

## **Statement**

### **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction Sendai, Japan, 14–18 March 2015**

Mme. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of FAO, I would like to express our solidarity with the people of Vanuatu and Tuvalu as they face the aftermath of tropical cyclone PAM and confirm our availability to assist in the emergency response as well as in the recovery

Let me join previous speakers in commending the organizers for their hard work in ensuring the success of this Conference. I would like to also express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan and to the City of Sendai for all their efforts and their so kind hospitality.

I would like to thank you all for this opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Disaster risk reduction is a corporate priority for FAO, a crucial component of the Organization's efforts to build more resilient livelihoods.

I will briefly share our perspective on the critical links between agriculture, food security, nutrition and disaster risk reduction. And introduce FAO's commitments as we forge ahead the post-Sendai.

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Mme. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The livelihoods of 2.5 billion smallholder farmers depend on agriculture – by “agriculture”, I refer to crops, livestock rearing, fisheries and forestry – and in many developing countries, the sector accounts for as much as 30 percent of the national GDP.

At the same time, agriculture is one of the sectors most affected by natural hazards and disasters.

Economic losses due to natural disasters have tripled over the last decade – and continue to rise. While disaster risks are interrelated, disaster impacts differ among the various sectors.

An ongoing FAO study shows that over the last decade, the agricultural sector absorbed at the very least 22 percent of the economic impacts of medium to large natural disasters in developing countries.

When disasters hit, the development paths of entire countries and regions can be knocked off course. The livelihoods of people who largely depend on crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry are particularly at risk.

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Mme. Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

In the decade since the Hyogo Framework for Action, we have seen considerable progress – stronger overall policies, greater awareness and improved coordination capacities for disaster risk reduction.

However, concrete local actions are yet to be delivered at scale

The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction under negotiation clearly references the need for a stronger involvement of sectors. Agriculture, food security and nutrition are particularly emphasized.

The post-2015 framework under negotiation focuses on promoting people-centred, local actions and fostering links between emergency response and development.

Even stronger risk reduction efforts are needed to reach the most vulnerable, food insecure populations. Agriculture has a key role to play in this, providing services, advice and technology options at the local level.

Agriculture, food security and nutrition both benefit from and contribute to disaster risk reduction.

And agriculture, food security and nutrition have a tremendous capacity to reduce disaster risk and contribute to greater resilience.

Convinced of this, FAO is putting forward some key recommendations to shape the “post-Sendai”.

First and foremost, the entire agricultural sector must be mobilized as a responsible and accountable partner in the delivery of the post-2015 framework.

We must promote the transfer of and access to sector-specific knowledge and technologies for risk reduction, and by doing so, focus on strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable populations.

People-centred, inclusive and effective disaster risk governance requires engagement across all sectors.

The capacities of sectoral line agencies must be further developed for proactive risk reduction. Clear institutional and financial commitments must be made so that the sectors, including agriculture, better integrates disaster risk reduction into investment plans, standard operating procedures, as well as recovery and development programmes. Within and across sectors we need to build on existing efforts to mainstream disaster risk reduction. Synergies should be identified with climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as with sustainable natural resources management to reduce emerging risks associated with extreme climatic events and degrading ecosystems.

Post-2015, we must reinforce a multi-hazard approach and address risks beyond natural hazards, taking into account transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases, food safety events, and protracted crises.

Finally, we need to foster solid operational and action-oriented partnerships to address the challenge of multiple risks at all levels and optimize available resources.

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Mme. Chair, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is clear for FAO that disaster risk reduction is everyone’s business.

Only together can we effectively tackle threats and build resilience at scale.

We are ready as an Organization to take up the challenge.

FAO is indeed committed to intensifying support for enhanced disaster risk reduction, from a food security and nutrition perspective.

FAO's new resilience strategy will catalyse enhanced support to countries and communities, providing multidisciplinary expertise to better address the nexus between food security, nutrition and disaster risk reduction.

FAO is now establishing a facility to scale up our support for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into agricultural policies. The facility will also link agriculture, food security and nutrition with national platforms, legislation and policies on disaster risk reduction.

Finally, FAO is committed to initiating a regular monitoring and reporting mechanism for loss and damages caused by shocks and crises that affect the agriculture sector.

FAO stands ready to support our member countries in implementing the post-2015 framework, as part of our global efforts to enhance agriculture, food security and nutrition.

Thank you.