

Director-General Transcript
Meeting with Senior Management
29 January 2020

Opening Remarks

Director-General

Happy New Year. Now both in the Western Calendar and in the Lunar Calendar we have entered the New Year. You know, for the people from Asia, today is a working day. By the Lunar Calendar it should be the fifth day of January, so it should be work now. That is why I chose today, to combine the Western Calendar and the Eastern Calendar.

Because for agriculture it is more convenient if you follow the Eastern Calendar. That way you can avoid all of risks, free from the frost period, and from other extreme disasters from global warming. So please read the Eastern Calendar, even though we are now on the West. Also, I called for this meeting, and I don't want to spend too much time now but I want to say one sentence. This year is the Chinese Year of the Rat, it is a year of an efficient FAO. So FAO efficient year, because the rat should be quick. So, I think beware, I will evaluate. I already had a meeting with the Director of Evaluation, Mr Igarashi. So, he will come to evaluate what you are talking about today and to see your real performance, your KPI. By a standard 360 degree evaluation. You are key persons, not only talking, but ensuring more deliverable, more tangible results.

So now, what do you say, everybody please take notes and then we will come to ask you by the end of the year to give your remarks, all among the D1 and above. I want to create a little bit of innovation of evaluation. Of course, I don't want to destroy the conventional evaluation you are already used to, the individual evaluation parameters. So just do your business as usual, but I will create a new evaluation among you, because D1 and above, you should know each other. To get to know what your marks are - even on the DDGs. I will be evaluated by the Member Countries, and the DDGs, ADGs, D2s and D1s should be evaluated amongst yourselves first. And then, you will offer your service to your colleagues. Otherwise you don't care about the evaluation because you got a good mark from Dan and his supervisor - that's not good frankly speaking. It's not a scientific way.

So let's do it now and we will use this conference, this meeting, as a first step to get your personal commitment. And then the rest of the people, who will not speak today, you also submit your working plan for tangible and traceable objectives and tasks.

Closing Remarks

Director-General

Just as Nancy said beforehand, I want to make you wake up. First of all, I would like to appreciate Dan Gustafson, finishing his official Chair duty, and his position as DDG. So, I would like to invite you all to stand and give him an applause, and our present.

(Applause and Dan Gustafson opens gifts.)

So now you get a little bit of fresh energy. The first time we met last year, it was just a brainstorming. Now as I said, it's a new year, 2020 it's a new start. We have started to do real business. I always did that when I was in different positions located in China or outside China. We started to make the cold room warm-up first. I think I am to do so together with your cooperation, with all FAO employees. You can see last December, the 18th, I think you made the Red Room warm up. It is some kind of evaporation with boiling water. I am very astonished and impressed by your engagement, and your contribution and your emphasis and energy.

We can now do real business. So starting today, it's a business meeting. That's why we wanted to thank Mr Dan Gustafson for his contribution and also for his long term commitment and I expect he has a good life, has food, and of course he will continue to work with food systems, transformation for the next years to come. So he will not leave us for a long time, maybe just several weeks for a holiday, I don't know, to relax. And also, I would like to appreciate Antonio Tavares. He as you know, he has worked a lot in this organisation, also give him applause.

(Applause)

Because, for those who know him - but a lot of people didn't know him well – so far, he is the longest working person in this organization. 39 years ago he joined FAO as a Consultant, so I think he is second-longest. Because longest is the ICC, Mr Mehboob at 50 years, so nobody can beat that! But I hope some young ones here can compete with Antonio Tavares, who worked as a Consultant in Legal Affairs, in Fisheries, in the field and also years taking care of the Legal Office. He dedicated and contributed his professionalism and also to make a difference. Because he is always sitting in the dark room to protect the interest of FAO. Not so many people realise that he has really contributed and engaged his professional commitment to FAO. So I really appreciate you, take care of your family first, and in case you still have time to work for FAO, you are also invited. You want to say a few words?

Antonio Tavares

Allow me to say for a few seconds, a few words. Your predecessor started a battle about two years ago. To change the mandatory age of separation. You know that there was a recommendation that we needed to change the age of separation from 62 to 65 years old and I was very much engaged as a soldier in that campaign and a number of representatives went to the Director-General to complain about me and saying that I was overstepping my authority. The fact is that I was very detached and by that time I had already decided that when I would reach 62, I would be retiring so I felt completely aligned to that debate despite what the representatives had said at the time. I wanted just to say and to thank you and through you FAO, what I think was a rather long and rich career. The work of Legal Counsel can be an impossible job sometimes. I mean my particular situation, I had a number of family constraints which obliged me to travel. I want to thank all my staff for their unfailing support throughout the years and I will be ready to assist my successor. This is not an application for a Consultancy but I am ready to assist and I wish you all the best, you and your Senior team. I was very proud to be part of your Senior team, even if for a very limited period of time. Thank you.

