

## **THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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### **MESSAGE TO THIRTIETH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA Khartoum, 19 February 2018**

I am pleased to greet the Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa. Let me start by commending the Food and Agriculture Organization for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into its Strategic Programme Framework.

The rise in food insecurity in Africa, and the poor progress in reducing malnutrition, are grave concerns. Protracted conflicts are among the main drivers. Climate change is also a major factor, putting pressure on the resource base and increasing the risks associated with droughts, flood and other disasters. Many rural women and young people can no longer make ends meet on their land, triggering migration in search of opportunities.

In the African context, sustainable food and agriculture systems offer direct and achievable solutions for sustainable development. This is because agriculture is an important sector with enormous potential to contribute to ending extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition, protecting the environment, and nurturing harmony among communities, countries and regions. Increased investments are needed urgently to improve infrastructure, increase productivity, develop technologies, enhance market access, empower women, create jobs for young people and strengthen resilience.

The United Nations is pursuing wide-ranging reforms aimed at significantly enhancing the effectiveness of the UN development system. We have also entered a new era of partnership with the African Union, including through the signing, just last month, of a new framework on implementing and aligning the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The United Nations and I personally look forward to working with all partners to accelerate agricultural transformation across the continent. Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference.