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# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

## Thirty-first Session

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### Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

Chairperson,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Secretary,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am honoured to be here with you today, as Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to address this FAO Regional Conference and to tell you about the most recent accomplishments of CFS and inform you of the activities that we will undertake in the upcoming months.
2. Last year was a special year for the CFS. In 2019, we celebrated the 45th year since the founding of the Committee, and 10 years since its groundbreaking reform.
3. Our Committee was established in 1974. At that time, devastating famines focused international attention on the topic, and prompted ambitious declarations that such tragedies would not re-occur. The very first “World Food Conference” met in Rome at FAO and, to back up its commitments, the international community agreed to create the CFS, as well as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the CGIAR system, asserting that “every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition”.
4. For 35 years, CFS kept a close eye on current and prospective supply/demand and food stock positions, disseminating timely updates to the global community to assure the adequacy of global food stocks.
5. However, following economic and financial crisis and food price shocks of 2007-2008, CFS was deemed ill-equipped to address the serious problems around food security, so Members agreed in 2009 to a

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- massive overhaul of the Committee, broadening its sponsorship to the three Rome-based UN agencies, expanding it to become a multistakeholder platform - to include civil society, private sector, and other key development actors - and creating a High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) to provide science and knowledge to inform its deliberations and decision-making.
6. This new CFS has three main interlinked strategic objectives, which help channel CFS energy and resources towards activities that effectively respond to the needs of the food insecure and malnourished.
  7. **First:** CFS strives to be the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform to discuss the food security and nutrition situation and coordinate collective actions at all levels.
  8. **Second:** CFS develops voluntary global policy guidance for policy convergence and coherence to achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.
  9. **Third:** CFS fosters the uptake, follow-up and review, and sharing of experiences and best practices on the use and application of CFS policy guidance at all levels.
10. Prior to its reform the CFS had already endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (Right to Food Guidelines) adopted by consensus of the FAO Council in 2004. Since it was reformed, CFS has already achieved some striking accomplishments by promulgating the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (the *VGGTs*); the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (*RAI principles*); a Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis, and 14 sets of policy recommendations and HLPE reports on a wide array of relevant topics.
11. These policy outcomes, as we call them at CFS, are providing both developing and developed countries with effective instruments for combating hunger and malnutrition.
12. In October, last year, CFS 46 approved a new Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2020-2023 with four new work streams on gender, youth, inequalities, and data systems. The programme of work was negotiated by CFS members and participants, balancing competing interests, while carefully addressing legitimate workload concerns and costs.
13. This year CFS will address two topics, with two new major policy products expected to be negotiated during 2020, and presented to Members for endorsement at CFS 47 in October 2020: “Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches” and “Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition”.
14. As you can see, our work programme is dense but it tackles challenging issues that require global solutions. If we want these inclusive processes of CFS to generate policy recommendations with the strongest possible legitimacy and the highest level of impact, we need all member States to participate

actively and constructively in their development, and to commit to their implementation. We must add value to the debates, take full ownership of the outcomes, and make every effort to implement the policy recommendations emanated by CFS, particularly as they pertain to ALL of US.

15. This is my message for you today. I am here to make an appeal to each of you: (1) to recognize the importance of the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work; and (2) to reach out to those that are not here, at all levels, to help me spread the voice with them about the ongoing policy convergence work of CFS on Food Systems and Nutrition, and on Agroecological and other innovative approaches. These policy guidelines can achieve tremendous impact if we work together. CFS cannot succeed without proactive country engagement and ownership of the work we produce.
16. Ministers, colleagues, we all agree that achieving food security and sustainable food systems is a matter of the greatest urgency. What I wish to do here is to let you know that the CFS exists to support you on the road ahead to reaching Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 and fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
17. I hope to see all of you in Rome at the next session of the CFS in October 2020 to continue this conversation.
18. Thank you.