



**KENYA STATEMENT AT THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON  
FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL BY HON. STEPHEN  
KALONZO MUSYOKA, E.G.H., M.P., VICE-PRESIDENT  
AND MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS -26<sup>TH</sup> - 27<sup>TH</sup>  
JANUARY, 2009 IN MADRID, SPAIN**

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**Your Excellency Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain,  
Your Excellency Dr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,  
Dr. Jacques Diouf Director General Food and Agriculture Organisation,  
Heads of Delegations,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

On behalf of the Government of Kenya and my Delegation, I wish to thank Your Excellency Mr Prime Minister and the people of Spain for hosting this very important high level meeting on food security for all. We congratulate you for making true the promise you made in Rome in June 2008 to host this conference. I also wish to thank Your Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations, and the Director of the Food and Agriculture Organisation for their immense support of the process that has led to this conference.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

As it has been said before in other forums as well as in this conference, the food crisis the world has experienced since last year, is the worst in four decades. Food prices escalated by more than 60 percent, even in developed countries within a short period of three months. In the developing world, the greatest impact was in the form of reduced access to food, leading to increased food insecurity to the extent that some countries experienced food riots. Consequently we have as a global family, moved backwards in our efforts to achieve the MDG 1. Many reasons have been put forward to explain this phenomena, especially increased fuel prices, climate change, competition of food with bio fuels, etc. But for us, it is a lasting solution that should be found and fast.

In this regard, the Government of Kenya notes with great appreciation that the Executive Board of the United Nations took that first action of establishing the High Level Task Force in April 2008. We also note that the High Level Task Force developed the Comprehensive Framework for Action that was adopted by all of us in July 2008. The framework offers a rich menu of policies and actions from which to draw responses to address food security in a timely and sustainable manner, now and in future. In the high level meeting on this same subject in June 2008, **we resolved to use all means to alleviate the suffering caused by food crisis to stimulate food production and to increase investment in agriculture. We also resolved to address obstacles to food and to use the planet's resources sustainably.**

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

While the food crisis is serious in many parts of the world, in Africa and more so in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is a matter of life and death. Over 50 million children are now malnourished in this region and are even at risk of some degree of mental retardation. More than half of the population of 450 million people in this region live below absolute poverty levels. Worst of all, the region has experienced drought in the past two years and consequently over 70 million people have been

compelled to rely on famine relief for survival. The food security situation in this part of the world is therefore worse at present than ever before.

The food situation in Sub Saharan Africa is similar to what is obtaining in my country, Kenya. Since 2003, and under the leadership of His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki, the country has registered a steady economic growth rate from a low level of negative 2 percent in 2002 to positive 7 percent in 2007. Levels of poverty decreased from 56 percent to 46 percent and food insecurity declined from 50 percent to 42 percent over the same period. However, most of these gains were diminished by a brief but profound internal political instability as well as global food, fuel, and financial crises in 2008. Economic growth has declined to less than two percent, while poverty and food insecurity are on the rise. The situation has been made worse by prolonged drought in many parts of the country in the last two years. A third of the 35 million people are now in a state of high food insecurity. We are planning to increase the number of people under famine relief from the current 1.4 million to over 4 million people. We are also expanding the school-feeding program to cover more than 2 million children, and provide supplementary feeding to over 4 million orphans and other vulnerable children. In this regard, His Excellency the President, Hon Mwai Kibaki, early this month, declared the famine situation in Kenya a national disaster and appealed for international assistance.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

While appreciating support from international development partners, we in Kenya believe that it is only our own policies, plans, and investments that can provide lasting and sustainable solutions to problems of poverty and food insecurity in the country. We believe that it was through our Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation of 2003/2007 that we achieved steady economic growth and reduction in poverty in the same period. With respect to Agriculture, the Strategy for Revitalization of Agriculture for the period 2004/2014, was the basic policy document that we used to achieve an agricultural growth of up to 6.4 percent by 2007. To propel our economic growth and consequently reduce poverty and food insecurity, we are now implementing Kenya Vision 2030 which aims at achieving an economic growth of over 10 percent by 2012. This has resulted in a tremendous reduction in poverty and food insecurity in line with MDG1.

With respect to agriculture, we aim at increasing agricultural productivity to a steady growth rate of over 8 percent by increasing land under irrigation from the current 5 percent to 10 percent; providing marketing infrastructure; increasing accessibility to agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and seeds; and establishing disease-free zones for livestock, among other measures.

We believe that to remove food insecurity, we should increase productivity to ensure that there is enough food within reach, in both affordability and distance. We must therefore provide incentives of credit and inputs for our farmers to produce more, taking cognizance of the availability of food internationally. We must also avail our farmers the latest technologies and resources to produce competitively in both national and international markets. In this regard, my country is committed to increasing its budgetary allocation for the Agricultural sector up to a level of 10 percent in the next three years in accordance with the Maputo Declaration. This year alone, the government has increased direct budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector from 4.1 percent to 8 percent. With this increase, we will be able to create an agricultural development fund to support priority development programmes. We have also formulated a comprehensive national fertilizer strategy and action plan with a view to increasing fertilizer use by 10 percent per annum and ensuring affordability by small scale farmers.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am aware that many of our African countries have increased investment in the agricultural sector

so as to achieve the targets of the Maputo Declaration and to increase sectoral growth by at least 6 percent per annum. However, resources for this purpose are limited in the face of competing sectors such as education, health, and security that are equally compelling. It is therefore imperative that international mechanisms like this one should come up with new sources of funding considering that we have stretched existing resources to the limit. In fact we have now reached a point where: **"we are digging a hole to fill another"**, by removing funds from one priority area to fix another. Such manoeuvres do not add new resources and cannot help to increase agricultural productivity thereby reducing poverty and food insecurity. We should instead, consider seriously other options such as debt swap, debt cancellation, and trade for investment. In this regard, we expect developed countries to come forward and work out agreements that will enable these nations to convert the debts that developing countries owe into agricultural development grants. We would like to see developed countries cancel debts owed by developing countries and create mechanisms for incentives to increase investment in agriculture. Such initiatives will release much needed funds that can spur greater growth, reduce poverty as well as food insecurity among our people.

### **Finally Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Permit me to express my deep gratitude to those countries and organizations that have pledged support to the food emergency situation in Kenya. May I also thank the organizers of this conference as it has given us the opportunity to review progress of the action plan agreed upon in June 2008. I would however point out that the progress has been slow. This conference is therefore a call for faster action.

**Thank you and God Bless you**