



# COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

**Forty-sixth Session**  
***"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"***

**Rome, Italy, 14-18 October 2019**

**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD  
FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)**

Mr. Chairman. Ministers. Excellencies. Ladies and gentlemen.

As we have already heard today, we have still got a mountain to climb to achieve our shared goal of Zero Hunger by 2030.

So the Committee on World Food Security can and must play a vital role in rallying the support and the resources needed to get the job done.

If we are serious about ending hunger, it is critical we invest in sustainable economic development and climate resilience. Why? Because we know that of the 821 million hungry people in the world:

- Around 50 percent of them rely on smallholdings for a living.

We also know that small farmers provide most of the world's food:

- They supply 80% of all food produced in Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa.

Yet many of these same farmers live precarious lives, forced to struggle by on low incomes and poor diets which are lacking in vital nutrients.

If we commit to fixing the problems in our food systems which mean so many food producers are also food insecure, then I believe we have got a real shot at getting to Zero Hunger by 2030.

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;  
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.  
Other documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)*



nb525

Take as an example, Africa, which is home to 60% of WFP's operations. The continent has the potential to be food self-sufficient:

- It has 65% of the uncultivated arable land left in the world.

But because farmers cannot get their produce to market:

- Africa imports 35 billion dollars of staple food crops each year.

If these problems are addressed and fixed, the African Development Bank says Africa could have a food industry worth 1 trillion dollars by 2030.

So the question we must ask ourselves is: how can we make a permanent difference to people's lives? The answer is that we must invest to create the economic growth and opportunity which underpins long-term resilience and stability.

It is time for us all to move beyond the old silos dividing humanitarian and development programs. For example, by expanding the use of Food for Assets programs to help local communities create infrastructure that will boost their resilience and support local food security.

But we can also learn from nations like the Republic of Korea and China, which have gone on an incredible journey - from food insecurity to economic prosperity - in the space of just 40 to 50 years.

China's achievements in ending hunger are truly remarkable:

- Since 1978, 800 million people have been lifted out of poverty.

China only has nine percent of the world's arable land but it feeds over 20% of the world's population. How was this done? By investing in infrastructure and technology, forging partnerships between the public and private sectors, and above all by nurturing and developing markets.

WFP is harnessing its own purchasing power to support the expansion of local markets and the development of sustainable food systems.

In 2018, WFP:

- Procured 3.6 million metric tons of food commodities;
- Worth US \$1.6 billion;
- 79% of this food procurement was in developing countries;
- We also bought \$763million of goods and services in 152 nations.

That is a huge amount of market fire-power with the potential to connect millions more small farmers to commercial markets.

But to truly succeed we all need to be a lot more ambitious. That means investing in infrastructure and technology, forging innovative new partnerships with the private sector, and using our purchasing power to nurture new markets. So they become an integral part of the sustainable food security we are all working together to create on our shared journey toward Zero Hunger and the other Sustainable Development Goals.

I believe the Committee on World Food Security has a vital role to play in driving this agenda forward and I have every confidence you will rise to the task.

I hope you have a good and productive annual session this week.

Thank you.