetheless. This includes rehabilitation, and modernization of irrigation facilities and dams, to enhance water efficiency, water efficient delivery, and reduce water wastage, construction of flood control facilities in sea wall in areas that easily get flooded, water impounding facilities in strategic areas to harvest excess water among others.

In the light of this intensifying climate change phenomenon the Philippines is now investing in climate resilient water infrastructures such as solar power irrigation systems, promoting domestic water and recycling schemes at house hold and community levels to promote water conservation and advocating nature based solutions like reforestation, expansion of areas, use of organic or bio fertilizer, as well as adaption of water saving and climate resilient agricultural practices in technologies such as adjustment of planting calendars, use of alternative wetting and drying better crop nutrient management.

To harmonize and efficiently implement water related measures of various Government offices in our country the President of the Philippines and the concurrent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, His Excellency Ferdinand Marcos Jr., signed and accepted in order number 22 last April 27, 2023 creating the Water Resources Management Office within the department of environment and natural resources. The office will likewise act as regulatory body to safeguard this precious resource, manage its use efficiently and ensure its efficient availability for all economic sectors.

Furthermore, last May 26, 2023, the country signed the record of discussions with the Korea National Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to implement a capacity building project to ensure that we have the human resources, skilled and capable to properly execute integrated water resources management that would contribute to the achievement of more sustainable development.

By working together and supporting each other to achieve the needed integrated management and efficient use of water resources under the able guidance and leadership of the food and agriculture organization, is a major step towards achieving the shared objective of a resilient agrifood system. A resilient agrifood system can definitely facilitate a recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the animal disease outbreaks and other crisis which are still looming in our needs.

Finally, the achievement of a resilient agrifood system and successfully overcoming all this crisis will need all of us to meet the targets we committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In view of this I reiterate once again the Philippines' unwavering offers support in the implementation of measures that will improve water resource management to achieve a prosperous food and agriculture and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. I call on our colleague Member countries to do the same. The time is ticking, we should act now and act fast. Thank you and a pleasant day once again to everyone.

## **PRÉSIDENT**

Mesdames et messieurs les Ministres, mesdames et messieurs les Délégués, je vous remercie infiniment. La réunion d'aujourd'hui touche à sa fin. Veuillez noter que la deuxième table ronde sur la gestion intégrée des risques d'inondations aura lieu demain matin à 9 h 30 dans la salle plénière. Elle sera animée par Madame Mariana Semedo, Directrice Générale Adjointe, qui ouvrira et lèvera la séance. Nous reprendrons les travaux sur le point X lors de la séance de l'après-midi, qui commencera à 14 h 00 heures précise.

### ***Continues in English***

I thank Mr Mehboob from Pakistan who will chair the Sessions tomorrow starting at 14:00 hours. I wish him and the Members the best for tomorrow.

### ***Poursuit en français***

Je vous informe que la réception va bientôt commencer sur le parc de la FAO. Végétothèques du monde, cela débutera très bientôt, au dernier étage sur la terrasse, ici, à la FAO. Je vous souhaite à tous et toutes. Alors, je vais vous demander de retenir votre souffle quelques instants, on a une prise de parole qui est demandée, juste avant de conclure.

### **Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)**

I just want to help the interpreters since I will be using certain names and I do not want those people that will be mentioned be misinterpreted or misunderstood. FAO and our Conference is attended by the people who are dealing with agriculture and of course they are not very much familiar with politics.

We have Chief-Scientist and hopefully he is not a chief politician here in this room. So for those of you who want to know a bit of politics just want to remind you that almost 10 years ago in 2014 the Minsk agreement was signed by the former President of France Hollande, former Chancellor Merkel, former President of Ukraine Porošenko and the President of the Russian Federation Putin. The aim of those agreements was to establish peace in Ukraine and later those agreements were proved by the Council Resolution unanimously. So, it became part of the international law.

Last year there were confessions from the persons I mentioned: Mr Hollande, Madam Merkel, and President Porošenko who stated that the only reason for those agreements was to save time in order to get weapons for the Ukraine and that was done. Unfortunately those agreements did not stay to the situation and if those agreements were to be fulfilled we would have an absolutely different situation on the ground. Some of the delegations mentioned disruption of the dam.

Unfortunately the very same delegates for several months did not notice that this dam was shut by the Ukrainian forces with the use of high mast systems. This is artillery and rocket system which is produced in the United States of America and is widely used in Afghanistan in Syria, in Iraq and in other places. So, they use these systems, guided ammunitions, those of you who are not familiar with military issues but you must not be necessary military expert to understand that guided ammunitions can only be guided by satellites. So then you understand who is controlling those ammunitions.

As for the destruction of the Kakhovka dam indeed a lot of people are suffering right now because of the flood, artificial flood, and this flood already caused a lot of deaths and 2000 households including all their agricultural products and their stocks have been washed into the black sea.

For you the dam is just a name of the dam and of course it was Russian's who destroyed it, well actually the dam was constructed by a chief architect of this dam, and for more than 20 years he was Minister of Energy of the Soviet Union. He lived close to my apartment and he is buried in Moscow 5km from my apartment where I am leaving now. So, there was a plea from one delegate I presume it was Ireland that they want to reconstruct and to help rebuild the dam. Yes we will rebuild the dam and hopefully it will once again bear the name of the one who built it. Thank you.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

I understand it was your right to reply. If there are no other comments. This will bring us to the end of this Session.

*The meeting rose at 19:27 hours*

*La séance est levée à 19 h 27*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 19.27*



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Organisation des Nations  
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Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>SIXTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>SEXTA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>4 July 2023</b></p>

The Sixth Meeting was opened at 09:36 hours  
by Ms Maria Helena Semedo

La sixième séance est ouverte à 09 h 36  
de Mme. Maria Helena Semedo

Se abre la sexta reunión a las 09.36  
de la Sra. Maria Helena Semedo

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**Roundtable: Integrated Flood Risk Management**  
**Table ronde: La gestion intégrée du risque d'inondation**  
**Mesa redonda: Gestión integrada del riesgo de inundaciones**

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Good afternoon, good evening to all the Excellencies, Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Ambassadors, distinguished delegates here in the room, all of you connected to join us in this Roundtable on Integrated Flood Risk Management, which I have the honour to moderate.

I am Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General of FAO.

Flooding is one of the most frequent and catastrophic climate related disasters. Those living in vulnerable situations are often at the greatest risks, especially the rural poor. But if managed well, floods can provide solutions to tackle multiclimatic related challenges.

Today's high-level roundtable, to be opened by the Director-General, will focus as I said, on integrated flood risk management for resilient agrifood systems and rural development. We will hear from the experience of different countries in managing floods and flood risk, and using flood water for flood adaptive economics, including aquaculture to achieve food security.

We will have a technical presentation on integrated flood risk management, to set the scene, followed by a high-level panel with Ministers, to share their experience. We will then have a Session with representatives from farmers' organizations, youth, women, indigenous peoples, followed by questions and answers, followed by interventions from the floor.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, without further ado, it is my pleasure to invite FAO Director-General Dr QU Dongyu to provide his opening remarks.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,

As you see, I am full of energy. I give you a wakeup call. I know some of you have still not completely woken up after several days of long meetings. Maybe a lot of gatherings here, I know, many social gatherings. It is good, it is your big family.

I welcome you to this high-level Roundtable on Integrated Flood Risk Management. Water is at the core of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs and it is the theme of our Conference.

If you read my CV carefully, I worked in the largest dam in the world for two years, the Three Gorges Dam, as a Deputy Director-General for Human Resources. It was 32 000 staff at that time in 2005-2006, and USD 440 billion investment to control floods around the Yangtze River. That is what is called a century project started as technical assistant from American Express about 150 years ago. So we implemented that masterpiece project in 1992. And then I had the fortune to finish that as the last piece of the work, and since 2008 have you heard of any floods from the Yangtze River in China? No. No big flood at all.

Therefore, sometimes for centuries, years and years, people in the developing countries consider flood as a real disaster. But how to change it? I said yesterday or the day before yesterday, crisis, you only have one word in English but we have two words in Chinese.

That is why this year we start with water scarcity because it is a traditional topic. But actually water scarcity is a slow dying, in fact. It will take a long time to have it completely destroyed. But a flood is in one second a destroying disaster. Therefore, you need real investment to build resilience. That is why smart is not enough. You can say someone is smart or someone is not smart, but we need more resilience. If you do not have investment, no matter how smart you are, you are not resilient. I am not smart, but I train every day, five kilometres, and then I am resilient. I know that for years ago we talked about smart, and the World Bank talked about smart, they already divide, if someone do not follow them, they are not smart. No. We are all smart unless we do it on purpose. If you have invested in the infrastructures and flooding. We are all smart, no matter where you are from.

Turn floods to be the resources – that is our future. That is not only for the individual Members, but also for the global water cycle. You will remember the McDougall Lecture, the Senior Minister said you cannot stop the water cycle. There are no borders. No matter Europe, no matter in Sub-Sahara or Middle East. Some years ago in the Middle East they had snow. That is the global water cycle.

We need investments to maintain flood as a water resource. Please remember this. Yesterday we discussed water scarcity and drought. I said we need technical solutions from the drought varieties, to drought irrigation equipment systems. In that, we have long experience. But the flooding control and turning to the resources, to be honest, it started about 2 000 years ago in my hometown.

Qing Dynasty built a 灵渠 (Ling Cannel) and then the Three Gorges Dam and Dujiangyan in Sichuan about 1 000 years. In modern times, in America President Mr Herbert Hoover built the Hoover Dam around the Colorado River. Then, of course, Itaipu in Brazil. It is not to control flood, it is to generate electricity. I have been to all these places.

We should holistically design in your region around the river and learn how to use the resources from upstream to downstream. Of course, some rivers cross countries, you need to politically negotiate. Let us please avoid any political discussions here. You can go and talk with the Secretary-General. We are only talking about how to use water for agriculture, for the environment, for food. That is our topic. Many Members sometimes politicize and talk about water ownership across the border, but that is a dispute across the street, across the territory – it is not our mandate in FAO.

Flood is one of the most frequent widespread catastrophic disasters. You know that Africa, Asia and recently in Pakistan, last year it was a real disaster, especially around rivers, there are so many people and in one night or one second, as I said, all the lives and the properties are lost.

Therefore, we need first investment in infrastructure. We have to convince. That is why I said again, we want to establish a water dialogue, because it keeps the political commitment from your leaders. One day I will invite some leaders to come from different regions, from the developed and the developing countries. How do you holistically design flooding control systems in your country, not only for agriculture, for urbanization, for industrialization and for the environment. The water should be used for these three aspects, not as only to serve the economic and social environment. It should be urbanization, industrialization and, of course, the environment.

And what is the position for FAO? I said professional, and flood. You see, first imagination: from the point of view of the Minister of Agriculture and Environment, we should encourage the country to invest in a lot of small ponds, small reservoirs. You do not need very big money to invest in a big dam like China or Brazil or America did. But you can encourage. That is why I remember in 1960, in my hometown there are so many small ponds. They were built in 1958. They had a great leap movement. Five years later, I was born and five years later I remember, oh, there were so many small ponds and reservoirs that were dug by the village people, the farmers. So that is one.

Second, mid-term along the rivers, you need government investment. And then across the territory you need coordination among the Members.

Therefore, there are three levels, and for Ministers of Agriculture at least you can encourage the local government to build more small, and you coordinate your relevant ministers to build the middle level reservoir, and then you suggest your leaders to negotiate with other leaders how to build big ones around the river. Near a river, any big river. That is not your job. You should ask your leaders to take a leading role.

Fortunately, now I also have a lot of experience and also you need a technical assistance, FAO is willing to. And also the Secretary-General, Mr Antonio Guterres, he was a Prime Minister in Portugal. He himself coordinated the distribution among Portugal and Spain. He told me several times. Therefore, if we need political support we can suggest the Secretary-General to have a special negotiation or consultation around the rivers.

Second, whether small or big or middle reservoir or ponds, when you build for irrigation – yes – but in my opinion it is more important to develop aquaculture. That is why you can learn from my

experience, I visited Zimbabwe and they have a national programme to encourage the villages to develop aquaculture with small ponds, small reservoirs.

That is what we can do, not only for irrigation but for aquaculture – local fish production.

The third purpose, we can grow aquatic vegetables. There are so many vegetables that you can grow in small ponds – it is not only for irrigation.

Fourth, we can go for agro tourism, because you can plant trees, flowers in your backyard, and then with a small pond you can go fishing, have a fishing contest, or picnic or agro tourism gatherings.

Many Ministers of Agriculture only consider water as water, water is only for irrigation. In my opinion, it is too narrow-minded, we should do it systematically and collectively, especially around the city, in peri-urban areas – there are so many small rivers, small ponds. You can develop each pond, develop several species of fish and then you can go fishing, go picnic and you can charge them for two times.

When I was in China in 1997 in Beijing, I suggested to build consensus on developing agro tourism and I said “instead of *encouraging local farmers to go grow one hectare of wheat, better to support them to develop 100 sq meters of pond to go and fish, develop aquaculture.*” Citizens from the city they come over for the weekend for two nights and then they can make USD 1 000 and that equals 1 hectare of wheat. So there is a peri-urban agriculture, which is Green Cities Initiative. That is what we should do, not only talk about the concept of the green economy, green development, green, green – where does green money come from? That is what I suggest.

Last but not least, as FAO we are also willing to assist you with enabling policy, how to establish a water pricing system. Water should matter, it should be valued. Water is not God’s gift, because if it was God’s gift, why there is so much water in some areas and not in others. God treats us equally.

Water should be priced. That price system should be established, especially for the water scarcity and even for the water flood areas. You let other people pay for how to handle and harness the flooding. Flooding should be paid by the other end users, not only government, but all the society who benefit from that project.

We established a special fund for Three Gorges Dam, for each kilowatt we collected 4 cents for the special fund for a sustainable management of the dam. Of course, now the price of electricity is much higher than at that time; at that time it was only CNY 0.156 per kilowatt. Now it is 0.39 or 0.45. It increased already three times, but we established as a special fund.

You need many price systems to handle the flooding project from big to small, and also how to make sure water is really valued and has a real cost, and real benefit.

Thank you very much.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you Director-General for your insightful remarks, for sharing your experience and showing that the flood effect can be considered in a positive way if they are used properly. The need to increase resilience and the need to have investment is what is important, and I think it will come up from the discussions from this panel that we have with us. Thank you so much Director-General for being with us and for sharing with us your experience and recommendations.

Now we will be moving to the technical presentation and I would like to give the floor to my colleague, Mr Li Lifeng who is the Director of FAO Land and Water Division and he will give a technical presentation.

**Mr Li LIFENG (Director of Land and Water Division)**

I am very honoured to present to you our Integrated Flood Risk Management to support the deliberation of the panel during this roundtable.

When we think of floods pictures, like those often come to our mind. The top left, the recent flood that happened in Northern Italy, took the life of 40 people. Top right, the devastating flood in Pakistan last

year, took the lives of more than 1 700 people. Bottom left, the flood in the West and Central Africa in August last year forced the displacement of over 125 000 people from their homes and across 17 countries. Bottom right, the flood in the Northern East State of Brazil in May last year, also caused over 100 deaths.

Flood disaster is one of the most frequent widespread and catastrophic hazards with global flood loss around USD 20 billion in 2021. Behind this economic loss lies a human story, a human story that is for example that is estimated 1.8 billion people are exposed to significant flood hazard. Those who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods are often the worst affected, with their livelihoods, food security and nutrition at serious risk. The 2022 Pakistan flood wiped out 1.7 million hectares of arable land, agricultural land, and killed over 800 000 heads of livestock. It affected 33 million people, caused economic loss and damage that is more than USD 30 billion.

Despite these tragic numbers, there are emerging paradigm shifts, as mentioned by our Director-General; paradigm shifts from flood responses and direct responses to floods.

There is a shift from the flood response to flood risk management, supported by the science of data, forecasting and engineering. A shift in recognizing flooding as an integral part of the natural rhythm of healthy rivers and the water cycle. It is crucial for freshwater biodiversity and multifish species that account for about 20 percent of global fish catching.

A shift from concrete or green infrastructure to green and blue infrastructure. Mentioned by the Director-General, he shared with us a number of examples from the Three Gorges dam to Itaipu, to others, and also mentioned by the Dutch Minister, Her Excellency, regarding the data works; those are all the new concrete green infrastructures.

Netherlands also invented and implemented a Room for the River approach which was then replicated in other European countries such as in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and also in China. The Room for the River approach further evolved into Room for Lakes, which was also implemented in the Central Yangtze - that I personally was involved with many years ago.

It is also a shift from the channelling and discharging flood water quickly to the downstream areas to the oceans, to utilize flood water, and to address the water scarcity in dry seasons and also develop a flood adaptive and flood resilient economies as deliberated by our Director-General.

Last but not least, a shift towards a more strategic and systematic approach which brings together all the actions to manage and reduce exposure, reduce vulnerability, build coping capacity, reduce flood impact and manage flood risks through better governance.

Floods and flood risks in agriculture in rural areas have some specific characteristics that deserve our close attention so as to develop effective solutions. Added to multi-natural disasters, rural areas are disproportionately affected by floods. In many developed countries rural flood risks is significant due to the combination of exposure, frequency, but also the low capacity to coping with flood, and also the vulnerability of their livelihood and agrifood systems.

Rural areas often appear a weak direct economic case due to the low concentration of population or asset, or if flood risks are assumed or perceived in the rural areas too difficult to manage due to the vast expansion of the flood impacts in the rural areas. However, rural communities including the indigenous peoples have often learnt to live with flood, recognizing the importance of the functioning floodplains and the health of ecosystems upon which many rely.

Indigenous peoples' knowledge, basic skill planning and the local actions are all important dimensions to flood risk management.

Recognizing the devastating impacts of flood on agriculture and rural communities, and the potential benefit of managing flood water for aquaculture, agriculture and rural development, instructed by our Director-General, the Land Water Division in collaboration with the Office of Emergency and Resilience, are producing a technical Report on integrated flood risk management for resilient agrifood systems and rural development.

While recognizing that no solution exists, the Report proposed eight recommendations that are included in the Conference Document *The State of Food and Agriculture: Integrated Water Resources Management (C 2023/2)*. Upon your feedback during the Conference, we will finalize this Report and plan to officially launch it at the Second Dialogue in Early October.

Let me quickly walk you through the eight recommendations.

- 1) Accept that absolute protection is not possible. So, they need to plan for accidents. By doing so, focus is placed on building resilience into all aspects of the planning process from the development choices, to agriculture, crop and livestock choices, and promotes working with communities to raise awareness and encourage investment in forecasting and early warning systems.
- 2) Assess the resilience of agrifood systems to flood risks at national and global levels, so as to understand agriculture flood risks, how they are distributed and how they may change. This is an important step towards developing the base from which to respond.
- 3) Work with nature as part of a whole system and portfolio-based response. This approach supports the healthy and diverse ecosystems such as forests, pastures, urban land floodplain and wetlands, which are essential to productive and resilient agriculture and rural livelihood.
- 4) Understand and communicate present day risks and how they may change in the future. A proper understanding of the flood hazard, and vulnerability, is the starting point of any planning process. Turning all kinds of knowledge and information into simplified messages for rural communities and using modern communication tools to reach out to them, are crucial in managing flood risks and disasters.
- 5) Agriculture and rural communication need to be closely involved in planning, designing, implementing and monitoring flood management actions. Promotion of socially just outcomes and inclusive decision making processes, particularly the inclusive of the rural smallholder farmers, women and the indigenous people when needed, play a substantial role in flood management and resilience building in many countries.
- 6) Connect risk governance mechanisms at all levels and ensure horizontal and vertical integration and allow it to maximize co-benefits and minimize risks. Flood management does not take place in isolation of any other sustainable development goals. Agriculture, land and water management policies and plans and the finances, must include a flood risk management component.
- 7) Increasing finance to scale up resilient interventions in agriculture and rural areas, as our Director-General just mentioned. Flood risk assessment and early warning in agriculture and ecosystem-based agriculture solutions, in flood risk and disaster management, pose the disaster recovery and resilience building in agriculture in the rural and should all be an integral part of the national and international Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies and financing plans.
- 8) Adapt to new contexts and optimize the use of flood water as a resource for flood adaptive, flood resilient economies, or simply use that flood water in dry seasons to address water scarcity challenges.

It is impossible for a person to step into the same river twice. Such wisdom reminds us that rivers are constantly changing, and so are the flood risks. Following the philosophy of paradigm shift in flood risk management and of working with nature approach, learning from the existing practice from Members, flood water could be smartly stored and used for flood adapted, resilient economies or simply used in the dry seasons.

That is all I want to present to you now and hope this rekindles your invaluable insights, thus contributing to the discussion and to the debate at this round table.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you very much Mr Li Lifeng for this presentation and calling for a paradigm shift from flood response to flood management, from green to blue and green infrastructure, shift to utilization of flood water, but also the need and importance of resilience and investment and involvement of communities in planning, designing, implementing, and monitoring flood risk management. I think with this setting the scene, we are moving now to our high-level panel, I would like to present them.

We have Her Excellency, Angela Didiza, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development from South Africa; The Honourable Anxious Masuka, Minister for Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development of Zimbabwe; His Excellency Salem Abdullah Al-Socatri, Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Fisheries of Yemen; The Honourable Christiaan Alfredo Barrantes Bravo, Vice-Minister Development of Family Farming and Agrarian Infrastructure and Irrigation of Peru; Ms Jana Huasokayo, Permanent Secretary Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland; and we have Dr Vanida Khunmidpetch, Director of Bureau Foreign Agriculture Affairs, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperation of Thailand; and to conclude, Mrs Magda Kopczynska, Deputy Director-General Agriculture and Rural Development of European Commission.

We will have two rounds of questions with the panellists, you will have four minutes to respond, to share your national perspective on integrated flood management, as well as to provide solutions to flood risk management and utilization of flood water.

I will start with the first question: how do you deal with flood prevention, control and post-flood recovery in your country? Do you have a specific strategy or plan or coordination mechanism? To share with us your personal and country experience and I will invite Her Excellency, Angela Didiza, the Minister of Agriculture from South Africa, to start.

#### **Her Excellency Angela Thoko DIDIZA (South Africa)**

I think first and foremost what is important is to acknowledge that dealing with floods is not the first time; I think what we are facing now is the intensity as well as the recurrence because of climate change, that we are seeing more of floods and droughts, sometimes in each country happening simultaneous in different provinces, and I think that is what we are dealing with.

And in that instance, one of the things that we have found in South Africa being important, is civic education. It is policy development so that you have got an integrated policy management in terms of disasters, not only floods but also droughts.

Secondly is the regulatory framework that also guides different spheres of government on how to respond, and I would say the other is coordination and institutional management between countries, and lastly early warning systems.

I am sure all of us here have got weather reports that is given on a daily basis either on radio or television focusing on what the weather is, and not every member of the community actually pays attention to that. But once you educate people about the importance of actually monitoring some of this information, it enables them to respond quicker. But also, as government, having a dedicated and focused early warning system that warns people in time so that certain responses can be made in the manner that it can save more people from the impacts of floods or even droughts.

But with regards to integrated flood management, what have we done? We had in 2010 one of the worst inclement weather which caused flooding in a number of provinces in our country and, working with our engineering experts, it became clear that in certain instances we needed to intervene as government by building flood walls so that we can actually not only save but also utilize that water for irrigation in the farming communities – particularly in the Western Cape as well as in the Northern Cape.

In the Northern Cape, we actually had to build the flood walls along the Orange River, which has now assisted more communities to utilize that water for irrigation, even during drought times; this is one of the resources we use to ensure that we can actually build for the banks, for your livestock farmers in particular.

In the Western Cape, we have actually built not only the flood dams but also built the Clanwilliams Dam to actually capture that flood water instead of allowing it to go to sea, which now assists both in terms of water consumption as well as irrigation for agriculture.

We also have appreciated the need for addressing our storm water infrastructure, particularly in the cities, such that that water can actually be re-used and rehabilitated for use in the communities. But I must say that these experiences are not all good, we have also learned, particularly through bad experience in the Kwazulu Natal province (KZN), when we were affected by floods last year.

Appreciating that in terms of our urban planning and town planning we need to actually ensure that we do not place people or allow people to place themselves – because sometimes it is not because government will place people in floodlines, but sometimes people will actually put their own infrastructure inside these areas, and therefore important to enable people to understand not only the current but also the historical; because one thing we found around KZN and Durban in particular, was that for over 100 years, in the same area where the floods occur, this is where they have happened 100 years ago, and therefore that knowledge capability is also important to ensure urban planning and rural planning in the future, so that people avoid settling or even governments avoid putting housing facilities in areas where you have had floods in the past.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

I think it was clear the importance of education, policy, regulatory frameworks, but also the importance of early warning and rural and urban planning. Now you refer to early warning. I would like to move now to His Excellency Salem Abdullah Al-Socatri, Minister for Yemen.

Minister, I was reading today from FAO that Yemen must be having floods in the next weeks. Share with us your perspective, and what you are doing to mitigate the effects and risk of flooding.

**His Excellency Salem Abdullah Eissa Salem AL-SOCATRI (Yemen) (Original language Arabic)**

I would like to say that Yemen has limited water resources, and water fall is very variable – water fall levels and precipitation levels – because of the different heights from sea level. We have some areas that are 3 700 metres above sea level, and the annual temperatures vary between 15 degrees Centigrade, and mountainous areas reaching 30 degrees in other areas, and in summer temperatures might reach 40 degrees centigrade – even more than that if we look at the desert plateau areas.

Now rainfall in Yemen is estimated to 67.2 cubic meters annually, distributed accordingly, 100 mm per year of rainfall – over 72.8 percent; 100 to 300 mm annually – over 16.8 percent; more than 300 mm per year fall over a very small area which is estimated around 10.45 percent of the overall area of the country.

Now the renewable water resources annually are estimated to 5.2 cubic meters where groundwater and surface water provide 1 billion cubic meters and 5.1 billion cubic metres, and the water used in 2019 is estimated to 5.1 billion cubic meters. So the deficit is around 2.6 billion cubic meters of water annually.

Now as to flood and hurricanes, and if you look at the past years, unfortunately natural disasters increased where we witnessed more floods and hurricanes that were repetitive and that led to huge losses in infrastructure as well as land and marine biodiversity as well as to more landslides and losses in lives.

And the most important hurricanes that Yemen suffered from in the past years, namely 2016 onwards – Shaheen, Shabila hurricanes, micron hurricane Meg, the hurricane that led to great disasters in agricultural and fisheries sectors, namely in the Eastern parts of the country. And the Socotra archipelago as well as Yemen suffered from severe microclimates as well as floods in 2008, that led to landslides and valleys where rainfall continued for 30 hours non-stop, and of course the disasters were economic and human as well as environmental, and everyone all over the world witnessed what we suffered from in Yemen.

This led to the highest rainfall levels ever, and last year in 2022 during August and September last year, at least 90 people were killed because of those natural disasters, amongst them women and children, as well as many other mountainous areas that were negatively impacted.

In one area, 13 individuals died in August 2022 because of thunder bolts, as well as 36 205 families that were negatively impacted, mostly internally displaced peoples (IDPs), or persons from 85 districts in 16 governorates, out of 23 governorates in Yemen. 16 governorates were negatively impacted. So those families who were internally displaced people, fled from wars and civil strife, and of course those people came from and into the different governorates of Hudaydah, Al Beda, Marib, Sana, as well as other districts from other governorates that witnessed conflict.

And of course, there was a great increase in the risk of epidemics and probability of spreading of things like cholera and malaria and diphtheria, and of course those three epidemics are very common after rainfall.

There was an increase as well in the risk of land mines that were left behind by the Houthi Militias, as well as the risk of explosion of unexploded ammunition and the different explosives that were left behind due to the civil war because the flood waters would lead to land slides and thus those explosives and ammunition would appear and would be transported from one place to another and this is another risk that Yemen faces and suffers from – which is a double suffering due to the crisis, the armed conflict as well as the floods – and this also made worse the current suffering of the Yemen people where currently there are 17 million Yemenis who suffer from food insecurity, in addition to 2.2 million women and lactating as well as pregnant women.

As for the different methods used in order to minimize the risk of floods.. So, what we have to do is to have early warning systems and we usually help the population through mobile calls and mobile messages. But the difficulties we face is the weakness of climate monitoring as well as the limited availability of early warning systems, the lack of awareness with regards to the risks of flood, as well as the economic situation of the country where we are suffering from economic problems due to all those multiple crises that are interconnected, whether natural or others.

And what we are suggesting is to improve our institutional capacities with regard to early warning systems as well as building data bases and statistical bases on the possibility of recurrence of such natural disasters as well as building more dams, more water breakers as well as continuous maintenance and making sure that we plan the floodways and notifying all those concerned, as well as improving the research that will help in the increase of productivity and making sure that there is awareness raising at the coastal level targeting farmers and agricultural sector because our country includes more than 2 500 square kilometres of arable land.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

It was important to listen from your experience and again, referring the need to have improved early warning, to have institutional capacity in order to be better prepared and better planning, and adding another important issue that has not been referred to, the diseases coming after a flood – you mentioned malaria, and other diseases, cholera, and it is important to take it into consideration.

I would love to listen, to give you the time you need, but unfortunately we need to close at 12:00 hours. I will be requesting your indulgence to stay on the four minutes to have the opportunity for all the Ministers to speak. Now I am going to the Minister Masuka from Zimbabwe.

**His Excellency Mr Anxious Jongwe MASUKA (Zimbabwe)**

In Zimbabwe we have a policy that is integrated water resources management and indeed recently we have created a Cabinet Committee looking at dysfunctional settlements because of the increase in the number of flooding in areas and urban areas where people have built in floodways.

But we do have floods coming from two principal sources: first from rivers in the lower lying areas of the country, and secondly, coming from cyclonic activity, especially associated with the Indian ocean and our cyclone season starts from about the end of January through to end of March. The most recent and most devastating one was what we call Cyclone Helena in 2019, it displaced 270 000 people and some 334 people died, livestock and infrastructure estimated at about USD 250 million was affected.



For the response at the regulatory or legislative level, we have a very strong Water Act with the Zimbabwe National Water Authority Act, because we have an agency that administers the water regime. We also have a disaster response institution in the Civil Protection Unit, and in that Civil Protection Unit we have disaster risk reduction, disaster risk management strategies, but more recently because of the importance of highlighting to the communities the weather forecasts, Zimbabwe has just launched satellite, ZimSat1 which started to beam yesterday in sending data related to climate, and we hope that this will complement current efforts for ensuring that we timely release information to communities.

And our water management system, this is decentralized and devolved to communities through Catchment Councils, the major rivers are constituted in Catchment Councils, and they manage their affairs at the local level. And should there be a warning through radio, through schools that there is going to be flooding then that is activated by the Civil Protection Unit using a whole government approach and people are notified accordingly. And once that disaster has passed, the relief efforts are in place, rescue efforts are in place and what we have tended to see is that we activate all the apparatus of government including the WASH sector because the health is also a major issue once we have flooding that has occurred – livestock is lost, crops lost, infrastructure, bridges and so forth.

In terms of the control aspects, Zimbabwe is perhaps having more dams than many other countries in Africa, fortunately we have 10 000 dams and we are building many more. Currently we have 12 major dams under construction, using our own resources, and these are estimated to cost USD 2.1 billion. They are at various stages of completion, and these are for flood management.

We also do ecosystem restoration, ecosystem management, natural resources management, awareness with communities, so that we can also limit, and special planning comes in so that people do not settle where they ought not to settle, but that water is then used for irrigation purposes. We aim to use for 350 000 hectares currently, we have 204 000 hectares of irrigation developed and, as the Director-General mentioned, fisheries is becoming a very important component of our development and we anticipate that 35 000 villages will each have some fishponds, and we are now in the process of stocking 1 200 dams.

So there is quite a lot we are doing in terms of floods, the mitigation, adaptation and everything connected with that.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you very much Minister, you refer to the importance of technology, how you are using satellite to share data, and to better inform relaying the information to the communities in order to be better prepared and also the investment you have in terms of 10 000 dams already, and other plans.

Now I am pleased to invite the Honourable Vice-Minister from Peru, to share the experience of Peru.

**Su Excelencia Christian Alfredo BARRANTES BRAVO (Perú)**

El Perú por su ubicación geográfica se encuentra permanentemente en riesgo frente al fenómeno de El Niño, por el cual el norte del país ha sufrido severas inundaciones provocadas por los desbordes de ríos, movimientos de masas, principalmente en la costa. Los procesos más significativos se han presentado en 1983, 1997, 2017 y, últimamente, en 2023.

Solo para tomar algunos datos, las pérdidas económicas en 1983 sumaron más de 3 200 millones USD y, más recientemente, entre marzo y mayo de este año las pérdidas han sido superiores a los 345 millones USD. Las inundaciones han provocado pérdidas de vidas humanas, la afectación total o parcial de cultivos, el incremento de los precios por el corte de las carreteras y, posteriormente, enfermedades en la población humana, plagas en los cultivos y enfermedades en los animales.

La respuesta del gobierno luego de los eventos de 2017 fue la formulación de proyectos de solución integrales para cada una de las cuencas afectadas. Sin embargo, estos proyectos no han logrado avanzar como se esperaba por problemas de saneamiento físico-legal en las tierras, problemas sociales, incluso culturales, que contrastaron con la firma de contratos, quizás genéricos frente a una realidad bastante compleja.

La presentación del ciclón Yaku este año y el posterior fenómeno de El Niño costero han evidenciado también que el sistema de defensas civiles, el sistema de emergencia, dependiente en primer lugar de los gobiernos locales y regionales se encontraba débil debido al cambio de las autoridades de ese nivel, lo que originó que los reportes de daños no se hicieran correctamente y no permitían la intervención inmediata.

El seguro agrario con el que ya desde hace varios años el Estado peruano asegura a través de la empresa privada más de 2 000 millones de hectáreas de cultivos en el país funcionó en las regiones afectadas, aunque su aplicación también ha generado varios aprendizajes que después comentaré.

Algunas de las medidas realizadas durante la emergencia de las inundaciones en el sector de agricultura han sido las siguientes. En primer lugar, una importante activación de los sistemas de alerta temprana para la evacuación de las familias en riesgo frente al incremento del caudal de los ríos. Esto con el uso de tecnología nos ha permitido también generar y reducir el riesgo de la pérdida de vidas humanas.

La capacitación a los gobiernos locales y regionales sobre el sistema de reporte de daños para la identificación de las necesidades de intervención y el uso del seguro agrario catastrófico; la dotación a las organizaciones de productores de motobombas, herramientas y combustibles para el drenaje de los campos de cultivo y la limpieza de canales y drenes; la intervención de emergencia por parte de las entidades del gobierno nacional asignadas una sola entidad por región en función de su capacidad operativa y logística para actuar en coordinación con los gobiernos regionales; la reprogramación de créditos de los productores con el banco del Estado a fin de evitar la pérdida de la calidad crediticia de los productores y mantenerlos con un buen historial; la generación de un programa de crédito adicional para reiniciar las siembras con un período de gracia adecuado para cada producto y con una tasa bastante menor, 3,5% anual como un bono de retracción de los intereses frente al pago puntual del préstamo.

Estas son algunas de las medidas que se tomaron y que han generado una serie de aprendizajes que más adelante podré detallar.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you Vice-Minister, again bringing back the importance of early warning systems but what your government has done in terms of creating insurance schemes, the credit programmes and also in terms of infrastructure.

Now I am pleased to move to the next speaker, Ms Jana Huasokayo, Permanent Secretary and Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, to share Finland's perspective and strategies.

**Ms Jaana HUSU-KALLIO (Finland)**

I would like to echo what the Honourable Minister from South Africa said, that, it is a package of water management. I think every and each country in the world is attacked by both, drought and floods, and it is a big challenge on national and regional level, there is no doubt about that. And then, when I am turning to the flood risk management, I think that we need solutions on national level that cover, of course, the agrifood system. But it is much bigger an issue covering the whole society at large across all sectors. So, it is and it has to be based on a holistic approach.

But then, at the same time, we need to act locally, and I think that the prevention and the action measures need the local people involved. I have the courage to say that, even on a national level, every river basin is an individual one. We need to have a very highly specific setting for each of the river basins and the solutions need to be both national, regional and local. One of my main messages from Finland is that making the people aware, increasing the transparency about the preparedness and also the actions is of benefit. It always benefits if we have accessibility to high quality information. There is no doubt about that.

Well, in Finland, in line, with the European Union legislation, especially the Floods Directive, we have assessed all areas prone to significant flooding in Finland. So, indeed, we have mapped the flood extent and assets, but also humans at risk. And in these areas involving the agrifood facilities and

business. As a very technologically-oriented country, if you allow me to say so, we have already piloted digital flood risk management plans in my country and indeed this has many advantages.

It saves resources, as we all understand, from regional and local administrations. It, indeed, as I already mentioned, increases citizen participation and it makes the plans more accessible and allows for continuous updating of the information. And we have had pragmatic or practical exercises already coming from the nature itself in the very, very north of Europe, in the Arctic area in western Lapland of Finland where we had this year an extremely quick snow melt and rains resulting at the same time which affected the rivers. So, the levels of water in that area was indeed exceptionally high.

With these plans, with these flood risk management plans, we could indeed minimise the effects, and I am very proud of the work that was done both on national level and local level. So, of course, the plans are not there for digital area or for paper, they are for action, and I am very happy that we could manage the situation very well indeed. Perhaps just briefly to mention that I am happy from the holistic point of view to say that we have a National Flood Centre in Finland for planning, for supervising and for action.

Then my very last point for this one, and I am happy to continue the discussion, is that at the same time when we are managing the water, I am referring what Dr Li Lifeng said in the beginning, work with the nature. At the same time, I am thinking about that the dams may cause serious problems for fish and therefore, for instance, in Finland we have indeed decommissioned many dams to make the migratory fish to run freely and we have technology for that as well.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you, Jaana, for sharing the solutions in your country, in Finland, and also that we need national, regional and local solution, and we need transparency to act with better preparedness and we need a holistic approach.

Now, I am moving to a new country, Thailand, and I have given the floor to Dr Vanida Khumnirdpetch.

**Ms Vanida KHUMNIRDPETCH (Thailand)**

I am very honoured to take part on behalf of Thailand, the Ministry of Agriculture. As you see at the first slide from FAO, the flood caused damage not only to life but also the livelihood of where the flood passed.

In Thailand, we had a big flood in 2011. That was really huge for us and at that time it caused the damage affect more than 13 million people and result more than 680 deaths. The cost, the recovery, the damage, it is more than USD 50 billion. So, 2011 is very damaged and then at that time the flood on the industrial park area, that have affect the cause of some supply chain that we have the industry in that park, especially the electronics. Even in the monsoon area where flood is normal along the river basin because it is seasonal, but out of that seasonal time it caused death.

So, on that we are looking at how we integrate the damage. And then I heard from all Excellencies I think that is what Thailand tried to do, but in 2017 we established the new office, Office of the National Water Resources in 2017, in order to coordinate, because we see that even we have so many department working on issues related to what flood or drought or water resources. It need a coordination. So, we have the Office of National Water Resources, and in 2018 we enact the Water Resources Act. So, in that act, we established a National Committee to coordinate how it works and chaired by the Prime Minister.

So, under that for the Water Resources Act, it is being enforced by three Ministers, Minister of Agriculture Cooperatives, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, and the last one is Minister of Interior, which is the part of the disaster risk management involved in our rural development and all the governance at the local level. So, the act enforced by three Ministers. So, that is how we coordinate. And regarding to the flood, so under those national committee there is a lot of subcommittees, a working group taskforce, but we just have approved, endorsed, the flood management at the end of 2022.

So, in 2023 this year, we have the flood management plan which is about 12 measures to deal with flood. It includes a forecast of the flood risk, rain delay, lowland management, revised regulation for water storage infrastructure, preparedness, rehabilitation of the structure, and telemetry system for ready to use equipment and manpower, safety of the dam levees and our structure, increase the drainage capacity of the waterway. And especially the most important is the Emergency Action Plan.

So those are the 12 measures that endorsed and will be implemented this year. And what we have been doing is we managed as the river basin and through that we have a digital to monitor the water levels. Then this time of the year we may be starting to implement these measures because it is the early rainy season for Thailand right now. So, we will see how that endorsed measures will successfully implemented. So I share this for all the flood management in Thailand.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you so much for referring the need for better coordination, the flood management plan and the Emergency Action Plan that you have to be better prepared. Now, I will move to our last high-level speaker of this panel for the first question, Ms Magda Kopczynska. Now, as you represent the European Union, I will have quite a different question to you. The question is how is the European Union organised in managing floods and put forward integrated water management?

**Ms Magda KOPCZYNSKA (European Commission)**

Let me start by thanking the FAO Secretariat for giving the European Union the opportunity to take part in this panel and listen to experience and lessons learned as expressed by all the distinguished speakers before me. I think what I will be saying will echo a lot what has already been expressed by all the speakers. Also, what Dr Lee Lifeng said earlier when it comes to FAO recommendations on integrated flood management because I think the word integrated is one of the key words that we should be looking into when we are talking about flood management.

Water and the use of water is obviously central for agriculture and we all have seen situations where agriculture has been suffering from either too little or too much water. As we all agreed with the climate change out there, the occurrence of floods will not diminish. We will be experiencing more and more heavy floods in all countries worldwide. So, the question how to combine what is at our disposal to manage floods in a way that we can prevent them as much as possible and then manage the outcomes is indeed a huge challenge.

In the European Union, an average six percent of all agricultural land may be exposed to the so-called 100-year river flood. It does not sound a lot, six percent, but the outcome is actually quite significant for the areas that will be affected. What we have seen recently, we are rather surprised by worse news than by better news in terms of occurrence of natural disasters. We do have a legislative regulatory framework in the European Union that helps us, but first and foremost European Union Member States to manage and work with river basins but also with flood management. Jaana already referred to the Flood Directive that has been in place for 15 years now, putting a number of recommendations and requests to European Union Member States.

When I was listening to speakers from other countries, clearly those recommendations are nothing original because what we have asked European Union Member States is to assess all areas where significant floods can take place, to map the flood extent, and assets and humans that are at risk in those areas, and obviously to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce the flood risk.

We have a six-year round and every six years we ask Member States to update those plans. But what I think is extremely important element of the Flood Directive is that all that information has to be available to the public, and it came very clearly from some of you, from the Ministers, that the involvement of local communities, of making them aware of what can be happening and how the authorities are managing that risk has a high positive impact on offering reassurance and making sure that this unknown and risky threat of a flood is not overwhelming.

In addition to that regulatory framework, another important element that we are also looking into, and, again, I know it is not at the European Union level only, but also at many countries levels, is how to deal with nature-based solutions that can help to either prevent flood or mitigate the outcomes. And,

here again, we come to the question of healthy ecosystems that can reduce disaster risk, how to make sure that we have healthy soils which have retained their sponge-like qualities and can diminish the effects of drought but also absorb more water. How to deal with artificial water storage, irrigation and drainage that can have a role to play, especially at farm level.

Coming back to this concept of an integrated approach, we need to look at both. We need to look at, as Director-General was saying, smart and resilient investments, but we also need to look at how we can make sure that our agricultural practices, that our environmental practices work in a way that if we cannot prevent the flood from happening, we will have an environment that will help us to manage the effects of the flood. Maybe I will have a chance to come back more on the emergency responses in the second part of the panel.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you again for bringing back the importance of having regulatory frameworks, the nature-based solution, the need of a healthy ecosystem, the need of integrated approach and as you refer on smart investment. We finish this first round of questions. I think it came clear from the discussion that we need early warning systems. We need better coordination, better planification. We need solutions at the global, regional and local level, and we need the involvement of the local communities and also transparency when we share the information.

Now, I am going to the second round of question and my second round is I think all of you agreed on what are the challenge, but I would like to hear from you what are two or three best practices and the solutions, and the lessons learned you have from flooding? I think all of you, you start already sharing some of them, but how you can maybe develop could be the positive.

And, as Her Excellency Didiza said, we have also some time not the wrong solution because we always learn that solution does not show to be efficient or to bring the solutions we were expecting.

**Her Excellency Angela Thoko DIDIZA (South Africa)**

I think what, for me, is important is risk mitigation. I think what all of us were saying is that it is important to prepare communities, but also learning from what Finland is saying and the European Union, it is mapping and understanding before a flood happens. What are those areas that are at risk and how do you start to address the challenges before the flood happens? That's one.

Secondly, how is that data shared and communicated? For instance, a number of our Ministries, I would guess, has got your special planning units, even if it may not be located within agricultural departments, but it is there in government. Also, have your geographic information system that is within the government system, and therefore coordination and collaboration with government is very important, but also bringing in civil society, communities and the private sector because when a flood happens, it affects everyone in the society.

Also, the regional management or coordination also becomes important because some of the river's cross different countries and therefore how you manage the water course in that instance. For me, the other issue which we have learned is about planning and coordination and setting up institutional arrangements that can be agile and responsive when a crisis happens. So, you know what needs to happen and each sphere understands their responsibility. But there is a need to also ensure that you do look at issues of, I would say, financial mobilisation because sometimes some of the national disasters may not have been provided for, adequately within national budgets.

So, what instruments do we have to be able to energise your different sectors in society to mobilise resources that can assist on emergency, which means removing some of those people that may be in risk to better areas, but, at the same time, some of the interventions that deal with social needs in the immediate to make sure that you avoid adverse reaction when disasters happen. Agility is also required post a flood or post a disaster. How quick does the system, particularly at a government level, respond immediately after the flood?

I would say, lastly, I think climate change is posing a challenge and opportunity to actually even relook at the design of our infrastructure, such that it becomes resilient. It is not only agricultural infrastructure, but it cuts across in terms of your civil infrastructure, human settlements, how do you

actually position your infrastructure so that it can respond and withstand and become resilient when there are such disasters such as the flood?

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you very much for sharing again your experience and bringing the need that the preparedness is the responsibility of the whole society, the need to associate the private sector and the civil society and also the mobilisation of the required finance.

**His Excellency Salem Abdullah Eissa Salem AL-SOCATRI (Yemen) (Original language Arabic)**

Floods, when they happen, there are certain steps that we take, such as we have an operation room at the Ministry of Agriculture. It is a common operation room between different departments. We receive Reports of any upcoming disasters.

We also coordinate with different authorities, including the local authorities and the security forces, to make sure that everybody is mobilised to work together to deal with this disaster. We also have a system to coordinate with the local communities who follow up the weather, who monitor the weather. We have an association for farmers, as well as an association for fishermen, and they also support us. We also know which seasons where we can expect a lot of rainfall or maybe flooding.

So, we have high alert. There is constant follow up. We have a plan, the Ministry has a plan to deal with floods, and to make sure that the water from the floods is transferred to the agricultural lands. But we have very limited capacity. So maybe we can make use of 50 percent of this water, but the rest will go to the sea. But when you talk about actual huge floods and hurricanes and cyclones, we coordinate on the level of the government and the different authorities, different Ministries, national, local.

We have the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health to make sure that the hospitals are prepared to receive patients, farmers or fishermen or otherwise. We also make sure that we have sufficient equipment to deal with these floods and to reduce risk.

We also have directives that prevent people from building their homes near valleys. We are also trying to follow up on any kind of similar infringements. So, there are also a lot of people are building in green areas next to valleys and hilly areas that are subject to flood risks. We also try to raise awareness amongst farmers and fishermen, for fishermen to use proper fishing methods, and also regarding the areas where they can conduct safe fishing. Also, in certain seasons, we prevent them from fishing, especially if we expect a cyclone or any kind of adverse weather.

In Yemen, we have 55 islands, seven or eight them are inhabited, like the Archipelago of Socotra, and they are usually subject to high risk of cyclones because they overlook the Indian Ocean, and usually that is where we get the cyclones. That is where we get most of this type of adverse weather risks. We also try to use experiences of neighbouring countries, especially early warning systems. We cooperate with neighbouring countries who provide assistance also in case of natural disasters.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you very much, His Excellency Salem Abdullah Eissa Salem Al-Socatri, talking also about cooperation with neighbouring countries and the lack of capacity to fully use the water and therefore it goes to the sea, the planning and the fishermen how also because sometimes we do not think that we can use aquaculture to develop water coming from floods.

**His Excellency Mr Anxious Jongwe MASUKA (Zimbabwe)**

What we have found is that what you need is an early warning system. An early warning system, as I say, is now satellite-aided but to be able to communicate with the communities. So, we do have radios given to communities so that you can alert them urgently. But we also do that through a system of schools.

The Civil Protection Unit (CPU), which is the statutory body established to manage these affairs, is also decentralised to district level with 60 districts in the country. Once you are able to provide that early warning, but you also need to be organised sufficiently at the state level to be able to resource this CPU, the Civil Protection Unit, so that it can respond in a decentralised manner in all the 60

districts where it will have warehouses, tents and everything to be able to mobilise at short notice and deploy to these communities.

We have also found that this communication must be aided by more accurate mapping of wetlands. We have just completed an updated mapping of wetlands and therefore this aids in settlements, this also aids in terms of the conservation practices that ought to be practised in those areas. So, quite a lot now is integrated. So, but I think the aspect raised by the European Union, this integrated approach is what we need to increasingly emphasise so that we have a whole of society approach to managing floods, and also of course we can then look at the other aspects where you be able to divert the water and utilise it in periods when you do not have the floods.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you so much, His Excellency Anxious Jongwe Masuka. Again, early warning, whole of society approach, and importance of decentralisation and civil protection. Moving along, now is my pleasure to give the floor to Peru.

**Su Excelencia Christian Alfredo BARRANTES BRAVO (Perú)**

Quizás uno de los temas más importantes es el poder evaluar permanentemente las acciones que hacemos. Por ejemplo, en el país hemos identificado un indicador que es el costo evitado, que es un tema importante. Por cada dólar que se invierte en algunas zonas hemos podido determinar que hay un costo evitado de 10 o hasta 20 USD y este es un mensaje importante respecto a la necesidad de inversión en prevención, aparte de los temas evidentemente de pérdidas, incluso, de vidas humanas.

Por otro lado, el tema de evaluación para poder mantener lo que viene generando respuestas adecuadas. Por ejemplo, hemos identificado que había un trabajo de limpieza permanente de ríos y quebradas que se había dejado de hacer y que había significado una reducción en la dificultad generada por las inundaciones.

Otro punto importante, y lo han mencionado, es también el centrar la información y coordinar la misma. La identificación de los puntos críticos es fundamental y es una cuestión dinámica, pero que tiene que ser centralizada y que tiene que ser articulada, de lo contrario la respuesta en emergencia puede ser compleja.

Otro punto importante es que las respuestas de desarrollo e infraestructura, de protección, como ya se ha mencionado también, debe tener una coordinación permanente con la población. La gran problemática que hemos visto, por ejemplo, en nuestro país, ha sido justamente por esa dificultad en la comunicación de lo que se quiere hacer, de lo que se quiere lograr y esto ha generado, evidentemente, retrasos en la respuesta.

