

**Statement by Dr. Sigurgeir Thorgeirsson,
Permanent Secretary for Fisheries and Agriculture,
Ministry for Industries and Innovation of Iceland,
at the 38th Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the
UN, 15 – 21 June 2013.**

I.

Chairperson, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Chairperson, I would like to congratulate you upon your election to the Chair of the 38th FAO Conference.

Allow me to begin by confirming my Government's commitment to the important work of FAO. As a founding member of FAO, Iceland has actively supported the organization in its goals of eradicating hunger and malnutrition in the world and achieving food security for all. As a food producing and exporting, country Iceland puts a great emphasis on international cooperation in shaping the regulatory environment for food production and exports, safety, quality and environmental protection.

The new Icelandic Government, taking office only few weeks ago, has food production and food security as one of the central themes in its policy. This calls for emphasis on development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and strong participation in multilateral cooperation on responsible utilization of natural resources. The fight against hunger and malnutrition is a key element in the post 2015 global development policies and goals. Recent crises and famine have demonstrated the need for a twin-track approach of providing emergency food assistance. At the same time it is necessary to help fragile states to build up resilience to future disasters, natural or man-made.

II.

Responsible and effective management of fisheries, be it industrial or small-scale, is crucial for food security and better nutrition in the world. Iceland considers the FAO to be the proper forum for the global discussion on fisheries issues. Building on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, Iceland

supports the FAO Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the shaping of international agreements and the important voluntary guidelines on various aspects of fisheries, fish trade, health issues and the fight against illegal and unreported fishing. Iceland has strived to reach consensus among fisheries nations on ecosystem approach and advocated the importance of regional management regimes.

III.

Several cross-cutting issues are now playing an increasingly important role in the work of FAO to end hunger. To that end one can name effective management of natural resources, energy issues, climate change, soil and water preservation and gender mainstreaming. Iceland has the privilege of hosting four United Nations University (UNU) programmes in the fields of fisheries, geothermal energy, land restoration, and most recently in gender mainstreaming. Through these programmes, hundreds of experts from dozens of developing countries have been invited to Iceland to take part.

Increased attention to renewable energy sources, such as harnessing of geothermal energy, as called for in the Rio + 20 document, could be of great value to FAO's work. That could be of benefit for better food preservation and storage, as well as reducing post-harvest losses and waste along the food chain; - issues of huge importance to reach global food security.

The Global Soil Partnership meeting last week demonstrated clearly the importance of soil issues for growing food and preserving the environment. Iceland draws on more than one hundred years of experience of reclaiming land which the forces of nature and excessive utilization have damaged. We want to contribute to the fight against land degradation around the world.

It is becoming widely recognized that women play a crucial role in food security. Securing the rights of poor rural women, such as to land and resources, credit, inheritance and to take part in decision making, unquestionably contributes to increased food security.

IV.

Chairperson.

Iceland is a candidate for a seat in the Council of FAO for the years 2014 - 17. Our candidature is within a long-standing rotation scheme which the five Nordic Countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have for one seat in the Council.

The Nordic Countries have for a long time been strongly engaged in the work of FAO with substantial financial contributions, as well as through the sharing of know-how, technology and human resources. Iceland is strongly committed to continue this work as a member of the FAO Council. For that we need the support of other Members.

Thank you, Chairperson.