

October 2013

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COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Fortieth Session

Rome, Italy, 7-11 October 2013

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

The world needs a strong and effective Committee on World Food Security. As the foremost global, multi-sector, food-security platform, the CFS supports our collective vision and our collective action.

Together, we shoulder an enormous responsibility, yet our burdens weigh nothing in comparison to the suffering of the 842 million chronically undernourished people depending on us to get it right.

Last year, at the CFS opening, I spoke about how we have never been more united in our commitment to the fight against hunger and of the crucial role of the revitalized CFS. Since then, progress has been made—not only in how we as agencies work together—but more importantly, progress has been made on our shared goal of eliminating hunger and chronic malnutrition.

As Director-General Graziano da Silva highlighted, and President Nwanze further explained, this year's jointly published SOFI offers us a bit of good news. The new numbers tell a story. The real cause for celebration is not the numbers themselves, however, it is the fact that the numbers prove irrefutably that we can achieve the goal of zero hunger.

The tools exist. The knowledge exists. But we lack the necessary global public will to support a sufficient and sustained investment. Achieving the goal of Zero Hunger will require a concerted sustained effort by all including government, the international community, private sector and civil society. The CFS, as the global platform for communicating on the issues of food security, must help generate and maintain this requisite concerted public will.

Importantly, the SOFI report also reminds us that in too many countries—and particularly the emerging economies—undernourishment and undernutrition coexist, creating a double-burden. And, in too many countries, rates of under-nutrition substantially exceed the actual prevalence of hunger. The SOFI also reported that one-in-four children under five—our next generation—are physically, mentally—and most importantly—permanently stunted.

As a global community, we recognize the importance of providing nutrition-enhancing interventions, particularly in the first 1,000 days of a child's life. Throughout our work at the CFS, we must provide the platform for dialogue on the issue of global nutrition, and also embrace the solutions put forward

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by the SUN, the SCN, REACH and the recently agreed upon UN Nutrition Network. This way, we can bring the unique benefits of the CFS' convening power to support the country-led strategies that are beginning to make a measurable difference to those children whose needs might otherwise go unmet.

Achieving the goal of no child stunted is a key pillar of the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge. Ensuring that no person goes undernourished and that food is 100 percent available-and-accessible is also a pillar of the Zero Hunger Challenge. I point out these two pillars particularly, because these are the two pillars where WFP can help lead. Yet, each pillar of the Zero Hunger Challenge provides each of our organizations with opportunities to lead. The Zero Hunger Challenge also provides an overarching vision that can support the work of the CFS as well. It offers us an achievable vision, if only we embrace the possibilities not by creating new platforms but rather by using our collective mandates to pursue, communicate and advocate the opportunity identified by each pillar.

Achieving these shared goals requires that we work together throughout the year in various forums at the global, regional and national level.

As we all agreed during the CFS reform process, a successful CFS is fundamental to the global coordination of the wider actions that allow people to realize their fundamental right to food and nutrition security.

This year's CFS agenda is again extensive, and each meeting, roundtable and work stream in this session supports the achievement of our common goal. This CFS includes challenging topics that require careful consideration. Honourable delegates, please allow me to say, it is important that every delegate here considers how the CFS goes beyond this annual opportunity to meet and—in the next five days—ponders the way forward of how your deliberations will provide more opportunities to achieving the goal of a food- and nutrition-secure world. The question is how do we ensure that the outcomes of our discussions provide the requisite information and support to those who are working at country level?

When this CFS examines the issues of protracted crisis, we must remember that conflict drives both hunger and poverty. The opposite is also the case; hunger and poverty can also drive conflict. We must identify solutions that will alleviate the heavy and worsening burden that undernutrition exacts on people who live in situations of protracted crisis. For example, in the 1970's just over 30 percent of the children in Yemen were stunted today almost 60 percent of the children suffer from the symptoms of stunting. The President of Yemen told me poverty and food security are bigger challenges for his country than those of security and politics. Without food security and nutrition, stability and development are impossible to achieve.

Again we all agree that social protection mechanisms and safety nets can provide a solid base to strengthen access to food for the most vulnerable suffering from the effects of protracted crisis. Also, we agree that broad-based partnerships that fully include civil society and the private sector are essential to achieving sustainable change through social protection. No single organization, no single government, and no single enterprise acting alone can resolve all the challenges that will eliminate the oxymoron of the protracted crisis.

We must ask whether the CFS should provide a voice to these challenges. And if so, how the CFS will provide voice to the challenges of the protracted crisis?

Distinguished delegates, WFP is fully committed to supporting the work of the CFS. We will continue to support the Committee's comprehensive approach to the issues of food security and nutrition. Solving hunger, food security and nutrition, requires a comprehensive, collective commitment.

We have just over 800 days to achieve the 2015 goal of halving hunger. Since the goal was set, progress has been made. The SOFI reports that progress is still ongoing. Let us not look singularly to post 2015 and miss any opportunity to achieve this existing goal. We must also move from commitment to action with urgency, and we must respond with activities that have both immediate and long-term impacts. We then must communicate our success with the same sense of urgency that we

communicate our challenges. We must increase global public engagement in support of a hunger free world.

In all of these areas and more, the CFS plays a catalytic role, by engaging with people, with governments, and with the international community. Let me close, by again stating you have the commitment of WFP to support the CFS; because, the world needs a strong, effective and vocal CFS.

Thank you.