

Opening remarks by Executive Director David Beasley on the occasion of the 2018 annual session of the Executive Board

It is great to be here. My dear friend let me say that normally this is a very united Board, but there is great division in this Board only in the last few days because of the World Cup! It is great to see the camaraderie that exists in this Board. When I got here a year ago, I really enjoyed getting to know the Board, because the Ambassadors for the World Food Programme are engaged in every nation around the world and particularly those nations that are struggling with hunger. To see this Board work together - from donor nations to beneficiaries to developing nations - is just quite remarkable.

Now there is also another division. My last Board meeting that we were together was my birthday, so my wife said, "You have a Board meeting on your birthday?" I said "Yes." But she was very forgiving. Well, today is our 30th wedding anniversary. She said, "You have a Board meeting on your anniversary?" I said, "I promise we will go out to dinner tonight after an event later in the evening." And so, you will get to meet my wife a little bit later and if there is an angel on earth, it is Mary Wood.

This has been a great team to work with and I say that because when I arrived a year ago, I knew less than anybody on this Board, about what were the day-to-day operations, the impact of the World Food Programme. When I came here, quite frankly, it was a tough time. We were facing the worst humanitarian crisis since the creation of the United Nations, since World War II. We were facing four countries at least on the brink of famine; we had seven L3s - and I did not even know what an L3 was back then so I had a lot to do on day one. But we have been able to achieve a lot because we have been working together. I brought certain talents to the table and so did everybody on this Board, but more importantly than all of us in this room are the employees of the World Food Programme, who work together with beneficiaries all over the world. I knew that the first year I was going to have to learn and listen while I also addressed working together as a team with everybody in here. The operational issues that we were facing were coupled with a major donor that was talking about pulling out.

So, here we are a year later and much has happened in that one year. Many good things, many bad things...things that we did not expect, whether it was the Rohingya crisis or more hurricanes or more conflict that has stretched already a team that is spread thin because of the many L3s and the crises that we have in so many countries. I learned very quickly that the World Food Programme is undeniably the best of the best in emergencies. As I began to analyse the future, understanding where we must go and what is going to make the World Food Programme more effective in addressing world hunger and zero hunger, I knew that we must: 1) always maintain our strength in emergencies; 2) move forward with digitization; 3) promote simplification and efficiency within the World Food Programme sphere; 4) develop greater partnerships not just with traditional donors, but non-traditional donors as well as the private sector, and 5) be more effective on the ground with more effective programmes, such as school meals and food for assets.

As I arrived here, I think it was clear that the World Food Programme is the best of the best in emergencies. No doubt about that. We want to make certain as we move forward in looking at this nexus of humanitarian development that we do not take our eye off the ball and we remain the best of the best in emergencies. I expressed concern a year ago because of all the crises and because of all the L3s. If we unexpectedly have more new occurrences of natural disasters or man-made disasters, it could really create a significant issue for the World Food Programme.

So, when there is a fire in a community, how many fire trucks do you already have? You cannot build the fire station and buy the fire trucks after the fifth fire or the sixth fire. So we have been working together diligently to build the teams to assure that our field teams have the necessary support. Even though we are spread thin now, are we prepared adequately to address short-term emergencies whether it is volcanic activity or more hurricanes or more earthquakes or more conflict? This team, working with you, has been restructuring to make certain that we have sufficient personnel to address whatever may come upon us at any given time.

Digitization. I had mentioned very clearly a year ago that digitization is an area that we must excel in and we must lead the United Nations in. Quite frankly when I arrived, as many of you recall, there was good news and bad news. The bad news was the United Nations had fallen behind on digitization. The good news was the World Food Programme was the best of the best in the United Nations system. That was sort of bad news too, because we really were not where we needed to be, but we were going in the right direction. Building that team as we are now, I am excited that already in this year, we are now at 29 million beneficiaries which have been digitized. We now have seven million of those that have been biometrically aligned.

Let me just touch on a couple of points in the digitization area, like digital registration with the Rohingya people, who had no identification, no dignity. Now they have identification and it is restoring their dignity. Governments are able to better keep track of vulnerable populations; we are able to share information/data between agencies and yet because of blockchain technologies and other sophisticated technologies, we are able to protect the privacy and rights of individuals concerned. This will be an issue that we will continue to work on. It will always be sensitive, but we must not back off out of fear of what is not known out there. We will work together through these issues.

