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Opening Remarks by the Executive Director

President Jhail, thank you, this is your first presiding as President. You followed in some good footsteps. Our task is before us facing the greatest humanitarian crisis since World War II.

When you look at the history of the United Nations and when it was formed and why it was formed, and the Marshall Plan that developed thereafter, it was trying to rebuild the world from chaos and crisis. The World Food Programme years later to come into existence to address hunger around the world and help develop nations in food because hunger is such a major factor in stability. Here we are decades later; much progress has been made, hunger has been reduced, extreme poverty has been reduced by over 50 percent. Nations like China and Mexico and South Korea are no longer beneficiary nations but donor nations. Great progress has been made, but it seems in the last few years that we are going in the wrong direction. Ten of our thirteen major nations where we have extraordinary funding are man-made conflicts. The way we did business 40–50 years ago was different to now and protracted conflicts that seem to have no end. Our friends, our brothers and sisters in many of these nations seem to have no hope. They do not know where the future lies for them. It is difficult enough to provide food and security in times of emergency whether it is a tsunami, an earthquake. But when you go to South Sudan and Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic and Somalia and Nigeria and other places of conflict, the citizens of these nations worry about their long-term future.

But we were making such good progress. In fact such good progress was being made that the United Nations felt like there was an opportunity to end hunger by 2030 so we developed some Sustainable Development Goals. Number Two goal -- that world hunger would end by 2030 if we work together, with partnership from the NGOs and the United Nations and the donors and the countries around the world. But now it seems like that goal is no longer achievable, and in the present rate of man-made conflict it **is** unachievable.

But reflecting on my first 69 days on the job ... when I received the first phone call about doing this, I was very reluctant because of the crises facing the world and in the United States, rumours were about possibilities of a major cutback. But I called several friends and said tell me more about the World Food Programme, its efficiencies and flexibilities -- because many times when leaders step into positions their hands are tied and you cannot achieve the objectives you want to achieve. As I learned more about the World Food Programme, I found that this organization was quite different because the leaders of the world had given the flexibility and the tools necessary for objectives to be achieved. I can tell you after 69 days of being on the job -- of which I have only been here about 20-something days because I have been all over the world -- the bad news are the problems. The good news is one of the problems **is not** the World Food Programme. I cannot imagine walking into this job, Mr President with all the crises, possibility of a substantial reduction in funds

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and a World Food Programme that needed overhauling. The good news is this team, this ship is operating on all cylinders; it is doing an incredible job. The management does not need shaking up.

Having been a United States governor, when I see the problems before us I see that there are opportunities. For example when I became governor our unemployment rate was the worst in the United States. We had military base closures, we had textile mills shutting down, we had an agrarian economy diminishing. But with every tragedy, there is a treasure of opportunity. We redesigned our economy based on teamwork and ideals and principles and measurable objectives and within two years our unemployment rate was among the lowest in America and personal income growth was number one in America. The reason I tell you this is I believe that this team in spite of the problems that we face, we will achieve our objectives. As I have travelled around the world I have been amazed at the flexibility of this operation, whether it is commodities in the Syrian Arab Republic or cash-based transfer e-cards in Lebanon, the World Food Programme adjusts working with donors in the countries of the recipients to find the system that works the best so that we do not destabilize an economy, so that we can strengthen an economy and provide food security for people.

The task we are facing is daunting. From just 2011 we have gone from 35 million displaced people to now over 65 million displaced people; we have gone from USD 3.6 billion in funding needs to USD 9 billion in funding needs. Just in the past year, we have gone from 80 million people in urgent need of food to 108 million in urgent need of food; that is a 35 percent increase in one year and that is due to man-made conflict.

It is daunting? It is. But with this team, in this room, I believe with the heart, the compassion, the knowledge and the experience, we can achieve the objectives we desire. While we will work to do our dead-level best, we are going to need your help, the leaders in this room, to bring pressure to bear upon these nations in conflict from the parties involved because we cannot solve hunger just by money alone; it is going to require extraordinary pressure upon many of these nations in such a way that the conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen and South Sudan and other places diminish. If these man-made conflicts are eliminated, if they end, I do believe with all my heart that world hunger can end by 2030.

