



UNION PARLEMENTAIRE AFRICAINE

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**Resolution**

**on**

***“Development of Agriculture in Africa with a view to facing the food crisis and contributing to the reduction of poverty”***

The African Parliamentary Union, meeting at its 31<sup>st</sup> Conference in Kampala (Uganda) on 29 and 30 November 2008;

*Considering* the threat posed by world high food prices and the need of a response to this crisis that is jeopardizing hundreds of millions of lives worldwide and more particularly in Africa;

Considering that peace and security are perquisites for the promotion of agriculture in African countries;

*Also considering* that agriculture plays an important role, if not vital, in the struggle against poverty and that it has to meet the basic needs of the population;

*Affirming that* agriculture is a powerful means of development capable of leading to growth, combat poverty and strengthen food security, taking into account bio-safety provisions ;

*Convinced* that the food crisis is an opportunity to reconsider the potential of the agricultural sector so as to face poverty, food shortages, malnutrition and lay the foundation of a sustainable agricultural development based on a different approach;

Considering the difficult access to land ownership because of traditional and customary usage

*Noting* that only 4.9% of the cultivated lands are irrigated;

*Affirming* that there is a real competition between food and fuel ;

*Knowing* that the production of grains and oilseeds based biofuels leads to the increase of food prices;

*Noting that* because of the food crisis pressures, donors and governments give priority to supplying foodstuff at the expense of investments in agriculture;

*Noting that* that the rural area which lives mostly on agriculture has been neglected and has not received enough investments ;

*Deploring* that only 4% of the Public Aid to Development (PAD) is dedicated to agriculture;

*Observing* that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the share of the public expenses dedicated to agriculture is only 4%

*Convinced that* the increase of the Growth Domestic Product (GDP)stemming from the development of agriculture efficiently helps reduce poverty;

*Acknowledging* that women have a central position in agriculture and the micro-gardening in urban zone, and as a result, they should be at the heart of the public authorities;

*Affirming* that the current world food crisis is the result of the choices and policies adopted in 1980's by States, international institutions and multinational companies; their consequences are, among others, the suppression of regulation instruments, tariffs elimination, development of export and cash crops at the expense of food products and developed countries dumping policies;

*Also affirming* that development disparities worldwide make even harder the integration of developing countries in the international market, which worsen the food situation on these countries;

*Noting* that the current food crisis shows the economic, social, ecological and political weakness of several African countries ;

*Underlining* that several African countries have not taped the potential of the agricultural sector because of persisting numerous constraints relating namely to inadequate rural infrastructures, insufficient technologies, unattractive land-law for the private sector and difficult access to credits;

*Affirming* that agriculture must be more dedicated to the production of foodstuff in order to ensure food security;

*Recalling :*

- International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights (UN, December 1966) enforced in January 1976 ;
- the objective of the world food summit held by the FAO (Rome, November 1996) ;
- the resolution of the 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference (Beijing, September 1996) on ‘‘Policies and strategies to ensure the right to food in this time of globalization of the economy and trade liberalization’’
- the findings and recommendations of the specialised inter-parliamentary conference held by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on ‘‘ Attaining the world food summit through a sustainable development strategy’’, (Rome, 29 November-2 December 1998);
- the Monterrey consensus (March 2002) which calls on partnership between developed countries and developing countries in poverty reduction strategies;

- *the World Food Summit Declaration : Five years later (Rome, June 2002) ;*
- *The World Summit on sustainable development (Johannesburg, August/September 2002);*
- *The Syrte Declaration on the Challenges of implementing integrated and sustainable development of agricultural and water in Africa (Syrte, Libya, February 2004)*
- *The 2003 Maputo Declaration by Heads of State and Government of the African Union to dedicate at least 10% of the national budgets to the agricultural sector as well as the Resolution of the Abuja Summit on Food security in Africa (Abuja, December 2006)*

*Affirming* that the right to food as stated in the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights can not be dissociated from the inherent dignity of the human being and is essential to the realisation of the fundamental law, particularly the right to development and peace;

*Concerned* by the current state of the world marked by several crisis, namely food, financial, economic and environment crisis, a situation that may undermine African countries development efforts;

1. *Exhorts* African States to create and preserve the conditions of sustainable peace and security that are propitious to investment in all sectors, especially in the sector of agriculture.
2. *Recommends* African countries to invest more in agriculture, a field that must be at the heart of the efforts of development in order to achieve, among others, the first Millennium development goals (MDG) on halving poverty by 2015.
3. *Urges* African countries with the support of developed countries, to promote investments in agriculture in order to increase productivity and yields and improve the revenues of the poor as well as the supply of foodstuffs.
4. *Asks* African States to include reforms in the land sector with a view to guaranteeing access to land ownership and strengthen the security of law-land and the quality of land management.
5. *Encourages* the National Parliaments of the continent to:
  - ensure that the agriculture sector gets adequate public funding that would enable it to attain the objectives of food security in the long run;
  - to legislate so as to facilitate investments in agriculture and in activities aimed at achieving food security ;
6. *Asks* the African States and the other countries that are affected by the food crisis, in accordance with the right to food stated by the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, to work, in the framework of international organisations, with a view to making agricultural produce not considered as ordinary produce that can be exposed to stock market speculations.

