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منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Thirtieth Session

Khartoum (the Sudan), 19-23 February 2018

Statement by the President of the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa

Your Excellency, Mr Abdullatif Al Igeimi, Minister for Agriculture and Forests, President of the Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa,

Your Excellency, Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ministers,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in Rome,

Honourable delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, on behalf of all the delegations here present, the Ivoirian delegation and myself, to thank the Sudanese authorities, in particular my counterpart in Sudan, for the attention we have received since we set foot in this great, beautiful country.

The Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa is being held here in Khartoum as a result of the solidarity of the African Nations which I am happy to respectfully acknowledge.

Dear participants,

As you know, the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held in Abidjan, in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, from 4 to 8 April 2016, on the theme of "**transforming African Agrifood systems for inclusive growth and shared prosperity**".

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A record number of ministers from Member Nations in charge of agriculture and other FAO areas of expertise attended, along with representatives of many countries, organizations and partner institutions.

At the end of the meeting, the FAO Regional Conference for Africa approved the contribution of FAO, as a partner of the African Union, to the elimination of hunger by 2025, thanks to the implementation of regional initiatives inspired by the Organization's strategic objectives.

It also adopted a declaration known as the "Declaration of Abidjan", which emphasized climate change and its effects on African agriculture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As my time as President of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Regional Conference for Africa draws to a close, I have the honour of presenting the results of the work carried out based on the recommendations adopted in Abidjan.

These results can be arranged around three main pillars. They are:

- 1) Africa's commitment to eliminating hunger by 2025;
- 2) the sustainable intensification of production and the development of value chains;
- 3) strengthening resilience in arid zones.

As regards Africa's commitment to eliminating hunger by 2025:

- a) FAO provided support to countries and regional economic communities for implementation and for monitoring of indicators on the food and nutrition situation;
- b) In addition, FAO encouraged the sharing of experience between Ghana and Ethiopia in the use of monitoring and evaluation systems based on new information and communication technologies for the agriculture sector.

As regards the sustainable intensification of production and the development of value chains:

- a) Ivoirian farmers were trained in integrated production systems, including agricultural production, aquaculture, livestock keeping and biofuels.
- b) 23 000 Zambian farmers were monitored using a smart-card system, which provides them with technical information.

Lastly, strengthening resilience in arid zones. Within the context of this pillar, resilience strategies were drawn up at the national and regional level. These strategies resulted in the design of a 28 million euro project, focused on strengthening pastoral subsistence resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last two years I have crossed the African continent from West to East and from North to South, via the centre, within the scope of my mandate.

This has enabled me to have working sessions with FAO subregional offices in Africa. I can assure you that FAO has high-level expertise in these offices, of which I urge you to make greater use.

I naturally took the opportunity presented by these trips to pursue dialogue with my African counterparts, to participate in several fora and conferences on agriculture in Africa and to meet African Heads of State and heads of many institutions to discuss increasing investment in the agriculture sector.

In addition to the implementation of the recommendations of the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa, the message I brought with me aimed to create greater awareness of the need to prioritize agriculture on the continent in order to meet the challenges of hunger, migration, terrorism, poverty and youth unemployment currently facing the continent.

I stated on each occasion that this prioritization must first and foremost be reflected in the proportion of national resources allocated to the agriculture sector.

I explained at COP22 that African agriculture should enjoy a fair share of the resources announced at COP21 to fight climate change and its effects.

Firstly, because 60 percent of the natural resources to be preserved to satisfy the food needs of humanity are in Africa.

Secondly, although Africa is responsible for 4 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, it has 36 of the 50 nations most severely affected by climate change in the world, and already had more than ten million climate refugees in 2015.

Finally, Africa has several vehicles for mobilizing these resources, including the Initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture to climate change (AAA) inspired by the Declaration of Abidjan.

I am pleased that the African Union has, through the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and the Environment, adopted this initiative at the second session of this Specialized Technical Committee.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My travels outside the continent have enabled me to help strengthen dialogue in the agriculture sector between Africa and the rest of the world. I place great hope in the Africa-Europe, Africa-India, Africa-Brazil, Africa-China and Africa-Turkey initiatives, among others, to increase agricultural investment in the continent (both public and private), as well as experience exchange which will help us to close the technology gap in the agriculture sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like, in the name of the Ivoirian Government, to take this opportunity to address my sincere thanks to all those who have participated in the implementation of the road map of my mandate as President of the Twenty-ninth session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

I would particularly like to express my gratitude to the FAO Regional Office for Africa and the FAO Representation in Côte d'Ivoire for their constant support.

I address my most sincere congratulations to the Government and the people of the Republic of Sudan for hosting the Thirtieth Session of the Regional Conference.

I would also like to underline the continual and essential work carried out by the Africa Group of Permanent Representatives in drawing up the framework of discussions for the Conference.

Lastly, I would like to give special thanks to the Director-General of FAO for his tireless leadership, his exemplary vision and for having placed the priorities of Member States at the heart of the FAO mandate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to end by inviting the President of the Thirtieth Session of the Regional Conference to continue this advocacy work, to mobilize even more African decision makers, as well as technical and financial partners around the agriculture sector in Africa.

Now that I have handed on the baton of President of the Regional Conference, I wish every success to my counterpart, Mr Abdullatif Al-Igeimi, Minister of Agriculture and Forests of the Republic of Sudan, President of the Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

I wish you all a fruitful and productive Thirtieth Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

Thank you for your attention.