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COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

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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 Luc Guyau
 Mr President of IFAD, Kanayo Nwanze
 Madam Executive Director of WFP, Ertharin Cousin,
 Professor Swaminathan, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts
 Members of the Advisory Group
 Distinguished Ministers
 Honorable Delegates and Observers
 Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to the 39th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

I want to start congratulating the European Union for the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition for its contribution to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.

This same spirit also drives the European Union in its support to global development, in particular to promote food security. FAO is proud to be your partner.

Ladies and gentlemen, today, there is new hope for world food security, but there also are many challenges ahead.

The new hunger figures show that we have made some progress in reducing the total number and proportion of hungry people.

Since you will discuss the State of Food Insecurity in the World this afternoon, let me only highlight a few points.

Globally, the number of hungry people fell by 132 million since 1990. The proportion of the hungry also fell. In the developing world, it went from 23.2 percent to 14.9 percent.

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This means that if we step up our efforts we can still reach the Millennium Development Goal target of halving the proportion of hungry people by 2015.

But not all is good news. We should be very concerned that hunger has risen in Africa and in the Near East. We need to concentrate our efforts in these two regions.

SOFI also shows that progress in reducing hunger has stalled since 2007.

Together, we are taking measures to counter this situation. At the global level, we need to continue strengthening the governance of food security.

The reformed Committee of World Food Security is the cornerstone of the new global governance that we are building together.

FAO is committed to help transform the CFS recommendations into concrete actions at the national level.

The “Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security,” endorsed this year by the CFS after a negotiating process that FAO started some three years ago, is an example of what this body can do.

As we move towards the national implementation of the Guidelines, the CFS takes on another challenge: the negotiations on principles for responsible agricultural investments.

I call on Governments, civil society and private sector to engage in this task with the same spirit that you showed in the debate on the governance guidelines.

In the next days the CFS will address other important issues.

You will discuss the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition. This is a living document that aims to support the CFS in realizing its vision and can help governments adopt best practices on food and nutrition security.

The CFS will also consider for endorsement an agenda for action on protracted crisis. It will discuss the new reports of the High Level Panel of Experts on food security and climate change; and social protection.

I also hope you have the opportunity to comment on the five strategic objectives that FAO is proposing to concentrate its work on, focusing in the eradication of hunger, promotion of food security and sustainable development.

These strategic objectives take into account the need for FAO to build meaningful partnerships and are being discussed by all FAO Governing Bodies and technical committees. Even though, the CFS is not an FAO committee, we think it is important to have your comments and inputs.

I also want to take this opportunity to stress the importance of collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP. We are working together not only because Members have asked us to, but because we are convinced that it is the only way forward.

Ladies and gentlemen, FAO is committed to the “Zero Hunger Challenge” launched by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the Rio+20 conference on sustainable development.

As we increase our efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goal for hunger reduction, let’s look beyond it, towards the total eradication of hunger.

Because, when it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number is “zero”.

The CFS is an integral part of this effort. You have a busy week ahead, discussing how to achieve a hunger-free world.

This is your meeting, but that is our shared dream. And, together, we can make it come true.

Thank you.