

**Statement of the Permanent Representative  
of the Federal Republic of Germany to FAO,  
Ambassador Thomas WRIESSNIG,  
at the 38<sup>th</sup> FAO Conference, FAO, Rome, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

- Honourable Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Colleagues,  
distinguished Delegates  
Director General,  
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- I am honoured to speak to you on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany. I am glad to convey my country's best wishes to the 38<sup>th</sup> FAO Conference.

The Federal Minister for Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection, Ms Ilse Aigner, who had planned to come to Rome and attend this important assembly, asked me to convey her best regards. She is convinced that this Conference will take crucial steps towards our common goals.

As current floods in Germany have reached a disastrous dimension and have caused severe problems for agriculture and people in the affected areas, Minister Aigner had to stay in Germany. She regrets this very much.

As Minister in charge of FAO, Ms Aigner is personally strongly committed to agriculture, food security and nutrition. The Federal Minister for Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection hosts the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin every year,

where FAO is an important strategic partner. In January 2013 many of you attended the GFFA and elaborated an important document to guide the discussions on responsible investments in agriculture (RAI).

In addition the Ministry hosted the "Policies against Hunger" conference last week, which discussed issues in the context of implementing the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests*.

*We very much appreciate FAO's commitment in assisting member countries to apply the Voluntary Guidelines.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

we fully support the FAO's commitment to contribute to the eradication of hunger. As the DG highlighted yesterday, feeding the people is not only a question of production but also one of providing access to food.

We generally support the DG's policy to make available FAO's experience in improving access to food and to cooperate with other UN agencies in this regard.

The State of Food and Agriculture 2013 reminds us that we have tremendous challenges ahead of us. By 2050 9.6 billion people need sufficient, nutritious and affordable food. Agriculture is key to tackling these challenges.

Firstly, we have to reverse the declining trend in productivity growth. Investment, research, innovation and improved access of farmers to knowledge and training are among the means to increase productivity.

Secondly, natural resources are scarce and in many cases degraded due to climate change, desertification and loss of biodiversity. Good governance and sustainable use of natural resources are of utmost importance.

Thirdly, poverty and hunger are widespread among food producers. It is therefore crucial to improve economic viability of farmers and rural areas.

Fourthly, we can no longer afford wastage of food and post-harvest losses. We need to substantially reduce waste and losses to save resources and provide food for the people.

These are areas and topics where FAO has a lot of experience and comparative advantage over other UN- organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
FAO enjoys an excellent reputation as the specialised UN-Agency for Food and Agriculture based on its core functions. They were confirmed by the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) and they have also been reinforced in the Director General's *Strategic Thinking Process*.

We strongly support FAO focusing on its technical expertise and knowledge, and promoting good practices available at country level.

We expect FAO to reaffirm its position as the main global player in the provision of public goods and policy advice in the areas of

food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

However this requires that –during the decentralisation process -  
FAO maintains sufficient resources and capacities at its  
headquarters.

While FAO is clearly one of the important actors in the fight  
against poverty (*new SO3*), its own comparative advantage -  
based on its core functions – lies in:

- its extensive experience in generating evidence-based policy  
advice;
- promoting research and knowledge sharing;
- cooperating with national authorities to develop capacities.

This also implicates that FAO has to coordinate its activities  
within the UN-system, in particular with the Rome-based-  
agencies (*RBA's*) in order to insure best delivery and most  
efficient use of resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

all of us are aware that one of the most important tasks of this  
Conference is to reach an agreement on the PWB 2014-15  
including a budget level acceptable to all of us.

We are confident that the good and trustful work between us will  
help to find a consensus with mutual respect for the expectations  
and constraints in our countries.

As stated by the Presidency of the European Union and many other delegations: we have to recall that many states are operating under very constrained fiscal circumstances, requiring the utmost responsibility and efficiency when it comes to public expenditure. Many of our countries are under strict instructions regarding public expenditure, both domestically and internationally.

In order to reach an agreement on an acceptable budget level we need further suggestions from the management where to make additional savings without jeopardising FAO's new orientation.

There should be more room for efficiency savings in the implementation of the programme of work as well as in the area of staff-related costs.

To be clear: we are in favour of FAO's new orientation but we see the need for a critical analysis of the programme of work as a whole identifying areas of lesser priority that should be de-emphasised

Let me finally raise three crucial cross-cutting aspects for FAO's work: the responsible use of natural resources, the principles of gender-equality and governance.

We expect that the management of FAO will give adequate attention to these issues as promised in the deliberations of the past few months.

The members of the governing bodies will surely keep an eye on this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Germany remains a reliable partner and supporter of FAO. We are strongly committed to the organisation's work at technical, scientific as well as at the political level.

We want to maintain a strong FAO which successfully uses its unique competences in the areas of nutrition, food and agriculture in the fight against hunger.

- Thank you very much for your attention.