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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Thirty-third Session

Rabat, the Kingdom of Morocco, 18-20 April 2024

**Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security
(CFS)**

His Excellency, Mr. Aziz Akhannouch, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco
FAO Director-General, Mr QU Dongyu,

Honorable Ministers, distinguished colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen,

As the Chair of the UN Committee on World Food Security, I am honored to speak to you today on this important occasion, the 33rd FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Kingdom of Morocco and all the organizers for their meticulous efforts in hosting this significant gathering.

I would also like to, again, express my gratitude to the Director-General of FAO, Mr. QU Dongyu, for this invitation and the privilege of engaging with you on the multidimensional nature of food insecurity and malnutrition.

The Committee on World Food Security, CFS, was established 50 years ago as a platform for intergovernmental coordination and as a standing committee of the FAO Council. The CFS currently comprises 141 member countries and, following reforms in 2009, also includes a wider range of Participants such as civil society and Indigenous Peoples, the private sector and international financial institutions, among others. It facilitates multi-stakeholder collaboration and global policy convergence in support of the progressive realization of the right to food in the context of national food security.

In the face of multiple challenges, the CFS plays three strategic roles. First, as a provider of policy guidance for countries and regions: CFS consolidates scientific evidence provided by its High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) to develop and facilitate multilateral agreement on policy recommendations and guidelines.

Second, as a collaborative platform: the CFS facilitates strategic coordination among the three Rome-based UN agencies (FAO, WFP and IFAD) and beyond, promoting synergies, resource optimization and multi-stakeholder participation in the area of food security and nutrition.

Third, as a dynamic knowledge exchange platform: the CFS fosters dialogue on regional and country-level efforts, enabling member countries to benefit from adapted policy guidance products and best practices.

[REGIONAL EXAMPLES]

Across the African region, there have been significant efforts to implement the CFS guidelines, with a particular focus on Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI). From 2017 to 2022, FAO led initiatives to empower youth in agriculture in 13 African countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda. This included capacity building and strategic planning. For example, initiatives in Mauritania and Tunisia since 2023 aimed to increase the effectiveness of business coaches and align support with global standards for responsible investment, highlighting the importance of empowering the next generation of agricultural leaders.

In December 2020, a Practical Handbook on Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) for its key use by African parliamentarians was launched in collaboration with the Pan-African Parliament, EALA and the ECOWAS Parliament, underscoring the commitment to sustainable and responsible agricultural investment and ensuring benefits for our communities and protecting our environment for the future.

Progress has also been made to improving tenure governance across sub-Saharan Africa, supported by FAO through the application of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT). Technical support was provided to 26 countries, focusing mostly on processes and methodologies for securing tenure rights of women, youth, indigenous peoples, on activities to support inclusive land reforms making use of the VGGT (in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo, Zimbabwe), on the modernization and digital transformation of land administration by piloting, and on mainstreaming the governance of tenure of land and other natural resources in economic poverty development, reduction and environmental sustainability and resilience initiatives.

In Sierra Leone, the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), supported by FAO's expertise starting in 2014, marks a shift towards a more inclusive, collaborative approach. This initiative highlights the power of a participatory framework in moving towards equitable and efficient land tenure governance. Sierra Leone's experience illustrates the importance of political support, partnerships, and empowering local communities, which have collectively fostered a strong national commitment to the process.

I would also like to share with you the commitment with the region shown by the UN Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), which play a pivotal role in global efforts to combat hunger and enhance food security. Operating within the framework of the CFS's Framework for Action (CFS-FFA), the RBA Resilience Initiative implemented during 2017-2021 serves as a prime example of how these agencies collaboratively work to fortify the resilience of agricultural livelihoods in conflict and crisis-affected areas.

With efforts designed for the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, and Somalia, the initiative underscores the importance of aligning with the CFS-FFA Principles, setting a precondition for enhancing food security and resilience among the most vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, in some of the world's most challenging environments. This strategic focus bridges humanitarian assistance with sustainable development, offering a model for comprehensive action in similar contexts.

Beyond these concrete examples, CFS provides a wide range of guidelines and policy recommendations aimed at being useful and applicable to policy makers while addressing the needs of implementers. These policy agreements cover a wide range of food security and nutrition issues, such as governance of tenure, gender equality and women's empowerment, youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, linking smallholder farmers to markets, ensuring food security in protracted crises and strengthening use and collection of food security and nutrition data, to name only a few.

At this critical juncture, the consideration and uptake of CFS products in the context of translating CAADP may significantly help enhance agricultural practices, policy coherence, and investment frameworks across Africa, thereby facilitating the attainment of the Malabo Declaration's goals.

I am grateful to Ambassador Josefa Sacko, in her capacity as Commissioner Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, for the invitation to me as the CFS Chairperson to form part of the Post-Malabo Agenda Development Steering Committee, which I have accepted with much appreciation. Please accept my assurances that the CFS will make a meaningful contribution, consistent with its mandate, to articulate how the CFS voluntary guidance instruments could contribute to the formulation of the strategic direction of the Post-Malabo Process.

[CLOSING]

In the spirit of cooperation, I urge all member countries to actively participate in the implementation of the recommendations made by this Committee into national strategies - together we can move forward to achieve our common goals.

To those countries that are not yet members of the Committee, I extend a warm invitation to join the CFS family. Your active participation and contributions are critical to shaping the global dialogue on food security and nutrition.

In closing, we would like to extend a warm invitation for our dear ministers, present here today, to participate in the high-level segment of the upcoming CFS 52 Plenary in October.

Our continued collaboration is essential to achieving regional and global goals to end hunger, poverty and malnutrition.

Thank you for your commitment and support,

Ambassador Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile

Chairperson

Committee on World Food Security