



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS

ORGANISATION
DES NATIONS
UNIES POUR
L'ALIMENTATION
ET L'AGRICULTURE

ORGANIZACION
DE LAS NACIONES
UNIDAS PARA
LA AGRICULTURA
Y LA ALIMENTACION

منظمة
الغذائية
والزراعية
للأمم
المتحدة

Statement¹

by

Mr. Oloche A. Edache

**FAO Assistant Director-General/
Regional Representative for Africa**

**7th Ordinary Session of the Conference of the
Leaders and Heads of State of the
Community of the Sahel - Saharan States (CEN-SAD)**

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 1-2 June 2005

¹ The statement was not read at the conference but distributed to participants

*Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a pleasure and great honor for me to be here today and to have the opportunity to deliver this address on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Director-General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf, is unable to attend this Session of your Conference in person, due to prior commitments. He has therefore asked me to represent him. He sends his fraternal greetings and the assurance of FAO's strong commitment to work closely with CEN-SAD, towards accelerating agricultural growth and improving food security in member States. Dr Diouf wishes CEN-SAD every success and looks forward to seeing the Organization grow from strength to strength, in the interest of member States, and indeed, our common humanity.

FAO commends the theme of this Session of the Conference of the Leaders and Heads of States of CEN-SAD, which is regional integration: "CEN-SAD's place and role in African integration". Indeed, without regional integration and sustainable peace and security, our common efforts to fight hunger and poverty would be seriously undermined. FAO is delighted to note that food security, which is the Organization's primary objective, is an important component of CEN-SAD's vision for regional integration.

Your Excellencies,

Last March, when the CEN-SAD Ministers in charge of agriculture, water resources and environment, paid a courtesy call on H.E. Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic of Mali, during their meeting in Bamako, H.E. expressed a strong desire to see the preparatory work for the development of the 100,000 hectares of land put at the disposal of CEN-SAD by the Republic of Mali, in the *Office du Niger* area completed in time. I am pleased to inform you that in response to that request, the Director General, Dr Jacques Diouf, has approved, for immediate implementation, a project in the framework of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), amounting to US\$276,000. The main objectives of the project are to conduct a study for the development of the 100,000 ha of irrigated land in the *Office du Niger*, and the preparation of a Regional Programme of food security for CEN-SAD member countries. I am also pleased to note that arrangements are being completed for the fielding of an FAO expert's mission to the *Office du Niger* site, to launch the activities.

Permit me also to mention that the Special Programme for Food Security initiated by the FAO African Regional Conference of Ministers and which forms part of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of NEPAD, is now being implemented in 43 African countries at a total cost of US\$ 300 million. In that framework also, 575 South/South experts and technicians are presently assisting African countries to build capacity among their farmers.

FAO is ready to support your efforts, Excellencies, to achieve national and regional food security. Already the Organization has supported the preparation of a report titled "Agricultural Development and food security in CEN-SAD member countries: Priority Options" which was placed before the CEN-SAD Ministers in charge of water resources and environment at their meeting in Bamako last March.

Your Excellencies

This address will not be complete without reference to the serious danger which the desert locust poses to food security and livelihoods in the CEN-SAD region. To combat last year's locust invasion, FAO mobilized considerable resources from several donors. I wish to use this opportunity to thank those donors that responded to our appeal and to urge those who have not redeemed their pledges to do so, to enable us cope adequately with the present threat. The latest situation report on the desert locust shows that there is indeed danger. The report of 25th May 2005 states that in early May immature swarms of locust were seen in Southern Niger moving eastwards from Maradi to Zinder and Diffa, where good rains fell last month. It is even feared that some of the swarms might have reached Western Chad, near Bol. There were also unconfirmed reports from the extreme north of Cameroon. Elsewhere, in the region locust activities have been reported in several places, including parts of Mauritania, Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt. Considering the nature of locust invasion that does not respect regional or national boundaries, it will be in the interest of CEN-SAD member States to work closely together to help contain the danger.

In conclusion, I wish, on behalf of FAO, to congratulate CEN-SAD member countries and the Secretariat for the progress so far made by the Organization. I am particularly pleased to note that FAO and CEN-SAD have continued to broaden and deepen their collaboration.

Finally, I would like to express our profound gratitude to the Government of Burkina Faso for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to the FAO Delegation. My sincere gratitude also goes to the CEN-SAD Secretariat for inviting and associating FAO with this important event.

I thank you for your kind attention.