

DENMARK

Statement by the Head of Danish Delegation (Minister for Food,
Agriculture and Fisheries Eva Kjer Hansen) at the
World Summit on Food Security
in Rome, 16 – 18 November 2009

1

DENMARK

- Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.
- Let us never forget that the battle against hunger can be won!
- A number of developing countries have shown the way. By investing in agriculture – instead of neglecting agriculture - they are about to achieve the goal of halving the number of hungry.
- Their examples provide a message of hope in a world where we face an alarming and increasing number of people suffering from hunger.

2

DENMARK

- Many good initiatives have been taken. Allow me to recognize the substantial contribution by G8 under the Italian presidency.
- From now on our commitments and actions will be based on the five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security at first presented in the L' Aquila Joint Statement.
- It is very simple. Hunger will not disappear if we neglect agriculture.
- Until 2007 it was generally believed that scarcity and high prices was a problem of the past.

DENMARK

- It was wrong. Even though we have many problems in this imperfect world of ours, we need to put food security back on top of the international agenda.
- A hungry man or woman has very little to lose. Therefore hunger is the main destabilizing force in the world.
- Denmark fully supports the Summit-declaration, but allow me emphasize just 3 important issues.

DENMARK

- Firstly, we must ensure that emergency needs are met. New commitments should not be at the expense of the victims of humanitarian crisis.
- Additional funding is needed. And we encourage other countries to join us in realizing the long-standing UN target of not less than 0.7 pct. in development assistance.
- Denmark contributes with 0.82 pct. of its GDP to development assistance and we will continue to be a substantial donor to the World Food Programme (WFP) as well as other organisations that address acute hunger and malnutrition in developing countries.

DENMARK

- Secondly, we must invest more in agriculture, not least in Africa.
- We note the call of the High-Level Expert Forum “How to Feed the World in 2050” for a substantial increase in investment in the agricultural sector.
- Likewise, the Danish Africa Commission has underlined that agriculture plays a critical role for growth, employment and poverty-reduction.

DENMARK

- Therefore we must support the African Green Revolution and other country-led initiatives to raise agricultural production and productivity.
- Unfortunately, since 1980, the share of agriculture in total development aid has dropped from 19 pct. to less than 4 pct. in 2006.
- We would like a substantial increase of the share of ODA devoted to agriculture and food security.
- Also, private investments in agriculture are crucial if the root causes of hunger are to be eradicated. We need the private sector.

7

DENMARK

- We must assist small-scale farmers in the developing countries to boost production by helping them get seeds and fertilizers.
- But it is especially important to help women farmers. In some countries they make up as much as 70 percent of the workforce in food production.
- Gentlemen! I have said it before - and I will say it again. You should always treat women properly! Just as you should always treat farmers properly. Therefore it is crucial that you treat women farmers with the utmost respect and gratitude!

8

DENMARK

- In general, the international community needs to increase research and development in the agricultural sector.
- The goal must be to increase yields, encourage a greater variety of crops, encourage better land use, water management and conservation practises.
- We have to take into consideration the whole range of technological possibilities - from organic farming to GMO's - of course with the right precautions taken.

9

DENMARK

- I believe that there is an old Chinese saying that goes like this: “The colour of the cat doesn't matter as long as it catches mice.”
- But one of the most important incentives to invest is the certainty that you can sell your products everywhere around the world.
- This brings me to my third important issue: Free trade. We should ease trade and get rid of export restrictions that impede the free flow of agricultural commodities.
- Barriers to trade will only prevent food from reaching the people who need it most. And it will only hinder investment in agriculture.

10

DENMARK

- In one month Denmark will host the COP15. We will meet again in Copenhagen to agree on the way forward to combat climate change.
- The Danish government understands and agrees that economic growth needs to be the number one priority of developing countries.
- But economic growth does not necessarily have to lead to an increase in energy consumption.
- Development can be achieved without drastic increases in the emissions of greenhouse gasses.

11

DENMARK

- Let me use my own country Denmark as an example. We have witnessed sustained economic growth over the last 25 years - but hardly without any increase in energy consumption. Today 17 pct. of our total energy consumption is supplied by renewable energy.
- Climate change is a threat to our world. And agriculture is one of the first victims.
- Unfortunately, agriculture is also a source of climate changes because of its emission of greenhouse gases.

12

DENMARK

- We need to address both problems at the same time. And, in doing so, we should not forget that agriculture is part of the solution.
- Biomass fuel has the potential to be a clean, renewable source of energy, when it is grown in a sustainable way, and especially when it is extracted from waste products.
- The trade-off between the energy, environment and social issues involved is subtle and immensely complex.
- We support the role of FAO in facilitating international discussion on this issue.

13

DENMARK

- Let me conclude my intervention by thanking secretary general Ban Ki Moon.
- As you said: There can be no food security without climate security.
- Likewise, there can be no climate security without food security.
- Therefore: let us feed the world by winning the battle against hunger and the battle against climate changes - at the same time.
- Thank you all for your attention. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14