Based on the leadership in this room and our partners around the world like FAO with Graziano da Silva – many of you have heard that he and I have been taking some trips together-- we are having a great time working together. Somebody even told me he even had Mr da Silva smiling. We were in Washington D.C. last week meeting with friends in Washington from the State Department to members on Capitol Hill and doing joint groups together. We were in South Sudan together showing how FAO and the World Food Programme are working together. And Gilbert Houngbo at IFAD ... tremendous leadership that is coming to the table and we look forward to partnering together, not worried about silos, not worried about

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who gets the credit but worried about how do we get the job done and who is best suited in each situation. That is where we want to be because as we look to the future, whether we are dealing with the Integrated Road Map or country strategic plans we know there has got to be give and take. As you well know there was concern among many of you in this room about moving too fast and we were trying to slow things down to make sure we get it right.

Transparency – I told Ertharin Cousin when the Proactive Integrity Report came out which I know she did not want to end her term on the Proactive Integrity Reports but I told her thank you; I said this actually will really be a good working document for us to see where we have some inefficiencies, see where we have some concerns. She and I had a good laugh about it. It has been an extraordinary review and we want every one of those items in our review mirror, quickly; not because we are putting it behind us but because we are addressing it and it is behind us. So if anyone in this room in the Executive Board feels like there is any problem that is not being addressed, particularly when it comes to integrity, accountability and transparency, please make certain you hold us to that highest standard because in today's environment where there is political instability and some of our major donors are having political pressures, the last thing we need are problems. We need to show that this is a lean and mean operating machine, as we say where I am from; that we are getting the job done with the most efficient and effective ways. You have been hearing some of the concerns in the newspapers that the budget coming out of the White House, zeroing out most of the funding from the United States for Food for Peace or McGovern-Dole, so you can imagine I have made a lot of trips to the United States in the last three months. I say three months; I have only been on the job for a little over two months but the first few weeks before I agreed to even consider this I wanted to make sure that our friends in Washington, in the United States Senate, in the United States House, were in fact committed to long-term funding. Because when you look at the Marshall Plan and where the United Nations was only 50–60 years ago facing the constraints and the problems in that time period we, again, are at another crossroads, facing extremism.

It is time for the nations again to go back to the fundamentals of the United Nations. And this is going to take money, just like the United States then put in USD 13 billion which is fair-market value equivalent today of 130 billion. My charge to my friends is: it is not time to turn the clock back; it is in fact time that America with its allies and friends all over the world that we step up to the occasion to fight extremism so we can fight poverty and end hunger and carry this world to a place that we all want it to be in our dreams and our hopes. So our friends in South Sudan, the newest nation on the face of the planet, will have peace and prosperity; so that our friends in the Middle East will no longer be at war. But this is going to require all of our working together and it is not a time to cut back. So when I have walked the halls of the United States Senate and the United States House talking to my friends that I have known for years in both parties, they are absolutely committed.

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Unfortunately, because of the obsession with the media today, with distractions like in Europe it was Le Pen, Le Pen, Le Pen or the United Kingdom, Brexit, Brexit, Brexit, or the United States, Trump, Trump, Trump. The people around the world are not receiving the normal balanced information that they normally receive about famines and conflicts and hunger and poverty and issues of such. Because what we have seen historically, particularly from these large donor nations, the hearts of the people open up and respond but they must know about it. My first 90 days, the first 69 here I have been number one talking to major donors, are you going to be there, are you going to stand strong? I will honestly tell you that I believe that the Trump Administration, President Trump himself when he receives enough of the facts, I believe that he will be a champion for these causes. I might have to add that I met with Ivanka Trump last week and had a nice chat; you know there is no greater way to a dad's heart than through the daughter, I have got two girls and you can never deny your daughter's request. It was a great conversation. **We are not going to leave any stone unturned.**

In the United States, the Democrats and Republicans have a way of putting aside their political differences when it comes to world hunger and I do not think they will turn their back on us now. Having said that, there is a call by our friends in the United States for other countries to step up more. Many of you have been stepping up more. Germany has been stepping up more; the European Union has been stepping up more; the United Kingdom has been stepping up more; Canada, of course devaluation of the dollar creates issues for them but in the midst of those of you who I do not have time in this room to go all the way around, but thank you. But our task is not done. I do believe, as I told my friends, as I have visited now just in the past few weeks from these major donor nations: that in these areas of extremism, if you want to spend more money on military operations cut the World Food Programme. I have studied so very clearly, where there is hunger extremism will flourish. Our studies, as you have seen, just coming out of the Syrian Arab Republic alone, for every 1 percent increase in hunger there is a 2 percent increase in migration. We know what happens when people migrate. In fact the Syrian people, as studies have shown us, a Syrian will not move out of the country until they have moved at least three times inside the country because they do not want to leave their home; and when they do leave their home country and end up in a place like Germany – Germany I think is spending somewhere around €50 a day for the humanitarian needs on average per refugee. You know what it costs the World Food Programme just to feed an individual in the Syrian Arab Republic? It is 50 cents a day. On average it is 16 times more money with all benefits. So there is every reason for us to stabilize nations, provide safe areas where citizens in those countries do not have to leave.

