

**SPEECH FOR ALEX HIMELFARB,
CANADA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN FOOD
AND AGRICULTURE AGENCIES,
TO THE FAO CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY
FAO HEADQUARTERS, ROME, ITALY
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5mins

Mr. Director-General,

Honoured Heads of State,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honour to represent the Government of
Canada at this important conference.

In 1945, Canada was proud to host the founding FAO conference in Quebec City.

Today, we are proud to continue as a leading FAO member nation.

Canada is taking action to respond to world hunger.

We are among the leading contributors to the World Food Programme. This April, we increased our food aid programming to 230 million dollars [**\$230M**].

Just as importantly, for the first time ever, we are fully untying food aid, with a special emphasis on purchasing food in developing countries.

For the longer term, Canada believes that increasing agricultural production in a sustainable manner, in both developed and developing countries, is key to addressing food security.

To this end, Canada is investing in agricultural development programming to help farmers in developing countries increase their production and food security.

Canadian development assistance for agriculture has increased by over 100 million dollars [**\$100M**] between 2001-02 and 2007-08.

Supporting agricultural research for developing countries is also vital to improving productivity.

Canada is a key contributor to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. This funding supported research into innovations such as drought-resistant varieties of maize.

Farmers in developing countries should also benefit from a more level international playing field.

That is why Canada joins other developed and developing nations in working toward a successful and ambitious outcome to the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization.

We want a result which realizes the potential of the Doha Development Agenda, and which also benefits Canada's agriculture sector, including both our supply-managed and export-oriented industries. We believe this is achievable.

We also need to focus on sustainability for the world's farmers. This includes sustainability in energy, which is a major input right through the food production system.

If we have learned any lessons in recent times, it is that our global dependence on oil is not sustainable. Clearly, the world's energy mix needs to be diversified.

Of course, different countries will pursue different approaches, according to their circumstances and capabilities.

Canada's balanced biofuels plan will see a very small fraction of our lower-grade crops being used to meet our practical biofuel goals of five per cent renewable content in gasoline and two per cent in diesel.

Given its size, the Canadian biofuels industry has a negligible effect on food and feed prices.

Even when Canada reaches our biofuel goals, 95 per cent of Canadian cropland will continue to be available to produce high-quality food.

Meanwhile, the benefit to the environment will be dramatic: the equivalent of taking one million cars off the road.

The Canadian government is also investing 500 million dollars [**\$500M**] to develop the next generation of biofuels technologies – including technologies that will process agricultural residues, rather than the crops themselves, for biofuels production.

The current crisis requires both short-term, and long-term solutions. Clearly, the FAO has a key role to play to help member states increase agricultural productivity. This and other FAO work should complement what other UN bodies are doing to respond to the crisis.

At the same time, Canada encourages the FAO to continue the essential ongoing work of implementing the Independent External Evaluation so that collectively we have the most effective organization possible.

My message to you today, ladies and gentlemen, is that a realistic, common-sense approach to biofuels, such as the one Canada is pursuing, will balance the needs of the world's hungry, the needs of the world's farmers and the needs of the environment.

I believe our approach accomplishes that and I look forward to working with FAO and member states towards this goal.

Thank you.