

Will AU Summit result in greater investment in agriculture?

President Obiang asked for greater investment in the agricultural sector at the closing session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union (AU).



Equatorial Guinea's President, Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the AU Summit

More specifically, Obiang asked African countries to invest heavily in their agricultural sector to decrease their dependence on the developed world, ensure food security, and significantly reduce hunger in their countries.

He said that Africa should reorient itself to ensure its independence and security of African states through the safe production of its own consumer goods. "Africa cannot be content to continue with the current dependence on the economies of the developed world. Africa is sailing upstream against a dependency that prevents them from moving toward sustainable development. Africa should rethink its relationship with the developed world to reduce as far as possible the gap that prevents access to development," said Obiang.

"The development of agriculture can greatly reduce this dependence," he said. "Africa can ensure food security and significantly reduce hunger in our countries. Africa should heavily invest in agricultural development to transform itself in order to accelerate growth to increase production and productivity," said Obiang.

Obiang proposed to the African Union the establishment of a program that focuses on the organisation and exploitation of markets to promote trade and food security and to eradicate hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty. This will also reinforce the fight against climate change and agriculture.

Agriculture is the most vulnerable sector in times of instability, war and terrorism

He said that Equatorial Guinea is already investing in its agricultural sector. "As part of our diversification plan, Equatorial Guinea currently focuses on [agricultural] production to achieve these goals. It is imperative to ensure the security and stability of our states, since agriculture is the most vulnerable sector in times of instability, war and terrorism," said Obiang.

"It's no coincidence that this session focuses on the issue of agriculture and food security in Africa. We cannot talk about the development of Africa if there is no agricultural development to ensure food security and avoid lifelong dependence on imports of consumer products."

He noted that Africa counts on the support of organisations focused on agriculture and ways to improve the sector, and urged continued support for those organisations.

"The African Union must recognise and financially support the structures of non-governmental organisations, businesses and institutions created in Africa to support agriculture, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)."

Link between democratic and economic development

Obiang linked democratic and economic development. "Africa must contribute to a democratic development aimed at achieving economic development of society and the welfare of its citizens. It must be a democracy that seeks conflict reduction, he said."

Obiang also urged his fellow Africans to prioritise South-South cooperation, a cooperation that respects the principles of equality.

"The last decade has marked considerable advancements of the African states. Many of them aspire to economic emergence in the near future. Nonetheless, the continent continues to be a victim of endemic diseases and insecurity that require a unified solution of the states."

Obiang said it was a great honor for Equatorial Guinea to host the 23rd African Union Summit at "a moment that is crucial for the world nations as they struggle to find solutions to economic crises, security, hunger and poverty, and climate change that affect the world." He said, "The participation of the heads of state and numerous guests in this summit shows the interest and commitment that Africa and its partners have to find solutions to current issues."

A session on agriculture and food security under the slogan *Transforming Africa's Agriculture, for Shared Prosperity and Improved livelihoods, through Harnessing Opportunities* was held in the afternoon.

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