Director-General

Dan, you want to say a few words?

Dan Gustafson

Thanks very much Director-General for the opportunity to just say a few quick words. I think this is a really good cross section of what is going on and I think it gives everyone, really a lot of enthusiasm for

the coming year and I think all the speakers were exceptionally good. And I thought 15 was going to be a lot actually, but I think 15, we went through it really quickly. But it was also interesting from this perspective, just to let you know, I think I worked with everybody in the room over the years in one capacity or another. A few of them were my superiors, Basharat included, a fair number of them have reported to me but I worked with every single one of them, I think without exception and they are a really good group. I know you know that, but I think what they said today was in fact what any of them would have said in their commitment, what they have in their plans for the year, what the new things are and so on and it was just really good. I think my final event probably in the Sheikh Zayed Centre, it was a really good one to go out on and I appreciate the opportunity. Thank you.

Director-General

And as I said, I appreciate them, not only in themselves, but you know Dan Gustafson was supposed to leave before July and I persuaded him to stay with me to help me in the transition. We need the Chinese historical reasoning from kingdoms 2000 years ago. If you want to get the new king, you need the senior cabinet people to handover, to help you and assist you. So he is one of them, and also Antonio Tavares, and Ali Basharat and others. So we need some senior ones really to help me to transfer, so there is somehow continuity, and it is also very important not to lose our culture, FAO's culture. This I respect very much. And of course at the same time we work with new Chinese British, Lau. Dr. Lau, he is now D2 of the Office for Corporate Communications - please stand up. I am a biologist so you know the metabolism, - newcomers and some senior ones fading out. Not go out, but fading out. One day I will be fading out, like leaves from green to yellow and then they die, so fading out. That's natural so I think so, of course I wish that all of you live a 100 more years, it is possible if we work healthily and with healthy nutrition and a healthy life.

First of all, I already said it's a year for FAO for efficiency. So FAO year of efficiency. Please transfer this message to all employees if you can manage it one minute quicker, one hour quicker, one day quicker, one week quicker, of course based along the science and the rules. Compare any case, any meeting, any activity, any travelling, one minute, one month, one week, one day, one hour, you name it, so that is efficiency.

For that we need a solution, we need action, and we need satisfaction. Satisfaction to the Member Countries, to the farmers, to our colleagues and to your staff and employees who work with you. If you don't build your team with satisfaction, you will be alone. Like myself, I appreciate the DDGs and all of you that work with me. So build up your team, your team spirit, so satisfaction among employees. That is your springboard to jumping and then we can reach out to our partners, our Member Countries our farmers. So, I don't want to explain too much.

Then, we need coordination, we need innovation, we need a results-orientated approach. In this Organization, I hear too many slogans. We need a results-orientated approach. For agricultural food systems transformation and for all those deliverable results which we committed. In doing so, I wanted to make two announcements.

First, all the big data related to production, land and water, trade, nutrition, you name it, should be coordinated and chaired by Maximo Torrero. Because different sectors, that is a similar situation when I started as Vice Minister in China 5 years ago, 6 years ago. Every small department, division had their own data. Now it is time to assemble it together. CIO should be the platform. That is the way to be committed to build the digital FAO. Otherwise every small department and small division - and that's why I stopped about 10 days ago, two weeks ago where someone wanted to develop another silo. I will kill your silo, your new silo. I don't want it. Because big data is a powerful approach.

Second, all the emergencies no matter natural disaster, diseases, and internal emergencies across the FAO system should be chaired and taken care of daily by Laurent Thomas. Not divided by different departments, because now we face so many emergencies. Of course professionally you have the DDGs, and ADGs - but you [Laurent] will be Chair. For instance, Africa Locust, of course Semedo, she will take care professionally, but the emergency, or some accident or whatever you mentioned, the emergency issues. And also Dominique, you are the only person responsible for emergencies, not only for emergency support or aid, it should be emergencies across the system. I am talking about emergencies not the professional emergency, not only. So all the emergency issues should be highly coordinated otherwise it will be a disaster, not only for FAO system, but for our Member Countries. We would not have offered tangible and deliverable services. Those are the two things. So the cabinet and the relevant departments should be aware of that. That is a big, big restructure. Otherwise there are too many silos. Every small group on behalf of FAO, and go to the field, and respond to anything, which may be beyond than what we expect. That is the second.