Por último, también mencionar la importancia del trabajo conjunto en los tres niveles de gobierno, tanto local, regional y nacional. Y el desarrollo y la mejora de algunos instrumentos directos para los productores, en este caso, la promoción de los seguros, incluso cofinanciados por el Estado, para generar una cultura de reducción de riesgo por parte de los productores también nos parece bastante importante como medidas generadas por el gobierno.

Y un último tema es también, tomar en consideración lo que los propios productores generan como respuestas o que han tomado como oportunidades a partir de las inundaciones. En el norte del país, terminada una inundación, los productores inmediatamente siembran leguminosas de corto plazo, saben que es una oportunidad el uso de la tierra húmeda para eso. La reforestación generada en algunos bosques con apoyo de las comunidades y la conservación, por ejemplo, del exceso de pasto que se genera por la inundación, son actividades que los propios productores realizan y que debemos también tomar en consideración y aprender de ellos.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you, His Excellency Barrantes Bravo. You referred to the need to coordination at the three levels. You referred the need to the response to be centralised, but the coordination with the population. Also, you referred the paying back of prevention. Indeed, in FAO, our studies show that if

you prevent is one to five in terms of investment, and I think what you referred to USD 20 is aligned with the studies and the figures done by FAO.

**Ms Jaana HUSU-KALLIO (Finland)**

I will continue what I said before, and I picked two topics. The first one is the free data that I was referring to, the transparency. Indeed, what Finland has done quite a huge work to put the environmental and hydrological data collected in my country freely available and investing in the expertise in the hydrometeorological monitoring, modelling and prediction is something that I am proud of, and I am sure we are more than willing to share this experience also with colleagues around the world.

The other topic I want to put on the Agenda is to continue the discussion with His Excellency Minister from Yemen about the transboundary waters because the water does not know on which side of the border it is. Using an example from the north again, between Finland and Sweden, there is a river that is the border of the two countries, and I am very happy that, of course, we have the same European Union legislation and we both have, as I mentioned, the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). I am happy that we share very many parts of the plans that are in common on both sides of the border.

At the same time, it is not only about the Flood Risk Management Plan, but it is also the marriage to the River Basin Management Plan where I am referring to the Helsinki Border Convention. So, in the hearings, in the plannings, I think that for the public it is important to show that at the same time we manage the river from the flood risk point of view, but more in general from the sustainable natural resources management point of view.

Here, again, I am referring, for instance, to the fish because I think that with the coordination we can regulate the fish catch and we can make the fishers, whether it is a hobby or a profession, more happy. So, I think that water is linked so much in our life that also in the river basins we should remember that it is not only about the water, but it is part of the sustainable natural resources management.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Bringing the importance of managing the rivers and the also managing the river based, bringing the fisheries part and sustainable natural resources management.

**Ms Vanida KHUMNIRDPECH (Thailand)**

I think, for Thailand, maybe I share with what Deputy Director-General has shared. I think the first one is information, as the other Honourable has suggested. For Thailand, we try to utilise the GIS map either for the flood map or the water resources monitoring.

It is the coordination between the Thailand Meteorological Department, the Geoinformatics and Space Technology Development Agency. So that is under the National Committee. So, under that, they share this information and distribute among the relevant agency in order not only prevention but mitigation and other disaster prevention.

Another one is under the Ministry of Agriculture Cooperative. So, our regular irrigation department, we are responsible for irrigation area of the agricultural area, and we have the Smart Water Operations Centre (SWOC) which is online on the website, people can access that, and then you can monitor and those operations will be shared at the policymaker and shared with other relevant agency under the National Committee in order to leverage the data so we can manage in agriculture area, in irrigation area, in the rain-fed area, as well as the other area out of agriculture. The information will be communicated to our water user group, which is our farmers or the rural people in order to be aware of how the situation of the water from the dam, from the reservoir that we manage.

So, I think that is how we are doing. But on the land, we have some conservation, like our new theory planning in the area. We always convinced that you need about 30 percent of your farmland in order to be the water storage. Those not only for the drought but to manage and then utilise the flood, in order to reserve for the drought times. So, I think those one and the other that I mentioned that now we have river basin management in our river in Thailand.



So, those will relate not only to the water use but how the environment will be affected at the watershed along the river basin, which is coordinated through the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Natural Resources, and as well as the agriculture. So, I think the balance of the use of the water, the basin, the watershed that goes down, and I really agree that sometimes the same area they affect both flood and drought. Then when we have to have the remedies and nature, those farmers receive both. So, either excess water or no water, the farmer and the people suffer the same.

So, I think that we continue to coordinate under the National Committee how to address that throughout the government and participatory with our local people and community.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Communication, participatory approach, lack of water or excess of water, the importance of information and conservation. Now, back to the European Commission and let me read out the question to you. What examples could you give in actual coordination with third countries and at multilateral level?

**Ms Magda KOPCZYNSKA (European Commission)**

Maybe before I look to countries outside the European Union, let me still look inside for a moment because what I wanted to talk more about now is the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, which is part of our integrated approach when it comes to floods because, as we all agreed, it is a lot about prevention, it is a lot about information and information sharing.

It is also a lot about coordinating efforts when it comes to assessing the impacts and targeting aid, and whenever there is a case of flood happening in one of the countries of the European Union, we have a mechanism through this Union Civil Protection System to, on the one hand, share information about what is happening on the ground, but also coordinate aid and direct assistance offered by EU Member States to one another.

That was the case in Belgium in 2021. That was the case in June this year when Italy suffered from flooding. But this mechanism does not work only when it comes to EU countries. We do offer assistance and information to countries worldwide if they are affected by floods. We use the satellite images through the so-called Copernicus programme to monitor crisis situations, but also, as I already mentioned before, provide flood forecasts. Those targeted maps, that targeted information, that monitors any flooding around the globe is offered to any country or international organizations.

Such was the case when Chadian government declared a state of natural catastrophe due to heavy rainfalls at the end of 2023. We helped with maps to monitor a situation when it comes to flooding of the Lake Chad. When floods took place in Mozambique and Uganda in May this year, we also offered information and monitoring capacity through our satellite programmes. I just wanted to use this opportunity to in a way advertise that opportunity because that assistance can be offered to countries if you need it.

When it comes to reaction from the Union Monitoring Crisis Mechanism, I cannot not mention the recent instance when EU provided help to Ukrainian government after the explosion of the Nova Kakhovka Dam because here EU and FAO shared a deep concern about the impact of the breach of the dam on the situation locally, on the situation when it comes to agriculture, when it comes to long-term impact and also long-term effects to the food security worldwide because of the role of Ukraine as a country providing food to other countries worldwide.

We very much look forward to rapid assessment by FAO together with United Nations partners and we hope to contribute to this work as EU because that situation may have long-term impacts on food security worldwide. That is, of course, an example of how we should be working together when it comes to managing impacts of floods happening anywhere in the world.

As you asked, Deputy Director-General, we do include the topic of water management, of flood management in our bilateral and multilateral contacts and dialogues. It is always an important topic in our discussions we have, for example, but this is just one example, the EU Central Asia Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation (WECOOP), which met earlier this year in Rome, in Italy, and which was looking, among other things, at both nature-based and investment possibilities that could be

dealt jointly by the EU and Central Asia countries in order to deal with possible impacts and effects of floods, but also how to prevent flooding and negative impact if they were to happen.

Again, to echo what I was saying at the beginning, this word integrated but also evidence-based and systemic policies is something that we need at global level to deal with the situation with water both now and in the future. I know, and we all know, that it was an important element of the Water Conference that took place in New York in March.

Maybe coming back again to the opening words of Director-General, he talked about the water that always flows and that water that is cyclical. I think these cyclical and transboundary solutions are what we should be looking at when it comes to management of all the risks that stem from floods, those that we know of and those that will happen unexpectedly. I would just like to assure you that you can count on EU as a reliable partner to do so.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you so much for expressing the interest of the European Commission to cooperate with countries around the world. You can provide information, you can monitor flood, you can provide evidence base, and you can always strengthen the cooperation with those countries

Let us stay here with us. Then we will have any questions maybe from the floor. But as we transition to the second part of this event and the second part will be to hear from the perspective of youth, farmers, women and indigenous people. They are here. They have their own.

As you said, the civil society should be involved in the solution, and we consider it important to hear the voice of those Members of the society.

**Ms Sophie ERFURTH (Water Youth Network)**

Farmers in India, in rural Assam, have a saying, "The floods must come but if they stay for more than ten days, we are in trouble." we are in trouble. In the face of rapid anthropogenic change, we are now tasked to redefine our understandings of sustainability. What do we mean by adaptive agrifood systems, for example? Adaptive to which baselines? Ecological baselines, I am afraid, I think of the past. Similarly, lessons and good practices of the past are rarely adequate solutions for the future.

In the case of flood management for agrifood systems, the term adaptive will have to be changed to ever-adapting. This section of the event serves to give a voice to those that are often overheard. I must admit that at this Session I believe that I am not the one who needs your attention. Rather, I want to use my last minute speaking to shed light on a group that I believe deserves the highest of our attention when we talk about flood risk management. Smallholder farmers are the most vulnerable to flood damage and are most at risk of losing their yields, their jobs, their livelihoods. Smallholder farmers account for 84 percent of global farms and produce around 35 percent of the world's crops.

Irregular and unmanaged floods pose severe threats to these food production systems and associated livelihoods. How do policymakers make sure that the policies that they craft are providing much-needed relief for smallholder farmers? When practitioners write new integrated flood management plans, how can they make sure that these plans reach farmers across all scales? Technology is often highly successful at solving point problems neatly confined in space and often time. But when it comes to scaling these solutions across decentralised geographies, even the most advanced technologies often fail.

the science of flood risk management is relatively clear. Anthropogenic climate change turns rainfall patterns more erratic and floods more rampant. We have calculated the economic and human cost of inaction. We have developed technical tools to address many of these issues. Nature-based solutions, for example, can serve as important buffers to social ecological systems. So, the science of flood risk management is clear.

The planning, however, is not, the governance is not, the politics is not. Integrated flood risk management needs to be more ambitious to cut across these themes. Be frank about shared challenges even if they raise uncomfortable questions regarding power dynamics and equity. Only this way can we have a chance at addressing the pressing challenges ahead.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you and thank you for reminding us the cost of inaction, that we need to act and we need to act together and we need to have better planning and also equity. Now, let us move to Cristina Chirico from the Confederation Italiana Agricoltura.

**Ms Cristina CHIRICO (Italian Farmers Confederation)**

We are here to represent the point of view of the farmers, considering them as a central role in the integrated approach that you presented today. Excellencies, we are very glad to understand today that we are sure that we have to switch from the emergency approach and enter in the management of the floods and drought risk together, reducing the vulnerability of the territory, management of the soil and water storage.

I represent today the experience that you cited today about Emilia Romagna region. As you know, it is the Italian Food Valley, and very recently following months of severe droughts, the same amount of rains which usually falls in seven months fell in just a few days. The cause of many damages by the floods is estimated around EUR 9 billion. The area has 21,000 farms, half of the agriculture employees in the Emilia Romagna region. What does it mean for us? We are coming back in Emilia Romagna to another period of drought.

In Italy and around the world, the farmers are adopting innovative and country-specific techniques to make agricultural land more resilient to floods and extreme water events. But it is not enough. It is not enough, the technology and innovation also digital innovation. It is not enough, the adequate training and knowledge-sharing for us. It is not enough, what farmers are doing by themselves. What we need, we have to change our idea of the territory. It shows that the management of the land and water and the prevention of environmental disaster are deeply linked to the permanence of farmers and their communities in rural, hilly and mountainous areas, by sustainability but also profitability of the activity of the family farmers.

The appropriate cultivation practices, the restoration, the maintenance of organised woodlands can help to shield the land from the catastrophic effect of the floods from the mountain to the cities. Society, as a whole, needs to rethink its relationship with nature, but also rethink the reduction of soil, the erosion of soil, the soil consumption by urbanisation. These are the first causes of the disasters. Involving farmers and their organisation in the planning and implementation of the integrated risk management strategies that you presented today, we need adequate financial and support schemes. This is crucial for us.

We, the World Farmers Organization (WFO), but also the Members of the World Farmers Organization at national level, are ready to engage with governments, with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the other United Nations agencies at the local, national and global level to present our best practices but to work together to avoid that the next catastrophe would be against agriculture and food security.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you very much, Cristina, and sharing the point that we need to associate the farmers in the planning and implementing of the risk management strategies and we need also a financial scheme, but we have all the approaches, how we can work together. And I can assure you that FAO is willing to continue to work with the farmers and I believe all the countries here present in the panel, also in the room.

**Ms Tania Eulalia MARTINEZ-CRUZ (Indigenous Peoples Unit of FAO)**

I am going to take you to Colombia, talking to my friend, Mr Dario Mejia, who currently is the Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

He was telling me that many times what we do wrong is that we try to go against the flow, the flooding, when we should be going with the flow and the flooding. What is that I mean by that? The Zenu region back in Colombia is highly susceptible to flooding and can be covered in water by eight months. That happens because of its location and geological conditions. In the news, it is quite

frequently that the region is portrayed as facing flooding and many projects have been implemented there trying to solve that issue.

However, we do not have to go that far to find successful management flooding strategies because if there is anyone that has been successful and capable of living in that territory for many centuries, in the same delta, has been the Zenu people because their knowledge in their territories, the cycles and the deep understanding they have of their surroundings have allowed them to develop channels and other infrastructure that drain the water to other watersheds in the rainy season, but also in the times where they are droughts, they can use that water. They are the champions in hydraulic engineering infrastructure that they have used to irrigate the fields, manage data resources or elevated fields where they can also crop and generate food.

As well as the Zenu people, there are many other indigenous peoples around the world that have similar management techniques. We are talking a lot about mitigating, but what about prevention? What about what is existing there, and we have undermined for many centuries? It is true that times are changing, but we have to acknowledge that many of these changes are not caused by the people that are suffering the most consequences.

Let me tell you about indigenous peoples. We say that in the name of climate change and development we have intervened territories, built infrastructures. We have promoted policies that are detrimental to our knowledge, to our systems, to our food systems, to our ways of living in harmony with floodings and these different cycles that I have mentioned before.

With this, what I want to say is that it continues to be a violation to our rights, to our territories, to our free and prior informed consent when projects are built on the name of development, on the name of climate change. Instead of looking for new solutions, you should be looking at indigenous peoples and the game-changing solutions, the ancestral knowledge and the things that have made us resilient, and we say in an era of crisis, the keepers of 80 percent of the world's biodiversity.

We have been the champions of adaptations, and my invitation to you, let us not go against the flow. Let us go with the flow. Work with us. One way of doing that is that in line with the United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS), we managed to get a coalition of indigenous people's food systems. Our goal is to strengthen policies that allow us to promote and strengthen our knowledge system and food systems that have made us resilient.

We are not saying that we do not want to work with you. We can work with you, but we are inviting you to learn, document, strengthening systems like the experience that I share from the Zenu people and work with us.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you Tania for bringing this important perspective of the indigenous people, let us go with the flow, let us use the indigenous knowledge to be more resilient to flood and also to live in harmony with nature.

Now I am moving to the last speaker of the second segment and the third segment will be questions or comments from the floor. If you want to have the floor, press the button, I have seen Maldives. If you want, please press the button and we will try to manage all your expectations in terms of also sharing your experience.

Now let us move to the last speaker, Ms Mariet Cohen. Mariet is the President of Women for Water Partnership (WfWP).

**Ms Mariet VERHOEF-COHEN (President of Women for Water Partnership)**

Dear guests, dear Honourable Ministers, we are very pleased to be here because floods and droughts and all the water disasters are gender neutral, however the impacts are not. Women are more exposed to flood dangers due to their various roles such as taking care of children, all the family members, people with disabilities, women were never allowed to learn to swim or allowed to leave the house during and after the flood disasters.

Women can help identify disaster risks for themselves and for girls, that may not be understood by male planners. They can help build security for their families, including increased income or awareness of personal preparedness and health. Implementing coping mechanisms for women and women groups, and creating resilience is a solution.

Women should be well and timely informed, they should be part of the local coordination and planning committee, and women should have access to information through for example mobile phones or local townhall meetings. Women have to be involved in the communication on prevention and the alternatives, by anticipating through prevention and building resilience, women get these coping mechanisms like rainwater harvesting, water storage, using other crops, focusing on the workers not only on the owners.

In case of prevention, teach them where to go to, what to do with fecal sludge, look at cultural norms and put them aside during disasters so that women are allowed to leave their homes. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) management and WASH facilities and services are a major issue during floods. Human aid bring safe drinking water, but not enough is done about toilets. That is one of the major challenges.

Build eco toilets, dry toilets that can be used during and after the flooding, the fecal sludge can be taken out and the water can be boiled. We remember in Srilanka that the mud flows gave problems, not because women were not warned beforehand, but there were no alternatives, they did not know where to go to, they went back to get all the people and that is why so many died. Planning, coordination, mapping the risks – they are all very important – but please create alternatives known by women and involve them.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Women involvement in creating alternatives, communication, be involved in the prevention and the response and be part of local coordination and planning.

Now let us move to the Plenary to question and answer of comment.

**His Excellency Hussain Rasheed HASSAN (Maldives)**

The Maldives has over 90 000 square kilometres of sovereign territory and nearly a million square kilometres is a large ocean state in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Over 99.6 percent of our territory is, in fact, sea water. Our total land area of over 1 100 small islands is less than 298 square kilometres, so we are a large ocean state with small land mass. Furthermore, we are also the lowest lying nation in the world.

Sea level rise caused by global climate change is an existential threat to us. Global temperature is increasing unabated, the seas are becoming warmer and warmer, slowly decimating the coral reefs and associated biodiversity.

In the Maldives we are living through a climate emergency already. We are experiencing a consistently warm climate, and endured warming trends during the last four decades, with increases of 0.8 degrees Celsius between 1978 and 2018.

Excellencies, at the current rate of global warming almost 80 percent of our country could become uninhabitable by 2050. As His Excellency, our President Solih declared at COP26, our islands are slowly being inundated by sea, one by one. If we do not reverse this trend, the Maldives will cease to exist by the end of this century.

The intergovernmental panel on climate change predicts that by 2050 if the temperature rises 1.5 degree Celsius, as much as between 70 to 90 percent of coral reefs in the Maldives and in other coral atoll nations, will be degraded and consequently a huge amount of biodiversity will be lost forever.

With increased and frequent weather events, sea swells, storm surges and flooding, it inundates dry land with sea water making ground water saline and causing devastating coastal erosion and land loss.

With coral reefs gone we will have no place to live. Our islands will not be protected by the coral reefs. 30 coral reefs actually protect 97 percent of the land from the waves. So this can be actually

mitigated if we made finance available as promised by the developing world to mitigate for an adaptation.

**Ms Julia IMENE-CHANDURU (Namibia)**

Flooding in Namibia has become a common phenomenon. As a very dry country, sandwiched by two deserts, the Kalahari on the East and the Namib desert on the West, and because of climate changes both drought and floods have become common.

Namibia has therefore implemented a national policy for flood risk management to deal with flood events in different phases – and that is prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The core objective of the plan is to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, to avoid new developments in increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise, surface water run off, and ensure effective management of residual risk for development in flood plains.

In some instances, communities do not want to be moved and this is another discussion for another day. Therefore the involvement and communication with the communities is of paramount importance. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of capacity building including water harvest techniques, as mentioned by some of the panellists, as well as early warning systems and smart investments.

Finally, I am encouraged by the interventions of the representative of Norway on the availability of finance and the increased willingness for cooperation.

**Mr Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)**

Thank you panellists for this wonderful presentation and I thank you for yesterday and continue today, getting the Agenda to focus more on water for agriculture. It is really very important, because without water there is no agriculture.

I fully agree with what the panellists have said, but especially I was touched when the Minister from Zimbabwe has raised about the establishment of catchment councils. This is really very important. Unless we tackle it at the catchment level, and of course this catchment could be many and holistically that intervention is very important. And government cannot do everything. The councils which are established at the catchment level should be empowered, should be supported and they will do a marvellous job.

Now when we come to flood today, flood for me is like an opportunity and a threat. It is a threat when it happens at a larger degree. It is an opportunity when it comes especially for areas that are low land areas which are not getting sufficient rain; when flood comes it is really like a blessing. So normally we call it flood farming, we practise it in the Eastern part of the country. One result, just to show the research that has been done in support of the Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) in Ethiopia in the Eastern part, it has given a yield which when we compare it to the land that has been cultivated with application of fertilizers and what have you – without being applied any input for this one. This is one.

Spit irrigations we follow for diverting the water which is coming from highlands and to the farms. This is very important. But one think I want to raise as an issue, maybe I am not helping you properly, but the best solution I feel is land use planning is most important actually in at least assigning which type of crop to which type of land in order to minimize the damage of the flood.

**His Excellency Mohammed HASSAN KATANA (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

In Syria we have been planning for water resources. On the coast we have been able to create lakes and also in the mountains, that has made it possible for farmers to have resources and this investment has then been used to further regional development, and this is useful for certain crops, the results have been very positive indeed. Before the water flowed directly into the ocean, but now it can be actually captured and put to good use by farmers.

In other regions we also have been able to put water resources to good use in areas which were arid before irrigation. Now on another front though, we have seen some water basins which previously received water flows, and unfortunately we have seen the size of those water flows shrink.

So, I think when it comes to planning one has to study very carefully where the water actually goes, and to conserve this resource. You have got to do that while you do make certain that the rightful owners for example of land, when the dams are built, that their concerns are taken into consideration for good planning.

These shared resources, we have the Euphrates Basin, that is a basin which has the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers and it is used by three countries of the five in the region. A number of different dams have been built jointly by the three countries, and these dams currently are a tool which is used to basically mean that there is a money value put on the resources that then governs the use by the three countries. That comes into play also when you are trying to plan. Now this resource should not be a source of conflict between the countries.

**His Excellency Floyd GREEN (Jamaica)**

I think interventions by the Deputy Director-General and the Technical person this morning was very, very good, I think this conversation on flood management is critical, and the fact that we are talking about flood management – in Jamaica which is a small island developing state – clearly we are threatened perennially by hurricanes and what we have seen since climate change is longer droughts and more intense periods of rainfall that causes severe flooding.

So, the management of that is critical and in fact at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining we have had to come up with a Disaster Risk Management Committee to do some of the mapping that Finland spoke about in relation to looking at those flooded agricultural areas and trying to plan beforehand.

I do take a lot of heart on the insights from South Africa and Zimbabwe regarding early warning systems and harvesting of flood waters, but I was especially interested in the intervention made by Peru regarding the insurance system and I did have a question regarding the structure of that insurance system, how do farmers access that insurance system?

And I use this to reiterate my call that the FAO has to help small island development states put in place parametric insurance systems to treat with flood events. The reality is that especially the youth and the women do not have access to these insurance policies that would help them recover quickly when they are faced with these flood type events, and as such I believe that green climate funds by the FAO would help small island states form these sort of policies that will help especially our youth and women.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you for sharing your perspective, I am sure Peru will share after some replies and you can have some discussion further, on how to move with the insurance schemes at small island development states.

**Mr Daryl NEARING (Canada)**

The Canadian delegation actually has a question for the panellists which is we would like to hear your views on the coordination which several speakers spoke to, coordination between different levels of government, private sector, farmers etcetera, and in particular if there are case studies, examples of how to successfully bring that coordination after a flood or during a flood; conscious that civic infrastructure like roads or electricity are often affected by floods: lessons learned and insights about how to make that coordination happen and how to respond effectively are welcomed.

**Son Excellence Laoukein Kourayo MÉDARD (Tchad)**

Au Tchad, au regard des prévisions élaborées par le service spécialisé, nous nous attendons cette année à une période d'inondation qui va être longue et dévastatrice pour notre pays. Sachez aussi que l'année dernière, il y a eu une telle inondation qui a emporté, englouti plus de 400 000 hectares de cultures, qui a fait écrouler des milliers de maisons, emporté une centaine de bétail et autres.

C'est pourquoi nous avons, cette année, pris les mesures suivantes. Un, renforcer la communication des prévisions saisonnières et leurs mises à jour afin d'informer et sensibiliser les communautés tant rurales qu'urbaines sur les risques. Prendre des dispositions pour prévenir les catastrophes à travers

notamment l'appui de la presse, de plateforme de réduction des risques de catastrophes, des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales (ONG), des partenaires et des systèmes d'alertes précoces du pays. Renforcer la veille et les capacités d'intervention des institutions en charge de prévention des risques de catastrophes et des aides humanitaires.

Eviter l'occupation anarchique des zones inondables, aussi bien par les habitants que par les cultures et les animaux. Renforcer la vigilance contre les maladies hydriques, les ravageurs de cultures, telles que les chenilles légionnaires et autres insectes nuisibles. Suivre de près les seuils d'alertes dans les sites à risques d'inondations, notamment dans les zones connues. Activer une forte collaboration entre les services hydrologiques et météorologiques afin de permettre la gestion anticipative des risques d'inondations dans les différentes zones concernées.

Huit, maintenir la garde et suivre les mises à jour des prévisions saisonnières et les prévisions de courtes et moyennes échéances produites par l'Agence Nationale de Météorologie. Neuf, renforcer les digues de protection et assurer la maintenance des barrages et des infrastructures routières. Dix, curer les caniveaux pour faciliter l'évacuation des eaux. Enfin, la mise en œuvre scrupuleuse de ces consignes pourrait contribuer à alléger les difficultés auxquelles les populations déclarées vulnérables, en crise, feront face dans notre pays.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Let me come back to our panellists, you have one minute each to respond to the question from Canada and to say your last words regarding the discussion today. Let me start with the European Commission and we will do the circle.

**Ms Magda KOPCZYNSKA (European Commission)**

I think when it comes to response to the Canadian question in our case it is a bit easier because we do have a very well established mechanism for cooperation for different countries in the case of flood, but also for flood prevention.

But what I take from the discussion and from the panellists, but also from the questions in the audience, is that cooperation is crucial and it is cooperation at any level, not only between governments, for which I would like to thank FAO for your facilitation for making it and for putting water on the Agenda for this year and for next year, and let us hope if we come back to the discussion in two years we will know even more good examples of such a cooperation.

But this cooperation absolutely crucially has to involve local communities, it has to involve farmers, it has to involve women, it has to involve indigenous people, and I very much hope that we will have a chance to learn and discuss with you on how we on the EU side can do even better to involve those communities when it comes to flood prevention and flood management.

**Ms Jaana HUSU-KALLIO (Finland)**

I reply to Canada. I think the issue is that you have to decide of course the chain of command so to say. You can do that by national legislation, you can do that by increment, depending on what the structure is in the country. But it is not only the nature that can cause disasters, so for dams controlling and being aware you need this 24/7 system anyway, but I think it is the issue to give the mandate on local level and also on national level and pass the information.

I would also pick the involvement, I said it in the beginning and I listened carefully to the talks, and the involvement of everyone is crucial. And my final word which is matching many other issues as well, is that prevention is always better than cure.

**His Excellency Mohammed HASSAN KATANA (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

This discussion has been enriched by our colleagues here. It is important to have partnership regionally and internationally with regard to prevention of floods, as well as national disasters. It is also important to make profitable use of the expertise available in many countries, also we need to have full coordination especially with countries that are lacking in experience in this field. For



instance, we have countries here most of which concerned by this issue, but in less developed countries and also island countries, these are more exposed than others.

In Yemen we have had a large number of dams, also we have traditional irrigation ducts. So these are old structures, they have played their role but we now need to have better means to deal with these risks that are constantly increasing. Now small islands and we are Yemen, and when there is a low tide these islands seem to be further from the mainland, of course we have different climates there.

**Her Excellency Angela Thoko DIDIZA (South Africa)**

I would like to repeat what Finland has said, that the line of command is very important. At national level in terms of our legislation we have got the disaster management centres, at national, provincial and local levels.

So what happens is that immediately when there is anticipation or a risk, the Minister of local government and traditional affairs will immediately convene all the ministers in all the various sectors that are critical, to ensure that immediately your early warning system goes out nationally and sometimes specific to the province or the particular local municipality or district that might be affected, given our focusing on the weather patterns and what is likely to happen.

And secondly, that structure is supported by the Joint Operations Committee (JOC) which will involve the technical personnel at all levels, including the army and the police. And the private sector and other structures such as your civil society, your farmers' organizations, your traditional leaders particularly for communal and rural areas, because all of those are important in terms of the response mechanism.

And particular interventions, depending on the level or extent of the disaster will then kick in and the very same structures would continue with the mop up and follow up on what needs to happen and indeed, what is required as a form of intervention or resource mobilization at a particular time – different line functions, departments, working with the various civil society organizations and private sector, will then intervene on those areas where they need to intervene.

**His Excellency Mr Anxious Jongwe MASUKA (Zimbabwe)**

For Canada I think for us it is very strong centralization and very strong decentralization, that there is the commitment at national levels, your production unit, provincial level chaired by the minister of state, and all agencies and stakeholders and replicated in all the 60 districts, shared by the district development coordinator – and they are able to respond at a local level.

And it means that the information early warning has to be passed speedily to the local level, it means that the communities must have gadgets to be able to receive this information, there must be capacity development for the communities to be able to respond in a manner that you want, and I think that this whole of society, decentralized approach is the way to ensure that we can reduce these disasters.

**Su Excelencia Christian Alfredo BARRANTES BRAVO (Perú)**

Un poco en la misma línea. Nosotros tenemos tres niveles de atención, local, regional y nacional; sin embargo, muchas veces lo que hemos visto es que funciona más a nivel regional y la coordinación con los productores y los usuarios se hace a través de los Comités de Regantes, que son los que reportan y los que acompañan los procesos.

Sí es importante en la definición del trabajo articulado saber las capacidades logísticas y operativas porque a veces en los niveles muy locales esto falta. Es un trabajo que es dinámico y que hay que ir promoviendo y que es importante, también, que se mantenga una continuidad en la articulación y, creo que más en los momentos en los que no hay emergencia para todos los aspectos de prevención es fundamental.

Solo sobre el tema del seguro, lo podemos conversar después también, pero comentar que este es un seguro que mantiene el Estado para un porcentaje bastante importante de la zona productiva del país. Sin embargo, se está promoviendo también un seguro que pueda ser cofinanciado con el productor para ir introduciendo dentro de estos modelos de reducción de riesgos por parte de los propios agricultores.

**Ms Vanida KHUMNIRDPETCH (Thailand)**

I enjoy all the panellists, I think those are the things, that is why I think Thailand created a national office of water resources and we established an Act for managing natural resources as a whole. But that is within the country and those need coordination and liaison with enough support, financial and officials, particularly at the local levels. All the information, early warning systems, I think those are how we implement it.

But I think for Thailand we have a transboundary river in the North, the Mekong River, and we are working with the sub-region to identify how the nexus of the water, agriculture and climate change, as well as the energy - how we address that. And then I think that part of the water is part of the solution that links. And in the South we have the Kolok River that is the whole river basin in the south between Thailand and Malaysia so what we deal with in the country, we try and chair and manage that at the regional levels.

And I think at the end of the day how we contribute and how we manage and be part of the solution of the global water cycle – I think those are another level, that maybe we work at the FAO levels and then we can take national action.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you to all our panellists, this brings us to the end of our panel discussion on Integrated Flood Risk Management. Thank you all for being here with us. I think it has been a lively discussion while we listen from country experience, how they have been dealing with floods and how they have been preventing and managing floods.

Maybe to have some key words from our discussion today, I would start by the importance of early warning systems, how we better prevent the need for coordination, cooperation, involvement at all levels, involvement of the whole society, how we have the involvement of the private sector, the civil society, the farmers, the youth, the women, the indigenous people, to have an inclusive and proper response.

The importance of financing and also some insurance schemes have been shared with us today. But better than that I think, is the promotion of the desired social response and showing that even economically it makes sense to better prevent. And I would like to invite you all to visit the Art Exhibition at the FAO Art Room. I do not know if you had the possibility to visit it, I highly recommend it, and it will hang until Friday, but the exhibit is composed by sculpture, by the world renowned Italian artist called Mr Theo Renzo Zafino and it aims to raise awareness about the central role of water, our planet's most fragile, valuable commodity. If you have not yet, I really recommend because it is pay back.

Now to conclude, we would like to have a photo with all the panellists. I will call here to the podium the Representative of Youth, Farmers, Women and Indigenous People to have a picture to keep a memory of our panel discussion today.

*The meeting rose at 12:10 hours*

*La séance est levée à 12 h 10*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 12.10*



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Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
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Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>SÉPTIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>4 July 2023</b></p>

The Seventh Meeting was opened at 14:12 hours  
Mr Khalid Mehboob,  
Vice-Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La septième séance est ouverte à 14 h 12  
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,  
Vice-Président de la Conférence

Se abre la séptima reunión a las 14.12  
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,  
Vice-Presidente de la Conferencia

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**Third Report of the General Committee**  
**Troisième rapport du Bureau**  
**Tercer informe del Comité General**  
(C 2023/LIM/15)

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Good afternoon and welcome back Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman I declare open the meeting of the FAO Conference. The first Item is Adoption of the Third Report of the General Committee and this is document C 2023/LIM/15. The General Committee has produced this third Report containing recommendations for the consideration of the Conference.

The Report is available as I just quoted the number of the document C 2023/LIM/15 published in all FAO languages on the Conference website. Do I take it the Conference approves the Report *en bloc*? It is so decided.

**Item 10. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (continued)**

**Point 10. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite)**

**Tema 10. Examen del estado de la alimentación y la agricultura (continuación)**

We will now continue with Item 10, *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*. I give the floor to the first speaker.

**Statements by Heads of Delegation**

**Déclarations des chefs de délégation**

**Declaraciones de los jefes de delegación**

*Japan, Sweden, Lesotho, Oman, Poland, Israel, Qatar, China, Armenia, Singapore, Germany, Chile, India, Solomon Islands, Maldives Nicaragua, Iceland, Czechia, Iraq, Uruguay, Tonga, Guatemala, El Salvador*

**His Excellency Hideo TSUNODA (Japan) (Original language Japanese)**

Chairperson,

FAO Director General,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honour to deliver a few words on behalf of the Government of Japan at this 43rd Session of the FAO Conference. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu and the Secretariat for their efforts in organizing this Session.

First I would like to congratulate the Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu on the successful re-election. I believe in the Dr Qu Dongyu's continued leadership as Director-General for eradicating hunger and ensuring transparency in FAO governance. When it comes to water as the theme in this Agenda Item while on one hand it is a resource that brings blessings to society, on the other hand it can also be a source of natural disasters that threaten people's lives and livelihoods.

In Japan the number of torrential rains has increased by about 1.4 times compared to 30 years ago, furthermore the entire Asia and the Pacific now experience approximately three times as many floods as it did 30 years ago. Therefore when considering water resource management water related disasters such as floods must be centrally focused upon together with water scarcity.

In April last year the 4th Asia Pacific Water Summit was held in my country. On this occasion our Prime Minister Mr Fumio Kishida launched the Kumamoto initiative for water announcing that Japan will support the Asia Pacific region with JPY 500 billion over the next five years. This initiative aims to promote efforts in both climate change adaptation and mitigation, through the development of high quality infrastructure utilizing Japan's advanced technologies.

Specifically as climate change, adaptation measures there are efforts to reduce flood damage in rural areas through the development of agricultural irrigation and drainage facilities and the utilization of paddy fields for rain water retention. Climate change and mitigation measures on the other hand include the reduction of green house gases emissions through small hydropoly generation systems using irrigation and drainage facilities and agricultural water management systems which enable advanced agricultural production with ICT technology.

Japan has decided to develop and provide the Asia Pacific region with hybrid technologies for both climate change, adaptation and mitigation. Through these efforts we will contribute to sustainable water resource management.

Chairperson, consumers and producers around the world are currently experiencing a hard time due to the price spike of food, energy and agricultural inputs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which since last year has been exacerbated by Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

It not only constitutes a flagrant violation of international law but also inflicted vast negative impacts on global food security thus Japan condemns Russia's action in the strongest terms. Furthermore with the growing importance of addressing climate change and bio diversity, global agricultural policies are at a historic turning point.

Against this backdrop Japan hosted the G7 agricultural Ministers meeting in Miyazaki in April this year where we discussed and concluded on how to make agriculture and food systems resilient and sustainable. The outcomes fed directly in the Hiroshima action statement for resilient global food security issued by the G7 and the invited countries of the G7 Hiroshima summit in May this year. Among them I have three things to share with you today.

First, sustainability in agriculture should be enhanced in a manner which enhances productivity. Secondly, food systems should be strengthened by each country by the maximized utilization of their existing domestic agricultural resources. Last but not least a wide range of innovations should be put in action to achieve sustainable agriculture innovate that benefits all people.

Actions are already underway, in Japan we have been implementing the strategy for sustainable food systems or strategy MIDORI, to build the sustainable agriculture and food systems. As part of its implementation for example against the soared prices of fertilizer and other inputs many regions in Japan including my home prefecture of Chiba are making efforts convert life stock manure into compost and distribute it as dried pellets to a wide range of areas. This can be deemed as a good example of innovation that has been developed and implemented using what is available on the ground. On the other hand we reiterate there is no one size fits all solution to building sustainable agriculture and food systems. It goes without saying that it is important for each country to search for their own best solution.

Chairperson, and distinguished participants, Japan will continue to cooperate and collaborate with FAO and other relevant international organizations and all Member States to contribute to solving global challenges.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Mr Fredrik ALFER (Sweden)**

Chairperson, thank you.

We align ourselves with the statement of the European Union delivered by Spain. Let me begin by thanking FAO for the Organization's vital and much appreciated work on food and agriculture in the past. The evidence compiled by FAO often in collaboration with other parts of the United Nations system provide an essential knowledge base for informed policy and decision making.

In these troubling times in which conflicts, economic crisis and climate change intersect and drive rising global food insecurity reports such as the *Global Report on Food Crisis* produced by the Global Network Against Food Crises and the *Hunger Hotspots Report* issued by FAO and WFP are invaluable tools for efficient Government action and response. FAO's analysis and reporting on global food prices and commodity markets are equally essential.

Sweden welcomes making water resource management FAOs by annual theme for 2024-2025. This is particularly timely and provides an opportunity to build on the momentum generated by the United Nations Water Conference that was held in March of this year. Considering the projected increase of fresh water demand and that the agricultural sector is the world's largest water user, the importance of FAOs work on integrated water resource management is almost impossible to overstate.

The European Union recently adopted priorities for its work with FAO which were developed and adopted under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union also highlights integrated resource management including water as well as the need to find solutions to multiple and transparency water challenges. FAO with its broad mandate is uniquely placed and suited to respond to address those challenges and to find solutions with concerted efforts with the wider United Nations family and other partners.

Echoing the statement delivered by Spain Sweden deplores the severe increase of food insecurity caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The invasion has devastating effects on agriculture and as was made acutely obvious by the attack on the Nova Kakhovka Dam, water resource management and infrastructure as well. We fully share FAOs deep concern about the impact of the destruction of the Dam on agriculture, fishery, forestry, rural communities and rural livelihoods. We welcome FAOs participation in the United Nations post disaster needs assessment and the rapid assessment of the damage and losses in the agricultural sector.

In conclusion Sweden reiterates its strong support to FAO and underlines the importance of integrated water resource management. Indeed water is the life blood of the Earth and a central component to the entire 2030 Agenda.

Thank you Chair.

**His Excellency Thabo MOFOSI (Lesotho)**

Chairperson,

Commissioner of the African Union Commission, Commissioner Sacko Your Excellences Heads of Delegations,

Your Excellency the Director-General of FAO, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Chairperson,

The Kingdom of Lesotho presents its highly esteemed congratulations and compliments to the Director-General of FAO, Dr. Qu, on his re-election. Lesotho appreciates and supports achievements of FAO during his tenure, particularly his passion for developing countries such as Lesotho. His immense energy towards achieving Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals in spite of a number of challenges such as COVID-19 and climate change to name a few.

*DG, A solution is only a solution when it responds to a challenge. I repeat again: A solution is only a solution when it responds to a challenge.*

Madame Chairperson,

I wish to register that Lesotho has embarked on partnering with FAO through its numerous initiatives, as we speak Lesotho has begun with the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) and will continue partnering with FAO in order to achieve the Four Betters and leaving no one behind. The Right Honourable the Prime Minister launched the winter ploughing season a few weeks ago, in which he gave a directive that four thousand hectares of wheat will be cultivated. Even though we here in Rome are basking in warm summer days, Lesotho is in its winter season and due to climate change, is experiencing excessive snowfall affecting human and animal life especially in the highlands or mountain districts of Lesotho. Since the opening of this Conference, we have all heard of the importance of water. For those who know Lesotho you will know that it has an abundance of water and calls it the white gold of Lesotho. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition is currently reviewing its Fisheries policy and has embarked on the establishment of Nutrition clubs of which 85% led by women in rural villages in order to have comprehensive household food security and nutrition.

Lesotho continues to support the partnership between the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition with the Ministry of Education and Training in the School Feeding Programme as it empowers small-scale farmers and encourages them to supply to the school feeding programme, to improve the livelihoods of those communities and providing nutritional meals to schoolchildren.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, Lesotho Government appreciates FAO's invitation to His Majesty King Letsie III the Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition for the FAO and the Champion for Nutrition of the African Union, to deliver the Keynote address at the World Food Forum in October.

I Thank You!

**Mr Ahmed AL-BAKRI (Oman) (Original language Arabic)**

Distinguished Director-General of FAO,

Excellencies,

Heads of the Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

May the peace of God be upon you all.

First of all I would like to convey to you the greetings of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and Water Resources in Sultanate of Oman and it is my great pleasure to take part in the 43rd FAO Conference through the virtual platform, and I would like also to congratulate the Dr QU Dongyu, Director-General, on his election for a second term and we wish him the best of success.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gather today on the occasion of this Conference to exchange our ideas about important themes and Items listed on our Agenda which includes many good ideas and visions which the Sultanate of Oman deem important. We believe that our discussion will contribute to addressing many issues of water, agriculture and production of food and nutrition all over the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Ministry, over the past two years has implemented and created an investment centre for food security which focuses on short and medium term programmes and projects. We have drafted an investment plan for more than 147 projects including investment opportunities in water and food insecurity.

The overall cost of this plan is about 1.3 billion Omani Rial (OMR) and we have started the implementation of these projects according to the key performance indicators of Oman Vision 2030. The investment in the water sector is one of the priorities of our Government in partnership with the private sector. We aim at preserving water resources and addressing the depletion or pollution in a way that guarantees the sustainability of resources for future generations. We have also been working on defining policies and legislations to create more job opportunities for Oman youth.

We can summarize the achievements of Oman in terms of water management and development of water resources as follows. Firstly, the construction 181 dams to recharge aquifers and enhances services storage. Secondly, development of an integrated monitoring system of water resources to obtain precise water data in various governorates of Oman. The Oman Ministry supervises the functioning and the maintenance of hydrometric monitoring network that includes 3 475 monitoring stations.

Thirdly, the implementation of a cloud seeding project. This national project started in 2013 and it aims at increasing the levels of precipitation and increasing the level of ground water. Fourthly, increasing the volume of desalinated water from 196 million cubic metres in 2011 to 473 million cubic metre in 2021. Fifthly, expanding and increasing sewage treatment plants that have reached 66 plants to date and they produce about 104 million cubic metre annually producing treating water at three stages. This water is used to mainly in agricultural sector.

The Ministry also conducts research and studies in the field of food and water security as well as other projects and development efforts with the aim to increase productivity of cubic metres of water in the context of integrated water resources management and to achieve the sustainability of water resources in order to achieve SDG 6.

In conclusion I would like to express our thanks to FAO for the excellent organization of the Conference. I also thank the Chairperson of the meeting and I thank all the participants.

May the peace of God be upon you all.

Thank you.

**His Excellency Ryszard BARTOSIK (Poland) (Original language Polish)**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson, Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate Mr. Director General, on his election for another term. We are all keen to see the FAO remain a strong, effective Organisation working for agriculture and food security. I wish Mr. Director General all success in carrying out this difficult mission.

I would also like to point out that Poland aligns itself with the positions of the European Union and its Member States.

Now I would like to address some of the issues related to water resources management.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a part of the full implementation and exercise of human rights. This perspective must be taken into account in water resources management.

Poland is a country with low water resources which are variable in time and territorially. Our retention reservoirs have a small capacity. A non-uniform distribution of precipitation and the increasingly frequent extreme weather events generate periods of excessive and insufficient moisture content. This causes large losses in agriculture. At the same time, the significant development of industry and agriculture translates into growing water consumption needs. We want to tackle the phenomena of droughts and floods with the rational water management.

Such actions also contribute to the implementation of the ambitious goals of the European Green Deal, including the sectoral strategies, specifically, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy. The Green Deal is a multi-strand strategy the implementation of which contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The environmental and climate goals are implemented by favourable agricultural practices, among others, through compliance with the standards of the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions. The Common Agricultural Policy is implemented through the Strategic Plans of the individual EU Member States. The Polish Plan includes, a set of tools designed to encourage and support measures to increase water retention in rural areas. These tools include eco-schemes, agri-environment-climate measures and a set of measures related to afforestation and the implementation of agroforestry systems.

Investments in the area of inland fisheries and aquaculture are also implemented as part of the Common Fisheries Policy.

We also support the development of scientific research and the transfer of research results from science to practice via the agricultural advisory system. Moreover, the participation of local communities in the improvement of water resources management is strengthened by the establishment of Local Water Partnerships. They constitute a mechanism for cooperation between local communities and institutions.

The Water Scarcity Prevention Programme has also been created in Poland. It provides, among others, for renaturalisation of rivers and ecosystems and improvement of water retention.

In conclusion, the actions carried out in Poland in the scope of national water management are included in delivery of the implementation of the following Goals: 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 14 (Life Below Water), 2 (Zero Hunger) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).



Concluding, I would like to emphasize that the Russian aggression against Ukraine, including the destruction of critical water infrastructure, causes huge losses for agriculture and global food security.

This is also compelling evidence to the importance of the issues of integrated water management. In this context, we expect the further involvement of the FAO in these issues.

Thank you for your attention.

**His Excellency Avi DITCHER (Israel)**

Honorable Ministers,

Distinguished Chair,

Respected delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to stand before you today at this esteemed gathering, the 43rd Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

I stand here before you today, since all of us, regardless of religion or nationality, are confronted by a pressing global challenge of great importance to our lives and the future of our children and planet – food security.

Regardless of whether rich or poor, the looming threat of food scarcity affects us all.

The global population is projected to reach nearly 10 billion by 2050, and with the growing impacts of the climate crisis, as well as conflicts and bloodsheds around the world, ensuring sustainable, affordable, and nutritional food systems, is no less than paramount.

As we all already know, Climate Change intensifies the challenges associated with food insecurity.

Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and extreme weather events, disrupt agricultural production and jeopardize the availability and affordability of food.

The consequences affect not only the agricultural sector but also state's economy, social stability, and the human well-being.

A quick and decisive reaction is crucial to make our food industry more secure and sustainable. We must promote resilient agricultural practices that maximize productivity, conserve resources.

Not only diminishing environmental impact but also benefit it. Not only for the purpose of feeding our population, but also for the sake of ensuring our future.

We cannot fail!

The consequences of failing to address food security are too risky to bear.

As the competition for limited resources intensifies, the potential for conflict and instability increases.

Lack of food and water can intensify social disparities, fuel migration, and spark geopolitical tensions.

It is imperative that we act collectively to prevent such a future.

Ladies and Gentleman, promoting sustainable food systems goes beyond agricultural practices alone. It includes the entire food value chain, from production and processing to distribution and consumption.

This is why it is my pleasure today to stand in front of you to not only present a fascinating innovation emerging from the State of Israel that hold tremendous potential for addressing this crisis, but also to inform you of an exciting way to utilize it. Please bear with me a few more minutes.

Israel has not only overcome geographical and climatic challenges, but also within a few years of its establishment, Israel was able to generate a prosperous agricultural sector, that even set a shining example for the world, moving from Food insecurity to abundance.

Please keep in mind that our country is mostly characterized by arid and semi-arid regions;

Yet, it has transformed its agricultural landscape through visionary practices and pioneering ideas.

Israel has overcome water shortage, infertile and lack of soils, and unfavorable climatic conditions and has turned itself into a thriving oasis.

The necessity has proven to be the mother of remarkable innovation.

Through cutting-edge technology, research, and a deep commitment to agricultural advancement, Israel has pioneered groundbreaking solutions that can help secure food for the world's population.

One of the key Israeli innovations revolutionizing agriculture is precision agriculture.

By utilizing advanced techniques such as drip irrigation, precision farming, climate smart technologies, Israel has overcome water scarcity and optimized resource utilization.

These practices enable farmers to grow more crops with less land and water, reduce waste, and improve overall efficiency.

The success of these methods has been widely recognized, and they hold great potential for countries dealing with similar challenges.

Furthermore, Israel has become a global leader in water management, utilizing advanced irrigation techniques, desalination, and reused water treatment.

Israel has developed state-of-the-art water treatment plants, that have transformed agriculture irrigation and water uses thus, enabling us to reach water security in one of the climate change hotspots on the globe.

These techniques, combined with advanced water management practices, have helped Israeli farmers thrive in arid regions and expand their agricultural production sustainably.

In addition to water management, Israel has also embraced digital technologies to revolutionize farming practices.

Due to Israeli innovation in agriculture, Israeli farmers are empowered with real-time information, enabling them to make informed decisions and optimize their operations.

Israeli scientists are helping farmers mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve yields, and increase resilience.

Distinguished guests, the innovative spirit of Israel, coupled with its dedication to sustainable agricultural practices, has given rise to solutions that can transform the future of global food security.

It is crucial for us to collaborate and share knowledge, leveraging these innovations to improve agricultural practices worldwide.

By adopting and adapting, we can collectively take a giant leap towards achieving food security for all.

I am pleased to inform you that Israel has joined the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

This will enable our researchers and scientists to join hands with researchers around the world to exchange genetic materials of plants to preserve our plant vegetation and develop new crops.

The Ministry of Agriculture has engaged in a very constructive and fruitful cooperation with two of the leading development banks:

The World Bank and The Inter Development Bank (IDB).

This wonderful cooperation will provide eligible member states with the opportunity to introduce climate smart agricultural technologies developed in Israel, to assist in their agriculture and food production challenges.

Those funds will provide opportunities to member-states to take advantage of Israel's technologies.

I would like to use this opportunity to call for other countries to join us in this important endeavor.

Let us unite in our efforts for the sake of our planet and the future of generations to come.

Thank you very much.

