

Excellencies, distinguished Representatives,

As we all know, we are facing a major migration crisis. It is estimated that about 250 million people are to be on the move due to different factors. To successfully manage this crisis, we need to address the drivers and underlying causes of migration, as recognized by the Declaration adopted at the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants, held September 2016 in New York.

Migration has always been an intrinsic feature of human societies, often a manifestation of a drive for innovation and development together with economic, social, and cultural benefits accruing to migrants and to countries of origin and destination. Yet, structural transformation, rapid economic growth, climate change, environmental degradation and conflict are creating new and complex drivers that exert new pressures both on recipient, transit and origin countries. This calls for concerted action to ensure that migration is safe, orderly and regular.

Indeed, the drivers and impacts of migration are intimately linked to FAO's global goals of fighting hunger and achieving food security, reducing rural poverty and promoting sustainable agricultural development and use of natural resources. Much migration, especially distress migration, originates in rural areas. Rural migration will increase in the next decades. The majority of the world's extreme poor rely on agriculture or other rural activities for their livelihoods, and so creating conditions that allow rural people, especially youth, to stay when they feel safe to do so, and to have more resilient livelihoods, is a crucial component of any plan to tackle the migration challenge.

Investments in agriculture and rural development can address the root causes of migration, including rural poverty, food insecurity, inequality and climate change, and magnify its positive outcomes.

Working with its partners and using resilient agricultural livelihoods as a key instrument, FAO works to: (a) raise awareness on the nexus between migration, food security and agricultural and rural development and strengthen the capacities of rural stakeholders and agricultural line ministries to account for migration and labour mobility in agriculture and rural development planning; (b) address the factors that compel people to move, especially those linked to natural disasters, conflicts over natural resources and environmental and livelihood deterioration in rural areas; (c) strengthen resilience of both displaced people and host communities for instance with life-saving food security and livelihood support; facilitating gender-equitable access to natural resources and markets; the reconstruction, rehabilitation and strengthening of food and agriculture infrastructure, services and markets.; (d) harness the positive contribution of migrants and displaced people and fostering their integration.

We believe that migration is a crosscutting issue that requires all member countries, UN agencies, development partners, private sector and civil society to work together. FAO stands ready to support the intergovernmental negotiations leading to the adoption the Global Compact on Migration. Indeed in 2018 our major annual flagship publication, the state of food and agriculture will be dedicated to this theme.

Today, we are here to reiterate our position that migration offers a solid opportunity for development and our renewed commitment to seeking durable solutions and capitalizing the potential of migration for agricultural and rural development in the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. Thank you.