

[Original language Arabic - Checked against English interpretation]

**Statement delivered by
His Excellency Othman Hussein Faid Mujli, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation of the
Republic of Yemen
on the occasion of the
41st Session of the FAO Conference, Rome, Italy (22-29 June 2019)
24 June 2019**

Good evening.

In the name of god the all merciful, the compassionate,
Mr Chair, Excellencies,
Ministers,
Excellencies,
Heads of delegations,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Yemeni Government, I have the pleasure of taking the floor during the 41st FAO Conference.

I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate the Director General elect Mr Qu Dongyu. I wish him all the best in his new endeavour. I would like to assure him of the collaboration between my country and the FAO under his leadership so as to achieve together the SDGs and eradicate poverty. I would like to extend my words of gratitude to Mr José Graziano da Silva for the work he has done at FAO during his tenure.

Ladies and gentlemen, this conference is held at a crucial time, when the world faces multiple and complex challenges that stand in the way of achieving the SDGs. Facing them would require a united front, prompt action and an inclusive approach, especially that those challenges not only impact a given country but also have a spillover effect across the world, thus threatening global peace and security.

In Yemen, on top of all the global challenges impacting developing countries and their economies, we face and unprecedented humanitarian crisis due to the conflict provoked by the Houthi insurrectionist militias which led to the deterioration of the situation on the political, economic and humanitarian level. The infrastructure was destroyed, most notably the agricultural infrastructure, in a country where 60 percent of the population relies on the agricultural sector. This worsened the humanitarian situation and increased food insecurity particularly in rural areas according to a joint FAO/WFP survey.

67 percent of the Yemeni population suffers from food insecurity. Although humanitarian assistance and emergency interventions reduced this percentage to 53 percent, food security remains a critical challenge especially considering that insurrectionists refusal of any calls for peace.

Ladies and gentlemen our country faces a humanitarian disaster which only a united front can face. Unfortunately Houthi insurrectionist militias have paralysed legitimate State institutions and have hindered humanitarian work, going as far as exploiting this crisis for political gains. The Yemeni government had repeatedly pointed at this problem and warned about it since the early days of the insurrection.

The Republic of Yemen would like to strongly condemn these ongoing practices by the Houthi insurrectionist militias. They have stolen WFP food aid and have hampered humanitarian work. The government holds those militias responsible for the decision taken by WFP on the 20 June to partially

suspend its operation in Houthi controlled areas, particularly in the capital, Sana'a. This decision will impact about 850,000 vulnerable persons.

UN agencies and international organizations should strongly condemn these violations exerted by the Houthi insurrectionist militias and put pressure on them so that those practices would cease and UN humanitarian work can proceed unhindered.

Ladies and gentlemen, eradicating all forms of poverty and improving food security are our greatest challenges. If we are to achieve sustainable development by 2030, we need to tackle these challenges. On behalf of the Yemeni government, I would like to reassert the need to act swiftly resorting to exceptional measures and strategies in order to tackle famine and malnutrition. We would like to stress the importance of capacity building and resilience building for farmers in countries suffering from protracted crises including in my country.

The situation there is unprecedented and requires a unified coordination among all international actors, especially the UN and its specialized agencies working on food, agriculture, relief and emergencies. Food producers should also see their resilience increase regardless of bureaucratic and administrative complications. A collaborative international effort proportional to the size of the disaster should gather main donors under one umbrella. Needless to say that emphasis should be placed on an emergency humanitarian relief effort and on sustainable development in parallel.

I would like here to salute the joint work of FAO and WFP and IFAD and all other organizations. Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to FAO for its work in Yemen. I thank all of the Organizations and donor countries for their support to FAO projects.

Last, a word of thanks to the organisers of this conference. I would like to wish for this conference to achieve all of its noble objectives, namely, eradicating hunger and poverty and achieving the SDGs by strengthening food and agricultural systems across the world, thus achieving the sustainable development goals for all.

I would like to thank last, the host country and thank you ladies and gentlemen for your attention. I salute you and may be the blessing of god be upon you.