

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone 517 700

Fax : 517844

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REPORT ON THE STATUS OF FOOD
SECURITY IN AFRICA

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA

Executive summary

1. Conscious of the potential of the agriculture and natural resources sectors for ensuring food security and for driving social and economic development in Africa, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at their third ordinary session in Maputo (July 2003), the Extra-Ordinary Summit on Agriculture and Water in Sirte, Libya, (February 2004) and the Extra-Ordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (September 2004), adopted various Decisions and Declarations committing Member States to paying particular attention to the development of the different sectors of agriculture.

2. The Commission of the African Union (AUC) has been mandated by Heads of States and Governments to facilitate the implementation of all the decisions and declarations aimed at achieving agriculture and rural development including the attainment of self-sufficiency in food production and safe drinking water and sanitation. To this end, the AUC, during the past two years, undertook many activities and initiatives to implement the relevant decisions and declarations with the view to creating the right policy and conducive environments for the attainment of food security and poverty reduction in the continent.

The current state of food security in Africa

3. FAO report on Food insecurity in the World notes that:

- i) « to date, efforts to reduce chronic hunger in the developing World have fallen short of the pace required to cut the number of the hungry people by half by 2015;
- ii) By 2000-2002, more than 30 countries representing over 2.2 billion people have reduced the prevalence of under-nourishment by 25% and have made significant progress towards reducing the number of hungry people by half by 2015;
- iii) Costs of not taking immediate and strenuous action to reduce hunger at comparable rate worldwide are a staggering loss of 5 million children through nutrition related deaths and millions of dollars in lost productivity and earnings »;
- iv) among the 30 countries that have registered progress in bringing down prevalence of hunger by 25% or more are sub-Saharan African

countries, excluding those affected by civil strife and wars. This demonstrates that with concerted efforts and provided we have peace and security, African countries are capable of eliminating hunger and abject poverty.

4. While the proportion of undernourished people in Africa decreased from 29% in 1990/92 to 27% in 2000/02, the absolute numbers increased from 175.8 million to nearly 210 million people, 97% of whom were from sub-Saharan countries.

5. During 2004, the food security situation continued to be found in the majority of AU member states. However, according to a USAID Famine Early Warning Systems (FEWS) Network with a presence in 20 countries in Africa, 6 countries had by Mid November 2004, an Emergency Food Insecurity alert status of emergency proportions requiring urgent action, three with « Warning status » requiring urgent action and two under Watch status requiring Preparedness and increased monitoring.

6. The number of people at risk of undernutrition are estimated to be about 23 million with about 14 million likely to require emergency food aid assistance in some 10 AU members states. Reasons vary from crop failures due to drought or floods in the Horn of Africa, to refugees problems caused by civil strife in Sudan and Northern Uganda and locust outbreaks in Mauritania.

7. For Africa as a whole, the burden of food import increased in year 2000 alone to over 18.5 billion dollars, to which should be added food aid flow of nearly 3 billion tons. To maintain the food security ratio in this region by 2015 at its level recorded in 1995, the Sub-Saharan Africa must produce 118 million tons of cereals out of the 139 million required.

8. The report cites various initiatives that have been taken in recent years by the international community, the AU, RECS and National governments. These initiatives include the World Food Summit. The Maputo and Sirte Decisions, The AU Vision Mission and Programme of Activities 2004-2007.

Locust outbreak in Sahel region and North Africa

9. The African continent is experiencing a new, widespread and the worst desert locust upsurge in more than 15 years. This is following the return of favourable climatic conditions after several years of drought, and the slackening of national permanent monitoring and surveillance systems. Good rains fell during the summer of 2003 in the Sahel of West Africa and Sudan, causing local outbreaks in Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Sudan in October. In November, swarms moved to Northwest Africa where breeding occurred in the spring of 2004 and an upsurge subsequently developed.

10. The desert locust situation remains extremely serious in Northwest Africa and to a lesser extent in West Africa. More swarms arrived in northern Morocco and Algeria from the Sahel. Several immature swarms have been reported to arrive in southeast Mauritania, northeast Senegal and western Mali. Control operations are in progress in all affected countries and nearly half a million hectares have been reported treated so far in December.

11. In view of the serious threat to food security posed by Desert Locust upsurge in some member states, the AU Policy Committee of the Special Emergency Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa (SEAF) during its 10th Extra-ordinary meeting held on 13 August 2004, approved one million US dollars for the purpose of assisting governments and peoples of the nine countries worst affected by the locust outbreak.

Implementation of AU Summit Decisions Maputo decisions

12. Various Decisions of the AU Heads of State and Government pertaining to the mandate of the Department of Rural economy and Agriculture are at various stages of implementation. A detailed strategic plan of action has been put in place for the implementation of all the decisions taken on agriculture and rural development in Maputo and Sirte. It is envisaged that all the decisions would have been fully implemented by the end of 2007.

