

His Excellency Juma Bin Ahmed Alkaabi

Minister for Municipalities and Agriculture Affairs and Urban Planning of the Kingdom of Bahrain

In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate, Your Excellency Chairperson of the Conference, Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council, Mr Director-General of FAO, Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is indeed a pleasure for me to take part in this Conference and to convey to you the greetings of His Majesty King Shaikh Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifa, the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, May God protect him, and also the greetings of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, the Prime Minister, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Heir apparent and First Deputy Prime Minister, as well as their wishes for a very successful Conference and their hope that it will contribute to achieving food security for all.

I would also like to thank FAO represented by its Director-General for the kind invitation to participate in this Conference and for the excellent organization to ensure the success of this Conference.

Mr Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen, food security and nutrition are important strategic objectives that countries are trying to achieve and this undoubtedly will lead to sustainable agricultural development. This Conference is being held while we are facing many challenges. The increase in the number of undernourished people to 12.5% of the under nourished people according to FAO estimates, although this figure was 50% in 1947 total population of the world and now it is 12.5%. This is a substantial achievement by the Organization and the international community, but still there are 868 million people suffering from undernourishment in the world.

In spite of the great efforts made by FAO through its support to Member Nations in the form of programmes and projects in different fields of agriculture in order to achieve food security and improving nutrition, but still the current situation witnessed by the world is characterized by food shortages. People are trying to produce biofuel from crops, but they have problems linked to climate change, disasters and the new patterns of consumption, the new challenges posed by international and commercial and the pressure being put on natural resources. The International Committee is doing everything it can in order to plug these gaps and to make use of the new technologies so that these efforts will be sustained. Also the use of the negative impact of some markets and to find new market structures that will be sustainable and that will encourage farmers to adopt the new technologies that will inevitably lead to the productivity and production.

Mr Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Arab countries have endeavoured to enhance food security through a common agricultural development strategy that will achieve food for all their citizens and this will be in conformity with the international efforts. In this respect, I would like to refer in particular to the Arab Declaration which focuses on the creation, production, and also refer to the Arab emergency plan which has been achieved or adopted by the Arab Socio-Economic Summit held in Kuwait in January 2009.

Bahrain, in this respect, has been doing everything it can in order to develop an agricultural sector and this will be, of course, a push to our development. We have a vision for this until 2030 which has been adopted by the leadership to provide decent lives for the Bahrain citizens while using our agricultural capabilities and making use of the technology and the assistance provided by our friends in international organizations so that we can achieve sustainable agricultural development.

The Kingdom, also within the group of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries is working in order to achieve food security and a decent life for the citizens. We, in the Kingdom of Bahrain, are committed to implementing the reform laws that seek to achieve food security in addition to the agreements and memorandum of understanding signed by the Kingdom of Bahrain as some Arab countries in the field of agriculture. We have of course joined a number of international organizations in this respect.

The Kingdom of Bahrain within its agricultural development strategy has been trying to achieve self-sufficiency in some foods and to diversify its imports in order to achieve food security. We also implemented a number of measures that would lead to food security, like increasing the animal and plant production, encouraging investment in agriculture, aquaculture, providing help to smallholders and breeders establishing incubators and also providing market facilities for the products.

We also encourage the private sector to play an important role in improving agriculture and to achieve food security. In addition to the direct launch and support of some staple foods, we have provided sixty million dinars every year and this of course is part of the efforts done by the country in order to achieve food security.

Bahrain has organized in 2010-2012, two International Exhibitions in the field of animal production under the auspices of the Kingdom of Bahrain. This of course is our contribution to the efforts made by the international governments in order to exchange expertise that will lead to the strengthening the animal production and the use of techniques and technologies. This exhibition will be held regularly every two years.

In this Conference, we are discussing the efforts made by this Organization in the agenda field and we, in this respect, would like to pay tribute to the efforts made in order to achieve food security. We would like to say that the ex-Majesty, the First Lady, and the Head of the High Council, provided support for the agricultural sector and the animal sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Mr. Chairperson, through this Conference, we look forward to revising the overall Strategic Framework for agriculture and the adoption of the Plan of Action 2014-17 which places the priorities for common actions in order to achieve the Strategic Objectives that will lead to a sustainable food system by also achieving sustainable agricultural development. This, of course, will go a long way towards eliminating malnutrition and will lead to more sustainable agricultural systems that will be used on the national and the international level. We also look forward to the attainable line, and the indicators that will be used to measure the progress made.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for inviting us to take part in this Conference which we hope will represent a new beginning for our common efforts to achieve food security and overcoming malnutrition. We would like to thank you for giving us the floor to deliver this statement and to also extend our thanks to the distinguished participants.

May God guide all of us in the right and successful path.

Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings.