

His Excellency Abdel Halim Ismail Al Mutaafi

Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation of the Republic of Sudan

Your Excellency, the President of the Conference, Your Excellency the Director-General, Your Excellencies, Ministers and Heads of Delegations, Ambassadors, dear guests, brothers and sisters, may the peace of God be with you all.

It is my pleasure and it is a great honor indeed to address this assembly on the occasion of the 38th Session of FAO Conference. I should like to greet on behalf of the Government and people of Sudan all the Heads of Delegations participating in this Conference and extend our congratulation to the President of the Conference for his election.

I should also like to express our greetings to the Southern Sudan, to Brunei and to the Kingdom of Singapore for becoming Members of FAO. We insist on the good relationships with our neighbors and the need to address all security tensions over the borders which result in the immigration of farmers and pastoralists. All controversial problems should be settled for the benefit of all the people of the region.

We also support the Programme of Work and Budget proposed by the Director-General for 2014-2015. Your Excellencies, this Session of the Conference is held in light of new developments at the global scene. New challenges in terms of food security, climate change, desertification, and the decrease of agriculture land together with the increase of the population.

This requires responses from FAO to these challenges in lights also of the available resources to improve the production and productivity and the livelihood of the rural people in order to reach a world without hunger with everyone on this universe has access to adequate and safe food.

In this regard, we insist on the importance of giving attention to the small holder farmers to insure food security and to enable the rural women and to promote gender balance in order to involve the women as well in improving the situation and their own situation in their societies.

The farmer or the pastoralist is the main unit leading to the increase in productivity. Therefore, giving attention to those elements providing entrance and inputs is essential in enabling them to play the role in increasing the production.

Your Excellencies, we appreciate the increasing role played by FAO and its ongoing efforts to promote the agriculture sector both in terms of plants and animals and in supporting the national efforts the current situation is alarming regarding the locusts' invasion in Sudan. This requires responding and preparedness to combat this problem. Sudan is at the forefront defending all the other countries in the area in this regard.

Your Excellencies, Sudan which has been blessed by God by plentiful of natural resources, 70% of our fertile land is unused. We have abundance of water, rainfalls and underground water in addition to the different climates in the country allowing for different crops to be cultivated in addition to the availability of agriculturalists and experts in the field.

Therefore, this sector is very important in our country and Sudan is very important in terms of providing food security. For this reason, we have put in place policies and programs in order to achieve all these objectives for the benefit of all people. We need to promote our agricultural sector and to allow for more mechanization, extension, training in order to keep up with the challenges at hand.

After having lost a major part of the earnings of oil, we have also given priority to the rural areas to insure the development of the agriculture in the country since more or over 70% of the population depends on this sector.

The initiative for the Arab food security launched in Riyadh will be adopted in the forthcoming Conference in Khartoum in December. Our cabinet has recently adopted the School Feeding Programme implemented by WFP with a view to be generalized to all other areas in Sudan.

Consolidating our relationships with the regional countries and all other countries with a view to improve the productivity and the situation of the farmers and the people living in the rural areas, the use of natural resources and the conservation of these resources for the future generations.

Your Excellency, the President of the Conference I do hope that we will manage to allocate over 10% of national budgets for the agriculture sector in order to provide food to all people, to all generations since food is a basic right as much as health and education are.

In this regard, I should like as well to extend my thanks to the Government and people of Italy for hosting this Conference and to FAO for its support and assistance to all countries. And we insist on the importance of the decisions to be made in this Conference to achieve these goals. We ask God to grant us all success in our endeavors.

In order to insure food security, combating hunger and poverty, and the development of agriculture. Again, may God grant us all success. Thank you.