

*Original language Arabic - Checked against English interpretation*

**Statement delivered by Mr Omar Al Fakeh  
Chargé d'affaires, Palestine  
on the occasion of the  
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Thank you.

I would first like to express my gratitude to Mr Graziano da Silva, the outgoing Director-General, and all the staff of the FAO for the efforts that they exerted in the previous years to ensure the development of agriculture around the world. I would also like to express my congratulations to our friend the elected Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyou, for assuming his responsibilities. We will all stand by him to ensure all the success in his tasks.

Palestine, as you all know, is committed, just like all other countries around the world. We are totally committed to the plans and objectives of FAO in achieving the agenda for sustainable development, reaching a flourishing world free of hunger.

Unfortunately, the situation in Palestine is not the same as it is in other countries. There are many challenges and obstacles facing the advancement and development of agriculture, as well as economic development. All of this is reflected at the same time in other sectors including malnutrition.

There are obstacles that you all know, that we see on the ground, where resources are not allowed in, technologies, equipment are not allowed in to Palestine all of which are necessary for agriculture and for farmers.

There are also other obstacles that you are all aware of that even prevent farmers from reaching their lands, which has a clear impact on their productivity and the agricultural sector as a whole. As well as, the degradation of the soil and the confiscation of land which reduces the land that is available for agriculture.

Israel still controls 60 percent of Palestinian lands. Those lands are not under Palestinian control, and 85 percent of natural resources are also not under Palestinian control.

The productivity of the agricultural sector in Palestine is no more than 25 percent according to UNCTAD reports, and the agricultural sector in Palestine is the livelihood for 150 000 families. Palestine exports 60 items to the world, which clearly indicates that Palestine has resources, has the human potential that will enable us to ensure the success of the sector to achieve development and advancement, and a future for our children and our people.

At the end, we would like to re-confirm that we are standing next to you hand in hand working together for a better world free of hunger with a better future for the children of Palestine and the whole world.

Thank you.