

(Transcription)

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Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation of Yemen

Thank you very much Mr. Chairperson. Your Excellency, Director-General of FAO, your Excellency the Independent Chairperson of the Council, Excellencies, Ministers, Heads of Delegations, ladies and gentlemen, peace and God's blessing be upon you all.

I am pleased on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Yemen to take the floor at this 38th Session of the FAO Conference. This Conference is held at a time when the world is faced with many great and complex challenges. This requires the adoption of national, regional and international collective measures in order to overcome these challenges and impediments.

The Conference will be discussing many important issues. Namely, the revised Strategic Framework as well as the vision of the Organization, its Strategic Objectives, the Medium Term Plan for 2014–2017 and the Programme of Work and Budget for 2014–2015 submitted by the Director-General of FAO.

The Republic of Yemen welcomes the efforts deployed for more decentralization in FAO, by delegating more authority to the regional offices, in order to undertake its role fully. We would like to express our full support to the decentralization process and its forthcoming phase. We also support the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action for the renewal of FAO.

We would like to express our thanks and gratitude to FAO for the technical support and advice it provides to Yemen. Yemen would also like to express its support to amendments to the budget and the Plan of Action, as I said before.

We reiterate our thanks to FAO for its technical support and also its help in combating poverty, desertification, plant pests as well as transboundary animal diseases. And we would like to thank FAO for the role it played in the common programme between WFP and FAO, which had a positive impact on mitigating the adverse effects of the political transformation recently witnessed in Yemen..

In this regard, we would like to thank Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, for his recent visit to Yemen. This ended the isolation of Yemen and had a very positive impact in terms of increasing technical support and advice provided by FAO to many sectors in Yemen. It also encouraged many dignitaries and representatives of other international organizations to visit the Republic of Yemen.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are faced with a threat of infestation by three agricultural pests. At the beginning of the year, the tomato stem borer attacked our tomato crop, the entire crop, and this led to the destruction of the entire crop for this season and many losses incurred by farmers. It is a threat to many other crops such as potato and eggplants.

At the same time, we also discovered the palm weevil pest in the governorate of Hadhramaut and we fear that this pest might be propagated over larger areas. This will lead to even more losses, always incurred by farmers.

We also expect an outbreak of desert locust soon, and we call on our brothers and friends from donor countries to provide us with support for the implementation of the transitional programme of stabilization and development of Yemen and its agricultural sector, and to honour their commitments and pledges made in the Conference of the Friends of Yemen that was held recently in the British capital, London. This programme aims at rehabilitating the agricultural sector of Yemen.

We are faced with many challenges due to the dire economic situation which led to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, arising in poverty and unemployment and acute malnutrition amongst children and women. There are over one million children suffering from malnutrition. The Yemeni society is an agricultural society and over seventy percent of its population lives in rural areas. The deteriorating economic situation and the decrease in production, have led to a hike in food commodity prices by over fifty percent since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2011.

Yemen also hosts over a million refugees from the horn of Africa, who fled armed conflicts there. They constitute an additional economic and security burden on Yemen, which suffers from a scarcity of resources. As such, we need to increase activities and programmes in order to deal with these challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, to conclude, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Yemen to continue its cooperation with FAO in order to achieve our common objectives,. We would also like to reiterate our support to FAO's activities in Yemen, by providing all necessary facilities and overcoming all difficulties in order to guarantee the success of these programmes. Thank you for your kind attention.