**Mr Masoud Jarallah AL-MARRI (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Vice-Chairperson of the Conference,

At the outset allow me to express our delight in being able to participate in this 43rd FAO Conference. This offers us a very important opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss mechanisms, recommendations and initiatives that will contribute to improving the state of agriculture and food as well as efficient water resources management across the world as we endeavour to bring about the Four Betters: production, nutrition, environment and life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Qatar appreciates the key role played by FAO, which is to compliment the efforts being undertaken within countries to achieve the SDGs in Agenda 2030 particularly SDG 2, the eradication of hunger and achievement of food security as well as improved nutrition and promotion of sustainable agriculture. We reiterate our attachment to fruitful cooperation and coordination with FAO as well as with all other stakeholders to enable the implementation of sustainable food systems that will in turn enable the SDGs to be achieved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Qatar attaches particular importance to food and food security. This is a sector of crucial importance and key to our national security. For the first time within the Middle East, Qatar will be hosting between 2 October 2023 and 28 March 2024 the Expo 2024 entitled *A Green Desert, A Better Environment*. This is part and parcel of our resolute efforts to combat desertification with sustainable initiatives to bring an end to this phenomenon of desertification.

In organizing and hosting this Expo we will be attaching particular importance to market gardening and horticulture and in view of the challenges faced by our region. I take this opportunity to invite all stakeholders, government's, organizations and specialists to participate in this event, which will offer an excellent opportunity to exchange innovative ideas and practices, and bluesky thinking. We are delighted that many stakeholders from around the world have already confirmed that they will be participating at this major event which speaks to the needs to plant trees and to green arid areas and deserts.

This Expo will be taking place in Doha and it is part of Qatar's efforts to adopt agricultural practices that are efficient and unconventional as we endeavour to address arid conditions for example, vertical agriculture, making use of up-to-the-minute technology. We support all endeavours to ensure agricultural self-sufficiency in Qatar. Further, we have adopted a national food security policy for the period 2018 to 2024 and this has enabled us to put in place a food security safety net for our country.

It enables us to protect ourselves and has for example enabled us to see the blow of the COVID-19 pandemic cushioned in our country, bearing in mind the closure of maritime and air routes, for example, as well as the temporary cessation of import and production chains internationally in the course of the pandemic period.

As part of our strategy we will be rolling out a future strategy for the period 2024-2030. This will come to an end in 2030 coinciding with the culmination of our national vision, Qatar 2030. This will be focused on sustainability in terms of natural resources enabling us to safeguard the achievements of previous strategies, bolstering local capacity in terms of supply chains and production as well as distribution of food.

It will also enable us to diversify our sources of production and food, diversifying logistical services as well with foreign investment and development of trade links. This will be a three pillar strategy, local production and markets, followed by alert systems and strategic reserves and development of foreign investment and trade.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We reiterate here today our willingness to cooperate with FAO and all Member States in order to further and strengthen our collected efforts to address shared challenges particularly in terms of shortage of water and climate change as we endeavour to find the best possible solutions.

In conclusion we wish this Conference every success and hope to be able to adopt the mechanisms that will enable us to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves because we come together here united by common interests.

I thank you.

**His Excellency Defu GUANG (China) (Original Language Chinese)**

Thank you Madam President. China would like to congratulate you. We believe that with you chairing the Conference we will surely move all Agenda Items forward smoothly and effectively.

Ministers,

Heads of Delegations and colleagues,

The Conference has chosen water resources management for the Four Betters as its theme. The Conference aims to step up efforts for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. China commends and supports this theme.

China lacks in water resources. Fresh water per capita is less than one third of the global average level. Water resources in China are distributed highly unevenly across regions. Drought and the lack of water have been a long term threat to China's domestic production. The Chinese Government values greatly water conservation in agriculture and China works constantly to better manage water resources. China promotes good practices in this area. In the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan water conservation in agriculture has made significant progress with increases posing efficiency and effectiveness of water use.

I would like to highlight the following measures. First, improving water management for sustainable agriculture, reducing water consumption. In 1997, 492 cubic metres of water were used to irrigate one mu of land. In 2021, that number is 355. By the end of 2022, over 400 million mu of farmland apply high efficiency irrigation methods using less water and putting water to better use.

Secondly, China pushes forward dry land farming, fully leveraging water resources. Dry land farming has a long history in China. The Shexian Dryland Stone Terraced System in Hebei province is designated by FAO as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. In practical terms agri-planting structure is adjusted and optimized according to precipitation. We also carry out trainings for water conservation techniques and establish irrigation guidelines for major agri-plants.

Thirdly, China increases efficiency of water use in agriculture and actively developing irrigation technologies. We apply different techniques in an integrated manner for higher efficiency. The total area of irrigated farm land increased from 240 million mu in 1949 to over 1 billion mu in 2021.

Although the irrigated area makes only half of the farmland in China 75 percent of food and over 90 percent of cash crops are produced on them. Water is the foundation for agri-production. China will continue to optimize water management and explore advanced irrigation techniques.

China faces three dilemmas protecting the bottom line for food security in a face of the lack of water, conserving water in agriculture with weak farmland infrastructure, using water for agri-production whilst safeguarding the environment. We will safeguard food supply.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Excellencies,

As the biggest developing country and a responsible major country China will step up its own effort and fulfil its international obligations. China will broadly support and continue to support FAO in its work and participate pragmatically in global agrifood governance. China will cooperate with FAO and its Members in a pragmatic and effective manner. The world is facing multiple challenges; the lack of

water, natural disasters, climate change, and the list is long. We call upon the FAO and its Members to take real actions.

This Conference serves as a key opportunity to improve water management thus turning a new page in global food security and rural development. China is willing to shoulder international responsibilities in accordance with its own capacities and development stage, through South-South Cooperation and Tripartite Cooperation, Hand-in-Hand Initiative and the GIAHS, China will deepen its cooperation with FAO and its Members to safeguard global food security, to achieve a world with zero hunger and zero poverty, and to contribute to the community of shared future for human kind.

Thank you very much.

**Ms Marieta STEPANYAN (Armenia)**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Armenia values its long-standing cooperation with FAO in all the areas of the Organization's mandate.

Over the past three decades FAO has been the trusted partner of the Government of Armenia in implementing reforms in the areas of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, aimed at improving rural livelihoods and food security in our country.

Currently Armenia implements a number of promising projects in collaboration with FAO, aimed at improving sustainable land management and restoration of degraded landscapes in Armenia, forest cover increase and sustainable forest management, as well as strengthening capacities for improving climate action for building resilience in agriculture.

Particularly, within the project on Technical assistance of land policy and land management instruments the draft Law on "Increasing effectiveness of utilization of agricultural land" was developed to facilitate the reduction of the abandoned land, to reduce the level of land fragmentation, to develop agricultural land market and to implement measures for effective use of agricultural land.

Ensuring food security is among the crucial components of the national security of Armenia. Numerous legal acts have been adopted to ensure the food security system.

We attach great importance to the project on deployment of digital technologies in Armenia, launched in January 2023, aimed at making rural communities more attractive, smart and sustainable.

With respect to the main topic of the Conference: water is at the heart of everything we do, I can state that Armenia is self-sufficient country with its water resources. This said however, investing in water security means thinking long-term, and we need to build our capacity to respond to the water security risks appropriately. And to this end we rely on the support of FAO in identifying and targeting the challenges with tailor-made projects.

Fish farming is another area of a strategic importance for our country, as fish farms can be established not only in the lowland areas, but also in the sub-mountainous and even mountainous areas and especially in the border villages, where it can be considered as the only profitable sector. The climate conditions of the Republic of Armenia are quite favorable for industrial fish farming, especially for breeding and growing of salmonids and sturgeons, and as a result of the targeted use of the groundwater it is possible to organize the production of commercial fish in all seasons. Currently over 170 fish farming enterprises are registered in Armenia, with a production of about 17,000-18,000 tons of commercial fish annually. Frozen, as well as processed fish and caviar are exported from the Republic of Armenia to a number of countries.

We highly appreciate the emergency humanitarian assistance that FAO has been providing to conflict affected vulnerable groups in Armenia, displaced as a result of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Unfortunately, in the result of the 6 months -blockade of Lachin corridor - the only road linking Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and the outside world, the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh has extremely aggravated, leaving 120,000 Armenian population without food and medicine. The disruption of gas and electricity supply to Nagorno-Karabakh yielded massive cutting of trees, which in turn caused deforestation. After months of interruption in the supply of electricity and gas, the Sarsang Water Reservoir is reaching critically low levels due to the release of large

amounts of water to power hydroelectric stations and meet the energy needs of the people of Nagorno Karabakh. Shallowing of the Sarsang reservoir will have serious environmental consequences for the entire ecosystem of the region. According to estimations, it will take several years to restore Sarsang's waters to the pre-blockade levels.

We are of a strong opinion that the status of this region does not make the people who live there any different from us all. And Armenia, as responsible FAO member and partner is hopeful that the humanitarian crises in Nagorno-Karabakh will be addressed in accordance with the goal 2 of the 2030 agenda.

Armenia is committed to working with FAO and all the partners towards attaining the goals of the Organization, unreservedly respecting its steadfast principle of Leaving no one behind.

Thank you.

**Mr Kok Thai LIM (Singapore)**

Chairperson, distinguished delegates. It is an honor to be here with you to discuss and exchange ideas on food and agriculture. This year marks the 10th year since Singapore became a Member of the FAO. Singapore is appreciative of FAOs exceptional work and continued efforts to enable safe food for all. The global food crisis has been exacerbated by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic climate change, extreme weather, geopolitical conflicts, and supply chain disruptions among others.

These events have affected the global supply of food and has had a disproportionate effect on countries, particularly small island states like Singapore, which are highly reliant on food imports. This crisis underscored the importance of food resilience as well as building and sustaining links with trading partners to ensure continued and stable access to food.

The challenge of feeding our populations in a manner that is efficient and sustainable is one we all face. Our solutions must be climate resilient to withstand the impacts of climate change. As such, we need to transform our food systems, leveraging on technology to help us grow more with less resources and in a more sustainable and resilient manner.

This will be crucial in an increasingly resource-constrained world. As a city-state with limited natural and human resources, Singapore has turned to various technology-driven solutions. This can help shift farming to become more land and labor efficient. For example, indoor vertical farms can significantly increase use while using less land, as well as minimize the impact of extreme weather given its climate control environment.

At the same time, technologies such as hydroponics and recirculating aquaculture system use significantly less water than traditional farming methods, which can help us address the water challenge facing the world. A potential game changer on the horizon is novel food such as culture meat. Singapore has ventured into novel foods such as alternative protein and culture meat, which can help meet our food needs. Singapore was the first country to approve for sale culture meat in 2020 and such Novel foods leverage on labors technology and can be produced with comparatively less land, water and labor than traditional methods.

However, countries are that wants to turn to social food solutions will need to have a good food safety system in place. And our experience are in developing the novel food, food safety framework and guidelines we are very happy to share. Couple with close partnership among regulators and industries this facilitates the development of food that can potentially elevate the food crisis. As a Member of the FAO Singapore will continue to support this organization in achieving its goals. We are also eager to exchange views and lessons learned with fellow Members in building resilient food supply chains, food safety systems, as well as urban food systems and solutions to ensure safe food for all.

I thank you.

**His Excellency Swantje NILSSON (Germany)**

Dear Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Germany takes the floor in this new term for the first time, please allow me to start with congratulating Dr. Qu on his reelection.

Germany looks forward to continuing close and trustful cooperation with Dr. Qu himself and all of FAO. Germany aligns itself with the Statement made by Spain on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States and is grateful for the information provided by FAO on the State of Food and Agriculture. It has already been underlined in many interventions at this Conference that we are faced with enormous challenges in the efforts to achieve food security for all people on this planet. We all have committed to ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. That is just a few harvests away.

With the Corona pandemic, the climate and biodiversity crisis, but also due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine with its effects on global food security we urgently need to step up our efforts. Jointly. And now! But where to start?

Agricultural and food systems transformation towards more sustainability and resilience. Our minister is looking forward to discussing this with you during the upcoming UN FSS Stocktaking event at the end of this month. Innovation and smart technology: enable farmers, so they can contribute to both, climate adaptation and climate mitigation. We need to work harder on reliable incentives for mitigation.

A focus on the restoration of natural resources, we need to deal with depleted soils or the lack of water. All these issues are at the heart of FAO's mandate. We very much appreciate that FAO has introduced more multi-stakeholder formats, more open discussions as we need some fundamental shifts to succeed with the necessary transformation. We already have a lot of shared values and achievements we can build on and which provide a coherent guide to navigating through the current crises.

We even have a lot in our toolbox already. Let us focus on commonalities, interlink approaches and tools and develop them further. Jointly!

We have already achieved so much, look at the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) and the Voluntary Guidelines on the realization of the Right to Food as elaborated in our Committee on World Food Security.

We are convinced that many people would benefit from greater attention, appreciation and implementation of the various guidelines and policy recommendations of those guidelines. For it is precisely there where women's rights, land (access) rights, youth participation, agroecology, responsible investments and sustainable food systems are interconnected.

The Guidelines on the Right to Food were adopted by FAO Council in 2004. They have not lost any of their relevance in the 20th year of their existence. And they cover both the improvement of agricultural structures as well as the access to production resources such as land, water – the pertinent subject of this General Debate – or for example seeds.

In last week's "Policies against Hunger"-Conference in Berlin more than 200 participants from all sectors concluded that a human rights-based approach can help the transformation of our food system towards more sustainability and resilience. They underlined that the needs and rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups must be taken into account when designing sustainable food systems. To quote our Organization FAO: "The Right to Food provides a change of perspective: the hungry cease to be a problem, they become both part of the solution and actors of their own development." And yes, it is our job as governments to always find pathways for people to be part of solutions and not be left behind as a problem.

Solutions need to be context specific and concrete. Thank you for focusing on water and all its interconnectedness today. The realisation of the right to food also helps to mobilize the full food production capacity lying in a holistic approach, targeting e.g. food loss and waste as well as more sustainable production methods. Sustainable aquaculture has potential to a resource-saving and climate friendly food production. One instrument to unlock this potential further could be innovation

along the nexus waste-feed-food, by using organic waste from food production and use it, e.g. for insect production, and eventually as feed in aquaculture. This could help reduce the impact of aquaculture production on fish stocks, and at the same time to the reduction of food waste.

We need to meet, best physically and bring all the knowledge from our countries into the room. Let us start acting! Let us move from the general debate to specific action!

Thank you.

**Sra. Daniela ACUÑA (Chile)**

En primer lugar, quisiera felicitar al Doctor Qu Dongyu por su reelección como Director General de la FAO con un amplio apoyo de los países Miembros. Le deseo el mayor de los éxitos y el apoyo de Chile en su gestión.

Cuando adoptamos la Agenda 2030 y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible asumimos el compromiso colectivo de intensificar los esfuerzos de poner fin a la pobreza en todas sus formas, reducir la desigualdad y luchar contra el cambio climático instando a los países a adoptar medidas que nos permitan transitar hacia un desarrollo sostenible. El agua es transversal a muchos de estos objetivos: el abordar los déficits hídricos, la escasez de agua, los riesgos de inundaciones y la degradación de la calidad del agua, que son amenazas a la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria, por lo cual es necesario mejorar la gobernanza del agua para que pueda conducir tanto a la sostenibilidad a largo plazo de su gestión y el uso de los recursos hídricos como sistemas alimentarios más eficientes, resilientes y equitativos.

En este contexto, la agricultura ocupa un espacio central en este reto, no solo porque se ve afectada gravemente por las limitaciones del abastecimiento hídrico sino también porque es el sector que más agua consume a nivel global. Desde el Ministerio de Agricultura de Chile, uno de nuestros objetivos estratégicos es precisamente este punto: el agua y la emergencia climática. Y en base a esto buscamos contribuir a la seguridad hídrica, la cual permita el desarrollo sustentable del sector silvoagropecuario y de los territorios rurales en un escenario de emergencia climática promoviendo así un modelo de gestión integrado a nivel de las cuencas y además las recientes inundaciones que han sufrido las regiones del centro y centro-sur del país dan cuenta de la urgencia de abordar estos desafíos. Con ello buscamos crear una cultura del agua mejorando así la sustentabilidad, conservación y su gobernanza a través de acciones orientadas a la eficiencia, la disponibilidad y la calidad del recurso hídrico.

El agua y su gestión resultan fundamentales para la producción de alimentos y el buen funcionamiento de los sistemas alimentarios. En relación con esto, el gobierno de Chile lanzó recientemente la estrategia de soberanía para la seguridad alimentaria la cual fue construida con la participación de amplios sectores de nuestra sociedad y coordinada por el Ministerio de agricultura. Esta estrategia orienta el actuar del Estado de Chile para avanzar con una visión de mediano y largo plazo en la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios hacia sistemas más sustentables, resilientes e inclusivos teniendo como foco el garantizar el derecho humano a una alimentación adecuada.

La estrategia es un primer paso en el camino para la transformación del sistema alimentario y el fortalecimiento de la seguridad alimentaria presente y futura incorporando la dimensión ambiental, social, económica y cultural a través de la introducción del concepto de soberanía alimentaria. Entendemos la soberanía alimentaria como el resguardo del derecho a la alimentación a través del fortalecimiento de los patrimonios que conforman la base del Sistema Alimentario Nacional con el objetivo de contribuir a la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional presente y futura.

Con esta conceptualización nos alejamos de conceptos como autarquía, autoabastecimiento, fijación de precios o restricciones al comercio exterior. Estos patrimonios del sistema alimentario son fundamentales para el funcionamiento y fortalecimiento de los sistemas alimentarios, ya que los entendemos como el conjunto de bienes materiales e inmateriales susceptibles de valoración económica, social, ambiental y cultural que permitan la producción, distribución y transformación de los alimentos. En este marco, los recursos hídricos son parte esencial de los patrimonios del sistema alimentario nacional.



La estrategia también considera enfoques transversales que ya se han planteado en las distintas discusiones acá, como son género, sustentabilidad, cambio climático, asociatividad, educación y capacitación, territorio, transición socio ecológica justa, jóvenes, trabajo decente e investigación, desarrollo e innovación.

Para finalizar, Señor Presidente, quisiera comentarles a los aquí presentes que el pasado 15 y 16 de junio Chile fue sede de la Segunda Cumbre Parlamentaria Mundial contra el Hambre y la Malnutrición con el copatrocinio de España y de esta Organización. Contando en aquella oportunidad con la participación de su Excelencia, el Presidente de la República de Chile, Gabriel Boric, demostrando con ello la importancia que tiene para nuestro país la alimentación, el combate a la malnutrición y la soberanía y seguridad alimentaria, así como la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios.

Agradecemos a FAO por todo el trabajo conjunto realizado y esperamos poder continuar en esta senda. Muchas gracias, Señora Presidente.

**Mr Shri Rakesh RANJAN (India)**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by congratulating Dr. Qu Dongyu for his reelection as Director-General of FAO and I wish him a very successful second tenure. India has endured a longstanding and valuable partnership with FAO since 1948 and has played a significant role since inception as a chair and Member of various statutory bodies and committees.

On India's initiative, United Nations General Assembly declared 2023 as International Year of Millets. FAO is the lead agency for its celebration with all stakeholders. Millet are climate resilient, can be grown in arid areas, require very little water and have high nutrition value. They provide an affordable and sustainable solution to nutrition, food security, and water conservation. Ladies and gentlemen, India is determined to attain sustainable development goal too.

We have the vision of empowering farmers, especially women and rural youth through large scale lab to land initiatives by developing new technologies and methodologies and helping them in its adoption. India has been promoting organic farming and natural farming with an emphasis on sustainable productivity, food security, and soil health. We have launched programs to create new irrigation infrastructure, conserved soil fat fertility including balanced use of fertilizers and provide farm-to-market connectivity, ICT linkages, etc.

The Government of India has focused on innovation, digital support system, climate-smart technologies, development of high and bio fortified varieties and agricultural research and IT initiatives. Let me focus on a few of our IT initiatives during recent times in agriculture.

India has one of the largest crop insurance scheme with about 85 million subscribers to the scheme. It is not an easy task to take care of all the claims and settlement. So our portal provides the backbone.

The portal is called DigiClaim, which is used for transparent calculation and claim settlement of crop insurance by insurance companies. YES Tech, which stands for Yield Estimation System based on technology. Is another initiative that provides for remote sensing-based yield estimation of crops? We have initiated digital crop survey as a pilot project to get a clear picture of the farms, farmers, and the crops being shown to better plan and manage their production. For a digital agriculture ecosystem that facilitates better planting strategy and policy making a federated architecture called AgriStack is being developed.

Through AgriStack farmers would have access to a wider choice of inputs, greater access to markets quicker and easier access to finance and better and more localized and customized advisory pertinent to their crop and their land. We are also working towards the development of a decision support system, which is a national framework that would help to standardize the use of geospatial data in agriculture.

A Pan India electronic trading portal called Electronic National Agriculture Market, ENAM, facilitates Pan India Trade in agricultural commodities, provides better price discovery through transparent auction process and ensures timely online payment. 17.5 million Farmers and nearly a quarter million traders are already registered on the ENAM portal. Ladies and gentlemen, these have been some of our recent IT initiatives. Today's youth has been participating in India's agricultural growth story.

Accelerator fund provides the young entrepreneurs in setting up agri startups. These efforts have culminated in record food grains and horticulture production and productivity in India making us a net provided to the world.

It is heartening to state that our approach towards food security and nutrition related challenges has been guided by the spirit of our G20 presidency theme of One Earth, One Family, and One Future. We firmly believe that with the unwavering commitment of the FAO and in collaboration with all Member countries, India can immensely enhance agricultural productivity and eradicate hunger and malnutrition. It will significantly contribute to creating a safer and healthier global community.

Chairman, Sirs, India is ready to share these and other developments in the agriculture sector with nations in the geographical south to help make their agriculture practices innovative, evidence-based, resilient and climate smart. We invite FAO to interact closely with us in dissemination of the knowledge and technology which India has developed through FAO's, South-South collaboration projects. Ladies and gentlemen, together we strive towards a world that ensures the wellbeing and prosperity of all its inhabitants. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Mr Lottie VAISEKAVEA (Solomon Islands)**

Chair and Excellencies,

Solomon Islands sincerely and warmly congratulates Dr Qu Dongyu on his appointment as the FAO's Director-General. Solomon Islands is a committed partner of the food systems Agenda of the FAO mandate and also of your full capacity to deliver the necessary support and transformation to create and shape a new global and local agriculture functionality for our farmers, economies and countries. In regard to climate change and its dynamics, it is clear that the normalcy of cyclic influence is broken. Time has fallen into a very linear pathway and it will get worse and worse.

The new systems we create and build must impact the change of lifestyle to create a pathway through the crisis. The future demands the parameters, not the past. The crisis is manmade. That solution must also be manmade. That is the most difficult option for mankind today. In Solomon Islands, we are making the human component the common denominator of a new paradigm to shift our agriculture to a sustainable platforms.

We are a tropical country. We have very good rainfall, but the rains now are always raining cats and dogs and so flash floods has become a common everyday occurrence. Agriculture must be the deliberate choice and decision of the farmer. The *four betters* must be delivered in the midst of the crisis. The Solomon Islands Agriculture New Day Strategy provides a practical pathway to harmonize with the *four betters* to ensure a customized and practical local action. We look forward to learn partner and collaborate with FAO and all our partner countries and Members. Our strategies include the opportunities to make women and youth more pivotal in agriculture and engage a strong interface.

This interface will ensure that the technical support of both FAO and all our partners can build a strong local response. This ensures that global, regional and local joints supply practical opportunity. Solomon Island seeks to increase water conservation in partnership with the relevant sectors and make it the possession of our smallholder farmers in their own geographical locations. In conclusion, Solomon Island wishes everyone the best in all our joint efforts.

Thank you.

**His Excellency Hussain Rasheed HASSAN (Maldives)**

Excellencies,

I am from the Maldives. The Maldives with over 90 000 square kilometers of sovereign territory and nearly 1 million square kilometers of sea is a large Ocean State in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Over 99.6 percent of our territory is in fact seawater. Our total land area in over 1 100 small islands is less than 298 square kilometers so we are a large ocean state with small land mass. Furthermore, we are the lowest-line nation in the world. Sea level rise caused by global Climate Change is an existing threat to us. Global temperature is increasing unabated.

The seas are becoming warmer and warmer, slowly decimating coral reefs and associate biodiversity. In the Maldives, we are living through a climate emergency already. We are experiencing a consistently warm climate and enduring warming trends during the last four decades with increases of 0.8 degrees-Celsius between 1978 and 2018.

Excellencies, at the current level of global warming, almost 80 percent of our country could become inhabitable by 2050 as our president, His Excellency, Ibrahim Mohamed Sohil declared at the COP26. Our islands are slowly being inundated by sea, one by one. If we do not reverse this trend, the Maldives will cease to exist by the end of this century.

The intergovernmental panel on Climate Change predicts that by 2050, if the temperatures rises more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, as much as between 70 to 90 percent of the coral reefs in the Maldives and other coral Atoll Nations will be degraded. And consequently, a huge amount of biodiversity will be lost forever.

With increased and frequent weather events, sea swells, storm surges and flooding, inundate dry land with seawater, making groundwater saline and causing devastated coastal erosion and land loss. With coral reefs gone there is nothing to protect the islands from the perils of the sea anymore. Without coral reefs, raising sea levels, pushing coast-dwelling communities out of their homes. Healthy coral reefs can absorb 97 percent of the wave's energy dramatically reducing erosion. We cannot afford to build rock boarder sea walls around our islands.

It costs something like USD 3 000 to build a linear meter of seawall. Low-line Atoll in the Maldives face a very significant threat from the rising sea level. The economic and human impact of wave flooding are likely to grow in significance and threaten the viability of livelihoods in many island communities. Excellencies, the dependence of the Maldives' economy on tourism represents a major vulnerability.

Climate Change is badly impacting the fisheries and agriculture. Fish is not only 98 percent of our physical export, it is also the main source of our protein for us. Without income from tourism, fisheries and agriculture, food imports and desalination decellularization of water may become less viable. The natural ecosystem for Maldives and most notably its coral reefs, are at great risk from climate change. Climate change represents a major threat to way of life of Maldivians.

This can still be averted. Humanity should be more responsible, seriously invest in greener technology, and implement measures to reduce and stop emitting greenhouse cases, making good the treasures made by the developed world to provide assistance and finance to the most climate-vulnerable states, LDCs and LDTs for mitigation and adaptation.

Excellencies, to adapt to the new climate conditions we need to first invest to protect our islands. In terms of food security and livelihood security, we need to ensure our tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean remain sustainable. European stocks are already over-exploited. We need to reduce our catches by 22 percent. We fish sustainably. We practice the most sustainable fishing method in the world. We catch tuna one by one using pole and line. Our fisheries is MSC-certified and we do not have any commercial net fishing.

We call upon all the coastal states in the Indian Ocean and distant water fishing Nations taking part in the IOTC to ensure stock sustainability of Indian Ocean tuna stocks. Looking up at agriculture, we have very little land, less than 298 square kilometers. The groundwater in the islands have become saline as I explained it before. We have to transform our agriculture. It will be a huge challenge, but I think we can still do it. For instance, we have to use reverse osmosis technology to produce water.

We have no fresh water, no reverse or no mountains. So even for agriculture, we have to produce reverse osmosis technology and produce fresh water. We need to transform. We need financial resources to invest in modern agriculture, vertical agriculture systems, and modern efficient growing systems. We can transform our agriculture and only we can do this with your help. I hope that the world realize that this is not going to be a life sentence for a small country like Maldives.

Thank you.

**Sra. Monica ROBELA RAFFONE (Nicaragua)**

Excelentísimo Señor QU Dongyu, Director General de la FAO, Honorables Representantes y Jefes de Delegación de los Estados Miembros.

Es un honor dirigirme a ustedes en el marco de este importante periodo de sesiones de la Conferencia y transmitirles el fraterno saludo de nuestro Presidente Daniel Ortega, de su compañera Vicepresidenta Rosario Murillo y del Pueblo de Nicaragua

Excelencias,

Este 43° periodo de sesiones de la Conferencia de FAO se desarrolla tras la incipiente recuperación post pandémica que se ha visto amenazada por diferentes acontecimientos globales, que aunados a la crisis mundial del agua —la escasez de agua, las sequías, las inundaciones nos ponen frente a retos apremiantes.

Los datos, nos indican que más de 2 mil millones de personas en el mundo carecen de acceso al agua potable segura y 3.600 millones de personas siguen viviendo sin servicios de saneamiento. A su vez, las estimaciones sugieren que se necesitarán 6.7 billones de dólares para el 2030 y 22.6 billones para el 2050, a fin de alcanzar el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 6.

Los problemas relacionados con los recursos hídricos son urgentes, y lo serán cada vez más durante los próximos años si no aceleramos las acciones eficaces y holísticas para combatirlos, reforzados por una gobernanza efectiva y un marco de acción global, que contemple financiamiento internacional, desarrollo de tecnologías modernas y eficientes de riego, así como la creación de capacidades, en apoyo a las políticas nacionales

Tenemos el gran reto de hacer realidad el derecho humano al agua y al saneamiento, lo debemos hacer de manera progresiva, pero acelerada en el marco del respeto a la soberanía nacional de los Estados y sus legislaciones. Promoviendo la cooperación y la coordinación transfronteriza, con pleno respeto de las decisiones y prioridades de cada Estado.

Señora Presidenta,

El Gobierno de Nicaragua ha alcanzado progresos significativos en cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030, con avances importantes en el ODS 6.

Con el propósito de continuar optimizando su grado de implementación, ha desarrollado y efectuado acciones estratégicas, vinculadas al incremento de coberturas y mejoramiento de la calidad de los servicios de agua potable, el saneamiento e higiene en las áreas urbanas y rurales, el monitoreo y análisis de la cantidad y calidad del agua, la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos y la protección de los ecosistemas relacionados con el agua, bosques, montañas, humedales y lagos.

Los Avances en el manejo y la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos en Nicaragua, se sustentan en un modelo de alianza, consenso y responsabilidades compartidas con los diferentes actores a nivel nacional y local, contemplando acciones de gestión territorial congruentes con el desarrollo de los principales sectores productivos y el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Humano.

La puesta en marcha de este modelo acompañado con una incipiente inversión pública, han permitido alcanzar una cobertura de agua potable en el área urbana de 93%, llegando a rincones alejados del país, con una proyección de conseguir el 98% al año 2026.

Continuamos con nuestro plan nacional de reforestación encaminado a la protección de nuestras cuencas hidrográficas, garantizando la reforestación en las áreas cercanas a los ríos y lagos, así como la aplicación de prácticas agrícolas sustentables, que minimicen la contaminación de nuestras fuentes de agua.

Excelencias, Nicaragua por su posición geográfica está particularmente expuesta a los impactos de la variabilidad climática y observa con preocupación cómo los impactos del cambio climático global, relacionados con el agua en forma de sequías e inundaciones, son cada vez más frecuentes y severos, obstaculizando nuestro empeño de hacer resilientes y sostenibles nuestros sistemas agroalimentarios,

Necesitamos una manera más inclusiva e integrada de abordar el problema de la escasez de agua, soluciones innovadoras que aborden tanto la dimensión socioeconómica como la medioambiental de

los problemas interrelacionados de la pobreza, la alimentación, el agua y el clima.

La FAO, en el ámbito de su mandato, puede aportar en términos de conocimientos, de asistencia técnica, movilización de recursos a través del Fondo Verde para el Clima, el Fondo de Adaptación y el Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial, entre otros, promoviendo además la asistencia técnica e impulsando la cooperación sur-sur y triangular.

Para finalizar, Señora Presidenta, reafirmamos el compromiso de Nicaragua de seguir contribuyendo al sector de agua y saneamiento mediante una planificación articulada, que permita el fortalecimiento y cumplimiento del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 6 de acuerdo con la Agenda 2030.

Muchas Gracias.

**Mr Matthías G. PÁLSSON (Iceland)**

Mr Chair,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to congratulate Director - General Qu Dongyu on a very solid re-election as Director-General of FAO, Iceland looks forward to working with him for his second term in office.

We are far off track when it comes to the achievement of SDG6.

Climate change is driving water scarcity and floods. Droughts are leading to less, and more contaminated, water. Floods damage infrastructure and can lead to water contamination.

Yet, water is fundamental to our existence. It is a human right, essential for all aspects of life and inextricably linked to sustainable development. Access to safe drinking water provides enormous economic and health benefits and delivers essential gender equality outcomes.

Being among the richest countries in terms of water resources, Iceland sees it as its obligation to contribute to improving people's access to clean water in areas where water scarcity is prevalent. For decades we have therefore worked with district authorities to improve access to clean water and sanitation facilities in our bilateral partner countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Malawi, Uganda and Sierra Léone.

This work aligns with our emphasis on gender equality, as the lack of access to safe drinking water disproportionately impacts women and girls who often have the primary responsibility for fetching water, often a long way from home. SDG6 is therefore at its core a gender goal. We need to ensure women's active participation in all aspects of society. When it comes to water management, their participation in all decision-making needs to be ensured, their voices heard and taken into consideration. Women need to be involved throughout the process from policy and national budget decisions, to designing and constructing community water infrastructure.

While Iceland is indeed rich in water resources, it is important to ensure their protection and sustainability for the foreseeable future. Last year, Iceland adopted its first national water strategy for the years 2022-2027. We must not take for granted what we have - and ensure we preserve it for future generations.

We need universal political and financial commitments to SDG6. Everyone has a role to play, governments, individuals, civil society, the private sector - and FAO as well as the United Nations as a whole. The increasing focus on the importance of water, both here at FAO, at the recent UN Water Conference and its Water Action Agenda, at the World Bank and elsewhere in the international system, will hopefully drive this forward.

This is, indeed, a watershed moment. Iceland is committed to play its part in this new tide of water action. By sustainably managing its water resources, by investing in improved water access for vulnerable populations and by increasing its climate financing.

Thank you.

**Mr Jiří JÍLEK (Czechia)**

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.  
Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

To begin with, Czechia fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and its 27 Member States delivered by Spain.

In addition, Czechia would like to make following remarks and observations:

First, the theme of integrated water resources management is critically important and we appreciate that it is discussed during this Conference. We believe that outcomes of the Conference will encourage FAO to further accelerate its work with all partners on this vital topic.

Second, we fully support constructive outputs of the UN 2023 Water Conference. “Keep calm and carry on” is not a viable option to resolve the global water crisis unfolding before our eyes. Transformational change is needed. Water must be understood, managed, valued and protected, for the benefit of all.

Achieving these goals is the responsibility of all water users, stakeholders and governments. The key messages from the UN Water Conference were that water is a global common good; access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is the most basic human need and right and must become a true catalyst for health and well-being, securing nutrition and energy for all.

UN 2023 Water Conference confirmed fundamental role water plays in all aspects of life. Water is directly linked to the three pillars of sustainable development, which are social, economic and environmental. All these three pillars should be given equal attention. We welcome also that sustainable water management will be overseen by the new UN Special Envoy for Water.

Third, as stated in the FAO document, integrated water management is crosscutting theme and supports the achievement of many SDGs through close linkages with agriculture and food security, climate change, biodiversity, gender equality and health, and others. Droughts and water shortages on one hand and floods on the other affects livelihoods of billions and food security globally every day.

Fourth, as far as Czechia is concerned, it develops its water resources management considering drought periods of last years which affected crop production and forestry sector significantly. We also work on measures to mitigate negative impact of floods.

Fifth, the water management is extremely fragile in countries, where crisis, conflicts and wars occur. Therefore, Czechia is deeply concerned about the unprecedented Russian attack against Ukrainian critical civilian water infrastructure, with the destruction of the Dnieper Nova Kakhovka dam and hydroelectric power plant. The Russian Federation continues to push the boundaries of its aggression and endangers the lives of tens of thousands of civilians and environment by a flood wave. This brutality and atrocity must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. We recall that attacks on critical civilian infrastructure can be considered war crimes and their perpetrators must be held accountable in accordance with international law.

The attack on the Nova Kakhovka dam means another humanitarian, ecological and technological catastrophe brought to Ukraine by the Russian aggression. Irrigation systems are destroyed, and Ukrainian agricultural land is being degraded. Czechia supports humanitarian activities to cope with the Russian Federation made disaster and expresses full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The Kakhovka water reservoir is an important source of water for the cooling technology of the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant, which brings another threat to the Ukrainian nuclear safety and security systems.

Sixth, Russian Federation's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal aggression against Ukraine, with an active involvement of Belarus, grossly violates international law and the UN Charter, and seriously undermines stability and international security, including global food security. Russian army targets farmers, fields, machinery, food production and storage capacities as well as transport and export

infrastructure. Russian Federation's war of aggression is also in violation of the object and purpose of the FAO as enshrined in the Preamble of the FAO Constitution.

Unprecedented worldwide surge in food, fertilizer and energy prices, combined with the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and boosted by the Russian war of aggression still has far-reaching consequences for the world food security, nutrition and food systems as illustrated in the latest FAO's assessment reports.

It is vital that the FAO continues its support to address the consequences of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine on global food security, nutrition and agriculture. Also, we stress the importance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative for the global food security, in particular in the most vulnerable regions and countries, and it is therefore essential that this initiative remains in place for as long as necessary.

Allow me, Mr. Chair, to articulate final remark on sanctions against the Russian Federation: They have only one purpose – to target the ability of the Russian Federation to finance the aggression. They are primarily directed at the Russian government, army, financial sector and economic elites. They do not target the Russian agricultural sector. Any negative impact on agricultural production in Ukraine and global food security is a result of the destabilizing effects of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr Zaid AL ANI (Iraq) (Original Language Arabic)**

Ladies and gentlemen.

The environment, soil, and water are really essential for the life on our planet and in the universe. And in the last few decades, human activity has destabilized the environment. Climate Change has been aggravated recently and currently it is threatening the lives of human beings and the flora and fauna of the world.

Many countries are severely affected by climate change, including Iraq, owing to the heavy impact of climate change and the deep-set changes in the environment. Temperature is on the rise and new challenges are emerging, and of course, they include desertification, water scarcity, recurrent sandstorms, and this is precipitating rural exodus of farmers towards the towns and cities, which is aggravating food insecurity in our country.

Ladies and gentlemen, Iraq accords great importance to combating Climate Change and its impact, and especially the impact on water resources. We work together with neighboring countries in the spirit of dialogue and fair sharing of water resources. And this is particularly true in the case of transboundary water resources. And there are some countries that are adopting policies that however, have an impact on the countries with which they should be sharing water resources. We hope that this Conference will also be the opportunity for us to explore the possibility of developing policies in which those countries that are uphill on the rivers course can help share the resource and ensure fair access to water resources, those water resources in particular that are transboundary. Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Georgia have signed a memorandum of understanding, a quadripartite agreement on agriculture. And this is an initiative that aims at achieving fair access to water resources and agricultural production, and to deal with the impact of climate change on water resources. And we are hoping for a strength in agriculture in the area as well as boosting agricultural trade and for the benefit of the region as a whole promoting sustainable development. And this, of course, is very important also for maintaining peace. There is a relationship between climate change crisis and the humanitarian crisis in our area.

We now have enhanced awareness of the impact of climate change on water resources. And our people are now looking to the United Nations to help identify the appropriate solutions to ensure that our people can live a healthy and stable lives in a sustainable environment now and for the generations to come.

Thank you.

**Su Excelencia Fernando MATTOS (Uruguay)**

Muchas gracias, Señor Presidente. Tengo el gusto de dirigirme a la Asamblea de la FAO en estas circunstancias tan importantes que vive la humanidad. Partiendo primero de lo que es las felicitaciones a nuestro Director General, QU Dongyu, deseándole el mejor de los éxitos en este nuevo periodo de gobernanza que se inicia con el compromiso de Uruguay de apoyar esta gestión y todos los programas que tiene por delante la FAO en este sentido.

Estaremos participando en la próxima convocatoria de ganadería sostenible y celebramos también el hecho de que FAO haya colocado como tema central de esta Asamblea los temas de los recursos hídricos tan importantes para mantener sistemas alimentarios y productivos sostenibles. El agua es un factor fundamental a efectos de poder sostener en lo largo del tiempo sistemas productivos que puedan dar respuesta a los requerimientos crecientes de una alimentación más saludable y también el de un desafío que tenemos todos los países productores para alimentar el mundo y al mismo tiempo de una demanda creciente de alimentos, tener la responsabilidad productiva desde un punto de vista de la preservación de los recursos naturales.

En ese sentido, el Uruguay es un país que tradicionalmente ha tenido esta conducta incorporada por legislación respecto al cuidado del suelo, del cuidado de los recursos hídrico, pero fundamentalmente ahora estamos en un gran desafío desde el punto de vista de la producción en función de una de las peores circunstancias de sequía que nos toca enfrentar. El peor panorama en 100 años y que nos coloca frente a la situación, inclusive, de estar con escasez en un país que ha tenido abundancia históricamente de los recursos hídricos y disponibilidad de agua dulce. Hoy nos vemos en una situación en la que la principal zona poblada del Uruguay, la zona metropolitana de Montevideo está enfrentando una situación crítica en cuanto a la disponibilidad de agua y apelando a todos los recursos en función de que venimos en un proceso de restricción de precipitaciones por más de tres años.

De forma que esto coloca la producción agropecuaria uruguaya en un grado superior de vulnerabilidad y es por eso que estimulamos todos los programas que existan para mitigar y adaptarnos a los efectos del cambio climático y apoyamos las políticas para que rápidamente se tornen disponibles los recursos de los países desarrollados, los grandes generadores de las causas que han llevado a esta variabilidad climática que tanto impacto y tanto condiciona la producción de alimentos y que es clave para que podamos enfrentar en el futuro una producción más segura, una producción más certera y que no tenga, de alguna manera, los impactos que tiene en otros estamentos de la sociedad.

Todos los recursos que el Uruguay está destinando hoy a compensar a los productos respecto al impacto de esta sequía son realmente recursos que debieran de estar direccionados para otros aspectos de la vida social, como mejor educación, como mejor seguridad, como mejor salud. No obstante, esta vulnerabilidad de nuestros sistemas productivos hace que la responsabilidad de los países que han comprometido recursos para mitigar los efectos del impacto del cambio climático estén rápidamente disponibles y que la FAO sea uno de los agentes fundamentales para poder canalizar adecuadamente los mismos.

Muchas gracias por la oportunidad. Un gran saludo a todos los integrantes de la Asamblea y que tengamos muy buenos resultados hacia futuro para una agricultura, una agropecuaria más próspera para generar los alimentos necesarios que el mundo necesitará en el futuro. Muchas gracias.

### **His Excellency Lord FOHE (Tonga)**

Chairperson, Excellencies, Director-General of FAO, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, greetings from the friendly islands of Kingdom of Tonga, Southwest Pacific and congratulations to your Excellency Director-General of FAO, Dr Qu Dongyu, and also the Member countries of FAO for the vast majority re-election on Sunday and Tonga looks forward to be kept afloat during the next four years from the sinking part of the world of the Pacific Ocean.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey Tonga's huge gratitude for it is in debt to FAO for all the enabling technical and financial assistance that has been invested and provided to Tonga during the past five decades, but especially the FAO gives assistance to every emergency recoveries and preparedness from the many severe tropical cyclones, early known droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, and recently the marine volcanic eruption of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai last year.



To date, the intensity and the frequency of these natural disasters are increasing, which also increases the damage, the cost, the number of years to recover. In addition, the gradual impact of the rising temperatures on agriculture production and the loss of agriculture land to the rising sea levels, which demands an extra level of national preparedness and resilience.

Tonga economy is hugely dependent on aid and remittance with its huge negative trade balance of about 80 percent, 40 to 50 percent of the total value of annual export of agriculture products. As a result of unhealthy diet, obesity is about 67 percent of the population with a mortality rate due to non-communicable disease of about 80 percent. The additional impact of the COVID-19 and the rising cost of imports collectively added weighting to that burden of multiple crisis situations of Tonga.

The Ministry of Agriculture has always focused on food security and building the resilience and preparedness of the human social resource and financial capitals of the agriculture sector. These are the programmes: on increasing genetic biodiversity of plant and livestock with new imported product, a million tree planting programme, a regional rating and sustainable agriculture programme, a circular agriculture system programme, a home gardening urban farming project.

About 95 percent of farming in Tonga are rainfed and the 5 percent of the irrigation farming are responsible for the vegetable supply to the local market and also export of watermelon and squash. Agriculture sector used only about 2 percent of Tonga's underground resources. However, fortunately Tonga has established early warning system for tropical cyclones, early known drought events, earthquakes but not volcanic eruptions.

Further, the legal framework for management of the underground water resources has also been established and only left with more modern innovative technologies and climate change smart agriculture practice to be established. But in saying that, the last El Niño drought event to Tonga was in 2014 and that event has been forecast for the later part of this year, which will bring intensive drought and water scarcity for about one to two years. The impact of the last resulted in lost production and rise in prices of local food and increased consumption of imported food, which takes about nine years to stabilize.

A few days ago Tonga, as a small island state, took part in the FAO high-level event on agrifood transformation. Tonga adopts all the guidance and the pathway solutions to transform our agrifood system and accelerate progress towards increasing resilience and achieving SDG1, 2 and 10, and hope to implement it as soon as possible.

In conclusion, Chair, Tonga hereby reaffirms its commitment to FAO and hereby acknowledge that the Excellency partnership with the FAO sub-regional office in Samoa and very grateful for their extra effort and outreach in providing many regional and national projects, key trainings and workshops, meetings to the Southwest Pacific countries, including Tonga.

With that, Chair, may I offer my sincere wish to the success of this meeting and to be in great abundance to each and every one of us here today.

Thank you.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I now give the floor to the delegate from Azerbaijan, who has requested to exercise the right of reply.

#### **Mr Nemat ALIYEV (Azerbaijan)**

We wish to exercise our right of reply to the statement made by the delegation of Armenia who regrettably, has made false and groundless remarks about my country.

We strongly condemn Armenia accusing Azerbaijan of hatred and animosity, while it has held the territories of Azerbaijan under occupation for nearly 30 years, has carried out ethnic cleansing against Azerbaijanis, in violation of its obligations, has not yet fully withdrawn Armenian armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan, has been indifferent to Azerbaijan's peace proposals for a long time, and is currently obstructing the process with a number of baseless claims.

Presenting the temporary situation in the Lachin border checkpoint related with the investigations and the security measures implemented by Azerbaijan as a "blockade and ethnic cleansing" after the provocation of Armenia is part of Armenia's false propaganda.

It seems that Armenia cannot digest the passage of hundreds of Armenian residents in both directions in the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation with the border guards of Azerbaijan since the start of the operation of the border checkpoint, and is insisting on continuing such provocative steps.

We remind that Armenia is still occupying 8 villages of Azerbaijan, has not completely withdrawn its forces from the territory of Azerbaijan despite the written and verbal agreements reached.

It is ridiculous that Armenia, which committed an act of aggression against Azerbaijan in violation of the UN Charter and the norms and principles of international law, and did not end the occupation despite 4 resolutions of the UN Security Council, is claiming that Azerbaijan is threatening with the use of force.

Dear chairperson it is obvious to everyone that Armenian brutal invasion of Azerbaijani lands was a calculated assault on the UN charter – and on the central principles of an international order that was designed, above all, to bring an end to all attempts at conquest and annexation.

Azerbaijan liberated its internationally recognized territories in accordance with the UN Charter and thus implemented UN Security Council resolutions requiring Armenia to withdraw its troops from these territories.

By liberating its territories, Azerbaijan also saved tens of thousands of hectares of territories from the environmental genocide of Armenia and is making great efforts to restore the potential of these territories for food production, which will be possible after they have been cleared of mines, noting that Armenia has planted a huge number of mines there and made the liberated territories Azerbaijan is one of the most polluted territories in the world, and still refuse to provide a proper map of mines.

Recently, we observe that conflicts driven impacts on food security has become one of the main issues in the course of discussions within the FAO, and it should be noted that Armenia was a pioneer as it comes to occupation the territories of a country from the same regional group. Therefore, it is because of 30 years of impunity that Armenia is still trying to mislead the international community and abuse the sensitive humanitarian domains.

We want to remind that during the years of 30 years of occupation of Azerbaijani territories, Armenia has been pursuing a policy of aggression not only against the people of Azerbaijan, but also its nature, which led to disastrous impact on agriculture, wildlife and water resources.

Armenia's eco-terrorism also negatively affected Azerbaijan's water management and planning system. More precisely, some transboundary potable water resources and irrigation systems were under the direct invasion of Armenia and they were usually used as a "weapon" against Azerbaijani people.

Water stress is a hot topic in the modern world and Azerbaijan, where 72,7% of all surface water resources are generated outside of the country. Armenia continuously contaminates transboundary water resources with chemical and biological items.

The Armenian delegation in its statement blamed Azerbaijan for the current situation in the Sarsang reservoir, but it should be noted that during the 30 years of occupation, Armenia used this reservoir as a tool to threaten Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's highest reservoir according to its dam's height with a total water capacity of 560 million cubic meters, Sarsang water storage located in the Agdara region was also under invasion. In the past, the Sarsang reservoir provided 6 regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan with water for irrigation. After the ceasefire starting from 1994, the Armenian side blocked these reservoirs and used to open the canal during spring and autumn in order to cause damage to Azerbaijani lands by creating artificial floods.

Moreover, the water reservoir was more likely to fall down in case of any technical or deliberate provocation. Day after day Sarsang reservoir became the biggest threat to regional ecological and national security.

While eco-terrorism acts of Armenia were discussed with international organizations several times, lots of articles were written and researches were conducted in this regard. Consequently, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution # 2085 dated 26 January 2016 on "Inhabitants of frontier regions of Azerbaijan are deliberately deprived of water" which considered that the deliberate creation of an artificial environmental crisis must be regarded as "environmental aggression" and seen as a hostile act by one State towards another aimed at creating environmental disaster areas and making normal life impossible for the population concerned".

The resolution also states that the occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia created similar humanitarian and environmental problems for the citizens of Azerbaijan living in the Lower Karabakh valley and lack of regular maintenance work for over twenty years on the Sarsang reservoir, located in one of the areas of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia, posed a danger to the whole border region. The Assembly emphasizes that the state of disrepair of the Sarsang dam could result in a major disaster with great loss of human life and possibly a fresh humanitarian crisis.

We want to emphasize that the lowering of the water level in the same Sarsang reservoir was inventively done by the Armenians themselves, which they acknowledge.

Despite the Resolution Armenia did not back down from its odious actions and consistently demonstrated unconstructive behavior to the principles of international law. Armenia continued to pollute and redirect river flows causing serious environmental damage and depriving the population of adjacent regions of water. The liberation of the Azerbaijani lands previously occupied by Armenia has given access for Azerbaijani ecologists to local rivers flowing through the territories of the liberated districts and other transboundary rivers flowing through the territory of Armenia. The monitoring results, analyzed in certified national and foreign laboratories, revealed that high amounts of heavy metals, in the river water and these drastic changes in the quality of water in the river can have extremely negative effects on its use for domestic and agricultural purposes.

