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Statement delivered by
Mr Yaya Adisa Olaitan Olaniran
Minister, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to FAO
on the occasion of the
42nd Session of the FAO Conference (14-18 June 2021)
16 June 2021

Vice-Chairperson of the Conference,

Director-General,

Ministers,

Members of the Delegations to this Conference,

It gives me great honour to address the 42nd FAO Conference and show that Nigeria agrees and supports absolutely the thinking and the decision to have the item title of ‘Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action’.

Therefore, Nigeria is ready and prepared to do all that is needed in the country’s local environment to fulfil this wonderful commitment so that the world will become a better place.

Yes, it is good to strategize, it is good to have deep thinking and all the necessary mental capacity involvement. However, until it is put into practice it is meaningless. The amount of intellectual capability of the world is such that we should not be where we are today. What is missing is what FAO has strategically flagged and that is: let us roll up our sleeves, let us get our hands dirty, let us get the machines working, let us have all this technology within the digital knowledge and the ability to synchronize the knowledge, the cultivars of old with modern technology and understanding.

If we move in this direction, undoubtedly, we will see the result glaringly in the eyes of children, women, and men, smiling, because their situation has changed. And the more we think about it, the more we can put into action the four “betters”: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better livelihood. When we refuse to respect any of these four, or abuse any one of them, or any combination of them, we get a COVID-19 pandemic. Nature will always fight back when it is being interfered with.

Nigeria believes that we need to work in sync with the world. We need to bring our commitments together. The countries that suffer most of the side effects of environmental and climate abuse are the least producers of the cause. Therefore, we need to work together, providing resources where need be, providing education and knowledge where required, without ignoring the local situation will take us a long way.

Therefore, I see the need for FAO to play a major role, more than ever before. After the United Nations Food Systems Summit and after the United Nations Climate Change Conference, the outcomes will be right on you, dear Mr Director-General, and all of us and your staff working to put it into practice.

Let me make a reference to Nigeria. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative high-level discussion took place last week and to show the commitment of the Nigerian Government, there were four Ministers, the Chairperson of the Governors in Nigeria (there are 36 Governors of State), two State Governors, the Special Assistant of Mr President on SDGs and many other high-level Government officials, with the Rome-based Agencies membership in the country fully-represented. This shows the hard work that had been put in by the FAO Representative in Nigeria. It deserves to be commended.

The outcome shows the need of Nigeria, in line with the excellent presentation of our dear friend and brother, Mr Ferraro, with all the effort being put in place. The country workshop on the Food Summit is going on well, and Nigeria believes very strongly in the home grown School Feeding Programme, which automatically puts smallholder farmers in the position to be more productive and more profitable, and eating good and nutritious food.

Finally, Nigeria is also working tirelessly on food loss and waste, which would save a lot of resources and improve the environment.

We owe it a duty, Madam Vice-Chairperson, to see that our world can be a better world than when we met it.

Thank you.