

**ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE OF THE KINGDOM OF
SWAZILAND DURING THE 38TH SESSION OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE HELD IN ROME, 15 – 22 JUNE, 2013-06-14**

CHAIRPERSON OF THE CONFERENCE

HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATION

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FAO

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ROME BASED UN ORGANIZATIONS

COOPERATING PARTNERS

INVITED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS VERY IMPORTANT HISTORIC SESSION OF THE FAO CONFERENCE. THIS IS THE FIRST CONFERENCE UNDER THE NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FAO. I BELIEVE IT WILL GIVE US A GLIMPSE OF WHAT HE INTENDS TO GIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION DURING HIS TERM OF OFFICE. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH HIM ALL THE SUCCESS IN HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT. I KNOW IT WON'T BE EASY BUT WITH ADEQUATE SUPPORT FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS, ESPECIALLY MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION, SUCCESS WILL SURELY COME. I BRING YOU GREETINGS FROM THEIR MAJESTIES AND THE PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND.

CHAIRPERSON, COLLEAGUES AND HEADS OF DELEGATION, THE CHALLENGES OF HUNGER AND POVERTY ARE STILL A MAJOR CONCERN TO MOST OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD AND THIS IS EQUALLY SO FOR THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND. OUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE IN ADDRESSING THESE HUMAN SUFFERINGS IN A MORE SUSTAINABLE WAY AND SHOULD BE KEY IN OUR AGENDA AS I HAVE NOTICED THE EMPHASIS OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORLD AND BUDGET (2014 – 2015). THE PRIORITIZATION OF PROGRAMME AREAS FOR EMPHASIS BY THE ORGANIZATION IS RECOMMENDABLE. I HAVE TAKEN PERSONAL NOTE OF THE INCREASED BUDGET FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECTS (TCP) WITH A BIAS TOWARDS EMERGENCY PROJECTS. THE STATE OF FOOD AND THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE THAT ARE MANIFESTING THEMSELVES IN INCREASED CROP FAILURE IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT ARE A

CONCERN AND ONE HOPES THAT THE MEETING ORGANIZED BY THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE LULO INSTITUTE WILL GIVE THE NECESSARY IMPETUS FOR ADDRESSING THESE.

THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT PROVIDED THROUGH FAO BUT I WOULD LIKE TO PLEAD WITH THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO ENSURE THAT SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE ORGANIZATION ARE TECHNICALLY CAPACITATED TO ENSURE THEIR INCREASED SUPPORT TO NATIONAL OFFICES IN MEMBER STATES BECAUSE THERE ARE AREAS OF CONCERN WITH REGARD TO THE DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

CHIRPERSON, THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE IS LONG OVERDUE. THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT IS BETTER PLACED IN THEIR PARTICIPATION NOW. GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND THE YOUTH IS KEY TO THE IMPROVED IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMMES OF THE ORGANIZATION AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS.

IF WE DESIRE TO REALIZE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IS ADDRESSED. I FURTHER NOTE WITH GREAT CONCERN THAT THE NUTRITIONOUS STATUS OF OUR CITIZENS WOULD NOT BE REALIZED IF WOMEN AND YOUTH ARE EXCLUDED OR MARGINALIZED. WOMEN DO NOT ONLY PRODUCE THE FOOD WE EAT BUT ALSO PREPARE IT. MEN SHOULD BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE WHAT FOOD TYPES SHOULD BE USED IN A DIET. THIS GOES FOR FOOD SAFETY AS WELL WHICH IS SO VITAL IN FOOD SECURITY. THERE IS NO FOOD SECURITY WITHOUT FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION. FOOD IS NOT A LUXURY, BUT A BASIC REQUIREMENT WHICH SHOULD BE CONSUMED IN THE RIGHT QUANTITIES AND CORRECT INTERVALS. THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY AND THE SICK. NO MEDICATION WILL WORK ON A HUNGRY STOMACH.

DEAR COLLEAGUES AND HEADS OF DELEGATION, FARM FAMILIES SHOULD BE GIVEN THE CORRECT EXPERTISE TO GROW FOOD CROPS AND TO KEEP LIVESTOCK IN THE MOST

SUSTAINABLE MANNER. THIS SHOULD ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, ADEQUATE SOIL FERTILITY TO SUSTAIN CROP GROWTH AND GOOD SOIL MOSTURE RETENTION PRACTICES, SUCH AS CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE. WHERE IRRIGATION IS PRACTISED, IT SHOULD OPTIMIZE THE AVAILABLE WATER RESOURCE. I CONDEMN THE PRACTICES THAT GIVE RISE TO SOIL EROSION, UNCONTROLLED FIRES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS. PRODUCTION SHOULD BE LINKED WITH ADEQUATE STORAGE, MARKETS AND PROCESSING.

MAY I ALSO MENTION THAT THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND IS VERY COMMITTED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE AFRICA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, CAADP. WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE THE FAO TO CONTINUE PLAYING ITS ROLE IN ENSURING THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME BY MOST MEMBER STATES WILL DEMONSTRATE THE COMMON PURPOSE OF INCREASING THE CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO THE NATIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT OF EACH MEMBER STATE AND IN THE DRIVE TO CREATE MORE JOBS THROUGH THE SECTOR. IT WILL ALSO INCREASE TRADE BETWEEN MEMBER STATES OF THE AFRICAN UNION WHICH IS CURRENTLY LOWER THAN IS OBSERVED IN OTHER CONTINENTS.

AS I CONCLUDE MY REMARKS, I WOULD LIKE THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE MOBILIZATION OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT CAADP. CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE AND OTHER RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS SHOULD AVAIL THEMSELVES TO ASSIST THE ORGANIZATION IN PROVIDING THE NEEDED SUPPORT TO MEMBER STATES.

I THANK YOU ALL.