

5 June 2008

**STATEMENT OF H.E. AMBASSADOR UĞUR ZİYAL,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO FAO AND
HEAD OF TURKISH DELEGATION TO
“FAO HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY:
THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOENERGY”
3-5 June 2008**

Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is gratifying to be here and address this high level meeting, which H.E. Director General Diouf had so aptly described as “a true summit” because the issue is vital. As the FAO report has pointed out 37 countries are living a food crisis. If urgent measures are not agreed upon and implemented, unrest can affect us all. Maybe this crisis is more immediate for millions of our fellow human beings who happen to be less privileged, but nevertheless, it is vital for us all, even for our planet.

Circumstances have prevented the personal presence of my Prime Minister and concerned Cabinet Minister, but we in Turkey are aware of the urgency and critical nature of the subject matter. We are also very much aware that we need a global response to this issue. Consequently, we welcome the collective deliberations, the search for solutions and the common response we are sure to reach. Turkey, as always, stands ready to do its part not only as emerging donor country but as a country with a significant agricultural sector.

We face various challenges. Climate change, biofuels, environment are ones that most readily come to mind. These, coupled with increase in world population, current market conditions and loss of biodiversity just to name a few all jeopardize our common economic and social goals. To counter them, we need a comprehensive response to which we believe this meeting will make a significant contribution.

Managing risks is another important facet of this challenge in front of us. Prices of agricultural products are not only rising but volatile. This is the result of various factors with varying consequences, not only for agricultural producers but for the general public as well.

Due to the above, food security has gained the nature of a most significant preoccupation that has to be addressed urgently.

As responsible states, we have to make sure that we have enough food to feed people, not only at a national level but more important, globally. For this, we must use our resources to develop and

implement strategies to overcome the challenges posed on our food production systems in order to achieve overall sustainable development.

Recent increases in food prices are of concern in Turkey as it is in other parts of the world. For us the recent price increases mostly result from increasing costs of energy and other inputs as well as from the influence of global market situation, rather than real food shortfall. In Turkey, we have been successful in implementing measures to control extreme price increases, but we all have to be prepared for more expensive food in the future. In this respect, we envisage that although increasing food prices would create opportunities for agriculture, this should not be more advantageous to the traders than the farmers.

Due to the increasing cost of fossil fuels, industry has been in search of cheaper and more environment friendly energy sources. In this respect, biodiesel sector has been growing in our country as well, slowly but progressively and demand for plant oil is increasing. Therefore farming communities are under pressure for more oil crop production. This, of course, creates an opportunity for farmers to earn more, but it also brings about a risk for food security. Thus, we need to examine food security together with biofuel demand, as well as sustainable strategies primarily with a view for food security.

Agriculture is directly influenced by the present challenges, but it could also provide solutions to minimize their effects. Monitoring, risk assessment and effective measures are necessary for establishment of sustainable production systems. The measures should concentrate on conservation and sustainable use of natural resources such as water, soil and biodiversity.

In order to cope with the challenges of climate change and bioenergy demands in view of achieving food security, we need to develop climatically adapted and sustainable production techniques. The measures to be taken for adaptation to the climate change include efficient use of water resources, development of early warning systems for floods and drought, promotion of renewable energy, improvement of plant varieties that are tolerant to drought stresses and conservationist agriculture techniques. But the most immediate action we must take is global coordination and cooperation for the alleviation of hunger and support for the most poor and affected segments.

One size fits all approaches may not be too pertinent, but in this context, Turkey has taken significant steps in terms of policy development, legislation and institutional restructuring. These include the following:

- A coordination council has been established with participation of all related institutions to monitor and develop strategies to minimize the effects of drought.
- Establishment of the GIS centre for monitoring, prediction and evaluation of crop production

- Higher emphasis on research for drought and water use efficiency, especially on development of drought resistant varieties and agronomy research
- Designation of and capacity development for research institutes for research on 'Drought' 'Bioenergy' and 'irrigation'.
- Financial incentives for extending the use of more efficient irrigation systems
- Financial and technical support for those affected from drought
- Support schemes for development of agribusiness for small household farms.

In addition, we are planning large scale regional development projects especially based on substantial irrigation investments to enable substantial development for mass food production.

As you can see, our efforts are more on the innovation, production and supply side which we believe to be a way out.

We appreciate and support the initiatives taken by FAO and other UN agencies and international institutions to tackle the present challenges. In this respect, Turkey attributes great importance to protection of natural resources and climate systems taking into consideration requirements and conditions of developing countries and we are prepared to take part in international efforts to alleviate hunger and achieve sustainable development.

Today high food prices, climate change and demand for biofuels are the most significant global issues that we have to adapt our agricultural systems to. The challenges we are facing throughout the globe for our agriculture are more or less similar. Since we all live in 'ONE' world, to secure food for our present and future generations, we have to ensure sound fiscal policies regarding international funds and credits for agriculture and exchange our experiences, collaborate more and work together, as we are doing here and now.

Thank you.