



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-first Session

"Making a difference in food security and nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 13 - 18 October 2014

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS (FAO)**

Madam Gerda Verburg, chair of the CFS,
Mr Thomas Gass, representing the United Nations Secretary-General
Madam Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of WFP,
Mr Michel Mordasini, representing IFAD,
Mr Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Chair of the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts,
Members of the Advisory Group of the CFS,
Distinguished Ministers,
Honourable Delegates and Observers
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by welcoming Ms Deborah Fulton, the new Secretary of the CFS. I wish you the best of luck. Let me also thank Mr Kostas Stamoulis for his valuable work as CFS Secretary over the past years. It is an honor to welcome you to FAO and to the Committee on World Food Security.

Later today you will be presented the 2014 edition of SOFI – The State of Food Insecurity in the World. I trust the report will provide valuable elements for your debates this week.

I would like to highlight three points of SOFI I think are especially important.

- First, progress against hunger continues: About 805 million people are chronically undernourished, 209 million less than in 1990–92.
- Second, the MDG-1 hunger target is still within reach. In fact, 63 countries already met it.
- And, third, there are significant differences among regions. Not everyone is moving in the same direction or at the same speed. Unfortunately, Africa is still lagging behind mainly because of conflict. And, as we know, conflict and hunger go hand in hand.

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There are two key lessons that we can learn from the experiences in fighting hunger.

First, we need comprehensive and sustainable food security programs, with interventions ranging from social protection to productive support.

Second, food security is everyone's business. It is a society – not a government – that decides to eradicate hunger and achieve food security. Political commitment and leadership from governments is the first step. However, civil society, private sector and other non-state actors also need to embrace this goal.

Ladies and gentlemen, You have a full agenda this week. You will consider for approval the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems.

The Principles complement the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

I wish to congratulate every one of you on the efforts to reach consensus around such a controversial issue.

Together, countries, civil society organizations and private sector associations have reached the first ever global agreement on what defines responsible investment in agriculture and food systems, and how it contributes to enhancing food security and nutrition.

FAO stands ready to technically support the next steps of this process, especially implementation at national level.

In the next few days, the CFS will also discuss measures to address food losses and waste, and the role of fisheries and aquaculture in food security and nutrition.

I also invite the Committee to take up the challenge of approving the Framework for Action on Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises.

As I said before, the MDG hunger target is still within reach. But that is only one step forward.

We need a final push in these 450 or so days and build momentum towards our true goal: Zero Hunger.

Many individual countries and regions have already adopted this goal. The international community is converging to it in the post-2015 development agenda.

And as you have just heard, the United Nations Secretary-General is pushing hard to achieve this goal within our lifetimes.

Yesterday, we took another step forward. The Open Ended Working Group finalized the two outcome documents of the Second International Conference on Nutrition: the political Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action.

I would like to thank all the Members present yesterday, the Permanent Representatives, delegates, and non-state actors as well.

I also want to give a special thanks to the Permanent Representative of Austria to FAO, Natalie Feistritz, Co-Chair of the Working Group: you did an outstanding job in finding consensus yesterday and pushing to finish the job on a Sunday evening.

I want to repeat what I said yesterday: thank you all for this achievement.

Ladies and gentlemen, Food security and adequate nutrition for all is where sustainable development starts. We can be the first generation to end hunger. We cannot fail.

Thank you for your attention.