

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

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ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION
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SIRTE DECLARATION ON THE CHALLENGES
OF IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON
AGRICULTURE AND WATER
IN AFRICA

**SIRTE DECLARATION ON THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING
INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN
AGRICULTURE AND WATER IN AFRICA**

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting at the 2nd Extraordinary Session of our Assembly in Sirte, Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 27 to 28 February 2004, in response, with appreciation, to the proposal to convene an Extraordinary Session of the Assembly on Africa's economic development, which was initially made by the Leader of the Great Al Fatah Revolution, Brother Muammar Ghaddafi, during the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003;

Reaffirming our commitment to the principles and objectives, stipulated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and its programme NEPAD, aimed at promoting cooperation and integration between our countries in all fields with a view to raising the living standards of our peoples and the well being of our future generations;

Aware that the ingenuity and potentials of our countries and peoples can overcome all obstacles to development in the Continent, eradicate poverty, ignorance and disease and establish a rejuvenated Africa;

Noting the progress made in the establishment of the African Union and its programme NEPAD and the on-going process of Africa's economic integration and the need for building viable mechanisms of cooperation and partnership in the struggle to extricate the Continent from the scourge of under-development and continued marginalization in a globalized world economy;

Welcoming the outcome of the Ministerial meetings in both the agricultural and water sectors, including the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and the African Water Vision for 2025;

Cognizant of the urgent need to respond to Africa's critical problems of hunger, poverty and disease by employing innovative complementary and comprehensive approaches aimed at optimizing the productivity of Africa's acknowledged massive resources and

huge possibilities for sustainable development, taking into account the variations in resource potential and endowment in different regions and Member States of the Africa Union;

Further reaffirming that sustained, just and balanced development is based on partnership, utilizing resources and sharing of its benefits in accordance with the principles of international law;

Recognizing that to attain self-sufficiency in food production and eradicate hunger, it is necessary to promote strategic food crops;

Further recognizing the importance of livestock and fishery resources in ensuring food security, as well as the need to collectively protect, preserve and develop these resources;

Further aware of the need to effectively utilize the results of scientific research, for agricultural planning to tackle problems of desertification, soil and water conservation and environment protection for sustainable agricultural and animal resources development;

Further convinced of the fact that water is the main factor in all human endeavour and of the need to assure the preservation and distribution of water resources;

Concerned by the unsatisfactory present situation of integrated water and agriculture programmes in Africa as reported by the FAO Director General and **anxious** to reverse this unacceptable situation;

Determined to prioritize implementation of integrated water and agriculture programmes to enhance sustainable development in Africa;

Acknowledging the initiatives of bilateral and multilateral cooperating partners;

Further acknowledging the work done by the African Ministers of Water and of Agriculture and their active engagement in providing policy guidance and coordination of water resources management and Agriculture development in Africa, and endorse their recommendations.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

1. **Identify and support** the development and production of strategic agricultural commodities and other key economic and industrial activities, in order to fully exploit the continent's special potentialities and comparative advantages of Member States in agricultural production and other economic activities, while reducing the expenditure and dependence on imports;
2. **Promote** the development of livestock production including the improvement of natural pastures, distribution of veterinary products, and genetic resources with a view to improving food security;
3. **Promote** the development of fishery resources, develop fishing methods and equipment, improve facilities for their preservation, storage, distribution and processing, and encourage regional cooperation in the field of fishing, including the protection of fishery resources in our exclusive economic zones;
4. **Promote** the development of agricultural implements, livestock and fishery equipment as well as the techniques for the manufacturing of the necessary equipment to meet the continent's needs for agricultural production;
5. **Promote** the strengthening of Centres of Excellence and/or networks and their establishment where they do not exist for crops, animals, forestry, fisheries, range management, water management, desertification, drought, floods and environmental management and the strengthening of related tertiary and research institutions at continental and regional levels for the purpose of carrying out research in biotechnology (including Genetically Modified Organisms), conservation of agricultural biodiversity, biosafety, food storage, water harvesting and application, etc;
6. **Strengthen** banks for genetic resources for agriculture and livestock at regional level and promote their establishment where they do not exist, as well as provide for registration of intellectual property rights;

7. **Enhance** Early Warning Systems at regional level and their establishment where they do not exist as well as their coordination at continental level in order to avert the negative impact of drought, desertification, floods, natural disasters and pests;
8. **Establish** an information network in the field of agricultural production for food security and the trading of commodities between markets and countries.
9. **Support** the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) in its role of preparing plans and policies related to water resource management on the continent and request the Chairperson of the AU Commission to adapt the mandates, structures and activities of AMCOW, the African Ministers Conference of Environment and the African Ministers Conference of Agriculture in order to integrate them into the activities of the Commission of the African Union and its Specialised Technical Committees;
10. **Encourage** bilateral agreements on shared water resources and **Enjoin** the Regional Economic Communities to develop appropriate regional protocols to guide integrated water resources management;
11. **Strengthen** existing river and lake water basins organizations where they exist and establish new ones wherever appropriate to *inter alia*:
 - Develop and promote water resources through support to infrastructure projects, including the construction of dams and canals, sinking of wells and providing irrigation equipment;
 - Exploit water falls to provide electric power and link it to the Continent's general network.
 - Carry out studies on untapped water in areas where it is available in large quantities to benefit the continent in accordance with the principles of international law, including the protocols concluded among all the riparian States.

12. **Adopt** the African Water Facility and acknowledge the African Water Vision 2025 for a comprehensive integrated development of the water sector;
13. **Immediately establish** the African Common Market for agricultural products, according to the Lusaka Summit decision;
14. **Promote** intra-African trade in agricultural and fishery products in order to correct discrepancies in food balances at both national and regional levels, and **explore** the use of new methods to settle payments for trade;
15. **Develop** clear strategies in the field of export-oriented industries, promote regional cooperation and integration based on comparative advantages in establishing industries in particular, those required by agricultural development programme;
16. **Further develop** the infrastructure, particularly in energy, transport, roads, communication and New Information and Communication Technology fields in order to increase productivity and promote local and foreign investments in these fields;
17. **Ensure coordination** of African positions at WTO and other international trade negotiations fora in order to secure better terms of trade and to increase the share of the Continent in the world trade;
18. **Develop** a common and coherent policy framework for public-private cooperation that will attract increased private capital into the agriculture and water sectors;
19. **Develop** the human resource potential in the continent through education, training, skills development and exchange of expertise;
20. **Ensure** gender balance in access to training, education, land, natural resources, loans and development programmes;

- 21. Expedite** action on the establishment of the African Investment Bank to ensure the financing of, *inter alia*, development projects in the field of agriculture and water;
- 22. Mandate** the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union to undertake a feasibility study for the expeditious establishment of an African Agricultural Development Fund;
- 23. Expedite** the implementation of NEPAD programmes in the field of agriculture and water and the implementation of the Declaration adopted in Maputo on the allocation of 10% of our national budgets to boost agricultural production;
- 24. Request** the Chairperson of the AU Commission to develop detailed plans of action, implement this Declaration, propose the necessary procedures and submit plans of action and detailed programmes to the Assembly at its ordinary session in 2005;
- 25. Entrust** the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) to:
 - (a) Follow-up the implementation of this Declaration and evaluate the progress made in the attainment of its objectives;
 - (b) Submit a report at every annual session of the Assembly, taking into account the achievements and identifying the obstacles and proposing the means to overcome them.

Done in Sirte on 27 February, 2004