



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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FAO High-Level Conference
on
World Food Security
The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy

Statement by

Mr. Manfred Boetsch

Secretary of State

Director, Federal Office for Agriculture

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Mister Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Switzerland very much welcomes today's discussion and thanks FAO for having taken the initiative to organize this Conference.

The global food crisis is indeed a serious economic and social problem. The reasons of this crisis are multiple and well-known.

The challenges are huge. The time is short. It is indeed our responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to safe and nutritive food. We do need concrete actions now:

- We need an efficient, coordinated and coherent global response from all international organisations. We therefore welcome the High-Level Task Force established by the UN Secretary-General
- The responsibility for tackling the crisis must be shared between the international community as a whole and the countries affected by the crisis. The latter have to exercise effective leadership in developing and implementing sound agricultural and food security policies consistent with the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the Right to Adequate Food and Water;
- As the leading specialized UN-Agency in the field of food and agriculture including rural development, FAO must play an important role in supporting long term food security. Indeed the food crisis is an additional motivation for going ahead quickly with the on going FAO-reform.

The first and immediate short term priority should be to secure sufficient and efficient emergency food aid to assist the most vulnerable and the poor. This emergency aid should be provided in such a way that it doesn't distort local markets.

Switzerland like others has responded quickly to the World Food Program's call by providing additional funding.

Short term policy measures such as food export bans or restrictions that could threaten the stability of food supply and demand should be avoided. On the other hand, Switzerland strongly supports prohibition of export subsidies. Also needed is a progressive liberalization of world food markets based on rules which enable the developing countries to manage the adjustment process and minimize the negative impacts on food insecure groups.

In the medium- and long-term perspective, Switzerland advocates a multilateral system in which sustainable agriculture and rural development are politically prioritized. Referring to various interventions one can summarize that a Sustainable and multifunctional agriculture is a prerequisite to protect the environment, promote the rural economy, assure environmental services and food security.

Mr chairman,

Therefore we plead for implementation of the following measures which aims at optimizing efficiency and improving sustainable agricultural production:

- significant increased investments in local and multifunctional agriculture as well as in the food chain, to contribute to the reduction of rural poverty by the creation of employment and income. Special emphasis should be given to family farmers who have the greatest potential in terms of production growth.
- effective access of all producers to appropriate means of production including locally adapted crop and animal genetic resources as well as secured land-tenures and micro-credits;
- strengthening of agricultural research and development, extensions services and capacity-building activities directed to the needs of all

farmers, taking into account the options for action identified in the IAASTD report;

- and last but not least good governance, there will be no success without security, proper regulatory framework and stability.

Mister Chairman,

Climate change and subsequently bioenergy are also two important issues.

Agriculture as well as forestry have a key role to play. Both have indeed the potential to contribute positively to the efforts to mitigate climate change and have also to adapt to its negative impacts.

In this regard, measures should be promoted to enable all farmers to benefit from mechanisms such as the Global Environmental Facility fund and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) for the post Kyoto period.

Lifecycle assessments (LCA) of the ecological and social impacts of biofuels as well as their impact on food security need to be conducted to ensure a positive greenhouse gas balance as well as conservation of resources such as water, soil and biodiversity. In this respect Switzerland like a few other countries has developed biofuels regulation based on such criteria.

To ensure a successful future of biofuels, international cooperation needs to be strengthened to support the development of standards and certification schemes for the sustainable production and use of biofuels.

Mister Chairman,

Before ending we would like to stress the political will and readiness of Switzerland to cooperate with the international community in the search and implementation of efficient solutions to deal with these global challenges.

Thank you for your attention