13. The six specialized technical offices of the AU in matters of agriculture and natural resources - i.e. Semiarid Food Grain Research and Development (SAFGRAD), Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR), Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (PANVAC), Inter African Physo-Sanitary Council (IAPSC), Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomosis Control and Eradication Campaign (PATTEC) and the Programme for the integrated Management of Fouta Djallon highland have all been fully integrated into the AU-DREA. The Commission has already appointed substantive directors for SAFGRAD, IBAR and IAPSC and an acting coordinator for Fouta Djallon programme. The requisite officers for PATTEC and respective Heads of Divisions for all three divisions of the DREA have also been appointed. The search for substantive Directors for the Fouta Djallon programme and PANVAC is in progress

The Fouta Djallon Programme

14. The Fouta Djallon Programme has been revived; The Programme has, since the re-opening of the Conakry office in July 2004, secured commitment of Donors to provide USD3.2 million per year for the next ten years to implement integrated development activities. The Commission has also taken steps to appoint a substantive coordinator for the Programme who should be in place before the end of 2005.

PATTEC Programme

15. PATTEC programme has been consolidated and additional funding for implementation of PATTEC programmes in initial six member countries has been obtained from the ADB and many countries developed their national strategies, Plan of Action and proposals for the implementation of the PATTEC initiative. Based on the level of mobilization to implement the objectives of PATTEC, progress in implementation in the 37 countries affected by tsetse and trypanosomiasis can be categorized in 3 groups, as follows:

- (a) 8 countries, where the implementation of the activities to eradicate tsetse flies has actually started;
- (b) 18 countries, which have prepared plans or declared their intention to embark on tsetse eradication activities,
- (c) 11 countries where there are still no reported arrangements to initiate tsetse eradication activities, and there are as yet no suggested PATTEC Focal Points.

AU-Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC).

16. Constraints to implementation of phytosanitary standards and the obligations of the member states in WTO-SPS requirements continue to pre-occupy and draw the attention of the AU-Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC). **The Maputo Declaration** assigned the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council the responsibility to ensure the implementation of international phytosanitary standards in plant health and food safety.

17. Requirements of compliance with international phytosanitary standards represent the most crucial challenge for African countries in plant protection in a liberalised agriculture. The IAPSC has raised and voiced these constraints through various fora both locally (in Africa during the 21st General Assembly in Dakar, Senegal) as well as internationally (during the 16th Technical Consultation among Regional Plant Protection Organisations- 16th Technical consultation in Nairobi, September, 2004).

18. It is being proposed to expand the mandate of IASPC:

- I. To provide enabling environments for phytosanitary surveillance through advocating for updating of phytosanitary legislations that is compliant with international obligations.
- II. To increase transparency and capacity for scientific decision making through training in Pest Risk Analysis.

- III. To increase capacity for phytosanitary inspections across regional borders and boundaries throughout Africa.
- IV. To institute early warning systems for migratory pests especially locusts, armyworm and queale birds.
- V. To promote integrated pest and crop management and advocate for removal obsolete pesticide stockpiles throughout Africa.

PANVAC

19. The PANVAC, based in Ethiopia and entirely funded by development partners, has hitherto been an OAU Specialized Technical Office for the certification of animal vaccines. A host government agreement was signed between the Commission and the Ethiopian Government in 2003. A proposal to incorporate PANVAC within the organizational structure of DREA of the Commission has been prepared and is under consideration for adoption.

Environment and Natural resources

20. For the implementation of the Decision adopting the revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, which is an important legal instrument aimed at ensuring food security through sustainable management and development of Africa's biodiversity, the AUC organized two 'Convention Signing Weeks', firstly from 3-10 December 2003 and secondly 6-13 December 2004. As a result of this exclusive effort, thirty (30) Member States have now signed the Convention while three (3) have ratified it. Given that the Convention requires 15 ratifications to enter into force, Member States would need to take urgent actions to step up the ratification process in order to permit the Convention's early entry into force and to enable the Commission to undertake measures to facilitate its coherent implementation.

21. The Commission has been seeking and establishing partnership with some institutions in Africa with a view to identifying areas of collaboration in furtherance of the implementation of the institutional strengthening commitments made in the Sirte Declaration. In this respect the AUC is currently considering signing a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with institutions such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), The African Centre for Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD), The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), The World Food Programme (WFP) and The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

22. The Commission has also developed a road map for the integration by end of 2005 of AMCOW, AMCEN and the African Ministers Conference on

Agriculture as Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) of the AUC. In this connection AMCOW has been contacted to seek its views on how the integration process should proceed.

Water Sector

23. Following the adoption of the African Water Facility and the acknowledgement of the African Water Vision 2025 in the Sirte Declaration, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), announced the launching of the facility during its Executive Committee meeting in Tunis in June 2004. The Facility has now been officially opened in the African Development Bank (ADB). The instruments for its administration and management have been developed and will be reviewed by AMCOW. The ADB has indicated that strong commitments for support to the Facility have been received from Canada (Can\$20 million); ADB itself (US\$2.3 million); Netherlands (Euro 16 million - at Euro 4 million per year); European Commission (Euro 20 million); and France, which has indicated possibilities of an annual commitment of Euro 3 – 5 million.