All of the mentioned war crime acts by Armenia are clear evidence of a violation of international norms and obligations under global strategies, such as human rights, as well as UN SDGs, FAO, and EU strategies on agriculture and food security which are rests on norms of international law.

Even after the liberation of their territories, Azerbaijani farmers cannot return to their homeland and engage in agricultural activities in these territories, given the intensive mining of these territories by Armenia. Contrary to the Tripartite Agreement, Armenia continues to plant anti-personnel mines on the territory of Azerbaijan and thereby intends to prevent the return of life and agricultural activity to these territories.

We demand Armenia, instead of continuing to accuse Azerbaijan and mislead the international community, refrain from dangerous rhetoric that undermines the process of securing peace and security in the region, and fulfill its obligations.

At the same time, we call on Armenia to put an end to its attempts to make the international community an instrument for its smear campaign.

**Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)**

I will also be taking the floor in the right of reply with regard to the statements made by several delegations concerning the situation in Ukraine, and more particularly around the situation around the Kakhovka Dam.

The FAO is an organization of knowledge and I will try to bring maybe some knowledge or maybe some wisdom in this room and to share with you some of my remarks.

The Kakhovka, well you can Google it in your laptops or in your mobile phones, and then you will see that the Kakhovka Dam, the fifth dam on the river Dnieper, and the whole project was started in the

middle of the previous century by Joseph Stalin and the dam itself was erected in the 50s, the last century.

So the city of Nova Kakhovka, which was mentioned by the delegations of Sweden and our colleague from Czechia, it was erected later, so there was no such thing as the new or nova Kakhovka Dam. If you once again look at the map, you will see that the city of Nova Kakhovka, along with some other regions and cities down the river of Dnieper, are located on the territories that are under control of the Russian Federation.

I do not think it is logical, at least in my part, to predict that it is in our interests to damage the dam that will erase 42,000 households down the river of Dnieper.

The same applies to the water from the Kakhovka Water Reservoir, as that was rightly mentioned by the colleague from Czechia. The water from this reservoir is being used to cool down the nuclear reactor at Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. This power plant is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe and our colleague from Japan was very much cautious about the consequences of the destruction of the dam to the environment in this region.

I just want to remind him, or maybe he will be more knowledgeable than I am, to describe the consequences of the damage of the Fukushima Power Plant in 2011. The destruction of the very same cooling system of this power plant had a very detrimental effect to the pollution of the waters, not only around Japan but in the other areas adjacent to the territory which were widely used by the fisheries. So maybe you can call on our Ukrainian... I cannot unfortunately call them partners, but colleagues or counterparts, not to use ammunitions that is being provided by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other countries in order to bombard the Zaporizhzhia Power Plant, because Zaporizhzhia power plant is, once again, under our control, under the control by the Russian Federation, and I do not think it is logical for us to bombard the nuclear power plant which, I would just once again want to say, is the biggest nuclear power plant in Europe.

Finally, I fully concur with the suggestion made by the delegation from Germany, not to go for the general statement but to go to the specific target orientated actions, but I believe that the supply of Leopard 1 and 2 tanks to Ukraine does not contribute to the agricultural products, it rather extends the conflict in Ukraine.

**Ms Marieta STEPANYAN (Armenia)**

Azerbaijan colleague replied long enough, nearly 10 minutes, I will try to be brief, not to bore our colleagues.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan is politicizing the platform of FAO, declaring in political statements. Azerbaijani colleagues mixed everything in his reply, starting from political aspect to the military aspect of the conflict.

I will tell only one thing. These actions of Azerbaijan one again testify to the fact that Azerbaijan is conducting a policy of ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh and hunger is being used as an effective weapon for that. Does the ethnic cleansing have a different form? The supply of food, gas, and electricity to the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh is cut. Farmers doing agricultural work as well as agricultural machinery are being targeted and shot at.

**Mr Nemat ALIYEV (Azerbaijan)**

Sorry for taking time but our Minister in his speech, he did not touch any political issue as we all witnessed, and it was Armenian delegation that spent 50 percent of her speech to criticizing Azerbaijan.

It seems that Armenia has nothing to share with the international community rather than dedicating their, let us say activities, their speech, their cooperation with international organizations, only their smear campaign against Azerbaijan.

While she is, let us say, accusing Azerbaijan on ethnic cleansing, but myself from Karabakh, and I was born in Fuzuli district which is polluted now, I spent five years in Fuzuli but, unfortunately, due to Armenian occupation for 30 years, I could not visit my, let us say, home where I was born and grown

up and spent my childhood. Even after liberation, I cannot go there because of the mines, so that is why it is not Azerbaijan that is politicizing.

For 30 years occupation, we never used FAO platform for political statements, we are just replying to the accusations of Armenia.

**Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)**

Japan would like to make a statement in reply to the intervention by our Russian colleague. There was a reference that Japan mentioned something with relation to dam. In our statement, we did not state anything about dam.

With regard to the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, which was mentioned by the Russian Federation, there are some differences with Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. Japan has engaged in discussions based on scientific evidence in a transparent manner at appropriate fora with relevant expertise on this subject, such as International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and we will continue to do so.

The Government of Japan will never approve the discharge of the water into the sea in the manner that endangers human health and the environment. Japan has been taking its new measures strictly abiding by relevant international law, while giving due consideration to international practice, and will continue doing so. The water to be discharged into the sea will be sufficiently purified until the concentration of radioactive materials is below the regulatory standard.

Japan has been explaining this matter to the international community in a highly transparent manner based on scientific evidence. We will continue doing so.

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, we need to break now and we will reconvene at 17:00 hours sharp.

The Session is adjourned.

*The meeting was suspended from 16:38 to 17:12 hours*

*La séance est suspendue de 16 h 38 à 17 h 12*

*Se suspende la sesión de las 16.38 a las 17.12*

**CHAIRPERSON**

Distinguished delegates, we can reconvene again to carry on with Item 10, *Review of the state of food and agriculture*. Topic for Agenda debate - water resources management for the Four Betters to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Su Excelencia Edgar René DE LEÓN MORENO (Guatemala)**

Buenos días. Es un gusto poder saludarles y probar nuestro cariño, en especial, de nuestro país y del Señor Presidente a todos ustedes. Aprovecho la ocasión para felicitar al Señor Qu Dongyu por su reelección como Director General de la FAO y también externo mi saludo al Presidente de la Conferencia.

Aprovecho este espacio para poder compartir con ustedes el trabajo que el Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación (MAGA) realiza en torno a la alimentación, agricultura y conservación de los recursos naturales. En ese sentido, comparto con ustedes que el trabajo de esta cartera está basado en el Plan nacional de desarrollo, denominado “K’atun, nuestra Guatemala 2032” y en cumplimiento con la política general del gobierno del presidente, Doctor Alejandro Giammattei, el MAGA ejecuta distintos programas y proyectos en beneficio del sector agropecuario nacional. Somos un país vulnerable a emergencias climáticas, especialmente lluvia y sequía. Por eso trabajamos en esta materia principalmente en el sentido de la prevención.

Creemos que el Centro de información estratégica agropecuaria que es uno de nuestros pilares en torno a la información, en torno a la proveeduría de orientaciones trabaja con tecnología de punta que nos permite generar alertas e informes periódicos que facilitan la toma de decisiones anticipatorias y

posibles eventos climáticos de tal cuenta que podamos generar toda una serie de acciones para poder permitirle a los productores de distintas índoles saber enfrentar las condiciones que tenemos acá.

Particularmente, nosotros desarrollamos acciones en torno a incentivos a la productividad. Aquí puntualmente recalamos que tenemos acciones de resiliencia al cambio climático, a la seguridad alimentaria; pero también trabajamos con incentivos para poder fortalecer mecanismos de producción, principalmente incentivos para conservar nuestros recursos naturales. Pero que también estos incentivos fortalezcan la producción de sistemas agroforestales y silvopastoriles. Esto nos permitirá trabajar de una forma conveniente de recursos como suelo, agua y también el recurso bosque a nivel general creando toda una serie de oportunidades para nuestro país, pero principalmente fortaleciendo a los agricultores familiares que no pueden ellos propiciar mejores condiciones de vida.

Dentro de los productos que trabajamos nosotros como programas de impacto se encuentra asistencia alimentaria, la constitución de la reserva estratégica de alimentos para enfrentar condiciones de crisis, el desarrollo de infraestructura de riego, la implementación de un seguro agrícola dirigido a agricultores que practican agricultura familiar, el impulso de un estipendio agropecuario que permite desarrollar acciones concretas para fortalecer la producción principalmente manejando el suelo, acciones de vigilancia epidemiológica y el fortalecimiento de la infraestructura productiva a nivel general que permita crear valor a las condiciones de producción.

Entre las acciones de resiliencia al cambio climático, concretamente aquí tenemos el seguro agrícola que apoya productores al momento en que sus cultivos o sus cosechas se vean afectados por eventos climáticos como exceso de lluvia o sequía. Los estipendios agropecuarios son mecanismos que permiten crear incentivos económicos que entregamos a los agricultores a cambio de implementar acciones técnicas para manejar el suelo incrementando prácticas de conservación del mismo, entre estas acequias de infiltración, barreras muertas, terrazas individuales, siembras en contorno o en curvas a nivel y cercas vivas. Adicionalmente, trabajamos con sistemas de resiliencia al cambio climático, concretamente promocionamos las prácticas de un uso eficiente del agua, creamos un mapa de cobertura vegetal y uso de la tierra, el cual viene siendo actualizado de forma permanente desde el año 2008, y creamos prácticamente todo un bagaje de conocimientos técnicos-científicos que permiten a productores que practican la agricultura familiar o agricultura comercial tener información de punta para poder desarrollar acciones de previsión y, sobre todo, de planificación productiva.

Participamos en 19 mesas técnicas agroclimáticas; ejecutamos el proyecto de habilitación de sistemas con manglares; en torno al tema de seguridad alimentaria, hemos brindado cobertura brindando raciones de alimento a más de 1 800 mil personas entregando asistencia alimentaria de forma directa bajo ese tipo de modalidad, pero también bajo la modalidad de alimentos por acciones. Inclusive hemos creado todo un soporte durante lo que fue la pandemia de COVID-19. Hemos también participado en la creación y fortalecimiento de 360 mil raciones disponibles para emergencia, 108 400 agricultores han sido beneficiados, 141 millones GTQ han sido invertidos en proyectos productivos, 13 unidades de riego han sido recuperadas y 1 099 000 productores han sido fortalecidos mediante agrocadenas.

Creemos que hemos trabajado fuertemente a la par de nuestros productores, pero nos enfocamos de cara al futuro principalmente porque en torno al clima se subyace una base para poder mejorar nuestras condiciones y aprovechar oportunidades que este nos está brindando. Creemos, entonces, que, trabajando de la mano con la academia, organismos internacionales, como FAO, podemos alcanzar mejores horizontes y nuestros productores, a través de los sistemas de registros que FAO hoy mismo nos está colaborando, nos permitirá llevar un recabo de información de tal cuenta que podamos tener nosotros un respaldo de nuestras intervenciones y hacer de las mismas intervenciones exitosas.

Agradecemos grandemente este tipo de apoyo porque nos ha impulsado, primero, a tecnificar, a enfrentar nuestros desafíos, a mejorar nuestras condiciones, pero sobre todo a construir una agricultura participativa. Muchas gracias por este espacio y, sobre todo, muchas gracias por el apoyo que FAO le brinda al pueblo de Guatemala.

**Su Excelencia Óscar Enrique GUARDADO (El Salvador)**

Buenas tardes a todos.

Agradezco la oportunidad que me brindan como Ministro de Agricultura y Ganadería de El Salvador de participar en este 43.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura en donde aborda la gestión de los recursos hídricos para lograr las cuatro mejoras, una en producción, una en nutrición, un medio ambiente y una vida mejor con miras al cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.

Antes de continuar, quiero aprovechar este momento para felicitar al Señor Qu Dongyu por su reelección como Director General de la FAO. Su liderazgo y compromiso con la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional en el desarrollo sostenible son admirables. Estoy seguro de que bajo su dirección la FAO continuará desempeñando un papel fundamental para la lucha contra el hambre y la formación de prácticas agrícolas sostenibles en todo el mundo.

Para el gobierno de nuestro Presidente, Nayib Bukele es importante trabajar con aliados estratégicos entre los que se encuentra la FAO, con quien tenemos una serie de proyectos en beneficio del sector agropecuario de El Salvador y la población en general. Actualmente, velamos por la construcción de una agricultura sostenible y sustentable que nos permita alcanzar sistemas productivos sostenibles, eficientes y con adaptación al cambio climático para lograr una seguridad alimentaria y nutricional, la cual se ve afectada por el clima y la vulnerabilidad de los productores y la alta fluctuación de los precios internacionales de alimentos, pero como Gobierno luchamos para que los salvadoreños tengan acceso físico y económico a suficientes alimentos, seguros y nutritivos.

La implementación de una agricultura restaurativa y amigable con el medio ambiente son parte de nuestros ejes primordiales, como ejemplo es el Programa Nacional del Bambú, la renovación del Parque Carreteros, el impulso del uso de los biofertilizantes e insumos orgánicos, la concientización de la implementación de las buenas prácticas agrícolas, el Banco de Semillas Forestales, entre otros. Todas las acciones anteriores además de ser oportunidades de desarrollo ayudan a la protección de los recursos naturales, donde el recurso hídrico es determinante para la vida, tema que aborda durante este 43.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO.

Agradezco el interés de este encuentro internacional al abordar la gestión de los recursos hídricos, pues como mencioné los impactos climáticos como el fenómeno de El Niño nos hacen plantearnos nuevas formas de trabajo y reforzar las acciones agrícolas verdes donde, a pesar de las limitantes económicas que enfrentamos, continuamos trabajando para cambiar las condiciones de vida de las comunidades más vulnerables. En este sentido, puedo mencionar los más de 100 reservorios construidos en el corredor seco del país, los invernaderos con sistemas de riego para asegurar las producciones y el restablecimiento de los distritos de riego y avenamiento en El Salvador.

Por otra parte, la mejora de la cadena de comercialización del sector agropecuario y la facilitación del comercio internacional son fundamentales para nuestro Gobierno, ya que potencian el desarrollo económico y garantizan la seguridad alimentaria para lo cual debemos trabajar de manera estratégica hasta innovar y facilitar los procesos. Y es que, la innovación, tecnificación son ejes transversales de nuestro trabajo. De ahí que contamos con el Programa de Mejoramiento Genético Ganadero, el Centro de Producción Estratégica, la creación y mejora de laboratorios especializados, la creación de aplicaciones virtuales, entre otros, todo con el propósito de transformar el sector agropecuario y la calidad de vida de las familias salvadoreñas.

Los avances en la agroindustria también forman parte de nuestros enfoques para el crecimiento económico, ya que el valor agregado permite generar nuevos empleos, impulsar la innovación tecnológica y fomentar las economías rurales para incrementar la rentabilidad de los productos. Asimismo, visualizamos en la pesca y la acuicultura una gran oportunidad de desarrollo gracias al aprovechamiento de los recursos marinos bajo criterios de sostenibilidad social, económica y ambiental que, paso a paso, estamos construyendo un mejor El Salvador. Y aunque aún nos queda camino por recorrer y retos que enfrentar, estamos seguros de que, trabajando con la población y nuestros aliados estratégicos, como la FAO, mejoraremos la calidad de vida de los salvadoreños.

Gracias.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Distinguished colleagues, this brings us to the end of the 7th Plenary Meeting. I wish to remind Members that the third roundtable on water infrastructure will take place in the Plenary Hall tomorrow morning at 9:30 hours. And it will be opened and closed by the moderator, Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General. We will continue interventions on Item 10 tomorrow at 14:00 hours sharp.

With this, I adjourn the meeting.

*The meeting rose at 17:26 hours*

*La séance est levée à 17 h 26*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 17.26*





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منظمة  
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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>OCTAVA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>5 July 2023</b></p>

The Eighth Meeting was opened at 09:35 hours  
by Ms Maria Helena Semedo

La huitième séance est ouverte à 09 h 35  
de Mme. Maria Helena Semedo

Se abre la octava reunión a las 09.35  
de la Sra. Maria Helena Semedo

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**Roundtable: Water Infrastructure**  
**Table ronde: Les infrastructures hydriques**  
**Mesa redonda: Infraestructura hidráulica**

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Director-General, Excellencies, Ambassadors, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this Roundtable on Water Infrastructure which I have the honour to moderate. I am Maria Helen Semedo, Deputy Director-General of FAO.

Water is our life blood, essential to our agrifood systems and water infrastructure is key to ensure that farmers, producers, big and small, have equitable, timely and safe access and management of Water Resources. In the face of climate change, water scarcity and preventing and managing floods, infrastructure is becoming more and more important, and demands greater planning and long-term investment at the country, regional and global level.

Today's high-level roundtable, to be opened by the FAO Director-General, will focus on water infrastructure for resilient agrifood systems and rural development. We will have a presentation on the importance of water infrastructure for the *four betters*, after which we will invite our Ministers and panellists to share their experience. We will hear from representatives of farmers' organizations, youth, women, and indigenous people, followed by questions by the audience.

Now, without further ado, it is my pleasure to invite FAO Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, to provide opening remarks.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Good morning,

Welcome to the high-level roundtable on water infrastructure. Water infrastructure has been developed along thousands of years of human civilization and it is fundamental, ensuring the equitable delivery of water resources and water services and achieving the SDGs.

Agri-food systems and rural development depend on water infrastructure, which is becoming even more critical in addressing the impact of the climate crisis, including water scarcity as well as the climate change through the use of hydro power, big or small, which is the best provider of renewable energy.

When also you combine with solar energy, it will be even more green and more sustainable, the way how to develop the renewable energy together in the rural areas. I saw some cases in Africa, in Asia, in China, in Viet Nam and others. So, water infrastructure, together with solar energy, that will be the new combination.

Water infrastructure is so critical to the efforts to make agrifood systems more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

Reliable water supply infrastructure enables farmers to diversify their agricultural practice and the crop varieties and to increase of resilience. Effective water storage infrastructure can help manage water resources during periods of excess and scarcity, and enables farmers to cultivate their crops throughout the year, mitigate the impact of seasonal varieties and climate hazards.

Water infrastructure directly supports rural development and creates employment opportunities and contributes to the circular economy by turning waste water into a resource for use by multiple sectors.

Dear colleagues, we need to invest in infrastructure that is better suited to the water challenges we face today. For example, in the Sahara, FAO is providing mechanization opportunity to farmers to improve their water infrastructure and is supporting rural women and their households to access water.

Globally, irrigated land produces 40 percent of the food from 20 percent of arable land. It means that irrigated land at least have two times more productivity than the nature-fed agricultural systems.

Like kids, they need regular nutrition. It helps them develop more normal. Any crop also need a consistent supply of nutrition and water and this helps them to grow. They have vegetative

development and also some crops will have seeds. Also they need a consistent supply of nutrients and water, of course. It is essential.

With that, we can have an untapped potential to improve the total production and food supply in the world. Last year I remember, during the Security Council briefing in May, chaired by Mr Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of the State Department of the United States, he mentioned that irrigated land is our most marginal utility investment to improve the food production.

In East Asia, more than 60 percent of the lands are irrigated. In Europe, only 12 percent, in the United States 18 percent and in Africa only 3 percent. You can imagine if we double this in Africa to reach the 6 to 10 percent, or triple, and in America, if they increase 5 percent of irrigated land, and Europe reached 20 percent, so it is an 8 percent increase. In Italy, I think if we increased by 10 percent the irrigated land, your food will be much, much higher production and also higher quality.

To help deliver on this potential, FAO has developed the global irrigation needs and the potential mapping methodology. That is why I really welcome the Ministers who come from the countries, like Israel, they have a lot of experience and can share with you, based on different crops, Because Israel faced the most challenging water scarcity in the world, in my opinion, but they still develop well-being, health and a rich society.

I do not know how many GDP per capita in Israel? USD 40 000 per capita? More? So, if Israel can manage a USD 40 000 per capita, then others cannot manage 4 000? Of course, we need some simplified, cheaper products to start this kind of water saving economy or water saving society.

Also Mexico, my close friend since many years, he did not come for voting but he came for this dialogue. It means that water is more important than the vote itself. We know each other since so many years. I know he asked his Ambassador to vote for me and he found an excuse, he could not stay here one week, so he came specifically for this dialogue. Mexico, they are famous for many things but one thing it is also very famous for is edible locusts, from the desert. Or Mexico's tropical desert. Mexico is also famous for a lot of biodiversity, corn, chilli peppers, you name it. But if they can have infrastructure to improve water supply consistently, from Mexico's land.

Some friend from Bangladesh told me if they will collect like in Bangladesh, they can even double the food production in Mexico. That is my personal observation. A Bangladeshi friend told me. They said if we do that, in Mexico, they can even double food production.

Also Slovakia. I have been there 20 years ago. Slovakia is not a big country but they can develop a high quality of wine. Maybe not so many people know this but you need a very consistent supply of water with nutrition, and then you can produce the best wine.

I saw some Ministers here and there are some others I know about their situation.

In Australia, the farmers, they produce many things but they also face the big challenge of water supply, even around the coastal areas. So, you need infrastructure of different ways and different sizes.

Proper financial mechanisms of investments at the right scale are keen to build and maintain a capital-intensive infrastructure.

I look forward to the Members taking ownership to implement supporting investments and financial decisions which are based on the professional assessment and consultation. But we must be mindful about the potential negative social and environmental impact of the larger investment infrastructure also.

That is why I am the right person to tell you. We had so many years of feasibility study assessment on the Three Gorges Dam, but finally you need the bold decision. You have to calculate which is more important – people's lives or you just lose the one fish species.

In the Yangtze River, we had very important fish species but then we established an artificial hatching centre to protect. Some people were displaced to other regions, because we needed the bigger dam for anti-flooding and to preserve the water for hydro power and for irrigation and also for the cities around the Yangtze River. It is about 400 million people. It is not small compared to having one million

people displaced. So, we have to make the calculations on what is good – environmental, economic and social.

Big infrastructure, it takes a long time but finally it is always beneficial to the society, to the people first.

In Sri Lanka, or Zambia, for example, FAO is piloting the multifunctional paddy fields for fish and shrimp farming and in addition to rice production.

The resilience-based solutions are key. And prioritizing green and blue infrastructure that can enhance water quality, maintain the biodiversity, provide other benefits to agrifood systems in the rural area.

Yesterday I already mentioned, Ministers of Agriculture have less money and budget but they encourage local government, the local villages and towns to start to build a small pond and a reservoir. We can start from small. A big one should come to the top leaders or legislative decisions even.

I remember Three Gorges Dam was the first project approved by the People's Congress of China. Normally, they are not that big and not necessary to be approved by the People's Congress, voting.

So, I think the developing country, we can have a more value-added infrastructure generating benefit by recharging ground water, control floods and provide an ecosystem service.

Dear colleagues and friends, we can and must do more together. We need to establish multisector global partnerships on water infrastructure and share all the aspects, from the policies, technology, innovation and also local communities, through all the key partners' participation approach, like indigenous people or farmers, senior society, how to share the water rights.

Water is not simple, I know. So, we need to establish more inclusive mechanisms to address the issues.

This collaborative framework will ensure the inclusive and sustainable planning, financing, governance and implementation, support achieving the SDGs and contribute to the *four betters* – *better production, better nutrition, better environment, a better life*, leaving no one behind.

Better production from the soil to start, from the water to sustain.

Thank you for your participation and support.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you, Director-General, for your insightful remarks, reminding us that we need to connect towards infrastructure with energy and we need more partnership, coordination, cooperation and have more inclusive mechanisms.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to give the floor to the Director of Land and Water Division, Mr Li Lifeng, to elaborate further and to set the scene for our discussion.

**Mr Li LIFENG (Director of Land and Water Division)**

Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues, a very good morning to all of you. Following the Director-General's insight, I am very honoured to present to you a brief technical background on water and infrastructure to support the deliberation of this roundtable.

As clearly mentioned in both Director-General's opening remarks and the Deputy Director-General's (DDG's) introduction to this roundtable, we rely on water infrastructure to deliver water and water services. Here in Rome, you can drink the water from a street fountain that is fed by the ancient Aqua Virgo, the aqueduct built 2 000 years ago, which also supplies water to Rome's famous Trevi fountain in the heart of the city.

Water infrastructure development is a solution to mounting challenges and that has contributed to many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most importantly those on no poverty, zero hunger,

health, sanitation and water, consumption and production, sustainable cities, etc. Water is an essential resource and a basic human right, but access to water is increasingly pressured or threatened by a number of the key drivers.

For example, the increase in demand due to rapid population growth, urbanization and economic development. The impact of climate change, which affected the temporal but also spatial distribution of rainfall that aged or inadequate infrastructure, as mentioned by the Director-General, and also the deterioration of water quality. While water infrastructure development can address all these threats and risks, multiple challenges must be overcome if we want to make infrastructure development transformative and sustainable.

In terms of sustainability, overuse, lack of access or over extraction of water from the surface or groundwater sources, the impact, especially on the downstream users at all scales, impact on nature, impact on environment and also social disapproval and impact on some smallholders. From a finance perspective, that is also a challenge. For example, the flood cost benefit analysis, especially with the non-monetary benefits being difficult to estimate. High initial outlay and high maintenance cost of some infrastructure, and also patchy and protracted processes being financed by international financial institutions.

In terms of technology, every single technology has both sides, and the major impediment is the lack of robust monitoring of the performance of water infrastructure, which in turn affect the need assessment of the infrastructure. Secondly, large and in-built infrastructure means inflexibility, and there are plenty of examples of such.

Not all challenges can be addressed at once, but I feel there is a special role in enabling the environment for consistent and sustainable water infrastructure development. We can promote systematic monitoring of infrastructure performance and to conduct accurate and consistent situation analysis so as to understand and assess better the development needs. We can produce more successful pilots for adequate infrastructure. We can support inclusive infrastructure planning that involves the farmers and end users from the very beginning to address their needs. We can mainstream and implement social and environmental safeguards from the planning to the design, construction, operation, the entire lifecycle of infrastructure.

FAO has been already working towards those objectives and is paving the way for further progress. I would like to mention only a few examples here of our relevant work. For example, from a data information perspective, FAO developed a prototype of a set management framework for public irrigation systems. This is to enable the monitoring and assessment of conditions critical to the infrastructure and also critical to the financial planning.

Managed by FAO Programme Committee and the Council, as our Director-General just mentioned, FAO developed the methodology and is launching the new initiative to map irrigation needs and potentials across the globe, starting with a few pilot countries and with a focus on Africa.

FAO is also piloting innovative and transferable technologies while shifting away from the rigid and inflexible design. Some examples here are mobile solar-powered and community-managed irrigation units, combined water harvesting and aquifer recharge infrastructure, use of remote sensing to monitor the infrastructure.

FAO supports and facilitates an inclusive and participatory approach to infrastructure planning and governance. This includes capacity-building programmes for infrastructure development. FAO has also been one of the first agencies in supporting the management and empowerment of water users' association and farmer organizations. And all projects and programmes implemented incorporates the need of the vulnerable groups such as women into the development process.

Last but not least, FAO developed the tools and knowledge to improve infrastructure sustainability and promote blue/green infrastructure. This includes the use of a rigorous framework of environmental and social safeguards, prototypes of nature-positive infrastructure, such as these passages shown here on this photo. As a knowledge organization, FAO published a circular on fish passages, and also, a comprehensive technical guide on fish passages that were involved in the translation of that into the Chinese version almost 20 years ago.

Also supporting technology development and produce guidelines to put infrastructure development into the circular economy. Of note, for example, would be the innovative treatment infrastructure combined with constructed guidelines for water reuse. FAO also issued global guidelines to support countries in monitoring and maintaining environmental flows under the SDG 6.4 indicator framework so as to ensure sustainable use of water resources.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

I think it is a great scene set-up for us to start the event. Now let us move directly to the high-level panel where we are honoured to be joined by:

His Excellency Víctor Manuel Villalobos Arámbula, the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development of Mexico (SADER);

His Excellency Mathieu Eric Rokosse-Kamot, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Central African Republic;

His Excellency Avi Dicter, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Israel (MOAG);

Mr Martin Kováč, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Slovakia (MPRV SR);

Ms Su McKluskey, Special Representative for Australian Agriculture Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Australia;

Director General Ms Swantje Nilsson, Head of Department for European Union Affairs, International Cooperation and Fisheries at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany; and we will be joined later by

Her Excellency Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), African Union Commission (AUC).

These will start to provide you the national perspectives of the countries and then we will move to regional perspectives when Commissioner Ms Sacko will join us.

We will have two rounds of questions and we will have three to four minutes each. I have the unpleasant task to manage time and when we reach the three minutes, I will try to signal you in a way that you can keep the time and finish on time.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, my first question to you, the panellists, is water infrastructure are vital to deliver water and water services. However, large infrastructures do have unintended social and environmental impacts. What are the experience and Strategies in your countries to balance the need for infrastructure and the possible unintended impacts. Think it clear, how are you dealing with the infrastructure and maybe the social, economic and environment impacts of the infrastructure.

I will start on my right, His Excellency Víctor Manuel Villalobos Arámbula to share with us the Mexico experience.

**Su Excelencia Víctor Manuel VILLALOBOS ARÁMBULA (México)**

Hace 10 años, cuando serví como Director General del Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA), impulsé un esfuerzo interamericano orientado a lograr un manejo integral de los recursos hídricos en la agricultura convencido de que uno de los retos más urgentes para enfrentarlos tiene que ver con el recurso hídrico, en especial considerando que la agricultura es el principal usuario del agua dulce del planeta.

El documento final que elaboramos proponía una serie de acciones de corto y de mediano plazo que tienen el potencial de lograr mayor eficiencia en el uso del agua en la agricultura. Lograr un mejor aprovechamiento y mayor productividad por cada gota de agua en la producción de alimentos y en el combate a la pobreza y a la desigualdad requiere una infraestructura adecuada e innovación permanente.

En cuanto a infraestructura se refiere, mi país, México, ha sido pionero en el desarrollo de infraestructura hídrica, la que consideramos un bien público. A la fecha, México cuenta con más de

4 400 presas y bordos de almacenamiento con una capacidad de almacenamiento de agua de aproximadamente 150 000 millones de metros cúbicos. Contamos, además, con 631 plantas potabilizadoras y más de 2 000 plantas para el tratamiento de aguas residuales, una de las cuales es la tercera más grande del mundo.

Lo más importante es que el país continúa invirtiendo en el desarrollo de infraestructura para el manejo del agua. El Gobierno del Presidente, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, ha declarado esta inversión como una prioridad y la considera no solo un asunto de seguridad alimentaria sino de seguridad nacional. Para la agricultura, México ha sido pionero en el desarrollo de modelos de gestión corresponsables para operar tanto el agua para el riego como el agua de lluvia. Este modelo se basa en que definimos como distritos de riego y distritos de temporal, que es un modelo de gobernanza desde lo local y con la participación de los usuarios que nos ha permitido transitar exitosamente, incluso en épocas de escasez de agua o de lluvia.

Invito a todos ustedes a conocer estos modelos de gestión y ponerlos a disposición de FAO para que, por medio de la Cooperación Sur-Sur (CSS) y la Cooperación Triangular (CT), otros países puedan conocer y aprender de estas experiencias.

A pesar de estos logros, estamos conscientes de que se hace necesario invertir más en infraestructura hídrica como bien público y también infraestructura hídrica como bien privado. Este último orientado a lograr mayor eficiencia en el uso del agua dentro de la parcela de producción. En este sentido, durante mi gestión como Secretario de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural (SADER), he impulsado procesos de innovación para lograr mejorar la productividad del agua en las parcelas, lo que hemos venido haciendo en manera paralela el establecimiento de una estrategia nacional de suelos agrícolas convencidos de que el manejo del agua no puede ser independiente del manejo del suelo.

Dada la riqueza de la experiencia en mi país, podría tomar mucho más tiempo compartiendo ejemplos particulares; sin embargo, dada la naturaleza de este evento, quisiera terminar con un mensaje para la FAO y pedirle que fiel a su misión fortalezca la Cooperación Técnica para que los Ministerios de Agricultura podamos contar con las políticas públicas, estructuras y organización y reconocimiento necesario para que las recomendaciones y las conclusiones que se generan en foros como este puedan aterrizar a nivel de parcela y realmente influir para que los productores y las familias mejoren sus condiciones de bienestar.

Les reitero la disposición de mi país para trabajar en este importante esfuerzo de cuidar el recurso más importante que tenemos para el presente y para el futuro de las generaciones del planeta, que es el agua.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you for referring to the massive investment of your country in terms of water infrastructure, the dams and the water storage, for referring to the importance of the governance, the participation of users and also how you have the cooperation in terms of Water Management and we took note of your recommendation to FAO.

Now Monsieur le Ministre Mathieu KAMOT, ministre de la République Centrafricaine.

**Son Excellence Mathieu Eric ROKOSSE-KAMOT (République Centrafricaine)**

Je prends la parole au nom du gouvernement de la République, et la délégation qui m'accompagne pour présenter la situation des ressources hydriques et les défis de développement de gestion des infrastructures hydrauliques dans mon pays.

En effet, l'eau est un élément essentiel pour les systèmes agroalimentaires d'une manière générale. En République Centrafricaine, mon pays, le climat offre des conditions favorables à une agriculture pluviale avec des cycles culturels relativement longs. Le pays dispose d'un important réseau hydrographique qui permet une bonne disponibilité en eau de surface et souterraine pour l'agriculture, l'alimentation du bétail, de la faune sauvage, le développement floristique et la régulation naturelle.

On estime la disponibilité en eau douce par tête d'habitant, qui au demeurant est à six millions pour une superficie de 623 000 kilomètres carrés, à 36 911 tonnes hydriques par an. Ce qui constitue un

potentiel important dans la perspective de l'intensification des cultures et des sédentarisation de l'élevage. De plus, la République Centrafricaine bénéficie des fortes précipitations annuelles. Cependant, les précipitations et les ressources en eau de surface ne sont pas distribuées de manière uniforme dans tout le pays.

On observe en effet quatre zones agro-écologiques. La zone forestière ou équatoriale dans le sud-ouest et le prolongement de la zone équatoriale de la cuvette Congolaise, des deux Congo bien entendus, où la pluviométrie est abondante, 1 500 à 1 800 millimètres d'eau par an et la végétation luxuriante. C'est la zone des cultures pérennes, le café, le cacao, le palmier à huile, banane plantain, et cetera. Vers le nord, la zone soudano-guinéenne ou tropicale humide, au centre, avec une pluviométrie annuelle de 1 100 à 1 500 millimètres d'eau par an. Dans cette zone sont produites des cultures vivrières, manioc, igname, et cetera.

La zone soudano-sahélienne, vers le nord avec des précipitations de 800 à 1 100, et la zone sahéenne caractérisée par l'instabilité de la pluie, des sécheresses fréquentes. La température moyenne se situe à 25 degrés. En ce qui concerne, après cette description de ce que la nature offre à notre pays, nous pouvons dire que l'hydraulique agricole est encore au stade primaire. Alors que les ressources hydro-agricoles sont a priori importantes. Aucun inventaire ou estimation de ces ressources au niveau national n'est actuellement disponible.

Le faible développement de l'hydraulique agricole est dû au fait que la pluviométrie annuelle est suffisante pour le développement des cultures et que le problème de maîtrise d'eau ne présente pas une contrainte majeure pour la quasi-totalité des producteurs agricoles. A cela, il faut ajouter le mode pratique culturel itinérant utilisé par les exploitants, qui n'est pas de nature à rentabiliser les investissements hydroagricoles.

Néanmoins, quelques périmètres sont fonctionnels autour des grands centres de consommation, notamment à Bangui, à Bouar dans l'ouest, à Bambari au centre, à Bozoum dans le nord-ouest pour les cultures maraichères et la riziculture. Les types d'aménagement hydro-agricoles existants, utilisés par les producteurs sont des aménagements simples, constitués d'ouvrage traditionnel et d'ouvrage amélioré. C'est-à-dire, type puits busés, barrage amélioré en butant avec régulateur de débit, vanne de distribution améliorée, ouvrage de dérivation en matériaux locaux.

Donc, en vue d'obtenir les améliorations des quatre domaines, à savoir la production, la nutrition, l'environnement, les conditions de vie, le gouvernement a mis en place un cadre réglementaire à travers la promulgation de loi portant au code de l'eau de la République Centrafricaine dont les objectifs sont de planifier de manière cohérente l'utilisation des ressources en eau tant au niveau des bassins versants qu'au niveau national. Mobiliser et gérer les ressources en eau, afin de garantir les conditions d'un développement durable par une utilisation rationnelle, protégée contre toute forme de pollution. Je crois que le temps m'est compté.

Donc, ce que je voulais conclure. C'est déjà pour exprimer que nous, compte tenu de la profusion en qualité d'eau, les investissements sont, comme je l'ai rappelé plus tôt, au niveau primaire. Donc, nous comptons sur la coopération internationale, surtout l'expérience du Mexique qui est disposé à partager ses expériences dans le cadre d'une coopération Sud-Sud.

Nous serons disposés, éventuellement, à échanger avec pour pouvoir bénéficier des expériences. Et ce que nous voulons dire aussi, notre pays en proie à l'insécurité chronique est obligé d'utiliser une bonne partie de ses ressources, qui auraient pu servir à la construction ou à l'aménagement, pour pouvoir améliorer les conditions de vie des populations, est obligé de consacrer ses revenus pour sécuriser la population d'une manière physique.

Je saurais terminer mon propos ici sans pour autant adresser mes félicitations au nom du gouvernement centrafricain au Docteur Qu Dongyu pour sa brillante réélection au poste de Directeur Général de la FAO, un signe de reconnaissance des Etats membres de notre institution commune au développement.

**Mme Maria Helena SEMEDO (Directeur général adjoint)**



Merci, Monsieur le Ministre pour partager avec nous l'expérience de votre pays. Un pays qui a des ressources en eau, mais comme vous disiez, les infrastructures sont au niveau primaire et espérons que vous pouvez avoir les investissements conséquents pour mettre en œuvre et maîtriser mieux l'eau à travers des infrastructures adéquates.

*Continues in English*

Now it is my pleasure to move to His Excellency Avi Dichter to share with us the experience of Israel. Minister, yesterday I followed in the plenary your speech and you referred that Israel was a very drought country and now it has been transformed into an oasis. Can you share with us how, through infrastructure you have made this transformation?

**His Excellency Avi DICHTER (Israel)**

Water is life. How do I know it? Each country, and we do not have many of them, who sends a satellite to check and to research another planet, is looking for one signal – water. If we find water, and we have not found until now, but if one day we shall find water on any other planet, it means we might have life over there.

In Israel, half of the country had enough rains and half of the country is semi-arid and arid, with no water. But good land, good soil for agriculture with no water. On the other side we have enough water but not enough land. So, I hate when people speak about their country and they say in average we have enough water in the country for agriculture. Let me recommend to you be careful of the word in average. Why? If your head is in the stove and your legs are in the freezer, in average in your belly button you are okay but practically you are dead.

So, when we have established our country 75 years ago, we decided five years after establishment to take the water from the north, from the Sea of Galilee, a huge lake, fresh water, and to shift it by a canal 1 200 kilometres from the north to the south. I am telling you today you would not have been able to do so. Because there were so many organizations who were taking care of the environment, that I am not sure that today they would have been in practice.

But what happened, it saved half of the country and it enabled to have agriculture in an arid and in a semi-arid area. About 85 percent of this water went to agriculture but at that time we were about 2/2.5 million people. Today we are 10 million people. You need much more water for people and much more water for agriculture. So you need to spread your water, all kinds of water. You have fresh water, you have storm water, you have wastewater, and we have decided in Israel to take all options and to get more water than we used to have before.

Up until eight years ago we had a lack of one billion cubic metres of water in Israel. One billion. For a population of 10 million, it is huge. And today, and I hope I have the opportunity to elaborate a little at the next Session, we have 20 percent water more than is needed. We supply Jordan today with 100 million cubic metres and it is going to be increased to 200 in the coming few months.

So, it means the people, countries, governments by decision to take water from one place and to shift it to another place, to take wastewater and to recycle it and to use it in agriculture and to take water from the Mediterranean and to desalinate the water. Today in Israel 85 percent of the water that people use is desalinated water. We spare the fresh water for the future, for the next generations or for emergency time.

Infrastructure is needed in order to bring water to every single place, every single settlement, every single city, every single farm, and we have an advantage because we are a small country, 22 000 square kilometres, day and night. But even then, if you do not have the infrastructure, potentially you have water, practically you have nothing, no agriculture and no fresh water to send to your people, which means you are not building new areas, new settlements because of a lack of water.

I know that when it deals with the environment security, you need to be very careful because, as I began, water is life. I am not sure that life brings water.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Water is life, life needs water and to explain how your country has been investing in infrastructure in a way to have 20 percent more than water needed because of the policies, the investment, and the political will to move in this direction. We had two countries very much investing in infrastructure, another country in the primary state.

Now we are moving to Slovakia. We have discussed several times. You are a specialist on water. You have been implementing green infrastructure or green solutions, if I must say. Can you talk about what you have done and what is your take, your view and recommendations in this regard?

**His Excellency Martin KOVÁČ (Slovakia)**

Over the decades, all countries change landscapes by land use change and land management practices. The same happened in Slovakia. Over the last 70 years by value of space of alteration of agricultural and fruit plains, rivers and infrastructure development, we decreased significantly original rainwater retention capacity of landscape structures and decreased rainwater retention capacity of all soils. Rainwater has less areas to infiltrate and less space. It contributes gradually to climate risks.

What is important is to monitor how we are changing water retention capacity on a national level and a regional level. We have to monitor it internationally as well. The European Commission President's proposal of soil health law, that will include the indicator water retention capacity of soils in the set of standard indicators of soil health.

At the national level, our Slovak Government approved the rules for the gradual adaptation of large drainage systems that was built in the past for the retention of internal water and rainwater in the lowlands. At the same time, it supports the restoration of the irrigation system in agriculture and the restoration of wetlands.

A great opportunity is the revitalization of rivers that we changed heavily in the past, and the revitalization of fruit plains for controlled retention and use of flood waters. As for existing dams, we have to increase the anti-erosion protection of the land above dams so that they do not become silted up. However, we need far more small reservoirs with water retention and anti-erosion measures for the retention of rainwater, especially in upper parts of the rivers, as they can better balance the impact flow and support the widespread retention of rainwater in the basins.

In 2010, Slovakia had very extensive floods. It affected 20 percent of the communities and costed damage of EUR 700 million. It was a momentum to change the business as usual trends and focus on a more integrated nexus approach. As the results of these flood situations, the Slovak Government approved principles of integrated water resources and soil management. The Slovak Government prepared and approved a landscape revitalization programme that set up for the first time the target to increase water retention capacity on the national level by 250 million cubic metres in different parts of the country to retain rainwater in a repeated way every year.

This programme is therefore an opportunity to increase water retention capacity in forests, agricultural land and municipalities. Within this programme, within one year we were able to increase this water retention capacity by 10 million cubic metres, involving 500 communities in the work, approximately 10 000 people. Local workers and residents took part and approximately 60 000 different water retention measures and anti-erosion measures were built with a one-time cost of EUR 42 million.

In the forests, an adaptation action on soil is followed by soil management improvement that will improve soil health and increase the water retention capacity of all soils by an estimated 500 million cubic metres increased potential. So, these are all plans until the year 2035. In fact, once these plans will be finished, we will be able to use more effectively up to 10 000 of rainwater every year more and to use this 10 percent of rainwater more ecosystematically for support of dam waters and evapotranspiration in the landscape. It will help us to minimize the climate risks.

Finally, on the national level we are preparing certification systems, carbon and water banks as a new part of state policy. This certification system does provide advisory services, monitoring, certification and funding action. It will be a new source of income for land users and rural areas. It will be a new opportunity for investments in green and blue water infrastructure.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you, Minister, for sharing with us the investments you have done in the big and also in the small reservoirs but still the need you have, the nexus approach and water resources and soil management and what you are doing in terms of certification systems. Now let us move to Australia. Ms McCluskey, what do you want to share with us?

**Ms Su MCCLUSKEY (Australia)**

Australia welcomes the FAO's increased focus on water resource management as it is critical for global climate adaptation and resilience, as well as to achieve global food security and sustainable agrifood systems. Australia is the world's driest inhabited continent and therefore water infrastructure is critically important for us. Unlike Israel, we are a very large country, so it brings additional challenges.

Australia has a long history of difficult water reforms at both the national and sub-national levels and so we have been internationally recognized as a leader in water resource management, particularly around governments, reform and water expertise. But it is important that we have steps in place to ensure that unintended impacts can be identified and mitigated. Firstly, we must make sure that the delivery of water infrastructure is supported by a strong science and evidence base.

Science plays a very important role in improving water security in Australia's regions. Science underpins the many desalination plants that supply urban water to coastal cities and also supply water to small towns and for industrial, agricultural and community facilities across Australia.

Science is also behind improved use of recycled water to increase our resilience to climate change, particularly for agriculture, industrial use or community green space. And science is examining the reuse of treated wastewater in industrial and agricultural production. Our commitment in Australia to science and evidence is also why we have a really strong research and development model that is quite unique in that levies are collected from farmers at the point of sale and then this money is matched by government and invested in research, development and extension across all of our agrifood and fibre industry sectors.

Not only does this model provide a way for farmers to have input into where research and science priorities need to be, but the benefits are increased innovation, productivity growth and sustainability. And in order to avoid the unforeseen environmental impacts, we also need to make sure, in this context, that any support or subsidies can actually be repurposed for better and less harmful environmental outcomes.

In Australia we have previously repurposed our subsidies to invest in research and development to help our farmers become more sustainable and productive and, at the same time, provide better environmental outcomes, including for water.

Second, sustainability is critically important to Australian farmers and as farmers we are constantly grappling with droughts or floods. So, good water infrastructure management is essential for us but it must be sustainable in the long term. And given we do farm on such a dry continent, then water efficiency is something that us farmers have been practising for centuries. As the effects of climate change take hold, we must continue to produce more from less and grow our agricultural sector and so we have developed the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework that demonstrates our commitment to sustainable practices that will reduce adverse impacts.

Thirdly, we have a strong regulatory framework that ensures proposals for investment in new or refurbished water infrastructure are assessed as both economically viable and ecologically sustainable before the investment can commence.

Fourthly, and I think vitally importantly, we must include those that are impacted as part of our planning and development processes, and this includes the farmer voice and the voice of our First Nations people. My role as special representative for Australian agriculture is one example of how Australia provides the farmer voice into these discussions and in very high-level engagement. But we also engage closely with our farmer representative bodies and with industry directly, and I also manage to get across the women's voice.

Our First Nations people have more than 65 000 years of managing finite resources in a changing climate and it makes sense that we can draw on their expertise. In Australia, we are actively moving to better include indigenous people's perspectives and knowledge into water resource management and community decision making, particularly as many of these communities are disproportionately impacted by water insecurity.

So, four points to consider in balancing investment and impacts.

**Ms Maria Elena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you for bringing new elements to this discussion, the need of science and evidence to support infrastructure, the need of innovation to increase productivity, sustainability, the infrastructures need to be sustainable and also how you are proposing the subsidies to use wastewater and to be recycled.

Now, after those experiences, the small countries, big countries, big infrastructures, primary infrastructure, let us listen to another country, Germany, to share their experience with us.

**Ms Swantje NILSSON (Germany)**

First may I compliment you for FAO on this more interactive format, I think we have all enjoyed it very much and it even brings strong voices from the ground, women's voices today, into the room and I think that is extremely good.

I was asked to also mention rivers as they are a transboundary in our country, but always have also formed borders themselves, for 100s and 1000s of years. We call the River Rhine "*Our Father Rhine*", so it is really dear to us, and it also marked the border of the Roman Empire already, so that I think is a very long history and unfortunately as you know, it has not only been used – or rivers have not only been used – to draw water, but also simply as sewage systems.

So it has been a longstanding fight to really make sure that healthy rivers will be the veins of a healthy environment and also for human health – lots of pollutants have gone into the rivers and then into the oceans in the end - so that is an ongoing fight I am very sure for all of us. And yes, I happily talk about Germany where we also know and will always be at the centre of societal peace, how we manage water, as it is pivotal to our lives and we have already heard a lot about that.

There is a new challenge unfortunately, or one of the new challenges, is surely climate adaptation, the demand for irrigation infrastructure in agriculture production, which in Germany has so far accounted for rather a small proportion but will increase. We know from FAO that about 72 percent of global water withdrawals is for agriculture, and in Germany right now it is only about 2 percent. So that is extremely little, because in our case it is other sectors, like energy 44 percent, industry about 25 percent, and public water use about 25 percent – that really draws the majority of the freshwater.

Due to climate change through, water needs will increase and also, in agriculture but unfortunately other sectors, and therefore we have the need to avoid water use conflicts when different users compete for the available amount of water. In times of water shortage water resources must be shared fairly to meet societal goals, it is really a question of peace. Assuring water and drinking water security is of special importance for social stability and should be noted in agreements on provisions that regulate water distribution on regional and local levels. Even though there is no water emergency in Germany yet, we have to use the time now to invest more in climate adaptation measures including sustainable water infrastructure.

We have a good infrastructure for water, including safe drinking water management for the population and freshwater for agriculture irrigation, sewage treatment, shipping, flood and coastal protection and again, also the protection of the oceans that has evolved over many decades and functions well.

But in the meantime now, our researchers have started to rethink water, especially in agriculture. Due to climate change, we will have to contain, especially rainwater, better in the future – which we did not need to do before. Dams and other barriers used to be the solution in the past, but we are struggling also with those barriers now and need to take care of them as they for example pose enormous problems to migrating species, for example the eel. I would love to talk more about that but maybe will have the time later.

There is new holistic approach, and it has to involve all stakeholders from energy, industry, transport sector, public water supply, environment and society as a whole. I think I am running out of time but also cities need more water, and we need to see how we can work with that in the continuum – rural, peri-urban and urban for sure.

Two things I want to mention very briefly – that is the German Water Strategy that only this year was decided upon by the German Cabinet and has ten strategic goals, once being the further development of sustainable water infrastructure adapted to the climate to protect against extreme weather events and ensure supply; and it needs to also be linked to another strategic goal to protect, restore and ensure a semi-natural water regime for the long term to prevent water scarcity and conflicting goals.

So, the preservation of ecosystems is important – I want to mention forests and peatlands – and those peatlands are extremely important because the water management is so difficult.

I have to conclude I am sorry, maybe we come back to it later, the second is the action plan on nature-based solutions for climate that we also came up with this new government and it concludes EUR 4 billion in the next four years to have this special focus on reinventing agriculture to use peat soils and local water management. Hope to talk about it in the next four minutes. Thank you.

