Concept Note:

74th Session of the UN General Assembly
High-Level Panel on

Food Security and the achievement of SDGs in Africa: what role of South-South and triangular cooperation
23rd September 2019, from 1.15 to 2.45 p.m, in Conference Room 3

The 2030 Agenda set eradicating hunger as one of the main challenges the international community needs to overcome in order to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for all. The 2nd goal of this agenda aims at guaranteeing food security and improving nutrition while committing to sustainable agricultural development. SDG.2 cannot be achieved without making progress in the implementation of other SDGs, climate change related goals especially.

The Paris Agreement on climate change thus recognizes the fundamental priority which aims at ensuring food security while facing the particular vulnerability of food production systems to the negative impact of climate change. Member states were therefore urged to promote resilience to climate change and low-carbon economic development.

Food insecurity has been a major issue for several African countries. Crop yields are currently decreasing while the African population growth is expected to increase from 15 to 20% in 2050. Hence, it is becoming urgent to resolve the food crisis in Africa by filling the agricultural productivity gap.

Recently, the FAO estimated that Africa is the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment which is affecting around 21% of its population (more than 256 million people). Africa which is home to nearly half of the world’s uncultivated arable lands, spends more than $35 billion USD per year on food imports. This figure is expected to reach $108 billion USD in 2025 if no concrete solution is reached. Furthermore, the budget allocated for agriculture has been divided by 7 in 20 years.

The global outreach of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that of the 2nd goal more particularly, is that hunger and malnutrition are eliminated for all people regardless of their respective countries. The latter goal cannot be achieved by governments, development actors or any other entity without cooperation. This explains why Goal.17 engages stakeholders to enhance global partnerships for sustainable development as well as regional and international cooperation, including South South and triangular cooperation, on capacity building in various fields such as science, technology and innovation.

South-South and triangular cooperation play a major role in fighting food insecurity, a role which was highlighted in the final document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, BAPA+40 as it emphasizes in its paragraph 24.d: “the need to leverage the role of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as a means to promote and support industrial and semi-industrial ventures and ensure food security and nutrition, including through the promotion of sustainable agriculture and food systems, food processing agro-industries, which have the potential to link with global value chains and effectively address the market needs of developing countries.”

Indeed, based on the concept of solidarity, several experiences have demonstrated the great potential of collaboration between developing countries, generating new tools of partnership in a way to eradicate food insecurity and ensure sustainable agriculture.

It is in this spirit that several initiatives have been launched in Africa to intensify South-South and triangular cooperation with the objective of promoting sustainable agriculture which would allow the continent to ensure its food security through capacity building, technology transfer, the financing of climate change actions and political dialogue.
For instance, on the sidelines of the 2016 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP22) which was held in Marrakech, African heads of State and Government launched two initiatives aiming at integrating the majority of state and non-state actors including financial institutions, in climate actions aiming at reaching the 2nd goal of the 2030 Agenda.

The first initiative, commonly known as Triple A, promotes and fosters the implementation of specific projects to improve soil management, agricultural water control, climate risk management and capacity building & funding solutions. The initiative is an important response not only to climate change, but also to food insecurities.

The second one is related to Sustainability, Security and Stability in Africa (3S) and aims at creating jobs for young people, women and migrants through the restoration of degraded lands by strengthening land access and tenure rights as well as by enhancing early warning systems to predict drought and other natural disasters and effectively respond to the displacement of populations.

Regional and international institutions such as Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other partners are also attaching special importance to food security and sustainable agricultural development.

**Main objective:**

On the sidelines of the World Sustainable Development Summit, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) will be organizing a High Level Panel on “Food Security and the achievement of SDGs in Africa: what role for South-South and triangular cooperation”. The Panel will take place on 23rd of September 2019, from 13.15 to 2.45 p.m in Conference Room.3.

The event will offer an opportunity to debate on food security challenges in a continent which is home to 50% of the world’s uncultivated arable lands and on the means by which African countries can reinforce their actions especially through the promotion of South-South cooperation, multi-stakeholder partnerships and the exchange of experience and know-how based on the support of their bilateral and multilateral partners.

The event will be also open for dialogue regarding the policies based on the successful experiences of countries which turned food security into a fundamental right supported by constitutional and juridical frameworks. It will also allow the parties to debate on the projects and initiatives launched by African countries, their development partners and regional and international financial institutions to reinforce the contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation in food security-related matters and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

**Points to be addressed:**

- The role of South-South and triangular cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships in ensuring food security in Africa;
- Investing in food and agriculture in Africa to achieve SDG 2;
- Promoting South–South investment for agricultural and economic development;
- The role of the private sector and other non-state actors in promoting food security;
- Presentation of African inter-governmental initiatives including the triple A initiative which promotes the adaptation of agriculture to climate change and the triple S (Sustainability, Security and Stability) in Africa which aims at stabilizing agricultural production and natural resources in high-risk areas.