

First regular session of the Executive Board, 2018

Opening remarks by the Executive Director

D. Beasley, Executive Director: Mr President, thank you, I look forward to working with you in this new role and new capacity. This is a great family. When I think about the men and women in this room that are committed to the ideals that we are all committed to, I have to say thank you and to our outgoing President, Yousef Juhail. It was a year ago about this time that you all were really considering who the new Executive Director was going to be and there were a lot of questions about this guy. But it is hard to believe it has been 10 months since I have been in this position. I had planned to speak 30-40 minutes but I think because of the time situation, after losing a day, I am going to cut it down to about half. As my wife would say, yes, we will see how that turns out.

I am going to just touch on a few things that are very, very important to all of us because one thing we must never forget is why we are here. What are we all about at the World Food Programme is addressing the needs of starving, hungry families and children all around the world and how can we achieve zero hunger. And we all know, we have heard this and discussed it over and over, we will never achieve zero hunger as long as we have the number of man-made conflicts that we have. But the successes that we do see out in the field, every single week, all around the world, because of the expertise that comes from this Board, the oversight and the guidance, are allowing millions of people around the world to go to bed every night full. Yet we have 20–30 million people around the world that go to bed every night on the brink of starvation because of a lack of funds, or lack of access. This does not even get into the other 700 million that go to bed hungry every night, maybe not on the brink of starvation. And so, while last year we had a fabulous year in terms of raising funds in spite of what we were facing, we still need more money. And zero hunger will not be achieved, even if we do not have the wars, if we do not receive the funds that we need to be able to achieve the objectives. So, while other agencies in the United Nations went down in funding in so many respects, in the World Food Programme, we went up. In fact, the available funds that we had, some of which we could not spend because some of it was earmarked, was about (US)\$7.1 billion. Quite amazing. We spent over (US)\$6 billion that was available to be spent. We raised a record-breaking (US)\$1.4 billion for future multi-year purposes.

So all that said was tremendous, and the United States, which was zeroing out the budget, got turned around and now we have tremendous support from the United States and many of you in this room are stepping up even more. But before I get into the numbers, which I want to touch on a little bit later, and the many wonderful achievements we can talk about, I want to zero in on what I think is on everybody's heart and that is some of the concerns that we are facing such as sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and abuse of power. You read the same papers that I read, you read the same stories and you have the same questions and the same concerns. And it was a little bit, quite frankly, surprising to me having been a United States governor. One of the things I did was send an email out right off the front saying: we will not tolerate sexual harassment, sexual abuse, or discrimination. I assumed that everybody would believe that, only to find out, a little bit later when some of the reports of exploitation were coming out in the newspapers from Hollywood and Oxfam, etcetera, that some of the women were saying: we just do not believe that management is serious. That kind of hit me in the heart and I am, like, why? Because you look around the

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world: how many years and how many decades has everybody been talking about sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and not just in WFP – worldwide. There still is a sexual harassment problem and it is unacceptable. I was a little bit caught off guard about that. I think my leadership group will tell you that at every meeting... we will talk about the policy we are going to be implementing, how we are going to work with the Board and how we can send a message to the world that the World Food Programme is going to be the leader on this. We are going to showcase the best of the best. Policy is very important, but if every policy on sexual exploitation and harassment in the last 40 years was successful we would not have this issue today. So, it is more than just policy; it is what happens in those meetings when the door is shut, the attitude, the atmosphere, that is set at the highest levels – those discussions. This is a very serious issue and we should not play with this issue.

On the other side of the divide I do not want to create an atmosphere where people are tiptoeing around the hall afraid to say anything either. But no one should feel disrespect, discriminated against or fearful working anywhere and especially at the World Food Programme. As I have told my team, anybody caught sexually harassing, abusing, discriminating in any way – you are fired. As fast as we can do it – you are fired. I have said it at our management meeting about a month ago with our top team of country directors and regional directors. I said: if you, as a leader, as a supervisor, as a senior officer in the World Food Programme, if you do not believe in this philosophy, in this environment, I want your resignation. I want you out of this organization. Because I put people in three categories in this area. One, those who do it right, which is the vast majority of the people who work here. Second, you have a few that I do not think mean ill but they still say things that do not quite sound right, they do not mean bad but sometimes they need a little encouragement – so, you know, you should not say it that way, or you do not realize you are being offensive. Then you get the third group, and that is the group where it needs to be all hands on deck to identify who they are. We do not want to wrongfully indict anyone, so to speak, but at the same time we cannot play with this. If there are rumours going on I want to hear about them and I want to start investigating; I want to start looking at those individuals more clearly, more closely. And look for those hidden, subtle factors that may give you the realization that there is a problem here. We will want to do everything we can. If they can be prosecuted criminally, they will. Will they be fired? They will. Whatever the system allows us to do to the maximum extent. But at the World Food Programme we need to lead in this area.

