

**COUNTRY STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE MINISTER T JOEMAT
PETTERSSON, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND
FISHERIES, SOUTH AFRICA ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 38th
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

15 June 2013 – 22 June 2013

Rome, Italy

Mr President

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to address you on this occasion of the 38th Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization. This conference coincides with two very special events for South Africa:

(1) Yesterday was the 16th of June, a day on which we commemorate our youth for their gallant contribution to the liberation of our country.

(2) Two days from now, June 19, will mark one hundred years of the imposition of the 1913 Land Act. A heinous act of land

dispossession from the majority of black South Africans. The destruction of a class of successful black commercial farmers is the root cause of land and agrarian reform policies today.

South Africa wishes to congratulate you Mr. President and your Bureau on your election. My country also welcomes the membership of South Sudan, Republic of Singapore and Brunei Darussalam to the FAO family.

Mr. President, South Africa would like to add her voice to those who have already thanked the FAO Director General, HE Dr. Graziano da Silva for his excellent address to the Conference. Your Excellency, Director-General, we note that this conference marks the completion of your first full cycle of governance meetings since you took office. Having listened carefully to your intentions once again, you have underlined the urgency to address food security and nutrition for all.

South Africa, like other Member States, is encouraged that the FAO has embraced results- oriented management. We welcome the need to expand the agricultural productivity scope to forestry, fisheries, livestock and aquaculture. We support and endorse matters raised by the Regional Conferences of the FAO aimed at ensuring a world free from hunger and malnutrition.

In this regard we fully support the deepening of engagement between the FAO and Africa, especially in supporting the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the activities of the African Union and its Regional Economic Communities.

Mr. President, the 28th African Regional Conference in 2014 must give further impetus to its member states, the various regions and continental bodies and the FAO to jointly and in partnership address the common challenges of agriculture development.

Excellencies, South Africa like many other Member States, is seized with the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. South Africa currently has about 12 million people that are vulnerable to food insecurity. The situation is further aggravated by negative impacts of climate change in the region. As such we have prioritized investment in sustainable food production and agriculture infrastructure, as an intervention to ensure food security. We believe we can address hunger and food security through our support for small holder farmers in general and women farmers in particular. We want to ensure that forests and fisheries contribute to food security and nutrition.

Your Excellency, Dr. Graziano da Silva, South Africa will continue supporting and working with the FAO Country Office and other United Nations agencies in South Africa. We look forward to further enhancing and building on our deepening partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other Member States.

In conclusion, Excellencies, we thank our brother and sister countries across the globe, that have been united in the prayers and support for our ailing world icon, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. May this conference contribute towards his noble ideal of a world free of hunger, poverty and inequality.

I thank you