



Republic of Malawi

**EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
AND FOOD SECURITY**

STATEMENT BY

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On the Occasion of the

AFRICA - FRANCE SUMMIT

**NICE, FRANCE
1st June, 2010**

- **YOUR EXCELLENCY NICHOLAS SARKOZY,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FRANCE;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCY BAN KI MOON, SECRETARY
GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS;**
- **EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT;**
- **YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. JEAN PING,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION;**
- **DISTINGUISHED MINISTERS AND AMBASSADORS;**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

I wish to begin by commending the Government of France for convening the 25th Africa-France Summit during which, among others, we have to look at alternatives for addressing effects of the global warming and climate change. This, I believe, is not just relevant an issue but also timely especially now that each and every nation is clearly seeing the impact of the climate change.

In developing African nations it was initially felt that issues of climate change were distant from us, but we are now experiencing adverse impacts on our developmental strategies. That is why I want the impacts of climate change on agriculture and food security to be placed on the forefront of our agenda.

It is a matter of great concern to Africa that increasingly, we are experiencing unpredictable and erratic weather systems that have severely burdened our food security and rural livelihoods.

Even my own country Malawi, we have not been spared from these adverse impacts of weather and climate. In the recent past, we have had erratic rainfall with frequent dry spells, frequent incidence of both floods and droughts which have resulted in crop failures and loss of livestock.

Sadly, it is the poor that are affected more as their livelihoods depend on the natural resources and they do not have the means to cushion themselves from these shocks. To a larger extent, climate change effects have undermined food security and economic progress goals in most of the countries in Africa and I believe such is the case globally.

You can therefore understand how serious the problem of climate change is for us in Africa. During the recent African Union Summit that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the beginning of this year, we resolved to accelerate economic growth of our economies in the region. We agreed to enhance our food security and agriculture development as a catalyst for development.

Transport and Infrastructure development was also considered a key element in this development paradigm shift to aid movement of food from surplus to deficit areas. Energy development, information and

communication technology; peace and security as well as climate change are enablers to our developmental goals.

But for us to do so we seek the cooperation of the developed world and resourceful countries to walk with Africa side by side and not to carry us on their shoulders; because that is not only cumbersome but unsustainable.

What we are looking for is support in building the African capacity to be able to understand, prevent, manage and mitigate impacts of climate change. We want to have our own institutions, technocrats, equipment, systems etc, for climate forecasting and management as the current trend of dependency on overseas institution has its own deficits.

For instance, we need resources to support and build capacity of training research and all other institutions involved in climate change studies, mitigation and adaptation. Simultaneously, efforts should galvanize the establishment of regional climate science centres in Africa that have the necessary computational and institutional capacities to support climate modeling and downscaling activities.

I believe that, using the available climate information, it is possible to design adaptation strategies that can significantly enhance the stability and sustainability of food production systems especially of small-scale farmers.

It is also important that together we establish stronger collaborations among agricultural research institutes and climate science organizations for these outcomes to be achieved. We must create networks of African and international scientists for sharing and debating the most recent findings from experimental work, new interdisciplinary concepts, and assessments of adaptation measures.

In addition, we shall strive to mitigate natural disaster through more integration of the early warning mechanisms in environment and climate change. In this regard, there is need to network the institutions based in the various member countries, and establish a continental control centre that will collect, store and disseminate information at continental level. African Governments must focus on expanding agriculture, soil and water conservation practices and rainwater harvesting initiatives.

Excellencies,

I would like to bring to your attention that Africa is the region most vulnerable to climate change, and unfortunately, with the least adaptive capacity. That being the case, I would like to propose that we create a global partnership to mitigate this situation as an immediate and urgent priority.

In this regard, we should redefine this global mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions as a primary mechanism to

prevent long-term climate change impacts on this region and as such, it should include Africa's major concerns.

In addition, the use of new technologies and irrigation farming are part of the solution to mitigate against the effects of climate change. We urge that those with resources like the G8 countries should provide adequate financing, capacity building and technology so that all countries are part and parcel of the solutions to climate change.

We in Africa are convinced that the challenges of climate development are not beyond our capabilities if only we can agree to work together with a common vision and strategy.

I thank you.