

STATEMENT BY H.E. DANIEL CONSTANTIN
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Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director General,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to participate and speak to the Thirty-eight Session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

I take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. José Graziano da Silva, for his chairing of the first Conference as Director General of FAO. I wish Mr da Silva a lot of success in implementing a new level of development of FAO, based on his idea to focus on shared knowledge.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The agriculture and food security are facing serious challenges all over the world. There are almost one billion people suffering of hunger in the world and another one billion who are chronically under feed, the majority being women, children and smallholder farmers. As it has been widely reported by FAO, the global agriculture production must increase by 70% by 2050 in order to meet the demand of the 9 billion people.

Climate change, the reduction of fresh water and severe limitation of the soil resources make this goal very difficult to reach.

The international situation of food demand, availability and sustainable development of the agricultural sector is often debated in different forums and the need to be better prepared and to ensure food security should be addressed by the decision makers in designing future policies.

Agriculture, due to its specific nature, is one of the sectors most affected by climate changes and as a consequence the food security is also affected.

That is why I consider agricultural policy as a key mechanism in addressing food security, poverty, climate changes and sustainable development of rural areas.

Today, we are witnessing a paradox - someone's efforts to achieve growth may conduct to someone else's poverty. This way, it is obvious that we have a common responsibility in finding a solution to this problem.

Also, RO considers that it is important to support the creation of a sustainable food system, capable to address the need of an adequate development of rural areas and food security.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

An essential role in food security can and has to be played by small scale agriculture, a resource that is not cherished enough and which should be a significant food supplier on the market.

Definitely, this type of agriculture can better meet local market demands , but regrettably, this opportunity has not been properly addressed by our rural development programs.

Small and medium size farms should be supported considering their important role in implementing environment friendly agricultural techniques that can provide for quality products, knowing their contribution to the preservation of the vivid rural areas.

It is true that modern technologies will allow us to increase agricultural production, but it is equally important to better manage our resources in a balanced way so that we can **think globally and act locally**.

I do believe that we have to strongly support the small and medium agriculture by recognising its key role in the rural development programs. Small and medium agriculture involves a big number of farmers, mostly in countries that do not have enough food; it should be our goal to improve their access to knowledge and markets, to achieve sustainable development of these areas, which could reduce hunger in the world.

Therefore, big agriculture **MUST COEXIST** with small and medium agriculture, both in terms of farming and markets, while technological and economic research have to come up with clear solutions.

Local food systems also stimulate local economies – small and medium size farms – many times family farms - can build a network capable to organise production-distribution chains offering their products direct to consumer markets or direct to retail, even to local institutions, local restaurants or hotels - generating jobs.

Farm products - generally processed on the farm or with the help of a small processor, are transported over shorter distances, offering to the consumer “fresh” products compared to the industrial food system which implies high energy and fuel consumption due to long transport distances, storing, freezing, packing, etc.

Local food chain can also offer a diversified range of products, their taste varying due to traditional recipes, high natural value, etc.

The creation of relationships between farmers and their urban customers through direct to consumer markets can help farmers to preserve their land, to protect their family, to maintain the population in the rural areas.

I would also like to refer to innovation. Without innovation the world will not be able to produce enough food to meet the increasing needs of the population and to better protect the environment. In this respect, we need intelligent support policies for farmers, a more developed transportation system, modern storing devices, etc.

The theme for this Conference and the latest State of Food and Agriculture Report is Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition. This goal is in line with the efforts of the Government of Romania to accelerate the need of sustainable productivity growth in agriculture and recognize the special importance of enhancing productivity in smallholder farming.

Romania participates for the first time as an EU member state in the reform process of the Common Agriculture Policy. The new CAP aims at implementing sustainable agricultural practices, as well as rural development policies adapted to the diversity of local challenges. At the same time, it is necessary to create some reactive market management instruments adjusted to the variety of sectors and territories, with a better and more responsible involvement of farmers and their organizations.

A priority for the next period it is to strengthen the farmers' position within the food chain and to develop the capacity to face crisis.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to inform this Conference that Romania has the honour to host the Thirty-eight Session of the European Commission on Agriculture, the Twenty-nine Regional FAO Conference for Europe, and the meeting of NGOs and the Civil Society Organization for Europe Bucharest, in April 2014.

I invite all of you in Romania, Ministers of Agriculture of Europe and Central Asian Region. You'll have the opportunity to see our achievements and progress in agriculture and you'll take advantage of our hospitality, including tasting excellent food and wines.

Thank you very much for your attention.