The Sirte Declaration

24. The Commission's 2005 – 2007 Strategic Plan covers the implementation plan for nearly all the issues in the Sirte Declaration. A programme of action has been developed for the implementation of the following during the 2004 - 2007 plan period:

- Agricultural development and finance; Fisheries; Food products market;
- Land management and policy; Disaster Risk reduction, Food Security; Livestock; Rural development; Use of Genetically Modified Organisms;
- Institutional strengthening; Integration of AMCOW and AMCEN and conference of agriculture ministers as Specialized Technical Offices; and Shared water management and use.

25. Detailed implementation plan prepared for the year 2005 include policy measures such as: studies for the establishment of an Agricultural development Fund; establishment of a continental early warning system for food security; establishment of an agency for strategic agricultural commodities; land and soil management; shared water management and use; and the promotion of disaster risk reduction.

26. During the 2004 budgets xxxxx numbers of countries have met or exceeded the 10% budgetary allocation to agriculture while yxy countries have made positive progress in the current budgets towards achieving this objective.

27. The following decisions are recommended for adoption:

1. Establishment of the African Food Security Committee in Africa as well as the African Union Delegation to the UN Specialised Agencies in Rome responsible for matters concerning food security. The Chairperson of the Commission be given the mandate to take appropriate measures for the implementation of the said Decision as a matter of urgency.
2. Expanding the mandate of the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council to facilitate capacity development in the continent on matters of phytosanitary surveillance and inspection, early warning systems for migratory pests, pest risk analysis and integrated pest and crop management as well as management and eradication of obsolete pesticides.

1. Background and Context

One of the development challenges of our time is the elimination of chronic hunger and abject poverty for millions of people around the World. Ensuring that “ all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and food preferences for an active and healthy life” is the ultimate goal that all nations are challenged to provide for their people. The World Food Summit which was held in Rome (Italy) from 13 to 17 November 1996 (WFS/96) set out for the World community to reduce the number of chronically hungry people in the World to half by the year 2015. This goal is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which we must strive to achieve by 2015 and beyond. Related to this challenge is the the 7th Millennium development goal that seeks to reduce by half, by the year 2015, the proportion of the population without long-term access to healthy potable water and to basic sanitation services. Africa remains to date the most food insecure and poverty stricken continent on earth where access to safe drinking water remains a distant dream for millions of its citizens. There is no doubt that we all agree that urgent action to reverse this trend is our common challenge and responsibility.

Conscious of the potential of the agriculture and natural resources sectors for ensuring food security and for driving social and economic development in Africa, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at their third ordinary session in Maputo (July 2003), the Extra-Ordinary Summit on Agriculture and Water in Sirte, Libya, (February 2004) and the Extra-Ordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (September 2004), adopted various Decisions and Declarations committing Member States to paying particular attention to the development of the different sectors of agriculture. The Commission of the African Union (AUC) has been mandated by Heads of States and Governments to facilitate the implementation of all the decisions and declarations aimed at achieving agriculture and rural development including the attainment of self-sufficiency in food production and safe drinking water and sanitation. To this end, the AUC, during the past two years, undertook many activities and initiatives to implement the relevant decisions and declarations with the view to creating the right policy and conducive environments for the attainment of food security and poverty reduction in the continent. The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and the Environment Action Plan of NEPAD formed the guiding framework within which the activities of the Commission were conceived.

In order to lay the ground for future action and progress on implementation of the afore mentioned decisions and to better focus our collective actions at the continental, regional as well as national level, in this report I will first of all give an overview of recent and current food security situation of our continent. In the second part I will give highlights on what the AU commission and different actors within the international community and Regional Economic

communities are undertaking or plan to do in addressing various issues that concern Africa's Agriculture, Food security and Natural Resource Management. The Third and last part addresses progress on implementation of specific decisions of the AU Heads of State and Government through AUC –DREA and its specialised technical offices and programmes as approved by respective organs of the AU.

2. The current state of food security in Africa

As part of tracking the progress towards attainment of the Millennium Development goal of Reducing the number of chronically hungry people by half by the year 2015, the Food and Agriculture organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has just released a report entitled « the State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2004 ». In the report, the FAO Director General makes three important observations:

- v) « to date, efforts to reduce chronic hunger in the developing World have fallen short of the pace required to cut the number of the hungry people by half by 2015.
- vi) by 2000-2002, more than 30 countries representing over 2.2 billion people have reduced the prevalence of undernourishment by 25% and have made significant progress towards reducing the number of hungry people by half by 2015.
- vii) costs of not taking immediate and strenuous action to reduce hunger at comparable rate worldwide are a staggering loss of 5 million children through nutrition related deaths and millions of dollars in lost productivity and earnings »

It is heartening to note that among the 30 countries that have registered progress in bringing down prevalence of hunger by 25% or more are sub-Saharan African countries, excluding those affected civil strife and wars. This demonstrates that with concerted efforts and provided we have peace and security, African countries are capable of eliminating hunger and abject poverty.