Also, SCOPE cards - you have seen these cards that are not just used for food, they can also be used for healthcare, education, housing and the list goes on. It is absolutely critical as we enter into this greater cash-based system -- in the World Food Programme, we are already at (US)\$1.4, \$1.5 billion of cash-based transfers and I expect by the end of this year, we will top (US)\$2 billion. We have rolled SCOPE out in 65 countries. Data and technology in the hands of the people who face hunger is a critical component for the future, and so we must engage with the private sector in ways that we have to some degree in the past but I think it is now time that we exponentially build upon that so that we can achieve even more. Those who have been engaged with us in this field know exactly what we are talking about,

whether we are partnering with Google or Facebook or Palantir or the list of dozens of other countries that we are working with in the digital field.

Let me just touch on a couple of examples of how a tech giant is working with us to shape operations using data expertise, satellite data imagery analysis in conflict areas like Syria, Nigeria, South Sudan. Also, to give WFP crucial remote access through the Google Earth and Maps platform to areas where otherwise our people cannot reach; running a pilot programme on using artificial intelligence; the use of drones in accumulating data, synthesizing it for emergency purposes to support our operational decisions. These are just a couple of examples in the digitization world that we will continue to build on. I am confident that what we are already seeing, working with some of the digital and sophisticated software operations and technical companies - we will literally see hundreds of millions of dollars of potential savings in the supply chain area alone. It is a new world.

Now, these devices, this technology does not necessarily save lives but it allows us to be more efficient, more effective to save dollars, which in turn allows us to feed more people. And when we can, in fact, because of technology, enter into areas where otherwise we cannot, it then becomes a tool that allows us to in fact save lives.

When I arrived here I said very clearly that I was so impressed with the people of the World Food Programme. What can I do as their Executive Director to empower them? I knew that we would have to evaluate programmes that maybe need scaling down, some that need scaling up -- because nothing is sacred other than the beneficiary here. We need to rethink our paradigms: what can we do more efficiently, what can we do more effectively? One of the things that I heard from you in this regard - which is a sort of United Nations reform thing but we do not wait on the United Nations reform, we will reform ourselves. And I heard over and over when I got here about the need for greater collaboration between the Rome-based agencies. At first, I did not know what that meant because I could not imagine that there actually was a problem, only to find out the opportunities were great.

Having said that, and looking back a year, I think everybody in this room can say that the collaboration with the Rome-based agencies is at an extraordinary high. I do not want to go through all the details but the number of collaborative projects has skyrocketed. That is just the beginning. We have taken field trips together. In fact, we are going to Niger in August to meet with the President, look at some projects where we are working together, because as I have very clearly explained and expressed for our team, our egos should not be in the way of a beneficiary. We need to break down silos, we need to collaborate, we need to take the lead but be humble about it and be willing to let others be seen first as we are working together. I always tell Gilbert (Houngbo) and Graziano (da Silva), particularly Graziano, "You speak first, I will speak last, you be in the first car, I will be in the last car. You can have the best position, I will have the lesser position" and the point is that WFP, we want to lead by example, by humility, by service to others because I think that is the mantra of the World Food Programme. We are looking forward to continued and further collaboration,

More efficiency - we have been talking about the ISC rate. Without at the same time damaging the capacity of the World Food Programme, we have cut our ISC rate from 7 to

6.5 percent. That means (US)\$25 million no longer in Headquarters but out there in the field, which means - talking about children at 25 cents a meal - that is 100 million meals.

At the same time, while we are in my opinion the most efficient, effective operation, we have to make certain that we do not destroy the capacity to be able to respond. And as I have told other agencies and donors, we are the logistical hub for the United Nations and so when there is a fire, we cannot go then and buy the fire truck. That is why we have to make certain that our 92 aircraft, our 5,000 trucks, our over 20-odd ships are prepared and ready to go at a moment's notice and be able to deliver what we need. That is why we are building the hubs around the world on a regional basis so that we can respond quickly, because quick responses mean lives saved and that is an investment in infrastructure that we must not back down on.

