

STATEMENT BY HON. MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT, HON. SELWYN RIUMANANA, REPRESENTING SOLOMON ISLANDS GOVERNMENT AT THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT HELD IN ROME, ITALY, FROM 16TH TO 18TH NOVEMBER, 2009.

Chair Person

Director General of FAO,

United Nations Secretary -General, Mr Ban Ki-moon

Excellences and Distinguish Representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin my remarks today by extending my gratitude to Dr Jacques Diouf, Director General of FAO, for his initiative in conveying this High Level Conference to address the current serious sharp rise in food prices and the impact on climate change as it affects agricultural productivity on global scene.

On the same note, Solomon Islands Government and its population appreciated support provided through various UN Agencies, including FAO for support rendered through technical and financial support in addressing food security issues as well as impact on climate change, as experienced throughout the world.

Mr Chair,

Today, countries are not only faced with rising food prices, but also the impact which climate affects the environment and other related issues. The recent World Food Summit held in Rome highlighted the challenges of Climate Change and Bio-energy, however, today's Summit highlights how to feed the World in 2050.

Mr Chair,

I came to Rome, representing the Head of State, also as Minister responsible for agricultural development in Solomon Islands, in these regards, I have deep and sincere hope that the Summit will further agreed upon issues to be addressed before the next World Food Summit and hope that issues are action-oriented in nature. Solomon Islands, as member of United Nations, including FAO and UN Agencies, also faced with consequences of growing food prices. My country is affected even more than the majority of other countries, in terms of price of food are on the rise, as well as other related issues such as bio fuel and climate change which added to the list of consequences facing the mankind.

Mr Chair,

As all of you gathering here are aware, the fundamentals of supply-demand balance of food are gradually becoming more and more unstable. Cultivable land barely increases any where in the world, increase population upon rather constant landmass resulted to uncontrolled human activities, the climate change continues to develop, and conversion of food for energy use is increasing, nevertheless, the world population is continuing its growth. It is estimated that over 100 million people are at risks of hunger as results of threat, and find ourselves confronting the possibility that our efforts thus far to achieve the Millenniums Development Goals [MDGs] may be hindered. It is understood that the Climate change Conference to be held in Copenhagen will also address these challenges and the practical

solutions both developed and under-developed countries commitments in relation to food security.

Climate uncertainties may result to increase infestation of insects and diseases and subsequently put smaller nations vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. This will further lead to high food prices and smaller nations being price takers will face significant impact on our economy and hence a difficult challenge for smaller nations will have to bear.

Let us be reminded of the fact that hungry populations are angry population. In such scenario it will no doubt put to risk local, regional and international security and may also caused unstable political government.

Mr Chair,

The Question is what we should do in the light of these situations.

In brief, its time for us to share, a common recognition of the gravity of the situation, analyses its causes and undertake a comprehensive and coherent measures ranging from emergency responses to medium and long term efforts.

We must act based on collective wisdoms and insights. In this regard, we must extend the hand of assistance to people who are at very moment, suffering from food insecurity or hunger.

Mr Chair,

The series of global crisis which has affected our nations, the financial crisis, the energy crisis, the Food crisis, the effect of population pressure upon rather constant

landmass and the Climate crisis have shown the red light flashing and it's a clear message to us all to take action now, an indication of rough roads ahead.

Mr Chair,

The small island nations need development, economic and policy tools to boost agricultural productivity, and investment in agriculture must be increased for the majority of the countries, as healthy agricultural sector is essential for overcoming hunger and poverty and is pre-requisite for overall economic growth.

The gravity of the current food crisis is the result of less investment in agriculture sector. Agriculture provides the livelihood of more than 80 % of the population and therefore, requires helping hands from the developed nations. Thanks for your support in the past, however, your continue support is called for at this critical moment in history.

Mr Chair,

I am inviting you to face the truth boldly and critically, turn to the renewal of the global economy on the basis of equality and solidarity, in harmony with the principles of mutual appreciation and social sensitivity, and readiness to renounce all the illusions of the obviously discredited market dogmas. Let us have the courage to admit the failure of expectations that our systems will by itself bring, sooner or later, a better tomorrow for all and that the problems occurring in its functioning are merely accidental.

Mr Chair,

I, therefore, recommend that this High Level World Food Summit to mark the beginning of the serious and concerted efforts to find solutions to the challenges of the global crisis and more importantly the food crisis. I further urge developed countries, to assist so called least developed countries to develop agriculture sector through investment in the agriculture. We all agree of the fact that investment in agriculture is paramount important but we must also devise the applicable approaches base on local environment because past undertaking in agriculture has records and history.

We can stand here making eloquent speeches, we can stand here making sweet promises and creating assurance and raising hopes and ambitions. But at the end of the day, it is how much we implement successfully, how much we share and how much we work together as global family addressing a common cause for all mankind need of help that count the most.

Thank you Excellencies, Distinguish guest, Ladies and Gentlemen for your attention.

Thank you

HON.SELWYN RIUMANA [MP]