It is however worthwhile to note that on the whole, the food security situation remained precarious in a number of regions and countries during 2003 and 2004. The figures below speak for themselves.

Prevalence of under-nourishment in Africa (in millions) 1990/92 – 2000/02

SOURCE: FAO, 2004

Region	Population 1990/92	2000/02	No. of people under-nourished		% of population under-nourished	
			1990/92	2000/02	1990/92	2000/02
North Africa	120.4	144.4	5.4	6.1	4	4
Central Africa	63.4	82	22.7	45.2	36	55
East Africa	167.8	217.7	76.4	86.2	46	40
Southern Africa	71	90.1	34.1	35.7	48	40
West Africa	175	230.3	37.2	36.4	21	16
SSA	477.2	620	170.4	203.5	36	33
Africa	597.6	764.4	175.8	209.6	29	27

Note:

Note: **North Africa:** Algeria, Egypt, Libya, A.J, Morocco, Tunisia

Central Africa: Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Gabon

East Africa: Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, U.R. Tanzania

Southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe

W. Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

SOURCE: FAO, 2004

While the proportion of undernourished people in Africa decreased from 29% in 1990/92 to 27% in 2000/02, the absolute numbers increased from 175.8 million to nearly 210 million people, 97% of whom were from sub-Saharan countries.

During 2004, the food security situation continued to be found in the majority of AU member states. However, according to a USAID Famine Early Warning Systems (FEWS) Network with a presence in 20 countries in Africa, 6 countries had by Mid-November 2004, an Emergency Food Insecurity alert status of emergency proportions requiring urgent action, three with « Warning status » requiring urgent action and two under Watch status requiring Preparedness and increased monitoring (see map below).

The number of people at risk of undernutrition are estimated to be about 23 million with about 14 million likely to require emergency food aid assistance in some 10 AU member states. Reasons vary from crop failures due to drought or floods in the Horn of Africa, to refugee problems caused by civil strife in Sudan and Northern Uganda and locust outbreaks in Mauritania. For Africa as a whole, the burden of food import increased in year 2000 alone to over 18.5 billion dollars, to which should be added food aid flow of nearly three billion tons. To maintain the food security ratio in this region by 2015 at its level recorded in 1995, the SubSaharan Africa must produce 118 million tons of cereals out of the 139 million required.

The situation per region in 2003-2004 can be summed up as follows:

In East Africa, even though an appreciable increase was recorded in Tanzania (12%) and Somalia, the overall cereal production dropped from 22.6 million to 20 million tons due to the belated and unstable rainfall regime in Ethiopia, the intense drought in Eritrea, irregular rains in Kenya and torrential rains in Uganda. In fact, East Africa is still among the regions faced with the most serious food crises in the continent.

In Southern Africa, the 2002-2003 seasons were characterised by a decrease in production, which although qualified as a slight decrease (17.5 million tons), was far below that of 2000, with 22.2 million tons. Wheat production for instance dropped by 9% in comparison with the level recorded for 2001. This poor performance aggravated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic plaguing the region, can be attributed to factors such as the high temperatures recorded in South Africa, the chief producer of the region, the drought in Lesotho and Malawi, the prolonged irregularity of the rainfall regime in Mozambique, and finally to the political crisis, coupled with the poor harvests in Madagascar. Thus, after two years of poor harvests, the food situation in Southern Africa worsened, thereby compelling 14.4 million people to depend on emergency food aid.

In West Africa, despite the fact that the amount of rainfall fell below the normal projections, the countries of the Gulf of Guinea recorded globally satisfactory harvests. The disturbances attributed to conflicts, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, were compensated by the satisfactory outputs realised by Nigeria, the first producer in the region. On the contrary, even though cereal production by the 9 member countries of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) decreased by 3% in relation to 2001, it reportedly increased by 11% in comparison with the normal output (average for the last five years). Generally speaking, the consequences of the social conflicts in the region (destruction of the productive base, refugees and displaced persons, etc.) as well as a few cases of drought, have been compelling some countries of the region to resort to food aid.

In Central Africa, only Cameroon recorded a significant cereal production. Some countries were victims of the late arrival of the rainy season while the rains were not only irregular but also late in Central African Republic. Generally speaking, food aid was necessary for the refugees and displaced persons in Congo and Burundi.

In North Africa, in spite of a slight decrease, cereal production in 2002 corresponded to the average for the last five years. The variation in production was due, among other things, to the late arrival of rains in Algeria and Tunisia, the reduction of cultivated areas, irregular rains and excessively high temperatures in Sudan, and the disturbances connected with the escalation of conflicts. The levels of performance recorded in Morocco (production of barley in particular) and in Egypt (wheat) compensated for the deficits incurred especially in Tunisia and Algeria. The food situation deteriorated much further in Mauritania.