So, what are the key words. I am carefully listening. I think in general among the 15 people, 9 people are well prepared. The other six not so, I don't want to name you. All of you, you are listening, you can make your own judgement. I took notes here, I never asked you to prepare. It is a chance for you, you are already D1 or above. Some of you are already Vice-Minister level or used to be. You know how to handle things. What is the opportunity for you, what is the opportunity for us, what is the chance? Otherwise, you waste your chance, you waste our time.

So let us do business more seriously and please all of D1 should submit your work plan with KPI as soon as possible with descriptive parameters to the Office of Human Resources, and also to the Office of Evaluation and ODG, the Cabinet. I will look and check what are your tangible results, tangible parameters and objectives. I will ask the 3 offices to look closely and follow what you are doing. I will put this all on the FAO web, not the internal web. Mr Lau, we put everything on the FAO web to let all the Members look at what our D1s and above are doing, not only yourselves, you should on behalf of your department, your division, your area. That's a way to let, if you are doing very well and your Country and your colleagues and your friends, they will come and say "hey DG, why did you fire him or her, he is so good". And if you say yourself he is so good, nobody believes it. So let's be transparent.

I was transparent because I was elected and what I do and what I say is always on the web. So now I bring all D1 above. Later on I will ask DDG also to prepare, what are you promising to do and your supervision. That is a real transparent evaluation and it's traceable. Not only saying a few words, a sentence. You know you get paid from Member Countries, you get paid from donors right? You have to answer what they ask you to do, otherwise it is not just to face the evaluation of the office, or evaluation from HR, no. Even myself, I have no time to evaluate you but I let all the people evaluate you. We have 4 billion farmers who live in countryside. They all watch closely. So thank you for that.

The key words you mentioned, SDGs, Hand-in-Hand, land and water, end hunger, innovation, private sector engagement, big data, and also action to change. Those are the key words, I am learning from you, so that is what most people like to follow. And then to make change and reachable results on the ground of Member Countries, we need 4 elements: enabling policy, innovation, investment and capacity building. So for all the projects you are going to implement for the Member Countries you should consider these 4 elements. And then we have to balance coherence and decentralization or dedication, to the lower, to the countries, to the regions, like I did, through delegation of my authority to the DDGs.

So now it is time for you to dedicate, and also bring coherence. I said coherence and coordination, I said big data and emergency should be more coherent and more centralized. Not every project or every

activity should go decentralized, big data it should be centralized otherwise there is no power at all. It is not big data, it is a small book, small information. Third, we have to build one FAO by digitalization, that is the most economic and quick way to build. And also, we build a one FAO by traceability, traceability of the senior management here, D1 or above. What are your activities, what is your project, what are your results, what are your mistakes, what are your risks? Everything should be traceable, like CODEX, we have traceability on food safety and also residues, toxins, whatever. So let traceability offer you a job, a project. That's why I encourage Maximo to take the leading example to put all the projects in ES on the FAO web. Also, now I hear today the Investment Centre should put all projects of the feasibility study, evaluation or whatever on the FAO web. So, the Office of Communication should post all those approved by the DDGs. So far I didn't change the responsibility for each DDG as I am waiting for the new DDG from the USA. Now, then we can have a new responsibility, to change a little bit. So far you just take the original and previous arrangement, but you have to put all those issues on the web when you are ready and the others you have to follow because all the members are watching you. Why are Maximo's projects on the web, why is the project from the Investment Centre on the web, why others private sector or whatever you name it, PS, or I don't know so many others. It's a digital world, we don't need to hide, because a lot of procurement activities should be put on the web. Let all the people check or trace you. That's the power of the digital world. I don't know, I sit in my office not so many people talk with me, I don't know what you were doing. Let all the people globally search you. That's very important because we are working for the people, we are international public servants, our work should be traceable and reliable. They will be won over by transparency, that's a way, and loyalty. Even your CV, some day I will put all the D-1s and above's CVs, like my CV on the web: from which university you graduated, how many stages you have come, from the first job until entering FAO. Not the generic kind, you have to put from which month to which month, and all the colleagues who know you will put the fact news, factual information. That's transparency, that's loyalty. So I think its very important for that.

