

**Delivered by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry,  
Cooperatives and Rural development, Republic of South  
Sudan.**

**H.E. Hon Betty Achan Ogwaro.**

**Rome 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Chairperson of the Conference  
Your Excellency the Director General FAO,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to express on behalf of the People and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan my profound gratitude for the overwhelming welcome to the family of FAO by voting yes, on Saturday 15th. Chairperson, allow me also to congratulate you for being elected to the position of the Chairperson and appreciate the Director General for a forward vision in combating hunger and malnutrition in the world.

I would like to thank the Hon. Director General of this esteemed Organization for his gracious invitation extended to the President of the Republic H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit to attend this momentous and historical occasion of the accession of the Republic of South Sudan to the membership of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), However, due to the urgent duties of his office, it was not possible for him to come.

Excellencies,

Agriculture is the mainstay of South Sudanese rural economy. More than 85% of the population in South Sudan lives in rural areas practicing subsistence agriculture and rearing of livestock and fisheries as the main sources of their livelihood. As you are aware, South Sudan is blessed with abundant Natural Resources that include vast prime arable lands which accounts for about 50% of the total land mass; forestry and wood land (29%), plenty of rainfall and large number of rivers and lakes. The Country is also diversified into a number of agro-ecological zones which make it suitable for the growth of varieties of crops, different types of trees and as well as suitable habitat to both livestock and wildlife.

Excellencies,

This conference is held at the time South Sudan is facing a number of challenges which impact directly on food and nutrition security of the country. South Sudan face the challenge of agricultural inputs (machineries, good seeds, fertilizers etc); low capacity, access to markets and farms, lack of resources especially credits to subsistence farmers, processing chains; political upheaval with its neighbor the Sudan, internal conflicts, and climatic change.

In order to ensure our agricultural transformation that addresses food security and nutrition, it will be imperative to focus on the management of risk and vulnerability that emanate from the threats of floods, droughts, plant and animal pests and diseases (East coast fever – locust and green

grass hoppers), economic shocks and conflicts (both localized and with neighbours), post harvest losses.

Over time, these challenges to the resilience of South Sudanese natural-resource based livelihood systems have been partially addressed through generous humanitarian assistance to complement the fundamental efforts of affected populations themselves. What is needed now is a radical reorientation in our engagement in threats from post crisis reactions to risk management for resilience. For us, this means using development, investment and humanitarian resources, partners and strategies in an integrated manner so that risks are reduced, resilience in the face of shocks is deepened, and livelihood options are expanded. The hazards do not, however, need to be a source of livelihood or economic collapse at the household or national levels

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of South Sudan has set as our priority, Agriculture and the achievement of food security in the Country and the drive for self-sufficiency in food production. This is a commitment and a vision that shall be central to our Agricultural policy and that we strive to carry out across all levels of government in partnership with FAO and other development partners. In earnest drive to realize this commitment and vision, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan has launched its National Effort for Agriculture Transformation and has backed up this by creation of relevant institutions such as the Food Security Council under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic owing to its paramount

importance; prioritizing agriculture into zones, (ZEAT), the Comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan; and developed policies to go along with it and the support of the Food Security Technical Secretariat; the collaborative working with agriculture related Ministries, agencies such as FAO and other development partners South Sudan is making strong although slow progress in the fight against hunger, poverty and malnutrition setting out plans for the development of Agriculture that are harmonized to important regional initiatives, such as through the IGAD process for the Country Program Papers and the Comprehensive African Agriculture Program (CAADP).

Your Excellencies,

Today, South Sudanese Agriculture is evolving into new roles in providing not only household food and nutrition security but also driving inter-communal peace and stability which is crucial for sustainable agricultural production and, attracting domestic and foreign investment, serving as the basis for a more diversified, resilient and robust economy for Citizens and the Nation alike.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The women and youth of South Sudan deserve special mention. Through the war, women sustained South Sudan with their tireless efforts to produce food, catch fish, harvest the gifts from the forests, and keep livestock alive, all under the most unfavourable conditions of war, poverty

and oppression. Simultaneously, generations of children and youth were forced to sacrifice education and the opportunities education bring. Women need to be at the fore front of agriculture-based transformation in South Sudan. They should be given equal access to resources, to benefit from rewarding livelihoods that protect food and nutrition security while fostering prosperity, and to enjoy the protection from all forms of violence and discrimination.

The energies and ambitions of our youth needs to be focused on agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forests and value chains as important not only for their livelihoods, but also as a source of peace and healing.

While South Sudan is oil producing country, our policy is that we shall use the oil revenue as a catalyst for diversification with Agro-based industry as the priority to fuel the much desired agricultural development. This will not be realized with the stoppage of the flow of crude oil through the Sudan. This, your excellencies means that there will be increased hunger and malnutrition, food insecurity and poverty and more support from FAO will be needed to address the challenges of combating hunger, poverty and malnutrition.

South Sudan Development Trust Fund for Agricultural Development which was announced Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of RSS is aimed to provide dedicated resources for the Government of South Sudan to partner with FAO and other Development partners with the explicit aim of developing effective institutions of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security in South Sudan with focus in

increased capacity, food production and productivity leading to a more food and nutrition security for the people of South Sudan. We expect to begin contributions to the Trust Fund by mid 2014. In this context we appeal to FAO and development partners to make initial contributions to help launch this much needed work. We expect FAO to lead the process and in this regard I support the Director General's improvement in the Organization and I appeal to my colleagues to support the 1% budget increase in the FAO budget which the Director General asked for.

To conclude, for South Sudan, **food security is human security**. We say that **a hungry country is an angry country**. Emerging from the long War as we did, South Sudan does not need to be angry anymore, just as much as it does not need to be hungry anymore. For us, **Agriculture is** more than food; it is **central to the process of healing our society**. Agriculture markets bring people together and bind them in positive relationships of reciprocity and exchange. There is dignity in eating the food one grows, joy in the sight of a new born calf, assurance in an abundant fish catch, soothing air from protected watersheds and hope in a field green with sprouting crops. Agriculture is Life and we are happy and proud that we are a part of the human Family that is dedicated to sustaining Life

Thank you very much for your kind attention.