

**Statement delivered by
His Excellency Hans Hoogeveen
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
on the occasion of the
41st Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy (22-29 June 2019)
25 June 2019**

Your Excellency Chair,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Netherlands Government, I would like to congratulate Dr Qu Dongyu as the new Director-General of FAO. The Netherlands certainly wish to work closely with Dr Qu as we have done also with his predecessor. And of course, the Netherlands Government would like to thank Dr Graziano da Silva for his leadership to achieve Zero Hunger over the last past 8 years.

Yesterday, we had an event organized by the youth for the youth: Real Action on Youth, Driving the Future of Agriculture.

I present you their voices:

"In my experience there are many talented young people who want to contribute to agriculture. When just one good entrepreneurial activity happens in the sector, it attracts young people in agriculture in rural areas", stated by Nikki from India.

Gina from Mexico stated: "As a young dairy farmer, I take pride in being a steward of the land and my cattle and providing high quality milk that comes from humanely handled livestock".

Nancy from Kenya stated: "We believe that granting youth control over decisions affecting lives especially in critical areas like agriculture, builds capacity in young people to take ownership for their lives and their communities".

Yuckmila stated: "Empowering the youth in rural areas is a way to provide the youth what they need to remain where their roots are".

"Working together makes arduous things simple, when youth are there, it becomes much simpler", Amol stated from India.

"As a young farmer and rural teacher, I have seen firsthand the impact of sustainable agriculture in the achievement of food security and I believe rural youth play an important role in creating change", Maycoo from Nicaragua stated.

"The future of the African continent is young and therefore policy determination has to reflect that through increased youth leadership and participation on all the relevant policies we can achieve Zero Hunger", Mashiri from South Africa stated this.

Ruramiso from South Africa stated: "We as youth are the largest population in Africa and we are also the future of food security. Until our voices are heard, we remain insignificant to that future".

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To give these voices a platform an informal Youth Council for FAO, WFP and IFAD for Zero Hunger was launched yesterday, with the strong support of FAO management.

The informal Youth Council will provide an unique and invaluable platform for the youth and future leaders to proactively and constructively engage in our policies here in Rome to achieve Zero Hunger. They need your full support.

To conclude, last month we saw scholars, students and youth marching for climate change. Let's support the youth to go marching for Zero Hunger in the near future.

Thank you.