



WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY

Rome, 16 – 18 November, 2009

Presented by:

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Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Mr. Director-General, Honorable Delegates, Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to convey the sincere wishes of H.E. Hamid Karzai, the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, for the success of this World Summit on Food Security.

I am also honored to present the following statement on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Honorable delegates!

This Summit is different from the two previous Summits of 1996 and 2002. For today the world is facing severe economic and financial difficulties, climate change, biofuel's influence on the markets of some key food commodities, slowing down of world trade, and disasters both natural or man-made. In fact, this Summit is a wake up call for all nations to join hands in addressing the fundamental causes of global food insecurity and poverty; and establishing a global framework for sustainable agriculture in the twenty first century. Therefore, we believe that the unanimously approved Summit Declaration was the

correct course of action for eradicating hunger and poverty from our planet.

Excellencies!

Food security in Afghanistan deteriorated sharply in the years 2007 and 2008 due to severe drought, exceptionally high prices of basic food commodities and other items of necessity like fuel. In 2008, some six million Afghans, that is one-fifth of the population, faced hunger. Although we received generous food aid from WFP and friendly countries, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was nevertheless compelled to divert one hundred million dollars from its development budget to the importation of wheat and wheat flour to meet domestic shortages. Of course, people suffered but there was no loss of life from starvation. Fortunately, we are having a bumper harvest of cereals this year, which hopefully will meet our domestic needs without resorting to the commercial importation of wheat.

Chairperson!

My Government gives high priority to national food security. The National Food Security Program is a major component of the Ten Year Master Plan of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock. The first five years of the Master Plan envisages an investment outlay of US\$ 2.3 billion of which US\$ 360

million is for national food security. The National Food Security Program is country owned and led. It is comprehensive, participatory and with focus on small producers and vulnerable groups like women. The core element of the program is raising farm productivity, particularly in irrigated areas through crop intensification and diversification, as well as improved animal husbandry. Moreover, the National Food Security Program is an integral part of sustainable agriculture and of a comprehensive rural development process. For its implementation, we look forward to a long-term commitment of the three Rome-based UN agencies (FAO, WFP and IFAD), other international financing institutions, bilateral donors and the private sector. We would warmly welcome the positive response from the international community for the economic and social development of the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan as delineated in the G8 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Trieste on 26/27 of June, 2009.

Honorable delegates!

The effects of global warming on the water flows of regions supplied by snow, like the Hindu-Kush range, is confirmed by the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). An early melting of snow in our mountain regions will cause heavy floods during Spring season followed by severe shortage of water for Summer and Autumn crops. In this respect, adaptation measures do require heavy investment in water storage. My government is determined to

undertake such investments because our future livelihood is at stake. The IPCC reports also raise the potential of more precipitation and a rise in temperature for high altitude regions. This could be a window of opportunity for parts of Afghanistan by facilitating agriculture and afforestation at higher altitudes. Nevertheless, this again calls for heavy investment in terracing, access roads and human settlement.

Excellencies!

At national level, sustainable agriculture and food security require momentous efforts on several fronts, including the enabling policy environment, investment in the promotion of sustainable agriculture and food security, making it convenient for farmers to acquire appropriate and affordable technology, access to markets, especially by small farmers, an efficient input supply system, the strengthening of public institutions, particularly research and extension, and the capacity building of men and women farmers, processors and traders. My Government with support from the international community is committed to move forward on all these fronts so it can provide adequate diet to the country's population by 2050, which according to the UN projection is expected to reach 97 million.

Chairperson, Honorable delegates!

In conclusion, the unanimously endorsed Declaration is a good roadmap for action to achieve sustainable agriculture, food security, improved nutrition and a vibrant rural economy, especially in those countries that have fallen behind. However, without a determined united effort, a significant segment of the world's population will continue to suffer from hunger, malnutrition and poverty; and according to the Declaration it is unacceptable.

Thank you all and God bless you