

DECLARATION

We, the countries of the Near East, participating in the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East in Rome would like to declare our full support for the work of FAO in reducing hunger and improving food and nutritional security worldwide, as well as in our region. We would like to commend the Director-General for launching a Strategic Thinking Process to determine the future strategic direction and priorities of the Organization and for his focus on decentralization with the aim of increasing the Organization's impact at country level. We commit ourselves to working with FAO on its critical mandate and will, singly and jointly, undertake the following actions:

- implement national policies, strategies, programmes that recognize the fundamental importance of sustainable agricultural development and food and nutritional security which aim to eliminate hunger;
- increase public investment, and encourage private investment, to build a prosperous agriculture and rural economy that can produce food sustainably and provide remunerative employment especially to young people and rural women;
- engage with civil society, the private sector and other partners, including FAO and other regional organizations, in this effort;
- promote cooperation among Member countries in the region to confront challenges facing food security and agriculture development;
- facilitate and strengthen FAO field programme in the region; and
- support and promote increased South-South cooperation in the development of agriculture in and outside the region.

We, the countries of the Near East, re-affirm the recommendation of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference held in Khartoum that calls for mobilising resources to help countries address the priority areas of action in the region. Taking note of the proposal of the Director-General for establishing a regional trust fund to advance food security in the region, we call on FAO to assist in developing this proposal taking into account the needs of the countries and the recent developments in the Region.