**Ms Maria Elena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you so much for sharing with us, for bringing the need to have healthy rivers for healthy environments and also for human health; the need to invest on climate adaptation solutions and the linkage with water security with social stability and peace and sharing with us your German Water Strategy.

Thank you, all the panellists, for your insights. Now let us move to Regional Perspective and welcome Ambassador Ms Josefa Sacko. I would like to ask you a different question because you are more on the country perspective, and what are the mechanisms in place, or measures taken by African Union Commission to support countries in developing sustaining water infrastructure and to promote regional collaboration. You have four minutes to share your insights.

**Her Excellency Josefa Leonel CORREIA SACKO (African Union Commission)**

I would like to commend the organizers, FAO, for really seizing this good opportunity after the UN 2023 Conference that has been described as the most important water event in our generation, and it gives us the opportunity to raise ambition – I am talking about the Conference – the opportunity raise ambition to support the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 by 2030, and the Conference also presented a game-changing solution for the multifaceted crisis like too much water means too much storms and floods, and the impact of too little water is drought and water scarcity, and too dirty water has an impact of water pollution.

Water in adequate quantity and quality is essential for all the aspects of life and sustainable development. The UN's sustainable development goal, SDG 6, clean water and sanitation is one of the mandates that I have at the African Union - to ensure that there is clean water and sanitation.

The infrastructure, what you need to do to manage water resources and provide water services, is of vital importance. Most of the SDGs would not be achievable goals if water management and adequate water supply is not available.

African Union Commission has done a lot to support African countries in developing and sustaining water infrastructure and to promote regional collaboration.

The first, as far as the year 2000, the African Union champion, the development of Africa Water Vision 2025, which was commissioned by the World Water Council in 2000, and it clearly articulated the critical success factors for which Africa must adhere in its efforts to unleash the potential of African water resources to stimulate and sustain growth in the region's economic development and livelihood. Unfortunately, due to lack of investment and alignment by our Member States to this Water Vision, no progress has been made so far. I think with the Conference that was called in 2023, the Conference on Water, we should push it, because it is really an important tool, but most of the African countries do not align to the national programmes.

The second tool or instrument that we have in order to coordinate and manage water on the Continent, is the creation of the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW), which was created in 2002 to provide political leadership, policy direction, advocacy in water management, as well as the provision of sanitation and adjunct services for sustainable social, economic and environmental development and maintenance. This one has really done a very good job, they have also put in place and developed the Strategy of 2018 – 2030, which is in place for water, the development planning of our Member States.

Another nice one that we have in the Continent is the African Union Framework for Irrigation Development and Agricultural Water Management. This was launched in 2020 with FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank – we all launched this initiative, and we are still under resource mobilization in order to implement it. The framework is structured around four strategic agricultural water development pathways, including agricultural water management in rain fed farming, farmer-led irrigation scheme development and organization, and wastewater recovery.

**Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you for linking water and water management to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sharing with us the Africa Water Vision 2025, the Ministerial Council bringing the leadership, and also the Strategy on irrigation – but also the lack of investment and alignment at country level.

Now, having this first round of questions, we go to the second, and the second I will read slowly because it is a bit long, but it is clear, and it is: Going forward, developed countries may need to upgrade their existing but aged infrastructure. Developing countries may need to develop their new infrastructures to meet the development need. What is your perspective, insight and suggestions on investment, financing and how to improve the governance of infrastructures in the future – from planning, designing to construction and operation.

Your perspective and suggestion for financing and investment, and how to improve the governance – those are the two parts of the question depending on if you are a developed or developing country.

**His Excellency Avi DICHTER (Israel)**

We are well trained to control the weather, we are sitting here because we control the weather by the air conditioning. Otherwise, if you switch off the air conditioning here, I am not sure we are able to continue.

We need to control the water, and to control the water is the name of the game. As I said before, when we had a lack of water of 1 billion cubic meters, we have been trying to find the solutions in three dimensions – one is fresh water, but as we all know, freshwater depends on God, he decides if, when and how much water we are going to get by rains.

But we as human beings, as governments, as organizations, we can control the water by desalinating water, and Israel just during the last decade we increased dramatically the number of the desalination sites, we have six and the seventh is about to be built, and today we desalinate more than 80 percent of Israeli water and it is going to be increased.

But it is not enough, we have another problem that goes to the environmental aspects. We, people, decide how much wastewater we should have, and it is very easy to calculate, because the number of people that is growing up will decide how much wastewater we are going to have. And there are two options – either to pull it to the ocean, which is very bad – and the Barcelona Charter is limiting you quite a lot; or to recycle it and use it in agriculture, and we have three dimensions of recycling – second, third and fourth.

If you decide as a country to send it to the beach or to the ocean, you need to recycle it at the fourth level which is the most expensive way. So you put a lot of money into getting nothing but to get rid of wastewater. If you pull it to agriculture it is a win/win situation, you get the wastewater from the hearts of the country, the big cities, the megacities, and you use it in agriculture. And in agriculture you can use second level, third level and let alone fourth level.

So, it means that if we want more food, we need more recycling of water, and here we have another problem. Like electricity, you can get electricity from the sun or from any other tools – hydroelectric – but you need to store it, and storage is the name of the game today. Same with water, if you shift water from one place to another and it is a rainy season you do not need water. So, you need reservoirs. And in Israel we have 230 reservoirs built over the last decade, which means that you keep the water when you do not use it, and you use it when you do not have rains.

Now we have semi-artificial lakes or reservoirs or totally artificial reservoirs. A dam is practically semi-artificial but we all know that a dam enables you to collect water that as we say, “*in one tree you can have a million matches but with one match you can put in flames a million trees.*” So, with one dam you can collect water that supplies life to millions of people, while if such a dam is destroyed millions of people are going to be at risk.

So we have to built it smart and very carefully, and all over the country, to enable agriculture to be all over. And to keep the freshwater for people to use for living, and I think a combination of both freshwater (whether desalinated or not) and to people and to agriculture – but mainly recycled water for agriculture, I am telling you in the coming many decades we are going to ensure the humanity, the global people to live much better lives, with much more food.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you very much Minister for bringing the importance of storage, the importance of freshwater for people and recycling, and how to reduce or to reuse water for agriculture and keep the fresh water for people consumption. Thank you for sharing with us this experience, I think we need vision, we need leadership and we need investment and this is what we need. I would allow you to leave us now and thank you for your participation, it is very much appreciated.

Let me continue now, let me go to Mexico.

**Su Excelencia Víctor Manuel VILLALOBOS ARÁMBULA (México)**

Yo iniciaría señalando que el agua es un recurso que se agota y cualquier mecanismo o infraestructura que podamos desarrollar será importante para hacer un mejor uso de este recurso. Y en ese sentido, nuestra posición ha sido en función siempre de buscar cómo vamos a poder almacenar el agua reconociendo que la infraestructura hoy día es costosa, requiere también de acuerdos con las comunidades y, sobre todo, tener en cuenta el impacto ambiental que esto puede ocurrir.

Al final de cuentas, la incertidumbre que hoy día se presenta en muchos de nuestros países relacionada, por ejemplo, con las precipitaciones pluviales, la poca seguridad que tenemos de que los sistemas de riego hoy día tienen suficiente agua para garantizar la producción agrícola sustentable, requiere de varias decisiones que son decisiones de política fundamentalmente asociada con la creación de infraestructura, el incorporamiento del conocimiento técnico-científico para hacer un mejor uso del recurso y, finalmente, un convencimiento de las comunidades sociales y las comunidades agrícolas para que podamos juntos poder tener una forma de hacer un mejor y mayor uso del agua para la agricultura.

De modo que, la tecnología, la aplicación de sistemas adecuados de riego harán un mejor uso del agua que se colecta o se almacena en los diferentes sistemas de almacenamiento, sea que estemos hablando de presas o pequeños mecanismos para contenerla y, por otro lado, complementarla con diferentes formas de utilizar el agua a través de sistemas de riego.

Me da gusto que se haya hecho mención por parte de Australia la importancia de sustentar todas estas decisiones con base en conocimiento científico porque, efectivamente, el agua requiere de un acompañamiento técnico para su mejor uso. El concepto de huella hídrica es un concepto que tiene que estar cada vez más incorporado al uso del agua para la agricultura. Esto es poder llegar a medir cuánta agua se requiere para producir los granos o los cereales, las hortalizas o todos los productos que la agricultura provee, pero medidos en función de la cantidad de agua que esto requiere.

En la medida que vayamos transitando hacia este tipo de esquemas de medición, finalmente vamos a poder tener una idea clara de la eficiencia del uso del agua en la transformación de los recursos naturales en alimentos, de modo que nuestra visión siempre estará asociada a almacenar el agua, a

hacer un uso adecuado acompañándolo siempre del conocimiento técnico. Ocurre hoy día que en nuestros países existe una gran incertidumbre respecto a la precipitación pluvial y esto es muy importante porque una alta proporción de nuestra agricultura depende de la lluvia y, muchas veces, si el agua no es almacenada adecuadamente la lluvia en vez de ser un beneficio provoca otra serie de problemas.

De modo que, transitando hacia un uso sustentable del recurso hídrico, la agricultura, el manejo adecuado de ella y, finalmente, el manejo adecuado del suelo nos va a proveer una alternativa que garantice la alimentación, pero a su vez un uso adecuado del agua.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you Minister, bringing again the importance of science and technology in all decisions in terms of what kind of infrastructure and what kind of crops to be used and to be produced, and how to improve water efficiency.

*Continue en français*

Maintenant, je voulais me tourner vers vous, Monsieur le Ministre, pour parler de la République Centrafricaine.

**Son Excellence Mathieu Eric ROKOSSE-KAMOT (République Centrafricaine)**

C'est toujours un plaisir de prendre la parole après le Mexique, puisqu'il déploie plus des technologies dont nous avons besoin pour notre agriculture. Comme vous l'avez, à l'entame de vos propos, situé les pays dits développés qui ont les infrastructures qui doivent entretenir les nôtres. Entretenir les infrastructures, ce n'est pas le cas de la République Centrafricaine, comme je l'avais tantôt énoncé, que nous disposons que des infrastructures primaires. Surtout que nous, notre agriculture pâtit beaucoup des difficultés d'accès aux intrants, notamment les semences améliorées, les produits phytosanitaires, les engrais, et cetera, et aussi les coûts des outils de production qui sont défaillants. De ce côté, nous avons besoin d'utiliser d'une manière rationnelle l'eau que nous avons déjà. Ça permet de garantir aussi l'équilibre au niveau, avec tous ces changements climatiques que nous avons.

C'est vrai que nous avons, tout à l'heure, relevé que nous avons l'abondance, mais cette abondance, nous devons la rationaliser pour permettre de ne pas utiliser les eaux souterraines, par la construction des retenues d'eau de surface, pour permettre l'utilisation graduelle. C'est vrai que l'investissement dans les infrastructures est tributaire de la coopération que nous avons. Ça dépend beaucoup plus de l'aide que nous attendons des partenaires pour permettre de construire ces infrastructures. Par exemple, l'utilisation de systèmes de goutte à goutte permettra de mieux conserver nos réserves en eau pour les générations futures.

Maintenant, avec le changement climatique, il y a des moments où, pendant toute une semaine, même pendant la période pluie, la saison de pluie, il ne pleut pas. C'est l'occasion de mettre en route, si nous avons des réserves où nous avons des infrastructures, de les mettre en route pour permettre de disposer d'une agriculture abondante au niveau nationale. Nous comptons beaucoup plus sur la coopération internationale, surtout partager les expériences, comme je l'avais mentionné tantôt. La coopération par exemple de bénéficier des expériences du Mexique ou même de l'Israël.

L'exemple de l'Israël, c'est un pays aride qui ont, grâce à des investissements importants, put régler le problème et disposer d'un surplus, d'une réserve de plus de 20 pour cent de surplus qu'ils partagent avec les pays voisins. Ce sera le cas aussi de la République Centrafricaine, Dieu merci, où nous avons encore, nous sommes bien arrosés, par la pluie, nous bénéficions de la providence de Dieu, au niveau de la pluie pour l'agriculture, mais nous souhaiterons avoir la maîtrise à travers les infrastructures que nous pouvons construire pour nous permettre, d'abord d'améliorer par la même occasion, parce que quand on maîtrise l'eau dans le développement de l'agriculture, nous maîtrisons, nous allons beaucoup plus maîtriser la productivité, parce que nous savons quelle quantité d'eau les aliments ont or quand nous nous soumettons à la providence de Dieu, ce n'est pas, comment dirais-je ?, sûr d'avoir les niveaux rationnels de production.

Donc, la maîtrise de l'eau de ce côté par l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies nous permettrons d'améliorer le niveau de productivité et surtout aussi de ne pas faire une culture itinérante, qui



permette de procéder à des déforestations. Ce que nous, nous ne faisons pas, parce que nous avons suffisamment de terres arables, au passage 15 millions de terres arables, pour six millions d'habitants. Nous avons encore de quoi faire.

Donc, c'est pour cette raison que nous comptons énormément sur la coopération internationale, le partenariat pour certains qui peuvent venir aussi investir dans le domaine agricole, en République Centrafricaine, nous, nous avons ces potentialités énormes à mettre en valeur. Faute de moyens, nous n'arrivons pas à le faire.

Donc, nous espérons, nous saisissons cette occasion au niveau de la tribune de la FAO pour redire, déjà nous avons une expérience en ce moment en cours avec la FAO pour la construction d'un barrage expérimental dans une zone à forte potentialité dans la culture maraîchère, dans l'ouest de la République Centrafricaine. Nous verrons comment dupliquer cette expérience, si elle aboutissait d'une manière favorable.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

One of the objectives of this roundtable is exactly this, to share experience, to share best practices and also practice may be which did not work well – and this I think is what Central African Republic is telling us: we have the potential, support us to harness this potential and to better invest and bring technical and scientific solutions.

Now let me move to Slovakia.

**His Excellency Martin KOVÁČ (Slovakia)**

The water holding capacity of land and landscape structure is public goods, it has a public benefit character for the stability of the global and small water cycles, because regardless of land ownership, every square meter or hectare of land provides production, utility and ecosystem functions at the same time.

It is a public water infrastructure of decentralized nature. Therefore, it should be increased and maintained on a decentralized basis. Due to its public benefit nature, it enables the comprehensive implementation of restoration and provision of ecosystem services like landscapes, and that is supporting the sustainable circulation of water. Therefore, it should be subject to regular investment and support both from the private and public sectors. It is the type of water infrastructure that is directly connected with land use change, land management soil quality, vegetation cover and small water cycles.

The water retention capacity of the country structures as a part of local, regional and national water infrastructure, has to be increased at the global level by 750 cubic kilometres within the next decade in order to fundamentally stabilize the global water cycle and reduce the risks of floods and droughts. Together with the simultaneous improvement of soil health, this water infrastructure can effectively return up to eight to ten percent of annual rainwater on the continents to the local circulation of water and ecosystems on continents. It will support the production of biomass, food and restore biodiversity every year, with the full implementation of adaptation measures on the global level.

Investment to achieve these global targets start with around USD 4 per cubic meter of any new water retention capacity created and increased. In urban areas the cost is higher per unit. On a global level we can speak about one time investment from USD 6 000 to USD 9 000 billion invested during one decade and distributed by country area share of any country.

Such investment will secure guaranteed ecosystem services and will play a significant role on stabilizing hydrology and climate risks on local, national and continental level. A share of this action is approximately 100 cubic meters per citizen or 50 cubic meters per hectare of land. Components of small water cycles on continents are land plots, soil, plants, and rainwater.

We are changing them. These components secure functioning small water cycles on continents, climate and water stability, biotech regulation that manage a) moisture and its flow on the continent. Instead of managing committed water resources, we have the opportunity to increase available water

resources in landscape and territories. In this way it is possible for us to meet the target point of irreversible changes and negative cascade effects of ecosystems.

If you would like institutional support for small water cycles, we have to monitor small water cycles, where there are key indicators of soil health and climate stability. We have to implement integrated water and soil planning and a good start is to use rainwater budgets methodology.

Third, we have to restore and maintain small water cycles in ecosystems to rehydrate land.

Fourth, we have to finance the restoration and maintenance of small water cycles. There are various ways to invest in these activities. How we will achieve Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, is by increase and management of water retention capacities of all soils, landscape structures and features.

We will really renew and manage key water infrastructure for global water cycle and climate stability. It will enable us to manage the action on a decentralized basis, from local, to regional, to national and continental levels. It will provide synergy effects and Four Betters benefits in every corner and region of all countries where it will be implemented.

As Slovakia, we are an active participant of the UN Water Conference on Water, and we prepared a special White Paper for the Conference, that is named Water for Climate Healing, a New Water Paradigm, and this white paper was focusing on the methodology of how to restore small water cycles. So, the paper is available and we would be very happy to share these experiences with you.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you Minister, reminding us that we need some soil health, not to be too integrated with water and we need better planning and decentralization. Thank you for sharing this perspective.

**Ms Su MCCLUSKEY (Australia)**

Let me talk first about governance because it is critical to everything else, and I will give a couple of examples of complex multi-jurisdictional transboundary agreements which govern Australia's essential water resources.

The Murray-Darling Basin is the largest and most complex river system in Australia, covering one million square kilometres of Southeastern Australia. It is a significant environmental, cultural, and economic value to Australia. From an agrifood perspective around 40 percent of Australia's agricultural produce comes from the basin, including 100 percent of our rice, 74 percent of our grapes, and 30 percent of our dairy.

So the Murray-Darling Basin plan was actually developed to manage the basin as a whole connected system and at its heart is an over-arching governance plan that goes across state and territory borders so that the water is managed holistically and sustainably while continuing to support farming and other industries. But the compliance of the individual water uses is done at the local level. This provides a cross border framework for governance but place-based delivery responsibility – and I think this is essential for us to consider.

Policy is also an important component for governance and in this respect, we have the national water initiative, which is our policy framework for national water reform. It is a landmark agreement between all Australian governments, which has driven sustainable management of our water resources by balancing the allocation of water between all users - so taking a very much collaborative approach.

On financing and investment, Australia's water markets are a key achievement of our water reform. The ability to trade water is critical to the efficiency and productivity of Australian agriculture, and water trading also promotes efficiency along the supply chain and delivers broader benefits to the Australian economy.

We have also established the National Water Grid Fund, which is committed to sustainable and responsible investment in water infrastructure. Through this fund the government is investing in water infrastructure that improves water access and security as well as delivers nature-positive outcomes for regional Australia and First Nation's communities.

And we also have funding for water efficiency projects that are designed to invest in infrastructure and provide water for the environment. But I also want to mention what Australia is doing in relation to developing countries, because we also make sure that through our aid programme, we provide funding to ensure that we can deliver water.

For example, to over 80,000 households, and to strengthen water utility capacity in Indonesia, and we also have immobilized Australian water expertise under our water partnership with other developing nations. We have a Water for Women Fund, which has successfully transitioned into a 100 percent climate finance eligible programme, that now supports 14 civil society organization projects in 15 countries, to ensure longer term sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, and infrastructure.

I think it is critically important that for developed countries that we can work both within our borders and beyond, and another example of how we do this in Australia is through a unique Centre for International Agricultural Research, that brokers, manages and funds research for development projects that support improvements in agricultural productivity, sustainable livelihoods, and food system resilience in developing countries.

And given where we are situated, we have a focus on the Indo-Pacific. This programme uses water as the point of entry and supports targeted technical investments and longer-term projects that improve livelihood outcomes for smallholders, regional and rural communities. So, for example water sensing tools, fish ladders to allow the passage of fishes along the rivers, but importantly, it is also about capacity building so that you develop the capacity of decision makers and water stakeholders in country.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you Ms Su McCluskey, referring to governance, policy, finance and markets, the need of sustainable investment and how Australia is supporting third countries in terms of providing funding, Australian expertise and also research for developing programmes that you have in terms of water as an entry point.

Now is the time to move to Germany.

**Ms Swantje NILSSON (Germany)**

Germany has a good water infrastructure, but as I said before, we also have our challenges. We have to preserve our water infrastructure, continuously modernizing and adapting it to increase its resilience, to counter the impacts of extreme weather events and disasters, emerging smart new infrastructure solutions for the further development and gradual reorganization of water infrastructure have to be considered.

Adaptation must also include in our case, where it makes sense, dismantling infrastructure that is no longer needed, and promoting instead semi-natural and natural elements in infrastructure planning. Continuous and sufficient investments in water infrastructure must be made. Long term infrastructure planning must be flexible, cost efficient and cross sector, for example combining water infrastructure with transport and energy.

As this poses major challenges for society also in terms of financing, the financial burden on public budgets and fee payers must be kept within reasonable limits, also considering distributing costs across generations. Moreover, guidelines and regulations must be revised regularly and adapted. We are aware that the majority of measures in the ecoculture sector do not have to be implemented at the national level, but at the regional level. This requires regional water supply plans for example, in cooperation with water suppliers, municipalities and other water users - among others, agriculture.

This emphasizes that political decisions are jointly developed and supported by all political levels. I already mentioned the new comprehensive National Water Strategy of Germany and now briefly coming back to water infrastructure in agriculture in particular, there is little irrigation facilities in Germany for agriculture traditionally, so this offers an opportunity now to invest in efficient irrigation technology from the start, and to sustainably expand the water infrastructure in agriculture where it is necessary.

The basic requirement for expanding irrigation is in particular reliable data on water supply and water needs. We are right now examining options also of a drought early warning system in agriculture, based on soil moisture models, and of course insurances for the farmers will be important to strengthen their resilience.

In Germany, irrigation is especially important for vegetable and fruit production. We need the use of low-pressure irrigation technology such as drip hoses in permanent and vegetable crops, which help to save water and energy. The irrigation cannon on the other hand is the exact opposite of economical and sustainable water management, as it wastes water and energy.

For water saving, irrigation in needs-based control system is required. This only works with the support of digital, sensor and model based decision-making aids. The food, water, energy, climate nexus – a really big nexus - will become more and more important therefore and addressing it is essential to achieve the European Green Deal which aims at making the European Union's (EU's) economy sustainable by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas.

The Green Deal of EU roadmap that proposes actions to boost efficient use of resources by moving to a clean and circular economy, achieve climate neutrality, reverse biodiversity loss, cut pollution and provide a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system is important to us. Water is a key element in all these actions.

Also, with respect to our agricultural subsidies for example, the new EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) shall contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing carbon sequestration, as well as promoting sustainable energy. Germany introduced as a new eco scheme, support for agroforestry, because of that.

I want to end with supporting FAO work in water, maybe we mention it later as I have run out of time now, but I think it is important that we also talk about those partnerships.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you for bringing again the importance of data, science and technology and the need for long term cost efficient infrastructure, the linkage with transport and energy and also the water, food and energy nexus.

Now, let me go back to Her Excellency Ambassador Josefa Sacko, to have regional perspective, and let me read out the question: What can be done more at the continental level, to support the needs of the region in terms of investment, policies, financing to improve water infrastructure?

**Her Excellency Josefa Leonel CORREIA SACKO (African Union Commission)**

Despite the self-evident importance of this sector, which is in investing in water, we are receiving very few investments, very less investments across the continent on this issue of water infrastructure. For us to meet the golden target of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on the continent, we need an investment of USD 30 billion a year.

Unfortunately, we are just receiving USD 10 billion to USD 19 billion a year for us to reach that target. So why? What are the costs of these new investments on the continent? The water issue has been a relatively low priority for our governments so there are inadequate laws and regulations, inadequate infrastructures, inadequate and inaccessible data and information on this sector and fragmented water institutions are the most identified challenge in Africa.

So how to change this narrative? In order to change the narrative, we need convincing national leaders that realize investment in water infrastructure is important, beneficial, and timely. Supporting government in mobilizing resources, planning, technical information to implement such infrastructure. Getting the right type of infrastructure in place, efficient, resilient and green and improving the financial viability of water infrastructure and services, actively promoting new sources of funding.

What have we done in Africa? His Excellency, Macky Sall, President of Senegal, and Chair of the African Union, formerly launched the International High Level Panel on Water Investment for Africa during the World Water Forum in Dakar last year, and this panel is composed by sole agencies,

African Union agencies, the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW), the African Union Development Agency, the African Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Global Centre on Adaptation and Billable Water Partnership and Global representations from different and former heads of states as well as other global leaders. The panel of water has an investment gap, at least to mobilize the gap of USD 30 billion that we are not receiving on the continent. So, we had a very productive side event during the United Nations (UN) Conference on Water.

Another issue I would like to share with you is turning specifically to agriculture. As a largest use of water globally, agriculture requires innovative, science driven solutions to prudently manage water resources, while maintaining an acceptable quality standard. Solutions also need to be integrated to help farmers adapt to climate change and strengthen resilience in food systems. We need to scale up good practices and I think we have very good day at the opening of this Conference, we had a very good experience from Singapore and then we will go and drive from those experiences that Singapore shared with us.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you for stressing the need and the investment in Africa, the need to increase investment, the need to bring science and innovative finance, and also innovative solutions. Again, the need for governance, the need to have better collaboration and the need to have nature-positive solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all the pannelists for sharing these remarks, and let us have a hand of applause for them before we move to the second part.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

Now let us move to the segment where we will be hearing from the perspective of farmers, youth, women and indigenous people. The panellists will speak from the floor, and we will have three minutes to give your vision.

**Ms Pramisha THAPALIYA (World Food Forum)**

It is my pleasure to intervene on behalf of youth and represent World Food Forum on this panel.

World Food Forum is an independent, youth led global network of partners, facilitated by FAO and we are working to empower people to actively safe agrifood systems.

The current problems around water infrastructures have directly impacted the lives of children and young people. Water scarcity, lack of proper water infrastructures and unsustainable management of water resources and poor water governance have been significant precursors of agriculture and food insecurity, increased poverty, transmission of communicable diseases and water induced migration.

Fetching water from long distances in many rural areas in different countries have prevented children, especially young girls, from attending school. Similarly, children living in places with limited water infrastructure for health and sanitation are also more likely to drop out of school.

However, young people are also creating and leading the solution to mitigate this problem through designing water infrastructures with locally available resources, recycling wastewater, doing policy advocacy, research and outreach, and also implementing sustainable water infrastructure initiatives through their innovative approaches.

But there are a lot of systemic barriers that are hindering the progress, for example lack of technical support to young people, to navigate the complexity of this issue, limited technical capacities to develop water infrastructures, less access to finance, less access to data, strict reporting guidelines and marginalization of them from policy making spaces.

Hence our transformation of water governance and improved water management requires meaningful involvement of young people in national and international processes on water infrastructures from planning to implementation and processes; investment in youth initiatives on water infrastructures;

increased capacity building, intergenerational collaboration and international cooperation that supports young people with water infrastructure related initiatives.

We would also like to see the increased involvement of young people in different Agenda outcomes from the United Nations (UN) *2023 Water Conference*, including National Water Roadmap towards the 2030 Agenda.

Solutions should focus on systems-thinking approach rather than a siloed approach. The World Food Forum is committed to empowering youth voices with its own independent Youth Policy Body, the Youth Policy Board and Independent Scientific Group, the Young Scientists Group, and with other youth networks we would like to work for example on Water and Climate Coalition, World Youth Parliament for Water, and other water related networks, to support the work of young people in improving water related infrastructure and water governance to drive agrifood system transformation.

Young people are not just the recipients of the decisions that are being taken today, but they are the ones who are spearheading the innovative solutions and policy actions to address the issues in water, food and ecosystem nexus. So, supporting young people in harnessing the water related solutions is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agrifood system transformation and the *four betters*.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you very much Ms Pramisha Thapaliya for telling us that if you need innovative solutions and policies, we will need to bring the young people to the decision making table, and we took note, and we also took note that you refer that you have some initiatives, you have some coalitions, and FAO will associate you in any decisions and policies we will be doing, supporting the countries.

Now, I am moving to Ms Josiane Irakarama.

**Ms Josiane IRAKARAMA (Rwandan Farmers Syndicate INGABO)**

As farmers, we care a lot about water because water is a big part of our daily life and our daily activities. Farmers are not only food producers, but we are also stewards of natural resources, especially water and soil. Since we are facing the double threat of water scarcity and floods, we are devising Strategies and innovation techniques for water harvesting and water management. Support of these initiatives is required starting from empowering the already existing local mechanisms.

For example, in Rwanda, we are very thankful to our government, which has established the renovation of swamps, and which works closely with the farmers and cooperatives who are members of our farmers syndicate that I am representing today, and the government is helping us to preserve the local mechanisms farmers are using to conserve the water and ensure equal distribution of water to irrigate the farmers farms.

However, great investment is needed to scale-up these initiatives. In the search for solutions, huge investment and resources should be allocated to these initiatives based on local community knowledge, because we are the ones who are aware of what has been working for us for ages. We should also take into consideration that what works, for example, for Mexico may not necessarily be what works for Rwanda or for Central African Republic.

So, we must take that into consideration. Another thing, storage and delivery infrastructures, especially green infrastructures, are key to ensure farmers get water to our plants, animals and ultimately to grow the food that we all eat. This will help towards the mitigation of climate change effects.

In the countries which are more vulnerable to climate change, irrigation and drainage systems are needed to enable farmers all year round, alongside ambitious projects to restore lakes, rivers and canals. Another thing which is very important is involving farmers and our organisations in the assessment of the current situation and identification of infrastructure investment priorities. We need to be identified as co-owners rather than beneficiaries of these projects because we are the ones who implement the majority of these projects on the field and their impact affects us more than anyone else in another sector.

Another thing, as a young farmer myself, as a representative of Rwandan farmers, and a delegate from the World Farmers Organisation (WFO) I can say that we are ready and eager to engage with governments at local, national and global level. We strongly believe that if we work closely together, we can secure more water and food for all.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

We took note that you are co-owners, you are not beneficiaries of the projects and policies, therefore needs to be also associated to the decision-making and you are ready and eager to engage.

Now, I am moving to Ms Tania Martinez-Cruz, representing the Indigenous People Food System.

After that I will be moving to the third part is to have statements, questions, comments from the Plenary.

**Ms Tania Eulalia MARTINEZ-CRUZ (Indigenous People Unit, FAO)**

We indigenous peoples have committed for centuries to preserving water because, for indigenous people, water comes in different forms, and it is something beyond the resource as we usually portray it.

It is linked to our cosmogony, our territories and it is essential to many processes in life. In a time of climate crisis, for the well-being of our planet, the ecosystems and all the living forms, as we safeguard 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity, it is important that the world works with us to ensure that everyone has access to clean, safe water, food security, while we preserve a healthy planet.

We are fully committed to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and ensure water access to everyone. We have been committed already for centuries, but it should not be done at our expense. It should be done in an inclusive way and using a rights-based approach. By that, I mean and request that we aim to ensure water security and we need infrastructure.

We should engage people, indigenous peoples, in a meaningful way. Respect our rights, our right to free prior and informed consent, and respect our territorial rights because many of the projects that are developed are in our territories. When our territories are disrupted, our ability to be resilient and maintain the practices that has allowed us to maintain the biodiversity and support the sustainability of this planet is also disrupted. And it is detrimental, not only for us, but for the entire world.

Dominant food systems are unsustainable, and we are using water inefficiently. We have heard that they account for 70 percent of the freshwater withdrawals, and if we aim to feed the world and we aim to ensure water for everyone, we should change the business. We should not keep business as usual. We should not increase the water demands if we do not revisit first what we are doing now and that we should do, we must do things differently.

Indigenous peoples can help us in this task. We are ready to help in this task. Our food systems are among the elders and the more sustainable and resilient ones in the world. In the drylands of the indigenous region of Mexico, the Mexican region, indigenous peoples have adapted the native seeds. When we think of other different sorts of water or way of water, we must go to the Sami territory and how snow is essential for the reindeer and the pastures that they get from there.

So, our food systems are totally interconnected. Every drop of water has a role in our livelihoods and water is essential for everything. So, in this sense, we know that addressing water and food security is an issue that concerns all of us and this is why we, indigenous peoples, are committed as we have been for centuries. This is why we came to the Water Conference in March in New York. This is why we also have been engaged in the United Nations Food System Summit.

The issue of the United Nations Permanent Forum this year was on planetary health, human health and climate change. They reinforced that we cannot move forward and ensure food security if we do not address water issues too. This is why, as part of our coalition and Indigenous Peoples Food Systems, we are also working to reinforce and strengthen our food systems. We are working also to document and learn the game-changing nature of our practices, the ones that have made us champions of resilience.

As we know, this issue is concerning everyone. We are ready to work with you and we are inviting you to work with us.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Need to change business, to have a more interconnected approach, water access to everyone, to be inclusive in all the solutions and all the decision. Now, we have the last speaker from this segment, Ms Mariet Cohen. She is the President of Women for Water Partnership (WfWP).

**Ms Mariet VERHOEF-COHEN (Women for Water Partnership)**

Women know their environment and circumstances often better than their male colleagues, but still women are not consulted when new infrastructure are discussed or decided on. They should be part of planning and decision-making to make the infrastructure into a success.

There are always challenges with new water infrastructure. An example could be the building of a new hydropower dam, impact location, people have to move. Where do they move to? When? Who gives them support for the displacement? What is going to be done? What is the alternative? How will they to sustain their livelihoods? Other people well and timely informed and part of the designing process.

The new infrastructure situation can be threatening. Jobs are disappearing. Although hydro people say that new jobs are created, mostly replacement jobs, as the old jobs are disappearing, and these new jobs are for another category of people. So, often the issue for the financing is that there is finance for building the new structure, but not enough for the maintenance. Financial support for the local communities is often not reaching them. Donors and sponsors need to change their current procedures so that this will indeed happen.

We know from experience that procedures make it impossible for smaller organisations to apply for finances and there is no trust that they can perform and manage it. Agriculture and water, including its infrastructure, are intertwined and giving support, also financial support, to Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), especially run by women, is crucial. You can read more information on our report together with The Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and FAO. In addition, women are often not rehired, and this causes a capacity gap and waste of talent.

Last, but definitely not least, is the gender-sensitive budgeting methodology for women, men, boys and girls. It gives a way of analysing the budget and its intent, and if and when finance actually reaches the intended recipients with the impact envisioned or not envisioned, and thus can lead to policy and/or budget adjustments.

If gender-sensitive budgeting is used, it might help to have a better understanding of investments in infrastructure and maintenance. This methodology is to be transparent and give more equitable funding. We did have recently a very interesting discussion on equitable funding that was held in Geneva during the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) roundtable, and you can read more about that as well.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Gender-sensitive budgeting, to have impact, and to have equitable share of resources between women and men, and the need to rehire women in order to reduce the capacity gap and not waste talent.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear delegates, now a round of applause to our panellists for this second

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

Now, let us move to you, to the Plenary.

**Ms Julia IMENE-CHANDURU (Namibia)**

I take the floor to share a brief national perspective. Namibia is one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa with a semi-arid climate.



Namibia's budget has been strengthened for the next five years to address water infrastructure development and rehabilitation of pipelines at the coastal areas. We are in the process of implementing community-based management water infrastructure by drilling and installing boreholes, rehabilitating water points and constructing dams, traditional wells and water pens for livestock for drinking, as well as harvesting flood and rainwater.

This includes the development of the feasibility studies for a desalination plan and a master study for the north central areas. This should move us to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 6 and water security across Namibia's population. At continental level, Namibia welcomes and supports the Continental Water Investment Programme adopted by African Union Commission and its Ministerial Committee on Water with the aim of leveraging USD 30 billion annually in climate resilient water investment for Africa by 2030. This will accelerate investment in climate resilience at regional, transboundary and national water governance for infrastructure, for social economic development of the continent.

I further thank the AU Commissioner for the great work being done on the continent.

**Ms Josyline JAVELOSA (Philippines)**

The Philippines greatly appreciates the esteemed panel for their insightful discussion, including FAO's technical presentation which includes how FAO can help respond to the challenges in promoting sustainability of water infrastructure and agriculture.

Briefly, the Philippines would also wish to share one particular challenge, particularly identified by our National Irrigation Administration (NIA). It is a government-owned and controlled corporation attached to the Department of Agriculture, and that biggest challenge identified is funding big-ticket multipurpose irrigation projects.

Efficient water use in irrigation services is critical in the Philippines. Around 68 billion cubic metres of water, which amounts to 80 percent of the country's yearly freshwater supply, irrigates roughly 1.9 million hectares of farmland, mainly for rice cultivation. However, compared to other countries, irrigating the same crop and land area, the agricultural irrigation system in the Philippines wastes around 25 percent of the delivered water. The lack of budgetary support led to slow irrigation development at two percent of the potential irrigable area of 1.3 million hectares annually.

Slow pace of project preparation, due to failure of consultants to deliver necessary outputs like feasibility studies and detailed engineering designs, as well as conversion of developed irrigated areas to other land uses, like residential, industrial and other purposes, were also identified as reasons for slow irrigation development. What NIA is doing recently is to partner with the public/private partnership centre of the Philippines to fast-track the country's irrigation development. The main objective is to create climate smart, resilient and multipurpose irrigation systems to expand irrigated areas and boost agricultural productivity and food security.

Under the partnership, NIA aims to maximise the technical services of the public/private partnership centre in terms of capacity building for the utilisation of various Public-Private Partnership (PPP) modalities for irrigation projects. As of the first quarter of this year, the agency has identified 50 potential projects for PPP, amounting to about USD 670 million. These projects have seven revenue streams, including hydroelectric power, solar power, aquaculture, wind energy, bulk water supply, water treatment and carbon credits.

The Philippines' priority projects also include the construction of the high dam, afterbay dam, and long siphon, as well as the improvement and expansion of irrigation facilities. This project will also provide essential benefits like improved watershed management, ecotourism opportunities and infrastructure support for renewable energy, and facilitate the development of hydropower and solar farms. In this regard, the Philippines will welcome FAO's support and technical cooperation with other countries, including financial investments from those who have the expertise and resources to support the Philippines' initiatives to accelerate water infrastructure for agriculture.

The Philippines stands ready to commit to a global water sector resilience Agenda. This requires that we address not only the physical risks through engineering solutions but the ecological, socioeconomic and governance challenges we face.

**Mme Hawa DIALLO SYLLA (Guinée)**

La question du financement des infrastructures hydriques est cruciale pour le secteur agropastoral. La majeure partie de l'eau utilisée à des fins agricoles en Afrique, provient principalement des précipitations et seulement une petite partie atteint les zones de culture, les rivières et les lacs. Les fermes et les zones pâturages sont loin des rivières, ce qui limite leur capacité à utiliser les plans d'eau pour l'irrigation. Par les effets du changement climatique, les périodes sans pluie de plusieurs semaines sont fréquentes, ce qui retarde les périodes de semis et par conséquent, affecte les rendements.

La Guinée compte 1 300 cours d'eau, de nombreux fleuves tels que le Niger, le Sénégal, la Gambie trouve leurs sources en Guinée, ce qui justifie son appellation de château d'eau de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Toutefois, avoir une ressource est une chose, et l'utiliser de façon efficace reste la problématique dans certains pays ici présents. Le ministre de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural d'Israël a touché du doigt cette problématique. Il faut encourager les investissements massifs dans les systèmes de rétentions d'eau et aussi d'irrigation.

Comme l'a fait le gouvernement rwandais précédemment, mentionné par Josiane. Mais quand on parle d'investissements massifs, on parle forcément du secteur privé, qui n'est pas très enclin à investir dans l'eau contrairement aux autres secteurs. C'est d'ailleurs le secteur où il y a peu de Partenariat Public-Privé (PPP) abouti, car les gens pensent que l'eau est un don de Dieu et pourquoi payé pour ? Nous avons réfléchi sur le sujet en Guinée et avons organisé un Forum National de l'Eau sur trois jours au mois de mai, avec des tables rondes pour mettre en évidence nos besoins d'investissements qui s'élèvent à USD 2.7 milliards.

L'état s'est engagé à financer à hauteur de 20 pour cent, soit USD 540 millions, les différents bailleurs à savoir la Banque Mondiale, la Banque Africaine de Développement, l'Agence Française de Développement, le Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), et la Banque d'Investissement Européenne et des sociétés privées ont manifesté également leurs intérêts.

Des annonces de financement d'environ 2.3 milliards ont été faites et nous espérons que le «gap» sera annoncé par la FAO et d'autres bailleurs.

**Mr Mamoun BARGHOUTH (Palestine) (Original Language Arabic)**

I would just like to comment on what the Minister of the State of Occupation has said. Israel was a dry state, and it became an oasis, but let me tell you that Palestine was never a dry state. Before occupation, we used to export agricultural products to many Arab countries and foreign countries. Our economy depended mainly on 46 percent on the agricultural sector. This is for the desert, what we would have said as desert. Now, as for surplus and water, yes, because the surplus is found in Israel, with 85 percent coming from Palestine.

So, he gave a solution saying to build dams, but he did not give one solution which is the easiest, and that is stealing Palestinian water. Can you not look at the violations that are happening? Can you not look at the theft of water that is happening?

This is my comment, and I know that what we are talking about is not political in nature, we are talking about water, but we are talking about infrastructure. Let me say the question that should have been asked to the Minister of the Occupation State, why are you still continuing to destroy the infrastructures in Palestine? Why are you still looting and stealing the resources? Why are you launching the war on the Palestinian? Why are you preventing the Palestinian people from benefiting from the agricultural sector?

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Now, to conclude, I will give to all the panellists one minute to share with us some take-home messages from this discussion. And I will be starting from Ms Pramisha Thapaliya, followed by Ms

Josiane Irakarama, Ms Tania Eulalia Martinez-Cruz, Ms Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, and then I come to the stage.

**Ms Pramisha THAPALIYA (World Food Forum)**

I invite all of the Members to include youth in the water infrastructure related decision-making processes right from the planning to the implementation when you are doing any water infrastructure related processes in your country, and include the youth in decision-making processes in your national level.

**Ms Josiane IRAKARAMA (Rwandan Farmers Syndicaye INGABO)**

I would like to encourage all the partners to please include the farmers in all decisions being made because we are the implementing partners, we should have equal participation.

**Ms Tania Eulalia MARTINEZ-CRUZ (Indigenous People Unit, FAO)**

Work with us, indigenous peoples. Let us keep this planet sustainable. We are here, just come to us.

**Ms Mariet VERHOEF-COHEN (Women for Water Partnership)**

I can say exactly the same, but I really would like to also emphasise that the funding instruments to reach local organisations, local governments or local municipalities are badly needed and have to be less bureaucratic and more flexible to actually achieve what we want to achieve.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Be inclusive, associate gender, youth, women, indigenous people, and farmers in this debate, and be less bureaucratic.

**Her Excellency Josefa Leonel CORREIA SACKO (African Union Commission)**

My take-away is that water is life. That is what we learned here. We should really make sure that our farmers have access to water and access to the new technology of water management and preservation of our natural resources.

**Ms Su MCCLUSKEY (Australia)**

Water is the lifeblood of all of us and we must make sure in any policies or decisions we make that are firmly backed by evidence and science.

**Su Excelencia Víctor Manuel VILLALOBOS ARÁMBULA (México)**

Mucha de nuestra agricultura depende de la precipitación pluvial. Necesitamos implementar buenas prácticas agrícolas para la recarga de los mantos acuíferos, de otra forma el agua se pierde y finalmente genera una serie de problemas adicionales. Buenas prácticas agrícolas, además de la reforestación y, sobre todo, un adecuado manejo de los suelos.

**Son Excellence Mathieu Eric ROKOSSE-KAMOT (République Centrafricaine)**

Je crois que le seul message que je pourrais lancer là, c'est au niveau des investissements innovants. Aujourd'hui, pour qu'une bonne partie de ces investissements ou de ces financements, qui peuvent être mobilisés dans ce cadre doivent être orientés vers la construction des infrastructures dans le secteur de l'eau pour permettre une meilleure utilisation de l'eau dans l'avenir.

Dans l'exemple de ce que nous faisons dans le cadre de la Commission du Bassin du Lac Tchad, où les expériences de financements de la Banque Africaine de Développement, nous avons réalisé dans certains pays de cette Commission, certains projets qui ont abouti. Nous attendons la réalisation au niveau de la République Centrafricaine.

**His Excellency Martin KOVÁČ (Slovakia)**

Global water cycle and small water cycles are directly interconnected on every continent, and because we lost water retention capacity of the continents over the last decades, we have a huge opportunity now to invest money in blue and green water infrastructure on every continent to increase this water retention capacity that will help us to bring stability of global water cycle. That is very important, and

I think it is very important that every country can participate by size of the area of the country on this solution every region, every community, every land user.

**Ms Swantje NILSSON (Germany)**

When water and all natural resources are under pressure, what is needed is stewardship. When we hear from the young farmers, we are the stewards, we know the solutions are here in the room. So, we need everybody around the table, the water table, and work on it together.

**Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)**

Thank you all for your valuable contribution in making such a rich exchange today. We have finished the series of roundtables, and this is the last one of the 43rd FAO Conference, and we heard about Strategies, experience and solutions that have served to recognise the key role water infrastructure play to deliver water resources and water service to all users.

To learn about the challenge, but also the solutions in developing and managing water infrastructure to meet both socioeconomic and environmental objectives. And to systemically plan Sustainable Water Infrastructure in the future, supported by science, innovation, technology, robust investment plans, bold policies and financing mechanism, as well as inclusive governance arrangement. To increase the stewardship, to associate all in this journey, to bring youth, women, indigenous people and farmers at the centre to be all at the decision-making table.

As a general conclusion of the three roundtables on water, we see clearly that we need more effective, integrated and coordinated action. They should be coupled with strong political will in recognising, valuing and managing water in a holistic and integrated manner to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Water is food, food is water and water is life. I think this is what we heard during these two days or three days that you have this discussion on water.

But it started on Sunday with the MacDougall lecture, and I think we will end up this week with clear guidance, clear road map, how to work the countries to better manage, better invest and bring green and blue solutions to water. It could be in drought, in floods and investment in water.

As Director-General referred on Monday, FAO has launched the water journey last year at the first Rome Water Dialogue. The Conference with the theme of water and the 300 tables on water are all important milestones along this journey, as well as the second Rome Water Dialogue planned in October, the first week of October. I hope we will be able to have all of you again with us to discuss about this important theme. We hope these events help co-create, co-design holistic water solution and foster partnership to co-implement such solutions for water secure and water food secure world.

To further raise awareness about the central role of water in achieving food security and nutrition, we have organised, again I would like to remind you, the art exhibition at FAO Atrium and it will run out until Friday. Its featured sculpture by world-renowned Italian artist, Fiorenzo Safina, and I would recommend all of you to visit this exhibition. But now, after this roundtable, will be followed by a high-level dialogue on how our agrifood systems shape One Health. What are the priorities for attention in developing national ways for change? We hope all of you will be able to join us. We will serve some refreshment. You have some food. Please join us and will be assured your food security.

Thank you for staying with us until the closing of this event, of this roundtable. Thank you and wish you a pleasant day and hope to see you again in Sheikh Zayed Centre. For the panellists, we would like to have again another with Her Excellency Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko as she was not able to join us since the beginning.

***The meeting rose at 12:04 hours***

***La séance est levée à 12 h 04***

***Se levanta la sesión a las 12.04***



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منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>NINTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>NONA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>5 July 2023</b></p>

The Ninth Meeting was opened at 14:15 hours  
Mr Khalid Mehboob,  
Vice-Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La neuvième séance est ouverte à 14 h 15  
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,  
Vice-Président de la Conférence

Se abre la nona reunión a las 14.15  
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,  
Vice-Presidente de la Conferencia

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**Item 10. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (*continued*)****Point 10. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (*suite*)****Tema 10. Examen del estado de la alimentación y la agricultura (*continuación*)****VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Good afternoon, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I call the Ninth Plenary Meeting to order.

We will now continue with Item 10, *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*. May I once again remind delegates to respect the agreed upon five-minute limit please.

**Statements by Heads of Delegation****Déclarations des chefs de délégation****Declaraciones de los jefes de delegación**

*Lithuania, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Jamaica, Ukraine, Viet Nam, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ecuador, International Development Law Organization (IDLO)*

**His Excellency Kestutis NAVICKAS (Lithuania)**

Mr Chair,

Director-General,

Distinguish Delegates and All Participants of the Conference, It is a great honour to speak on behalf of Lithuania.

Thank you for bringing the water issue into our discussions.

When talking about the state of food and agriculture, it is difficult not to focus only on the multitude and overlapping crises. In Lithuania, we have seen a moderate progress in SDG 21, but more efforts are still needed especially in accelerating the transition to sustainable agriculture and mitigating the effects of the recent rapid increase of food prices on the most vulnerable.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

The unprovoked and illegal war of aggression of Russia in Ukraine continues to strain the global food security. The aggressor is not only directly killing innocent civilians but is also targeting the primary needs of the Ukrainians. At first, it was the demolition of the energy infrastructure in order to freeze the people of Ukraine and leave them without drinking water. Now we have the explosion of Kakhovka dam, which caused flooding of residential areas, drowned cattle on farms, washed away crops. This brutal act will negatively impact agricultural sector because the dam was used as a water reservoir for field irrigation. Therefore, the destruction by Russia of the Kakhovka dam stands as one of the most devastating examples, with its negative effects to impact local communities, agriculture, natural ecosystems and water resources for years to come.

Ukraine holds a significant position as one of the world's primary agricultural producers, cultivating crops such as wheat, barley, maize, rapeseed and sunflower seeds. Countries in Africa and Asia heavily rely on these exports. As the extensive areas of agricultural land were flooded, we can expect to see knock-on effects in terms of food production. The broader context is deeply concerning, as Russia persists in impeding the export of Ukrainian goods through Ukrainian ports and repeatedly threatens to end the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Continuing support for Ukraine is imperative to ensure the rebuilding and functioning of its agricultural infrastructure.

Mr Chair,

We thank FAO for the proposal of the integrated water resources management as the next biennial theme. It is extremely timely, as we are currently experiencing climate extremes with significant effects on our agricultural production. Lithuania is fortunate to be a water-rich country, but as such, extreme events are becoming more common, it will require shifting to a more efficient water use as

well as production practices more suitable to the changing climate mitigation.

Currently, however, the most prominent issue is the worsening water quality in our rivers and lakes, as well as the Baltic Sea, one of the most eutrophication-affected seas in the world. Agriculture is the leading source of this surface water pollution, mostly due to impact of nitrogen fertilisers. We are tackling this not only by proposing regulatory measures, but also providing IT tools for farmers for better planning as well as support for more sustainable practices, such as cover crops, protective strips along waterways and crop protection.

To conclude, we would like to echo the support for FAO's work on water, in cooperation with United Nations Environment Assembly. Food systems sustainability, which also includes integrated water resources management, is key for ensuring food security and the resilience of global food systems. It is important we continue to work on this together.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

Good afternoon to all.

Excellencies.

