



Intervention by Mr William J. Doyle, President of the International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA), at the Opening Session of the 80th IFA Annual Conference in Doha, on Tuesday, 22 May 2012.

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to IFA's 80th Annual Conference.

At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to our local member QAFCO for the kind invitation to celebrate 80 years of IFA conferences in Qatar. The association was established in 1927, right at the start of the incredible development of the agricultural sector that took place during the 20th century, when more and more fertilizer plants were being built. We have come a long way since those days and the association has built an impressive track record. Today, I would like to talk to you about three important issues: our workforce, its safety and our noble cause of helping to feed a hungry world.

As you may notice from IFA's annual report, I wish to honour those who make up the IFA family at large: the associations and institutes, the members, and most of all, the women and men who are responsible for what the industry is today. It is my deep belief that these people are the industry's most precious asset.

This is why I have made safety the prime focus of attention, not only in my own company but also in the association. The industry's workforce brings many skills needed to be operational in the field, in mines, factories and offices. The industry is constantly changing and will need to adapt even more in the years to come, in order to continue improving the sustainability of our operations: economically, socially and environmentally. We will need to attract young talent with new skills and an innovative perception of the industry. This is a challenge because, for decades, agriculture was not considered an attractive sector for employment by youth. There is a shortage worldwide of soil scientists, agronomists and extension agents. The IFA Norman Borlaug award aims at recognizing the work of exceptional scientists who have contributed to creating improved crop nutrition tools and techniques and communicating them to farmers. We will shortly honour this year's award recipients.



Because people are our most important asset, our role as industry leaders is to protect them. IFA has placed occupational safety and health excellence at the top of its agenda and is committed to promoting the mindset of “Safety First” in fertilizer production. The association surveys safety performance in the industry. Thanks to efforts by the members, the benchmark for Lost Time Injury has progressively declined over the past ten years to levels comparable with the best performing industry sectors worldwide. This is fantastic news but it does not mean that we should be complacent.

Maintaining an effective safety culture is vital for excellence in safety in production and this is an every day effort. A strong safety culture has as an overriding priority that plant safety issues receive close attention from all levels in an organization - from the most senior-level company executives to workers on the shop floor. Moreover, the leaders of an organization, including executives, managers, and supervisors are key to the achievement of an effective safety culture through leading by example. Their words and actions show the staff what is expected of them. Not only good safety attitudes and behaviour are important, but effective safety management systems that allow the safety culture to become institutionalized need to be in place. Safety is our number one priority.

Concerted efforts are needed to protect the workforce so that we may continue pursuing the noble cause of providing nourishment to soils, plants and people. Indeed, our industry contributes greatly to improving the lives of millions of people. Fertilizers are responsible for about half of the food grown on earth, nourishing billions of people and helping to improve their diets every year. As the human population continues to grow, the world's farmers will need to become even more productive than they already are. We all recognize the challenges faced by ongoing food crises, rising malnutrition and hunger and the important role played by fertilizers in providing solutions for replenishing depleted soils and for increasing yields. Unfortunately, our contribution is not always well understood and recognized. We have to continue working hard at communicating the importance of our industry, at positioning ourselves in the international policy agenda and at partnering with key players in the agri-food chain.

IFA has an important role to play in this global positioning. I am particularly pleased with the current leadership role taken by IFA as chair of the International Agri-Food Network and private sector representative in the United Nations Committee on World Food Security. It is a unique opportunity to interact directly with United Nations agencies, multilateral donors and governments.



To further demonstrate our noble cause, I am very happy to inform you of the launch of a new global advocacy campaign led by IFA, CFI, TFI, Fertilizers Europe and ANDA called Roots for Growth. This campaign aims at raising awareness of the important role played by fertilizers in global agriculture, encouraging greater dialogue and fostering opportunities for partnerships with key actors around the world, including farmers, agronomists, scientists, environmental leaders and governments. The campaign was designed to fit within the current negotiations taking place in preparation of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20.

I invite you now to watch a video that was produced as one of the key tools of the campaign: www.rootsforgrowth.com

Thank you.