We also said we were very concerned last year as we continue to grow from a few billion dollars to (US)\$5 billion to \$6.5 (billion) to \$7 billion and we need to grow to \$8 billion to \$9 (billion) to \$10 billion to address the unexpected needs that we are seeing out there. We have got to make certain that we have, internally, the resources and the management to demonstrate our integrity and that is why we created the Enterprise Risk Management Division. We have got to make certain that donors know that the integrity of our operations is sound and that when we deliver, they know that it goes where it is intended to go. These are very important dynamics.

I remember getting here hearing about the PIRs, Proactive Integrity Reviews. I was like, what is a PIR? You know that was another problem that I got here, Mr President, all these acronyms in the United Nations. For the first month I did not know what anybody was talking about, but as to the PIRs, our teams have been working together with every single Board member to address those concerns and that is now in our rear-view mirror.

We have 16,000 employees, not to mention the thousands of people that we work with out there in the field, whether it is NGOs or whatever the case may be. This morning we paid tribute to the men and women that have died in service at our memorial wall. We believe, as I had mentioned last year when I got here, that we must empower our staff, our people - we must make certain that they know that we are a family, and families respect each other. Male or female. Regardless of religion. Regardless of colour. But we want to make sure that we empower and we create an atmosphere that makes everybody perform the best that they can perform. We began improving medical coverage, extending maternity benefits to consultants, investing (US)\$8 million in staff wellness initiatives throughout the system, setting up the FIT pools.

Then we got unexpected news with regard to the United Nations. But it was not just the United Nations, it was global - and that's the issue of sexual harassment. It was quite a shock to me frankly when I came into the United Nations system. I thought the United Nations would actually be the best of the best, a world leader in gender parity as well as sexual harassment issues only to find out that it pretty much reflected the rest of the world. That is the bad news. The good news is we are going to do what we need to do: we at the World Food Programme are going to be the leader of the United Nations to showcase that this is a zero-tolerance organization, not just by written policy but by management practices.

I have spoken about this to you in the last Board meeting. You and I have had many deliberations and discussions about this but we are also putting our money where our mouth is. We put (US)\$3.9 million in the next three years just in additional personnel to investigate concerns, complaints, harassment of any nature out there.

I am sure we are not going to be perfect, no agency is and no one is, but when we get a problem, we are going to address it. My team understands very clearly the atmosphere that we want. I do not want a single woman in this environment feeling concerned and I want the World Food Programme to be not just concerned with our environment but also out in the field. I want everyone to understand that we do not deliver just food, we deliver values, we deliver respect and we expect that in our operations and it starts at the top. As to gender parity, you have heard me speak, I will just allude to it again - I was shocked when I got here that the United Nations was not the world leader on parity, quite frankly, and I said at meetings, "you know it is about time we quit talking about it and just do it". And so, we have put together a bold plan that will achieve gender parity for every country that we are in, in the world. And there are some tough countries out there but we are going to make some headway there as well.

Partnerships. When I got here, all of you had been working hard to raise more money but lo and behold as we say, the crisis was getting worse, whether it was a man-made crisis or a natural disaster. And so, we are having to raise more money. Our goal is to put the World Food Programme out of business. When you have zero hunger, you pretty much can put us out of business. But until that happens we have got to raise a lot more money. So I expressed very clearly that we must protect our existing donor bases - what do we need to continue to do to make certain that the donors have respect and confidence in the World Food Programme, what do we need to do to expand the donors? Our traditional major donors are stepping up even more, if I look around this room; but also donors that I thought would be tremendous opportunities to do more. I was just in France last week, I had tremendous meetings in France and I think we will see a significant improvement with regards to not just France's money with regards to the World Food Programme but more importantly, a collaboration on joint projects where there are teachers in francophone-speaking countries. We talked about the Sahel, we talked about Niger and we showed videos which we are going to show in a minute. As I look around the table, I think other countries from Russia to China will be doing substantially more than what we have in the past.

So each of you in here, who have been stepping up more, thank you, we have got more work to do. As I recall the old story of the widow's mite, the little small contribution, it does not know how small it is, it makes a difference.

