

STATEMENT  
BY  
H.E. MOHAMMED HOSNY MUBARAK  
PRESIDENT OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

BEFORE  
THE WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY

FOOD & AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

(ROME, 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2009)

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,

I would like to express my appreciation to my dear friend Prime Minister *Silvio Berlusconi* and to the Director-General *Dr. Jaques Diouf*. I address this important Summit from the vantage point of Egypt's Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose states comprise almost two thirds of the membership of the United Nations, and whose peoples are the most affected by the risks of the prevailing food security situation.

These risks present a direct threat to the lives of millions of people, and to one of the basic human rights, which is the right to food. They threaten the social stability of the peoples of developing countries, and impose additional burdens on them that limit their ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 1, which is to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

The world still remains distant from achieving this goal, and our Summit today convenes at a time of an acute international economic crisis, during which the number of those who suffer from hunger and malnutrition has surpassed one billion; that is more than one sixth of the world population, representing an increase of one hundred million people compared to the figure of the previous year.

The crisis of the international economic recession has interlocked with the crisis of the global increase in the price of food, both of which have resulted in this unfortunate substantial increase. Despite the modest retreat in the global price of food, the current economic crisis has reduced income levels and job opportunities, thus limiting the ability of the poor to obtain their definitive right to food.

Last year, and from this very podium, I had called for a global partnership, one which addresses the causes of the food crisis and its consequences in the short, medium and long terms. I had called for an international dialogue to institute this partnership, one that presents solutions to be agreed upon by all, and to be adhered to by everyone. I reiterated my call during the *L'Aquila* Summit of Group of Eight industrialized countries, just a few days after the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in *Sharm El-Sheikh*. So where do we stand now?

Ladies & Gentlemen,

The time has come for us to proceed beyond the dialogue phase, towards serious and tangible steps, that address the question of food security on the reality on the ground. The causes of the food crisis are clear, and the means to rectify them are known. We need an international program of action, one that addresses this question from a comprehensive perspective, and whose parameters in brief are:

First: The attainment of food security in developing nations does not take place in isolation from their overall efforts for comprehensive development. On the contrary, it is linked to the state of their economy, infrastructure, road and transportation networks, distribution outlets and domestic trade structures. It is also linked to their human development efforts, controlling their population growth and development of education. All of this requires real support from wealthy advanced nations to the nations of the developing world. It is true that the development partners have committed – during the *L'Aquila* Summit – 20 billion USD over the next three years to be allocated for increasing agricultural production and productivity. And it is true that this commitment represents an important

step on this track, but it remains – like other commitments – to be urgently implemented on the ground, in a manner that includes additional funding, and not merely the reallocation of funding resources that are already available.

Second: The share of agriculture in official development assistance has decreased from 17% in 1980 to nearly 5% at present, and this requires a reassessment on the part of donor countries and institutions. Over 70% of the populations of developing countries are engaged in the agricultural sector, and we need to work to develop this vital segment, since it is an essential component of the international efforts to realize food security. I hereby state before this Summit that the countries of the developing world look for support for their efforts in agricultural development, through additional direct investments and advanced technologies, and supplementary assistance for their efforts to increase food production, enhance productivity, improve the efficiency of water usage and develop irrigation systems.

Third: The risks of the prevailing food security situation have been compounded by the negative effects of climate change, with its requisite phenomena of coastal erosion, flooding, desertification, and land aridity, among others. Today, just a few weeks before the UN Conference on climate change in Copenhagen, I would like to state that the success of the Conference will remain conditional upon its success in enhancing the ability of developing countries to adapt and address the consequences of climate change. The forthcoming conference must afford this issue the same attention the developed countries afford to reducing the emissions responsible for global warming. What is needed is a fair and balanced package, one that realizes the interests of all in the post 2012 phase.

Fourth: Our efforts to address the food crisis must resist the current practices in the international trade in agricultural products, foremost among them are protectionist measures and agricultural subsidies by developed countries. These measures have inflicted the most severe damage on the agricultural sectors of developing countries, and I call upon developed countries to espouse positive policies that lead to consensus in the *Doha* round of multilateral trade negotiations. Egypt will continue its

efforts to forge this consensus in its capacity as coordinator of the African Group in the World Trade Organization.

Fifth: Short term measures to address food shortages need to be operationalized, including through the provision of sufficient funding for existing international mechanisms, and the enhancement of their capacity to provide food and humanitarian assistance, rapidly and effectively, and to deliver it to those who are most in need and are facing marginalization, especially women and children, and here I recall – in this context – the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip as a result of the ongoing Israeli blockade.

Sixth: There is a parallel requirement for more coordination, between the World Bank, FAO, World Food Program, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Development Program, and other existing international mechanisms. In this context, I would like to express our conviction that the *Committee on World Food Security* in its new composition, has become qualified to assume a primary role in the global partnership that we aspire to, through the institutional framework it offers for the participation of governments and international and regional organizations, side by side with the private sector and NGO's and scientific research centers, in addressing the question of food security.

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**

Despite the international engagement with the global food crisis, we must acknowledge that this engagement has not – as of yet – reached the required and necessary level. We are participating in this Summit to continue to maintain this question on the international agenda, and to collectively arrive at a common vision for addressing it, in its economic and social dimensions, and its connection with countering the speculation in the subsistence of humankind, and achieving stability in food markets. We can work together for a world that is more humane and just, one that secures food for all, and eschews – in its third millennium – that more than one billion of its inhabitants remain victims of hunger and malnutrition.

Thank you