Distinguished delegates.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

With record numbers of people acutely hungry in the world, SDG2 on zero hunger is further and further off-track. Progress is in reverse, with conflict and climate change driving food insecurity globally. This is exacerbated by the Russian Federation's illegal war in Ukraine that directly impacts food security, and therefore the work of FAO - and the other Rome-based agencies. The UK joins others in calling on the Russian Federation to end the war.

In this context, FAO's State of Food and Agriculture report, with its focus on water security – interlinked with food security and climate change – is of critical importance. Dependent on water are the ecosystems on which food security relies, proper sanitation and hygiene, and all life on earth.

But the world has mismanaged this precious resource for too long, and now we are faced with a global water security crisis, exacerbated by climate change. The impacts of El Niño this year will be devastating, especially for the most vulnerable. Whilst this is a daunting picture, if we act now, and we act smart we can drive forward a water secure world that protects people, planet, and nature. But we must act together. As the global commission on the economics of water puts it – water is our greatest global common good.

As the largest user of freshwater supplies, the food and agriculture sector has a huge role to play. There is an imperative now to improve the sustainability of water use in agriculture. For this, we will need innovative solutions, new technologies, better data and more transparency, increased finances in blue and green infrastructure, and of course increased political leadership to deliver this.

But when we talk of water security, we often think of blue water – the water found in lakes, rivers, and reservoirs. But not enough global attention has been put on green water - the water captured and stored in our soils for plants. We encourage FAO to increase the focus on green water. Without this there can be no replenishment of groundwater, which will impact the whole water cycle including precipitation levels, with knock on ramifications both within and beyond the agricultural sector.

We invite FAO to join the Glasgow Fairwater Footprint Declaration, a multistakeholder initiative committed to raising standards of water management in supply chains, including for food. Driving forward a water secure world is at the heart of the UK's work on climate adaptation. We encourage FAO in continuing to strengthen its focus on and integration of water across all of its work. Following on from the UN Water Conference in March, FAO is uniquely placed to drive forward this agenda, for a water secure world, better able to adapt and respond to the consequences of climate change. We also call on FAO to collaborate and engage with the Rome-based and other UN Agencies focussed on food systems and food security, to better integrate sustainable water resource management across the water-

food nexus.

Water resource management is also essential for the delivery of all the SDGs, including SDG 3 on good health and wellbeing. As co-chair of the water and health dialogue at the UN water conference, the United Kingdom highlighted the critical role that water, sanitation and hygiene have - also on combatting the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance. As Lord Benyon, the UK Minister of State in our Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, highlighted in today's side-event, implementation of a One Health approach is becoming increasingly important, and we are committed to taking this forward, also through knowledge sharing and the UK's FAO Reference Centre. The UK has a high level of ambition for action across the One Health spectrum. We look forward to further strengthening our collaboration with other Member States and partners, including FAO and the Quadripartite – particularly in the lead-up to next year's UN General Assembly High-Level meeting on AMR.

Finally, the UK would like to congratulate Dr Qu Dongyu once more on his re-election as Director-General of FAO. In a context in which the world is facing unprecedented, interconnected challenges on global food security, nutrition, climate change, water scarcity, and disaster risk management, the world needs a stronger and more effective FAO more than ever. We look forward to working closely together with FAO and its members. We must do more to build resilience. We must do better on anticipatory and preventative action. The livelihoods and lives of billions of people depend on this. Never has it been more imperative for us to work together - in partnership, with FAO, at country level, across the international system, with all stakeholders. The UK is committed to this.

Thank you.

### **His Excellency Floyd Green (Jamaica)**

Chairperson, Delegates,

Jamaica, the land of wood and water, is pleased to be participating at the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference.

As a Small Island Developing State, climate resilience and adaptation strategies are essential for the agricultural sector amid increased intensity and frequency of natural disasters, which have had a major negative impact on production.

Agriculture plays a crucial role in the development of Jamaica, contributing 8 percent to the GDP and 15.54 percent of our employment.

Our focus, therefore Chairperson, is now on transforming the agricultural sector bearing in mind the Four Betters. Our focus is on food and nutrition security, poverty reduction, improved livelihood, reduced dependence on imports, increased use of climate smart technologies, mitigating loss and damage from natural disasters, value chain development, export, expansion and of course alignment with the SDGs, particularly SDGs 1, 2, 12 and 14, as well as infrastructure development.

In this regard, the Conference's thematic focus is strategic, timely and all embracing, especially in light of the impact of climate change on our food systems.

The development of infrastructure, policy and international cooperation to successfully harness the value of water is fundamental to Jamaica's thrust to pursue improved agricultural productivity as a key driver for economic growth.

Chairperson, Jamaica has identified approximately 200 000 ha of irrigable lands for the development of irrigation conveyance and water support systems.

So far, we have been successful in developing and operationalizing 31 446.63 ha which represents 15 percent of our overall target. This has been accomplished through several infrastructure projects within our agro-economic zones, Agro-parks and production zones.

We are in the process of implementing two of our larger irrigation projects to date. The Essex Valley Agricultural Development Project and the Southern Plains Agricultural Development Project (SPAD), with a projected spend of over USD 64 million.



The projects aim at developing a state-of-the-art supply chain constituting the installation of pressurized irrigation systems, improve irrigation, drainage, and farm roads and flood control systems covering 1 605 ha of land. They are expected to impact over 3 000 persons.

An additional six projects, comprising 6 126 ha are currently in the pre-project development stage to include various surveys such as cadastral. This includes the very important Pedro Plain Agricultural Development Project, which is expected to take water from our Black River, our longest river, to over 4 103 hectares in the bread basket parish of St. Elizabeth at a projected cost of USD 200 million.

Jamaica continues to work with our local, bilateral and multilateral partners in seeking to buildout our remaining irrigable lands in the short to medium term.

We are growing local supply chains, value chains and claiming market share in export markets. This is being done in an environment where women, youth and people with disability are integrated into the strategic focus to improve our water security.

Chairperson, Jamaica is serious in reducing our carbon footprint, and is very deliberate in promoting carbon sequestering. In this regard, Jamaica is on a path to fully integrate renewable from solar into our irrigation pumping systems.

So far, we have designed and implemented photovoltaic systems at several of our pumping sites and have been seeing a reduction in our cost of operation and a similar reduction in our carbon footprint.

Chairperson, the unfortunate reality however is that we the small island developing states who contribute the least to this climate crisis are suffering the most yet still benefiting the least from the funds earmarked for climate action. FAO must lead in changing this reality. It is the smallholder farmer, in Jamaica, in Samoa, in Barbados, in Seychelles, in Maldives, who are less able to source water and ill equipped to adjust to intense bouts of torrential rainfall and flooding. We know this, every one sitting here knows this, and we reiterate it in our speeches across multiple conferences, yet we gather with our 2030 goals slipping from our grasp. As the Great Song writer Roberta Nesta Marley said “in the abundance of water, the fool is thirsty”.

It is time for action, action at scale that can provide sustainable reform to our agri-food systems. Helping to provide irrigation infrastructure especially in light of the El Nino phenomenon, working on biodiversity conservation across the Caribbean, working with our artisan fishers to up skill and retool, working with financiers to design an appropriate parametric insurance system, to create a system where our small holder youth and women can access financing to transform their own agri-food systems. It can be done, it must be done.

In closing, Chairperson, Jamaica joins other delegations in offering our congratulations to Director-General Qu Dongyu on his re-election. We believe that he will create lasting change and we support his thrust to use the FAO as a vehicle to drive global food and nutrition security, agricultural productivity, improved livelihood of producers, resilience in the sector, and to contribute to addressing the impacts of climate change while ensuring the management of our water resources not only for ourselves but the world at large and for our generations to come.

I thank you.

**His Excellency Markiyan DMYTRASEVYCH (Ukraine)**

It gives me a pleasure on behalf of the Government of Ukraine to extend congratulations to Director-General on his new appointment. We are looking forward to continuing our efficient cooperation.

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

In revenge for its military losses on the ground, Russia continues terrorizing Ukrainian civilians, Ukrainian farmers by attacking critical infrastructure resulting in significant casualties and destructions.

The clearest evidence of Russia's terrorist actions in Ukraine, which happened one month ago, was a destruction of the Kakhovka Dam. The Kakhovka reservoir is the main source of water in the South part of Ukraine.

According to preliminary estimates, approximately 3 thousand hectares of agricultural land on the right bank of Dnipro river and also several times more on the left bank, which is now under occupation, were flooded and cannot be cultivated.

After destruction, the problem of irrigation becomes the biggest one in the agriculture of Southern part of Ukraine. The Kakhovka reservoir supplied water to more than 3 hundred thousand hectares of farmland where we used to harvest about 4 million tons of grain and oilseeds before the Russian full-scaled invasion. This disaster will stop the water supply for irrigation systems. Therefore, this is not only an agricultural and environmental issue, but also a social one. In response to this devastation, Government of Ukraine, together with FAO, works of the realization of the post disaster need assessment to define a recovery strategy.

In addition to this fact now, the whole world must be aware on the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Common security depends entirely on global attention to the actions of the occupiers at this plant.

Dear participants,

According to the recent assessments made by the Government of Ukraine, the direct damage toll to Ukraine's agriculture reached USD 9 billion. Indirect losses in Ukrainian agriculture due to the war reached USD 34 billion, which include the Russian blockage of food exports from the Ukrainian ports and losses due to lower production.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative continues to make a crucial contribution to the efforts of the United Nations to address global food insecurity, by helping to bring down prices, by preserving an essential source of humanitarian relief supplies for the World Food Programme.

But Russia now has completely stopped registering a new fleet since June 26, which indicates its intention to disrupt food supplies to world markets. If the registration of vessels will not be restored, the grain supplies will be completely stopped.

We support the statement of the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul that all parties to the agreement should immediately ensure access to food export vessels, as this creates a food danger for the entire world market. Only through joint efforts, the world can stop Russia's food blackmail.

We call on Conference to reaffirm the decisions on the implications on world food security and agriculture arising from the aggression of the Russian federation against Ukraine adopted by the FAO Council and by the European Regional Conference at its 33rd session.

Ukraine welcomes the continued concerted efforts of the international community to put global food security at the forefront of their activities and support multilateral efforts to find acceptable solutions to mitigate the food crisis.

Dear colleagues,

Lastly, I would like to emphasize an issue that is extremely important for Ukraine. This is the demining of Ukrainian lands. Unfortunately, Ukraine cannot cope with this challenge on its own and the process is very slow. We are grateful to FAO, World Food Programme and international partners who are involved in this process. Currently, only almost 10% of prioritized areas are demined. At the same time, active hostilities continue, so current figure does not include millions of hectares of land temporarily occupied by the aggressor. After the victory, this amount will increase many times over, while Ukraine's ability to implement such projects on its own is unlikely to increase.

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

Ukraine withstands not only military forces of enemy but also huge pressure on Ukrainian economy, including agriculture. Nevertheless, we fight and will fight for freedom and democracy values.

Thank you for your attention.

**Mr Duong Hai HUNG (Viet Nam)**

Mr Chairperson,

Distinguished Delegates,

Access to food increasingly became a challenge, especially for millions of people in low- and middle-income countries, where the most vulnerable populations of the world live. Overall, more than a quarter of a billion people went hungry in 2022.

According to FAO, the Asia-Pacific region is anticipated to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2065 – a delay of 35 years.

This downward trend originates mainly from impacts of climate change, COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts and crises on food, feed, fuels, fertilizers and finance. Such impacts are threatening to wipe out the developments achieved with great efforts of nations for years and they are also big challenges for food and nutrition security for 8 billion people of the world.

Distinguished Delegates,

Sustainable agriculture and food security are among the pillars of Viet Nam's Socio-economic Development Strategy from 2021 to 2030, in which we prioritize the development of eco-farming, hi-tech, low-emission and climate-resilient agriculture associated with livelihood improvement for rural residents.

At present, Viet Nam agriculture is facing some big challenges, ranging from inherent problems to objective factors: smallholders scale and its low competitiveness of products, depleted resources, climate change, post-harvest loss and food waste, insufficient investment, market fluctuation and changing consumer trends of the world.

In addition, Viet Nam is facing three nutrition burdens at the same time, namely high rate of child malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency in mountainous areas, disadvantaged areas and ethnic minority groups; rapidly rising rate of overweight and obesity, and sharply increasing rate of nutrition-related non-communicable diseases in urban areas.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In March 2023, our Government issued the "National Action Plan for Transformation to Transparent, Accountable and Sustainable Food System in Viet Nam to 2030" which targeted mainly at transforming the food system from production, processing, distribution to consumption in a transparent, responsible and sustainable manner, based on local advantages, contributing to the achievement of Vietnamese and global Sustainable Development Goals.

Viet Nam's food system is moving towards a multi-sectoral and multi-objective approach, including: continued transformation to a transparent, responsible and sustainable food supplier, making a positive contribution to the global food security; smart adaptation to climate change, protection of resources, ecosystems and biodiversity; provision of sustainable livelihoods while ensuring social protection security, especially for the poor and vulnerable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need "joint actions" solutions to deal with emerging global crisis by shaping sustainable, resilient, healthy and inclusive food systems. I would like to propose some priorities for FAO and international partners to consider and support Member states, including:

Firstly, supporting countries to implement the Country Programme Framework and to transform the agri-food systems towards resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability. Focus should be on innovative ways to improve engagement and benefits of smallholder farmers in agricultural value chains, reduce food loss and waste, promote e-commerce, improve the system of traceability, logistics, transport and quality control, develop diversified types of PPP models to attract private investment in sustainable agricultural value chains. Viet Nam wishes to collaborate with all

stakeholders to promote agricultural trade as the fundamental basis for regional and global food security.

Second, accelerating the green and digital transformation of agriculture along with the “more from less” approach. Therefore, financial, technological and capacity-building assistance for developing countries is critical for the transition to more multiple values, more sustainable and climate-resilient food systems. Viet Nam stands ready to become a food innovation center in South East Asia, and will continue to actively join initiatives on innovation, inclusive, digital and green transformation in the agricultural sector.

Thirdly, promote the coordination and information sharing in sustainable management of natural resources and water resource, including transboundary water resource, marine resources and South-South cooperation. Enhance active cooperation and support to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for a cooperation to build a disaster prevention system, enhance the sustainability and resilience to disasters, paying special attention to community-based risk management and sustainable rural development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and people of Viet Nam, I sincerely thank FAO, international community and donors for their precious assistance for the agricultural and rural development in Viet Nam for the past years, and look forward to your continued support and assistance in the future for the implementation of Food System Transformation in the “emerging crisis condition”, making a contribution to deliver progress on all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Finally, on behalf of the Government of Vietnam, I wish to express our warmest congratulations to His Excellency Qu Dongyu on his re-election as the Director General of FAO and to confirm our strong commitment to work with FAO in the coming time.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt) (Original language Arabic)**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to extend my congratulations to His Excellency Director-General, Qu Dongyu, FAO Director-General for his new appointment.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to thank the Director-General of the Organization for their exerted efforts in order to enhance internal management of FAO and in launching new initiatives and promoting collaboration with Member States, the private sector, the academic circles, and the civil society, thus contributing to achieving FAOs objectives, specifically on eradicating poverty, malnutrition in rural areas.

Ladies and gentlemen. We are all facing presently a number of regional, international and climate related challenges as well as pandemics, crisis, including most recently COVID-19 and the Ukraine crisis, that led to a negative impact on food security and led to a great deal of distortions in global markets, undermining supply, leading to unprecedented increase in commodity and food prices. In spite of what we have achieved in the field of agricultural development in our countries, there remains a lot that can be done in order to achieve a minimum level of self-sufficiency which reference to main food stuff and allowing us to build resilience against all shocks that affect our collective food security.

In spite of the myriad of challenges that we are all facing and that relate to the cultural sector, and that are also connected to water scarcity, climate change, land degradation, the certification and the increased number of populations, and increased production costs. As governments we are all requested to collaborate further together in the agriculture and Food Security field in order to achieve FAOs proposals to reach sustainable Food Security and to reach our regional objectives, building greater resilience with reference to the sector of Food Security.

On this occasion I would like to reiterate our support to FAOs Strategic Framework for the period 2022-2031, that calls for the transformation of agrifood systems making them more comprehensive, more efficient and resilient in order to provide for better production means better nutrition and livelihoods achieving sustainable development through the use of the latest technologies and the

proper inputs specifically with reference to enhanced grains that are more tolerant to salinity, to fertilizers and to extend the use of agricultural automations, SMART agriculture, and we also support the FAOs strategy on climate change 2022-2031.

Ladies and gentlemen, our present theme on the water resource management and the *four betters* is consistent with Egypt's objectives related to food security because we believe in the nexus between Food Security and Water Security. And we look with the greatest importance to the issue of water in terms of ensuring the best management and the most sustainable Management of Water Resources (WRM). This is why in 2021 we launched a National Strategy on Water Management that extends until 2050. In part of this national plan on water resources we have allocated a total budget of USD 50 billion.

As a matter of fact, this plan is consistent with our National Sustainability Development Strategy until 2030. It seeks to enhance the quality of water by creating secondary and tertiary wastewater treatment and enhancing or developing the new water resources and adapting to climate change, as well as localizing the latest water desalination technology, promoting the level of governance in water management, and supporting this with the necessary legal framework in order to ensure the best possible good governance in Water Management.

As a matter of fact, Egypt is embarking on a number of national projects that will lead to the rationalized use of water and this happens to the implementation of a National Project in order to rehabilitate water canals as well as the National Project to move from flooding irrigation to modern means of irrigation as this would have a direct impact on the rationalized use of water in addition to implementing multiple large projects that would allow the re-use of agricultural waste water.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Egyptian Government has adopted a number of initiatives that would help us achieve Food Security and curb the relevant challenges related to water security and climate change. In this regard I would like to note that His Excellency, President of the Republic, Fattah Al-Sisi, has launched a new initiative entitled Decent Life. That is deemed as the project of the century with a funding of more than EGP 400 billion, leading to the total transformation of rural livelihoods, enhancing the living conditions of about 60 million Egyptian citizens, and more than 20 Egyptian Governors, which basically makes up half of the Egyptian population.

As a matter of fact, the initiative includes the launch of a number of initiatives in the agricultural, educational, health and cultural sectors, in addition to other production promotion projects in Egyptian rural areas. I would also like to note that the Egyptian Chairmanship of COP27, jointly with a number of international partners, has allowed us to focus on the role of water through a number of events.

As a matter of fact we have dedicated a whole thematic day on water topics and we have also launched the new water initiative called AWARE, and we have also dedicated a special segment in the Conference that was held in Sharm El Sheikh for water related matters, and as a result of these efforts, water was the main topic of discussion during COP27, it was for the first time that water has been mentioned during the main discussions of the Conference as a main source related to climate change, in addition to making reference to water related matters in the final statement of the Conference.

In conclusion, please allow me to wish you great success on the occasion of this Conference. I would also like to extend my gratitude and thanks to the FAO. I would also like to inform you that Egypt looks forward to collaborating continuously and actively with FAO, especially under the wise leadership of His Excellency QU Dongyu, and once again I would like to congratulate him for his new appointment.

I would also like to reiterate our continuous and full support to FAO, a prompt organization working at the service of humanity, and exerting great efforts in order to achieve sustainable agricultural and rural development as well as food security regional, national and international efforts. Egypt is also ready to dedicate all of its agricultural resources and expertise at the service of FAOs projects and programmes especially in south countries.

Thank you very much for your attention, sorry if I was a bit lengthy.

**M. Ibrahim KONE (Burkina Faso)**

Monsieur le Président,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres, Mesdames et Messieurs,

L'honneur me revient de prendre la parole en ce moment au nom de mon pays, le Burkina Faso, à cette 43<sup>ème</sup> session de la Conférence de la FAO.

Avant tout propos, je voudrais, au nom de mon Gouvernement, transmettre mes vives félicitations à Monsieur QU Dongyu pour sa brillante réélection au poste de Directeur général de la FAO.

Monsieur le Président

Le présent thème retenu pour les débats généraux de cette Conférence et qui porte sur la gestion des ressources en eau vient à point nommé.

En effet, il n'est plus à démontrer que la maîtrise de l'eau, constitue un facteur déterminant pour un accroissement des productions agro-pastorales. Ainsi, le Burkina Faso a fait de cette gestion des ressources en eau une priorité, en témoigne l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre du Programme National de Gestion intégré des ressources en eau 2016-2030.

Au niveau sectoriel, le Ministère en charge de l'agriculture a élaboré des stratégies nationales relatives au développement durable de l'agriculture irriguée et à l'hydraulique pastorale, dans l'optique d'une meilleure mobilisation et gestion des ressources en eau à des fins de productions végétales et animales. Pour opérationnaliser ces stratégies, des actions spécifiques sont mises en œuvre dans le cadre de projets sous régionaux et nationaux. Par ailleurs, un accent particulier est mis sur le renforcement de la production de campagne sèche et cela nécessite une bonne maîtrise des ressources en eau.

L'ensemble de ces efforts déployés en matière de gestion des ressources en eau contribue à l'amélioration des productions agro-sylvo-pastorales, halieutiques et fauniques d'une part, et d'autre part renforce la nutrition et les conditions de vie des populations qui aspirent à une meilleure sécurité alimentaire.

Monsieur le Président,

La situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture est affectée par les aléas climatiques, les effets de la crise sanitaire et surtout de la crise sécuritaire au niveau national. Malgré une relative bonne campagne agricole 2022-2023, le taux de couverture des besoins céréaliers au niveau national est de 98,4%, traduisant ainsi une situation d'équilibre fragile. En ce qui concerne les ménages individuels, plus de 49% d'entre eux ne peuvent couvrir leurs besoins alimentaires à partir de leur propre production.

Monsieur le Président,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Délégués,

La situation alimentaire et nutritionnelle révélée par les analyses du cadre harmonisé montre qu'en absence de réponse appropriée, 15% de la population équivalant à 3,3 millions de personnes serait en situation de crise alimentaire dont 9% sont des personnes déplacées internes dues au phénomène terroriste. Consécutivement aux déplacements massifs de populations, on enregistre un abandon des terres agricoles de plus de 656 000 hectares, des actifs de productions et des troupeaux de nos pasteurs.

Pour pallier à cette situation, le Gouvernement et l'ensemble des partenaires au développement ont élaboré le Plan de réponse et de soutien aux populations vulnérables à l'insécurité alimentaire et à la malnutrition d'un coût de plus de 211 milliards de FCFA.

La mise en œuvre de ce plan devrait permettre d'apporter un soutien aux populations vulnérables. C'est le lieu pour moi de saluer le travail de toutes les organisations humanitaires qui nous accompagnent dans la prise en charge de nos populations en situation d'urgence alimentaire.

Monsieur le Président,

Malgré le contexte sécuritaire difficile, le Gouvernement de la transition est plus que jamais engagé pour l'atteinte de la souveraineté alimentaire. C'est pourquoi, nous avons engagé le dialogue avec les

organisations humanitaires pour l'orientation et la conversion de leur intervention dans l'autonomisation de nos populations vulnérables.

En ce qui concerne l'action gouvernementale, je tiens à relever que l'engagement au plus haut niveau de notre pays pour l'atteinte de la souveraineté alimentaire s'est traduit concrètement par l'adoption d'une Initiative présidentielle pour la production agropastorale 2023-2024. Celle-ci mobilisera les Forces de Défense et de Sécurité et leurs supplétifs ainsi que les personnes déplacées internes pour produire sur 11 000 hectares. Il s'agira aussi de sécuriser les grands sites de production pour permettre aux déplacés internes réinstallés de pouvoir produire en toute quiétude.

Pour soutenir cette initiative, et conformément aux axes d'intervention de notre Plan stratégique national d'investissement agro-syvo-pastorale, il est envisagé l'opérationnalisation des agropoles ainsi que le complexe industriel de production d'intrants à base de phosphate naturel; tout cela dans la dynamique de déclencher un schéma de transformation de nos systèmes agro-alimentaires. La mobilisation de nos partenaires est fortement attendue pour accompagner cette dynamique pour une meilleure résilience des populations.

Monsieur le Président,

Telles sont les informations que je voulais partager avec vous sur la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture au Burkina Faso et plus spécifiquement de la gestion des ressources en eau.

Je vous remercie.

**Mr Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)**

Thank you Chairperson for the chance,

Excellencies,

Invited guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all let me take this opportunity to thank FAO and the Secretariat for making the State of Food and Agriculture, with particular emphasis on integrated water resource management as an agenda on which we have to share our views.

Chairperson,

For my country Ethiopia agriculture is the base for our economy that provides 80 percent of employment to our population, 70 percent of export, 33 percent proportion in national gross domestic product and 70 percent input for agro-processing for which water either in the form of rain or irrigation is very essential.

Ethiopia recognizes that water is a foundational component of agrifood systems, that is facing increased challenges and water scarcity have resulted in repeated drought which has caused a heavy loss in the livelihood of our people specially in the low land areas.

Chairperson,

We do not only agree but practically encountered the impacts of drought and floods that undermine our efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

We would like to also recognize that agriculture is increasingly required to “make its case” for its share of water to ensure food security and nutrition, for mitigating and adapting to floods, and for addressing agriculture-induced water pollution.

It is highly alarming to know that more than 3 billion people live in agricultural areas with very high or high levels of water shortages or water scarcity. Some 1.81 billion people are directly exposed to floods, which pose a significant risk to lives and livelihoods.

The impacts of climate change are expected to worsen this picture with repercussions for agri-food systems, the planet, human health and well-being around the world.

We do agree that, the key to all these entangled challenges is integrated water resources management that contributes to inclusive and effective water governance.

Chairperson,

Towards this end Ethiopia has initiated climate resilient green economy strategy, which focuses on soil and water conservation, Green Legacy, in which we have planted over 25 million seedlings over the last four years, and we are planning to do the same reaching 15 million over the coming years, and integrated water management to facilitate continues supply of water for drinking and agriculture in the form of irrigation while still working on reduction of flood by managing our watersheds.

We have got an impressive result in doubling the production of wheat by using irrigation, which is an indication that if we work hard and manage and use our natural resources we will be able to ensure our food security in shorter time. We have also got impressive results in the areas of fruit and vegetables and working our level best in dairy, poultry and honey production.

As the amount of natural resource degradation in Ethiopia is enormous it will take some more years to fully cover our hills with green vegetation to reduce flood and protect our soil from erosion and at the same token capture and conserve the moisture that could be used for multiple uses.

We will continue to do so by employing new innovations in collaboration with FAO, IFAD, WFP, the World Bank and other partners to further implement our Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy and improve our agricultural system so that it can contribute to our food and nutrition security.

Finally Chairperson,

Let me also use this opportunity to thank our partners who have supported us both financially and technically to develop and implement our Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy.

Let me also reassure that the Ethiopia will continue to work with FAO, as it has been doing before, and let me also, once again, congratulate Dr QU Dongyu for his re-election as the Director-General of FAO.

Thank you very much.

**Su Excelencia Patricio Esteban TROYA SUAREZ (Ecuador)**

Señor Presidente, permítame empezar saludando su designación para el cargo que ocupa y reiterando nuestro compromiso de trabajar bajo su liderazgo. Aprovechamos esta intervención para felicitar al Doctor QU Dongyu por su merecida reelección al cargo.

Ecuador se adhiere a la declaración efectuada por el G77+China y quiere realizar algunas puntualizaciones en su calidad nacional. Como se ha dicho ya, los indicadores del SOFI evidencian el deterioro de la situación de la seguridad alimentaria global y demuestran que solo la atención y la atención integral del acceso al agua y de otros desafíos que debemos encarar podrá traer soluciones duraderas. 821 millones de personas están sufriendo de inseguridad alimentaria y ese número seguirá creciendo si no tomamos medidas claras para atacar las causas estructurales de la inseguridad alimentaria.

Ecuador es un país que cuenta con una alta disponibilidad promedio de agua dulce per cápita, sin embargo, enfrentamos desafíos en la gestión territorial del recurso porque en pocos kilómetros pasamos de regiones con gran precipitación hasta zonas casi desérticas. Existen zonas con alto riesgo de estrés hídrico que se podrían agravar a futuro frente a los pronósticos del cambio climático que hacen prever el incremento en las precipitaciones promedio aumentando la ocurrencia de efectos adversos que afectan ciertamente a la población y a sus medios de vida.

En la actualidad, mi país avanza en la implementación de políticas específicas que permitan ordenar de mejor manera el uso y el acceso al agua, siempre priorizando las necesidades básicas del ser humano y trabajando en políticas que toman en cuenta mecanismos de mercado para promover su uso para actividades productivas con un enfoque de transición ecológica.

La Cooperación Internacional en el marco de las instituciones multilaterales es crucial para enfrentar los problemas existentes. Necesitamos una mayor coordinación entre las tres grandes agencias de la



ONU con sede en Roma para evitar la superposición de funciones y asegurar una mayor agilidad y eficiencia en el tratamiento de los problemas y en la generación de soluciones.

Muy especialmente hacemos un llamado a redoblar los esfuerzos para combatir la desnutrición infantil porque el descuido de las necesidades de las nuevas generaciones no solo afecta el futuro sino también el presente de la humanidad. El gobierno de Ecuador está firmemente comprometido en este grave problema y ha realizado importantes esfuerzos para reducir los porcentajes de desnutrición en varias provincias del país. A partir de una estrategia interinstitucional liderada por la Secretaría Técnica Ecuador Crece Sin Desnutrición. La gestión de riesgos es un desafío que nos llama a todos y que demanda una respuesta colectiva. Debemos tomar en consideración las necesidades y, por supuesto, la experiencia de los agricultores.

Ecuador, así como otros países en el mundo, ha sufrido sequías e inundaciones que han costado vidas y que han afectado nuestra infraestructura sin ser uno de los mayores contaminantes, somos uno de los países que sufre las consecuencias del cambio climático. Hoy, más que nunca, destacamos la plena vigencia del principio de responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas al momento de establecer quienes deben asumir los costos de reducir las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero.

Los informes científicos recibidos demuestran que la inminente llegada del fenómeno de El Niño provocará graves daños en varios países, entre los cuales se incluye mi país. Necesitamos, por tanto, que la comunidad internacional brinde asistencia y cooperación para mitigar los efectos de este y de otros fenómenos naturales que afectan a todo el mundo.

El 14 de enero de 2022, Ecuador oficializó la ampliación de la zona de protección para la reserva marina de las Galápagos con lo que dicha reserva pasará a 193 000 kilómetros cuadrados. Se trata de una de las decisiones más importantes para proteger al primer sitio que la UNESCO declaró patrimonio natural de la humanidad en 1978.

Actualmente trabajamos con nuestro país vecino y hermano, Costa Rica, en el marco de la Reserva de la Hermandad que conecta a las Islas Galápagos de Ecuador con la isla costarricense del Coco.

Señora Presidenta, la pesca es una fuente de alimento de alto contenido nutricional de la que dependen millones de personas en el planeta. Por esto es importante resaltar que la pesca ilegal no declarada y no reglamentada es una amenaza latente a la actividad pesquera. En tal virtud, consideramos que es de vital importancia redefinir las prioridades presupuestarias de FAO enfocando y dedicando recursos a la lucha contra la pesca ilegal, no declarada y no reglamentada, y a la correcta implementación y operación del Acuerdo de Medidas del Estado Rector del Puerto de 2009.

Señor Presidente, queridos colegas, muchas gracias.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

That ends the list of countries, I now give the floor to the International Development Law Organization (IDLO).

#### **Mr Franco SANCHEZ-HIDALGO (International Development Law Organization IDLO)**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished guests and delegates,  
good afternoon.

On behalf of. The International Development Law Organization and our Director-General, Ms. Jan Beagle, we wish to congratulate Mr QU Dongyu for his re-election as Director-General of FAO.

All of us at IDLO look forward to continuing our fruitful cooperation with FAO to advance rule of law solutions for food security, gender equality, governance of land and natural resources, and climate justice.

At this challenging moment marked by intersecting crises that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable across the globe, the significance of mutual collaboration and solidarity cannot be overstated. Embracing cross-cutting, whole-of-system, and whole-of-society approaches is vital.

IDLO's mandate is to promote the rule of law to advance peace and sustainable development. By applying Rule of Law and justice lens to development challenges, we strive to enhance food security, promote non-discriminatory access to food, embed a gender perspective into food policies, and strengthen the legal basis for the right to food.

The correlation between the rule of law and food security is evident on a global scale. Countries facing crises, where the rule of law has broken down, tend to have high levels of food insecurity. This is particularly true for conflict-affected and displaced populations.

Recent events have underlined the interconnectedness of all seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, making it clear that collaborative and multistakeholder approaches are required.

Violent conflict, the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effect of climate change contribute to increasing inequalities and are key drivers of intensifying levels of food insecurity and water scarcity.

Rule of law principles can support efforts to improve Food Systems and Water Governance, ensuring equal access to natural resources.

By implementing bottom-up and top-down approaches, we should work on strengthening sound legal frameworks, building capacities of institutions, and empowering communities.

IDLO's partnership with FAO on legal and regulatory measures for promoting food security for marginalized and vulnerable groups affected by health restrictions during COVID-19 is an example of how we can combine our expertise to address the complex challenges of today. Mr Chairperson, in this context, we look forward to maintaining close collaboration with FAO, and all our members and partners, as we work towards the sustainable transformation of food systems, based on the principles of justice, human rights, and the Rule Of Law.

Thank you.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

That brings to an end the list of our speakers. I now give the floor to the Russian Federation, because they have asked for the floor to make the right of reply.

#### **Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)**

Indeed, yesterday we had already discussion on the situation around the Kakhovka Dam and its implications on the agricultural sector in this territory.

Today, the delegates from Ukraine shared with us and provided additional information on those implications and the devastating effect on the agricultural sector in this area, as well on the cooling system of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. I will add to these statistics only the fact that back in 2016, so well before the conflict, the Ukrainian side blocked the North Crimea channel and the water to Crimea was delivered exactly from the Kakhovka Water Reserve. And of course it was also mentioned that this territory is under control by Russia.

I would just ask the Delegates and the Participants to imply a little bit of logic or maybe common sense to understand who stood behind the damage of the dam and who is interested in damaging this water reservoir, which is very essential to the agricultural sector in this area.

Another thing was mentioned was the Black Sea Initiative and how it is being implemented. So we already provided the information that it contained of two parts, the initiative itself and the memorandum of understanding between Russia and United Nations. Unfortunately none of those elements that are contained in the memorandum between Russia and the United Nations in order to provide access for the Russian foodstuffs and Russian fertilizers to the world markets have been implemented. Also, the Ukrainian side a month ago blew up the pipeline from the city of Tolyatti to the city of Odessa, which basically put an end to the fertilizer production and fertilizer supplies via this channel.

Additional factor is that according to those memorandums and the Black Sea Initiative, Russia was supposed to provide security for the safe shipment of grains from Ukraine to the world market. The

Russian ships, at least twice, have been attacked by the submerged drones, and of course when they were covered at the city of Sevastopol, it became known that those drones were produced by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I do remember that in 2010, my good Colleague, at that time he was a Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Conference on Disarmament, John Duncan approached me with an idea of the Arms Trade Treaty in order to put an end to the supply of arms to the zones of conflict. Later on this treaty was signed because it was the initiative of the European Union and at that time the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as I said, was a part of the European Union.

And of course I laughed at John and said, “*Okay John, are you serious that this treaty will be implemented by the European Union?*” And of course at the very first opportunity they will violate this treaty and of course the big boss, the North Atlantic Trade Organization (NATO) boss, will never sign up to the treaty. And of course I was right because this treaty is not being implemented as we see the situation in Ukraine.

There was a call that we must stop war as soon as possible. Of course, next week there will be a NATO summit in Lithuania, and of course there will be ample opportunities for the Participants at this summit with the calls to stop the war. I will be very much surprised to hear a single Delegate at the NATO summit who will speak about peace. Instead, they will speak about further arms supplies to Ukraine.

I just want to finish up by expressing condolences to the people of Ukraine, to both Ukrainians and Russians who were killed during the conflict. If we put a stop to the conflict and then an open door of opportunity to invest in agriculture and to invest in sustainable food supplies, including in that area we are talking about.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

That brings us to the end of the list of speakers under this item. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have heard over 100 speakers in this Plenary Hall under the General Debate of this 43rd Session of the Conference.

Over the last three days, our esteemed Speakers have given their unique perspective from their countries on our theme of water resources management for the four betters – better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I would like to thank the moderators and speakers of the three roundtable events held in conjunction with our General Debate for the first time ever, and all the speakers who have contributed to this lively and fruitful dialogue since Monday morning. Ladies and Gentlemen, we will reconvene in Plenary tomorrow morning at 09.30 hours sharp. I wish you all a pleasant evening. The Ninth Plenary Meeting is adjourned.

*The meeting rose at 15:27 hours*

*La séance est levée à 15 h 27*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 15.27*



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>TENTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>DIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>DÉCIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>6 July 2023</b></p>

The Tenth Meeting was opened at 09:32 hours  
Mr Morten von Hanno Aasland,  
Vice-Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La dixième séance est ouverte à 09 h 32  
sous la présidence de M. Morten von Hanno Aasland,  
Vice-Président de la Conférence

Se abre la décima reunión a las 09.32  
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Morten von Hanno Aasland,  
Vice-Presidente de la Conferencia

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**Item 21. Draft Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization**

**Point 21. Projet de code de conduite sur les procédures de vote (article XII du Règlement général de l'Organisation)**

**Tema 21. Proyecto de Código de conducta para los procedimientos de votación de conformidad con el artículo XII del Reglamento General de la Organización**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Good morning, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. I call the Tenth Plenary Meeting to order.

I wish to inform you that a request has been received from the FAO Staff Bodies to deliver a statement to Conference. If the Conference is in agreement, I would propose that the statement be delivered under Item 31, *Any Other Matters*, scheduled to be taken up later this afternoon. Is that acceptable? Thank you.

Our first item on the Agenda is Item 21, *Draft Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization (Draft Resolution)*. Please ensure you have document C 2023/LIM/8 in front of you.

The relevant introduction for this Item has been published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference, in all languages.

***Introduction to Item 21: Draft Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization***

*Dr Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chairperson of the Council*

Following the 41st Session of the Conference in 2019, the 162nd Session of the Council considered matters arising from the Conference including, *inter alia*, voting procedures and requested these be reviewed by the appropriate Governing Bodies and through a process of informal consultations led by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC).<sup>1</sup>

The matter has been discussed at numerous Governing Body sessions, including the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) at its 109th, 110th, 112th, 113th, 115th, 116th, 117th and 118th sessions, and the Council at its 162nd, 163rd, 164th, 166th, 168th, 170th, 171st and 172nd sessions.

The Governing Bodies provided guidance to the informal process led by the ICC who, between February 2020 and February 2023, held thirteen informal consultations with the Members of FAO to develop a draft code of conduct for voting procedures.

At its 42nd Session in 2021, the Conference appreciated the efforts of the ICC in facilitating the discussions amongst Members on the draft Code of Conduct, and requested his successor to continue such efforts with a view to a draft text being submitted to this 43rd Session of the Conference, following review by the relevant Governing Bodies of the Organization.

The first draft text of the voluntary Code of Conduct was presented to the 170th Session of the Council in June 2022, through the draft Report of the ICC to the Council contained in document CL 170/INF/7. The Council at its 170th Session commended the ICC for his efforts in leading consultations and requested he continue the consultations to achieve consensus, prior to submitting an updated version to the relevant Governing Bodies, with a view for a draft Code to be submitted for approval at the 43rd Session of the Conference.

After further rounds of informal consultations held in September 2022, November 2022 and January 2023, a consensus text was arrived at during the informal consultation of the ICC with the Membership held on 9 February 2023. This draft text was reviewed by the 118th Session of the CCLM, which made some technical adjustments in line with its mandate, and invited the Council to

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<sup>1</sup> CL 162/REP, para 7.

endorse it. The Council, at its 172nd Session in April 2023, commended the ICC's efforts, took note of the adjustments made by the CCLM, and accordingly recommended submission of the *Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization as referred to in the Conference and Council Reports* to the 43rd Session of the Conference for approval.

Document C 2023/LIM/8 contains the extract from the Report of the 172nd Session of the Council as well as the draft Conference Resolution before the Conference for approval.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

Does any delegate wish to take the floor on this item?

#### **Mr Asmerom KIDANE (Eritrea)**

This statement on the draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for voting procedures is prepared on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

First and foremost, Africa Regional Group commends and appreciates FAO, the Secretariat, Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, and all relevant sectors for organizing the 43rd Session of FAO Conference. Likewise, once again we would like to congratulate Dr Qu Dongyu for re-election to the second term as Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and wish him a successful work for the upcoming term, which will run from 1 August 2023 through to 31 July 2027.

To that extent, the Voluntary Code of Conduct for voting procedures of FAO is the result of extensive informal consultations among Member countries under the guidance of the Independent Chairperson of the Council. The Voluntary Code of Conduct for voting procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization aims at promoting open, fair, equitable and transparent voting procedures during the election for the Office of Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in accordance with the Basic Texts of the Organization.

It is of a voluntary nature and is not legally binding. Hence Members have to honour its contents. It recommends desirable behaviour by Members nominated by the Members regarding the election of the Director-General of the Organization in order to increase the fairness, credibility, openness and transparency of the process.

All personnel involved in the voting procedure are subject to the obligations of impartiality, neutrality and confidentiality and any failure to adhere to these obligations result in the initiation of administrative process which may include a disciplinary process. Therefore, the Africa Regional Group appreciates the draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for voting procedures and recommends Member to abide strictly by the Basic Texts, respect the integrity, legitimacy and the dignity of the voting procedures.

Hence the Africa Regional Group requests, at the 43rd Session of the Conference, to review the draft document, if necessary, make comments as it considers appropriate and adopt.

#### **Sra. Beatriz MARTÍNEZ ZAMORANO (España)**

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea y de sus 27 Estados Miembros. Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, la República de Montenegro la República de Macedonia del norte, San Marino, Turquía y Ucrania hacen suyas también estas palabras.

Nos gustaría elogiar al Presidente Independiente del Consejo (ICC), el Sr. Hans Hoogeveen, por sus continuos esfuerzos para facilitar las consultas informales con todos los Miembros y las Conclusiones del Consejo.

Queremos agradecer que se haya alcanzado un consenso y que el proceso del Código de Conducta para las votaciones haya concluido en el 172º periodo de Sesiones del Consejo.

La UE y sus Estados Miembros siguen plenamente comprometidos con un proceso electoral abierto, justo, ético, equitativo y transparente, añadiendo valores a los Textos Básicos y a la práctica preexistente de la FAO en las elecciones secretas. A lo largo del proceso, la Unión Europea y sus

Estados Miembros se han comprometido a lograr un Código de Conducta significativo y de aplicación generalizada que contribuya a proteger la integridad de todas las elecciones en el seno de la FAO.

El Código de Conducta Voluntario en las Votaciones es un texto conciliador y consideramos que puede ser un buen punto de partida para fortalecer aún más la alineación de la FAO con las mejores prácticas y normas en el sistema de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, y las agencias de la ONU con sede en Roma en particular, en beneficio de todos los miembros de la FAO, garantizando la integridad y el secreto total con la votación secreta.

**Mr Hammad HAMMAD (United States of America)**

The United States is proud to join consensus endorsing the draft resolution. We appreciate the work of the Independent Chairperson of Council (ICC) in facilitating consensus to allow us to reach the finish line in the development of a Code of Conduct for FAO elections. This Voluntary Code of Conduct is important. It looks to the future, improves and strengthens procedures and transparency in FAO elections and will apply it to future Director-General elections, we saw even on Sunday that many of these best practices are now being followed.

**Mr Bo LI (China) (Original language Chinese)**

First of all, China would like to appreciate the two Independent Chairpersons of the Council (ICC) for their constructive role played in the two-year consultation. China confirms the voluntary basis of these guidelines and without modification of any Basic Texts. China believes that the current practices can ensure the openness, fairness and transparency of the procedure and with that we can further clarify the procedure.

We confirm, first, this is relevant to the basic text and governance of the Organization. The follow-up modification and guidelines should be clearly authorized by the Conference. Second, the practice shall take into account the current practices in the UN system, not the specific or single practice of certain organizations.

Thirdly, with the current practice in practice for a long time, it can ensure the confidentiality of the voting as well as the fair participation of Member States to ensure sound governance of FAO which shall allocate more time and energy to the discussion of the protocol and the substantial issues without wasting too much resources on the procedural issues.

**Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)**

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par l'Espagne au nom de l'Union Européenne et de ses 27 Etats Membres. Ce code de conduite relatif au vote est le fruit d'un long processus de consultation, mené depuis plus de deux ans par deux Présidents Indépendants du Conseil (ICC) successifs. Comme nous l'avons déjà dit lors de la 172ème Session du Conseil, ce texte n'est pas à la hauteur de nos ambitions et des meilleurs standards des Nations Unies, mais nous ne nous opposerons pas à son adoption.

Nous pensons en effet qu'il définit un certain nombre de pratiques et de principes qui contribueront à améliorer la transparence et l'intégrité des processus électoraux à la FAO. Le respect du secret absolu du vote et la transparence du dépouillement sont essentiels au bon déroulement de toutes élections démocratiques. Concernant les modalités pratiques du scrutin, nous appelons la FAO à s'inspirer d'autres organes et agences des Nations Unies, telles que celle du Programme Alimentaire Mondiale (PAM) ou de l'OMPI qui assurent transparence et efficacité.

De notre point de vue, ce texte n'est pas l'aboutissement, mais bien le début d'un processus pour améliorer la transparence et l'intégrité des élections à la FAO et assurer l'absence de tout conflit d'intérêts. Une révision régulière du code de conduite est nécessaire pour s'assurer que les meilleures pratiques électorales de la FAO s'alignent sur les meilleurs standards des Nations Unies.

En conclusion, si ce code démontre son utilité, il n'y a pour nous aucune raison qu'il ne s'applique qu'à l'élection du Directeur Général, et non à toutes les élections couvertes par paragraphe 10 de l'article XII du Règlement Général de l'Organisation, conformément d'ailleurs au titre même de ce code.

**Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

Me gustaría intervenir iniciando estas palabras expresando que en los últimos años hubo tres elecciones en la FAO, en las cuales las normas aplicadas fueron los textos básicos y en las cuales hubo elección del Presidente Independiente del Consejo (ICC), hubo elecciones para el Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA) y hubo elecciones para el Subcomité de Ganadería.

Las elecciones fueron transparentes. Las elecciones respetaron los textos básicos y no hubo absolutamente ningún inconveniente. Consecuentemente, creo que todo aquello que pueda ayudar a construir absolutamente sobre la base del consenso, sobre la base de no modificar los textos básicos, sobre la base de no querer reinterpretar los textos básicos que son nuestros esquemas de certidumbre interna, por supuesto, desde nuestro lugar hemos facilitado el consenso para este procedimiento. Seguramente había países que tenían mayores ambiciones, otros que directamente consideraban que no era necesario este Código de Conducta, pero en definitiva privó el concepto de respeto por la diversidad de opiniones, pero sobre todo la búsqueda del consenso.

Agradezco al Presidente Independiente haber facilitado esas consultas y Argentina, por supuesto, como ha participado y facilitado el consenso, también va a apoyar este Código de Conducta.

**Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

The Russian Federation would like to thank Mr Khalid Mehboob, who was the Independent Chairperson of the Council up until 2021, and Mr Hans Hoogeveen who succeeded him in this position for their important contribution to the development of the draft Code of Conduct for voting procedures. Their tenacity, commitment and perseverance allowed participants of the negotiation process to reach consensus on the text of the document.

The Russian Federation is not opposed to its approval by the Conference. We would also like to note the following: the voluntary nature and substantive contents of the code do not contradict the mandate for its preparation. The mandate had been granted to the 41st and 42nd Sessions of the Conference. We believe that any proposals to review, change the status or expand on the scope of the application of the code must be based on actual examples of deviating from the voting procedures adopted by FAO and must not replace the Rules of the Basic Text of FAO.

It is important to note that the regulatory framework of the Organization reflects its uniqueness when it comes to how voting is organized but, at the same time, it does not contradict the corresponding best practices used at the UN. Given these comments, the Russian Federation is not opposed to its approval by the Conference.

**Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)**

Recognizing the inclusive and iterative processes that have been conducted by two Independent Chairs of Council (ICC) as well as the technical review through the Committee on Constitutional Matters, this has resulted in a consensus on the text. Accordingly, Australia endorses the resolution on the Voluntary Code of Conduct for voting procedures. We believe this is an important document to guide and promote best practice in the conduct of future elections in the FAO.

**Mr François CLOUTIER (Canada)**

We appreciate the inclusive process to arrive at an end product we can all agree on. We believe the Code of Conduct adds value and compounds the good practices that have been put in place without going beyond the Basic Texts. We consider it an important step in continuing to strengthen good governance and transparency at the FAO.

Canada supports the endorsement of the Code of Conduct through the resolution as proposed.

**Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

The United Kingdom would also like to thank the two Independent Chairpersons of the Council (ICC) who have helped Members respond to the Conference request to develop this draft Voluntary Code of Conduct. It has been, as others have said, an extensive and fully inclusive procedure that has taken on board views and suggestions from all Members.



The United Kingdom is therefore pleased to adopt the Code of Conduct for voting. We believe that it is important for all United Nations agencies to review governance procedures and to ensure that we remain at the forefront of best practice, and that is important for FAO, just as it is for any other UN agency. So, we very much welcome this and we look forward to continuing discussions to ensure that FAO is at the vanguard of good governance in all areas.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I see no other requests for the floor. I believe we can agree that the Conference appreciated the efforts of the Independent Chairperson of the Council and his predecessor in developing this text.

Can I take it that Conference wishes to adopt the Resolution as contained in C 2023/LIM/8, on the Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization as referred to in the Conference and Council Reports? It is so decided, and congratulations, this Item 21 is closed.

#### **Item 22. Technical Cooperation Programme's resource allocation shares**

##### **Point 22. Affectation des ressources du Programme de coopération technique**

##### **Tema 22. Asignación de cuotas de los recursos del Programa de cooperación técnica**

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

We move on to the next item on our Agenda which is Item 22, *Technical Cooperation Programme's resource allocation shares*.

As Members will have noted, there is no document for this item. However, the introduction for this Item has been published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference, in all languages.

Does any delegate wish to take the floor on this Item?

#### **Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

The Russian Federation is not opposed to approving the new Technical Programme's Resource Allocation Share Plan. At the same time we would like to note the recommendation made by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees of FAO which took place in December 2022 with respect to needing a periodic review of the criteria for calculating the shares using this kind of algorithm which is based on a single set of principles and methodologies would allow us to correct the physical volume between focus regions and countries, depending on a series of factors related to their social and economic status and development.

#### **Mr Bo LI (China) (Original language Chinese)**

China appreciates FAO's inclusive and transparent process in its discussion with Members in order to define Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) allocation share. We also support Conference's endorsement of the new regional allocation share. China encourages FAO to do the following.

