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FOOD SECURITY IN A CLIMATE OF CHANGE

CABI GLOBAL SUMMIT

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Chairperson

Distinguished participants

I would like to express my appreciation for the invitation extended to me by Mr Trevor Nichols, the Chief Executive Officer of CABI, to participate in this important event for the life of the world population which is threatened by the scourge of poverty and hunger accentuated by climate change.

I have the feeling that in this conference we will not be able to invent new approaches or strategies to be undertaken in order to create conditions to avoid the predictable catastrophe that humanity may face in the coming 40 years when 9 billion people would be yearning for food in quantity and in quality.

I cannot predict what new feeding habits will be there in 2050 but what I can foresee is that whatever people will need to eat will have to be made available in big quantities with finite land resources. Therefore, production factors must be able to increase their productivity. The first production factor being the human being himself or herself he or she must increase his or her production capacity by acquiring higher standards of knowledge, discovering the existing but still neglected knowledge which has always been there among the communities and adapting it to the new discoveries of science and technology with due care in order to avoid backlashes.

In the same token, scientific research must be conducted with perseverance and its results must be made available to the

communities that ought to be trained so that they may grasp the methods and techniques of their implementation on the ground.

The positive results of research should become the property of those who work on the field so that they produce more in every inch of the land where they work. The efforts of the smallholder farmers must be supported by the efforts of the commercial farmer who should also master more and more the methods and techniques to increase production and quality of products while preserving or improving the quality of the soil he/she utilises.

Soil, water, fertiliser, pesticides (or other techniques to fight insects and plant diseases), more modern implements such as animal traction ploughs and harrows, small single man managed ploughing, planting and harvesting machines should be made available to the smallholder farmers. Tractors, combine harvesters, sprayers, irrigation systems should be made available to commercial farmers at affordable prices and within permissible fiscal policies.

Of all these factors, besides human ability and creativeness, soil, water and energy are the most important components of the production chain. The four of them are being threatened by climate change.

The farmer is no longer able to predict the seasons for the diverse production activities namely land preparation, sowing and harvesting periods.

The availability of water for human consumption and for agricultural purposes is also affected by frequent and prolonged droughts. As President of Mozambique, I witnessed the devastation caused by severe flooding in 2000 and 2001 which made us realize that what were once extremes of weather, happening perhaps once in a generation, have now become commonplace. Indeed, our continent is experiencing more frequent and severe droughts, flooding and cyclones; temperatures are rising and rainfall becoming less reliable and less predictable, posing serious risk to agriculture production and food security.

Although the African continent is endowed with many water sources these are under extreme pressure, in such a way that they are on the verge of drying up as it is the case of Lake Chad which has shrunk to 10% of its size in the last 35 years.

This compels us to establish an enabling environment and mechanism of cooperation for joint utilization and management of water resources, such as the SADC Revised Protocol of Shared Watercourses.

Across the African continent national governments are toughening environmental protections and developing adaptation programs, but more needs to be done. Internationally, there is an increasing surface recognition that the developed economies – whose activities are most responsible for climate change - must go further than accepting radical and urgent cuts in emissions. Any fair and effective agreement at Copenhagen also requires a massive transfer of resources and knowledge to the developing world which is already suffering the effects of climate change.

Climate change also contributes for soil degradation through erosion, increased salination and desertification, thus decreasing the areas available for agricultural activities.

The production of hydroelectricity is affected through the reduction of the water flows in the rivers.

As a result, around 852 million people worldwide are chronically hungry, while up to 2 billion people lack food security intermittently due to varying degrees of poverty.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain food security in a world beset by a confluence of "peak" phenomena, namely peak oil, peak water, peak grain and peak fish. More than half of the planet's population, approximately 3.3 billion people lived in urban areas as of November 2007. Any disruption to farm supplies may precipitate a uniquely urban food crisis in a relatively short time.

Food security, which refers to the availability of food and one's access to it, is a complex topic, standing at the intersection of many disciplines.

In Mozambique the coordinating mechanism involves 13 ministries:

Agriculture, Health, Culture & Education, Industry & Commerce, Public Works & Housing, Fishing, Finance, Plan & Development, Women & Social Affairs, State Administration, Justice, Environment, Transport & Communication.

This system grants an integrated approach to food security and nutrition which takes into account the political and economic climate, the production, availability and access to food, health, water supply and environment sanitation.

In Africa, the majority of African people lives and work in rural areas. Several studies indicate that about 70% of African population are smallholder farmers and they have agriculture as their livelihood. They constitute the engine of income growth in rural areas. To speak of poverty eradication is to speak of agricultural development and rural employment.

The common denominator of the smallholder farmers is low productivity, food insecurity and limited ability of households to generate savings. About 75% of the smallholder farmers are resource-poor and cannot afford to purchase the necessary inputs to increase production. It follows, therefore, that the most direct and effective means of raising standards of living and alleviating poverty, hunger and malnutrition is through increasing the productivity and incomes of smallholder agriculture.

Coupled with greater participation of farmers in commercial agriculture through effective agrarian and land reforms, this can lead to a transformation of the rural economy through the development of rural based agro-industry and the rural based private sector. With higher farm and rural incomes and purchasing power, Mozambique's economy will be on a solid and broad base for full industrialization, leading to social, economic and environmental stability.