7. *Calls on* multilateral institutions and developed countries to promote new international policies that favour other national and regional policies in order to overcome the food crisis and reduce poverty.
8. *Encourages* African states to facilitate the participation of the civil society in the drafting of agricultural policies.
9. *Urges* African countries to promote bio-safety provisions and to increase private and public investments in agriculture as well as in other areas of the chain of value underlying the production and the marketing of food.
10. *Calls on* multilateral institutions, under the authority of the United Nations and specialised institutions like the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the International Funds for the Agricultural Development (IFAD), to give more priority to agriculture and food production by stressing on the micro-gardening.
11. *Asks* developed countries, African countries and the concerned institutions, to promote agriculture research to come up with seeds that can stand African climate conditions and increase the yields.
12. *Encourages* African States to support and improve the rural population's access to fundamental assets such as land, water, human resources, by developing public investments in the areas of irrigation, health and education.
13. Exhorts African African States to promote investments in the basic infrastructure sector necessary for economic development and to encourage the implementation of an industrialization policy aimed at transforming agriculture products as well as technology transfer and partnership ;
14. *Asks* developed countries to pursue their efforts aimed at, on the one side, suppressing agricultural subsidies, namely for rice, cotton and oilseeds and on the other hand, at opening their markets to African produces by avoiding the use of excessive non tax barriers.
15. *Exhorts* African States to take the following measures to ensure food security and sovereignty, particularly:
  - (a) dedicate at least 10% of the national budgets to agriculture in conformity with the Maputo Declaration and that of the declaration of the summit of Abuja on food security in Africa ;
  - (b) introduce a policy of training and development of human resources in the rural area in order to increase agricultural productivity ;
  - (c) increase investment in food produce and ensure the political and economic conditions with a view to facilitating the access of smallholders to local markets especially in developing road and railway infrastructures;
  - (d) encourage a better organisation of farmers so as to increase their productivity in the foodstuff sector and promote the consumption of local products ;

- (e) implement national and regional policies of biodiversity protection, soil and water and promote the diversification of the agricultural activities, especially aquaculture for an optimized and sustainable exploitation of the natural resources;
- (f) introduce, for low income countries and for a limited period, regulation tools that enable the promotion of agriculture and rural trade;
- (g) help smallholders reduce their production costs linked to the high prices of raw material or energy ;
- (h) change, if possible, export crops into food crops and seek for other sources of income to improve or reverse the situation of being net importers of food;
- (i) establish an Agricultural Policy at the Regional Economic Communities (REC), following the example of the Agricultural Policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAP), in order to favour the creation of an agricultural market, increase agricultural production and stabilise the prices and combine investment efforts in the sector of agriculture.
- (j) speed up the implementation of the provisions relating to trade approved by the REC by reducing tax barriers and suppressing non-tax barriers at technical and other levels by 2010 and take into account these measures in the Doha round and Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations.
- (k) redefine the agricultural policy in support of women who make more than half of the agricultural workforce, by facilitating their access to productive assets ;
- (l) implement an investment funds for the agricultural sector in order to develop access to credit and micro credit, particularly for women and small farmers
- (m) increase investment in rural infrastructures, irrigation, research and agriculture produce storage infrastructures;
- (n) encourage smallholders to embark in high added value activities such as poultry farming, bee rearing and aquaculture, in order to increase their incomes to help reduce poverty in the rural area;
- (o) facilitate investments and business setting in agro-industry in order to create jobs;
- (p) set up a mechanism for protection and assistance to farmers aimed at overcoming the losses caused by natural disaster ;
- (q) establish a modern centre at the continental level for gathering information, statistics and analysis in order to create a database which will enable exchange of information in the agriculture and investment sectors.

16. *Calls* on international and regional financial institutions to support the African countries who are experiencing microeconomic distortions in their budgets and balances of payment;
17. *Exhorts* creditors to cancel African countries external debts which reimbursement attempts seriously put a strain on their financial capacities in terms of investment and poverty reduction;
18. *Invites* developed countries to hold and fulfil their commitments in terms of public aid to development (PAD) fixed at 0.7% of their GNP and to dedicate 0.15 to 0.20% of its share to the less developed countries;
19. *Encourages* the countries benefiting from public aid to development to dedicate more of it to the development of agriculture;
20. *Recommends* the countries concerned to stop the development of the production of biofuels which are one of the causes of the food crisis and to promote research on the production of second generation biofuels.
21. *Invites* African countries to establish rules as well as suitable assistance to family farms, in order, on the one hand, to value at local level, the local potentials as the farmers' know-how, and local seeds and on the other hand, to develop internal exchange.
22. *Asks* the European Union, to review, with a non mercantile approach, the conception of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) for them to serve development; only a EU/African countries economic partnership based on the goals of development in terms of economic capacities and adequate and suitable infrastructures, could make African countries take advantage of the trade liberalisation and not hinder the sub-regional and regional integration.
23. *Urges* African States to take into consideration, during Doha round and EPA negotiations, the measures adopted in the RECs in terms of inter-African trade.
24. *Calls on* African States to work within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in order to value development priorities and therefore make a proposal for the General Agreement on customs rights and trade to be amended with a view to strengthening the principle of non-reciprocity in trade.
25. *Invites* the countries and international institutions to promote local skills and agro-ecology which must be one of the areas of agronomic public research.
26. *Encourages* the African States to work out a policy to develop non agricultural activities and jobs for the youth in the rural area and in urban centres.
27. *Exhorts* the international community to strengthen its support to African Union/NEPAD (AU/NEPAD) programmes and plans relating to agriculture and food security, to water and infrastructures and particularly to the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

28. *Recommends* the implementation at the international level, of a mechanism that coordinates the actions of the key players of the agriculture industry in order to stabilise agriculture markets and efficiently respond, with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP), to situations of food crisis, especially in low income countries.