First, ensure that TCP adds up to a certain share in regular budget. Secondly, FAO must fully consider developing country-specific needs and challenges and further increase support to developing countries. Thirdly, within regional allocation share FAO must fully consult with Member States and respect all Member States' autonomy as well as rights for equal access to resources in order to ensure continuity of TCP within countries as well as allocation of resources.

#### **Mr Sayed Altayeb AHMED (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)**

Thank you for organizing our work as part of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) which is one of the main areas in terms of the importance of FAO's work. We understand the exceptional circumstances which all of us are experiencing now as well as the financial pressure which is the result of current international crises. All of this affects the allocation of the budget of the Technical Cooperation Programme.

We reaffirm the importance of the consultation process to identify criteria for resource allocation and for developing new schemes for Technical Cooperation Programmes and here it is very important to

properly calculate the resources allocated regionally with respect to each region, especially for the least developed countries and vulnerable regions. Because there is a large gap in terms of poverty, malnutrition, climate change and all of this has consequences on income levels. So, we must take into account these circumstances and develop plans that would account for these conditions.

Therefore, the Technical Cooperation Programme's resource allocation needs to be implemented properly and the Middle East is a priority in terms of agrifood systems. This is also part of our Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have noted that there are many countries in the region which need help with respect to strategic planning of water resources, the sustainable soil management, sustainable land management, especially given the fact that Northern Africa and the Middle East are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Also, with respect to prioritizing, we need to account, while distributing resources, Technical Cooperation Programmes within a single region, we need to account for these criteria based on what the centralized offices have presented to us. There are some emerging issues as well as new circumstances which are also appearing in countries of the region. We are also seeing the consequences of global crises in these regions, so we must make sure that there is technology transfer and a transfer of resources to the decentralized offices.

### **Mme Ihssane FERTOUS (Maroc)**

Le Maroc s'exprime au nom du Groupe Régional Afrique (ARG) par rapport au Point 22. Au début, nous voudrions souligner que nous félicitons et nous saluons le processus de consultation inclusif et transparent grâce auquel le Programme de Coopération Technique (PCT) a pris une dimension, caractérisée par la transparence, l'efficacité et l'efficience accrue dans la mesure où le savoir-faire et les compétences techniques qu'il recouvre sont mis à la disposition des Etats membres qui en font la demande.

Nous saluons également le suivi des contributions, des projets ODPD et aux cibles associées aux Objectives de Développement Durable (ODD), afin de veiller à l'alignement stratégique et de favoriser l'obtention des résultats palpables en matière de PCT, ainsi que les efforts de rationalisation et de modernisation entrepris par l'Organisation afin de se doter d'outils pour appuyer l'investissement et développer de nouveaux modes d'exécution des projets. Par ailleurs, les textes présentés rappellent opportunément certaines décisions de l'exercice stratégique qui a été conduit suite à l'évaluation conduite en 2022, le Groupe Régional Afrique prend note de l'application des nouveaux critères de répartition régionale des fonds du PCT approuvés par le Conseil 166.

En ce qui concerne la région Afrique, nous constatons une ouverture de crédit 2023-2024 d'un montant de USD 44.3 millions et indique aussi le pourcentage prouvé au titre du PCT pour l'exercice biennal 2023-2024, par type de projet, par région bénéficiaire de 55 pour cent. Le Groupe Régional Afrique a participé activement aux discussions sur la répartition régionale, et continue de soutenir le consensus qui s'en est dégagé et attend des propositions de révision de cette distribution.

A cet égard, nous voudrions souligner ce qui suit, la région Afrique est la plus affectée dans le monde par la famine et l'insécurité alimentaire, la malnutrition, le manque d'infrastructures pour la bonne gestion de l'agriculture et les ressources hydriques, ainsi que les effets du changement climatique. Ce qui impact négativement les conditions de vie de sa population.

En outre, la région Afrique est défavorisée en matière d'accès aux innovations et aux nouvelles technologies ainsi qu'en termes d'accès au savoir-faire et aux formations dans le domaine de gestion et d'administration. Cela engendre une lenteur notable dans l'exécution des PCT. Cette situation précaire telle que nous l'avons décrite a un effet direct sur la possibilité d'absorption des allocations approuvées par la FAO dans le cadre du Programme de Coopération Technique.

Au vu de ce qui précède, nous rappelons ou nous appelons plutôt au maintien des allocations approuvées en faveur de l'Afrique dans le cadre du PCT, en assurant son suivi et sa mise en place au travers des mécanismes propres aux conditions et aux différentes réalités de chaque pays, à l'appui des projets lancés en Afrique dans le cadre des PCT par l'accès aux nouvelles technologies et la formation continue de la population travaillant dans le secteur agricole, ainsi qu'au renforcement de la résilience

des petits fermiers face au choc climatique et la protection des chaînes d'approvisionnement de ces derniers qui se retrouvent de plus en plus vulnérables.

**His Excellency Mohammed HASSAN KATANA (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

In fact, resources allocated to technical cooperation are a crucially important issue, particularly because certain countries are particularly affected by problems resulting from the conflicts they are facing for various reasons. Let me give you the example of Syria. Syria had achieved a very high level of food security. Syrian society was doing well in terms of food security and self-sufficiency. However, the problems my country are faced have led to a deterioration of the situation. Then we also saw competent people/qualified people leaving the country, also from the agricultural sector.

As a result, we have to ensure the necessary funding under technical and scientific support in order to build capacity, to train people and allow local populations to find their feet again and come back to agricultural activity which would allow us to re-establish a new situation of food security. We need, therefore, to increase the allocations marked for those countries facing crises and specific difficulties in order to allow them to provide a sustainable development response and to come back to a normal situation as they experienced pre-crisis.

So, within the context of the Organization's criteria, we should maybe think about having exceptional support or financing in order to provide technical and scientific support to those societies facing this type of exceptional problem.

**Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

Queremos expresar con mucha claridad que valoramos y reconocemos todo el trabajo realizado por la FAO que ha llevado varias instancias de revisión y discusión entre los Miembros para determinar los criterios de asignación de recursos y relanzar el Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) desde un enfoque inclusivo y transparente. Las vulnerabilidades de los países en desarrollo requieren de una activa política de cooperación técnica que fortalezca las capacidades nacionales, la transferencia de conocimientos y tecnologías y generar efectos catalíticos para apoyar los procesos de transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios en cada uno de los países, de acuerdo con cada contexto, de acuerdo con cada realidad.

Asimismo, entendemos que la distribución de los fondos dentro de cada región debe siempre contemplar la consulta activa de los Miembros para lograr un compromiso efectivo que considere las distintas necesidades de los países, lo que contribuirá a lograr un gran impacto, un impacto significativo.

Teniendo en cuenta la evolución de las discusiones recientes sobre el presupuesto, resulta fundamental abordar la necesidad de incrementar de manera proporcional los recursos asignados al PCT y en cumplimiento de la resolución 9/89 que establece hasta en 14% de la consignación neta presupuestaria, alentamos a un proceso que, en la medida de lo posible, vaya en esa dirección.

Por último, queremos expresar que nuestras intervenciones a lo largo de este proceso han tenido siempre un enfoque constructivo para contribuir a que todos los países en desarrollo estén conformes, o al menos no estén totalmente disconformes, y se pueda finalizar el ejercicio iniciado por la FAO con consenso. Tenemos la firme convicción de que hay que actuar antes de que ocurra la emergencia. Por eso apoyamos fervientemente el Programa de Cooperación Técnica.

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Thank you for the statements. To summarise, I take it that the Conference reaffirmed the strategic and catalytic importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), and agreed to maintain the TCP resource allocation shares at the level presented in the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25.

Thank you. This concludes Item 22.

**Item 23. Guidelines for the participation of the private sector as observers in FAO Governing Body sessions**

**Point 23. Directives relatives à la participation d'acteurs du secteur privé en tant qu'observateurs aux sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO**

**Tema 23. Directrices para la participación de actores del sector privado en calidad de observadores en períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

We move on to Item 23, *Guidelines for the participation of the private sector as observers in FAO Governing Body Sessions*.

As you may have noted, there is no document. However, the introduction for this Item has been published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference, in all languages.

**Introduction to Item 23: Guidelines for the participation of the private sector as observers in FAO Governing Body sessions**

*Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chairperson of the Council*

The participation of the private sector as observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies and Technical Committees is a long-standing item discussed by FAO Members in Rome.

The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM)<sup>2</sup> and the Council<sup>3</sup> have discussed this item during several sessions.

The 171st Session of the Council:

*(49) ... noted the complexity of the subject and requested that a consensus should be reached on the general principles, including the feasibility and desirability of participation of the private sector observers in sessions of FAO Governing Bodies, prior to embarking on designing draft guidelines.*

*(50) In this regard, the Council requested a background document addressing questions, remarks and observations raised by Members, and requested the [Independent Chairperson of the Council] ICC to consult thereon.*

In preparation for the 171st Session of the Council, a first informal consultation was held on 29 September 2022. Members raised issues and questions about principles and purposes; forms of observer status; criteria and procedures for granting observer status; reporting and review; risk management; transparency, especially on reporting and publishing; and limitations on the number of permanent observers attending Governing Body meetings, including their rotation. The consultation was held in a positive and constructive spirit.

As a backdrop to the above discussions, FAO's commitment to strengthening strategic engagement with the private sector towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been reinforced through the adoption by Members of an updated FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025 (the Strategy).

The Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council (ICC), with technical support from FAO, has undertaken an analysis and further consultations which form the basis of the note which was circulated to Members on 30 May 2023. A next informal consultation is foreseen at the end of September 2023.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Would any delegates like to take the floor on this item?

**Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)**

We want to thank FAO and the Independent Chair of the Council (ICC) for conducting extensive consultations with Members on this subject. We have heard widespread support for private sector participation as observers during the last two FAO Council meetings and reiterate our support. We

<sup>2</sup> At its 97th Session in 2013, 115th Session in 2022, and the 118th Session in 2023

<sup>3</sup> At its 148th Session in 2013, 150th Session in 2014, 154th Session in 2016, 165th Session in 2020, 170th and 171st Sessions in 2022 and 172nd Session in 2023

agree that no changes are needed and that current rules allow for private sector observers per FAO's basic text. The United States of America strongly supports the FAO Private Sector Engagement Strategy adopted in 2021. We have seen an increase in private sector interest in collaboration with FAO since the strategy was adopted.

A consistent policy to allow private sector observers to participate in governing bodies must be part of that engagement. We are happy to see that FAO will conduct an internal process with the technical committees to ensure internal consistency with observers. We appreciate the work by the Independent Chairperson of the Council and Management to compare FAO's practices to other UN specialized agencies and to examine the breadth of existing guidelines for non-government entities already in the basic texts of the Organization.

**Mr François CLOUTIER (Canada)**

We believe the private sector has a key role to play in helping deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2). We support open and transparent governing bodies. We also believe clarity and consistency of application of the rules for observers are beneficial for all stakeholders. With this spirit, we commit to continuing to constructively engage in the consultations over the coming Sessions.

**Mr Tsutomu KOYAMA (Japan)**

Japan recognizes the need to accelerate consideration of appropriate forms of engagement of civil society organizations and the private sector in FAO's policy decisions and implementation of the programme.

At the time of approving the Strategy of Private Sector Engagement 2021-25 at the 165th Council, concerns about the cross-border diseases and the pests caused by the desert locust and other diseases emphasized the need for collaboration with the private sector in terms of access to data and technology. Subsequently, the impact of COVID-19 and the Russian Federation's war in Ukraine has further increased the need for data to ensure that all people have access to affordable, safe and nutritious food.

The key to overcoming the food crisis we have faced and building a more inclusive and resilient food and agriculture system is to promote innovation through private sector investments, including start-ups. The importance of collaboration with the private sector and civil society organizations is also mentioned in the Hiroshima Action Statement for a Resilient Global Food Security, which was announced at the G& Hiroshima Summit in May of this year, including not only the Group of Seven (G7) countries but also invited countries, that is Australia, Brazil, the Union of the Comoros, the Cook Islands, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam.

In this context, Japan looks forward to a deeper discussion among all Member countries on the involvement of private sector in the FAO. We also hope that efforts provided by FAO to strengthen cooperation with the private sector, including organizations of the FAO Informal Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) launched this year.

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I see no other requests for the floor. I do not think there were specific points that needed response but I would like to ask the Independent Chair of the Council or the Secretariat to respond if there is anything that you may wish to say.

**INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL**

I would like to thank the Members who took the floor for their support, for continuing our discussion on the important role of the private sector in the work of the implementation of FAO's programmes and projects. And, indeed, as was stated in the document, in the second half of this year we continue our work with informal consultations to get an agreement so that it can go via the Governing Bodies (GB) Council to the next Conference.

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Thank you, that is noted. To summarise, the Conference took note of the progress on this matter. We move on to the next Items on the Agenda.

**Item 24. Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization**

**Point 24. Rétablissement, par la Conférence, du droit de vote des États membres redevables d'arriérés de contributions financières à l'Organisation**

**Tema 24. Restablecimiento por la Conferencia de los derechos de voto de los Estados Miembros en mora del pago de sus contribuciones financieras a la Organización**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I now open Item 24, *Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization (Draft Resolution)*. The relevant document is *C 2023/LIM/9*.

The introduction for this item has been published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference.

***Introduction to Item 24: Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization***

*Dr Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chairperson of the Council*

The Conference, at its 42nd Session in June 2021, requested “the conduct of a comprehensive review on the process for reinstating voting rights for Member Nations in arrears for consideration by the relevant Governing Bodies, including the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), supported by a process of informal consultations led by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups”. The matter has gone through a two-pronged process of formal review through the Governing Bodies and informal consultations with Members over the last two years.

The 113th Session of the CCLM (25-27 October 2021) noted the practice developed by FAO was consistent with the approach taken by most other UN system organizations and was of the view that a blanket waiver of the rules regarding voting rights established by the Basic Texts should be avoided. The Council considered this Report at its 168th Session and encouraged the ICC to hold consultations with Members taking into account existing rules, the CCLM’s findings, and relevant United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions.

In the first half of 2022, I led informal consultations with the Membership whereby a draft Conference Resolution was developed and submitted to the 116th Session of the CCLM. The CCLM recommended amendments to the draft Resolution in order to align it with the Report of the 191st Session of the Finance Committee, and with these adjustments considered the draft Resolution consistent with the Basic Texts of the Organization.

The Council, at its 170th Session, then considered the draft Resolution and requested that the ICC continue the informal consultations to achieve consensus before submitting a revised version for review by the Council, through the CCLM and the Finance Committee, with a view for submission to the Conference at its 43rd Session.

Accordingly, three further informal consultations took place in late 2022, which allowed an informal consensus to be reached on the draft Resolution at the informal consultation held on 3 November 2022. This draft resolution was submitted to the 171st Session of the Council, which recommended submission to the CCLM and Finance Committee for further review. The 118th Session of the CCLM made a number of technical adjustments to the text and confirmed that the revised text was consistent with the Basic Texts of the Organization. The 195th Session of the Finance Committee agreed to submit the text, as amended by the CCLM, for the consideration of the 172nd Session of the Council.

Finally, the Council, at its 172nd Session in April 2023, recommended submission of the Draft Resolution, as reproduced in document C 2023/LIM/9, to the 43rd Session of the Conference for approval.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

I now open the floor should any delegates wish to take the floor on this Item.

#### **Sra. Beatriz MARTÍNEZ ZAMORANO (España)**

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (EU) y de sus 27 Estados Miembros: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, la República de Montenegro, Noruega, la República de Macedonia del Norte, San Marino, Turquía y Ucrania.

Los atrasos en contribuciones asignadas siguen siendo una de las principales fuentes de preocupación de la FAO. Los atrasos totales a 31 de diciembre de 2022 ascendían a 42.6 millones de dólares y 24.5 millones de euros, lo cual representaba el 15% de las contribuciones asignadas en aquel momento. El anterior es un importe significativo y supera con creces el nivel del aumento propuesto del presupuesto ordinario para los próximos dos años 2024-2025.

La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembro confieren gran importancia a la salud económica de la FAO y al pago íntegro de las contribuciones asignadas, al tiempo que son conscientes de que pueden darse condiciones que obstaculicen la capacidad de los miembros de satisfacer sus obligaciones económicas.

El restablecimiento del derecho de voto de los Estados Miembro con atrasos es un aspecto crucial para el que se necesita establecer procedimientos transparentes. En este sentido, la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas aporta un indicador importante. Nos habría gustado ver los criterios establecidos por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas con respecto a la fecha límite para solicitar el restablecimiento del derecho a voto mejor plasmados en el borrador de la Resolución. También subrayamos la importancia de mantener una sección de información de fácil acceso al público y actualizada en la página web de la FAO, en cumplimiento del sistema de buenas prácticas de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU).

La Unión Europea y sus Estados miembro están convencidos de que la Resolución de la Conferencia aportará unas orientaciones prácticas de gran valor para los Estados Miembro con contribuciones atrasadas para que puedan solicitar de forma válida el restablecimiento de su derecho a voto en las Conferencias de la FAO. Recomendamos encarecidamente a todos los Estados Miembro afectados que saquen el máximo partido a esta Resolución de la Conferencia.

Rogamos a todos los miembros que paguen la totalidad de sus contribuciones asignadas en el plazo establecido y sin condiciones.

Dicho esto, apoyamos la adopción del borrador de la Resolución por parte de la Conferencia.

#### **Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

The Russian Federation is grateful to the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), Mr Hans Hoogeveen for conducting consultations on developing a draft resolution on the restoration of the voting rights of Member States and arrears in the payment of their financial contributions and we are not opposed to the approval of the document by the Conference in light of the recommendations of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters and Finance Committee.

The outcome text includes best practices of the UN system and we firmly believe that the inability by Member Nations to pay its assessed contributions due to circumstances beyond its control is a reason to grant this Member Nation an opportunity to maintain its voting rights at the Conference. I am going to repeat myself. The principle of conditions beyond a Member's control, which prevents it from paying its contributions is a main principle of the document and it would be a mistake to state that a Member Nation encountering difficulties due to circumstances beyond its control is impeding the Organization and implementing its programme action.

This is not a large amount compared to the amount paid in full and on time by the main contributors to the Organization and mainly the main contributor to the Organization. This Member must provide

exhaustive information to confirm this. We have adopted a specific plan of action, which is included in the agreed upon text of the document. It states the steps that must be undertaken to restore voting rights for the Member Nation in arrears.

I would like to, once again, highlight that from the standpoint of the Russian Federation and the analysis based on the practices of the UN system. It is in line with the best practices of the UN system.

**Mr Hammad HAMMAD (United States of America)**

The United States is proud to support for adoption the draft resolution. FAO now have a clear process for Member Nations in arrears to apply for their voting rights to be restored, provided the circumstances preventing them from payment were beyond their control per the FAO Basic Texts. We support the draft criteria and texts of the resolution which provide practical guidelines consistent with the Basic Texts and the Organization's financial regulations.

**Mr Bo LI (China) (Original language Chinese)**

China has no objection to the *Draft Resolution* of the Conference. China thanks the Independent Chairperson of the Council for organizing multiple rounds of informal consultations and appreciates the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the FAO Legal Department for their professional opinions on the draft. In order to ensure the financial health of FAO, we encourage Member Nations to pay their contributions on time. At the same time, we emphasize that when assisting the Conference in considering applications for restoring voting rights the General Committee should fully take into account the actual difficulties the countries conserved have to ensure fairness, inclusiveness and operability.

**Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)**

La France s'aligne sur la déclaration prononcée par l'Espagne au nom des 27 Etats membres de l'Union Européenne. La France soutient l'adoption de cette procédure de rétablissement des droits de vote par la Conférence. Nous regrettons que ce texte ne soit pas pleinement aligné sur la procédure de l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies, particulier la résolution A/RES/54/237, acceptée de tous et qui est mise en œuvre et réaffirmée chaque année depuis 1999.

Nous pensons néanmoins que cette résolution permettra de renforcer et de préciser la procédure de rétablissement des droits de vote à la FAO. Le paiement des contributions obligatoires est un engagement pris par tous les membres de la FAO en vertu de l'article XVIII de la Constitution. Alors que nous allons voter le budget 2023-2024 de l'Organisation, je tiens à rappeler que les arriérés de paiements qui s'élevaient à USD 70 millions au 31 mai sont l'un des principaux freins à la mise en œuvre du Programme de Travail, et ce au détriment des pays qui en ont le plus besoin, en particulier les pays les moins avancés.

Alors que les pays les moins avancés ont été les plus sévèrement impacté par la COVID-19 et l'aggravation de l'insécurité alimentaire résultant de l'agression russe contre l'Ukraine, les arriérés de contributions à la FAO sont marginalement attribuables aux Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM), 95 pourcents de ces arriérés sont dus par une douzaine de pays qui doivent plus d'un million à l'Organisation, dont aucun n'est un PMA.

Ces pays sont les mêmes qu'en 2019, sans que la pandémie, puis la crise n'ait changé quoi que ce soit. En d'autres termes, les PMA sont les victimes des arriérés de contribution à la FAO, mais ils n'en sont pas la cause. A cet égard, nous encourageons la FAO à publier les informations détaillées, à jour et au moins sur une base hebdomadaire, spécifique à chaque pays et accessible au public sur les contributions. Nous sommes bien sûr conscients que certains pays font face à des circonstances indépendantes de leurs volontés qui peuvent retarder le paiement de leurs contributions. Pour cette raison, le rétablissement des droits de vote par la Conférence est une question qui doit être traitée avec le plus grand sérieux.

Le Bureau de la Conférence, auquel siège la France, a étudié 17 demandes de rétablissement de droit de vote lors de cette Session. Nous pensons qu'il doit disposer d'un temps suffisant et des informations les plus complètes possible pour étudier en détail chaque demande. Nous appelons donc les membres à mettre pleinement en œuvre les dispositions de cette résolution. Nous rappelons que la GMU demande



que les requêtes de demandes de rétablissement au droit de vote soient présentées dans un délai minimal de 15 jours, pour permettre l'examen approfondi. En conclusion, nous encourageons la Conférence à réexaminer les dispositions de cette résolution le moment venu, au vu des enseignements de sa mise en œuvre, afin d'en préciser le cas échéant ses modalités.

**Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)**

Japan appreciates the consultation efforts made for building the consensus on the voting rights restoration. In view of the regulation, the *Draft Resolution* we think is a good mix of transparency and pragmatism. While we would like to request all the Members to make the payments in full in a timely manner, Japan is ready to support voting rights restoration.

**Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

We just wanted to draw the attention of our dear colleagues to the fact that the basis of this document is the idea of obligations that are beyond the control of the Member Nations, which prevent the Members from paying their contributions to the Organization. A list of these contributions is not clearly defined and this is part of the best practices of the Organization.

**Sra. Haifa Aissami MADAH (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de)**

Me gustaría que a los efectos del registro correspondiente expresar la posición de mi país con respecto al punto que nos ocupa. En este sentido, tal como lo hemos hecho ante las instancias competentes en su oportunidad y en concordancia con lo que establece el Artículo III, párrafo 4 de la Constitución de la FAO, el derecho a la restauración del derecho de voto de los Estados hace parte de los textos fundamentales y es una previsión que se ha incluida justamente para cubrir aquellas circunstancias que escapan a la voluntad de los Estados y que les impiden de alguna manera honrar sus compromisos financieros con la Organización.

Dicho esto, desearía recalcar como lo hemos también expresado en las consultas que antecedieron y por las cuales agradezco también al Presidente Independiente del Consejo (ICC), sobre el hecho de que justamente esa previsión que está contenida en los textos fundamentales, precisamente, tiene como espíritu y propósito el que ningún Estado Miembro de la Organización sea excluido siempre que esté afectado por situaciones que escapan a su voluntad.

Y, tal como lo dijimos durante los debates del Comité General, nosotros presumimos la buena fe de los Estados que han acudido responsablemente y habiendo agotado todas las posibilidades que tienen a su alcance para explicar las situaciones con lujo de detalles a la Organización y ante las instancias competentes como lo son, por ejemplo, la División de Finanzas de la Organización y otros entes interesados que han participado activamente para intentar establecer, como es el caso de Venezuela, canales y mecanismos seguros que permitan honrar los compromisos financieros con la Organización.

**Ms Jackline YONGA (Kenya)**

Kenya would like to express its appreciation for the informal consultations undertaken by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), which resulted in the consensus among Members on the draft resolution. It had taken quite a while. We also take note of the recommendations made by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Finance Committee, which stress the need to ensure consistency in the six languages of FAO for the *Draft Resolution*.

We further note with appreciation the confirmation of the CCLM that the *Draft Resolution*, as revised by the CCLM, is consistent with the basic text of the Organization. We also take note that the practice developed by FAO over past years on the restoration of voting rights is consistent with the approach of most other UN system organizations.

We appreciate that Members in arrears wishing to restore their voting rights have the opportunity to submit a written payment plan to the Director-General. This is especially welcome because these are challenging times where most countries have been cushioned by the shocks of protracted conflicts that has affected most regions, exacerbating inequalities.

We request that FAO continues to maintain a publicly exhaustive and up-to-date information section on the FAO website, reflecting the status of payment of assessed contributions. In conclusion, Kenya supports the adoption of the *Draft Resolution* on this Agenda Item.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I see no further requests for statements. I take it that the Conference approves the draft Conference resolution, as contained in document *C 2023/LIM/9* on the Procedures for the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization.

It is so decided. Item 24 is concluded.

#### **Item 25. Other Constitutional and Legal Matters**

##### **Point 25. Autres questions constitutionnelles et juridiques**

##### **Tema 25. Otros asuntos constitucionales y jurídicos**

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I now move to Item 25, *Other Constitutional and Legal Matters*. There are no other matters to discuss, so that concludes this Item.

I would like to ask the Secretariat to make an announcement, please.

#### **ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL**

I just wanted to inform Members that Commission I will convene at 14:00 hours in Plenary for the Adoption of its Report. It will be followed by the Adoption of the Report of Commission II and we will start the Plenary meeting right after that.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Ladies and gentlemen, we are done with our work for this morning. I adjourn the Tenth Plenary Meeting. We reconvene at 14.00 hours this afternoon.

*The meeting rose at 10:36 hours*

*La séance est levée à 10 h 36*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 10.36*



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منظمة  
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<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>ELEVENTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>ONZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>UNDÉCIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>6 July 2023</b></p>

The Eleventh Meeting was opened at 14:04 hours  
Mr Morten von Hanno Aasland,  
Vice-Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La onzième séance est ouverte à 14 h 04  
sous la présidence de M. Morten von Hanno Aasland,  
Vice-Président de la Conférence

Se abre la undécima reunión a las 14.04  
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Morten von Hanno Aasland,  
Vice-Presidente de la Conferencia

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**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF COMMISSION I  
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT DE LA COMMISSION I  
APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME DE LA COMISIÓN I**

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF COMMISSION II  
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT DE LA COMMISSION II  
APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME DE LA COMISIÓN II**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Good afternoon, welcome back to the 11th Plenary Meeting.

We will now adopt the Reports of the Commissions here in Plenary. Please ensure you have before you documents *C 2023/I/REP* and *C 2023/II/REP*.

At this stage, I would like to ask the Plenary whether it wishes to adopt these two Reports *en bloc*?

It is so decided. The Reports of Commission I and Commission II are hereby approved by the Conference.

**Report of Commission I adopted  
Rapport de la Commission I adopté  
Informe de la Comisión I aprobado**

**Report of Commission II adopted  
Rapport de la Commission II adopté  
Informe de la Comisión II aprobado**

**Item 25. Other Constitutional and Legal Matters (*continued*)  
Point 25. Autres questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (*suite*)  
Tema 25. Otros asuntos constitucionales y jurídicos (*continuación*)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Before the break we had a request for the floor from New Zealand, which due to a technical delay was not picked up on time. Therefore, I would like to re-open Item 25, Other Constitutional and Legal Matters.

**Ms Jacqueline FRIZELLE (New Zealand)**

New Zealand wants to raise the matter of regional representation on the FAO Council. In the Southwest Pacific Region there are 16 diverse countries with unique perspectives, needs and solutions. However, the Southwest Pacific Region currently only has one position on the Council.

At this Conference, we were really pleased to see that there were over 10 Members of the Southwest Pacific Region in attendance. The important work of FAO focusing on issues such as climate change in small island development states, are critical to our region, but we are the most under-represented region on the Council, and therefore we have limited voice on important FAO governance decisions.

We request that regional balance of the FAO Council be noted as a matter for future consideration by governing bodies of FAO.

**Ms Lonnie TUATAGALOA (Samoa)**

Samoa aligns with the matter raised by New Zealand on regional representation for the Southwest Pacific. We therefore join the call for regional balance of the FAO Council be considered by the governing bodies of FAO to ensure proper and inclusive representation of the Pacific Members of FAO in the Council.

**Mr Lajkit RUFUS (Marshall Islands)**

Marshall Islands stand with the proposal that New Zealand submitted to have the Southwest Pacific to be among Council Members.

**Mr Lottie VAISEKAVEA (Solomon Islands)**

The Solomon Islands also stand along with this request and look forward to the FAO Council for due process and consideration when the time is right.

**Mr Villiami MANU (Tonga)**

Tonga is in line with all the Pacific Islands in supporting New Zealand's proposal for extra Members.

**Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)**

Australia would like to add our voice to New Zealand's call for future consideration of regional representation on Council Membership to ensure the perspectives and solutions of regions such as the Southwest Pacific can be proportionately heard. As currently the sole member from the Southwest Pacific on FAO Council, Australia would welcome future consideration of this matter.

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I see no other requests from the floor. Thank you for these interventions, we have taken duly note of them.

**Item 26. Audited Accounts 2020 and 2021 (Draft Resolutions)**

**Point 26. Comptes vérifiés 2020 et 2021 (projets de résolution)**

**Tema 26. Cuentas comprobadas correspondientes a 2020 y 2021 (proyectos de resoluciones)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

We now turn to Item 26, *Audited Accounts 2020 and 2021 (Draft Resolutions)*. Please ensure you have the relevant documents before you: *C 2023/5 A*; *C 2021/5 B*; *C 2023/6 A*; *C 2023/6 B*; and *C 2023/LIM/3*.

The introduction to this Item has been published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference.

**Introduction to Item 26: Audited Accounts 2020 and 2021 (Draft Resolutions)**

*Mr Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director-General*

Documents *C 2023/5 A* and *C 2023/6 A* contain the official Financial Statements of the Organization for the years 2020 and 2021 respectively, together with the opinion of the External Auditor on the Financial Statements. Documents *C 2023/5 B* and *C 2023/6 B* present the Reports of the External Auditor for each year, typically referred to as the "Long Form Reports".

I am pleased to inform Conference that, as in previous years, the External Auditor has expressed an unmodified opinion on the 2020 and 2021 Financial Statements of the Organization.

The results and official accounts of 2020 were examined by the Finance Committee at its 188th Session in November 2021 and by the Council at its 168th Session in November/ December 2021. The results and official accounts of 2021 were examined by the Finance Committee at its 194th Session in November 2022 and by the Council at its 171st Session in December 2022.

The Audited Accounts of 2020 and 2021 are now before you for adoption, by approval of the draft Conference Resolutions as submitted by the Council in document *C 2023/LIM/3*.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Does any delegation wish to take the floor on this Item?

**His Excellency Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)**

Ethiopia is presenting the statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. At the outset we would like to thank the FAO Secretariat for providing us with documents on FAO Audited Accounts 2020-2021.

The Africa Regional Group would like to appreciate the financial position of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization for the related years and urges to mobilize more finance to run many programmes and projects in the developing countries that contribute towards more food and nutrition security, in the same way they have been doing so far.

The Africa Regional Group noted that the extract from the Report of the 168th Council Session which was held during 29 November to 4 December 2021, we also note that the Council considered the Reports of 186th and 187th Session of the Finance Committee and the FAO to implement all the recommendations provided and support the recommendation of the Draft Resolution by the Council for adoption by the Conference of the FAO Audited Account 2020 as represented in Appendix C to this Report.

The Africa Regional Group has also noted and supports that the FAO Council reviewed the Reports of 192th, 193rd and 194th Sessions of the Finance Committee, except for the restoration by the Conference on the Voting Rights of Member Nations and the payment of the financial contribution to the Organization, which was taken up under the separate agenda item, and endorse the recommendations of the Finance Committee.

Finally, the Africa Regional Group supports the recommendation of the draft resolution by the FAO Council for adoption by the Conference of the FAO Audited Account for 2021 as included in Appendix D to the Report, and as reproduced in Paragraph 12 of the document *CL171/9*.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I see no other requests for the floor. Can I take it that the Conference wishes to approve the Audited Accounts 2020 and 2021, and thereby adopts the Conference Resolutions as contained in document *C 2023/LIM/3*? It is so decided. This concludes Item 26.

#### **Item 27. Scale of Contributions 2024-25 (Draft Resolution)**

##### **Point 27. Barème des contributions 2024-2025 (projet de résolution)**

##### **Tema 27. Escala de cuotas para 2024-25 (proyecto de resolución)**

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

We move on to Item 27, *Scale of Contributions 2024-25 (Draft Resolution)*. The relevant documents are *C 2023/INF/7* and *C 2023/LIM/6*.

The introduction to this Item has been published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference.

#### **Introduction to Item 27: Scale of Contributions 2024-25 (Draft Resolutions)**

*Mr Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director-General*

The paper before you sets out the proposed FAO Scale of Contributions for the years 2024-2025. This has been derived from the United Nations Scale of Assessments for 2022, 2023 and 2024 in force in 2023. The 2022-23 Scale is also shown for comparison purposes.

The proposed 2024-25 Scale of Contributions was reviewed by the Finance Committee at its 195th Session in March 2023 and by the Council at its 172nd Session in April 2023.

The Conference is invited to approve the Draft Resolution submitted by the Council on the Scale of Contributions for 2024-25 as presented in document *C 2023/LIM/6*.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

Would any delegates like to speak on this Item?

#### **His Excellency Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)**

Ethiopia is presenting this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group again. Africa Regional Group would like to thank again the Management and the Secretariat for providing us the draft resolution on the Scale of Contributions 2024-2025.

We urge all Member States to pay their contributions on time and in full so that FAO will support the programmes and projects that enhance food production, especially in developing countries, so that they can achieve their food and nutrition security.

Africa Regional Group reviewed the Report of the 195th Session of the Finance Committee (FC) except for the Medium Term Plan, (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), and Restoration by the Conference of the Voting Rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization, which were taken under the separate Agenda Items, and endorsed the recommendation of the Finance Committee to submit the draft resolution for adoption by the Conference of the Scale of Contributions 2024-2025 as set out in *Appendix C*.

On the Scale of Contributions 2024-2025 Africa Regional Group also supports the Conference having noted the recommendation of the 172nd Session of the Council, confirming that as in the past FAO should follow the United Nations Scale of Assessment subject to adaptation of the different Membership of FAO, decide that the scale of FAO contributions for 2024-2025 should be derived directly from the United Nations Scale of Assessment in force during 2023 and adopt for use in 2024 and 2025, the scale as set out in the Annex of this Report.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Can I take it that the Conference wishes to adopt the draft Conference Resolution concerning the Scale of Contributions for 2024-25, as set out in document *C 2023/LIM/6*? It is so decided, and Item 27 is closed.

#### **Item 28. Payment by the European Union to cover administrative and other expenses arising out of its Membership in the Organization**

#### **Point 28. Paiement par l'Union européenne des dépenses administratives et autres découlant de son statut de membre de l'Organisation**

#### **Tema 28. Pago de la Unión Europea para sufragar los gastos administrativos y de otro tipo derivados de su condición de Miembro de la Organización**

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

We now continue with Item 28, *Payment by the European Union to cover administrative and other expenses arising out of its Membership in the Organization*. The relevant document is *C 2023/LIM/7*.

#### **Ms Alexandra VALKENBURG (European Commission)**

I would like to take this opportunity to address the Conference on behalf of the European Union (EU) to underline and reiterate our longstanding commitment to the FAO and its work.

The partnership between the EU and FAO goes beyond the mere administrative Membership Fee that is under this Agenda Item; it represents a small fraction of our financial contribution to the Organization both during the implementation of FAO's long term strategic framework to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those for which the FAO has a custodian role within the UN System.

As one of the largest development financiers, the EU is consistent on its commitment to multilateralism and the rules based international order, contributing to the Organization's objectives. The EU/FAO cooperation is founded on the belief that our shared vision for sustainable and resilient food systems necessitates a comprehensive approach that encompasses financial contributions and collaborative efforts – both are essential in addressing the global challenges of hunger, malnutrition, and environmental sustainability.

In this regard the EU has consistently fulfilled its obligations, recognizing the importance of a stable and adequately resourced FAO to achieve our shared objectives. The EU remains dedicated to its partnership with the Organization and we wish to highlight some of the elements that are part of the EU Council conclusions on the shared priorities of the EU and its Member States for FAO.

We count on FAO to take the lead on advocating and supporting the transition towards resilient and sustainable food systems, and to demonstrate a results-oriented approach, and to partner with other regional and international organizations to maximize and support synergies between actions on food systems, climate, biodiversity, water, fisheries, including Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, infrastructure research and other relevant sectors, in order to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

In conclusion, we reiterate our unwavering commitment to the FAO and its mandate.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

As the Third Report of the General Committee, which we have adopted on Monday, has dealt with this matter, we can should be able to move on to the next Item.

#### **Item 29. Other Administrative and Financial Matters**

##### **Point 29. Autres questions administratives et financières**

##### **Tema 29. Otros asuntos administrativos y financieros**

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Item 29 is *Other Administrative and Financial Matters*. As no topics are under discussion, we can should be able to move on to the next Item on the Agenda.

#### **Item 9. Appointment of Representatives of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee**

##### **Point 9. Nomination de représentants de la Conférence de la FAO au Comité des pensions du personnel**

##### **Tema 9. Nombramiento de representantes de la Conferencia de la FAO en el Comité de Pensiones del Personal**

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I would like now to open Item 9, *Appointment of Representatives of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee*. The relevant document is C 2023/10.

The introduction to this Item has been published on the website of the 43rd Session of the Conference.

#### **Introduction to Item 9: Appointment of Representatives of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee**

*Ms Greet de Leeuw, Director, Human Resources*

Item 9 on the Agenda of the 43rd Session of the Conference, covered in document C 2023/10, deals with the “Appointment of Representatives of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee”. The United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund provides retirement, death, disability and related benefits to the staff of the United Nations organizations, including FAO. It is administered by the UN Joint Staff Pension Board and Staff Pension Committees in each of the Member Organizations of the Fund.

The FAO/WFP Staff Pension Committee consists of three Members (with three alternates) appointed by the Conference of FAO, three Members (with three alternates) appointed by the Director-General and three Members (with three alternates) elected by FAO and WFP participants.

The Conference has the authority to appoint Members and Alternate Members as representatives of the FAO Governing Bodies to the FAO/WFP Staff Pension Committee.

The Secretariat has been informed that the nomination of the following candidates is being proposed to serve as Members and Alternate Members representing the FAO Conference on the FAO/WFP Staff Pension Committee:

- a) Mr Guillermo Valentín Rodolico, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Argentine Republic to FAO, to serve as Member from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026;



- b) Mr Abdul Rahman Abdul Wahab, Alternate Permanent Representative, Embassy of Malaysia, to serve as Alternate Member from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026;
- c) Ms Maria Buttigieg, Deputy Permanent Representative, Embassy of the Republic of Malta, to serve as Member from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027;
- d) Mr Denis Cherednichenko, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to FAO and other UN Agencies in Rome, to serve as Alternate Member from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027;
- e) Mr Christopher Tatum, Alternate Permanent Representative of the United States Mission to the United Nations Agencies, to replace and complete the term of Mr Hammad B. Hammad, for the remainder of his term until 31 December 2025, due to Mr Hammad's departure from Rome in June 2023.

The Conference may wish to consider these candidates and, if it finds them acceptable, to proceed with the appointment of the persons just named to become Members and Alternate Members of the FAO/WFP Staff Pension Committee.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

The Conference is requested to consider the candidatures as outlined in the document and the introduction to this Item and, if it finds them acceptable, to proceed with the appointment of the persons named as Members and Alternate Members of the FAO Staff Pension Committee.

#### **Mr Hammad HAMMAD (United States of America)**

The United States of America disassociates from the appointment of the Russian Federation Delegate to the UN Staff Pension Committee (UNSPC) and would like this reflected in the Conference Report.

#### **Mr François CLOUTIER (Canada)**

Canada would like to join this dissociation of the Russian Federation to this appointment of the Staff Pension Committee (UNSPC).

#### **Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)**

Igualmente, España en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y sus 27 Estados Miembros nos disociamos del nombramiento del representante de la Federación Rusa para el Comité de Pensiones de personal de las Naciones Unidas (UNSPC) y solicitamos que conste en el Informe.

#### **Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland also disassociates itself from the nomination of the Russian Federation to the UN Staff Pension Committee (UNSPC).

#### **Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)**

Australia would like to disassociate itself from the appointment of the candidate from the Russian Federation to the UN Staff Pension Committee (UNSPC) and request that this be reflected in the Conference's Report.

#### **Ms Jacqueline FRIZELLE (New Zealand)**

New Zealand would also like to disassociate itself with the appointment of the Russian Federation to the UN Staff Pension Committee (UNSPC).

#### **Ms Dilyara RAVILOVA-BOROVIK (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

The Russian Federation expresses its regret with this politicization of the work of the Conference and furthermore disassociates itself from the candidatures of the United States of America and Malta as a Member of the European Union (EU) into this particular Committee, in other words the UN Staff Pension Committee (UNSPC). So we would like for our particular position to be registered in the Minutes of the Conference.

#### **Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)**

Japan would also like to disassociate the appointment of the Russian Federation candidate and we would like it to be recorded in the Conference Report.

**Mr Birger Gjelsten VEUM (Norway)**

We would like to disassociate ourselves from the appointment of the Representative from the Russian Federation delegation to the UN Staff Pension Committee (UNSPC).

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

I see no other requests for the floor. Can I take it that the Conference has no objection to the list of candidates as outlined in document *C 2023/10*? It is so decided. That completes Item 9.

**Item 31. Any Other Matters**

**Point 31. Questions diverses**

**Tema 31. Asuntos varios**

*Item 31.2 In Memoriam*

*Point 31.2 In Memoriam*

*Tema 31.2 In memoriam*

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Conference has traditionally paid tribute to staff members who passed away while in service since the preceding session.

Since the last session of Conference, the following staff members died passed away while in service:

- Mr Bature Awudu
- Ms Hülya Nirvana Roman Karakas
- Mr Marlos Jhonny Melo De Souza
- Mr Georges Al Nahri
- Mr Adnan Rauf Quereshi
- Mr Alberto Antonini
- Mr Maman Bachir Souleymane
- Mr Bakary Cisse
- Ms Kekeletso Tohlang

May I request the Conference to observe one minute of silence in tribute to those staff members who died since the last session of Conference in 2021?

*Minute of silence*

*Minute de silence*

*Minuto de silencio*

Thank you

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Ladies and Gentlemen, as agreed this morning we shall now listen to a statement by a Representative of the FAO Staff Bodies. Ms Florence Tartanac, President of the Association of Professionals in FAO (AP-in-FAO), you have the floor.

**Ms Florence TARTANAC (President of Association of Professionals in FAO)**

Chairperson of the Conference,

Director-General,

Secretary-General of the Conference and Council,

Distinguished delegates,

Colleagues,

The Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs) – the Association of Professionals in FAO (AP-in-FAO) and the Union of General Service Staff at FAO and WFP (UGSS), appreciate this opportunity to share staff perceptions and feedback with you, in a spirit of collaboration and with the shared goal of making FAO the best that it can be. We are all committed to fulfilling FAO's important mandate worldwide.

First, we congratulate Mr Qu Dongyu on his re-election as the Director-General.

We hope that the energy and ambition felt this week in this Conference carries forward in the coming four years and manifests through concrete outcomes.

However, as staff representatives, we are feeling a growing sense of frustration. We recognise that FAO has opened a space for dialogue, which is much appreciated. Nevertheless, we are concerned that concrete progress on promised change is taking too long. Our interactions with Management are increasingly characterized by delays or even a lack of replies on important matters.

AP-in-FAO and UGSS would like to see that the dialogue and the mechanisms already in place, translate into a meaningful and systematic consultation process, followed up by concrete outcomes.

The membership of AP-in-FAO and UGSS knows and loves this Organization. We have many good ideas we can bring to the table, ideas that work for all of us – employees, management, and the Members we serve.

We would like to comment on three critical areas of significance for us: teleworking, job growth and equal treatment between HQ and Field Offices.

Teleworking is an essential part of modern and flexible working arrangements across the UN system. In May 2023, the SRBs published a position paper on the topic that shows that teleworking can enhance productivity, improve staff morale, allow organizations to deliver more efficiently, reduce absenteeism and turnover, support recruitment and retention, especially women, cut costs, promote equality and diversity, and meet environmental goals - to name just a few key benefits.

Teleworking has become crucial to FAO colleagues and it is good for workforce morale. Employees across the entire Organization, in all locations (and we are not talking only about staff but also consultants), have said that teleworking help them do their jobs with more energy, is a crucial factor in their career decision making, and want to see a more modern and flexible working approach in FAO. We urge FAO Senior Management to build on the experience accumulated during the pilot to emanate a permanent policy which reflects modern approaches, lessons-learned and staff feedback.

We invite all Members to review this SRB evidence-based position paper on teleworking. It is on the intranet, in it, we advocate for a FAO teleworking policy similar to other organizations in the common system.

On the topic of job growth, the recent conclusion of the job reclassification for General Service Staff is welcomed with great satisfaction and gratitude to the Director General. We remain optimistic that the exercise for Professionals will also reflect the concerns and aspirations of all staff, not only those in the P1 to P3 categories with more than ten years of service. For many years, there was little or no avenue for the dedicated staff of FAO to grow their careers in line with the growth in their expertise and experience.

We believe our Organization must show greater ambition to retain dedicated, experienced colleagues and attract new talent, and in particular women. We are still far from achieving gender parity at professional level and for senior positions.

The SRBs are ready to collaborate in the revision of the long-awaited recruitment policy. Currently there is still a huge lack of transparency, inadequate oversight and explicit opportunities for qualified internal candidates. We consider that the current recruitment policy has shown deficiencies for ensuring a fair and impartial process.

Finally, too often, we hear that Headquarters does not understand the issues faced by employees in the field. This dynamic must change, starting with consistent and equal treatment of employees, no matter

where they work. More effort must be made to ensure that the rules are applied equally throughout the Organization – whether it is the teleworking policy, mobility opportunities, level of healthcare and including the right to official staff representation.

We reiterate the commitment of all employees in creating a conducive working environment that promotes equitable treatment, growth and innovation. We ask that promises of reform and positive change translate into concrete actions and outcomes.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

Thank you for your important observations and points made, let me add that I trust that this is duly noted by Management and the Leadership of the FAO and I would also say that in my experience any Organization is only as good as its working environment and the ability of response from Management.

With this, we conclude this particular Item.

#### **Item 30. Date and place of the 44th Session of the Conference**

#### **Point 30. Date et lieu de la 44<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence**

#### **Tema 30. Fecha y lugar del 44.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia**

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

We now move on to the next one on the Agenda, which is Item 30, *date and place of the 44th session of the Conference*, which requires the Conference to set dates for its next Session. The dates proposed for the next session of the Conference are Saturday 28 June to Friday 4 July 2025. I see no requests or comments to this and it is so decided.

The delegation of Israel has asked for a right to reply and I would like to give Israel the floor for that.

#### **Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)**

I would like to respond to the comment made by the Palestinian observer yesterday and the remark he made after the roundtable on water infrastructure. Israel pulled out and left Gaza Strip 18 years ago; again, 18 years. On the West Bank, we have the Palestinian Authority, meaning obviously it is an Authority that runs the Palestinians' life on the West Bank.

It is about time that the Palestinians, both in Gaza and in West Bank, will take responsibility for their own lives and start to invest in building civilian infrastructures, including water infrastructures, rather than investing in terrorist infrastructure. It is also about time for the Palestinian delegation to maybe share with us the views and ideas on very important issues that we are discussing here in FAO, such as how to come closer to reach 2030 Agenda, how to face climate crisis, rather than attacking Israel whenever they ask for the floor.

#### **Mr Mamoun BARGHOUTHI (Palestine) (Original language Arabic)**

The representative of the occupier is saying let us participate together in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but she knows clearly that we are living under occupation and there is an apartheid system there where we have no control over natural resources. We cannot do anything because we are under occupation.

#### **VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

This concludes our business for this afternoon session. I would like to thank you all for very efficient and effective work in these two sessions that I have had the pleasure to chair with you and thank you for entrusting me the Chairpersonship as Vice-Chair.

*The meeting was suspended between 14:53 and 17:09*

*La séance est suspendue de 14 h 53 à 17 h 09*

*Se suspende la sesión de las 14.53 a las 17.09*

#### **Item 20. Adoption of the Draft Resolution on Budgetary Appropriations 2024-25 (Vote)**

**Point 20. Adoption du projet de résolution sur l'ouverture de crédits budgétaires 2024-2025 (vote)****Tema 20. Aprobación del proyecto de resolución sobre las consignaciones presupuestarias para 2024-25 (votación)****CHAIRPERSON**

Welcome back, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. We will now proceed to the Adoption of the Draft Resolution on Budgetary Appropriations 2024-25. I wish to recall that the Conference is statutorily required to approve this draft resolution through a vote.

The draft resolution on which the Conference will vote is contained in document *C 2023/LIM/16*.

Before we proceed to the vote, I would like to invite the Elections Officer to explain the process for voting, to undertake the quorum check, and to support the selection of the first Member Nation to vote.

**ELECTIONS OFFICER**

As set out in Article XVIII, paragraph 5 of the FAO Constitution, decisions on the level of the budget shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. Votes cast means votes in favour and votes against and does not include abstentions. When a majority of two-thirds is required for any decision by the Conference, as in this case, the total number of votes cast must be more than one half of the Member Nations of the Organization, that is 98 or more.

Then on to the procedure for the vote. Since a two-thirds majority is required, the vote must be conducted through a roll call voting procedure as is prescribed in paragraph 7 (a) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization. In addition, a roll call vote will also allow all delegations to participate in the votes including delegations participating online in the hybrid modality of the 43rd session of this Conference.

In a roll call vote, the delegations of Member Nations will be called out in alphabetical order to give a response, either “yes”, if the delegation is in favour of the proposed resolution; “no”, if the delegation is against; or “abstain” if the delegation wishes to abstain in the vote. In accordance with the same paragraph 7 (a) of General Rule XII, the vote of each Member Nation participating in the vote by roll call will be included in the verbatim record of the plenary meeting.

