



REGERINGSKANSLIET

**Speech by the Minister for Agriculture of
Sweden, Mr Eskil Erlandsson at the FAO High
Level Conference on World Food Security,
Rome 3-5 June 2008**

Excellencies,

Mr Director-General,

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

**Let me begin by welcoming the initiative behind this
conference linking food crisis, Climate Change and
Bioenergy. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries must
have a more pronounced role in the negotiations on a
new international climate agreement within the
Climate Change Convention.**

**Agriculture and forestry are highly exposed to climate
change but can also offer solutions that are beneficial
both from a mitigation and adaptation perspective,**

especially for those who are hit the hardest, i.e. the developing countries.

I would like to underline how the interdependence between different policy areas such as trade, agriculture and development demonstrate the urgent need for a coherent approach from the international community and interaction between ministries at national level.

Higher agricultural prices are here to stay. Most analysts, like the OECD and the FAO, seem to agree on this. The currently high food prices create problems in the short term, but should be seen as an opportunity to address underlying structural problems in the medium to long term.

In the medium to long term open trade, and the promotion of increased agricultural productivity, will play important roles in developing countries where many of the poor are farmers.

Immediate food relief is necessary, but it must not disrupt neither local food markets nor the long term possibilities for poor farmers to raise their productivity in food crop cultivation. Answering to short term needs, the Swedish Government made an extra contribution to the World Food Program this year, as have many others.

By reducing or even eliminating trade distorting tariffs and subsidies in agriculture, we can level the playing field on the world market and set the production incentives right. Generous market access to developed countries, coupled with aid for trade, will spur investments and increase agricultural output in developing countries. Securing land rights for women is another important measure in order to promote further agricultural production.

A successful completion of the Doha Round is essential in regard to the food crisis since an ambitious deal

would lower the barriers to trade in agriculture. We need to do our outmost to conclude the Doha Round.

The role of bio-energy in rising food prices has been debated intensely lately. Most analysts seems to agree that increased demand for biofuels is only one of several reasons for rising food prices. Sweden endorses further research and development on bio-energy, in particular second generation biofuels, as a way of switching from fossil fuels to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable renewable fuels. This would imply reduced competition between biofuels and food crops, which could, in the long run contribute to lower the pressure on food prices on the market.

Further, to address the current problems and help find solutions for adaptation and disaster risk reduction in developing countries, the Swedish Government has launched the international Commission on Climate Change and Development. We must work together to

strengthen the resilience of the worst affected countries so that they can continue on their path to sustainable development.

Climate change also affects animal and plant health. Healthy animals and plants produce more. New infectious diseases, especially vector born diseases may be spread, as climate conditions change radically.

It is therefore essential that plant and livestock breeding take the health aspects into account. To this end, Sweden has made financial contributions to the Global Crop Diversity Trust in order to encourage further work in the field.

Finally, in the long term, support to the development of small scale agriculture , particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa is essential. It is important for the fight against poverty, for broader economic growth as well as for increasing food security. Overall, there is a need for strengthening capacity in developing countries. Linked

to this need for capacity building there is a role for FAO in assisting developing countries.

Let me conclude by declaring that the Swedish Government is prepared to immediately respond to the pleas from the United Nations.

Thank you.