

**STATEMENT BY DR. CHRISTOPHER CIANTAR, PERMANENT
SECRETARY, MINISTRY FOR RESOURCES AND RURAL
AFFAIRS, MALTA**

Mr. Chairman

Mr. Director General

Excellencies

Dear Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

May I initially express my delegation's appreciation to the Director General of FAO, Mr. Jacques Diouf, for his tireless efforts in convening this *World Summit on Food Security for all* and in highlighting its relevance. The broad participation in the Summit reflects the importance that Governments attribute to the issue under discussion. The initiative is very timely particularly given the prevailing circumstances in which more than 1 billion people are enduring the bitter consequences of hunger and poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

Increases in food prices in 2008, compounded by the consequences of the current financial and economic crisis, as well as the challenges of climate change, have exacerbated the problems of hunger and poverty worldwide. The said challenges seriously threaten Global Food Security and nutrition, making the 1996 World Food Summit targets and the Millennium Development Goals in general, but particularly ~~MDG~~ **MDG 1**, more difficult to achieve.

Goal #

The consequences of climate change adversely affect agricultural activities. Floods and drought reduce crop yields and increase soil erosion. Member States realise that the issue of climate change is an international phenomenon and, as such, warrants collective action. Indeed the forthcoming Copenhagen conference is a unique opportunity for Member States to act collectively, and concretely, to achieve a post Kyoto Agreement which aims at significantly curbing down greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Chairman,

The problems related to food security stem from the growth in global food demand and the decrease in food crop productivity. To make matters worse, the increase in the production of energy crops is also a cause of concern since arable cultivation has to compete with this new phenomenon risking diverting food away from mouths into fuel tanks. New technologies aimed at the development of crops for the production of bio-fuel call for a thorough evaluation.

Mr. Chairman,

Millennium Development Goal 1 which foresees the halving of the world's poverty and hunger by 2015 remains an uphill struggle which risks complete failure unless our efforts are intensified to adopt

concrete action. To date, a number of Declarations and Strategies have been formulated with the primary objective of achieving Global Food Security. The commitments agreed to by the G8 during their recent meeting in L'Aquila continues to reinforce instruments previously adopted including *inter alia* the Declaration adopted earlier during this Summit, the Declaration adopted in this same Chamber last year during the High-Level Conference, as well as :

- Health Check of the CAP (Common Agriculture Policy).
- The ACCRA Agenda for Action (September 2008);
- The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

Mr. Chairman

It is felt that while due recognition is given to all initiatives taken, as well as others not specifically referred to earlier, are praiseworthy and noble, the following relevant questions beckon : *Are the proposed measures sufficient to achieve the desired goals ? Are these instruments yielding the results yearned for ? Is our political will translating itself into sufficient concrete action ?*

Mr. Chairman

Malta supports the strategic objectives described in the Declaration just adopted which calls for a proactive approach which adequately

addresses the challenges mentioned earlier. Food security and suitable adaptation and mitigation actions particularly focusing on small agricultural producers and vulnerable populations, should be given utmost importance.

My delegation is in agreement with the reference to an intensified support to advance effective country-led regional strategies, to develop country-led investment plans, and to promote mutual responsibility, transparency and accountability, which link into the ACCRA Agenda for Action.

Mr. Chairman

FAO has a pivotal role to play in the fight against global poverty and hunger. The current institutional FAO reform remains essential in making the organisation more effective and efficient in dealing with the global challenge of food security for all. Towards the same objective, the ongoing reform of the Committee on World Food Security is very much needed to improve the global governance on food security. The CFS, being a central component of the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, presents an optimum international platform for discussion of policies aimed towards the elimination of hunger. It is also crucial in better coordinating actions at national regional and global levels.

Malta further supports the need to reaffirm our commitment to the strengthening of the ability of the United Nations, and its agencies, in identifying and understanding the root causes of hunger and to chart appropriate strategies. The cooperation of the three UN Rome based agencies, FAO, IFAD and WFP, and the channelling of their available resources, would go a long way in effectively addressing the scourges of hunger and malnutrition.

Mr. Chairman

The summit builds on a series of previous high level meetings and conferences. It has analysed the existing world situation which calls for a firm commitment to establish effective goals and measures aimed at reducing hunger and poverty. Indeed, it is generally agreed that consolidated action is needed more than ever ~~before~~ if food security is to be ensured.

However, the implementation of the five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security enshrined in the Declaration warrants collective efforts and political willingness to give concrete terms to our pledged commitments.

Thank you.