This brief review of the situation per region underscores the scope of the food security problem in the continent. The Table below show areas where various sources estimate that emergency food assistance was required during 2004 season. The prognosis for 2005, an important component of any early warning system, indicate that food security situation is unlikely to improve in a number of countries due to persistent civil strife or shortfalls in main rains

Estimates of Emergency food Aid need in some AU member States during 2004
(Source: FEWS/USAID, 2004)

Country	Status Population at risk	Food Beneficiaries	Aid Remarks	Prognosis (2005)
Chad	201,200	197,000	Refugees in Camps of which, 18,668	Likely to increase
Djibouti	100,000	61,757	refugees	Likely to increase
Eritrea	1,900,000	1,400,000	Poor weather +Water shortage	Likely to remain the same
Ethiopia	7,300,000	5,300,000	"	Likely to increase
Kenya	2,700,000	2,700,000	needs not met	Likely to increase 43,000MT required Jan-March 2005
Malawi	1,700,000	1,300,000	needs not met	Likely to remain the same
Mauritania	1,000,000	285,000	Locust outbreak	
Somalia	1,300,000	700,000	Flooding	Likely to remain the same
Uganda	1,980,000	1,980,000	Civil strife in North	Likely to remain the same
Zimbabwe	4,800,000	Not available		
Total	22,981,200	13,923,757		

2.2. Recent initiatives and actions undertaken to reduce poverty and food insecurity in Africa

2.2.1 Initiatives and Actions by the International community

The international community has been fervently mobilised behind the United Nations in order to put an end to one of humanity's fundamental challenges for survival and prosperity in the 21st century. The following milestones can be cited among the most recent and important initiatives:

Initiatives by the International community towards Food security in Africa		
Initiative/Year	Objective/Goal	Outcome/Impact
1. The World Food Summit (Rome, 1996)	Fighting hunger and poverty around the world	MDGs have been adopted by AU member states development 2025 Visions and Mission with a view to reducing the number of undernourished people in the world by half by the year 2015 «
2. World Food Summit: "five years later (Rome, 2002)	Assessment of the Implementation of the World Food Summit Objectives	Proclaimed the international Alliance Against Hunger. Establishment of Special Food security Programme (SFSP) for LDC countries, in collaboration with FAO, 40 AU member states and most of RECs assisted in elaborating and implementing SFSP
3. World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, August/September 2002);	To assess and speed up the UN World Environmental Summit « 21 Action Plan » and World Sustainable Development Goals	Adoption of broad policy measures to alleviate poverty, African Ministerial Statement on Poverty alleviation as an indispensable requirement for sustainable Development in Africa
4. The Millennium Summit (September 2000)	Strengthen the role of the UN in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.	The Millennium Declaration and Development Goals (MDGs). MDGs have been

		adopted by AU member states development 2025 Visions and Missions, MDG being included in PRSPs.
5. The G8 Summits in Genoa, Italy, July 2001	Fighting Hunger and Poverty as well as money laundering/terrorism	Genoa plan for Africa recognising that “Food Security, Education and Health together constitute the 3 rd mainstay of Development”,
6. the Kananaskis Summit, Canada, June 2002	To fight Terrorism and Strengthen World Economic Growth and to develop partnership with Africa	Adoption of the “Plan of Action for Africa in response to NEPAD”,
7. Evian G8 Summit, France, 2003.	Follow up of World Sustainable Development Summit and Regional Issues	Adoption of the Plan of Action for Health, Water and Control of Famine in Africa.
8. Vision 2020 African Conference (IFPRI)	Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020	Prioritising actions, strengthening actors and facilitating partnership in Member States

One of the many initiatives taken by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) towards attaining the goals of the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals is the Special Food Security Programme (SFSP) aimed at assisting developing countries, particularly the Low-Income Food Deficient Countries (LIFDC), to improve household and national food security. The programme particularly seeks to offer groups of small-scale farmers the means to achieve rapid increase in productivity and reduce the annual variability of production and thus promote a better global access to food for families, communities and local markets”. In this way, FAO assisted in elaborating and implementing the SFSP in about forty African countries and in most of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

It is now recognized that the best means of attaining the Millennium Development Goals regarding Food Security consists in incorporating them into the national and regional poverty reduction strategies. Strategies for reducing food insecurity should necessarily be based on agricultural growth, the sole element that can make a significant contribution to poverty reduction hunger reduction than the other sectors in both rural and urban areas.

Nevertheless, these strategies should also include some targeted accompanying measures that would afford increased access to food for people who cannot satisfy their nutritional needs through their own production, or who lack the means to buy food.

