FAO speech during the launch of the Parliamentary Network on Food Security and Nutrition in Africa and Arab world

Ayman Omar, Senior Programme officer-Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

Rabat, January 17, 2019

Your Excellency, Abdelhakim Benchamach,

Speaker of House of Counselors of the Kingdom of Morocco,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace be upon you all,

It is a great honor for me to be with you today to share you this historic event of celebrating the official launch of the parliamentary network on food security and nutrition in Africa and the Arab world.

Your Excellencies,

 Despite the remarkable progress on the reduction of hunger and malnutrition in the world till 2015, yet, the last three years have seen steady increases in hunger and malnourishment rates, as about 821 million people are suffering from chronic deprivation of food.

The situation of food security and nutrition in Africa and the Arab world is more critical. For instance, the rate of people who suffer from lack of food security in Sub-Saharan Africa amounted in 2017 to 23% of the population. In the Arab world, the overall number was 9% and approximately 30% in the Arab countries experiencing conflicts.

Conflicts and climate change are among the main causes of lack of global food security, particularly in Africa and the Arab world. Studies indicate that the Arab and African regions will be among the areas most affected by climate change in the upcoming 50 years, which aggravates the challenges of food security and nutrition.

 Ladies and gentlemen,

Business as usual would never enable us to achieve the sustainable development goals. Therefore, we should adopt a totally different approach that takes into account the close correlation between food systems and the environment, thus enabling a sustainable transformation by improving management and the techniques employed in agriculture, animal wealth, fishing, and forests.

 Your role, as parliamentarians, in achieving the sustainable development goals-especially Goal 2(elimination of hunger) as well as ensuring the provision of enough food for all, as a basic human rights- is a significant and vital one.

 You can effectively contribute to the elimination of hunger by enacting convenient legislation and overseeing polices and budgetary allocations, in addition to raising awareness among the social segments you are representing.

The outcomes of the global parliamentary summit against hunger and malnutrition held in Madrid in October 2018 emphasized parliamentarians’ commitment to work towards eliminating hunger and ensuring the right to enough food for all.

Dear ASSECAA members,

The establishment of the food security and nutrition network in Africa and the Arab world is a great and significant step on the long road to the elimination of hunger and the achievement of food security and nutrition in Africa and the Arab world.

On behalf of FAO, I would like to congratulate you on this important progress, and to re-emphasize FAO commitment to offering full support to this network as is the case with all parliamentary networks that works on eradicating hunger in different world areas.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to express FAO’s gratitude and its utmost appreciation to both the House of Councilors of the Kingdom of Morocco and your revered association for organizing this event as well as for your kind invitation to celebrate the launch of the network.

I pray that God give you and your emerging network success.

Thank you very much