In the past year many of you know that I was travelling all over the place, field to field to field, but also making certain that we were in the major capitals to address financial needs. This year we plan to spend some substantial time in the nations' capitals around the world, not just for funding but also as we need to reconfigure some of the traditional silos to give us the flexibility to address the needs where the humanitarian and the development nexus meets, particularly in places like the Sahel. Last year, when we saw countries like the UAE

and Saudi step up and Princess Haya will be here in a little bit, that was a tremendous success story in turning the corner.

In 2017, we raised about (US)\$7.1 billion. Our burn rate for example, how much we would spend per day in 2016, was about (US)\$15.9 million per day. Last year, we raised (US)\$19 million per day, almost (US)\$1 billion more on an annualized basis. The good news within that, for the first time we have reached extraordinary numbers for multi-year flexible funding, so out of that figure we had (US)\$1.4 billion which was up from (US)\$487 million in 2016 that is available for future years. And to many of you in this room, we have had tremendous meetings in the capitals (with donors) who have taken the lead in multi-year flexible funding.

The other area is in terms of partnerships to unleash the global wealth that is available - it is an absolute indictment on humanity when the world has (US)\$300 trillion worth of wealth. The United States alone has \$100 trillion of available wealth. Not one child in the world should go to bed hungry. Not one. Because we are just talking about billions of dollars, which engages, in my opinion, the most absent part of the World Food Programme team and that is the private sector. For some reason and I do not know why but the United Nations has shunned the private sector. But I think there is a renewed spirit of how to engage the private sector. The Secretary-General, whom I think is doing an amazing job, as well as other agency heads that I have talked with and met with, are very keen on engaging the private sector in several ways. First and foremost, money, but I do not think the long-term answer with major foundations and corporations is going to be money. It can be a lot of money, but on an annualized recurring basis, it would be unrealistic to think that we would raise (US)\$5 billion or \$6 billion in that way. That does not mean we cannot raise half a billion dollars or so with aggressive, very strategic campaigns. But most importantly though, the engagement we are having with the private sector beyond funding is making the World Food Programme more efficient, more effective internally and externally. Internally, in programmes and supply chain projects as well as helping us just operate more efficiently and more effectively. Also, out in the field, I truly believe that we cannot address the needs and concerns related to achieving zero hunger unless the private sector is integrally involved and engaged.

As you have heard me mention before: when I was governor we had the worst unemployment rate in the state and within two years we had the best employment rate in the state, and the best in personal income growth. I mention that because it was not the government that did that. What we did, as the government, was inspire and empower the private sector in all aspects, not just education but incentivization. I believe we will never address zero hunger anywhere in the world - including the Sahel and Africa especially, where 60 percent of our expenditures are - until we properly, effectively integrate the private sector, because the private sector can help us in so many ways. Not to elaborate on that at this moment but if you recall, you asked a few weeks ago that we pull the private sector engagement strategy off the platform. I had made a comment, I think at a German luncheon the other day, that I did not want to engage the private sector in significant operations from the first few months that I was here. Why? Because I did not know the

United Nations system. And the last thing I want to do is bring a friend in only to see him disappointed. I have now seen a year's worth of operations and I now have confidence that we can integrate the private sector effectively out in the field. So now, over the next few months we need to start building this platform, building this team, building this plan to engage the private sector in many different ways. And I want to ask companies: I want you to take ownership of ending poverty. I want you to take ownership.

The last area of privatization is in the area of digitization, using social media - using the cell phone and the internet to raise funds. Because I do believe there are hundreds of millions, billions of men and women and especially millennials who really want to help starving children in any country in the world. But we must build that platform right, we must develop the strategy right - as I mentioned it took AT&T 75 years to reach 100 million users. It took WhatsApp three years. UNICEF has led the way in this arena. It has taken them decades to build up to what we have but because of the technology today, we should be able to do it quickly and lead this field and we plan to do that.

