



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-third Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 17-21 October 2016

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO

Your Excellency Ambassador Amira Gornass, Chair of the CFS;
Mr. Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of IFAD;
Ms. Elisabeth Rasmusson, who is representing the Executive Director of WFP;
Mr. Patrick Caron, Chair of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts;
Honourable Ministers;
Heads of Delegation;
Distinguished Participants and Observers;
Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is an honour to address you at the 43rd (forty- third) Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

It is an emblematic meeting. The CFS is turning 40 and we have many reasons to celebrate.

The latest developments in the international context have made the CFS increasingly important.

The 2030 Agenda places the eradication of hunger and all forms of malnutrition as a fundamental condition for sustainable development and for a more peaceful world.

And the Paris Agreement has definitely brought food security into the climate change agenda.

Let me quote the preamble of the Agreement: "the Parties recognize the importance of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change."

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This a clear recognition of what FAO has long been advocating: eradicating hunger, promoting sustainable agriculture and addressing climate change are just different facets of the same challenge. They have to be faced hand-in-hand.

This was the main message of World Food Day 2016 last Friday.

Later today, we are going to launch the SOFA 2016, which also addresses the relationships between food security and climate change.

The report presents possible solutions and highlights that all relevant stakeholders must join forces and work together. And this is where the CFS has a fundamental role to play.

Since its reform in 2009, the Committee has become the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform.

The SDGs call for extended partnerships. And the CFS represents a strong manifestation of inclusiveness and cooperation.

It brings together the expectations, concerns and interests of a wide range of diverse stakeholders.

If no one is to be left behind, all relevant actors need to be heard, especially those who normally find limited space in international meetings, such as civil society organizations and the private sector.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

When we talk about food security and nutrition, we cannot lose sight of the numbers.

Around 800 million people are chronically undernourished.

Another 2 billion suffer from some form of micronutrient deficiency. 160 (one hundred sixty) million children are stunting.

At the same time, 1.9 billion people are overweight, of which 600 million are obese.

This means that more than half of the world population suffer from one or more forms of malnutrition.

There is a clear failure of food systems to deliver healthy diets to people.

We need policy convergence. The CFS has a clear comparative advantage on achieving this.

It is very important that the CFS reaches consensus on policy recommendations for connecting smallholder farmers to markets.

These will encourage appropriate policies and practices in an environment of rapid transformations in agriculture.

FAO welcomes the CFS decision to contribute to on-going efforts to fight malnutrition, including in the context of the Decade of Action on Nutrition.

FAO and W-H-O have been mandated by the UN General Assembly to co-lead the implementation of the Decade, with the strong collaboration of IFAD and WFP.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The issue of livestock has been considered by the CFS for the first time since its reform. It is an important sector. Nearly 1.3 billion people rely on livestock for their livelihoods.

FAO has been acting as a convener for a multi-stakeholder partnership building a “Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock”.

FAO's Committee on Agriculture has addressed this issue and requested the Organization to play even a greater role. We count on CFS policy recommendations to leverage our work.

Also your deliberations on urbanization and rural transformation will be pivotal. These issues are on top of FAO's agenda as well.

FAO is contributing to the implementation of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and will actively participate in the HABITAT III Summit.

Last Friday, we hosted at FAO the Second Mayors Summit to evaluate progress of the Milan Pact and reinforce the importance of cities in building sustainable food systems and addressing climate change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, FAO is custodian for 21 indicators across six of the Sustainable Development Goals, and we are also involved in the monitoring of other indicators with other agencies.

Many of these indicators are new. FAO is developing the most appropriate statistical methodologies to measure and monitor them.

The Organization will assist countries in meeting these new requirements through statistical capacity development.

We will send a proposal to FAO Council next December to establish a new Office of Chief Statistician and also a Department on Climate Change.

Before concluding, let me reiterate that FAO is committed to continue to provide the best possible technical support to CFS.

You have a busy week, and I am looking forward to the outcome of your discussions.

Thank you for your attention.