2.2.2 Initiatives and Actions by the African Union

It is because they are fully aware of these challenges and constraints and especially confident that Africans themselves can guarantee their food security through endogenous development that the Heads of State developed some initiatives to stem food security in the continent. The most recent of these include the following:

Initiative/Year	Objective/Goal	Outcome/Impact
1. Africa's Common Position on Food Security and Agricultural Development, the African Ministers' Declaration at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (adopted in Nairobi, Kenya in 2001), etc.	African Common position on sustainable Development in Africa	African Ministerial Declaration on poverty alleviation as requirement for sustainable development in Africa
2. The Declarations and Resolutions of the Maputo Summit (July 2003) concerning the adoption and implementation of the NEPAD Agricultural and Environmental Programmes and Plan of Action (CAADP) and Food Security in Africa, 2003	Reinvigoration of Africa's food and Agriculture sector for economic prosperity and the welfare of its people	Adoption of CAADP and Env. Plan of action of NEPAD
3. Establishment of DREA within AUC with division for Food Security, 2003	To devote special attention to Agriculture and Rural Economy within AU	Development of Strategic plans and programmes for Food security etc..
4. The Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Integrated and Sustainable Development of Water and Agriculture in Africa (Sirte/Libya – February 2004)	To make agriculture and water the engine of African sustainable development	Development of programmes of action and strategic framework to address the challenges of implementing integrated and sustainable

		development on agriculture and water in Africa
5. The Ouagadougou Declaration (September 2004) on Employment and Poverty Reduction in Africa, 2004	Speed up Poverty Alleviation in Africa	Sensitization and awareness creation on the potential role of agriculture in alleviation of poverty and creation of employment in Member States

These recent actions are concrete proofs of the African Leaders' commitment to eradicating this endemic crisis of poverty and food insecurity in the continent. The common feature of these commitments is the broad vision of dealing with all aspects of poverty, employment and food insecurity particularly in rural areas, which constitute both breeding grounds for such scourges and the prime mover of the continent's growth and development.

2.2.3 Initiatives and Actions by the Regional economic communities

In reflection of a common purpose and commitment to our development agenda, the various AU initiatives are being pursued at the level of RECs. Notable examples is the holding of a Summit of Heads of States of the SADC region in Dar Es Salaam Tanzania in May 2004 and the recent Second meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of COMESA which took place in Nairobi Kenya, from 15 –16th October 2004, whose resolutions largely echo the Maputo and Sirte commitments to the Agricultural sectors, including the decision to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to Agriculture. These initiatives no doubt reflect the national commitments of member countries.

2.2.4 Challenges and the way forward in coordinating initiatives at continental and global levels.

In spite of all these commendable efforts and initiatives, the situation prevailing to date has not been impressive. In 2002, about 30 million Africans needed emergency food aid, that is 2 million more than in 2001. Moreover, with the importation of 48 million tons of cereals in 2003, the continent has clearly shown that at such a pace, it cannot attain the millennium goals of reducing the number of people suffering from hunger and thirst by half by the year 2015.

In the present African context, the availability of food constitutes the basis of food security and primarily depends on agricultural production and food production in particular. However, notwithstanding an established agro-

pastoral occupation (about 70% of the continent's population live in rural areas and depend directly on Agriculture and natural resources) and immense potentialities of all kinds, Africa's agriculture presents as its hallmark, "a high variability of production, relatively low agricultural outputs and dependency on commodity exports, characterised by a low elasticity of demand and a high volatility of prices ..." (FAO, 03). As part of the implementation of African Leaders' renewed commitment to promoting African agriculture and reversing this trend, as stipulated in the *Maputo and Sirte Declarations*, the African Union Commission, and NEPAD, its special programme, took measures for the creation of the Common Market for Agricultural Products, strategic food reserves and the early warning system for food products.

The Commission, with the special assistance of FAO, is currently launching studies on the establishment of the Common Market for Agricultural Products with a view to making Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Products the key solution to the marginalisation of Africa in World Trade as well as the major issue for a more balanced local consumption, in pursuance of the Lusaka Decision on Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Products. The studies, which will be conducted throughout the continent and in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), should define strategies and promote the establishment of action plans for integrating and promoting intra-African trade between regions with surplus production and zones affected by trade gap or large-scale consumers. The establishment of this African Common Market is all the more important since only 10% of the total volume of African goods go to other African countries, while in most cases, over 80% of the local products of the other continents are traded internally.

On the other hand, the creation of strategic food reserves is in keeping with the Decision taken in Maputo to establish strategic storage or reserve systems so as to guarantee, at all times, the availability of staple agricultural commodities, their stable supply as well as access for the regions and households and thus limit certain effects of the continent's direct dependence on food aid and food imports. On the basis of the recommendations of a previous study, the NEPAD has started establishing these systems with the support of its partners, including the European Union, FAO and WFP and in collaboration with the RECs. An indicative plan of action for 2005-2006 envisages sharing the roles and responsibilities of the various participants at the national, regional and continental levels.