The last area, that fifth concern that I mentioned was achieving zero hunger. Quite frankly, the direction we are going, we are not going to get there. It is hard to believe what has happened in the last couple of years. The severe hunger rate has gone up from 80 million to 124 million people. Every five seconds a child is dying from starvation. I was giving a speech in Berlin Friday and I mentioned that and I looked at one of the ambassadors from a Balkan country and I said, "Your child just died." And I looked at another ambassador, not for the World Food Programme, and I said, "One, two, three, four, five. Your little girl just died." We must embrace with passion this opportunity before us because when one child suffers, we all suffer. This is where it gets back to how we have been doing things in the United Nations, especially. Why is it that we have been in countries for 20 and 30 years and have nothing to show for it? The World Food Programme is doing an amazing job, but we need to go from saving lives to changing lives. The old paradigms on which many of the funding silos were designed no longer fit the needs of today. Traditional wars, yes. Extreme poverty; emergency conditions, yes. But not where the humanitarian-development nexus comes together in fragile communities like the Sahel, where you have climate impact and poverty and then you have extremists coming in to exploit conflict between pastoralists and farmers, to exploit families and children who do not have food, to use it as recruitment. I have had mother after mother tell me "my husband did want to join Al Qaeda or ISIS but we had no food, we had no choice". And the World Food Programme can be the first line of offence and defence against this type of extremism. Defence, obvious. Offence, by prevention; by getting ahead of the curve. We had shown a couple of videos last week, I think some of you saw it, not all of you. I will ask my team if they would show the two videos now. As I had mentioned, last week when I was in France meeting with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, when we showed her the video on the Sahel, she looked at me and says, "Wow. I had no idea the World Food Programme did that", and she said, "We're in." That type of excitement is what we need.

One thing that I do think the United Nations does very poorly is sell itself. It talks in this language that nobody understands. Well, you see the video is not too complicated. You

begin to see the wow factor of what we are doing out there in the field which is the future of operations for true sustainable development and so – if you would show it.

[Video plays]

This is actually one of the reasons why I thought it would be critical for you to be here, as this is happening right now as we speak in Niger. It is impacting an entire nation. What we want to do is showcase that when we come together with strategic partnerships and comprehensive plans, we can change a nation. Well, talk about change I will come back to that in a minute but we have got Princess Haya and my wife behind her - Princess Haya, it is great to have you here.

So, with regards to food-for-asset type programmes, saving lives changing lives. Every humanitarian dollar ought to be a development opportunity as well, and not in short-term emergency scenarios. When I think about Niger, I think we are in a perfect position to showcase that when we scale up and do it right, we can food-secure an entire area. When you take the food-for-asset programme - you just saw the difference between the arid, totally dry parched land and the grasslands which could grow vegetables, which could grow crops. That picture you saw with all the grass was literally 12 months later. When you complement that type of programme with a school meals programme, wow, amazing change of an entire culture and this is what we have got to do more effectively in scaling up. I met with Henrietta (Fore) two weeks ago in New York and talked about what UNICEF could do with us. I said, "Henrietta, we need to partner. Let us be strategic. Let us build the teams." What is it going to take for all of us to come together to achieve the type of success that we believe will showcase to the world what happens when you do it right?

Let me just give you just a few examples. Hunger rate will go down. Migration will go down. Teen pregnancy will go down. Birth rates will go down. Conflict will go down. Extremist recruitment will go down. The water table will go up. Income is up. Reforestation up. Peace up. Resilience up. Sustainability up. Hope up. And we are going to put together the spreadsheets, the financial analysis to show that when we do not do it right, we spend a lot more money over 20 years than when we do it right - and then we will have an exit strategy. This is one of the things that I am asking of other United Nations programmes and operations: what is your exit strategy?

I am not talking about a short-term emergency; there is always an exit strategy there where there is an earthquake or hurricane. But in these fragile communities, if we do not have an exit strategy, it means we do not have a good strategy at all. We want to leverage every dollar and incentivize the local community. We are now purchasing hundreds of millions of dollars of commodities and food locally in Africa. Where there is a school meals programme, buying locally to encourage and sustain job creation. Then, of course, the communities become more self-sustainable and resilient, and they have significant assets created with the food-for-asset programme.

Let me just run through a few figures. Last year alone, 219,000 hectares were rehabilitated, millions of trees were planted, 17,000 kilometres of feeder roads were built or repaired, over 3,200 wells dug, over 500 bridges built, and the list goes on. As I have expressed to other members of the United Nations family, take advantage of beneficiaries who want to rebuild

their communities. They do not want international aid. They want to be self-sufficient and free and experience their dreams and hopes, but they need for us to empower them and encourage them. These programmes that we are talking about, that we are modelling around the world, now need to be scaled up. This is where I am going to need your help, going to your countries - and the donor countries especially - to talk to your governments with the development dollars and the humanitarian dollars and changing silos so that we can be more practical and effective in our work.

