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Africa

Statement
on behalf of the European Union
by

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Madam Chairperson, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

*The Czech Republic has the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and would like to focus the statement related to the thematic issue of Africa on **the long-term response to improve food security in African countries**. Food availability on African markets and food accessibility for the population are indeed crucial issues for the African continent, and the EU would like to provide eight policy recommendations in that direction.*

Firstly, food insecurity simply cannot be addressed without a **financial re-mobilisation of concerned African States and the international community towards sustainable rural and agricultural development**. We would like to recall that investments in rural and agricultural development are highly effective in reducing poverty. It is thus crucial to reverse the trend of declining commitments of the international community and of African states that has prevailed over the past decades. In that respect, the EU would like to underline that the most recent data show that there has been, in certain African countries, a progressive increase in the share of national budgets allocated to rural and agricultural development. Those efforts made towards the enforcement of the Maputo Declaration should be pursued, and the EU also strongly urges the acceleration of the CAADP programme. We acknowledge that, beyond the financial commitment of concerned States, additional resources from technical and financial partners and donors will be necessary. The EU also recognises the importance of applying aid effectiveness principles defined in the Paris Declaration to the financing of agricultural development and food security in the African developing countries.

This financial re-mobilisation should support the revision and implementation of sustainable public agricultural policies, involving civil society and the private sector, strengthening smallholder farms and focusing on critical points, such as: land tenure, sustainable management of natural resources, infrastructure, training and education, the empowerment of women, access to financial resources (including micro-credits), inputs, storage, risks, etc.

Secondly, the efficiency of those enhanced financial efforts is strongly linked to **the respect of fundamental democratic and human rights and good governance principles**. This priority is a prerequisite as political stability and peace are highly interlinked with food security. Improved governance also will have strong beneficial effects in the agricultural sector.

Madam Chairperson,

No sustainable and long-term food security will be possible in Africa if we do not address the specific vulnerability of the continent and of African family farming, in particular, to global environmental changes, and if we do not take into account the impact of the development of African agriculture on the environment. Our third recommendation is indeed **to strengthen the implementation of the three Rio-Conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Desertification, as key instruments to respond to food insecurity, and to develop synergies among them, at the global and national levels**. This also means **ensuring that agricultural policies and strategies in Africa better take into account the sustainable use of natural resources, especially forests, soils, water and biodiversity**. On that subject, the EU therefore supports the regional initiative TerrAfrica which deserves special attention as it places sustainable land management in the context of broader rural development and agricultural strategies and aims at harmonizing and aligning different bi- and multilateral contributions.

We would like to underline specifically the need to strengthen Africa's capacity to address the double challenge of desertification associated with land degradation, and climate change, through both adaptation and mitigation. Developing countries' capacities to adapt and, in particular, to adapt their agriculture to the negative effects of climate change should be strengthened. Indeed, it is a key element in the pursuit of sustainable development, poverty reduction and food security, and developed countries should support them in that process. On the other hand, emissions from agriculture can be a major driver of climate change itself; it is therefore necessary to ensure that agricultural development in Africa is compatible with the global effort to move towards a sustainable low-carbon economy and society. In the same line, the growth of agricultural production can place more significant pressure on land thus causing land degradation and making land unfit for agriculture.

It is necessary to promote agro-ecological practices and to move towards an agriculture that will use less external inputs and will consume less energy. We must, together, find an equilibrium between the much-needed growth in agricultural productivity and the constraints of environment and energy. On that subject, the EU recognizes that traditional agriculture and, in general, indigenous knowledge are powerful resources to develop sustainable agricultural production models.

Finally, the EU considers it important that Africa in general and African agriculture in particular would benefit from the post-2012 climate regime and funding mechanisms, such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The challenges of climate change, desertification and biodiversity degradation should be fully mainstreamed into the use of ODA. The EU will work for the effective implementation of the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) between the EU and those developing countries most vulnerable to climate change. We will explore ways to mobilize new financial resources to tackle climate change and combat its negative impacts. The EU also encourages African countries to take those challenges into due account when designing their national policies and strategies.

Madam Chairperson,

Our fourth recommendation is to **fill the gaps in terms of policies and financing in order to achieve the MDGs in Africa.** The fight against poverty and the promotion of education, health and environment sustainability are indeed highly interconnected with food security. Bearing in mind that food security is not only a question of increased agricultural production but also of improved purchasing power, we would like particularly to underline the need to engage for the achievement of MDG1. It is necessary to take actions to improve the access of the most vulnerable populations to social protection, such as safety nets. It also is crucial to support sustainable economic growth, creating employments and generating incomes for African populations.

