



**BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Statement by

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**Special Meeting of ECOSOC on the Global Food Crisis
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Mr. President,

At the outset, we associate ourselves with the statements made by the G-77 and China, and the Group of Rio. We present some considerations about the food crisis as a consequence of the increases experienced in the price of basic food items in the developing countries.

Mr. President,

It is difficult to understand the intent of wanting to blame the price of fuel as the fundamental cause of the crisis experienced by many developing countries. This appreciation is no more than a desire to cover up the failure of the economic models that had been imposed according to the interests and strategies of the developed countries.

In this regard we must observe, the recommendation made to many countries to substitute cereal fields for heavy grains to feed cattle. Everyday hundred of millions of people experience hunger in the world, because a good part of the arable land is cultivated for animal feed instead of being cultivated to feed people.

Mr. President,

In 1984 when the price of a barrel of fuel was US\$28.14, Ethiopia faced the biggest famine of its history, at the same time it designated part of its land to cultivate flax tart, cotton seeds, and rape oilseed, exporting these items to the U.K. and other Europeans countries to feed cattle.

In this context, please allow us to remember that in 1995, when the average price of fuel was US\$14.91, the worldwide price of cereal increased by 50%. At the time, the financial institutions did not consider the warning formulated by many specialists about the consequences of the decreasing availability of arable land, water, environmental expenses, and the erosion and degradation of the fields would have over the agricultural production, whom also predicting that the world price of beans will double for 2010 and the price of wheat and rice will increase more than double.

This constitutes a clear example of the falseness of wanting to attribute the current worldwide food crisis to the prices of fuel.

Another example is our country, one of the most important oil producers, a country that was self-sufficient in the production of food, before we received the generous packages offered by financial institutions to face the foreign debts crisis. Those packages ultimately promoted the social exclusion in our countries and slow down the availability of cultivation of land, and consequentially created our food dependency.

Mr. President,

The food situation worldwide demands, today more than ever, to take urgent measures, directed to increase the agricultural productivity, and to obtain access to food, water land, credit and technology for both men and women in equal conditions. It is an essential method to generate income and to create employment opportunities for the poor; consequently, this will reduce poverty and hunger.

In light of the situation, at the time of making decisions about the most serious problems that humanity is faced with, we must address the root of the causes, which are simply the conditions of the international institutions and the donors through policies for assistance for the development that restrict the autonomy of action, limiting the right that each country has to define and to apply the public policies that consider more convenient in defense of the rights and well being of its people.

We reiterate the call of the developing countries, in relation to the activities of the UN Programs and Funds in favor of the development and the fulfillment of the appropriate international goals, which are effectuated according to the priorities, specific necessities, strategies and objectives of those developing countries, with respect to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. President,

The Government of President Hugo Chavez Frias has proposed a new orientation of the agricultural and rural development by establishing a legal framework that would guarantee nutritional security and a new institution of the agricultural and rural sectors, as essential pillars of the economic and social programs of the Nation, which would play a role in the cooperation south-south, specifically in the development of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). Actions like these permitted us to face the food crisis, by activating measures to reorganizing the agricultural storage system, as announced recently by the director of agricultural policies of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Fernando Soto.

Mr. President,

The area of action in the fight for food sovereignty and security has not remained within our borders. Taking into account that the crisis generated by the increment of the basic items of the food basket goes across the borders of the nations, Venezuela has entered into a contracts and international agreements to face the situation and to push the policy of integration and complementariness at regional level.

To the end, we must mention the Food Security and Sovereignty Agreement of the Extraordinary Summit between the countries members of the ALBA (Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Dominican Republic) that took place in Venezuela during April 22-23, 2008, which will allow the structuring of joint policies to exchange foods and to develop programs accordingly to the nutritional needs of each nation. It will contribute to the straight of the food sovereignty of our countries. Already, five mixed companies for processing of rice, leguminous, dairy and poultry products have been created.

This action was accompanied by the "Presidential Summit on Foods Sovereignty and Security: Foods for the Life," celebrated in Managua, Nicaragua on May 7, 2008 which was summoned with the purpose of approaching the serious problems of our countries, which worsened by the accelerated increase in the cost of foods, which has already brought about an explosion of public violence in different countries.

In line with the framework of this Summit, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela offered the following proposals:

- To create a Bank of Agricultural Supplies to reduce the costs to small and medium farmers;
- To place 100 million dollars through the ALBA Bank for the agricultural portfolio, with the purpose of financing the projects presented by the countries;
- To create a special plan within PETROCARIBE to finance the agricultural production, through special quotas of fuel that has to impact the production;
- To strengthen the power of the States by a special tax for the creation of a Special Agricultural Fund;
- To propose the fight against the drug trafficking, especially with respect to the expropriation of land use for the production drugs;
- To create a center of applied studies for the enrichment of the agricultural production;
- To encourage the celebration of a summit of oil-producing countries to search for a formula Oil-food to create a special agricultural fund.

The cited proposals were attached to the Final Statements of the Summit.

These actions by our countries must be considered as an important document for the task that the Work Group of High Level on the subject of the Worldwide Food Crisis must develop, because it summarizes the priorities, specific needs, strategies and objectives of 11 Latin American countries on the food sovereignty and security of their countries.

Mr. President,

We consider that the Work Group of High Level on the subject of the Worldwide Food Crisis should implement efforts to protect the Bio-Diversity, procuring a sustainable food security and sovereignty, and establishing measures that prevent that the production of agro-combustible is carry out at the expense of the food and the biodiversity. At the same time, it assures the positive effect of this type of energy in stimulating the complementariness in the operation and use of different primary energies to the benefit of the poor countries, but and in the mitigation from the effects of the environmental contamination.

Thank you