

## **FAO Conference, June 2015**

### **UK statement**

Distinguished Chair,  
Distinguished Director-General,  
Excellencies,

It is a great pleasure for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the United Kingdom Government. The UK attaches profound importance to the work of FAO in addressing global hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty. While we note that continued efforts by many on these issues have resulted in a slight reduction – to 795 million – in the number of hungry in the world, that figure remains completely unacceptable. It highlights the ongoing urgency for FAO and all of us to redouble our work.

As for the theme of the Conference, we acknowledge FAO's increasing focus on social protection, and welcome the generation of valuable evidence on the impact of cash transfers on wider rural development through the Protection to Production research. We encourage FAO to continue to take an evidence-based approach to exploring better coordination and layering of social protection with other agricultural development interventions. This will avoid the risk of overburdening nascent national social protection systems with multiple rural development objectives. We look forward to the contribution that FAO can make to the task of building social protection systems within its mandate and in partnership with others.

Excellencies, this Conference is exceptional for several reasons:

- We have re-appointed Director-General Graziano da Silva for a second term. The United Kingdom sincerely congratulates him and considers his re-election a tribute to the achievements of his first term. It is a vote of confidence that he will use the next four years to continue his quest to modernise FAO and help it achieve the impact and international stature it deserves;
- We will endorse the Council's recommendation on FAO's 2016-17 assessed budget: the unprecedented agreement on the budget figure prior to Conference allows us instead to devote our attention this week to important policy priorities; and
- We will approve an important resolution on antimicrobial resistance. While this is but one of the many policy issues FAO is tackling – in agriculture, food safety and beyond – it has particular significance. It positions FAO in the front line of a battle that can still be won, rather than obliging it to fight a fire that overstretches its capacity to respond. It is a battle with very high stakes, for human and animal health, for agricultural livelihoods and for our common efforts at poverty reduction. And it highlights the collaboration between FAO, WHO and the

International Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), three multilateral agencies working together to tackle a health threat that crosses species and boundaries. We believe strongly that the appeals from member states from all regions for support from FAO to help tackle this challenge are testament to the trust they place in the Organization. We are confident it will justify this through allocating appropriate core resources, the value of which will be maximised by voluntary support from members.

These achievements illustrate the focused approach and constructive spirit that typifies member state collaboration in FAO. The important issues we deal with deserve no less, and the membership regularly rises to the challenge of supporting the Organization to deliver. Steadily it is strengthening the important foundations of effective delivery: greater ability to measure and report results, stronger efficiency and value for money, an energised and top-quality workforce, and increased transparency and accountability.

That progress will help FAO celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in a spirit of renewal. And it will position it well to contribute to tackling the phenomenal opportunity when the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals are adopted in September, including ending extreme poverty and hunger in a generation and ensuring that no one is left behind again.

For all of these reasons, this Conference, in this pivotal year, is one we should all celebrate.

Thank you.