



IFPRI AT 40

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

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Speaker Remarks

Keynote Speaker: **Magdy Martínez-Solimán**
Assistant Secretary-General, Director of the Bureau for Policy and
Programme Support
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), USA

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

My first words are of congratulations to IFPRI on your 40th anniversary. I am pleased to join you today to share some perspectives from the United Nations.

Food security has always been, since the San Francisco Charter was signed, one of the most heartfelt priorities of the UN and of its development agencies. For the three priorities of the UN –peace and security, development and human rights– food security is indispensable.

And yet, as we live in a world of great inequalities. Short of 800 million people around the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy life. One in nine people in the world live in hunger. One out of six children -- roughly 100 million -- in developing countries is underweight. One in four of the world's children are stunted.

At the same time, 1.4 billion people are overweight, of whom 500 million are obese. 70% of the world's poor depend on natural resources for all, or part of, their livelihoods, and many are suffering the consequences of depletion of natural capital and climate change.

Overwhelmingly, food insecurity is a global economic, development and political problem – with the greatest challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The underlying causes of food insecurity are complex and diverse: poverty, inequality, inadequate infrastructure, conflict, climate change, water scarcity, land and environmental degradation, among others.

We can be the first generation to end poverty and hunger –just like we probably are the last generation with a serious chance to end global warming.

To address the underlying causes of food insecurity and to inspire action towards a world free from hunger within a generation, the UN Secretary-General launched the Zero Hunger Challenge in June 2012, during the Rio+20 World Conference on Sustainable Development.

At the same time, the new 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals emphasize a global determination to end hunger, achieve food security, end all forms of malnutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, as stipulated in SDG2.

Achieving food security and ending hunger can only happen when emerging food policy issues are able to address several interconnected factors together. Such factors include growth, livelihoods and employment, access to basic infrastructure and services, nutrition, health, education and greater equality. When addressing these multiple dimensions together, interventions that emphasize the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems will be critical.

At UNDP, we believe that measures to combat land degradation, reduce food and post-harvest losses and promote sustainable consumption patterns are critical to achieve SDG2.

The agriculture sector remains critical for inclusive and sustainable growth. It represents a significant share of the economies of developing countries, and provides more than 70% of employment in LDCs. Achieving food security and ending hunger will require a capacity for integrated decision-making, whole-of-government approaches and public-private partnerships, in order to address inefficiencies and unsustainable practices in the agriculture sector and build a new global food system.

It will also require significant capacity building, technical assistance, knowledge transfer, finance and accountability.

All must therefore be on board –Governments, farmers’ organizations, civil society, think tanks, research institutes, social movements, business groups, development and commercial banks, the UN system, all of you– and infused with the determination that zero hunger can be achieved.

We will focus on three priorities:

1. Facilitating access to technology and land rights for small farmers, in particular women, to meet the food needs of the poor and marginalized communities;
2. Supporting an inclusive and sustainable agriculture value chain that generates jobs and livelihoods, and empowers smallholders to increase productivity and access to markets;
3. Utilizing social protection as a powerful tool to tackle hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and to empower people by building their assets and protecting them against shocks.

In conclusion, shocks are the new normal. Volatility seems to be no news anymore. But we can’t settle for a world of plenty, with plenty of hungry people. Agenda 2030 is an agenda of dignity and justice – for people and planet, and food security is an indispensable pillar of that new agenda.

Thank you for your attention.