The last thing I would like to mention is United Nations reform. I believe that we are reforming the United Nations regardless of what happens in New York. I believe there is a renewed spirit taking hold of collaboration, cooperation. What I am also seeing is a tremendous collaboration between UNHCR and UNICEF and WHO. We meet before the official formal meetings take place, usually around 7.00 in the morning and what we get done in that hour is just amazing. But it does not make a difference if only the heads talk. We have got to allow that to permeate down to the management level at Headquarters and then down to the field. Henrietta can call me and she does on my cell phone; I call her. Tedros (Adhanom) and I are texting literally almost every other day. Filippo (Grandi), he and I email or text quite a bit and talk and that is the type of camaraderie I think that will bring about the United Nations reform regardless of structure in New York. However, we do see there is a restructure happening in New York and as I said a year ago, I know the World Food Programme does an amazing job, so make certain that reform does not destroy one of the really good things that the United Nations does.

Filippo Grandi and I have been asked by the Secretary-General to co-chair business innovations. I think it has been tried a couple of times before, Manoj (Juneja) has given me that insight - our team, Amir (Abdulla), Manoj (Juneja), and I wish Elisabeth (Rasmusson) was here but you are familiar with her situation, Valerie (Guarnieri) and Chief of Staff Rehan (Asad), we are literally committed to working together. This co-chair of business innovations, the McKinsey Group, says that there could be a possibility of (US)\$500 million of savings by combining back office services as well as leased space using security and sharing of vehicles. The opportunities are great. Filippo and I and Henrietta, at least three of the big ones, we have committed to really trying to push this forward. So, we are going to build the team that we need, the structure necessary to truly make this happen. This will cause, in my opinion, some gnashing of teeth when we get down into the weeds because I am certain there is going to be some countries that say, wait a minute, no we do not want you to be more efficient here. Well, we have got to move forward and try to utilize the dollars wisely so the beneficiaries can, in fact, be helped.

The resident coordinator system - I think it is a great opportunity but I also have great concern. I have expressed that to the Deputy-Secretary-General as well as to the Secretary-General. We are moving forward as the General Assembly moves forward with new resolutions but I do think we will make headway. We will work through some of the complicated issues and at the same time not destroy the World Food Programme, in my opinion being the most effective operation clearly in the world in so many regards. Our collaboration will continue no matter what happens in New York.

Seeing the United Nations Security Council pass the resolution they passed a couple of weeks ago about hunger and its relationship to conflict, I think is also another element of United Nations reform, as the world begins to realize you will never have development if you do not have food security. Never. When you have food security coupled with better education and development, well I think we can reduce conflict around the world. I do believe that we can achieve zero hunger by 2030, first and foremost if we address world conflict. It is our number one enemy out there. I think all of us need to continue to speak out and pressure countries so that we can end the conflicts and this is a very significant, important role of the United Nations.

I want to thank you again for allowing me to be your Executive Director. As you know a year ago my first phone call that I received, I was like, I am not going to work for the United Nations, no way. But a year later, I can honestly say of any position I have ever had in my career, I have had to use every experience and every relationship that I have ever had because of the opportunities. As I was saying to Scott Pelley on CBS on "60 Minutes," many of you remember that story months ago - privately he said to me, "Governor you have got the greatest job in the world." He and I have known each other over the years, and I said, "Scott, I do have the greatest job in the world." He was so moved by the interview and what he saw the World Food Programme doing, to be leader of a team and a family like this is just amazing. I said, but I want to say something you have never thought about. I said, I do not go to bed every night thinking about the children we save. I go to bed every night thinking about the children we could not save. I said, Scott, when we do not have the money we need, the World Food Programme, men and women in this room, we have to choose which children eat and which children do not eat; which children live and which children die. You see I cannot think of a better place in the world I would rather be than partnering with you to work the through the challenges with the right spirit of collaboration. I beg you to make us more effective. I beg you to be part of the solution. I beg you to be a continued partner as you have been in the past so that we can continue to achieve successes around the world. It is an honour for me to have been here now for 14 months as Executive Director of the World Food Programme and I thank you for that opportunity.