The last thing I want to mention here is we need coordination and communication. Coordination is not a concept. I will ask you, encourage you, D-1 within Departments, how many P-5s you work with. You have to indicate how many projects with other P-5s, even not under your supervision, that's coordination. Otherwise we pay for your D-1 instead of P-5. And also how many project activities, someone is not a project manager but professional, some work in the Cabinet or in logistics. How many activities do you work with other Departments, cross-Departments, even cross-Organizations. We will list you, D-1 one, D-1 two, we will put it on a table. The D-2 also, within Departments how many D-2s work together for one project and how many D-1s, even P-5s? Also, outside the Organization because D-2s somehow you represent FAO, so you should work with other organizations and also with other Departments. You are D-2s, for instance, you are D-2 for Agro-Commodity and how many projects work with Fisheries or with Nutrition, I just take this as an example. That's how to build the FAO system's spirit of family value and real collective power, and also it is to cut the silos. Also, other international organizations, not only UN organizations, if you are D-2. In fact, D-2 is different, because D-2 is a big step and then ADG is the same.

How many ADGs do you work with, other ADGs? You are ADG for one sector, how many ADGs do you work with? other ADGs in this system or regional. That's one, or how many D-2s do you coordinate, to work together? A lot of ADGs or D-2s just get a project from D-2 and D-1 level, that's not value added work. Then why do we need so many ADGs? One ADG can house two or three D-2s or three to four D-1s. Because if we added the value, look I'm a DG if I get all D-1s and above your accomplishments are considered my achievement for granted. It's not nice. What value have I added? So my coordination also, among the ADGs and DDGs, that's why I asked Semedo I will be Steering Chairman for the Fall Army Worm Action Plan, and I will coordinate the Steering Committee meetings and also mobilize resources

from China, from America, from the EU. I push her, that's my role. Also it is an indication how the Fall Army Worm Action Plan is so important, and the Food Systems Summit also, just for information. So I will take some big ones to coordinate, to mobilise. Hand-in-Hand, of course. So, I encourage ADGs also, you are ADG, what does it mean? Assistant to the DG. But, at least, you have to have a good performance as Assistant to a DDG. When I was Assistant to the Governor, the Governor asked me to lead a task force. You had to finish and then you qualify to become Vice-Governor. Because someone talks with you, you have to change your business and performance. You are not only just as an ADG title, you have to assist me, what kind of task force you can finish on your own? Coordination and also resource mobilization. And, the DDGs, the same logic. How many other DDGs, other DDGs in other organizations, within FAO how many ADGs not only yourself, for instance, You are allowed, you have the power to do so, you have authority to do so. Each DDG should be coordinating others to finish the bigger project, the bigger programme instead. So, I think there's coordination and communication. Among the D-1s and D-2s and ADGs, you need communication. Now, WeChat, others, Twitter, also WhatsApp, and also you have to communicate outside through the official channels by quality check of Office of Communication, by the office of the relevant professional department first and then also by the check with ODG, then you use the DG of FAO to get it out. That's why before the year I asked all of you to present the highlights, so Dr Lau you should talk with all the D-2s, what are the highlights one, two – put it on the web. You spend so much money, what is the highlight, reachable highlight? Because you have got an individual evaluation by the HR or SSC in Budapest, no that's your provisional evaluation, what is your highlight? We need to answer the questions from Member Countries and the public, from society also.

That's why I ask you to highlight. How many highlights you can report, and you can make a story, why is it so good, so informational, so impactful. So the Office of Communication together with CIO and the web, put all those highlights. Of course, these highlights should be traceable and reliable and approved by the DDG and then we can make the FAO annual report more reachable and with more impact to the Member Countries. They are closely watching us. So the coordination and the communication and the “any other business” that I've already mentioned and meetings, please cut 20% off meetings which are organized by P-5, P-4 or D-1. Before the New Year I asked ODG to get all the meetings under the FAO, there are so many, so much travelling. I don't know, do you have time to sleep and think? There are a lot of people travelling from one place to another. I didn't see them working in the FAO headquarters. If someone is travelling more than 200 days let them travel, they are not an employee of FAO, they are a traveller, an international traveller. Some job may need more frequent travel, nowadays we have video, we have telecommunication, so cut 20%. DDGs and Maximo you will be responsible, and they will merge three or four to one. Because a lot of people go to the Member Countries ‘ah, people from FAO headquarters, they treat you very well, famine needs stopping’ and they go back, and they come back from one location to another. That's a waste of time, waste in quality of your job, so 20% cut.