The United Nations needs to lead in this area. There is zero tolerance – and that is not just a phrase; I think that is something that is a reality. The conversations that I have with my team, literally almost every week, they know how serious this is: do not play with this stuff. Do not play with it at all because all people at the World Food Programme deserve respect. Some people take a positive approach or negative approach; it can both. But I do not want people to do what is right because they are fearful of getting fired; I want them to do what is right because we want to respect our peers, we want to respect our colleagues, and that is what we are all about in the United Nations. I want to lead with optimism. I want you to respect who you work with. I do not care what their background is; it does not matter. This is your peer, this is your brother, this is your sister, this is your friend, this is your colleague and you respect them. Now if you are not willing to do that on the positive side, here is the negative side: first chance we get to identify you, we are going to discipline you, fire you or whatever

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the case may be. So, we will be looking to the Board as well in helping us identify any people like this and addressing it right up front.

We are going to be making some changes. We are working with a great team. Our leadership group, as I mentioned, we are talking about this in a most serious and effective way, coming up with ideas. We are asking and I am asking. I talked with Peter Maurer of ICRC just the night before last and I've talked to Filippo Grandi and Henrietta Fore and others to ask: what are you doing; what are you hearing; have you got any ideas; what is the best practice? And so, we are trying to share information. On our team are John Aylieff, the Director of HR, and Bonnie Green, Chief Ethics Officer, Kiko Harvey, Inspector General, Gabrielle Kluck, Ombudsman, and Bart Migone, head of our legal section.

Speaking of new faces at the table, we have Valerie (Guarnieri). You remember the last meeting we had that Ramiro Lopes da Silva, who is a legend in his own right, has been replaced by Valerie. I have told Valerie that no one replaces Ramiro. You stand strong in your own right; you be your own leader and set your own path; learn from his experiences. And so, Valerie is at the table now and we are very excited about that. You have heard about Elisabeth Rasmusson's situation, so be in thought and prayer for her, and Gina Casar is sitting in her place and she has just been amazing, she really has. Elisabeth knew exactly what she was doing when she chose Gina. Everybody around knew Gina, and had high regard for her and you know I am the new kid on the block, so I was not sure, but after the first meeting with her, I am, like, wow, this is fantastic, Elisabeth knew what she was talking about.

Let me go on to talk about sexual harassment: I want to touch on some specifics, because we have to fix the problems that exist. While I believe there is a tremendous atmosphere in the World Food Programme we just cannot take a single chance at all. When you are out there in the number of countries that we are in, and have contracted people in the dozens of thousands, we need to be on guard every chance and opportunity we can. The lack of awareness, unreported harassment, including reluctance to make complaints for fear of retaliation - that was one of the things that really upset me the most when I heard that women felt like they could not make reports out of fear of retaliation. In response to some of the more aggressive emails that I have sent out and some of the more aggressive comments that I have made, and the leadership group has made, we are now getting emails from women that say: for the first time we feel like leadership is hearing us and really listening to us. I think that is a very, very important milestone.

Following the Oxfam situation – it is not just Oxfam, but other agencies as well –I sent a letter out on Friday to the Oxfam leadership saying that we are putting on hold any new agreements while we examine the measures currently in place to prevent abuse and exploitation. Because when we are talking about abuse in respect of our workers it goes beyond our workers, it goes beyond WFP family; it also goes to the beneficiaries. They are the most vulnerable population out there and we have to set the tone because if we do not respect one another then we are certainly not going to have respect for a beneficiary out there. I think the atmosphere in the World Food Programme, as I say, our mantra, our guiding principles are: we love our neighbour, and this vulnerable population, when they are already struggling and suffering enough, the last thing they need is to be harassed in any way, shape, fashion or form. It is not acceptable.

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Let me touch on a few of the reforms that we are talking about. I have a whole list of things. I am just going to cite a few of them.

Allowing investigations of anonymous reports. Normally, in a legal sense, you would not do that but I think, because of the sensitivity of the issue and what is not being exposed, I think we need to investigate anonymous reports. I think that will give women more strength and more confidence to speak out.