Our fifth recommendation, Madam Chair, is that the long-term response to food insecurity should notably rely on **further regional economic integration in Africa and on the successful integration of Africa into the world market.**

Along with appropriate bilateral policies, we would like to put stress on the key role that regional economic organisations should play in terms of: support to and coordination of national strategies and policies for agricultural development and food security; improvement of the institutional environment for the agricultural economy; and sustainable management of trans-boundary water resources. On that subject, we would like to underline the importance of ensuring the coherence and convergence of the integration processes among the African Union,

the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Finally, the EU calls for the completion of the negotiations for comprehensive and WTO compatible regional Economic Partnership Agreements. They will improve the integration of the ACP countries into world trade and promote a gradual and asymmetrical opening of ACP markets. In particular, they will allow the protection of their sensitive food-and-agricultural product sectors, while also respecting the WTO requirements. They will also support ACP countries and regions in their efforts to reform and to upgrade productive capacities. The elimination of inter- and intraregional trade barriers will stimulate regional agricultural trade and has the potential to contribute to better food security in the regions.

Madam Chairperson,

As its sixth recommendation, the EU would also like to stress the importance of having **civil society as a strong partner for the response to food insecurity in Africa**. Capacity-building is required to strengthen civil society and to ensure its stronger involvement into the elaboration and implementation of food security and sustainable development policies, strategies and programmes. Particular attention should be given to women, as gender equality provides an opportunity for growth and poverty reduction. Priority should be also given to smallholder farmers, many of them being women, and other vulnerable groups, to professional agricultural organisations, to African research organisations, and to the private sector. To this extent, education, which is a cross-cutting issue of the CSD cycle, is a fundamental instrument to empower individuals and our efforts should contribute to the achievement of MDG2, ensuring a basic primary education in all African countries. The UNESCO Decade on Education for sustainable development represents the international framework to support African countries in developing educational policies.

Finally, Madame Chairperson, the EU would like to provide two policy recommendations on the key interlinkage of this year's CSD thematic issues: water and sanitation, and on a key crosscutting issue for sustainable development that the EU considers to be of great importance: sustainable consumption and production.

*Indeed, the EU wishes **to stress the central role of water for Africa's development and food security and the need for additional efforts, especially in the field of sanitation**. Strengthened political commitment, more efficient and targeted financing for the sector in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005, effective governance, capacity building, are different ways to promote the importance of water. Access to water and sanitation will directly and indirectly contribute to food security. Directly, through reduced pollution, and because water is essential for human life and for crop production and stock breeding. And indirectly, through poverty alleviation and health improvement.*

Secondly, we reaffirm the fundamental importance of the promotion of sustainable consumption and production in Africa. In that respect, the EU particularly welcomes the African 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production approved in 2005 by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). The EU **encourages African countries to build upon international frameworks while continuing to develop their own national priorities regarding sustainable consumption and production. They should actively participate to the negotiation towards the elaboration of a 10-year framework of programmes for SCP, and should in particular develop an Ecolabelling Mechanism for Africa**. This can help to make production more sustainable and develop new

market opportunities. SCP should be considered as a strategy contributing to the eradication of poverty and the promotion of new business development in Africa. Lastly, a special concern about sustainable consumption and production of food in the African countries is the issue of losses in the food chain through complex supply chains, poor storage and lack of efficient transports and infrastructures.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, the EU would like to report on a few initiatives that will contribute to meeting those challenges and turn some of the recommendations into concrete activities. First, **the first action plan (2008-2010) of the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership**. This Partnership provides the way for joint actions, including on food security, climate change and regional integration. Second, the **EU food facility (of € 1 billion)** that was approved in December 2008 to rapidly respond to soaring food prices and to the food crisis in developing countries, especially in Africa. Implementation of the Food Facility will be carried out during the period 2009-2011, providing an important impetus to food production among small-scale farmers. And finally, Madam Chairperson, the EU calls for engagement in the establishment of a **Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition** endorsed by the Madrid High Level Meeting on Food Security for All. The consultative process as proposed in the Madrid declaration should actively involve African countries. In our point of view, such a Partnership should involve all stakeholders (*Northern and Southern States, private sector, professional agricultural organisations, international organisations, regional economic communities, civil society, philanthropic organisations, research institutes, etc.*) and should enable improved policy coherence in addressing food security, poverty eradication, agriculture and rural development, trade, energy, as well as sustainable management of natural resources. Its discussions and decisions could be fed by an independent network of experts.

Thank you for your attention.