



REPUBLIQUE DU SÉNÉGAL

Un Peuple – Un But – Une Foi

*Présidence de la République*

**FAO High Level Conference on  
World Food Security : the Challenges of Climatic  
Change and BIOFUEL.**

**STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY  
MAITRE ABDOULAYE WADE,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL**

*Roma, June 3rd , 2008*

**Ladies, Gentlemen Heads of State and Government,  
Ladies and Gentlemen Ministers,  
Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations,  
Mr. Managing Director of Food and Agriculture Organization of  
the United Nations,  
Ladies , Gentlemen,**

It has been now almost twelve years since the International Community met here in Roma, during the World Food Summit and made the commitment to provide food security for all in order to eradicate hunger in the world. This same commitment was renewed in Roma in June 2002.

Meeting again at the same place, for a Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climatic Change and BIOFUEL, the evidence that comes to light is that not only this objective has not reached but world food and environmental situation has further worsened.

Here we are once again caught up with History.

We must act urgently and change method to overcome the challenges we are facing.

The main lesson drawn from the generalized soaring price of staple food is that from now on no country is spared from this phenomenon. We all bear the burden, rich countries as well as poor countries, at different scales of course.

A new impetus of solidarity and innovative cooperation is needed if we really want to bring concrete, sustainable and satisfactory responses to the crisis.

The FAO was created to serve as a framework for our common action aiming at « **raising the level of nutrition and living conditions of populations of member States and improve the yield and efficient distribution of all food and agricultural products** ».

But since the creation of the FAO, 63 years ago, the world has changed drastically; our environment has undergone severe mutations and has deteriorated considerably. With the growing number of Developing countries joining massively the Organization, the needs it must satisfy have diversified widely.

These profound changes have warranted legitimate questionings about the capabilities of the FAO in its current structuring and with its human and financial means, its working methods and field interventions to successfully fulfill the mission it is assigned to carry out.

The current crisis bears in itself the setbacks suffered by the organization as a multilateral cooperation system for agricultural development and food security; further more this is regardless of the willingness and competencies of the men and women who run it.

The external Independent evaluation of the FAO ordered by the FAO Council and which was made available to Senegal, testifies with pertinence the difficult situation the Institution is going through.

Among other constants as worrisome as they can be, the report shows that over a ten year period, FAO resources declined by 31% and its effectiveness by 40%.

The document reveals the existence of **« a heavy and costly bureaucracy...a large number of overlaps and double employment; lack of cohesion in the relations between headquarter and field activities»**.

Furthermore it is indicated that **« Administrative costs compared to expenditures for programs have increased considerably »** and that **« in several country offices, administrative costs are much higher than program expenditures »**.

While noting that the Managing Director has **« launched courageous initiatives to unlock the situation and redynamize the Organization »**, the independent Evaluation notes despite all that **« the FAO is going through a severe crisis which threatens at present time its future »**.

And in any case it is not with a budget of 867.6 million dollars for 2008-2009 and a total of 3072 employees that the FAO will satisfy the expectations of its member States.

Therefore we must envisage the necessary redressing measures. The FAO being born out of the will of States, it is through this same willingness that the changes dictated by the new disposition of things should occur.

**The Agricultural revolution** we are wishing for in developing countries, supposes, at the outset, a **revolution in mentalities** for a new state of mind in approaching problems and their solutions.

Let us conduct less study, cut down on administration expenditure and spend more on field activities to reverse negative tendencies.

Let us simplify procedures, mechanisms and methods so as to shorten intervention timeframes.

Let us delocalize the maximum of services possible in areas of operational activities. Let us trust local actors through more flexible delegation of power.

Let us envisage innovative investments through direct distribution of agricultural inputs and equipment to go around long, costly and finally inefficient administrative procedures.

Those are certainly, among other possible measures, the major changes that seem to me indispensable to improve the system and emphasize the action of the Organization on priority sectors where it benefits from comparative advantages.

Commitment, innovation, rapidity in the action. This is the spirit in which we must also define and execute the commitments we will make in this present Conference.

**How to achieve world food security?**

**How to respond to challenges of climatic change and bio-energies ?**

## **1. Facing food crisis: going from food aid to assistance in agriculture?**

No people can assume its destiny with dignity without freeing itself from food assistance.

Food assistance, generates a dependency link that always increases the need of assistance without providing a durable and trustworthy response to fundamental problems.

The sustainable solution to this current crisis lays rather in food self-sufficiency by a return to the land. Therefore we must encourage long term actions based on assistance to agriculture.

This is the final option chosen by Senegal.

That is why we have launched a plan called the **Great Agricultural Offensive for Food and Abundance**

With ambitious objectives and precise means of action, we are aiming at producing large quantities of diverse varieties of staple food and other crops as well as the modernization of livestock. All social categories are involved in this Great offensive, including Senegalese abroad.

We are carrying out simultaneously our irrigation program for 240,000 hectares to cover our needs in rice and put an end to a dependency that costs us on average each year, 350 million dollars to import 600,000 tons of rice.

In our quest for food sovereignty, we also develop **modern farms** in rural areas.

It is about a new type of partnership through which equipments and other agricultural inputs like fertilizers, irrigation equipment, drilled water, power generators, seeds and the necessary technical assistance are provided to young people in villages.

