

## Theme: Agriculture

### Statement by South Africa - 24 February 2009

#### Introduction

Chairperson, the South African delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by Sudan on behalf of the G77 and China and with Senegal on behalf of the African Group

South Africa would like to align itself with a call for a uniquely African Green Revolution made by African Ministers of Agriculture at the High Level Intersessional Meeting in Windhoek this year.

Chairperson, agriculture is the backbone of most African economies and is the largest contributor to Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in many African Countries. Yet, it is severely constrained by poor infrastructure, unfair terms of trade, high tariffs, high cost of agricultural inputs, degradation of natural resources and the ongoing food, energy and financial crises.

To address these challenges, South Africa would propose the following policy options aimed at accelerating agricultural growth, enhancing food security, and reducing poverty:

Enhanced efforts are needed to support programmes in Africa to **increase agricultural production** in a manner that is compatible with **sustainable natural resource management** approaches, and responsive to the impacts of climate change.

There is a need to enhance **access to agricultural inputs and appropriate technologies** , complemented by **access to information, technical support**

**and effective extension service.** These are important elements of a strategy to increase agricultural production, which should also include sustainable production practices, efficient irrigation systems and water technologies, intensive production systems, integrated pest management practices, and increased agricultural inputs and fertilizers in line with the Abuja Summit outcomes.

Chairperson, agricultural trade is pivotal in promoting agriculture in Africa. In order to facilitate the integration of African agriculture into global markets, it is important to promote intra-African trade, South South co-operation, and urgent finalization of the negotiations under the **Doha Development Agenda.**

Development of the agricultural industry depends on **development and transfer of new technologies.** Intellectual property right (IPR) constitute a major challenge in this context.

South Africa calls for, **increased finance and investment** in research and technology development, including increased regional and inter-regional collaboration.

These policy actions should address the needs of a **wide range of users** especially women farmers, youth and resource poor farmers.

Finally, chairperson South Africa emphasises that these interventions must be aimed at achieving food security in developing countries that are severely affected by the food crisis.