



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-second Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 12-15 October 2015

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CFS CHAIR

Distinguished Ministers,
Mr Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition, David Nabarro,
Mr Director- General of FAO, Jose Graziano da Silva,
Mr President of IFAD, Kanayo Nwanze,
Madam Executive Director of WFP, Ertharin Cousin,
Mr Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts,

Members of the Committee Bureau,
Member country representatives,

Members of the Advisory Group,
Members of the CFS Secretariat,
Honourable Delegates,

Today, I would like to reflect with you on a quote by Haile Gebrselassie, Ethiopian Olympic marathon Champion.

"When you run the marathon, you run against the distance, not against the other runners, and not against the time".

You can easily understand why I felt inspired!

For CFS and partners, the finishing line is at the horizon, and it has a name: Zero hunger. It has been set to 2030, in an unprecedented worldwide movement epitomized by the Sustainable Development Summit in New York two weeks ago.

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The distance from this line is still considerable: currently 793 million hungry people. But looking at the past two decades, even greater is the distance behind us.

When I say us, I mean all of us: as country representatives, Heads or staff of the United Nations, NGO workers, private sector companies, scientists, volunteers, students, citizens. We are running one single race, all together, to goal Zero Hunger.

As a marathon runner, I agree with Haile. As Chair of CFS, however, I have one objection. In our case, time matters; because every day lost in our fight against hunger and malnutrition costs humanity more than twenty thousand lives, and the dignity of so many more.

When you elected me to become CFS Chair, 2 years ago, I made four commitments.

First, I committed to keeping the momentum of the reformed CFS, after its promising start under the admirable steering of my predecessors.

Second, finding consensus, by listening to stakeholders, building bridges, and above all, setting a strong basis for trust and confidence.

Third, improving the efficiency of CFS processes everywhere possible, by focusing our discussions and resources on added value.

And last, I promised to deliver concrete results.

Today, I would like to thank all of you for what, together with you, we have achieved.

The RAI Principles, endorsed at CFS 41, are called to play a major role in leveraging the estimated \$265 billion needed each year to achieve sustainable agriculture and zero hunger by 2030.

The Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, submitted this year for your endorsement, has the potential to play a crucial part in linking humanitarian aid with development assistance and agricultural financing through partnerships, in the 21 countries currently in protracted crises worldwide. With positive impacts way beyond local borders, as we are experiencing worldwide over the last months.

The policy recommendations on food loss and waste in the context of sustainable food systems, and on sustainable fisheries, are widely referenced.

In the last 2 years, CFS has been represented and featured in all regions; and each time, with a substantive and frank dialogue with local multistakeholders.

In the Near East region, CFS and the RBA offices have convened multistakeholder workshops to progress the uptake of CFS decisions in the region.

CFS featured in specialized magazines, mainstream national newspapers, development websites, blogs... and of course, social media!

Friends; the visit of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to CFS multistakeholders, last May 2014, underlines, even more than the outstanding results we've reached together, the potential which leaders see in CFS, going forward.

Two weeks ago, I was invited by the President of the 70th General Assembly to participate, as CFS Chair, in the SDG Summit, and I was requested to share the "CFS story" on "Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions" to the more than 190 countries present.

Agenda 2030 is clear on how to "transform our world in the next 15 years": it will involve inclusiveness, a holistic approach, and shared responsibility.

And it explicitly recognizes CFS "for its important role and inclusive nature" in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

This represents a turning point for CFS.

In response to uneven progress in meeting the 2015 hunger targets, a new era opens for us all. CFS, in close collaboration with the Rome based agencies, must fully play its role in the implementation of Agenda 2030, and of all targets within its scope, including the crucial topic of nutrition. It has tremendous potential added value. You being here today in such large numbers, from diverse backgrounds, regions, generations, are the living proof.

The 2009 reform, and here again I would like to pay tribute to the visionaries involved at the time, some of whom are in this room today, has shaped and prepared CFS. There is no doubt today that CFS is “the most inclusive intergovernmental body to discuss global food security and nutrition issues”. And that as such, it offers a unique forum for the review and follow-up of progress on SDG implementation.

CFS has so much potential!

As an inclusive convener, gathering each year all the major global players on food security and nutrition. Including the most vulnerable and marginalized, who are rarely heard in the places where decisions are taken.

As an efficient policy-making body. Supported, upstream, by the excellence of complementary RBA technical expertise and independent scientific HLPE reports. And, downstream, again by the RBAs who put their operational capacity in support of countries that see the true potential of inclusive policy instruments and multistakeholder collaboration.

Through CFS policy instruments, addressing policy gaps or emerging issues, which are cross-cutting, holistic, multi-sectorial. They are a model for sustainable decision making.

However, this potential will not be fulfilled without political will, and hard work. And, also crucial, nothing will go forward without sufficient financial resources.

This morning, we are gathered not only to open the 42nd Session of the Committee on World Food Security Plenary. We are here to hear from you where you see CFS in five years. What role you see our CFS play in the global fight against food insecurity, malnutrition and unsustainable agriculture?

I look forward to hearing from you, which vision of CFS you will entrust to all of us for 2016 onward.

CFS is different. So let's go out there and make this difference!

Thank you.