However, there are some constraints to a quick implementation of these strategies:

- Climate risks and uncertainties associated to the inefficient production process hamper the agricultural production.
- Declining soil fertility in smallholder areas is leading to unsustainable production levels
- Increasing population densities, leading to settlement on even more marginal land
- Lack of financing in agriculture
- High interest rates
- Shrinking agro-industries due to inadequate investment
- Lack of interest by commercial banks and insurance companies in supporting agriculture and agro-businesses

Clearly, as it has been pointed out several times, agriculture yields constitute one of the main challenges of agricultural production in Africa, be it in staples such as rice, maize or other food crops. The gap between potential and actual yields is usually large, for a variety of reasons all inter-connected. This call for a value-chain approach that seeks an integrated approach from tillage, to inputs supply such as quality seed and fertilizers, crop production techniques, irrigation, post-harvesting processing, marketing, trade, credit and financial institutions, dissemination of best agricultural practices through extension networks, among others. This integrated approach has proven to be critical to alleviating poverty and hunger in Africa.

The current sources of agricultural growth are not sustainable. Without close attention to the use and adoption of improved

agricultural technologies and science, production growth may slow and rural poverty will remain widespread.

In order to engender transformational change in agriculture there is need to scale-up the resources made available to developing countries for human and institutional capacity building to enhance a research-based approach to agriculture development.

The commitment of African governments to devote 10% of national budgets to agriculture and rural development in Maputo in 2003 represents a good start.

But our efforts in the continent need to be complemented by the contribution of our developed partners. The US\$20 billion agreement to provide support for the world's poorest farmers, reached at the G8 Summit in April, is a welcome move in the right direction. So is the World Bank's commitment to almost double its support to African agriculture to \$400 million. This support must accelerate the speed at which Africa embraces technology and develops its own solutions.

Although constraints exist, Mozambique possesses the fundamentals to realize its considerable agricultural potential. The country is endowed with natural resources, including numerous fertile agro-ecological zones, but only about 10 percent of its 36 million arable hectares are cultivated. Mozambique has 104 river basins, 20 million hectares of forests, and a long coast line with three major ports.

The Government of Mozambique is committed to rural growth and development, however, the potential can only be realized through public-private partnerships in which the Government provides an enabling environment and the private sector increasingly assumes the risks and reaches out to rural areas.

Mozambique aims to increase agricultural productivity and production through green revolution by using science and technology to improve crop varieties, and by boosting innovation. Incorporating science in agriculture in Mozambique is key to the modernization of the economy, to provide employment in rural and urban areas and to raise the incomes of households.

The *Green Revolution Strategy (GRS)* approved in 2007 and the Food Security and Nutritional Action Plan and Strategy aim to increase the agriculture production and productivity of the smallholder farmers in a competitive and sustainable way, eliminate hunger and improve food security. This is done through sustainable use of the natural resources and improving the access of the farmers to new technologies, market, information, training and financial services. There is also a need to promote the development of local agriculture and forestry based processing industries.

These policies coupled with a favorable rainfall in 2009 have contributed to the increase of production by 14% in cereals, 7% in vegetables and 9% in cassava.

The government estimates an increase in 11% in cereals, 4% in vegetables and 8% in cassava for 2010.

Successes in recent years have included:

- Reduction of absolute poverty index from 54% to 43.9% over the last five years
- Reduction in the number of people living in extreme food insecurity from 800,000 to 450,000 between 2005 and 2008
- The creation of 120,000 jobs as a result of allocation of funds to support local development initiatives in each of the country's 128 districts
- Distribution of improved seed varieties
- Substantial increase in the number of extension workers
- Encouragement of the use of animal traction and mechanization of agriculture
- Investment in infrastructure such as roads, power, telecommunications including the extension of the mobile telephone network.

In recognition of the effectiveness of the policies adopted by the Government of Mozambique, our Head of State, President Armando Guebuza, was awarded last August the Leadership in Food Security Policies Prize for 2009 by the Forum for the Research and Analysis of Agricultural Development, Food and Natural Resources Policies.

Subsistence agriculture has significant growth potential in Mozambique. To ensure household food security, most cultivated land is used to grow low value maize and cassava (more than 50 percent of the total). With the remaining area, smallholder farmers diversify with a wide variety of other food crops, and further minimize risk by planting in both low lying and higher elevation areas.

In order for agriculture to flourish it cannot be developed in isolation. We may have all the inputs, implements and machines but if we don't have development in other essential services for the life of the

citizens agriculture will not succeed and the standards of living may deteriorate instead of improving. I am referring to the need of infrastructure which, beyond the irrigation systems, feeder roads and electricity distribution network includes health centers, schools, a network of rural retail shops. Storage facilities are also of paramount importance for the development of agriculture, alongside means of transport, telecommunication such as mobile telephony, internet, radio and television which are big boosters of agriculture production. Mozambique is paying a lot of attention to these aspects.

Civil society plays an important role in the implementation of the food security and nutrition strategy in Mozambique. Several organizations are engaged in community development and environment awareness programmes.

For instance, the Joaquim Chissano Foundation that I have created in 2005 works primarily for promoting sustainable peace in the country and in Africa for we believe that peace in all its dimensions is a sine qua non condition for people's development and welfare.

Based on the values of solidarity, respect for human dignity, equality of rights and opportunities amongst citizens based on the primacy of dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation, the Foundation is launching integrated and sustainable projects at community level.

Currently it is in the process of establishing a training centre for the young graduates in the areas of livestock and agriculture with the aim of nurturing them to become successful commercial farmers. The

training facilities will also be open to any people who may wish to get involved in agrarian entrepreneurship.

The courses will equip participants with advanced technical skills and abilities in the areas of production, processing, marketing and management of agricultural and cattle farms with view to develop the value chain competitively and profitably.

With our collective efforts we will create the basis for a better future for the generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.