

**Message from Prof. Omotayo R. Olaniyan, Permanent Observer
Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations
on the Observance of World Food Day**

The Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations congratulates the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the 59th Observance of World Food Day in 2004. This year's theme "Biodiversity for Food Security" is of great relevance to Africa, as the continent grapples with the issues of food security. The promotion of biodiversity does not only serve to ensure food security, but is also crucial in the maintenance of variety of food crops that act as alternative sources of food considering the harsh climate in most African countries. This also maintains the traditional knowledge of Africa's farmers that has over many years been important in the management of genetic diversity through the selection of plants and animals to meet environmental conditions and food needs. The African Union appeals to the international community to support FAO's initiatives that are aimed at the promotion and maintenance of biodiversity.