

Global Bioeconomy Summit

Statement by FAO Deputy Director-General,

Coordinator for Natural Resources

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Your Excellency Peter Bleser, Parliamentary State Secretary of the  
Ministry for Food and Agriculture of Germany,  
Honorable Ministers and Ambassadors,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. On behalf of Mr Graziano, Director-General of FAO, I would like to thank the German Government and the City of Berlin for providing this excellent platform for discussion.
2. We are at a crucial moment in time, Ladies and Gentlman.
3. Next week, world leaders will meet in Paris at COP 21 (in the aftermath of the recent barbarian acts of terrorism) to a groundbreaking Climate agreement and renew their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as the most appropriate way to promote a fairer, safer and more inclusive world, where no one is left behind.
4. Hence, this Bioeconomy Summit and its conclusion are crucial leading the world towards a more sustainable development.
5. Please allow me to share with you some key messages from FAO concerning bioeconomy, based on our vast experience regarding the production and use of the basic source of bioeconomy – I mean biomass.

6. **Our first message is that the increase in bioeconomy development is welcome as it** offers a unique opportunity to comprehensively address inter-connected societal challenges such as food security, natural resource scarcity, fossil resource dependence and climate change, while achieving sustainable economic growth.
  
7. **Second: Bioeconomy will have a transformative role on agriculture in its broad sense** –meaning crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries - because it will put a lot more pressure on renewable but finite biomass resources to produce a lot more non-food goods than today while also fulfilling everybody's food needs.
  
8. **Bioeconomy development per-se is not necessarily sustainable. Achieving sustainable bioeconomy is easier said than done because it faces major and simultaneous challenges,** such as ensuring food security, addressing climate change and sustainably managing natural resources; while guaranteeing that bioeconomy benefits everybody. **This is FAO's third message.**
  
9. The good news is: **Collectively we already know many ways and have significant experience on how to advance bioeconomy in a sustainable way.**
  
10. Please allow me to share some key aspects:

- **Bioeconomy development must contribute to the production not only of more food, but of more nutritious food.** The world has enough food and yet over 840 million people are undernourished. So let's focus on improving access to food and its quality.
- It is quite obvious that **sufficient tenure security on land and other natural resources** is a key for investment. Since 2012, FAO supported over 20 countries in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).
- We will face an increasing competition over water, land and energy, to produce food and non-food goods. If we don't "do more with less" – or, to put it in a more positive way, "Save and Grow" – through **resource use efficiency**; we will probably need more than one planet to develop bioeconomy in a meaningful way. FAO can bring its work on resource use efficiency, on sustainable crop intensification, the water-energy-food nexus, prioritizing the use of agricultural residues between soil quality, animal feed and bioenergy, and integrated food energy systems.
- **We need innovative technologies, including biotechnology – but it needs to be sound and adapted biotechnology – old and new. Plus we need it for everybody and it has to involve those who are good at managing biomass, including small-scale producers.** FAO will convene in February 2016 an International Symposium on "The role of agricultural biotechnologies in sustainable food systems and nutrition".

- ***We know how to achieve sustainable bioenergy – and we can use this knowledge in sustainable bioeconomy.*** FAO has developed a well-respected decision-support package on sustainable bioenergy. It can be a useful starting point to support the production and use of sustainable biomaterials. ***Let's move from the food versus fuel debate to a food and fuel debate. Food comes first and we know how to make it happen.***

*Ladies and Gentleman*

- ***Climate change*** will significantly influence the potential for bioeconomy development. FAO's approach here is prioritize sustainable production and livelihoods as well as climate change adaptation; with climate change mitigation as a co-benefit, when possible and appropriate.
- There is also no doubt that ***particular attention needs to be paid to family farmers and other small-scale biomass producers and businesses*** in bioeconomy development, given their important role in eradicating hunger.
- We simply cannot continue ***loose and waste one third of what we produce***. We are working with countries to reduce food losses at all stages of the agri-food chain. One excellent example is the International "Save Food" Initiative.
- ***We need to work across sectors. FAO has done its homework*** and our work now centers around five strategic objectives which are of cross-sectoral nature making us work in a more integrated manner.
- Finally, ***the global development of a topic such as bioeconomy requires technical excellence, multi-***

**stakeholder dialogue and coordination at both international and national levels.** FAO can bring its technical experience, its “honest broker” role, a global convening power and the duty to support its Member Countries.

- In fact, 62 Ministers of Agriculture proposed at the January 2015 Global Forum for Food and Agriculture **that FAO, in collaboration with other partners, provides the appropriate platform for international efforts towards sustainable bioeconomy development that gives priority to food security and nutrition.**
- Since then, the Government of Germany has provided support to **FAO to launch a process leading to the development of sustainable bioeconomy guidelines** aimed at supporting its Member Countries and other parties interested in bioeconomy. This work has started and will be carried out in collaboration with other major national and international players in the area of bioeconomy.

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

**11.** Last month, FAO celebrated its 70th Anniversary. We have achieved a lot, but more needs to be done.

**12. Our greatest challenge is to end hunger and food insecurity. That is the cornerstone to sustainable**

***development and the future we want. It should also be the priority of sustainable bioeconomy development.***

13. We are ready to face the challenge, together. Please be assured that ***FAO is ready to play its role in the worldwide development of sustainable bioeconomy for all.***

Thank you for your attention.