

41st FAO CONFERENCE - Item 13
CFS CHAIR MARIO ARVELO
24 June 2019

1. Chair, Ministers, colleagues: it is an honour to address the 41st Conference of FAO as Chair of the Committee on World Food Security, the CFS.
2. This is a very special year for the Committee, as we celebrate forty-five years since its creation and ten since its reform.
3. In 1974, the international community was overwhelmed by a food security crisis triggered by the global financial crisis.
4. FAO convened the first World Food Conference —held in this house in November of that year— to address the outbreak of famines and the imminent risk of widespread starvation, stemming from uncertainties around oil trade and the eruption of armed conflicts.
5. Both CFS and the International Fund for Agricultural Development emerged from that Conference, which began to shape a UN-based network for preventing and responding to global food crises.
6. Ten years ago, in the wake of yet another large-scale financial breakdown, FAO member States agreed to revolutionize the CFS, broadening its pillars to bring the other Rome-based agencies —IFAD and the World Food Programme— as equal partners.
7. While reaffirming its intergovernmental nature, CFS became a multi-stakeholder platform, opening its doors to civil society organizations, the private sector, other UN agencies such as the World Health Organization, research centres, philanthropic entities and many other key development partners.
8. A High Level Panel of Experts was also established, to provide science-based knowledge to inform the Committee's deliberations and decision-making towards policy coherence and convergence.
9. In these forty-five years —and especially in the decade post-reform— CFS has produced voluntary guidelines on the right to food, and on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests; the principles for responsible investments in agriculture; a Framework for Action in Protracted Crises...

10. ...and 14 sets of policy recommendations on a wide range of relevant topics, from food loss and waste to the challenges of climate change —which have been steadily improving the lives of the most food insecure as the Committee makes substantive contributions towards zero hunger and the other goals of the 2030 Agenda.
11. CFS 44 produced policy recommendations on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition, complementing the UN strategic plan for forests.
12. The plenary called on all stakeholders to implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, with a focus on Recommendation 34 on the rights of rural women.
13. The forty-fifth plenary approved terms of reference for what may well be the most ambitious CFS undertaking so far: negotiating voluntary guidelines on nutrition and food systems, for approval in October 2020.
14. The High Level Panel report on this extremely complex subject is already considered a splendid global public good and is being referenced in a growing number of peer-reviewed papers.
15. CFS 46, to take place in this house in less than four months —from 14 to 18 October— will continue fostering uptake, follow-up, and sharing of experiences and good practices on the use and application of Committee products, reviewing their impact on the fight against hunger and all forms of malnutrition.
16. In particular, we will monitor CFS policy recommendations on smallholder agriculture, as we address the Committee's contribution to the UN Decade of Action on Family Farming, which was launched last month here at FAO.
17. CFS 46 will also approve a four-year programme of work; on-going negotiations indicate that the membership possibly will embark upon four major areas: gender, youth, inequalities, and data, including collection and analysis.
18. I am pleased to convey that the Committee on World Food Security is living up to its creed and conviction of inclusiveness, as the most open and transparent platform in the international system: FAO, IFAD and WFP have agreed to become *ex-officio* and *extra-quota* members of the Advisory Group to the CFS Bureau.
19. This means that the three Rome-based agencies will be permanent members of the Advisory Group, and that the elected seats they occupied will be available for reallocation to other stakeholders devoted to the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

20. This innovation is especially welcome because the 2009 reform could not have included structures that had not yet emerged, such as parliamentary fronts against hunger and regional secretariats for social protection.
21. Others along the value chain, including farmers groups and small and medium enterprises are also missing from the Advisory Group.
22. Chair, Excellencies: I would like to conclude by referring to the most recent report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world —mentioned this morning by Director General Graziano— and reflecting on the birth of CFS and the Committee's responsibility in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.
23. The 2018 SOFI report says that the number of people who cannot reliably produce or buy food is growing: one in nine of our brothers and sisters have not eaten today, and do not know where their next meal is going to come from.
24. The vast majority of the hungry and malnourished are —as we all know— women and children across the so-called Global South.
25. SOFI —published jointly by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO— also says that the main drivers of hunger and malnutrition are man-made armed conflicts and climate change, and the migration flows they generate.
26. Forty-five years ago, our predecessors in government created CFS in response to man-made crises that were spinning out of control.
27. Looking ahead, we will continue to strengthen the Committee's performance, rationalizing its work and budget, with renewed commitment from all its members.
28. Do come to the forty-sixth CFS session in October: only working together can we make hunger history. Thank you.