



FAO's GATEWAY NEWS

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Issue

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39th Session of the FAO Conference



On 13 June, the 39th session of the FAO Conference closed a week-long session during which Members, in record attendance, approved the agency's biennial programme of work and budget and sent a strong signal of support for continuing the strategic direction charted out by Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

The Conference formally approved a regular budget of \$1,035.7 million for delivery of FAO's programme of work over the period 2016-2017.

Graziano da Silva in his closing statement to the Conference outlined FAO's priorities for the coming years, in particular the eradication of hunger, raising levels of nutrition and addressing climate change.

In its final report, the Conference "expressed... support for the Director-General's vision" and underlined "the

importance of continuity in the strategic direction of the Organization in the Medium Term Plan 2014-2017".

FAO's next Programme of Work and Budget "will consolidate our work on the (five) strategic objectives and will add emphasis to climate change and nutrition," Graziano da Silva told Conference participants.

During his statement, Graziano da Silva said that he would press ahead with the process of change, including reinforcing FAO's subregional offices "to improve our support in regions such as West Africa, Central Asia, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean."

Re-election of the Director-General and Independent Chairperson of Council



The Conference session began on 6 June with the overwhelming re-election of Graziano da Silva to a second term in office which will run from 31 July 2015 to through July 2019.

The sole candidate, he received a total 177 votes, which represents the highest number of favourable votes ever garnered by a candidate for the Organization's top post.

Setting another record, this year's meeting of the biennial Conference was attended by 191 delegations, the highest level of participation in the Organization's history. These included 16 heads of states and government and 116 ministers. A total of 1,700 delegates attended the Conference. For the first time, all the Pacific States were represented in a session of the most important governing body of the Organization.

The Conference also re-elected Wilfred Joseph Ngirwa of the United Republic of Tanzania as Independent Chairperson of the FAO's executive Council. His second term in office will run from July 2015 to July 2017.

SIDS High-Level Panel

A high-level panel on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) has exchanged views on the promotion of food security and nutrition, while also addressing climate change and environmental threats in SIDS. Guests on the panel offering expert insight included the Prime Ministers of Guinea Bissau, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Fiji, in addition to the Director-General. The event also marked the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FAO and the African, Caribbean and-Pacific Group of States (ACP), for renewed partnership.

Papal audience and the Encyclical

In remarks heard by representatives of over 120 countries, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva and the current Chairperson of the Conference, Le Mamea Ropati Mualia, Pope Francis stressed the importance of reducing food waste, providing nutrition education, and creating a sense of global solidarity to ensure food security for all people.

Some days later, the Pontiff released the Papal Encyclical "Laudato Si", on Climate Change and Environment. It states that the crisis of poverty and of the environment is indeed one single crisis. To respond to this, says the Encyclical, we all need cooperation and solidarity among peoples and nations.

Third UN International Conference on Finance for Development

The Conference, held in July in Addis Ababa, set a roadmap for future investments in development that are people-centered and sustainable and a crucial pillar of the UN's new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Through the SDGs and the Accord, the world has declared: 'Our goal is to end poverty and hunger,'" FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said addressing world leaders, civil society and private sector representatives gathered for the conference plenary.

To achieve this, significant boosts to investment in both social protection and rural development are needed to ensure that every person has adequate access to food all year long, and improve the productivity, incomes and livelihoods of the poor, he added.

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CONTACTS

**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

Tel: (+39) 06 57051
e-mail: fao-hq@fao.org
web: <http://www.fao.org>

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MDG Awards

The Conference awarded in a special ceremony 72 countries for having achieved the MDG target of halving the proportion of hungry people. Of these, 29 have also met the more stringent goal to halve the number of hungry people as laid out by governments when they met in Rome at the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996.

Achieving Zero Hunger: the critical role of investments in social protection and agriculture

FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have released last July a report that details the investments needed to eradicate world hunger by 2030 - a key aim of the SDGs to be adopted in September.

It's widely understood that eliminating hunger is an essential prerequisite to achieving other development goals relating to health, education and productivity.

To make hunger history by 2030, the UN food agencies estimate that an additional \$267 billion per year on average needs to be invested in rural and urban areas, as well as in social protection measures that give poor people access to food and the means to improve their own livelihoods.

This comes down to an average \$160 per year per person living in extreme poverty. This is only a fraction of the costs that malnutrition currently imposes on economies, societies and people.



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