Then, innovation. I say repeatedly a small step by individuals collectively will make a bigger leap. So the ADGs and the project and seminar meetings, you just change a little. I am so happy to see that we had the 25 years recognition event organized by Ali Basharat. He said that he is older than us but he still has a very innovative spirit. He organized the recognition in the morning, with a short CV introduction and then came the first meeting of the afternoon for newcomers, a welcome meeting in this room also. You see, there is really a build-up upon inherited culture, so I say that because even meetings if we change a little bit they will have a tangible result and others. So innovation is not only science and technology, I said it is innovation of mindset, innovation of approach, innovation of business model. For us it is more important but for science it is of course important. So that will be the mandate of the new Office for Innovation, once we recruit the Director and Chief Scientist, so we will have a discussion. Also, I really

hope to 'stem innovative gene' into FAO system. This organization is too conservative, for many years too bureaucratic. You saw the same thing but once you leave here you are nothing, because you did not have a real legacy left for this planet. We have to avoid that, otherwise the people are very nice when they see you, ' ah, you are so important', it's a polite way but we have to consider ourselves more demanding. So, I think a 'stem innovative gene' into FAO system sounds best logically-guided way of designing the business first.

The fourth is openness and sharing. A lot of people close their door, and the travelling, and they come back and close their door again. I move around and I see a lot of people, not a few, I would say 40%, 50% of people come, lock their door, computer and then go out and travel and then come back. That's the phenomenon of FAO staff. That's not good, you need to be open, open to your neighbours, open to your department, open to the other organizations, to make a real change. Sharing, sharing information, I know a lot of country FAOR Representatives still running their old business, in their old mentality. They didn't follow Headquarters new mission and initiative.

That's all, am I going to forget? no. I check all those activities, when I have time I'm always online to check different countries. A lot of countries didn't have any news on the web from FAO. Why are we running so many projects with no information on the web of the countries? You have to ask them to make our news, our results, on our local web and also regional.

Look, in Bangkok I take as an example, if you look the news in the South Post or Thailand newspaper, how many news on the web in a year? I think OCC, Office of Communication should establish traceability pyramid because you spend so much money and even then no news. Also, in Headquarters, the same. Not only the FAO web, also CNN, BBC whatever, all the influential media, social media, you didn't adhere but if you make every D-1 at least one or five, D-2 two, an ADG four, and a DDG ten annually on their social media and media and everyone could read of FAO. We have so many experts, also females, even they are P-5 or P-4, so we have to make the crowds to engage in establishing the visibility of FAO. Of course, the best of our performance and achievements of FAO. But - Investment Centre I take as an example, how much money do you handle, much more than IFAD - but how much news comes from the Investment Centre? Almost zero. How much money, I said two times almost four times more than IFAD. No information or news. So FAO is only digging its head to the desert. That's not good. We need to work hard, we need also communication and outreach. That's why openness and sharing.

The fifth is discipline and the rules. Because when we have a DG of FAO open, transparent FAO and some of you if you didn't respect discipline and rules you will have trouble. I said repeatedly, I committed to the Audit Committee and also OIG, I never interfere with their business. I will let them investigate DDG, ADG, D-2, D-1 or any general staff, that's no doubt. I said repeatedly to staff employed from China, you will be evaluated more harsh, because I am originally from China, so I think that we have to be very respectful to the discipline rules. And, at the last evaluation, as I said repeatedly during my campaign I want to establish a 360 degree evaluation. Not only to get the recognition and appreciation from your supervisor, because a lot of people try to do favours with their boss- that's natural, but then they don't care about the reaction from their colleagues, their customers, their relevant partners. 360 degree evaluation: that's a beauty, and very important to give you a cubic three dimension of your performance and marks. So, I had a talk with the Office of Evaluation and together with the Office of Human Resources and ODG, first we start with two groups, D-1 and above, and then FAORs, including the regional D-1 and above. So these two groups will be started with the 360 degree evaluation this year and I want to see tangible results and before Christmas we will see. I'm awaiting a scientific evaluation.

So that time, if you are on the short-list, I'm sorry. I'll remind the majority that the short-list is not a good short-list, so please be serious on evaluation on the KPI and others.

So, I hope we will have a FAO year of efficiency for the 75th anniversary. That's the best way to celebrate. Also, I hope that the majority of you can still be on the long-list by the end of this year. Thank you.