

[Transcription from Arabic]

Statement delivered by His Excellency Ahmed Hassan Gabobe, Minister for Agriculture of Somalia, on the occasion of the 39th FAO Conference, Rome, 6-13 June 2015

In the name of God, the Merciful, Compassionate.

Mister Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Director-General, His Excellency Mr Graziano da Silva, on his re-election to the head of this new session of the Organization and this Conference. The Director-General has received unprecedented support, which reflects the gratitude towards all of the efforts which he has deployed to make sure that this Organization and this Conference would be productive and will continue to do so during his next mandate. The Director-General, as well as his team, have carried out some deep-rooted reforms within this Organization since 2012. The Organization now has a much higher profile since it has been able to decentralize its work more than in the past. The Organization is now emphasizing results.

The Government of Somalia supports the Programme of Work and Budget for 2016-2017. We welcome the priorities which have been singled out in the area of work, nutrition, in social protection, and to combat climate change. We also welcome the increased attention that we've seen towards South-South Cooperation. The government of my country also welcomes the decentralization in the work of this Organization. This decentralization will make sure that we are able to implement our technical work so that the states and the poor are all able to benefit from our actions. We are also expecting quite a bit of work to take place in the Regional and Sub-Regional levels.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The international community and international organizations were enormously generous after the famine which hit our country in 2011 and we will remain forever grateful to the international community and the international organizations. FAO's emergency work in Somalia has made an enormous difference. Unfortunately, there are still millions of people who remain highly vulnerable, especially to climate shock. Just a few centimeters less rain could plunge hundreds of thousands of people into severe food insecurity. We are struggling to build capacity of our public institutions when faced with this protracted crisis and we are trying to deal with the enormous and unacceptable levels of food insecurity. We must continue to build strong, resilient communities so as to be able to provide vital services.

My Ministry unfortunately does not have the capacity or expertise to be able to provide these services so as to enhance food security and eradicate poverty. Agriculture as well as other sectors must expand and flourish and we must continue to foster the private sector so as to allow markets to function and to grow.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We cannot fully and only rely upon the generosity of international partners forever. We must be able to

depend on our own resources and strengthen our own capacity so as to provide these services to our people, so as to avoid the scourge of famine.

We of course need the support of international partners for longer term development because only that can bring us wealth and prosperity and eradicate famine once and for all.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Somalia is not always an easy place to live and to work. Let me give you an example: in April, a suicide bomb attack took place and cost the lives of four UNICEF staff, and three local guards lost their lives as well. Recently, this Organization lost two of its staff members, Yahir and José, and only last week a Senior International Consultant passed away in Somalia while working there. I would like to take this opportunity to honor the memory of these people and to thank the FAO and other partners for their considerable efforts to work in partnership with the federal government of Somalia to improve the lives of poor and vulnerable people throughout the country.

I would like to express my full support to the Director-General as he embarks on his new mandate.

Somalia has lived through one of the worst possible famines over the last few years and we would like to reaffirm the commitment of the entire region of Africa to eradicate hunger by 2024.

I pray to God that our meeting be productive and successful and thank you for your attention.