



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

ADDRESS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY
NGWAZI DR. BINGU WA MUTHARIKA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

AT THE

**WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY FOR
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

ROME, ITALY

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- **MR. CHAIRMAN;**
- **EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT;**
- **DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION, DR. JACQUES DIOUF;**
- **HONOURABLE MINISTERS**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

I wish to begin by commending the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization for convening the World Food Summit and to say that this Summit is timely, critical and urgent because millions of people around the world live with or are threatened by hunger, starvation and malnutrition.

Excellencies

The theme of this Summit “**Seeking a Lasting Solution to the Scourge of Hunger in the World**” is very relevant.

Malawi is very conscious that democracy, governance, human rights and the rule of law cannot be achieved if the people are hungry. Accordingly Malawi placed agriculture and food security at the top of its development agenda. As a result,

Malawi has been able to produce enough food for our people. Malawi's success story in agriculture is well known. Within a short time space we have transformed our country from a food deficit to a food secure nation.

We are also able to export and to donate to our neighbours in Southern Africa. Malawi has achieved food security within a short period of time.

But how did Malawi do it? Firstly, as a nation we recognized that hunger and food shortages result from a combination of factors. These included poor agricultural policies and practices; adverse climatic conditions and weather patterns; lack of systematic application of science and technology to agriculture; inadequate or non-availability of inputs especially fertilizers, improved seeds and extension services to poor farmers and financial resources and investment in agriculture and food security sector.

My government set out to adequately address these challenges through a number of policy interventions.

The second major challenge Malawi faced was to seek a national consensus on reforms of the agriculture policy as the engine for social and economic development of our poor

economy. We resolved to produce enough food to feed ourselves.

The Malawi government was fully aware that whereas the international community recognizes the imperatives of poverty reduction very seldom is agriculture and food security regarded as the cornerstone for the buoyancy and sustenance of the African economies.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

One contributing factor to this dichotomy is that bilateral and multilateral donors may have pushed the commercialization of agriculture far too much to the detriment of the small scale poor farmers especially in Malawi and other developing countries who continue to struggle even to grow enough food to feed their families.

The problem was exacerbated by the absence of a balance between poor small scale peasant farmers and large scale commercial farming to ensure that the former are protected from exploitation by the latter.

The third challenge Malawi faces in achieving food security has been the fact that the international community has hitherto ignored the implications of the climate change on agricultural development. The recurrent and prolonged draughts, floods, tropical cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons have had adverse effects on food production and overall food security. Yet these factors have been ignored.

In Malawi we have learned good lessons on climate change. We have now resolved to reduce extreme dependence on rain-fed agriculture to irrigation. Malawi is now introducing the “Green Belt” Irrigation programme along its lakes and river banks and the construction of small, medium and large scale multipurpose dams that will irrigate up to one million hectares of land for the cultivation of a variety of cash and food crops for national consumption and for export. Malawi is thus poised to make a significant contribution to solving the problems of world food shortages.

Excellencies

Against the backdrop of these major challenges are the extreme rigidities in the policies of the donor communities that refuse to allow subsidies to agricultural sector in developing

poor African countries. They also refused to increase funding and investment in African agriculture and food security.

Instead the policies emphasized food aid from the North instead of enabling poor countries to grow their own food. These policies succeeded in impoverishing agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular and hence the endemic food scarcity, hunger and malnutrition in the region.

In Malawi, we introduced the Targeted Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme that enabled poor smallholder farmers to access fertilizers, improved seeds, herbicides and extension services. I can gladly say that the results have been spectacular.

I am convinced that many countries in the world can harness and utilize their abundant water resources to promote sustainable agriculture and food security for generations to come.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

In order to meet these challenges, industrialized countries must be persuaded to change their policies towards global food

security. Firstly, the North needs to agree to share scientific and technological research and information on agriculture and food security with developing nations through a global compact. In developing countries we need research on improved and drought resistant seed varieties; we need modern tractors and agricultural equipment and we need pest and crop disease management and we need to reduce post-harvest loss at national, regional and global levels.

I also want to bring to the attention of the world leaders the importance of agro processing and value addition as a food security measure.

In this regard I wish to highlight that the private sector can contribute effectively to economic growth by taking an active part to ensure agriculture and food security in the poor nations.

Accordingly, I propose that this Summit sends a clear message to the private sector in both developed and developing countries to increase their investment in agriculture and food security.

I wish to end my remarks by underscoring the fact that it is possible for farmers – small, medium and large – to produce

enough food for all people on this earth. We have done it in Malawi and we are ready to share our experiences with others.

The world leaders gathered here should create an enabling political environment for ensuring viable agriculture and food security.

Let us all work together to attain the goal of ensuring food security in the world.

Together we can do it.

Thank you.

God Bless you all.