



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

**Interactive dialogue on  
“Targeting Hunger: South-South and Triangular  
cooperation for Transforming Agriculture”**

12 February 2020, 15:00-18:00 hours

Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters,  
New York

Remarks

by

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon!

1. I am honoured to participate in this interactive dialogue on "**Targeting Hunger: South-South and Triangular cooperation for Transforming Agriculture**".
2. I would like to thank Mr Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the 74<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, for his strong leadership and for organizing this very important and timely event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. We are all aware of the critical situation the world is facing: more than **820 million** people in the world suffering from hunger and **2 billion** people experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity – and the numbers are not improving over the past years.
4. **We all know that this is unacceptable and that we need to reverse this trend. But how?**
5. **The answer lies in our ability to transform the agricultural sector!**
6. The sustainable development of agriculture is the key to ending hunger.
7. But we need to overcome the challenges that face us, in order to make agriculture an engine of sustainable development.
8. Our approach to agriculture must confront the realities of growing land pressure, the impact of climate change, the degradation or depletion of water and soil resources, and the dramatic loss of biodiversity in our time.
9. We need smarter agriculture that works with, not against, nature; that properly values and remunerates the contributions of small-scale producers, fishers, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples not only to food but to preserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem services.
10. **This is where South-South and triangular cooperation makes a difference!** Through South-South exchanges we can disseminate sustainable climate-smart agricultural knowledge, experience and technologies to smallholder farmers.
11. To this end, FAO will further strengthen cooperation with member countries in the framework of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.
12. FAO has been at the forefront of this endeavor for over 40 years.
13. Since 1996, FAO has raised over USD 370 million for South-South and triangular cooperation. This has allowed deployment of more than 2,000 experts and technicians to 80 countries, transferring solutions, knowledge, experience and technologies to millions of smallholder farmers.
14. Building on our experience, we will further leverage the full potential of South-South and triangular cooperation to accelerate agri-food systems transformation. In doing so, we will focus our efforts in three areas:

15. **First, FAO will implement high-impact and innovative South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.**
16. Through the **Hand-in-Hand initiative** that I launched last year, FAO will work with countries and their development partners to identify and target those areas where the gap between agricultural potential and actual development is so large that investment can help lift people out of both poverty and hunger.
17. FAO will work with governments, other sister UN agencies, international organizations as well as research institutions across the world to co-develop data sharing systems, models and analytics that help us improve our understanding of food systems.
18. The goal is to understand where and how investment, innovation, policy and institutional change can help in making agri-food system transformation a driver for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
19. **Second, FAO will expand its partnerships with diverse groups of actors**
20. FAO has solid South-South and triangular partnerships with countries such as Brazil, China, Republic of Korea, Japan, Mexico, Morocco and the Netherlands. FAO will work to expand that to meet the increasing demand for South-South and triangular cooperation.
21. In this same direction, FAO will strengthen partnerships with the private sector. We cannot achieve impact at scale without private sector finance and investment. South-South and triangular cooperation can be leveraged to unlock private sector investment in food and agriculture. We have succeeded in this area in the past and we will do more in the future.
22. FAO has set an ambitious target of creating up to 200 partnerships with academic and research institutions. We have already begun reaching out to some and have witnessed positive results.
23. **Third, FAO will enhance national capacities to engage more in South-South and triangular cooperation**
24. We will provide differentiated capacity-building support to our membership, both providers and recipients of South-South and triangular cooperation.
25. The ultimate goal is to enable countries to effectively manage exchanges and engage in impactful and mutually beneficial South-South and triangular cooperation with FAO's involvement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

26. FAO can do a lot. Together, we can do more and we can do it faster to achieve the SDGs.
27. As Director-General of FAO, I appeal to all of you to come together and scale up all our efforts.
28. Let's work together, learn together and contribute together!

Thank you.