

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Organisation des
Nations Unies pour
l'alimentation et
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Продовольственная и
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Organización de las
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Statement by Nadia El-Hage Scialabba

on behalf of the

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

at the Second Preparatory Committee of the
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

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Co-chair of the PrepCom2,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues of the UN system,
Major Groups,

This statement responds to two of the questions posed to this meeting: what specific investments should a government prioritize as part of the green economy strategy; and what decision could UNCSD take to support a green economy which advances poverty eradication and sustainable development in all countries?

As we all refer to the multitude of global challenges – from food and fuel crises to climate and financial crises – we all must recognize there will simply be no green economy without due attention to the food and agricultural economies. This is especially telling when you consider that 60 percent of global lands are occupied by agriculture and forest activities, and that the food and agriculture sector as a whole provides livelihoods to 40 percent of the world population.

As the World Watch Institute 2011 edition on Nourishing the Planet describes, “there is probably no other single sector of the global economy that is so central to our prospects both for human development meeting the needs of our now nearly 7 billion people on the planet and also providing for environmental stability”. To environmental stability, I would add global security: everybody recalls the 2008 riots due to the global food crisis, a crisis mainly caused by ineffective policies linked to oil and food price surges, also exacerbated by climate-induced droughts. The estimated impact of climate change on agriculture, unless mitigated, could result in 600 million additional hungry people in 2080, inducing major population displacements to which no one is prepared.

With a global population growing to 9.2 billion by 2050, and incomes rising in developing countries, increasing food demands must be met through production and consumption patterns that respect the assimilative and carrying capacity of our Planet. This requires more than adopting new technologies. Facing global challenges, old and new, will require a change in mindsets – mindsets that support better and integrated policy, planning and management of resources. In other words, the paramount goal is good governance.

Considering the importance of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in alleviating poverty and the great impact of its management on natural resources, this sector cannot but be considered an essential part of any green economy strategy. Welfare gains from investments in agriculture are far higher than a similar effort in other sectors, mainly because they target the poorest section of the world population. Knowledge-building in agroecological management and incentive measures vitalizing rural landscapes help alleviate poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and lower adverse ecological impacts and greenhouse gas emissions.

Let me take one example: mountain development. Mountains cover 24 percent of the Earth's land surface and are home to at least one quarter of the world's poorest and hungriest people. They provide freshwater to over half of humankind for irrigation, industrialisation, hydropower generation, and urbanisation. They contain 17 of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots and one third of all protected areas worldwide. Mountain areas are realms for recreation and tourism in an increasingly urbanised world, while

providing key resources such as minerals, timber, and plant genetic resources of major food crops. Yet, mountains are treated as marginal and often neglected in national and international development agendas. The ability of mountains to provide essential goods and services for all of humanity is increasingly under threat from climate change, globalization, lack of investment and land degradation.

Since 1992, when the chapter on mountains as fragile ecosystems - chapter 13 - was introduced in Agenda 21, the demand for goods and services from mountains has grown considerably. In the context of a Green Economy, new opportunities for investment by the private sector are emerging, especially for renewable energy and ecosystem services. Without institutional arrangements that ensure the balanced development of social, ecological and economic capital at a variety of scales, these new opportunities could perpetuate the degradation of the mountain social-ecological systems. Enhancing global commitment and ensuring policy reforms and increased investment tailored to mountain regions will be for the benefit of poor mountain communities, as well as for humanity as a whole. Mountain development, notably through low carbon technologies and socially inclusive policies, should be given a prominent place on the Rio 2012 agenda.

Because agriculture, forestry and fisheries are natural resource-dependent sectors, green economy investments will (as some analysts have put it) create double or triple dividends, in the medium to long-term. However, at what cost? How could developing countries secure the green economy transition when certain jobs and livelihoods might be at risk? What kind of public investments and incentives are needed to safeguard smallholders' viability?

The Green Economy Roadmap likely to result from this UNCSO process will require strategies, policies and measures relevant to the food and agriculture sector. To this end, FAO has launched a Greening the Economy with Agriculture (GEA) initiative. FAO's objective with this initiative is to assist countries implementing the transition towards the green economy - in the context of sustainable development, food security and poverty alleviation.

More specifically, FAO action at technical, policy and civil society levels will seek to:

- ✓ Analyze the interactions between the green economy and the food and agriculture sector, including opportunities and constraints;
- ✓ Promote a dialogue with FAO member countries, as well as dialogue between the agriculture, forestry and fisheries constituency and other national partners, on GEA strategies for 2050;
- ✓ Promote food and agriculture stakeholders' participation into the Rio+20 process and beyond.

FAO's aim is to create bridges between different types of stakeholders and among constituencies, while strengthening the overall resilience of countries to shocks, either macro-economic or ecological.

As part of this process, I am pleased to announce the joint FAO/OECD Expert Meeting on Greening the Economy with Agriculture (GEA), to be held in Paris, 5-7 September 2011. For this meeting, FAO is exploring questions such as:

- ✓ Food, bioenergy and natural resources **availability** for low footprint agriculture, forestry and fisheries;
- ✓ **Access** to food and productive resources to the poor and indigenous people, including decent rural livelihoods, in a green economy context;
- ✓ **Stability** of food systems to macroeconomic and ecological variability;
- ✓ **Utilization** of low carbon food systems, including sustainable diets, biosecurity and waste management;
- ✓ **Policy coherence** and trade for GEA, including also non-agricultural policies.

Also, FAO is developing Guidelines for the Sustainability Assessment of Agriculture and Food Systems. We have in fact began a 5-week e-forum on this topic in February that will continue until 25 March, which has attracted some 200 online participants who are sharing their views and knowledge on this topic; you are all invited to participate at www.fao.org/rio20.

Based on synthesis of the findings of the Expert Meeting, FAO will seek its member countries' views on policy options for GEA strategies, including technology, employment and trade, taking into account different investment costs and institutional structures. The outcome of FAO member countries' discussions will constitute the food and agriculture sector contribution to Rio+20, that is, a GEA Roadmap for 2050. With this, FAO will provide qualified answers to the questions posed on the likely costs of transition to a green economy in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, potential financing sources and elements of a supportive international framework for an equitable green economy vis-à-vis trade, development assistance and investment.

Thanks you very much for your attention.