Scrapping the six-month time limit for reporting abuse.

Empowering the Inspector General to investigate suspected cases of abuse in the absence of a formal complaint, which I think is very important – and by the way Kiko (Harvey) and I were talking and one of the things that I think is an issue is her division not having the personnel she needs. The team has now just approved a, give-or-take, (US)\$ 1.3 million increase for her to have the personnel she needs to investigate more thoroughly, more effectively, not just in this area but also in the areas of fraud and mismanagement.

Strengthening measures to ensure complainants receive immediate support while their allegations are investigated.

A direct standing committee that will be able to take quicker, more coordinated actions, like separating complainants and alleged perpetrators; suspending the alleged perpetrators pending investigations; arranging special psychological and medical care; referring allegations to the local police. I believe that receiving contributions from you, the Member States, is important. One of the ideas that came our way from you was the Board's suggestion of setting up a joint working group to share information and make proposals. We think that is an absolutely great idea. We cannot in any way think that there is too much information. So, we need every idea, and I think the Board needs to be able to showcase around the world and back in your countries that we take this seriously and we are going to be the leader on this issue. I think that this is the first time in the United Nations it has ever happened like this. I have actually been quite surprised, as much respect as we should have for the United Nations, by some of the things they are not leading on. This should not be an area the United Nations should be struggling in, quite frankly. It should be the leader in the world for obvious reasons. We need to let the World Food Programme showcase how to do it and how to do it right, and we are going to collaborate with the other agencies. If they have a good idea we want to hear it, we want to listen to it as well. So, we want to develop this culture of respect, with a positive atmosphere.

Let me talk to you about gender parity, really quickly. John (Aylieff) and I and the team are working through a process by which every country will reach gender parity within a certain timeframe, and every country will have objectives. Objectives of course being fifty-fifty, with benchmarks and measurables, and how to achieve these benchmarks and measurables and in what timeframe, because in some countries it could be a little more complicated than in other countries; it might take a little bit longer. So, we are working through it. In every country my expectation is to have gender parity. It should happen, but one of the practical anecdotal things is that everybody is busy. What are they doing? They are feeding people; they're achieving the primary goals and objectives. So, we are saying: take a little bit of time now because if you have a country office that is 30 percent female and 70 percent male, well those are very important details that really impact the whole operation. So, go to the universities in the cities, there are a lot of female graduates every year. Go to the president's

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or prime minister's office, they will have a gender officer who will have some ideas and thoughts. Go to the corporations and the NGOs or the Lion's Clubs or the Red Crescents, or whatever the case may be, and identify young women who are very qualified. We are going to keep the pressure on because every quarter – every quarter – there will be a report from John on my desk, saying which country offices have met the objectives for that quarter and which countries have not. And if a country has not met their objectives they will have to respond with why they have not met that objective. And if they have not met that objective the first person I am going to talk to is the Deputy Executive Director, because I am going to hold him accountable, and he will have to talk to Valerie (Guarnieri), in the leadership group, and they are going to be hearing from me too, and the regional director. Because I am going to hold the regional director responsible and then the regional director is going to be on top of that country director and it will not take but a couple of times for everybody to realize that this is not just chit-chat; this is serious stuff. Because I do believe that we if create the right atmosphere where we respect women and others, it means you are less likely to see discrimination and sexual abuse, and it minimizes that negative atmosphere.

The other area that I am very focused on is – and I said this last year when I was talking about taking this role – that I felt very confident we could turn the United States funding situation around if we did not have any major natural disasters or major scandals. Well, today there is a sex scandal brewing out there in the whole United Nations system. There are also some allegations of fraud brewing out there, like in Uganda, which is why we have been pushing digitalization in biometrics, with digitalization for every single beneficiary. We also know that when we have biometrics aligned with beneficiaries we can cut the cost by anywhere from 10–30 percent. These are real numbers and it makes a huge, huge difference. The team in Uganda has been working with the Government, working with the various donors, working with UNHCR. Our team has really elevated this issue and brought it to wider attention, and so we will be working with everybody necessary to ensure it is addressed. As Valerie will tell you, whenever something like this comes up in a country operation, I say: Should that country director have caught it before it happened? Why did the country director not catch it before now? Is it a management issue; is it a systems issue; what needs to be modified? Sometimes it is just a bad situation, you have a bad person and the country team catches it as soon as they can. But these are the questions we need to ask in every single situation, because the donors deserve it and they demand it and we owe them that respect and confidence in the system. We continue to improve, whether it is in Uganda or wherever the case may be: Somalia we are dealing with issues there. If you are taking commodities and monies out to these deep, difficult areas, these are not simple situations, but as I told my team I do not want excuses; we want answers and we want corrections, modifications. We always must look and see what we can do better. I will say with great pride that I think we have one heck of a team out there, but when you are feeding some eighty-odd million people in the most difficult places around the world you are going to run into problems; our donors know that; you know that. The question is: can we improve the system; can we improve our management, and when we do discover a problem how do we address it? Do we deal with it transparently, openly and effectively? And that is the type of trust we want to have.