When it is your turn, please make sure to turn on your microphone. For those delegations participating online, please unmute yourself and ensure that your video is turned on. At the conclusion of the first call, the name of Member Nations with delegates or representatives who failed to answer will be called up again in a second round.

I would like to remind delegates that in accordance with paragraph 14 of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, once voting has commenced, no delegate or representative may interrupt the voting, except to raise a point of order in connection with the vote. Before we begin the voting procedure, we must establish that we have a quorum, and the Chairperson will have to draw lots to determine which Member Nation will start the roll call.

In accordance with paragraph 2 of General Rule XII, the quorum required for a vote is a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization. This means that at least 98 Member Nations must be present at this time. We will now establish the number of Member Nations present. Each delegation of a Member Nation is requested to press the touchscreens, that is the ribbon on the touchscreen that says ‘presence’ in all languages. The electronic voting system can then verify the number of delegations present. The screens on your desk are now activated. Please press the ribbon.

Did all delegations press the ribbon on the screens? Thank you. The electronic voting system indicates that we have 146 Members present; that is well beyond the requirement for the quorum, 147 at the moment. We can thus proceed to the vote.

Finally, we must determine which Member Nation will be called first in the roll call by the draw of lots. I ask the Chairperson to draw that lot.

**PRÉSIDENT**

Les Maldives.

**ELECTIONS OFFICER**

The Maldives. The first delegation to be called is the Maldives.

With that, we have concluded the outline of the process for the voting, we have done the quorum check, and we have identified the first Member at the start in the roll call.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Now we will proceed to the vote. I recall that the Conference is now voting on the Draft Resolution on Budgetary Appropriations 2024-25 contained in document *C 2023/LIM/16*.

I now invite the Assistant Secretary-General to call out the names of Member Nations, starting with Les Maldives, as just selected.

*Vote*

*Vote*

*Votación*

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL**

I have concluded the list.

**PRÉSIDENT**



Nous allons prendre un instant pour comparer les résultats des personnes qui faisaient le suivi, je vous reviens avec ces résultats dans un instant.

***Continues in English***

I will now read the results. Please note the record of the vote will be included in the Verbatim Record of this meeting.

Votes cast, 152. We needed a majority of 102. No abstentions. No votes against. 150 votes for.

With this result the Conference has approved the Resolution on budgetary appropriations for 2024-2025.

منظمة الأمم المتحدة للزراعة والرياسة والصحة الغذائية	联合国 粮农组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations		Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
Vote on: Budgetary appropriations 2024-2025, draft Resolution, C 2023/LIM/16				6 July 2023; 17:45		
Vote sur: Ouvertures de crédits budgétaires 2024-2025, Projet de résolution, C 2023/LIM/16						
Volación para: Consignaciones presupuestarias para 2024-2025, proyecto de resolución, C 2023/LIM/16						
<b>RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS</b>						
<b>Roll call vote /Vote par appel nominal/Votación Nominal</b>						
Number of votes cast/	Nombre de suffrages exprimés/	Número de votos emitidos	152			
	Majority required/	Majorité requise/	102			
	Votes for/	Votos pour/	152			
	Votes against/	Votos contre/	0			
	Abstentions/	Abstenciones	0			
Votes for:	Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe					
Votes Against	-					
Votos contre	-					
Votos en contra	-					
Abstentions:	-					
Abstenciones:	-					
No Reply:	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Comoros, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominica, Fiji, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, India, Jamaica, Kiribati, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Suriname, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Vanuatu,					
Aucune réponse:						
Ninguna respuesta:						
<b>ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ADOPTADA</b>						
						
Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électoral/ El oficial de elecciones						

## Item 7. Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council

### Point 7. Nomination du Président indépendant du Conseil

### Tema 7. Nombramiento del Presidente Independiente del Consejo

#### CHAIRPERSON

We now move on to Item 7, *Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council*.

Under Article V paragraph 2 of the Constitution, “*the Conference appoints the Independent Chairperson of the Council*”.

We have one candidate for the post as mentioned in document C 2023/9 – namely Mr Hans Hoogeveen from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In accordance with paragraph 10 of General Rule XII, and following the recommendation of the General Committee that we adopted on Saturday, I propose to elect Mr Hoogeveen as the sole candidate for the Office of Independent Chairperson of the Council by clear general consent.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

Congratulations, Mr Hans Hoogeveen, on your re-election to the post of Independent Chairperson of the Council and, if you want, I give you the floor.

### **INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, I am overwhelmed by your broad support for my re-election as Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), and I would like to thank you for the trust and support for this important role within FAO. I am proud to serve the Membership for another two years.

FAO has gained a stronger role at the International political level. I have seen FAO grow and flourish to what it is today, more relevant than ever on the world stage, more relevant for those who need it the most. Of course, I will continue to support his beautiful Organization, to make the Organization even more fit for purpose and to support the Membership, especially for the challenges we are facing today.

We need to stand united, working shoulder to shoulder and, of course, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve already for two years in this Organization. Over the last two years the Council has risen to the challenges and continues to rise. Major achievements were related to substance, governance and working methods. The Council took decisive decisions related to policy guidance, especially to provide public goods, to norms and standards, to statistics, and especially also to technical capacity on the ground. We improved inclusivity, openness, and transparency.

Excellencies, it is great to see that over the last two years, the Council has shown a growing involvement and commitment of the Members. We saw even greater collaboration between Members to achieve shared goals. Through Formal and Informal Consultations we tried, despite competing priorities, to reach consensus. Besides many substantive decisions, we made also quite important changes to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Council in many ways.

FAO is, and should continue to be, the global platform for dialogue and negotiations on all matters relating to food security, agrifood systems, and, of course, nutrition. The Council has ensured that FAO continues to be a dynamic, fit for purpose organization, based on science, facts and experience, striving to achieve its most noble mandate. And our successes have been made possible not only because of our discussions between the Members, but also our discussions with the Management.

Dear friends, as you know, I strongly believe in the multilateral system with its most crucial principle and that is deciding by consensus. I will continue to strive for the Council to take now all decisions by consensus. To that end, I will continue with informal consultations to make sure that all Members can join the consensus. But it is a teamwork effort. We all have to stand united, like we have done a moment ago for the budget.

Furthermore, I would like to strengthen the involvement of the Members in the agenda setting, that we also can look forward to new issues, new things to take up as FAO, and I think it would be very important not only to take decisions, but also to take stock for action on the ground, what has been achieved, because we can learn many lessons from what has been achieved.

Of course, I will do my utmost to continue to be your inclusive and Independent Chairperson of the Council. We have to work together with respect, dignity, solidarity, equality, being open and transparent. We have to make the Council the most important effective body, not only of FAO, but I would say of the United Nations. Of course, I would like to thank Mr Rakesh Muthoo and his team for the excellent support which the team has given over the last two years to the Council and to myself.

Dear friends, to conclude - I will serve you with all my energy, with all my passion, and with all my dedication. Let us not forget at the end of the day, it is all about people, people with passion, people who are dedicated to serving this great organization, and to serve those who need the most, leaving nobody behind and making our dream of a world without hunger and malnutrition a reality.

*Applause*

*Applaudissements*

*Aplausos*

**Mr Marcel BEUKEBOOM (Netherlands, Kingdom of the)**



In your opening statement of this 43rd Session of the Conference, Madam Chairperson, you referred to the foundation of FAO on 16 October 1945. The Kingdom of the Netherlands was there and became one of the founding Members of this Institution.

The original mission of FAO was inspired by the ravaging impacts of a World War which destroyed agrifood systems worldwide and pushed people into hunger and poverty. We have achieved a lot since then. Poverty has been reduced drastically and agricultural productivity has increased worldwide. Notwithstanding its progress, millions of people still do not have the certainty of one meal a day. Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2), Zero Hunger by 2030, is moving out of sight, partly because of senseless wars and conflicts are still destroying agrifood systems.

Since 1945, the root causes of hunger have multiplied, though. Economic crisis, the loss of biodiversity, climate change and pollution have added to the stress on our agrifood systems. Hence, constructive multilateral cooperation remains crucial in these times of global crisis. Together with many willing partners, the Kingdom of the Netherlands works hard to foster an inclusive and effective multilateral system.

We wish to protect it from forces that undermine the international legal order and human rights. We are committed to strengthening its institutions and promote a more representative, coherent, efficient and effective system that is fit for purpose. One indispensable element of this commitment is our investment in the human capacities of that system. After all, people are the most important building blocks of multilateralism.

Two years ago, the Netherlands was pleased to present Mr Hans Hoogeveen as a candidate for the position of Independent Chair of the FAO Council. After being elected, Mr Hoogeveen guided the Council through turbulent times, marked by geopolitical tensions, a global pandemic, and growing demands on FAO. Navigating the overfull calendar of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), consensus was reached on several important strategies, amongst others by means of informal meetings with Members.

As a liaison between FAO Management, technical committees, other institutions and Members, Mr Hoogeveen helped us to keep our eyes on the ball, the realization of the mandate of FAO. We are pleased to see that this resulted in a second term, and I would like to thank all Members for that trust in him.

Let me finish by conveying my sincerest congratulations to Mr Hoogeveen, and by wishing him all the best for the coming years.

**Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)**

On behalf of the Africa Regional Group, we extend our sincere congratulations on the re-appointment of Mr Hans Hoogeveen as the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC). During the first term as the Independent Chairperson, Mr Hoogeveen not only had to deal with sensitive matters impacting global food security, but also conducted numerous informal consultations to resolve matters before the Council.

The Africa Regional Group appreciated that these consultations were inclusive, candid, and open ended in nature, upholding rules-based multilateralism. This allowed the Council Members to express their respective positions in an atmosphere conducive to facilitating consensus on issues such as the code of conduct on voting and the restoration of voting rights, among others.

The Council meeting chaired by Mr Hoogeveen, and through his personal dedication and professionalism, managed to successfully conclude its work, thereby advancing FAO's programme of work within its strategic framework to the benefit of especially the developing Members.

In the next two years, the Africa Regional Group will continue to work constructively with Mr Hoogeveen and all the Council Members in advancing the agenda of the Council and to return to consensus decision-making on all items.

In conclusion, Chairperson, the Africa Regional Group also wishes to reiterate the importance of adhering to the principle of regional rotation when deciding on positions of the FAO Governing Council or governing bodies.

### **PRÉSIDENT**

Alors, je comprends que vous souhaitez pour plusieurs avoir l'occasion de remercier le Président Indépendant du Conseil (ICC), vous aurez certainement le temps de le faire de façon individuelle, mais on va quand même prendre quelques remerciements de groupe. Alors, j'apprécierais des remerciements qui sont brefs.

### **Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)**

En nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y sus 27 Estados Miembros quisiera felicitar al señor Hans Hoogeveen por su reelección como Presidente Independiente del Consejo (ICC). Queremos mostrar con ello nuestro agradecimiento por sus esfuerzos hechos durante su anterior mandato, especialmente tratando de lograr procesos que fueran inclusivos y la búsqueda de acuerdos. Esperamos que pueda dar continuidad a su duro trabajo con igual éxito. Para ello puede contar, Señor Hans Hoogeveen, con la colaboración y ayuda de la Unión Europea y de sus Estados Miembros para lograr todos nuestros objetivos comunes.

### **Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)**

The United States of America very much looks forward to working with the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) in his second term.

The United States of America would like to express our thanks to Mr Hans Hoogeveen for his work over the last biennium, helping Members achieve agreement on so many important issues including the strategies on climate change, science and innovation, the resolutions on the code of conduct for voting and the guidelines for the restoration of voting rights for Members in arrears, among many other discussions and decisions that we had over the past biennium.

Thank you, Mr Hoogeveen, and we look forward to working with you.

### **Mr Gerald Geoffrey MWELI (United Republic of Tanzania)**

On behalf of the United Republic of Tanzania, I join other Members by extending our heartfelt congratulations to Mr Hans Hoogeveen with the re-appointment of Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) for your victory. This is the recognition of your efficiency and dynamic leadership for the past two years. We are committing our support to you toward the achievement of the FAO Strategic Plan, and our national priorities with a focus of no one should be left behind. Congratulations, Mr Hoogeveen.

### **Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)**

On behalf of the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and my own country Sweden – we would like to congratulate you, Mr Hans Hoogeveen, on being elected for a second term as Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC).

During the past two years you have successfully guided us through the FAO Council meetings and facilitated informal consultations that helped us reach consensus on important matters such as the two strategies on climate and on science and innovation, and most recently facilitated discussions on the Programme of working budget that we are here to take a decision on this week.

We also appreciate all the hard work behind the scenes and for always being available to the membership. We look forward to continuing collaborating with you, and wish you all the best in the coming two years. You can count on the support of the Nordic countries.

### **Mr Zaid AL ANI (Iraq) (Original language Arabic)**

I would like to highlight Mr Hans Hoogeveen's efforts and his dealings with all countries - the countries in our region; our country's hope to have greater cooperation with FAO to achieve the goals

to be able to achieve food security and well-being for all of our peoples, and I hope that we are all able to do that and we can continue working as before.

**Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)**

Dearest Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), Israel is looking forward to working with you for another two successful years. You did great, you can count on us.

**Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)**

En representación del Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe deseo felicitar al Presidente Independiente del Consejo (ICC) por su reelección en este cargo. El Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe (GRULAC) aprecia y agradece todos sus esfuerzos, en particular encaminados a la búsqueda del consenso, por su gran liderazgo y dedicación. Puede contar con nuestro respaldo, apoyo en el desempeño de sus funciones durante los próximos dos años.

**Mr Defu GUANG (China) (Original language Chinese)**

I would like to congratulate the new elected Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) I am highly approved for your work in the last two years facing all sorts of challenges you have steered us through. Thank you so much. As you mentioned, we will focus on multilateralism and we will focus on the basic text of the FAO. We will continue to be a more inclusive and open organization and we will be able to help combat poverty and solving food crises.

**Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)**

To be brief, like other previous speakers, Japan wishes to congratulate Dr Hans Hoogeveen on his re-appointment as Independent Chairperson of FAO Council (ICC). Japan is sincerely looking forward to working closely with you.

**Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (San Marino)**

On behalf of the European Regional Group, we would like to join the other colleagues and welcome the elections of the Independent Chair for his second term. We would like to thank him for the excellent work during the first mandate in establishing informal consultation for reaching consensus on very important issues. We look forward to working with you, Mr Hoogeveen, and all the best for the second mandate.

**CHAIRPERSON**

This item is now concluded.

- Item 8. Election of Council Members**  
**Point 8. Élection des membres du Conseil**  
**Tema 8. Elección de miembros del Consejo**

**CHAIRPERSON**

We shall now proceed with the next item on the agenda, Item 8, *Election of Council Members*.

You have before you document *C2023/LIM/15*, the Third Report of the General Committee, which includes the vacancies for Council seats that exist, and the nominations for Council seats that the General Committee reviewed.

Paragraph 10(a) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization allows for the election of Council Members by clear general consent when the number of candidates is not more than the number of vacancies to be filled. I, therefore, suggest we carry out the election of the candidates by clear general consent when there are no more candidates than vacant seats for a region.

If no delegation wishes to make a comment or request clarification, we shall now proceed.

We will begin with Africa.

For the period from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference to 30 June 2024, there is one seat to be filled and the candidate is: Equatorial Guinea.

For the period from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference to 30 June 2026, there are four seats to be filled and the candidates are: Cameroon, Morocco, Lesotho and Uganda.

For the period from 1 July 2024 to the end of the 45th Session of the Conference, there are three seats to be filled and the candidates are: Burundi, Congo and Tanzania.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I assume that the Conference approves the proposed candidates for Africa?

It is so decided.

We now move on to Asia.

For the period from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference to 30 June 2026, there are three seats to be filled and we have three candidates: India, Pakistan and one joint candidacy of Thailand and Malaysia. The Conference is invited to note that the term of office of Thailand would be from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until 31 December 2024 and the term of office of Malaysia would be from 1 January 2025 until 30 June 2026.

For the period from 1 July 2024 until the end of the 45th Session of the Conference, there are six seats to be filled and six candidates as follows: Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines and the Republic of Korea.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I assume that the Conference approves the proposed candidates for Asia?

It is so decided.

We now move on to Europe.

For the period from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until 30 June 2026, there are four seats to be filled and four candidates: Italy and Norway and two joint candidacies of Georgia and Switzerland, and Spain together with the United Kingdom.

The Conference is invited to note that the term of office of Georgia would be from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until the end of the 44th Session of the Conference and the term of office of Switzerland would be from the end of the 44th Session of the Conference until 30 June 2026.

The Conference is further invited to note that under the joint application of Spain and the United Kingdom for one seat, the term of office for Spain would be from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until the end of the 44th Session of the Conference, and the term of office of the United Kingdom would be from the end of the 44th Session of the Conference until 30 June 2026.

For the period from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until 30 June 2024, there is one seat to be filled and one candidate: Croatia.

For the period from the end of the 43rd Session of the Conference until the end of the 44th Session of the Conference, there is one seat to be filled and one candidate: Lithuania.

For the period from 1 July 2024 until the end of the 45th Session of the Conference there are two seats to be filled and two candidates: France and Ukraine.

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I assume that the Conference approves the proposed candidates just outlined for Europe?

It is so decided.

Also for Europe, for the period from 1 July 2024 until the end of the 45th Session of the Conference, I would like to refer to document *C2023/INF/12 – Information Note on Election of Council Members*, which outlines the fact that for this period, there are three seats to be filled and we have four candidates: Croatia, Iceland, the Netherlands and the Russian Federation.

If no candidate wishes to withdraw, we shall proceed to a secret ballot.

I now pass the floor to the Elections Officer, who will run through the voting procedure and carry out the necessary quorum check.

### **ELECTIONS OFFICER**

The secret ballot voting procedure will elect three Members of the Council from the Europe region for the term of office from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2024 until the end of the 45th session of the Conference. We have four candidates for three vacancies to be filled. Candidates are Croatia, Iceland, the Netherlands, and the Russian Federation. In accordance with paragraph 10 (g) Rule XXII of the General Rules of the Organization, the three vacancies will be filled simultaneously in one election.

The voting procedure will be in full accordance with the basic text of FAO, including specifically paragraphs 10 and 12 of Rule XII, as well as in accordance with established practice. Before running through the voting procedures, I wish to remind all Members and delegates of the fundamental importance of complete secrecy of the ballot. I also wish to recall the obligation that all those responsible for the supervision of any vote by secret ballot shall not have to not disclose to any unauthorized person any information which might tend, or be presumed to tend, towards destroying the secrecy of the ballot.

Voting delegates will be asked to hand over at the entrance of the voting area electronic recording or communications appliances such as mobile phones and tablets. Electronic appliances will be kept under the supervision of a security guard and will be returned to the voting delegate at the exit of the voting area immediately after the delegate has deposited their ballot paper in the ballot box.

I will now describe the voting procedures. Delegates will be called one by one in alphabetical order, starting with the letter "A" to go to the voting area at the corner to my right. Delegates must bring their Conference registration pass to show to the teller at the entrance for identification. A ballot paper will then be issued by one of the two tellers.

The ballot paper contains the four candidates in this election, Croatia, Iceland, Netherlands, and Russian Federation in English, alphabetical order. Delegates are required to cast three votes for three different candidates as there are three vacancies in this election. Delegates are invited to mark the three candidates of their choice with an "X". I must stress the importance of delegates marking three candidates. Since ballot papers that show less or more than three votes shall be invalid. It is not possible to select only one or two or all four candidates of preference as three votes must be cast out of the four candidates for a ballot paper to be valid.

If a voting delegate, however, wishes to abstain from the vote, the ballot paper should be left blank entirely and no votes should be cast. It is also not possible to cast two votes and one abstention on one ballot paper. The only way to abstain in this vote is to leave the ballot paper entirely blank. The three candidates who receive the largest number of votes will be elected as Members of the Council provided they also reach the required majority of more than half of Members casting valid votes. As with other votes, the number of Members casting valid votes does not include abstentions or defective ballots.

Under paragraph 4 (c) of Rule XII of the General Rules, the ballot paper shall not carry any other notation or mark other than that required for the purpose of indicating the three votes as this would invalidate the ballot paper. Paragraph 10 of Rule XII states that should any delegate invalidate their ballot paper, they may request a new blank ballot paper from me, the elections officer in the voting area.

The invalidated ballot paper will remain in my custody. I should also like to remind delegates that in accordance with paragraph 14 of General Rule XII, once voting has commenced, no delegate or representative may interrupt the voting except to raise a point of order in connection with the vote.

As with the previous vote, before we proceed we must establish the quorum. Under General Rule XII, the quorum required for this election is a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization. That means that at least 98 Member Nations must be present at this time.

We will now establish that number. Each delegation of a Member Nation is again requested to press their touchscreens, that is the ribbon on the touchscreen that says, "Presence" in all languages. The electronic voting system can then verify the number of delegations present.

Please press the ribbon. Have all delegates present pressed the ribbon? I see. Thank you. The electronic voting system indicates that we have a presence of 149 delegations here. We can thus proceed to the vote. Before we open the vote I will repeat one more time that a valid ballot paper will either have zero votes or three votes. There is nothing in between.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

In accordance with paragraph 10(c)(i) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, the Chairperson appoints two tellers from the delegates or representatives. Accordingly, I have appointed Her Excellency Jackline Yonga, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kenya and His Excellency Miguel Jorge Garcia Winder, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico, as tellers for this election. May I now ask the tellers to make their way to the voting area.

#### **Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)**

Brazil, once again regrets the break with the established practice of this organization and the recourse to voting on an issue that should have been solved by regional consensus. This Conference is meeting in the shadow of a crisis that affects all countries, but especially developing ones. Where multiple factors breed hunger, poverty, and inequality.

Our attention must remain on facing these challenges of hunger, poverty, and equality, the core mandate of FAO. Diverting our focus we are failing those more than 800 million people that are facing hunger and food insecurity in developing and developed countries and moving away from the established practice and letting issues that fall well beyond our mandate divide us. Our organization is facing a serious risk of not being able to fulfill its mandate. Thank you.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

We take note of it. Thank you. Another request from the floor and when we start the vote, it would be limited to point of order.

#### **Sra. Haifa Aissami MADAH (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de)**

Al igual que lo ha hecho la distinguida delegación de Brasil, Venezuela lamenta las implicaciones que este precedente que está por ocurrir debido a la incapacidad de un grupo regional de alcanzar los consensos y respetar aquellos acuerdos ya alcanzados. Consideramos imperativo advertir y llamar a la reflexión de todos los colegas que están en esta sala sobre lo grave que implica el hecho de que los demás Estados Miembros decidamos quién va a representar a un grupo regional determinado.

Como lo hemos hecho a lo largo de todas nuestras intervenciones, y sin excepción, una vez más Venezuela llama a todos los Estados Miembros a reflexionar sobre la necesidad de no polarizar y no politizar los trabajos de nuestra organización. Cualquier consideración geopolítica está fuera del mandato de esta Organización y, por ello, exhortamos una vez más a detener esta escalada que no contribuye para la lucha contra el hambre en el mundo.

Agradeceríamos que, como aún no ha empezado la votación, ojalá pudiéramos nuevamente tener unos minutos que les permitan a todas las delegaciones sentarse a discutir y tratar de llegar a una fórmula de consenso privando y privilegiando los acuerdos dentro del seno del grupo regional que hoy se ve imposibilitado de hacerlo por consenso. Creo que aún hay tiempo y bien vale la pena aprovecharlo.

#### **Mr Ayman RAAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)**

I would like to join my voice to that of the Ambassador of Venezuela and the Ambassador of Brazil. It is indeed sad that we find ourselves within the Conference breaking rules and breaking standard procedures for political reasons. It is even worse that today and in this Conference, we try to politicize everything from the beginning while today in the world, there are millions of people who suffer from poverty and hunger. Millions of people who need help let us at least once stand boldly and let us

together put an end to this politicization so that politicization does not become a habit in this organization.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Merci, c'est noté. Conformément aux règles de l'Organisation, nous allons maintenant procéder avec le vote. Je demande à la Secrétaire Générale Adjointe d'appeler les pays.

*Vote*

*Vote*

*Votación*

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL**

I have concluded the second call, Madame Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON**

The voting has now concluded. I will ask the tellers to depart and count the ballots, and I will suspend the meeting while the vote is being counted.

*The meeting was suspended from 19:26 to 20:35 hours*

*La séance est suspendue de 19 h 26 à 20 h 35*

*Se suspende la sesión de las 19.26 a las 20.35*

**CHAIRPERSON**

Ladies and gentlemen, please return to your seats.

The voting has now concluded and we will now continue with Item 8, *Election of Council Members*. I will now read the results of the ballots.

Ballot papers deposited, 151. Members casting valid votes, 134. Abstentions, 16. Defective ballots, 1. Majority, 68. Elected Croatia with 130 votes, Netherlands with 122 votes, Iceland with 95 votes. Not Elected Russian Federation with 55 votes.

REPORT OF BALLOT RÉSULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACIÓN	<b>1</b>	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS ELECTION DES MEMBRES DU CONSEIL ELECCIÓN DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO	EUROPE 1 JULY 2024 - END OF 45 <sup>th</sup> SESSION
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1. Ballot papers deposited	<b>151</b>
2. Abstentions	<b>16</b>
3. Defective ballots	<b>1</b>

4. Members casting valid votes	<b>134</b>
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5. Majority	<b>68</b>
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Elected – Élu(s) – Elegido(s)		Not elected – Pas élu(s) – No elegido(s)		Eliminated – Eliminé(s) – Eliminado(s)	
Croatia	<b>130</b>	Russian Federation	<b>55</b>		
Netherlands	<b>122</b>				
Iceland	<b>95</b>				

## Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escuradores

Ms Jackline Yonga (Kenya)

Signature.....  
Date..... 06/07/2023

Mr Miguel Garcia Winder (Mexico)

Signature.....  
Date..... July 07th 2023

Mr Ilja Betlem, Elections Officer, FAO

Signature.....  
Date..... 6/7/2023



## CHAIRPERSON

We will now continue with the other regions so I would ask all the delegates to stay with us so we make sure we keep quorum and we have all the groups elected in the proper way. So we will now move on to Latin America and the Caribbean.

For the period from the end of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Conference to 30 June 2026, there is one seat to be filled and one candidate, Panama. From the period from 1 July 2024 until the end of the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference, there are three seats to be filled and three candidates; Chile, Guatemala, and a joint application by Ecuador and Peru for one of the seats.

The Conference is invited to note that Ecuador would occupy the seat from 1 July 2024 until 31 December 2025 and the term of the office of Peru would be from 1 January 2026 to the end of the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I assume that the Conference approves the proposed candidates for Latin America and the Caribbean? It is so decided.

We now move on to the Near East. For the period from the end of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Conference until the end of the 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference, there is one seat to be filled and one candidate, Sudan. For the period from the end of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Conference until 30 June 2026, there are three seats to be filled and three candidates; Afghanistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. For the period from 1 July 2024 until the end of the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference, there is one seat to be filled and one candidate, Kuwait.

May I assume that the Conference approves the proposed candidates for Near East? It is so decided.

Since there are no seats to be filled for North America, we now move on to Southwest Pacific. For the period from the end of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Conference to 30 June 2026, there is one seat to be filled and one candidate, Australia.

May I assume that the Conference approves the proposed candidate for Southwest Pacific? It is so decided.

May I congratulate the countries that have just been elected to Membership of the Council and take the opportunity to remind you that the 173<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Council will open on Monday 10 July at 09:30 hours here in the Plenary Hall.

Before you leave, should we confirm the time for tomorrow? We will reconvene tomorrow at 12:00 for the adoption of the final report.

This brings the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Conference to a close. I wish you all a good evening. And, sorry, I also just want to inform that the Africa Regional Group meeting will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. in the Ethiopia Room.

I have a request from the floor, the Russian Federation.

### **Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)**

Thank you, Madam President. I understand you have a reservation in the restaurant so I will not take a lot of your time so that you get very quick to the restaurant for your appetizer.

I just also want to congratulate all those countries that have been elected from all regional groups and I also want to congratulate the candidacy from the European Regional Group with one remark.

First of all, before the elections we had interventions by our distinguished colleagues from Brazil, from Venezuela, from Syrian Arab Republic, who noted to the fact that there was a formula that had been agreed in 2014 on the rotation basis and the rotation principle.

Of course, we also congratulate Iceland but we also want to stress that it was done in a way that violated this rotation scheme that was accepted by our predecessors in 2014 at the European Regional Group. So it means that no rotation scheme will exist any longer in the European Regional Group.

So each and every time that we will be sitting here in this forum, we will be electing or approving the decisions by the Council, each time it will be elected by the vote because there was a consensus and we now have a situation where the consensus is broken, and this is my deep, deep regret.

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON**

I will now call the Session closed and I will see you tomorrow at 12:00 hours.

*The meeting rose at 20:43 hours*

*La séance est levée à 20 h 43*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 20.43*



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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# CONFERENCE CONFERENCE CONFERENCIA

<p><b>Forty-third Session</b> <b>Quarante-troisième session</b> <b>43.º período de sesiones</b></p>
<p><b>Rome, 1-7 July 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 juillet 2023</b> <b>Rome, 1-7 de julio de 2023</b></p>
<p><b>TWELFTH PLENARY MEETING</b> <b>DOUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE</b> <b>DUODÉCIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA</b></p>
<p><b>7 July 2023</b></p>

The Twelfth Meeting was opened at 14:44 hours  
Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Chairperson of the Conference, presiding

La deuxième séance est ouverte à 14 h 44  
sous la présidence de Mme. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Président de la Conférence

Se abre la duodécima reunión a las 14.44  
bajo la presidencia de la Sra. Marie-Claude Bibeau,  
Presidente de la Conferencia

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**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT  
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT  
APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME**

**CHAIRPERSON**

I declare the 12th Plenary meeting open. Yesterday afternoon we adopted the Reports of Commission I and Commission II and this afternoon the Conference is invited to adopt the consolidated Report of the Conference.

Before we move to the adoption of the Report of the Conference, I wish to bring Members' attention to three documents circulated yesterday, *C 2023/INF/13*, *C 2023/INF/14* and *C 2023/INF/15*.

Document *C 2023/INF/13* contains a proposal received from the delegation of New Zealand containing text for inclusion in the Report of the Conference. Document *C 2023/INF/14* contains a text proposal for inclusion in the Report received from the delegation of Brazil. Document *C 2023/INF/15* contains text for inclusion in the Report from the delegation of Belarus.

At this juncture, I would like to ask the Conference if it agrees to the inclusion in the Report of the text contained in the three documents. This text would be included under Item 10, *Review of the State of Food and Agriculture*. Do Members agree to its inclusions?

**Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

Como se lo adelanté antes de la reunión, le dije que mi delegación preferiría no incluir ninguna de las tres propuestas porque para nosotros esas propuestas llegaron ya a un momento último de esta reunión en las cuales los temas que hemos discutido ya fueron acordados y plantear estas propuestas ahora para nosotros es sumamente incómodo, por lo tanto, no tenemos intención de que la Conferencia se demore y que tarde más tiempo.

Todos queremos irnos rápido y terminar esta semana, pero la verdad por más que haya muchos aplausos, la realidad es que todos los Miembros deben ser respetados en sus posiciones, por lo tanto, creo que los Miembros tienen el derecho a expresar claramente que estas propuestas como paquete, para nosotros no es aceptable. Nosotros creemos que tenemos que mantener el texto sin estas propuestas que no fueron discutidas durante las reuniones de las comisiones.

Algunos dirán que los tres textos en sí mismo son balanceados. Nosotros no tenemos, en particular, problemas con varias de las propuestas y, podríamos de alguna manera entrar en ver cómo mejorar algunos de esos párrafos, pero entendemos que para ser más prácticos es cuanto menos más. Lo menos es tratar de no incluir nada nuevo y mantenerlo tal cual como viene el *draft*. Por lo menos el *draft* que hemos acordado en la Comisión I y la Comisión II.

Entonces, Presidenta, le pido que por un segundo dejemos los aplausos de lado para ver si hay otros colegas que también tienen esta preocupación o simplemente fue que quizás me levanté con dolor de cabeza y por ahí se me ocurrió a mí que esto es un problema incómodo para algunas delegaciones.

**CHAIRPERSON**

I think we have few names. I will, obviously, listen to you and see if we do have a majority, a vast majority, from what I have heard, in support of the inclusion of the three proposals and if a few of you might eventually only would like to clarify their position in a footnote, for example, this is also a possibility.

**Ms Dilyara RAVILOVA-BOROVIK (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

Our delegation shares the viewpoint which was just shared by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Argentina. The delegations read through the texts. However, discussions of these texts and potential elements that might not satisfy some delegations were not conducted.

At the same time, we believe that the Session was very difficult. It was difficult for everyone and therefore, in order to ease the process of adopting the Report, our delegation is ready to adopt all three proposals as one batch, because with respect to the proposal by New Zealand, we actually have a

particular opinion of the proposal by New Zealand and we would like to have this opinion included as a reference to the corresponding Item, to the corresponding paragraph.

If this proposal as a whole is satisfactory to all delegations, I would be happy to share this reference for you.

**Her Excellency Angela Thoko DIDIZA (South Africa)**

The Africa Regional Group wishes to congratulate you for successfully managing a constructive and fruitful 43rd Conference. We have taken key decisions, not least the reappointment of the Director-General and the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and on a budget level for the next biennium. However, we regret that we needed to undertake a vote on filling the Council seats of one region. In addition, we regret to adopt *en bloc* three proposals for inclusion in the Report of the Conference without a substantive discussion on these conclusions.

The Africa Regional Group underlines the importance of reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in eradicating hunger. FAO is a key strategic partner for Africa in reaching this goal and we are dedicated in strengthening our cooperation with the Rome-based Agencies to this end.

Africa has placed a priority, among others, on blue transformation, water and livestock management and addressing the impact of climate change through adaptation and resilience to ensure food security.

Science and innovation is a key accelerator for agrifood systems transformation in Africa and in this context the concept of bioeconomy remains under consideration in Africa. The best approach is also to recall past Council decisions that unite us and to reaffirm that agricultural trade takes place consistent with the rules and objectives of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Africa Regional Group are not satisfied with these proposed texts for inclusion in our Conference Report. We would have wished for a more inclusive process to develop suitable language. Therefore, with these reservations, the Africa Group can join the consensus on the Report of the 43rd Conference, as proposed, and would support its adoption *en bloc*.

**CHAIRPERSON**

I just want to make sure that I got it right. I am taking note of your regret that we are at the stage of adopting these three without further conversation but, at the end of the day, for the sake of the Assembly, you would agree to support the inclusion of the three. Do you ask for a footnote or a reference?

**Her Excellency Angela Thoko DIDIZA (South Africa)**

You are correct in your summary. We would not ask for any footnote, but we wanted to state the reservations as stated in our statement so that Conference understand where we come from.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Your intervention will be in the Verbatim Records of the full Assembly, but not in the Report.

**Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)**

I appreciate the flexibility of so many colleagues in the room here today, and I want to make clear where the United States is as well. We have listened to our colleagues, both during Council and I think over the last week, including yesterday, so many who have said that we should step back and we should find consensus and a way forward.

With that in mind, the United States joins consensus on the *en bloc* adoption, as proposed by the Chairperson, the proposals from New Zealand, from Brazil, from Belarus. We support them all.

For us, no explanation of position, no dissociation. We are ready to take this action today and I would encourage others to do the same to show our solidarity and support of the FAO, to show our solidarity and support of Director-General QU Dongyu as he begins his second term, and in support of the lifesaving and vital work that the people of this organization do every day. The world deserves nothing less.

**His Excellency Rwamirama Bright KANYONTORE (Uganda)**

Uganda has serious concerns on the meeting for adding new issues to the Report for adoption. I guess there are many delegations here that would have loved to introduce new issues or expand on what was adopted from the Commission but Uganda is cognisant of the challenges that such new proposals pose at this level. However, they have refrained.

We implore all delegations that have sponsored these proposals to consider that we cannot consult our capitals in real time to get guidance on such proposals, including recognizing them as being part of the Conference. Let us not open a Pandora's box for Members to start introducing new ideas at the tail end of the Conference.

**Mr Robert BULAI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)**

Thank you for your support of our proposal. We had truly hoped that it would be acceptable to all. You are fully aware that some of the decisions mentioned in one of the proposals was something that we had not supported but we support the *en bloc* adoption and we will include a corresponding footnote with respect to New Zealand's proposal but we believe that we should not open a new can of worms and should adopt this *en bloc* so that we do not waste any more time.

**Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)**

Desde la Unión Europea y sus 27 Estados Miembros queremos sumarnos a esta opinión generalizada de la adopción *en bloc*.

**CHAIRPERSON**

For those Members who have reservations on inclusion of the three proposals, may I ask you whether you could join the consensus or if you would like to have your views reflected in the Report as a footnote and then referring to the Verbatim Records of the Conference?

**Ms Dilyara RAVILOVA-BOROVİK (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)**

The reflection of our position in the Verbatim Records of the Conference would not be sufficient for us. We hope that our position will be reflected in a footnote to the paragraph that will contain the text proposed by New Zealand. Our footnote will read as follows. This text is repeating a factual footnote which is contained in paragraph 31 at the moment and the footnote will also be labelled 31 with a few slight changes. It will read as follows:

***Continues in English***

*"The Russian Federation opposes the Conference endorsement of the decisions contained in the Report of the work of the 169th, 171st and 172nd Sessions of the FAO Council."*

***Continues in Russian***

I think that most delegations can understand the meaning of our footnote because these decisions were taken at these Sessions of the Council.

**CHAIRPERSON**

We have taken note of your remarks. It will be included as a minority view in a footnote in the Report.

**Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

Dos cuestiones. De las tres propuestas tenemos particular preocupación con algunas cuestiones vinculadas a la propuesta de Bielorrusia. Se la hicimos saber de manera bilateral porque así corresponde a los mecanismos de respeto que nosotros tenemos por cada uno de los Miembros. Entendemos la situación en la cual no hay manera de poder ahora discutir en detenimiento cada uno de esos puntos. Por lo tanto, por una parte, nos vamos a disociar de la segunda propuesta, la propuesta de Bielorrusia. En segundo lugar, siempre interpretamos que toda la cuestión vinculada a lo que íbamos a discutir hoy era lo que ya habíamos discutido en la Comisión I y la Comisión II. Estábamos leyendo el Reporte sobre el tema de las mesas sobre agua.

Para nosotros hay varios temas allí que requerirían tener que discutirlo y para nosotros es complicado y no queremos ser responsables de que la Conferencia termine la semana que viene. Pero también, entonces, por una cuestión preventiva también vamos a disociarnos.

Si el Reporte del agua no es un resumen del Chair —porque, repito, nosotros los Miembros no tuvimos participación en una negociación sobre un Report de cada una de las mesas, sino que los panelistas expresaron sus posiciones absolutamente en libertad y todos tomamos nota de las diferentes posiciones por parte de los panelitos. Y fueron mesas muy ricas e interesantes, pero en realidad cuando uno analiza o lee el Report, ahí hay un conjunto de elementos que, si son resúmenes del Chairperson, es una cuestión, pero si se incluyen dentro del Report es otra cuestión.

Yo quiero pedirle Presidenta si usted puede clarificar si lo que hemos recibido sobre el resumen sobre las cuestiones de las mesas está incluido en el Report o es un resumen del Chairperson. En caso de que no sea un resumen del Chair y esté incluido en el Report, Argentina también se va a disociar porque no tengo manera de poder consultar a mi capital sobre los contenidos de ese documento. Espero haber sido claro y estoy, obviamente, tratando de ser constructivo para facilitar la preocupación sobre los tiempos de culminación de este proceso.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

When you look at the Report which is the Report of Commission I and II, the actual Report of the Conference, the Roundtables are not reflected in this Report. It is additional information that we were able to share together. My understanding is that we will take note as a footnote of your dissociation from the proposal from Belarus. Is that okay?

#### **Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

En primer lugar. De acuerdo. Para poder desbloquear o para tratar de avanzar nosotros nos disociamos de la propuesta de Bielorrusia. Eso está claro el mensaje. La otra fue una pregunta a usted, Presidenta. Quería saber si lo que hemos recibido hoy sobre el tema de las mesas del agua, si eso es considerado un resumen de parte del Chairperson o es incorporado al Report. Porque si es incorporado al Report como el mismo documento de las Comisiones I y II, en todo caso tendremos que disociarnos porque no tengo tiempo ni manera de poder analizar este documento con mi capital.

No sé si está claro, Presidenta. Si es un resumen del Chairperson no es una decisión. Si es un documento que se incorpora al Report es una decisión de todos los Miembros. Esa es la diferencia técnica.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

The Report that we are adopting now does not include anything about the Roundtables. It is a separate document.

#### **Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

Argentina se disocia solamente del párrafo 26, aparte de la propuesta de Bielorrusia, del párrafo 26 del Report.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

It is noted, thank you.

#### **Sra. Haifa Aissami MADAH (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de)**

Mi delegación siempre ha defendido el consenso como la mejor fórmula para avanzar hacia los objetivos comunes. Y, en coherencia con esto, yo quisiera una vez escuchada con muchísima atención cada una de las intervenciones y las dificultades o reservas que puedan tener algunas delegaciones con respecto al lenguaje de las tres propuestas que fueron circuladas.

Yo me atrevería a plantearle una solicitud porque creo que quizás ayudaría un poco a tener una fotografía que nos tenga a todos a bordo. Y quizás si usted reformulara su pregunta y la pregunta fuese estamos dispuestos a adoptar el Reporte de esta Conferencia inicialmente circulado sin ningún añadido, yo estoy segura de que tendría un aplauso mucho más estruendoso que el que escuchamos en

el inicio. Y esto nos permitiría avanzar sin reservas y sin que dejemos a nadie atrás como dice el lema de esta Organización.

Porque si empezamos a discutir las últimas tres propuestas que se recibieron abrimos la caja de Pandora, como acertadamente dijo una delegación y cada quien a este árbol de navidad colocar una velita más. Así que yo, le pediría con todo el respeto que por favor reformule la pregunta porque la pregunta condiciona de alguna manera la respuesta y consulte a la sala si están dispuestos a adoptar el Reporte que inicialmente fue circulado sin añadiduras.

**Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)**

Australia joins others who have spoken before me today in demonstrating flexibility towards *en bloc* adoption. While Australia does not love all aspects of the three proposals before us, and perhaps would have suggestions on the content of the Report, we recognize the challenging circumstances in which we all conduct our work. Accordingly, Australia supports the *en bloc* adoption of the Conference Report and the three proposals, including, where necessary, with a footnote, as proposed by those delegations who require them, to facilitate this Conference concluding its work efficiently.

We thank those Members for their flexibility, their constructive approach and support as we enter a new biennium for the FAO and its important work to the world at large.

**CHAIRPERSON**

Therefore my understanding is that the Conference agrees to include the three proposals in the Report, including footnotes from Russian Federation, Argentina and Belarus. Do Members agree to its inclusion?

Thank you, it is so decided.

Then the text as contained in the three documents will be included in the Report of the 43rd Session of the Conference. We will now turn to the adoption of the Report of the Conference, which now includes these three text proposals just agreed and the three footnotes.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to propose that the Report of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference be adopted *en bloc*.

Thank you, it is so decided. It is a great moment.

I would like to thank all the officers of the Conference for their hard work which has ensured a successful session, including my Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission and the Drafting Committee, the Members of the General and Credentials Committees.

My thanks for the Director-General for his support to our proceeding and I am truly grateful to all of you and a special thanks to Mr Rakesh Muthoo, Ms Nadine Kayal and the whole team who worked so hard.

Thank you to all of you who have found a way forward to conclude this Conference on a positive note, while we are facing huge challenges in our world. Thank you very much. I think this Organization has an extraordinarily important mandate, to feed the world, nothing less. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I would like now to give the floor to our Director-General, Dr QU General.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, friends, first of all, I congratulate you, that together you have made a new historical record with an extraordinary successful Session of the FAO 43rd Ministerial Conference. I sincerely thank the Chairperson of the Conference, the Honourable and experienced Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau from Canada for her calm, professional, efficient and effective leadership of the Conference.

I also thank all the Members for the trust and empowerment you have placed in me to lead FAO for a second term by approving the 2024-25 budget proposal. It is not only a matter of money. More



importantly, you have shown your solidarity, humanity and passion to the world, to the people whom this Organization has served.

The Conference has also endorsed the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25. You can call this a historical step. For me, to be honest, it is a small step but it is a historical step as a 12-year cycle of flat nominal budget has ended with Members' approval of a 5.6 percent increase for costs.

Even, it is more important for a stronger political signal to the world as shown by your statements and by this budget approval, the importance of food and agriculture during the current global situation. The current prospects of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) achievement cannot be underestimated.

We will continue to work hard to deliver more and better results. I will play the role as head of this Organization neutrally, professionally and honestly. Members have reaffirmed the robust road map and action plan under the overall guidance of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and its strategic narrative of supporting the 2030 Agenda through the transformation of agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind.

Dear colleagues and friends, during this past week, I had the opportunity to host 56 bilateral meetings with Members, heads of delegations, high-level representatives, which reaffirmed and strengthened the fruitful collaboration we have at the country level, regional level and the global level.

Let us continue together to make every effort to serve the farmers of the world and to the best of our collective ability, especially at a local and regional level, and keep food and agriculture at the top of the global agenda through FAO, through its knowledge products, its platforms, like the World Food Forum (WFF), and a number of key initiatives.

I wish to thank my Core Leadership team and senior managers at Headquarters, regional and country for their support for their support during my first term, leading us to achieve an excellent 1.0 Vision during unprecedented global challenges.

I wish to thank all FAO employees for their passion, their loyalty and their unwavering efforts, working together to achieve FAO's mandate.

A new term has started with a new spirit, new energy and a new working style. Yesterday I had a coordination meeting with all the seniors already. That new working style I asked of them, it is driven by our common passion and common mandate, to transform global agrifood systems, to accelerate the rural development and to ensure food security and nutrition for all, leaving no one behind.

We need recovery from the pandemic and conflicts. We need to reform our system to feed the purpose. We need to rebuild the FAO network and capacity. We need a renaissance FAO for a better future. That is the four *Rs*. The Secretary-General of the Conference, he always said to me, like the *four betters*, now we have the four *Rs*. Remember, that is my real guideline for the next four years.

Let us roll up our sleeves and get this work done to reach an excellent 2.0 Vision. Thank you to all the delegates who have travelled from far to be with us this week here in Rome. I wish you safe travel home. For those remaining in the eternal city, I wish you an enjoyable summer season.

Before closing, I wish to congratulate Dr Hans Hoogeveen as Independent Chairperson of the Council for another two years' service with us. Let us work more coherently and more effectively for the people who need FAO most.

I thank you. Thank you very much.

#### **CHAIRPERSON**

On behalf of the Conference once again, I want to congratulate you on your re-election and I wish you every success as you continue to undertake your demanding task as the FAO Director-General.

**Mme Elissa GOLBERG (Canada)**

Je suis désolée de prendre la parole, j'avais essayé avant, et je n'aimerais pas prolonger les choses trop longtemps, mais ce serait important de vous remercier pour votre leadership en ce qui concerne cette Conférence. Vous avez fait preuve de force et de grâce. On est très reconnaissant. Nous étions fiers que vous étiez élue par la 43<sup>ème</sup> Conférence Canadienne. Donc, merci infiniment. Cette Conférence a discuté des questions très importantes et critiques pour la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde.

### ***Continues in English***

FAO's Constitution calls upon us, amongst other things, to ensure humanity's freedom from hunger and as Lester Pearson had said, as the Conference's first Chair, "*this is a bold aim, when it seeks to help nations to achieve freedom from want,*" and it is an enormous responsibility for us all. It is a time, therefore, we must work together to develop and implement innovative and inclusive solutions grounded in science and good public policy, something that you, Minister, have always said to us. And it has to be solutions that are impactful for people around the world and also for the planet.

We certainly have no option if we hope to achieve the aspirations identified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in this regard, Dr QU Dongyu, FAO is an essential actor and partner as we move forward together. This Conference has provided direction for our work over the course of the next biennium.

My delegation would simply like to conclude by thanking the Secretariat, including the interpreters, the technical staff, the election staff, the Assistant Secretary-General and the Secretary-General for their support in enabling a smooth delivery of this Conference, our first meeting in person since the enormous tragedy that was the global pandemic.

### **PRÉSIDENT**

Je dis souvent que ma plus grande force, c'est d'être bien entourée, et ça le prouve encore une fois, autant avec l'équipe Canada, qu'avec l'équipe FAO.

### **Ms Mercedita SOMBILLA (Philippines)**

On behalf of the Philippines and our Agriculture Minister, who is currently the President of the country, I would like to congratulate you, Agricultural Minister Ms Maria-Claude Bibeau, for ably chairing this 43rd FAO Conference and leaving us to deliver the very purpose of the sovereign governing body of the FAO, particularly to appoint the Director-General and the Independent Chairperson of the Conference, to elect the Council Members and, more importantly, to approve the budget of the Organization.

All these elements are key for FAO to deliver its mandate, to identify and formulate strategies, policies and best practices based on science for recommendations to Member Nations concerning questions relating to food and agriculture. We thank you, Vice-Chairpersons, Commission I and II Chairpersons, the Secretariat and all those who have supported you and the Membership in fulfilling the Conference mandate over this past week.

Once again the Philippines wishes to congratulate and extend best wishes to FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu and the Independent Chairperson of the Council, Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen for their re-election. May you both continue the outstanding work you have started in your first terms. Likewise, we also thank everyone and those participating online for supporting our Membership in the Council until the end of the 45th Session of the Conference in 2027.

We look forward to working with everyone to help our organization to empower the clientele that we serve to transform agrifood systems that will ensure the achievement of our Sustainable Development Goals. The Philippines wishes to continue forging cooperation with the FAO, the Membership and the UN partners to both agriculture productivity, food security and nutrition nationally and globally.

The Conference theme of water resources management reawakens in Member countries the need for more effective water governance and more integrated water management, considering water as a key input to agriculture. Failure to respond to water issues now will definitely result to failure in achieving the *four betters – better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life*, and just a while ago the Four Rs.

Allow me to conclude with an excerpt from our President and Agriculture Secretary, Ferdinand Marcos Junior's debut speech at the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly last year. "*We need to take concrete steps towards modern and resilient agriculture for food is not just a trade commodity, nor is it a just livelihood, it is an existential imperative and a moral one. It is the very basis of human security.*"

It has been a pleasure and honour to engage with you all this week towards this common cause of food security.

**PRÉSIDENT**

Mesdames et messieurs, je me permets de vous rappeler que la 173<sup>ème</sup> Session du Conseil de la FAO commencera lundi le 10 juillet à 9 h 30 dans la salle rouge, et je déclare maintenant la 43<sup>ème</sup> Session de la Conférence de la FAO terminée. Je vous souhaite un excellent week-end et un bon retour à la maison, merci.

*The meeting rose at 15:32 hours*

*La séance est levée à 15 h 32*

*Se levanta la sesión a las 15.32*