

Director General's intervention
Handover of G77 & China Chairmanship
11 January 2012

Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to address the G77 again, this time with all its members gathered in this important ceremony of handover of its Chairmanship.

In the first place, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome that you gave me a few days ago, when I took on the post of Director General of FAO.

This kind initiative from you has already given birth to one of the most important imprints that I wish to apply for my period as Director General, and also corresponds to the main message which I would like to transmit to you today: the significance of re-building trust.

Let me once again thank the support I had from the Group of 77 and China for my election as Director-General and reiterate my intention to work closely with not only the Regional Groups in FAO, but also with important political Groups as the G77 and China, needless to dwell on the story, actions and tradition of the G77 as one of the most relevant actors in the multilateral scene.

I have previously stressed that I count on every and each member country to work with FAO and win the fight against hunger. To this end, I am committed to bringing FAO's reform to completion; to promote a bottom-up approach through the redefinition of the Organization's priorities through the Regional Conferences, and to offer greater support to Regional and Sub-regional offices, intensifying the decentralization process. I also intend to prioritize FAO's work where the Organization can make a difference.

To this effect, I will personally participate in every Regional Conference and would like you to make your governments aware of the importance of ensuring high level representation, especially at ministerial level.

As I have said before, I am committed to finding efficiency savings, and my proposal is to use resources to strengthen our presence where it is most needed: at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, avoiding the duplication of bureaucracies and structures, and providing better services for technical cooperation and policy assistance. Decentralization is in my view the key aspect of FAO Reform.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank the outgoing Chairperson of the G77, His Excellency Ambassador Hassan Abouyoub, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco, for the great work done during the year 2011. He has been one of the main persons responsible for the improvement in the relations between FAO and the G77 in the recent past.

I would also like to welcome and give my compliments to Her Excellency Ambassador Gladys Francisca Urbaneja Durán for her election to the important position of Chairperson of the G77. As we come from the same region, I have known her very well as Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and trust her capacity. I am convinced that the best person to chair the 130 countries has been elected.

Ambassador Urbaneja, as we start our new mandates at the same time, I would like to invite you to work with me and help me reinforce the trust that the G77 expressed to me a few days ago.

Thank you very much and very best wishes for the New Year.