Looking at the 2018 budget - after 2017, when the United States gave (US)\$ 2.5 billion even though the budget was initially zeroed out, thanks to the Republicans and the Democrats working together – this Presidential Budget did say something quite unique.

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I do not know the exact wording but it was something like: the United States is committed to feeding people around the world. It was a very positive statement that shows the White House truly understands the importance of the World Food Programme and considers it to be one of the jewels of the United Nations system. So, the budgetary process has begun in Washington once again. Am I concerned? Yes, but I am confident that when all is said and done, I do not think we will go backwards from the (US)\$ 2 billion for 2018 and 2019. I am still pushing to try to pick up another half a billion or billion out of Washington. We are coming up with all kinds of ideas and thoughts, and working with the Republicans and the Democrats together in the White House I believe we will be able to achieve success. But it is going to require work. I had planned to spend a little less time in Washington D.C. this year and spend more time in capitals around the globe to generate more support and more funding, but I think, not to leave anything to chance, we are going to be spending the necessary time in Washington. The atmosphere is toxic in Washington; the Republicans and Democrats just do not get along on anything right now. I have never seen anything like it. My friends in the Senate and the House, it is just like they are looking for something to feel good about, and they are working together with us on making certain that the World Food Programme receives funds, and the United States continues to send the message that they are not backing down on humanitarian aid for the most vulnerable around the world. So, I do not see anything that is going to change that; I really do not. But, you just cannot take any chances. So, I want to be all hands on deck making certain the team in Washington has all the resources and the personnel they need to cover every single base. I know you hear me talk about the United States a lot, but there is a reason: one of the main reasons I am here is to help protect that massive (US)\$2 billion donor relationship, and to make certain the team stays strong - and we do have a great team.

The United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands – all of you in this room – have also been tremendous, stepping up in so many ways. The last few months I have taken some great trips, trying to generate more attention. We are at (US)\$6 billion or more in operational expenditures on an annualized basis now, but we need 9–10 billion to reach the 100–110 million most vulnerable people. So, we need to go from about (US)\$17 million per day to (US)\$25 million dollars per day. How do we do that? We will not get there with the standard operating fundraising practice; we cannot get there that way. I just do not see the traditional donors at all saying: we will step up and give you another (US)\$3 billion. But I do think the traditional donors will do more if we are strategic about it. This is the case that we are going to be making. I have been meeting with the chairmen of the foreign relations committees, the chairmen of the budget committees, explaining to them what and why this is needed; going to the Diet in Japan, meeting with the leadership in China, going to meet with the leadership in Korea and talking to the members of the parliaments there and explaining to them why they should do more; why it is in their national security interests to do more.

I believe that we will see success stories so we are going to be working through all of that.

France: I am hopeful that France is going to be stepping up. We will make a special trip to France.

Saudi Arabia: we are making tremendous headway now with Saudi Arabia. The trip that I just made to Russia last week, meeting with Mr Lavrov, meeting with the top leadership. I think Russia is willing to step up and play a more multilateral role. As I was explaining to them

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very clearly, the world needs for Russia to be at the multilateral table; the world needs for the United States and Russia to find ways to collaborate; the world needs to find ways for China and the United States to collaborate more; the world needs the United Nations performing its role in a more effective way to support collaboration.

Among the countries in this room there is so much more we can do. Canada is talking about the year of feminism. What a perfect opportunity to talk about school feeding programmes. There is no more powerful gender parity programme than the school feeding programme. I think many of you in this room, without getting into it too much, will do more and more. We have had some frank discussions on this just this morning with the United States. I am also planning on testifying to more committees in different countries to build greater awareness of the power of school feeding programmes; what they mean in terms of gender parity, and the nutritional value that comes from having a school meals programme - what it means to intellectual capacity and physical development, and ultimately to the GDP of a country.

