

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Heads of Delegation
Hon Ministers
Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring warm greetings from H.E.Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, and current Chair of the Commonwealth. He is unable to be with you today due to heavy schedule of equally engaging programmes. I am therefore privileged to present to you his message.

“Uganda is grateful for the invitation to attend this High Level Conference on Food Security focusing on ‘The challenges of Climate Changes and Bio-energy’”

1.FOOD SECURITY

Food Security is a basic human Right the absence of which poses a major global challenge that threatens to undo all the development efforts of poor countries.

We all know that over 850million people of the world suffer from food shortages. Of that, Africa presents the largest number and continues leading in hunger, malnourishment and undernourishment. Unless this conference takes a dramatic effort and commitment, 40 million children of the African Continent will be malnourished by 2020. Yesterday we were told that every second, a child dies due to lack of Food, mainly in Africa.

Millennium Development Goal One is to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015. However, Sub-Sahara Africa produce barely enough food to subsist on, using rudimentary farm tools and depending on rainfall and human labour. This situation must change to avert a food crisis on the continent.

Fortunately Africa has the political will to reverse these grim statistics, through the New Partnership of African Development NEPAD.

The strategy is to empower the rural communities to produce not only for subsistence but surplus for commercial purposes.

Therefore **Commercial farming** both intensive, in case of limited landholdings, and extensive where availability of land permits **is the way to go for Africa.**

Uganda has embarked on that strategy to transform our society from peasantry to intensive/commercial farming through guided enterprise selection and zoning.

Modern agriculture requires capital and technology and for these inputs we need both local and foreign investors. However the main motivation to investors is the market. Africa needs a level playing field in the global market for agricultural produce', a market devoid of unfair subsidies and protectionism.

2. RISING FOOD PRICES.

The rise in global food prices are a threat to global security and National stability.

Total food import bills rose by approximately 25% in Africa in 2007. While major rice exporters are imposing strict export bans other nations are raising tariffs on other food stuff.

Major causes are :

1. Growing Population. The World's population reached 6 billion people in late 90s and has been growing at 1.6% per year. Food production must double in order to feed the growing demands.
2. Increasing prices of major commodities like oil and steel have a direct bearing to food production and transportation. Oil prices have increased by 240% since the 1970s.
3. Unsustainable consumption due to increased incomes. To Africa this should be an opportunity to produce more since we still have the land and cheap labour.

Our problems as I said earlier are capital, technology and market accessibility. Uganda calls for conclusion of the Doha ^{Investable Fin} ~~of~~ Negotiations in order to have a fair share into the global market.

3. CLIMATE CHANGE & BIO-ENERGY

Mr Chairman, Disempowered Delegates

For Africa, climate change is concurrent with the problem of energy scarcity. A look at the global consumption per capita reveals that African countries are the lowest consumers. In Africa the greatest causes to the environment degradation are:

1 Scarcity of electricity and

2. Primitive/Rudimentary Agricultural methods both of which force farmers to encroach on forests in order to eke out a living. Uganda for instance destroys 41 billion cubic metres of biomass per annum for fuel, which endangers the environment.

We must generate enough electricity through a variety of sustainable resources – hydro, solar geothermal wind etc so as to curb deforestation. **This is one mitigation measure that Africa must undertake. Re-forestation mainly in degraded areas is another mitigation measure that must be promoted and supported as a matter of urgency.**

Mr. Chairman, having overcome slavery and colonialism, anew form of Aggression that has beset Africa is in the form of green house gas emissions from the industrial world.

Global warming threatens to wipe out all development initiatives of poor countries. We all know Africa contributes less than 1% of the total Global emissions but is already hit most and will suffer the more due to global warming. Poor countries with least adaptive capacities are to suffer most from rising temperatures. **Uganda urges the UN system to fast track the establishment of the**

Adaptation Fund to benefit the poor and vulnerable countries. And to supervise the mitigation measures as prescribed in the Kyoto Protocol.

Mr Chairman

The production of bio-energy comes as a relief to Africa to stop the overdependence on fossil fuel which is becoming scarce. However the production must be guided and must not in anyway encroach on food production. We trust that the Declaration we are to adopt at this Conference will make appropriate provisions in this regard. In any case I do not envisage any responsible government starving her people in order to run engines, as the opportunity cost would be too high.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, Uganda is appreciative of all the partnerships and support originating from the UN system, the Multilateral and Bilateral Arrangements. We are a country in transit with a vision to increase incomes of our people and with right policies in place to enhance food security. I believe that this High-Level Conference shall come out with harmonized positions for the

world's food security while we adopt the use of bio-energy.''

For God and my Country

I thank you.