The establishment of a reliable early warning system capable of anticipating the emergence of food crises, taking stock of production and available resources and monitoring phenomena such as natural disasters (floods, drought, invasion or outbreak of endemic diseases affecting animals, crops and plants) is all the more essential because it constitutes the preferential tool for combating food insecurity. Considered as one of the priority sectors of the Africa-Europe partnership, this issue of early warning system is being addressed through a

joint study that has just been commissioned with FAO support in West, East and Southern Africa. The partners have agreed to take measures to complete this study with the “Transport and Communication” component. In fact, it is obvious that under our present conditions, an early warning system cannot be efficient without the capacity to indicate access facilities and/or exchanges between zones producing more or less consumer goods. Similarly, the New Information and Communication Technologies now play a pivotal role in promoting effective information dissemination in particular for the purpose of stemming food and humanitarian crises.

Nevertheless, while these initiatives are being established gradually, the chain of deficits in the crops as well as cereal production, harvest deficits in the crops as well as cereal production in most of our regions (due to social conflicts or climatic disturbances and the intervention or prevalence of uncontrollable natural phenomena such as the recent locust invasions) comes to remind us that the food insecurity phenomenon is rather being aggravated. This situation demands that Africa and its partners step up their efforts and ensure a better co-ordination of the control activities. It is in this context that the Commission is submitting to the Summit this proposal for the establishment of an African Food Security Committee.

2.2.4.1 The African Food Security Committee

Like the World Food Security Committee, the African Committee will be within the aegis of the AU and will be entrusted with the promotion and coordination of activities and initiatives aimed at reducing food insecurity.

Its specific mandate shall be to:

- i. Serve as the forum and platform for exchanges on all issues concerning food security in Africa;
- ii. Provide advice and support required to accelerate the establishment of the comprehensive and effective Early Warning System so as to make it the Committee’s preferential tool for managing and controlling food crises in Africa;
- iii. Provide African States and RECs with advice and support required to accelerate the establishment of strategic food reserves and the African Common Market for Agricultural Products in order to guarantee the continent’s food security;
- iv. Provide advice and support required for the promotion of the leading projects of NEPAD with a focus on strategic agricultural produce such as Rice (NERICA), maize and cassava in the producing areas of Africa;

- v. Provide advice and support required to promote strategies for the development of agricultural production in Africa as well as the assistance needed for fund raising and implementation of accompanying measures for eradicating poverty and food insecurity in rural and urban areas;
- vi. Promote initiatives towards changing eating habits to ensure a better food balance for poor people in the rural and urban areas;
- vii. Promote and defend Africa's interests by serving as a close link between the continental and global levels and submit reports regularly to the African Union Commission.

It is proposed that the Committee should be composed of:

- Five distinguished African personalities of international repute recognised in the field;
- Five distinguished personalities duly selected in the other continents on the basis of proven experience in reducing poverty and food insecurity;
- One (duly nominated) representative of the international organisations that are Africa's development partners in the field: UNDP, FAO, WFP, IFAD, ECA, CCD, WB, etc.);
- Two representatives of World Food Security Commission;
- One (duly nominated) representative of each Regional Economic Community (REC);
- One (duly nominated) representative of African Development Bank (ADB);
- One representative (interim nominee to Committee Sessions) of African regional organisations such as CILSS;
- One representative (interim nominee to Committee Sessions) of NGOs and specific Food Research Centres in Africa;

2.2.4.2 The African Union Representation in Rome particularly FAO responsible for Food Security in Africa (particularly FAO).

In adopting its vision and strategic plan of action for the next 4 years, the African Union set itself, among others, the objective of helping to reduce poverty and food insecurity in the continent. To this end, it must close ranks with its principal partners and harmonise the initiatives taken or to be taken in that

framework. Since the specialised agencies of the United Nations System FAO, IFAD, WFP in Rome and UNCCD in Bonn have respectively been mandated to contribute to the attainment and monitoring of the specific Millennium Development Goals worldwide, it is in the African Union's interest to use this opportunity to institutionalise its co-operation with these agencies. It is proposed that a light structure be established within these agencies in Rome not only to run the African Commission Secretariat for Food Security but also to ensure the daily monitoring of the joint programmes and actions envisaged in the field. In view of the African Union's vision, as well as the strategic objectives and roles involving co-ordination, advocacy, monitoring/evaluation and harmonisation of the Commission's policies, the Delegation's specific mandate will be to:

- i. facilitate the coordination of initiatives promote Food Security in Africa.
- ii. promote co-operation between the United Nations Specialized Agencies and African Union in their efforts to reduce poverty and food insecurity in Africa.
- iii. promote and co-ordinate the implementation of AU/FAO joint programmes and action plans for food security in Africa.
- iv. identify and propose, for consideration by the African Food Security Committee, delicate issues that are likely to undermine food security for African peoples.
- v. manage the Secretariat of the African Food Security Committee and submit reports to the Commission.

