

**Launch Event for the 2014 Sahel Regional
Humanitarian Strategic Response Plan
Statement by the FAO Director-General
José Graziano da Silva
February 3, 2014, FAO Headquarters**

Ms Valérie Amos, United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator

Mr Romano Prodi, Special Envoy to the Sahel,

Ms Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International
Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response

Ms Nancy Lindborg, USAID Assistant Administrator

Mr Amir Abdullah, representing WFP

Mr Robert Piper, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is an honor to welcome you to the launch of the Sahel Regional Humanitarian Response Plan. In particular, I would like to thank OCHA for coordinating the process that led to this plan.
2. The Sahel has been facing a protracted crisis for many years. And ensuring the food security of its population is one of its major challenges.
3. Food production increased one percent last year and is in line with the 5 year average. However, it has not been enough to keep up with population growth.
4. The total number of food insecure people in the region again reaches 20 million. That means that the right to food of one in every 8 children, women and men is at risk.
5. These are only some reasons that explain why the Sahel remains a priority. They show that the international community needs to and should increase its support.

6. We have a common responsibility to make sure that the next drought, whenever it strikes, does not lead to another major humanitarian crisis.
7. The only way to end the recurrent emergencies is to change from a simply reactive approach in response to emergencies, to a proactive, integrated approach, focusing on resilient livelihoods.
8. The plan that we are launching today does exactly that. It is the first time that the Humanitarian Response Plan has a three-year timeframe. It shows that we are looking at the immediate needs but also beyond them.
9. Let me end by pointing out that enhancing the resilience in the Sahel requires the combined efforts of local communities, civil society organizations, governments, regional bodies and the international humanitarian and development communities.
10. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR-Sahel), that brings together the European Commission, FAO and other

agencies and regional institutions such as ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS.

11. I am confident that we will receive the needed support to implement the response plan we are presenting today.
12. Thank you for your attention.