China: I was just in China; we had a tremendous trip. But it will not be just one trip. We are not going to move China up to where it needs to be on just one trip, or South Korea. It is going to take multiple trips and we are going to make them. So, we will work with you to achieve the successes that we believe that are out there.

I also think that, while some of the countries at the table today cannot give a lot of money, you can give us a lot of expertise and support in many, many different ways.

I want to touch on one last internal aspect and that is the issue of age. Regarding the United Nations General Assembly's resolution - we will now move to adopt the General Assembly Resolution, to increase the mandatory age of separation to 65 years for staff recruited before 1 January 2014. I have requested that at the June meeting of the FAO Council, the staff regulations change to allow this reform; and from today, I invite staff turning age 61 after 1 January 2018 to apply for waivers and they will be considered favourably.

Let me now talk a little more about external matters and where we are going, what we need to do, because I am hearing from the donors: what do we need to do to be more effective out there? The World Food Programme, we are the best of the best, there is no doubt about that. I stand proudly before any congress in the world. In terms of emergency operations, getting the job done, in logistics we are the most efficient, most effective; there is no doubt about it. But where I think the United Nations can be more effective, and I think the World Food Programme can lead in this area, is in bridging the humanitarian and development nexus. I think it is critical that we do this more effectively - how do we use food as a weapon of peace? How do we use food as a tool of reconciliation, of building bridges? Because already with our food-for-asset programmes we are building roads, we are building bridges, we are transforming landscapes, terracing land, turning millions of acres into cultivable, usable land - making a real difference. We have examples to showcase to our donors - here is what happens when you do it right. You will never achieve zero hunger without sustainable development. It is one thing to feed people in an emergency - a tsunami, an earthquake or a hurricane; or a desperate war and you know the statistics there, how it has changed in the last 10-20 years - but sustainable development is another ballgame. When I look at Syria, when you see what happened in Syria, a country of 20 million people, give or take, which imploded. The numbers of asylum seekers went through the roof and aid was cut. They could not get food. So then you had migration, and with migration you had infiltration - infiltration

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by extremist groups. As I told the European leadership, if you think you had a problem with Syria, 20 million people, with a couple of million migrating, infiltrated by a few extremists, wait and see what happens with the greater Sahel region of 500 million people. Because this is where ISIS and Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda and others are moving into, collaborating, forming partnerships, using food as a weapon of war, a weapon of division, a weapon of recruitment. If a family is sustainable and resilient, with jobs, and their children are fed, they are not nearly as vulnerable to these extremist groups. We are making this argument, from Italy all the way up to the United Kingdom, and I think we are seeing great response from the leadership in Europe. I am also making the same case to other countries around the world. I am now hearing the Ministry of Defence in Germany, the leadership in the United Kingdom, singing the same message - understanding that we clearly must get ahead of the curve in these countries. Because if you do not you are going to pay a mighty big price. But if we do it right, and for all the right reasons, it will save money. If we work out the mathematics and the spreadsheets, I believe it would show that when you do it right the expenditures over time go down because they become self-sustainable. But if you don't, costs go up because you have chaos, destabilization, conflict, war, and migration.

I could talk about a lot of other things, but I won't because we're short of time. Let me just say, on behalf of the team, we are so excited about the many great things that are before us. I know there are challenges. Yes, we are facing the worst humanitarian crisis since World War Two - but we have also averted famine, we are keeping children and families alive and the more money we get the more people we can protect. And the more access we get, the more we can achieve. I do think there are going to be some positives in 2018. I think there is tremendous potential to find alternative sources of funding in the digital world, the social media world - which is a whole other area of discussion I would love to spend 20 minutes on. I do believe it will be an important new area, as we work on private sector partnerships. As I have mentioned before, the United Nations in my opinion has shunned private sector engagement in the past 20-30 years. But I see a whole new atmosphere and recognition that we cannot achieve sustainable development without the private sector being integrally engaged and involved - out in the field in terms of supporting economic growth, but also with internal operations and helping us be more efficient. We believe there are certain partnerships that could potentially save us hundreds of millions of dollars in operational costs and supply chain savings if we use the advanced technology that is available out there. We have great confidence and hope although it will take time to develop; it will not happen overnight, but we are in the process of developing our plans and we will be working with you to achieve success in the future.