



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE SARAH
SAYIFWANDA, MP, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE
AND CO-OPERATIVES, ZAMBIA**

AT THE

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

ROME, 3-5 JUNE 2008

Chairperson,
Director-General of FAO,
Heads of State and Government,
Heads of Delegations,
Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to deliver a message of warm greetings and best wishes from the great Zambian Leader, the Republican President Dr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, SC., who is unable to be with you today due to some other national commitments. However, I have his full blessings to deliver this statement to this Conference.

I feel greatly honoured to be participating at this High-Level Conference whose purpose is to address food security issues in the face of soaring food prices and the new challenges of climate change bio energy and food security.

Let me start my remarks by thanking the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the other Rome based sister UN Agencies, WFP

and IFAD as well as the CGIAR system for convening this High-Level Conference.

Chairperson, this Conference could not have come at a more opportune time than now when the world is faced with rising food prices every day. A few years ago, food was in abundance, but today we hear of food riots. This conference is, therefore, welcome as it will assist us devise sustainable solutions to the food crisis by identifying the policies, strategies and programmes required to safeguard food security.

Chairperson,

We are concerned that climate change is affecting most parts of the world over the past few years. The world has experienced some of the worst droughts and floods in the last two decades. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, this is expected to worsen as the anticipated changes over the next 50 years include a warming of up to 3 degrees centigrade, reduction of between 5 and 10 per cent of current rainfall, increase in daily maximum temperatures, increased incidents of droughts and floods.

Zambia as a part of this global family is also experiencing the effects of climate change especially in agriculture. Since the 1990s, crop production in the country has faced negative impacts due to extreme climatic conditions, which are believed to be manifestations of long-term climate change. Recent projections indicate sub-Saharan Africa to be at risk for increased drought during the twenty first century. These changes will affect the agricultural sector in the following ways:

- ❖ Reduction in crop yields,
- ❖ Increased incidence of pests and disease,
- ❖ Reduction in soil fertility,
- ❖ Limited availability of good quality water, and
- ❖ High production costs

Chairperson, Zambia like any other nation wishes to ensure food security for its people. Food is a right. Therefore, it should be available at all times, in the right quantities and at the right prices. In addition, the food should be of good nutritive value. This is, however, being threatened by climate change. It is, therefore, in the interest of the world to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are leading to climate change.

As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Zambia is promoting a number of programmes such as:

- ❖ Conservation farming
- ❖ Sustainable forest Management
- ❖ Enhancing capacity for early warning
- ❖ Investment in agricultural research and extension
- ❖ Renewable Energy

You may wish to know that Zambians depend on rain-fed agriculture, which is vulnerable to climatic change. Therefore, the issues of mitigation and adaptation to climate change are critical to ensuring food security for the Zambian people.

Chairperson,

Zambia's large potential in agriculture remains unexploited. Out of a total land area of 73 million hectares, 42 million ha (58%) are classified as medium to high potential and therefore, suitable for agricultural

production. Twelve percent (12%) is suitable for crop production and only an estimated 14% of this is currently cultivated.

The Zambian climate is still relatively favourable for agricultural production with rainfall of 800 mm in the southern part of the country and 1,800mm in the north each year. Ground water resources are also abundant. The irrigation potential in Zambia is 423,000 ha of which only 100,000 hectares is being used.

Chairperson,

With such a vast land area, Zambia has large pasture lands capable of supporting a sizeable livestock herd. However, the expansion in this sub-sector has been hampered by outbreaks of a number of diseases such as foot and mouth. Livestock production can immediately be improved by an injection of funds in local production of vaccines. This Conference can also look into the issues of funds provision for the purchase of the vaccines to eradicate the problem of diseases in Zambia.

Given this great potential, Zambia is well positioned to play a strategic role in producing food for the region and beyond.

Immediately, Chairperson, my Country requires supplementation in the provision of additional fertilizer, seed and farm implement for the small-scale farmers, who are the major producers.

Chairperson,

On the question of bio-energy, prudent land use planning is necessary in allocating land for food production, especially that of large scale production of biofuel plants. However, we should be cautious against compromising food security through sharing same food sources for bio-energy supplies and human consumption. Currently, Zambia has adopted the large scale growing of Jatropha on marginal lands for bio-diesel production.

Chairperson, Zambia is ready to produce for the nation, region and beyond, given the opportunity.

In summary, Chairperson, Africa does not need unnecessary feasibility studies to produce food. All that is needed is financial and material Assistance for;

- ❖ Agricultural inputs such as fertiliser, seed and equipment
- ❖ Research and extension services
- ❖ Improved road infrastructure
- ❖ Storage facilities and investments

There is also need to make credit accessible to small scale farmers especially women and other disadvantaged groups. In addition, there is need to speed up the WTO Doha Round which should address the issue of tariffs of developing countries.

As I conclude my statement, I wish to express our hope that the outcome of this High Level Conference will be a declaration that expresses a strong political will to implement measures aimed at achieving global food security.

Thank you for your attention.

Honourable Sarah SAYIFWANDA, MP

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND CO-OPERATIVES - ZAMBIA

