

Statement delivered by
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Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests for Italy
on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)
3 July 2023

Thank you Mr President.

Ministers, Ambassadors,

Delegates.

I would like to express my congratulations of course to the Director-General and I would like to wish him fruitful next four years and of course the Italian Government pays great attention to the FAO. Considers it a fundamental element in this entire architecture dealing with numerous different challenges, geo political challenges which are ever so key in our times.

Italy would like first of all to condemn the war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and would like to express our support and our solidarity to the people of Ukraine. Food security is one of the priorities of the Italian Presidency during the G7 Presidency of 2024. We will of course support all concrete measures adopted in order to fight hunger, and what is most important of course in dealing with hunger is fighting against all of the problems that exist that on particular front including water.

Water resources have to be managed effectively, in other words we will work in that particular direction, Professor Andrea Rinaldo will receive the water prize, the Nobel Prize for Water because of the excellent work that he has done as far as putting together a hydrological system of an independent nature. We have seen droughts and floods throughout the world, 3 billion people throughout the world are at risk of water scarcity in agricultural areas and approximately 1.8 billion are exposed to the threats of floods.

So it is necessary for us to intervene and to act at the national level and there has to be international cooperation as well in order to deal with these adverse weather circumstances that exist. Floods cause disasters, disasters like that which took place in Italy in Emilia Romagna, just to note the most recent flood event in our country, and this of course has strengthened the conviction of the Italian Government that a major role has to be played by the authorities working together with farmers and with producers in order to have proper management in the various areas in order to deal with the flood circumstances that exist.

For us these issues are environmental issues, the policy for water management has to be part of an integrated development programme that is adopted and good water quality is absolutely imperative for life as well, and we do feel that the FAO has and will in the future adopt numerous different projects and programmes in order to mobilize the necessary resources to manage water resources, partners have to exist, private and public in order to carry this out.

Investment for sustainable management of water is absolutely key as well. We need more efficient use of water. At the same time it is necessary for us to develop the existing technologies and new innovative technologies are necessary as well. We have to focus on the possibility of looking at the hydrological reality and dealing with it as we know up until now in a more effective fashion and once again adopt more innovation approaches as well. It is necessary for us to move quickly to deal with the risks that are out there, predict risks as well.

I simply wanted to remind you that the meeting that will take place and will be co-chaired by the United Nations and Italy that on transformative systems in food production that will take place between 24 and 26 July, it comes at an extremely important moment as well, taking into consideration the vulnerabilities in the food supply system and the food chain system as well that was exposed all the more so after 2021.

So, we have to look at the idiosyncrasies, the diversities that exist between the different countries as well, and the presence at that particular event at the end of July of Antonio Guterres the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and numerous Members, heads of state and government altogether they will underline the very importance of having proper management in order to deal with the issues of food security for a more just world. At this point I would like to wish you a fructiferos week and I welcome you to Italy. I welcome you to Rome.

Thank you.