

**Statement by**  
**H.E. Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek**  
**Permanent Representative of**  
**the Arab Republic of Egypt**  
**High-Level Policy Dialogue**  
**Building Resilience in Nutrition on the**  
**African Continent: Accelerate the**  
**Human Capital, Social and Economic**  
**Development**  
**“Building Resilient Socio-Agricultural**  
**Food Systems: The Key to Nutrition”**  
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H.E. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Secretary General

Under-Secretary-General Cristina Duarte the special Advisor on Africa

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Allow me at the outset to express our deep appreciation to USG Christina Duarte, and her team for organizing today's high-level policy dialogue on “**Building Resilient Socio-Agricultural Food Systems**”

Our meeting takes place today amid an unprecedented food insecurity crisis. According to the FAO reports, 811 million people are affected by hunger in 2022. The FAO Food Price Index, reached its highest peak in March 2022 since its inception in 1990. In Africa only, one in every five persons face the threat of hunger, the continent remains a net food importer at an annual cost of \$43 billion annually

Most certainly, this crisis was not created overnight. Even before the COVID -19 Pandemic, the world, especially in Africa, was not on the correct path to achieve SDG 2 to end hunger and achieve food security. The COVID-19 Pandemic further exacerbated the already dire situation. The Socio-economic manifestations of the pandemic included increasing inequalities, affecting the fiscal space, and disproportionately affecting our countries in Africa.

This situation was further compounded by the adverse effects of climate change which include drought, flash floods, availability of water, economic development and social inequalities. Water scarcity in Africa, have severe manifestations on the activities of agriculture and the efforts to achieve food security. 1 in 3 persons are affected by water scarcity on the continent.

This already dire situation, is further affected by the geo-political tensions. The continued crisis in supply chains and the disruption to transport and shipping, the rise in energy and fuel prices, which is

increasing food commodity prices, narrowing fiscal space, and moreover increased protectionism.

In this regard, I would like to share with you a few numbers:

1. More than 60 percent of the population in Africa are smallholder farmers.
2. About 23 percent of the Continent's GDP comes from agriculture.
3. According to the AfDB, Africa's annual food import bill of \$43 billion, estimated to rise to \$110 billion by 2025. This bill is expected to further increase in light of the Ukraine crisis and the disruptions in the global supply chain. According to the ICRC, about 346 million people in Africa are facing severe food insecurity.
4. The IPCC working group 2 report on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability pointed that the regions most vulnerable to climate change are Africa, Central and South America, South Asia and the small island developing states, hence comes the utmost importance of adaptation and resilience. Africa is suffering from the manifestations of climate change, especially desertification, drought and water scarcity.

To address this multidimensional crisis I would like to highlight the following points:

- 1- Firstly: On the immediate action, all efforts must be exerted to ensure that the need of the developing countries, especially net food importing countries, are fulfilled in a timely and efficient manner. Strengthening partnerships, regionally and internationally is needed now more than ever.
- 2- Secondly: achieving food security must be addressed in a comprehensive approach. This should be based on our commitment to achieve sustainable development and leave no one behind. Provision of the means of implementations, including finance, transfer of technology and capacity building to the developing

countries to achieve sustainable agricultural production is needed now more than ever.

- 3- Thirdly: investments in the agricultural sector should be a priority. For instance, for the past years, Egypt has promoted a decisive policy to increase its national production and reduce its food dependence through land reclamation projects with a total area of 625 thousand hectares, and through investments such as the establishment of 21 fisheries in the Mediterranean and Red seas and the promotion of livestock production projects.
- 4- Fourth: we need to strengthen our joint efforts to implement our continental programs in connection to agriculture and nutrition. “The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme CAADP” should be the corner stone of our endeavors in this regard. Moreover, the CFTA presents an excellent opportunity of growing intra-African trade, which will allow us to unlock Africa’s untapped resources, particularly its uncultivated arable land, which represent 65% of the world’s total potential.
- 5- Fifth: we need to build resilience and adaptive capabilities to future shocks in relation to climate change. We support the continuous calls by the Secretary General to allocate 50 % of climate financing to adaptation. Egypt as COP-27 president, will work together with all parties on the realization of the comprehensive two year Glasgow – Sharm El-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation.

In conclusion, I would like to once more reaffirm the utmost importance to address the current food security challenges in Africa in a comprehensive and holistic approach that combines both immediate actions to alleviate the immediate crisis, while also addressing the root causes through enhancing and strengthening our continental strategies, in order to achieve the sustainable development as in enshrined in agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Thank you.

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