



League of Arab States
Arab Organization for Agricultural Development



Riyadh Declaration To Enhance Arab Cooperation to Face World Food Crises



We, the ministers of Agriculture, and those responsible for Arab Agricultural affairs, members of the general assembly of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), meeting in its thirtieth ordinary session held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia during the period 20 – 24 Rabie II 1429 H, 26 – 30 April 2008, under the generous patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, king of Saudi Arabia.

After studying the statement of the Director General of AOAD, and reports submitted by AOAD on: the impacts of the use of food crops to produce biofuel on global and Arab food security; progress of agricultural development in the Arab world; developments in Arab food security situations and the increasing food gap; paths of joint Arab economic action; trends of world prices of main food commodities which rose for most of the commodities to unprecedented levels; especially in the case of wheat; water shortage and its adverse reflections on the future of agriculture in Arab countries; the recent international consideration for agricultural sector; the call of the World Bank to adopt new agricultural agenda for development; pressures on international food supplies resulting from the increasing demand for food, feed and biofuel; in addition to the impacts of the climate changes and the overall effects of those factors on the future prices of food commodities, and accessibility to food in Arab countries.

We agreed to issue «Riyadh Declaration to Consolidate Arab Cooperation to face World Food Crises».

As we:

- Appreciate and abide by the Resolution of Riyadh Arab Summit in March 2007, which approved the Strategy for Sustainable Arab Agricultural Development for the Next two Decades and deem it a part of the Joint Strategy for Arab Social and Economic Action.
- Commend the promising achievements through the Arab economic block by establishing the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, which came into effect in the beginning of 2005, and the approval of the general structure of the Executive Programme of Arab Customs Union, and mandating the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States to set the mechanisms and detailed programmes for the application of the said structure according to a specific time frame, leading to the establishment of Arab Common market.
- Completely aware, with highest feeling of responsibility, of the seriousness of continuing decline in current food production growth rates, which failed to meet increases in consumption rates, and to reduce the food gap, which imply adverse repercussions threatening food and social security of Arab citizens.
- Feel anxiously the seriousness of the limited available Arab water resources, its external threats, and the aggravating water shortage in the Arab region, climate changes and their expected adverse impacts on the economic and social development paths in general, and on Arab sustainable agricultural development in particular.

- Monitor and follow with great concern the fundamental changes and the accelerating developments witnessed in the international and local food markets, that include unprecedented increase in prices, sharp decline in food stocks, irrational use of food in the production of biofuel, severe shortage in the basic food requirements, and increasing growth in the demand for basic food commodities and fodder crops, which are contributing a chronic global food crisis.
- Understand and are aware of the seriousness and extent of the challenges posed by these conditions; changes and developments, their impacts on Arab agricultural sectors, the greatest water consuming sector, which bears the responsibility of availing the safe food for citizens in the Arab world.
- Foresee with clear vision the scenarios of the future of food production within the Pan Arab perspective in using the available Arab agricultural resources in an integrated development framework, and the positive effects of this perspective on the rates of agricultural production and productivity that could be achieved, and the self-sufficiency levels that could be attained within this vision.
- Reiterate our commitment to the Arab, regional and international conventions and protocols, and the efficient interaction with the emerging events, and effective participation in its shaping in the direction that achieve the sustainable Arab interest.
- Commend the support and attention received by the agricultural sectors from our leaders and governments, and the cooperation and coordination that prevails among the Arab countries to promote these sectors, and the efforts exerted to enhance sustainable agricultural and rural development, and the role of Joint Arab Action Institutions and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in supporting the national efforts to improve agricultural production growth rates, and to promote Arab food security situations.

We declare our commitment to enhance Arab cooperation through the adoption of the following actions and mechanisms:

1. Launching an initiative for an Emergency Arab food security programme aiming at increasing and stabilizing food production in the Arab world, especially the production of cereals, oilseeds and sugar, and calling all concerned parties to cooperate and coordinate in preparing this programme at both national and Pan Arab levels.
2. Encouraging the public and private sectors and Arab business to invest in joint agricultural projects in eligible Arab countries within the context of the emergency programme, and urge the convening of a conference for this purpose towards the end of the year 2008.
3. Commitment of the governments of Arab countries hosting joint Arab agricultural projects to provide facilities, concessions, and promotional guarantees that encourage and motivate Arab investment in food security domain.

4. Adopting an Arab Food Programme to support the Arab countries which are most affected by food shortage and rising food prices, and preparing a comprehensive proposal on the requirements for this programme and its implementation mechanisms.
5. Intensification of efforts with the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to place special importance to the issue of Arab food security in the Arab Social and Economic Development Summit which will be held in Kuwait in mid- January 2009.
6. Urging the governments to expedite the preparation of legislations and laws supporting Arab agricultural integration and reinforcing the Greater Arab Free Trade Area to enhance inter-Arab agricultural trade.
7. Mobilizing efforts and resources to prepare national and joint programmes and projects that help achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Arab Agricultural development Strategy to strengthen the capability of securing safe food for the population, and call the Arab, regional, and international development and financing institutions to provide the necessary support to achieve this goal.
8. Preparation of a plan of action and specific time frame for the coordination of agricultural policies in Arab countries to accelerate the realization of the Arab Common Agricultural policy in the medium term, as one of the major strategic objectives of the sustainable Arab agricultural development.
9. Urging the setting of regulations and legislations governing the use of food and feed crops in the production of biofuel in the Arab countries, and encouraging the directions towards its production from agricultural residues and by-products.
10. Calling on all Arab media institutions to cooperate and coordinate to play their Pan Arab role in consolidating and raising the awareness of the Arab production and investment base of the inevitability of Arab agricultural integration, and raising the awareness of Arab citizens of the importance of rationalizing and changing consumption patterns.



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