

WORLD FOOD SUMMIT, 16-18 NOVEMBER 2009

United Kingdom

Today a billion people are hungry because they cannot afford enough food to meet their daily needs. Among them children whose futures are being compromised through malnutrition.

A deplorable situation, one that has no right to exist in the 21st century.

Assuring food security is not just about money and technology, though of course both help.

It is not just about growing more food. Globally there is no shortage of food. Last year saw the world's biggest cereal harvest ever. This year's will be nearly as big.

Ending hunger requires food to be both available *and* affordable. Some African countries have produced huge maize surpluses. Yet over a quarter of their people are hungry. They simply can't afford to buy the food that is there in abundance.

The world cannot stagger from one food crisis to the next. Food security has had top billing at international meetings and conferences over the last year. Many good words have been spoken and money – over \$20 billion over the next three years – has been pledged.

Now is the time for action.

For too long governments in developing countries have not given food security and rural development the priority they deserve. Too

often Ministries of Agriculture have been asked to take on what we know is an incredibly complex agenda – especially now with preparing for and mitigating against climate change. In practice many ministries must share responsibility for delivering food security.

For too long, leaders in rich and poor countries have failed to take tough decisions to ensure that international trading, financial and investment systems are working properly.

But at this Summit we have achieved something remarkable: a declaration by 192 member states based on five principles – the Rome Principles – to take a comprehensive approach to tackling hunger and malnutrition.

Some are saying the statement was watered down.

We think it's a significant achievement.

And some countries are already showing the way. They are finding ways of combining support to agriculture with support to poor people. Look at Ethiopia's achievements with its Productive Safety Net Programme. See what Brazil has achieved with its Zero Hunger campaign.

This “whole of government” approach is being championed by the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme, CAADP.

An approach that is consistent with the idea of a Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. So far 12 CAADP Compacts have been signed setting out binding

commitments by governments and other stakeholders. They provide an excellent model that can be replicated in many other countries.

What this Summit needs to deliver is not more fine words. Nor does it need to deliver more financial pledges. It needs to ensure that what has been promised is urgently translated into action.

It needs developing country leaders to return home and mobilise all their ministers towards a common goal of food security.

- *Finance ministers* to allocate sufficient budget resources, drive equitable economic growth, and so reduce poverty.
- *Health ministers* to address malnutrition, particularly of children.
- *Social security ministers* to put in place mechanisms to protect and support the poor and most vulnerable.
- *Environment ministers* to ensure sustainability.
- *Trade ministers* to encourage private enterprise, and the free movement of commodities within the region.
- *And transport, water and power ministers* to ensure that the vital inputs to agriculture are there.

It needs donors to support achievement of all the MDGs. The UK is on track to meet the 0.7% GDP target by 2013, and plans to legislate at the first possible opportunity to enshrine this commitment in law.

It needs our international organisations to work better together and to deliver more effectively what countries need.

And it needs all leaders to go away and use all their political, diplomatic and technical resources to get international systems working better:

- to restore global economic growth and get international financial systems working more effectively;
- to get the Doha Development Round back on track; and
- to remove protectionist and distortionary subsidies and remove obstacles to free trade.

And it means ensuring that agriculture and food security continue to be given the highest international attention to ensure that the commitments of our joint declaration are translated into the action so urgently needed.

Thank you.