

4th Global Multi-stakeholder Platform Meeting, OTTAWA, CANADA

Official Opening, 15 October, 2013

Opening Statement of Guiding Group Chair, Neil Fraser

Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Agri-food, the Honourable Pierre Lemieux,

Chairman of the Canadian Pork Council, Monsieur Jean-Guy Vincent,

Director of Animal Production and Health Division, FAO, Mr Berhe Tekola,

and to all participants at this 4th Multi-stakeholder Platform meeting of the Global Agenda of Action in support of Sustainable Livestock Sector Development

May I add a warm welcome to you all to this meeting, and thank you for your attendance. I look forward to hearing your views, your experiences and your observations over the three days of this Meeting.

Since the last meeting, in Nairobi in January of this year, nothing has happened in the world to make the Global Agenda of Action any less relevant or less needed. The broad picture that you know so well remains much the same – rising demand for livestock products, pressures on the globe's natural resources, poverty, food insecurity, and the continuing need to address climate change. Are we prepared to let that picture and that story continue in the same way? I assume from your presence at this meeting that you are here to join me in responding with an emphatic "no" to that question. I hope that this meeting will be a significant and concrete step in formulating and initiating the kinds of practice change that can make a real difference.

We have continued to develop aspects of governance of the Global Agenda. The Focus Area groups have met to extend their conceptual thinking. The Guiding Group was selected during the year, and held its first meeting in June, and another one in September. I won't say any more on these governance and organisational issues just now. Suffice to say that we've looked at some elements of governance today, and we'll be looking for the meeting to firm up some clear and significant conclusions on Thursday.

I would like to turn to some of the issues that we'll be addressing during this meeting – some of the further developments that I believe will add strength and gravitas to the Global Agenda, and that will contribute to achieving a greater impact in pursuit of our various goals and objectives.

1. First, there's a question of our conception of “**sustainability**”, and the breadth of application of effort, in pursuit of it. In the short life of this Multi-stakeholder Platform and the three Focus Area groups, much of our attention and effort has been taken up with the environmental dimension of sustainability. Certainly, natural resource use and climate change issues are the aspects that most often attract headlines and the attention of the general public. But our mission is about more than that. Part of our basic document, the Agenda Consensus, refers to social and economic development. The Panel session and plenary discussion this morning was aimed at adding to our collective understanding and commitment to these dimensions. We should now factor these considerations into our work and the approaches we take.
2. My second point neatly follows on from the first. And that is the question of the breadth of our stakeholder base, and the manner of **representation** of the variety of legitimate interest groups that are a valid and vital part of the Global Agenda. We seek your ideas on further stakeholder groups, currently not represented, but who would bring interests, knowledge and experience to the Agenda. We are open to those with commitment and ideas, and a constituency that can help bring about the practice change that will be the true test of our relevance.
3. **Innovation.** We need to give some thought to just what innovation means to the full range of our interests and actions. I'm not just referring to technical innovation, but also to the way that various stakeholders organise themselves to achieve shared concrete outcomes. Please bring your ideas to the table in tomorrow's sessions.

4. **Incentives.** You'll see that incentives are included as a topic area for tomorrow's deliberations. If desirable actions and practice change are not being applied as widely or as quickly as is desirable, what can be done to incentivise greater action? What is the role of the carrot? What is the role of the stick? What is the role of common self-interest? What role for the public sector, and public policies? What role for the private sector? How to best harness market forces? Again, I'd ask you to bring your ideas and your experience to the table tomorrow.

5. The support team have been giving some thought to ways in which the **concept of multi-stakeholder action can be replicated** and used to initiate action in particular situations, such as some sectoral interest, or a particular environmental or social target, or at a national level, or in some other way. The idea would be to have an expression of public commitment to a particular situation or goal, with a tailored and targeted plan of action and an implementation strategy. We'd like to hear experiences of such multi-stakeholder groups, and ideas on how these can be replicated in other parts of the world, or even applied in other sectors. The session on Thursday morning would be a good time to profile these experiences, with a hope that this can stimulate the formation and mobilisation of further such actions. We would be delighted to have some interest group, or a specific country, put up its hand to pilot some form of national multi-stakeholder partnership.

