

**MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND  
HUMAN RIGHTS**

**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY**

**HER EXCELLENCY**

**DR. KINGA GÖNCZ**

**MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**HUNGARY**

**HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: THE  
CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

**(ROME, 5 JUNE 2008, 11.00 AM)**

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I wish to thank Mr. Diouf, Director-General of FAO for his timely initiative to convene the High Level Conference on Food Security. As rural areas make up 88 % of the territory of Hungary, agriculture and rural development in general play an important role in our economy.. My Government welcomes therefore that, while addressing various aspects of the global food

crisis, this Conference focuses specifically on the opportunities to resolve these problems by giving priority to the development of agriculture and rural life.

It is necessary for the international community to address the challenges of poverty eradication and hunger, climate change and the sustainability of agricultural production in a coherent and integrated manner, paying special attention to the unique situation of the most affected, least developed countries. I can assure you that the Republic of Hungary is committed to meet the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Between 2007 and 2013, Hungary intends to put more emphasis on the sustainability of agricultural production, to the preservation of rural lifestyle, culture and heritage. Let me mention that last year we adopted the so called New Hungary Rural Development Program which attaches special importance to

- the protection of the environment,
- the preservation of forests, natural habitats and biodiversity,
- water protection and management,
- renewable energy,
- modernization of infrastructure and farms,

- organic farming, and
- research and education.

The future of mankind and agriculture is significantly influenced by the way we respond to the direct and indirect effects of climate change. In many regions of the world, global warming contributes to a severe decrease in agricultural land that might be complemented by water shortage and energy crunch. This might lead to political intolerance, inflaming ethnical riots, the evolution of international conflicts alongside food deficiency.

Besides the reduction of atmospheric emissions of greenhouse gases and the increased rate of their absorption, it is also inevitable to adapt to the new weather and climatic conditions such as drought, desertification, weather extremities, Until 2015 Hungary intends to reduce its greenhouse emissions by 15%, of which agriculture will take a proportional share, approximately 10-12%.

One way of addressing the problem of energy poverty might be the increased use of bioenergy. The transformation of energy use also entails significant savings. The replacement of fossil fuels by renewable energy sources is not only a necessary priority but also a

great opportunity for rural areas. Nevertheless, the production of these new energy sources must be reconciled with the provision of food stocks for the world's population, while avoiding any potentially irreversible damage to biodiversity.

Mr. Chairman,

We are very much concerned about the recent increase in food prices. Protests and food riots in various parts of the world clearly demonstrate a dramatic impact on the world's poorest populations, endangering the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially the commitment to halve the number of those starving by 2015.

At the same time, in the longer term, rising prices could turn into an opportunity to help rural communities in some developing countries out of poverty. In my opinion, it is the main responsibility of the international community to seize this unique and historic opportunity to boost agriculture and food production in an appropriate way.

Until recently, it was much talked about overproduction. Nowadays, one of the basic problems is the lack of access to food in many countries, and sometimes even the shortage of food. To enhance food production, we

need to bring more land under cultivation or to increase yields, which is sometimes very difficult to reconcile with the preservation of biodiversity. In addition, the increased use of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, etc.) and investments in the infrastructure (roads, warehouses and primary processing) are essential to boost agricultural production. On the other hand, we might also need to reconsider agricultural policies that restrain trade or production.

The overall situation can be significantly improved by the promotion of investment in professionally designed projects that lead to sustainable development. However, the most important issue is the co-ordination of actions, so we very much welcome the establishment of the Task Force, created by the UN Secretary-General. As a result, we hope to attain synergies and complementarities, instead of creating duplications in the operations of the various global actors (such as FAO, World Bank, IFAD, WFP, UNDP and bilateral donors). Elements of the UN reform also point in this direction. In our view, FAO should, in the framework of this Task Force, play a leading, proactive role in coordinating actions in agriculture and rural development.

As an emerging donor country, we concentrate our efforts primarily on those activities where Hungary has comparative advantages such as modern plant

production, animal husbandry technologies, forestry and fishery programs, water resource management, and primary food processing. It is our priority to promote the economic empowerment of women as well. We established close cooperation with countries such as Vietnam, Ethiopia, Yemen, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Eastern European region as well as the Palestine Authority.

We wish to deepen our ties with countries of the African continent as well in the spirit of the European Development Consensus and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. In this respect I am pleased to announce that Hungary is going to consider reprogramming its ongoing and projected assistance to developing countries, in particular to those most affected by high food prices.

I believe that working together, we will be able to meet the challenges of our times and agriculture and rural development would become the main drive for sustainable development.

Thank you for your attention.