Visiting these countries I have been telling the story, many of you know we have been travelling to South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia and many other countries – I think I have been to 12 countries in the last couple of months and we have plans to be in Yemen, Nigeria and other places soon. That's because we are

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trying to bring attention to the media, to break through all the clutter of local politics of a domestic nature, to bring attention to the crises that we are facing around the world. There is USD 300 trillion of wealth available in the world today, 300 trillion, unprecedented fluid wealth beyond any time period in world history. All we need is USD 9 billion. The world is spending USD 2 trillion a year on military operations alone, imagine if we took a proper portion of that for hunger and sustainable development. Which brings our other issue to bear – is it because of the conflict and these crises that is absolutely distracting us from sustainability and development in nations that are ready to move forward?

We ourselves have to try to provide balance not to be distracted by just a crisis in the famine areas alone but how do we redesign the future working with our partners and nations that are ready to move forward, like China did or like Mexico did or like South Korea did, because the expertise of the World Food Programme I have never seen anything quite like it. When we were in South Sudan, Mr da Silva and I witnessed just one particular change by our team in redesigning a parachute. Like for example nutritional products and cooking oil had to be moved into these very remote locations by helicopter – a very expensive proposition – but by a redesign of the parachute along with the compression system of how it lands, the cooking oil and these nutrients were able to be dropped out by airdrops with huge aircraft dealing with volume. That one change alone saved, in just two years, USD 45 million. At 50 cents per day per person that is 90 million more days of helping a hungry child or person.

The crisis before us is grave, 1.4 million children in the areas of famine alone are at the break of starvation. Without the funding needed 600,000 children will perish or die in the next 90 to 120 days; that is one child every 12 seconds, without the funding needed in these crisis areas. So we need all the help we can get. It is not just the money but money is important. I hope that other countries will step up more than they have in the past. Some of you are doing all you can; some of you can do more.

I plan to spend at least once a month in the United States over the next few months until we have the funding secured and I am hopeful having just the last week been back in the Senate and the House, I have been so moved by the Democrats and Republicans saying that they are going to stand strong and I believe that the United States will not let us down. I am asking you, do not let us down. Let us all work together. The Gulf States need to do more, Russia, China can do more, Europe and other countries can do more. We have before us an opportunity and we look forward to working with you. My wife will join us in September. I am looking forward to many of you getting to know her.

I have met I think with 97 permanent representatives in the last couple of months and travelled to 12 nations. I did not realize it was a 20-hour-a-day job, seven days a week; I thought it was maybe 18 hours a day, six-days-a-week but it is worth every bit of it. I am at a stage in my life that I do not need a title, I do not need a job; it is all about a cause. Everything I believe in is based upon this simple teaching of love

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your neighbour as yourself. I dedicate myself to this cause because I believe that the leadership that is needed at a time like this are the people in this room.

I look forward to working with the President in the Executive Board to achieve our objectives, working with the team at the World Food Programme, which is second to none, and every single person that we have on our team out there throughout the world; they lay their lives on the line every single day. In fact it was said one time that there is no greater friend than a friend that will lay their life on the line for another. I believe that is the World Food Programme. We will partner with FAO and IFAD and all other organizations like UNHCR and Tony Lake at UNICEF – we already had a tremendous collaborative conversation – working with the donor states or working with recipient countries we look forward to partnering with you. I know everything will not be perfect; we will have our bumps on the road but as long as we keep our hearts pure and our heads strong we can overcome anything because I believe in people and I believe in the people and the leadership and the expertise around this room. I ask you to continue to bear with me because I am, as we say, drinking water out of the fire hydrant, I am learning so much per day. I will make mistakes but I can assure you it will not be one of the heart. I think with your continuing to mentor me and teach me and we working together, I do believe that we can end world hunger by 2030.

So Mr President, thank you for my first exposure to the Executive Board and thank you.