

**Informal Joint Meeting of the FAO Council, the IFAD Executive Board and
the WFP Executive Board
13 September 2019**

**Opening Remarks of the President of the WFP Executive Board, H.E. Hisham Mohamed Badr,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt**

H.E. Hisham Mohamed Badr, President, WFP Executive Board (Chairperson): Good morning. Please take your seats. Good morning, Excellencies, colleagues, friends. Thank you for coming. This is a historic day indeed and inshallah it to be a very good and blessed day with all your participation. Ms Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr QU Dongyu, DirectorGeneral of FAO, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, President of IFAD, Mr David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr Khalid Mehboob, Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, Ms Amal Al-Dabbas, WFP National Goodwill Ambassador from Jordan. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

At the outset, allow me, on behalf of all of you, to warmly welcome Ms Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. We are extremely honoured to have you with us today, ma'am, and would kindly ask you to convey to the Secretary-General our appreciation and deep thanks for representing him today in such an important meeting.

As you may recall, while we were in New York for the Joint Meeting of the Boards of the United Nations Funds and Programmes, namely the UNDP, the UNFPA, the UNOPS, the UNICEF, the UN-Women and WFP back in May, I reiterated the importance of your gracious presence at this Rome meeting and you, as well as the Secretary-General, positively responded and I thank you for that and the Deputy Secretary-General immediately recognized the importance of such a meeting and as soon as I presented the invitation I was very glad and gratified to find this positive response that you will be attending with us.

I would also like to remind the Membership today as to why we are here. We are here for the partnerships between our nations, the partnerships which are leveraged in the field. The smarter partnerships that the Secretary-General agenda for United Nations reform, is asking us to pursue. The new structure of the system in which we all would have a stake as representatives of the governing bodies of the three Rome-based agencies who are working to ensure that we have a better today for the people who we are serving. Remember these words, the people we are serving, because we are here to serve other people, to serve people on the ground, and the better tomorrow for the future of today, our youth.

Our meeting today is a golden opportunity for all of us; we should seize it, to maximize the increased collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP under the umbrella of the mother of the United Nations, to better serve the people in the field and in our endeavours to achieve SDGs, especially SDG-1 on eradicating poverty and SDG-2 on ending hunger. That is the ultimate objective of the reform of the United Nations development system of the Secretary-General.

In this vein, I believe that food security and nutrition and ending hunger and poverty should be given utmost importance within Agenda 2030 and the reform process of the United Nations development system. I am convinced that this meeting will be a message which could be conveyed to the SecretaryGeneral by Ms Amina Mohammad, the Deputy Secretary-General, and her participation in the RBA meeting which is a clear message of the fundamental role of the RBAs in achieving Agenda 2030.

Therefore, the first message that we would like to convey to the Deputy Secretary-General from all of us here, representing the three Rome-based agencies is this: the importance of elevating this issue of food security and fighting hunger at the top of the United Nations system in deliberations. We are lucky in the sense that this meeting takes place almost one or two weeks before the General Assembly of the United Nations which is an opportunity where all the global leaders gather to assess the situation.

I think this could also be an opportunity to put food security and eliminating hunger on the top of the agenda of the international community and to put the alarming call for the stakeholders to scale up efforts and promote partnerships between governments, the entire United Nations system, including RBAs, international financial institutions, let us not forget them, private sector, civil society, all to work together to overcome the immense challenges that the world is facing today in the field of food security and sustainable development, as the numbers of the undernourished people in the world is continuing to grow for the last three years.

Let us not forget and let us believe, with the distinguished panel we have today, this morning, I think we can do everything. With the Deputy Secretary-General, with the three leaders of the Rome based agencies, all with their calibre and stature, with the political will, with the commitment of all of you, what else is needed? What else are we waiting for? If we cannot change and make a huge dent in eradicating hunger with all this distinguished panel, this very heavyweight panel, and all the distinguished ambassadors here, this is the moment. If we have to muster the political will and we have to believe and if we believe that we can do it, with all this leverage that we have today, this is the first step. Do not look to the past and say it has not been done before. No, if we believe that we can do it if there is a political will and with this great leadership on this panel that we are lucky and historically to have with us today, then I think, we can be able to do this and convey a message to the impoverished people in the world that are watching us to give them hope and that is, after all, a very important message that we deliver from the United Nations, which is hope.

Now, I would like also to call for this opportunity for the three Rome-based agencies to scale-up and to double their collaboration in the field. So, this is a message not only from us to the world but a message to call on the three heads of the Rome-based agencies and together to make closer collaboration, another call to serve people.

I would like to make a simple proposal. I hope that in the future, whenever senior officials come from different countries, from my country, from your country, when they come to visit Rome, that we should give them the opportunity, allow them to have a joint meeting with the heads, or with the senior officials of the three Rome-based agencies simultaneously together, if the heads are busy, so that they can see what they can do together for that country.

If a minister comes, for example, from Egypt, visiting and his visit is focused on, maybe, FAO, but that at the same time will afford an opportunity in which the three Rome-based agencies can sit with this minister and say, listen, minister, together we can do, in your country, this and that, and that applies to all the countries of the world. So, I would like to submit this very simple proposal so that it can be taken up as a small step to move forward.

Now, without further delay, Excellencies, as agreed by the memberships and secretariats of the three Rome-based agencies, this important forum takes place on an annual basis with each of the agencies rotating responsibility for organizing and chairing the event. In this light, after FAO and IFAD held the first two meetings in 2017 and 2018, WFP is hosting it this year. I am, therefore, very pleased to welcome you in the Auditorium of the WFP headquarters.

Ladies and gentlemen, ... We strongly hope that the discussions held today will result in an increased sharing of knowledge on issues of common concern in the three organizations. In our planning deliberations for this year's meeting there was discussion about broadening the regional perspectives. For today's meeting we will start with two Goodwill Ambassadors from the Near-East, then jump to the Sahel and end with Latin America. Throughout the discussions, we will focus on the United Nations reform and synergies supporting RBA collaboration for a better future together.