This experience is part of what I call **innovating investments** which replace the long and complicated financing processes. It materializes through a direct assistance on the field involving the concerned populations and obtains real tangible results.

The beneficiaries motivated by the fact that they are taking their own destiny in hand, recover their dignity in the work they are doing and can thus afford decent living conditions and at term will have the possibility of exporting part of their production.

In the quest of food security, I think that despite the principle of precaution, now has come the time to explore biotechnology further, for the vulgarization of genetically modified organisms in the area of agriculture and livestock.

## **2. Safeguarding World Environment : for a common differentiated and solidary responsibility.**

The world continues to live daily through the harmful degradation of the environment engendered by climatic changes.

Safeguarding world environment commits all countries no matter what development level they have reached.

It requires concerted and imaginative responses.

However it must be based on the acceptance by all of the principle of **common but differentiated responsibility**.

**Common responsibility** calls for an individual behavior compatible with the preservation of the environment, the universal adhesion to international tools for the fight against the degradation of the environment and mostly the execution in good faith of the commitments made.

It means that no State can, alone, respond to global challenges. Only a concerted and solidary approach can deal with problems of a planetary dimension

**Differentiated responsibility** requires that public or private actors that pollute the most assume of course liabilities proportional to damages they cause to the environment.

**Solidary responsibility** must as far as it is concerned inspire positive initiatives of contribution to the protection of nature in the interest of current and future generations.

It is in this spirit that in the framework of NEPAD, the sahelo-saharan States have launched a project at continental level called the **GREAT Green Wall**, of which Senegal, in relation with the Commission of the African Union, is the coordinator, being responsible for the environment aspect of NEPAD.

This project consists in planting trees over a distance of 7000 km from Dakar to Djibouti to constitute a 5 km wide green strip across the desert to stop any further progress of desertification process.

With the regeneration of biodiversity, we plan to give our planet a new « **green lung** » and contribute thus to the fight against climatic changes.

Through its global impact, this project is beneficial to planet EARTH **our common habitat**. Subsequently it should be interesting for the international Community as a whole.

We have already identified the course of the Great Green Wall and selected the tree species to be planted according to climatic zones ; each country crossed by the Great Wall being responsible for its edification within its borders.

All along side of the Great Green Wall we are planning to build **water capture basins**.

The process consists in collecting rain water during the rainy season at the lowest point of each village by compacting the ground as a basin.

Every year during the rainy season we loose important quantities of water by evaporation, infiltration underground or running off to the ocean.

With water capture basins these resources are valorized to enable farmers in rural areas to grow food all year long, develop fish farming and satisfy their nutritional needs and even export market garden produces.

Please note that the investment for a water retention basin is around 140,000 US Dollars. We have built more than two hundred in Senegal and the life of beneficiary populations has improved qualitatively.

Revalorizing in this way our country side we not only contribute to the preservation of the environment through a rational exploitation of water resources but also to the fight upstream toward the phenomenon of rural migration and illegal emigration.

As far as the protection of the ecosystem is concerned in particular, the international community should perhaps envisage classifying certain forests to the status of **Common Patrimony of Humanity** with accompanying compensatory measures for concerned populations.

For example exploitations areas could be arranged through "restoration activities" by regular and monitored reforestation.

#### **4. Facing the Oil choc and developing alternative energies**

With the continuous soaring cost of petroleum products, the economies of non oil exporting African countries are threatened by destabilization.

All what we have achieved with painstaking and constant efforts are at the risk of being jeopardized by unforeseen budgetary charges.

We have to subsidize the price of petroleum products and primary commodities to prevent passing on the burden to consumers at the risk of provoking explosive social uprising.

At the same time the State is renouncing to fiscal receipts on certain products to cushion the price hike. This situation leads irreversibly to budgetary disequilibrium.

I proposed more than a year ago the creation of a Poverty Fighting Fund which could be garnished with voluntary contributions of oil companies to help non oil exporting countries to bear the burden of increasing oil charges.

I know and I am happy about it that France supports the idea of a tax on oil companies super-profits and that the World Bank accepts the principle of alleviating the petroleum overcharge for non oil producing developing countries.

With recourse to BIOFUEL, we have the possibility of alleviating the energy dependency of non oil producing countries but also contribute to the reduction of the green house effect.

JI am fully aware of the controversy about the increasing cost of food products subsequent to the use of part of agricultural production for energy purposes.

However let us refrain from generalizing the problem because as far as Africa is concerned with its unexploited huge land resources it can at the same time be a bread basket and a reservoir for BIOFUEL

In any case plants like Jatropha, potentially used for BIOFUEL grows wild in Senegal.

### **Ladies, Gentlemen,**

At the time we are having these meetings our peoples are still listening and observing us.

Sweating their efforts, millions of men and women, small farmers, craftsmen, fishermen, herders and other social categories are striving with courage and dignity to provide their families with decent living conditions secure conditions.

The million men and women cannot be satisfied neither with declarations of intention nor by soul less commitments but rather by immediate and concrete actions in response to their expectations.

That is why we are here.

Together let us make sure these hopes are not deceived.

We have the means to do so. Let us put our willpower to service these means.

Thank you for your kind attention.