



Joint - Communiqué Africa Food and Nutrition Security Day 2011 31 October 2011 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Africa has the potential to feed itself, but after more than 50 years of independence, the continent still suffers from widespread malnutrition while spending millions of US dollars annually to import food from the global market. Yet the continent, unlike Asia, has immense land and water resources that could be utilized to boost food production. 240 million people in Africa are undernourished (consume less than the required recommended 2100kcal/day); 5 million children die of malnutrition every year. This is equivalent to a child dying every 6 seconds. Malnutrition is the leading cause of death (35% of child deaths per year). Over 50 million African children suffer from chronic malnutrition which translates to about 40-60% of these children being stunted (low height for age). Over 40% of pregnant women are malnourished.

It is with this context that the African Union Commission, NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, representatives of the Member States of the African Union, representatives of the Government of Malawi, representatives from the EU, Africa Rice Center, UN Agencies, NGOs and CSOs, met on 31 October 2011, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to mark the 2nd Annual Africa Food and Nutrition Security Day.

The theme of the event was “***Investing in intra-African trade for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa***”. This theme calls for:

- An increase in the volume of high-value and nutritious foods;
- Enhancing of national and regional markets and cross-border trade;
- Enhancing of regional and local emergency response and capacity to deal with food and nutrition crises;
- Stepping up of efforts to prioritise harmonisation of Sanitary and Phytosanitary frameworks.

The commemoration outlined the following key recommendations for action:

- Multi-sectorial coordination mechanism and a framework for Monitoring and Evaluation is key in the reduction of food and nutrition insecurity. This mechanism is critical in ensuring joint planning for food and nutrition security across the key sectors and to
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enable a system for tracking progress and identifying emerging challenges to be addressed in time.

- Due to the lack of robust information systems that have proven to be a challenge in so far as understanding the extent and location of food and nutrition security problems, there is therefore the need to improve on available information systems and creating easy access systems to them.
- There is need to improve infrastructure such as roads, rail and waterways, airline, storage, sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards to regulate food quality and safety and to better serve the objectives of improving the movement, delivery of agriculture food and nutrition commodities and services within nation states and across borders for effective regional integration and trade flows.
- There is need to increase budget allocation dedicated to core nutrition interventions within the Agriculture Investment Plans, strategic food reserves and other key sector plans such as health, education, trade and social protection.
- Social protection, mainly for the rural community, is essential to the strengthening of the agricultural sector.
- AU Member States should take steps towards food fortification measures to combat micro-nutrient deficiencies of mothers, infants and young children, as the consequence of under-nutrition in childhood are far-reaching and irreversible;
- In order for small farmers to be able to optimise their productivity, they must be supported with quality seeds, fertiliser, implements, appropriate technologies, as well as require capacity building in the required skills.
- The delegates called for dedicated action to address the challenges at hand and the need for short term contingency planning as well as long term planning to prevent and mitigate crises such as the Horn of Africa drought.

These recommendations will feed into the other items tabled for deliberation at the 18th AU Heads of State and Government Summit for consideration by AU Member States.
