



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR ABDALMAHMOOD ABDALHALEEM MOHAMAD, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77 AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THEMATIC DEBATE ON: "THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD" (New York, 6 April 2009)

Mr. President,

The G77 and China expresses its appreciation to you for convening this debate on the global food crisis and the right to food.

We deem it very important that the United Nations has remained seized with this critical issue. The G77 and China believes that eradication of hunger and the attainment of food security and the right to food are global imperatives.

Mr. President,

According to a recent FAO report, the total number of undernourished people in the world reached 963 million in 2008. And in spite of the volatility in food prices, the number of the world's hungry is still higher than they were in 2002, leaving the poor still unable to purchase food.

Steps to eradicate hunger and promote the right to food have yet to be translated into concrete action to help those most impacted by the crisis, and concerns still remain over the situation of the rural and urban poor, landless or small-scale farmers and households headed by women.

Any successful strategy to defeat hunger should therefore involve stronger institutions with better accountability, stability of the global markets, enhanced market access for agricultural products from developing countries, sustainable investments in agricultural production and research, and targeted support to the advancement of the agricultural sector in developing countries, including small-scale farmers and the poor.

Mr. President,

The current financial crisis and global economic slowdown have placed additional constraints on the ability of developing countries, especially the poor, to gain access to food. Overcoming this challenge will require:

- Addressing the global food crisis, which is caused by multiple interlinked factors, including subsidies and protectionist policies of developed countries. This requires a coordinated international response.

- Actions by both national governments and the international community, including donor, are required in the short, medium- and long-term, to meet household and global food security needs, the world's most vulnerable populations and countries especially in developing countries.

- Revival of agriculture in developing countries is a key to eradicating poverty and achieving food security, through coordinated short, medium and long term measures at the national and international levels.

- The international community should support national, regional food initiatives to stabilize prices and serve as emergency stock.

Actions taken by both governments and the international community must aim at minimizing risks and mitigating the effects of food prices volatility on the most vulnerable. In this regard, we must ensure that:

- i. International assistance to support policies aimed at strengthening social safety nets in developing countries, particularly in least developed countries to deal with the adverse impacts of food crisis.
- ii. In the short- to medium-term, national and international efforts should be made to ensure that international emergency food assistance is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible to the most vulnerable people particularly in developing countries.
- iii. The international community to support capacity building activities in developing countries in the design and implementation of social protection policies and programs.
- iv. Enhance the capacity of regional and sub regional organizations to effectively contribute to the strategies to cope with volatile food prices and natural disasters in agriculture sector.
- v. Synergize all efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to strengthen immediate humanitarian and development assistance with those of the multilateral organizations.

- Stronger assessment, monitoring and surveillance system are needed to prevent the recurrence of crisis. Early warning system on food security should be enhanced through:

- Strengthening the capacity of developing countries to monitor and evaluate the supply and demand needs of food at national level.

- Developing a better food security information system to monitor and report on the status of national, regional and global food supply, demand, and prices, and that can act as an early warning system for global food insecurity.

- Establishing better coordination of information system to facilitate a comprehensive analysis and response to the global food crisis.

- Strengthening the role of United Nations System to monitor and evaluate agriculture commodities supply and demand at the global level.

In this regard, we:

- Recognize the important role of relevant international bodies and organizations, including Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme, on agricultural development and food security.

- See the need to improve the distribution of and the access to food in developing countries, through sustainable agriculture and rural development actions to boost food production, which depends on increased and sustained investment in the agriculture sector by government, donors and private investors.

- Urge developed countries to scale up financial support, technology transfer and technical assistance for the establishment of agricultural systems and sustainable agriculture practices, and combat the adverse impact of climate change through meeting their commitments under the UNFCCC.

- Achieving an early conclusion of the Doha Round in order to provide for rules-based, fair and free international trade particularly in food and agriculture commodities, as an indispensable part of a long term solution.

- Eliminating barriers to trade in agriculture products coupled with elimination of overall trade-distorting subsidies by developed countries, as one of the means to increase food production and investment in agriculture in many developing countries.

I thank you