

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. LAMYA AHMED AL-SAQQAF, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF KUWAIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS BASED IN ROME AND  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE ROME CHAPTER OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE EXECUTIVE  
BOARD MEETING OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME  
ROME, 4 JUNE 2007**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor. Kuwait is speaking on behalf of the G77 countries and China. First of all I wish to seize this opportunity to warmly welcome Ms. Josette Sheeran as our new Executive Director here at WFP. Your track record as a management leader is most impressive, and my delegation is very much looking forward to working with you over the coming years.

In the light of global climate change and the forecasted increases in natural disasters as a result, the international community is facing increasingly greater threats to food security. The 2004 tsunami provides the perfect example of this, thus it is imperative that we take measures to reduce the unpredictability of these events and to limit the resulting damage. This can be achieved through investment in risk-minimising, preventative measures and early warning systems that would serve to lessen the impact of natural disasters.

A study by a British development group has concluded that for every dollar spent on prevention, 4 to 10 dollars can be saved on relief and reconstruction. Accordingly, the G77 members advocate a re-evaluation of the relief-based approach to areas affected by natural disasters currently adopted by WFP, in favour of a marked increase in investment that would reduce the impact of natural disasters.

On behalf of the G77 countries and China, I wish to commend the WFP for its excellent work in development, whether it is in capacity building, or in programmes such as Food for Education, which helps to ensure a better future for children of the developing world, by both encouraging them to attend school and by making sure that hunger does not take away their will and capacity to learn. In particular, we wish to praise the impact Food for Education has had upon helping girls get an education, as unfortunately it is they who so often suffer first. Girls represent 57 percent of the 400 million chronically hungry children in the world, and two thirds of the 100 million primary school children not attending school, thus the G77 fully supports the stance of WFP in working to reduce these figures. Moreover, we fully endorse the positive impact Food for Education has upon the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases.

Mr. Chairman, the Millennium Development Goals remain the focus of the Group of 77 and China, and we believe that the three Rome based organisations provide a strong base to tackle these targets. As such, we wish to see greater coordination between WFP, IFAD and FAO, working together to find areas of mutual benefit and added value, whilst concurrently identifying comparative advantages and accordingly reducing duplication and wasted resources.

Mr. Chairman, we wish for WFP to make its cost-structure as transparent as possible, where costs should be controlled and more spent upon the needy. In addition, we would like to see WFP adopt a fair recruitment policy so that there is equal geographical representation in place. Finally, Mr. Chairman, we also wish to request that WFP does not rush into the closure of offices in the Near East Region. WFP work is invaluable in the region where there are such acute water shortages and an unsettled political situation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.