



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

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

Rome, Italy, 17-21 October 2016

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CFS CHAIR

Mr Director- General of FAO, Jose Graziano da Silva,
Mr President of IFAD, Kanayo Nwanze,
Madam Assistant Executive Director of WFP, Ms Rasmusson,
Ministries,
Dr Patrick Caron, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts,
Excellencies,
Member Country Representatives,
CFS Multi-stakeholders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to CFS43!

I am very pleased to see so many of you (and thanks to our distinguished speakers for being with us).

Being here together we are strongly re-affirming the importance of food security and nutrition for fair and equal development and its centrality within the global development agenda.

Since its reform, CFS has taken a leading role in focusing worldwide attention towards food security and nutrition, not shying away even when the topics raised contentious issues and discussions became passionate.

On the contrary, CFS has used its inclusive multi-stakeholder platform and the solid scientific-evidence provided by the HLPE and the technical expertise of the three Rome-based Agencies, FAO,

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IFAD and WFP to reach consensus on how to address some complex topics that go to the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. Our practical policy recommendations can help our countries achieve zero hunger and address malnutrition in all its forms within our lifetime.

Our contribution is recognized in the UN resolution on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and most recently in the General Assembly resolution proclaiming the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.

This year we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of CFS. 40 years of hard work, ardent political discussions and successful deliberations – let's all applaud.

Looking back just over the past five years, I see major CFS policy products, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of land, fisheries and forests; the Principles for Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems and the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises. Each of them represents a groundbreaking global agreement in its own realm of application for the number of stakeholders involved and the inclusive approach that we followed.

The intersessional period that has just closed was another very productive one for the Committee, and I would not have expected anything different.

Our work on CFS contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development resulted in a proposal for how the Committee can meaningfully contribute to its effective implementation by country-led and collective efforts.

We have deliberated on how to improve smallholders' access to markets so as to maximize their potential to contribute to the fight against hunger and malnutrition and I expect those policy recommendations will be endorsed during this plenary.

You will also be called to endorse policy recommendations on "Sustainable Agricultural Development for food security and nutrition, what roles for livestock?", which are informed by the 10th HLPE report which was also delivered this year.

7 years after its reform, it is now time that we, the owners of CFS, take stock of what has been accomplished and decide what we want this Committee to be able to achieve in the future. For this reason in 2016 we have launched an independent evaluation, which will not be only looking into our past, but will also propose forward-looking recommendations that will enable us to respond even more effectively to the most pressing food security and nutrition challenges.

We need to ask ourselves: "How much am I ready to commit to bring this Committee to the next level?"

We also want to understand more about countries' experience in the use and application of CFS products, and that is why on Wednesday we will be having our first Global Thematic Event on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.

We have received over 60 contributions documenting experience and good practices on their application.

Such a high-number of submissions – and I am sure these are not all countries who have tried applying one part or another of the guidelines since they were endorsed in 2012 - tells us how important globally-agreed policy recommendations are for the promotion of better food security and nutrition policies at the national level!

Now, let me say something on the theme for our opening session of this 43rd session: "Sustainable Food Systems, Nutrition and Climate Change"

Building sustainable food systems is in essence working to achieve the food security and nutrition-related targets of the 2030 Agenda.

In the coming years, there will be many ways for us to contribute to the achievement of these global goals, for example providing our inclusive perspectives to the discussions at the next High-Level Political Forum or linking us to regional and national organizations that can support countries to implement CFS policies.

ICN2 and the Decade of Action on Nutrition are both signals of increased international momentum for tackling malnutrition in all its forms.

As CFS, we have a unique opportunity to use our global multi-stakeholder forum to enhance global policy coherence and promote better coordinated actions for improving nutrition for all. A new HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems is expected in October next year.

Finally, Climate Change. This is a topic which, together with food security, is in my heart. Agriculture-based economies like Sudan are at the mercy of this changing climate and unfortunately evidence is already telling us the huge and unsustainable impacts that 4 degrees global temperature increase would bring to food security and nutrition.

The Sahel region is drying out, uprooting livelihoods and forcing many people to move or migrate abroad abandoning agriculture and increasing food insecurity.

Earlier this year I was in New York for the signature of the Paris Climate Agreement and for the kick-off event of its implementation. While I was there I spoke to people about how climate change is a threat to food security and I advocated for policies that can safeguard agriculture and the universal right to food.

The nexus between sustainable food systems, nutrition, climate change and other development challenges is one that, I think, will be a recurring topic in CFS.

As I see, the coming years will be challenging and demanding for CFS. Thus, while consolidating our past achievements, we would also need to strive to increase our impact.

We should all reflect on how CFS could better fulfil its role and support our members to eliminate hunger and malnutrition.

The year 2030 is not far, so we must start acting now, make our engagement ever stronger and invest adequate resources if we want to succeed.

I hope, by the end of the week, many will have come to me to share their ideas.

Let us join forces and help hungry and malnourished people to have a better future for them and their offspring.

I wish all of us a successful CFS week!

Thank you!