

Thirty-eighth Session of the FAO Conference

His Excellency Amr Mostafa Kamal Helmy

Ambassador Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to FAO:

Mr Chairman. Allow me, at the outset, to convey the greetings of His Excellency Dr Ahmed Mahmoud Ali El-Gizawi, the Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of Egypt.

Dr El-Gizawi was looking forward to taking part in this important meeting; however he could not, due to some urgent and emergency engagement. I would like, first of all, to convey my congratulations to His Excellency Minister Mohammad Asif Rahimi for chairing the 38th Session of this Conference, and I wish him all success in running the events of this important Session.

I would like also to convey my greetings to the FAO, at the top of which comes Mr. José Graziano da Silva, in recognition of the great efforts exerted for the preparation of this important meeting.

Mr Chairman, the issue of food security is a national commitment in the first place. Based on this, Egypt has adopted a number of important policies in order to face the issue and the crisis of food security. In particular, the price rise of food commodities that contributed to the increase of expenditures of livelihood. In this regard, Egypt has adopted a strategy for sustainable development including the following main points:

- the development of water resources and their management,
- the development of research as well as agricultural extension,
- the support and development of internal and external marketing mechanisms for agricultural products and,
- the increase of the yield and of the productivity to reduce all the wastes and losses that came as a result of the marketing system to rationalize food consumption and to carry out important institutional reform.

We are also aiming at increasing the investment directed to agricultural sector while paying more attention to the small enterprises and the micro-enterprises in rural areas.

We would like to indicate that we are carrying out a number of procedures in order to expand social safety network while focusing on small holders and small producers within the framework of the rural development strategy in Egypt.

This would contribute to provide more job opportunities to the small farmers in order to secure decent income to them, to support human resources as well as supporting the rural infrastructures and all the services that are rendered to them.

This also includes improving the road network and the storage capacity, improving irrigation systems and carrying out reform in the field of agricultural extension and technical education.

We are also aiming at increasing the investments on technology and the scientific research. Egypt has supported more investment in the field of agricultural sector in order to provide additional resources for investment in agricultural infrastructure.

Mr Chairman, allow me first of all to highlight the fact that Egypt has nominated itself in order to renew its Membership at the FAO Council during the elections that will be held on the sidelines of this session.

This decision came out of Egypt's keenness to continue its pioneering role as well as its contributions in the activities of this esteemed international Organization. Egypt has the support of the Arab League as well as the African Union.

I would like in this regard to pay tribute to the strong ties between Egypt and FAO. Especially within the framework that Egypt is hosting the Regional Office of the FAO in addition to the FAO of the Near Middle East Office. This Office is supervising the implementation of all projects that are within the framework of the Technical Cooperation Programme with the countries of the region. These projects include the following: the agricultural pest control project, the plan of action in order to control the trans-boundary animal diseases, as well as the project for the promotion of fisheries in East Mediterranean.

I should like in this regard to pay tribute to the role played by the FAO in organizing the High-Level Forum on means to promote the food security issue in Egypt. This will be held on the 27 of June in Egypt under the sponsorship of the FAO, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and in coordination with Egypt as well as other businessmen and the stakeholders, including small farmers' societies.

We do hope that this meeting will be successful. This meeting will focus on the concept of partnership between the private and public sector being the main means in order to improve the environment of investment in Egypt and abroad in this sector. It will also discuss the role that the international financial institutions could play in order to support this type of investment in Egypt.

The Government of Egypt is attaching the greatest importance to the discussions and debates of this meeting on how to reduce the post-harvest losses, and this can be taken as one successful example of cooperation between Egypt, FAO and the World Food Programme, and it comes within the framework of the FAO commitment according to the recommendations of the Near East Regional Conference.

Mr Chairman, the achievement of sustainable agricultural development needs more international cooperation. Not a single country by itself can control these important challenges that we are facing, especially when it comes to the food and nutrition issues.

Based on this, Egypt is seeking to expand its external and foreign cooperation with all countries in the field of agricultural development, especially on the African continent and with the countries of the Nile basin.

Mr. Chairman, I do wish that this Session will result in specific and viable recommendations that contribute to boost our collective capacity and strengthen the mechanisms of coordination for the interest of developing countries, and that unify our visions in order to implement the policies that will enable us to find sustainable solutions for the food security and the nutrition issues.

Thank you very much.