2.2.4.3 Decisions to be taken by the Summit

Given the crucial situation of the continent's food security, as recapitulated above, it would be desirable if the Summit took the decision on the establishment of the African Food Security Committee in Africa as well as the African Union representation in Rome responsible for matters concerning food security in addition to giving the Chairperson of the Commission the mandate to take appropriate measures for the implementation of the said Decision as a matter or urgency as follows:

- i) Establish the African Food Security Committee under the aegis of the African Union with the mandate to provide guidance for food security policies and strategies development and implementation in the continent and to provide liaison with the World Food Security Committee in this respect;

- ii) Establish an African Union Delegation in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) office in Rome to ensure regular follow-up on global issues affecting Africa's food security and to provide information and advice to the Commission of the African Union for appropriate actions.

2.3 Locust Threat to Food Security in Africa

The African continent is experiencing a new, widespread and the worst desert locust upsurge in more than 15 years. This is following the return of favourable climatic conditions after several years of drought, and the slackening of national permanent monitoring and surveillance systems. Good rains fell during the summer of 2003 in the Sahel of West Africa and Sudan, causing local outbreaks in Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Sudan in October. In November, swarms moved to Northwest Africa where breeding occurred in the spring of 2004 and an upsurge subsequently developed.

The desert locust situation remains extremely serious in Northwest Africa and to a lesser extent in West Africa. More swarms arrived in northern Morocco and Algeria from the Sahel. Several immature swarms have been reported to arrive in southeast Mauritania, northeast Senegal and western Mali. Control operations are in progress in all affected countries and nearly half a million hectares have been reported treated so far in December.

Thus, at a time when destructive locust are threatening the agricultural efforts of an entire African region already in a very precarious food situation, none of the existing locust control organizations is in a position to organize an efficient anti-locust campaign in time, for lack of means and experienced human resources. This has placed the farming communities in the affected areas at the mercy of the pests that is known for their unusually destructive powers as it is now known that a small part of an average swarm, about one tonne of locusts, eats the same amount of food every day as 2 500 people.

Fighting the locust invasion has caused enormous loss of resources in some instances up to the tune of about US\$ 30 million in Morocco to fight the 2003 – 2004 campaign. Most of the affected countries of Northwest Africa – Algeria, Libya and Tunisia all have major agricultural sectors that can justify expensive control operations. It is worthy to note that the invading locusts came from the Sahelian countries, an even poorer part of Africa, where agriculture is mainly at a subsistence level and resources for locust surveillance and control are woefully inadequate.

Resource mobilization to stop the problem especially in the Southern Sahelian region should be given a special attention because this area constitute the main locust corridor between the Sahara and the countries further north. According to some estimates, for each dollar spent on control of locust in the Sahel, it

saves \$3-4 being spent in the north later on. This justifies the need for sufficient efforts to be concentrated in the Southern Sahelian regions in preventing the migration of the pests.

In the Sahelian countries hit by the 2003 – 2004 upsurge; agriculture contributes between 20 and 40 percent of gross domestic product. Skies, filled with desert locusts cast a shadow of hopelessness over the lives of millions of farmers and herders. Most of the affected countries do not have the means to cope with the situation and a great deal of assistance is urgently required for a well coordinated desert locust control campaign between now and the end of the cropping season so as to protect crops in the Maghreb region and to reduce the risk of swarms reinvading the Sahelian countries next summer. In addition to food assistance to the most vulnerable populations, many farming families will need seeds and other inputs for off-season agriculture, and even for the next main growing season. Continued monitoring and preparation for Desert Locust control is also needed.

2.3.1 Role Played By The AUC Commission In Combating Desert Locust

- In view of the serious threat to food security posed by Desert Locust upsurge in some member states, the AU Policy Committee of the Special Emergency Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa (SEAF) during its 10th Extra-ordinary meeting held on 13 August 2004, approved one million US dollars for the purpose of assisting governments and peoples of the nine countries worst affected by the locust outbreak;
- The AU is also involved in the Mobilization and Strengthening the capacities of Desert Locust Control Organizations in carrying out the following activities:
 - i) To conduct routine aerial monitoring of locust populations and identify appropriate sites for preventive control;
 - ii) To build up a data base on field populations of the locust and be in constant communication with other institutions such as the FAO and the National Plant Protection Departments to exchange information;
 - iii) To generate a steady flow of situation reports and communicate to member states and all stakeholders;
 - iv) To promote technologies which are environment friendly through training, seminars etc;

- v) In case of emergency, to activate the transfer mechanism of contingency funds in order to set up the operational control;
- vi) To promote community based approach in the application of mechanical, thermal, and chemical methods of control .

In view of the fact that the problem of desert locust has no respect for national borders and overlaps political boundaries, we are urging member states especially those in high-risk areas to:

- i) Adopt a regional approach in dealing with the problem through the strengthening and/ or establishment of regional plant protection infrastructures;
- ii) Fully support and strengthen the capacities of their National Plant Protection Departments in coordinating locust control activities;
- iii) To establish National Plant Protection Departments where they do not exists;
- iv) Urge their National Plant Protection Departments to establish and strengthen institutional linkages with Desert Locust Control organizations such the DLCO-EA, CLCPRO etc through Memorandum of Understanding on the need to work together.

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