6. I think it is essential that I briefly raise the matter of **funding**. Our activities in setting up this Global Agenda have to date been supported by contributions from two major donors and a minor donor, plus the 'in-kind' contributions from FAO and those who are contributing to the Focus Area groups and the Guiding Group. We are grateful for all this assistance. But the need will be ongoing.

7. Three areas of need can be identified:
 - One is the organisational and policy development that is required to set up the Global Agenda. This includes the costs associated with

the various meetings of the MSP and the Guiding Group, the associated publicity and communications material, and the underpinning of organisational and logistical demands.

- Second, there's the costs of undertaking technical assessments, analytical work and the development of the intellectual tools that will help guide the work of the Focus Area groups and catalyse concrete actions at the local level.
- Third, financial resources will be required to give life to various fundable propositions that come forward, including piloting of innovative approaches, twinning exercises to replicate identified successes, and the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships at the national level.

8. If your group, or your country, can provide financial support, please let us know. Also useful would be ideas of other sources that would have an interest in funding some aspect of the Agenda.

9. One final issue that I want to draw attention to is the **name of this Global Agenda** initiative. Or, to give it its current full title, the *Global Agenda of Action in support of Sustainable Livestock Sector Development*. A number of people – both within the MSP and outside it – have expressed reservations concerning the current name. The absence of “livestock” in the title has been the most identified omission. The Guiding Group has spent some time discussing this issue, and canvassed various options, before coming to agreement on the title **Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock**. I hope that this name will meet with your approval.

So much for some of the questions that we'll be addressing at this meeting.

I'd now like to cast the horizon a little further out, and propose some of the issues and approaches that I believe we should also be thinking about for further development of the Global Agenda. Some of these issues we are answering intuitively, but I think we could improve on this with some analysis and refinements to our approach. Some of these issues we should keep under regular review.

1. **Strategic approach, and Priorities.** Currently we are developing various responses and actions, based on the discussions at MSP meetings, and in the deliberations of the three Focus Area groups. That is well and good, and I am confident that these are all useful approaches. But as far as I am aware they are not part of an overall strategic analysis of just where the Global Agenda can make the greatest impact with the most efficient application of the financial and intellectual resources available to us. If we assume that we will not have unlimited resources, just where should our priorities lie? And how do we establish what those priorities are? What criteria or analysis do we use? I hope that the Focus area groups, and the able but limited resources that the FAO support team can supply, will come up with some useful answers to these questions. The Guiding Group looks forward to addressing these questions.
2. **Ambition. [Measuring progress.]** Having decided what direction we want to go, how aspirational should we be? How ambitious can we be? And how do we know if we are approaching those ambitions? I think we are all agreed on some general goals and objectives, and in some cases more specific direction has been defined. How can we track our progress towards those goals? Anecdote, intuition, and qualitative and consensus discussion can be illuminating up to a point, but there will also be value in being able to quantify progress and successes. This raises the question of setting targets, and then the issue of what metrics and indicators to use to measure and report outcomes.
3. The quantitative material that I have just talked about will be useful for a variety of purposes, the two key ones being to inform ourselves of how we are faring, and also to be able to tell others about what we are achieving. And this brings me to my third point – that of **Communication**. As success builds upon success in our mission – and I'm confident it will – we will want to share this with others, to give support to those who are driving these successes, but also – importantly – to inform a larger audience of our achievements. This will bring benefits in terms of protecting and enhancing the reputation of the livestock sector, but also to attract further support and action to the cause.

This, hopefully, will inspire copy-cat action to replicate the successes and innovative approaches that we promote, and also bring further intellectual, financial and leadership contributions to extend the proven approaches that we can be responsible for. Therefore, we should extend the initial thinking that we have done concerning communication methods and mechanisms. I should note that communication and publicising our successes is not just a task for the Guiding Group and the Support Team. It is something that all members of the Multi-stakeholder Platform should concern themselves with.

Priorities, ambition, and communicating our successes. With your help, this meeting can be instrumental in strengthening the foundations, extending the commitment and generating a situation where we have a positive and proud message of successful practice change to deliver to the world. That, after all, is why we are here!

Thank you for listening, and may I thank you in advance for your commitment and your efforts that will bring our collective aspirations to fruition.