

**STATEMENT BY THE HON. DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE OF GHANA AT THE 39TH FAO CONFERENCE IN ROME**

DATE: 8TH JUNE, 2015

**THEME: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF RURAL POVERTY AND HUNGER BY
STRENGTHENING RURAL RESILIENCE: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Chairperson of the Conference,

Director General of FAO,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I bring you warm greetings from His Excellency John Dramani Mahama President of the Republic of Ghana and indeed the people of Ghana who appreciate the long standing working relation with the Food and Agriculture Organization dating back to 1959. During this period, FAO has supported some 350 projects and programmes with a total investment of more than US\$230 Million. FAO is indeed very popular with farmers and fishers, particularly in rural communities in Ghana because its activities directly impact the rural sector positively.
2. We take this opportunity to congratulate the Director General for the strong leadership he has provided since his election in 2011 and the transformation he has championed to improve the Organization. In my country, it is often said that one's good deeds go before them, and so

your good leadership is a clear testimony of your re-election for another term of office. May the Good Lord continue to guide you.

3. Mr. Chairperson, the statistics from the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) 2015 Report and other reports indicate that the prevalence of undernourishment in the developing world has fallen between 1990 and 2015, and so has extreme poverty in low and middle income countries fallen between 1990 and 2011. While this is good news to most of us here whose duty is to see to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, we cannot say the battle is won. Brazil has demonstrated we can end hunger in 10 years, with our renewed commitment, new information and resolve, we can do it in less than a decade.
4. Ladies and gentlemen, two years ago, Ghana was among the few countries awarded a diploma for having made significant progress in tackling hunger and indeed having met the target 3 of the MDG first goal. We are happy that many more countries have made progress in meeting the target and the Special Event yesterday, was an attestation to our individual efforts and collective achievements of the MDG 1 and the World Food Summit hunger target.
5. Mr. Chairman, another statistic that concerns us is the fact that about 76% of the world's poorest people live in the rural areas of developing countries, 80% of whom are the world's hungriest people; it is a paradox that the rural sector, which produces four-fifths of the food for urban consumption, should remain hungry.
6. We know the causes of global food insecurity and poverty and there is no need to list them. What we are not doing too well at is investing the necessary resources in the sector where it matters most and not working effectively with the little resources we have. With the digital communication technology, we should strive to build stronger partnerships and mutual respect as we embrace the new development agenda.

7. Mr. Chairman, climate change and its consequent weather effects, conflicts and unstable macro and global economic environment; threatens sustainable development and increases vulnerability of our producers and actors in the agricultural sector. This calls for us to pay more attention to addressing agricultural risks in our individual countries and globally to improve resilience.
8. A combination of strategic interventions is required to build the resilience of vulnerable populations. Improving access to productive assets, putting in place measures to address agricultural risks and targeted social protection measures to cushion those whose livelihoods are under constant shocks and threats will be vital.
9. Mr Chairman, in Ghana our social and economic development is guided by the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda, which sets out among other things to achieve inclusive growth through, agricultural modernization and sustainable natural resources management.
10. Concrete actions are in place to respond to the vision of the development agenda. The main focus of the medium term instrument that is agricultural modernization drive is to make an empowered small farmer well integrated in the value chain in order to share in the benefits that accrue from agri-business.
11. A key aspect has been the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy which aims to bridge the wealth divide through the provision of targeted interventions that will support persons living in situations of extreme poverty and related vulnerability and exclusion.
12. In the agricultural sector, the provision of price support mechanisms on selected inputs and services has resulted in increased productivity, incomes and subsequently improved livelihoods.

13. The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) Programme, which provides cash transfers to the extremely poor and vulnerable households, has ensured that such households have an increased chance to access services and opportunities. It has contributed to improving the local economy and thereby increasing food production as well as improving the diets of households at risk.
14. The Labour Intensive Public Works Programme (LIPW), the Capitation Grant, the National Health Insurance Scheme push for affordable health care. And these are all interventions that are helping the vulnerable in society.
15. Mr. Chairperson, the lesson over the past 25 years and our collective achievements in relation to the MDG 1, have taught us that it is possible to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty and this must therefore guide us in the post 2015 development agenda.
16. Africa, like other regions, has set for themselves the year 2025 timeline to eradicate hunger. Ghana is committed to achieving this target as well as the UN Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge that aims to create a world where there is no hunger. A world which there is no hungry people to be counted as a statistic.
17. We can only achieve these when we redouble our efforts in investing in our rural economies and empowering our smallholder farmers who form the majority of rural dwellers to be productive and resilient to the many risks that confront them.
18. In conclusion, Ghana will continue to work hand-in-hand with the FAO, the UN Agencies and other Development Partners to combat hunger, malnutrition and poverty. We shall not rest on our oars until the whole world is cleared of these cankers.

I thank you for your attention