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# COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

## Fortieth Session

Rome, Italy, 7-11 October 2013

### STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

Mr Chairperson Yaya Olaniran,  
Members of the Committee Bureau,  
Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council Wilfred Ngirwa,  
Mr President of IFAD, Mr Kanayo Nwanze,  
Executive Director of WFP, Madam Ertharin Cousin,  
Professor Swaminathan, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts,  
Members of the Advisory Group,  
Distinguished Ministers,  
Honourable Delegates and Observers,  
Members of the joint Secretariat,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 40th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

The new hunger figures released a few days ago show that undernourishment continues to fall. The 2013 edition of the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) will be presented to you during the CFS, so let me just point out some numbers.

The latest estimates signal there are nearly 30 million less hungry people in the world in 2013, compared to last year. And we continue to progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal hunger target of reducing by half the proportion of the undernourished population between 1990 and 2015.

According to the latest estimates, the proportion of hungry people has fallen in the developing world from around 24 percent to 14 percent.

We have 815 days to bring this proportion down to 12 percent and meet the MDG hunger target.

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A lot still needs to be done, but there are many reasons to believe we can still make it. And hunger has continued to fall despite the difficult economic situation of the last few years.

During the last FAO Conference, we recognized 38 countries that had already reached the MDG hunger target. Now the number has gone up to 44.

And another 18 developing countries already had undernourishment rates below 5 percent in 1990. That means that 62 out of 128 countries, nearly half of the countries that we monitor, have reached the MDG hunger target.

You can choose how to look at it: whether the glass is half-full or half-empty. I see many challenges ahead of us, but also progress and successful experiences that we can build on.

62 countries are living proof that we can reach the MDG hunger target. In common, they have political commitment and actions that respond to local needs. They learn from and adapt successful experiences, and have a holistic approach to promoting food security, ranging from productive support to social protection.

FAO is fully engaged in this process, supporting nationally and regionally led processes and working in partnership with other development actors.

We are convinced that working together is the only way forward.

That is why we are strengthening our relationship with civil society, private sector, academia, producers and cooperatives and other development actors.

I also want to highlight the continuously growing collaboration among the Rome-based agencies FAO, IFAD and WFP. This cooperation ranges from field operations, strategic programming and administrative agreements.

All this helps us respond to calls for action such as the Zero Hunger Challenge launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Zero Hunger Challenge calls for something new, something bold, towards a decisive global commitment to end hunger, eliminate childhood stunting, make all food systems sustainable, eradicate rural poverty, and zero food waste and losses.

FAO is transforming itself to give a decisive contribution to the goal of a hunger-free and sustainable world.

We are doing this by:

- a) sharpening our priorities;
- b) focusing on results;
- c) strengthening our presence in the field;
- d) opening up to external partnerships;
- e) learning and sharing experiences;
- f) listening more and responding to what countries need;
- g) pursuing greater efficiency; and,
- h) directing all our efforts and resources to fulfil our mission.

This is not always an easy process, but it's a necessary one. And the support of our Members and our partners, and the certainty that this path leads to greater positive impacts on the lives of the hungry, gives us more than enough reasons to move ahead.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The results of the CFS reform are visible to the naked eye. More active and more inclusive, the CFS has tackled some key issues on the food security agenda.

A landmark in the Committee's activities was its endorsement last year of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure.

FAO is proud to have been a partner in the development and approval of these guidelines. And now we are actively assisting interested countries and regions in implementing them, with funding from Belgium, the European Union, France, Germany, Switzerland and IFAD.

This month we will hold the tenth regional and subregional workshop to disseminate the Voluntary Guidelines.

We are also preparing different technical guides to assist countries in specific areas. At this CFS, we will present the guide for forest tenure and development.

Our support to the Voluntary Guidelines is only one example of our commitment to help transform the Committee's recommendations into reality, acting as its executive arm.

And now the CFS has another important related challenge: to conduct the consultation on the principles of responsible agricultural investments.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I encourage Members and participants to engage in the policy dialogues taking place this week in a spirit of openness and I look forward to the outcome of your discussions.

Finally, I would like to thank the outgoing Chairperson of the High Level Panel of Experts, Professor Swaminathan, for his leadership in making the panel a key asset of the reformed CFS.

And to Ambassador Yaya Olaniran, who concludes his term as CFS Chairperson. Under his mandate, the CFS took important steps forward, including the approval of the Voluntary Guidelines.

To both of you, my thanks. And I look forward to continuing a constructive relationship with your successors.

And thank you very much to everyone attending this session. I am sure we will have fruitful debates.