

KORT VERSION

Statement by the Head of Danish Delegation (Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Eva Kjer Hansen) at the
FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of
Climate Change and Bioenergy
in Rome, 3 – 5 June 2008

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- Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.
Allow me to thank FAO for convening this conference in collaboration with WFP, IFAD and Bioversity International.
- We appreciate the work of the Secretary-General's Task Force on the Global Food Crisis. We hope that it will result in a comprehensive strategy emphasizing the role of agriculture in providing food security and in dealing with Climate Change.
- Let us admit it. In many respects, the food crisis that we are facing right now, is due to our own negligence.

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- For many years we have forgotten to invest in agriculture. We believed that scarcity and high prices was a problem of the past.
- We were wrong. And today we see the consequences of this short-sightedness.
- Instead of trying to hide our mistakes, we should learn from them and address the problems openly.
- In order to cope with the problems, I would like to suggest three main responses.

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- Firstly, we must ensure that emergency needs are met.
- Secondly, we must invest more in agriculture, not least in Africa.
- Denmark contributes with 0.8 pct. of its GDP to development aid. We strongly encourage other countries to join us in realizing the long-standing UN target of not less than 0.7 pct.
- Unfortunately, since 1982, the share of agriculture in total development aid has dropped from 17 pct. to only 3 pct. today. We must reverse this trend.

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- It is important that small-scale farmers in developing countries are assisted to boost production by helping them get seeds and fertilizers.
- It is also important to help women farmers. In some countries they make up as much as 70 percent of the workforce in food production.
- Now, gentlemen, you should always treat women properly! Just as you should always treat farmers properly. Therefore it is crucial to treat women farmers with the utmost respect and gratitude!
- In general, the international community needs to increase research and development in the agricultural sector.

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- The development has to be led by the countries themselves. But allow me to suggest that we have to take into consideration the whole range of technological possibilities.
- We need conventional inputs such as fertilizers. We also need high tech solutions such as the use of GMOs – of course with all the necessary precautions. Likewise, we need the methods of organic farming when the conditions demand it.
- I believe that there is an old Chinese saying that goes like this: “The colour of the cat doesn’t matter as long as it catches mice.”

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- Investment in agriculture should be encouraged in many ways. But one of the most important incentives to invest is the certainty that you are allowed to sell your products everywhere around the world.
- This brings me to my third point: Free trade. We should ease trade and export restrictions that distort markets and impede the free flow of agricultural commodities.
- We should also join efforts to move the Doha trade talks toward a successful and rapid conclusion.

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- Export restrictions, cartels, barriers to trade et cetera are not the way forward. This will only make things worse. It will only prevent food from reaching the people who need it most, and it will only hinder investment in agriculture.
- Representing Denmark as host for COP15 in 2009, allow me to mention that in just 18 months the world community is set to conclude a global agreement to combat climate change.
- We have the responsibility to act in common. But it is clear that different countries have different responsibilities according to their respective levels of development.

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- The Danish government understands and agrees that economic growth needs to be the number one priority of developing countries. But economic growth does not necessarily have to lead to a corresponding increase in energy consumption.
- A new climate agreement must pave the way to affordable and environmentally sound technology for developing countries. Pursuing a low carbon development strategy should not be a detour, but rather a shortcut towards sustainable development.
- Agriculture is both a potential victim of climate changes and at the same time agriculture is a major source of climate changes.

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- But more importantly agriculture can also offer solutions with regard to global warming. Biomass fuel has the potential to be a clean, renewable source of energy, when it is grown in a sustainable way, and especially when it is extracted from waste products.
- The trade-off between the energy, environment and social issues involved is subtle and immensely complex. We need to study this carefully. Therefore we support the role of FAO in facilitating international discussion on this issue.
- To conclude my intervention, let me summarize my main points:

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- Without agricultural development, there will be no development.
- Without agricultural development, on the basis of investment and free trade, there will be a permanent food crisis.
- Without agricultural development, there will be a continuous degradation of both environment and climate.
- Agricultural development is the key.
- Thank you all for your attention. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.