



The Tokyo Summit on Nutrition for Growth (N4G) from December 7-8, 2021 offers a historic opportunity to transform the way the world responds to the global challenge of malnutrition.

Summit comes at a critical time, halfway through the United Nations (UN) Decade of Action on Nutrition, with only five years to meet World Health Assembly (WHA) goals on nutrition mothers, infants and young children, and 10 years to achieve the SDGs.

This Summit is an important opportunity to point the global community towards achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals - in particular, to end malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 and to strengthen the link between food, food systems and health. The aim is to galvanize the commitment of governments, civil society, the private sector, donor agencies and the UN to end malnutrition in all its forms.

Below is the speech by the President of the Republic of Madagascar, Andry Rajoelina, delivered on December 7, 2021, via videospeech from Antananarivo, because of the sudden resurgence of the coronavirus.

(...)

It is a pleasure and a great honor for me to be able to deliver this speech today on a cause that is particularly close to our hearts. I would like to salute the initiative of Japan for the organization of this "Summit on Nutrition for Growth", which takes place in a context where, more than ever, the populations of the world are in a situation of food insecurity because of the pandemic.

This Summit reminds us that malnutrition is a global problem. In 2020, 811 million people suffered from hunger; over 155 million children are stunted for their average age, preventing them from developing physically and intellectually. It also has an impact on their education.

Food insecurity has been particularly worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic: 124 million people are now in extreme poverty. Africa and Asia are the most affected continents, with one in five Africans facing hunger. More than double that of other regions of the world. And Africa is the only continent where, according to projections, the number of people facing hunger will continue to increase in the years to come if there is no concrete action on our part.

We know that food insecurity is caused by different factors, the main ones being conflict and climate change. Moreover, Madagascar is one of the countries hardest hit by this phenomenon. In the south of my country, climate change, which has led to severe episodes of drought and a decrease in rainfall, causing a dramatic reduction in water reserves. All this makes any livelihood activity for families almost impossible.

Indeed, climate change worsens the "kéré" or famine which has affected southern Madagascar for several decades. My compatriots in this part of the Big Island are taking a heavy toll from the climate crisis in which they were not involved. To date, 1,300,000 of my fellow citizens suffer from malnutrition. Among them, 200,000 people are in phase 4, that is to say in a situation of food crisis. Almost 75,000 children under 5 years old suffer from acute malnutrition.

Faced with these alarming figures, we must find more adequate solutions. This is imperative because millions of human lives are in danger. This is why, for almost two years now, the Malagasy state has waged a fierce struggle against this evil.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To win this fight, it is essential to change the paradigm and mode of action by developing multisectoral projects, both in the fields of Agriculture, Health, Water, Sanitation, 'Education and Social Protection. Regarding Madagascar, the Malagasy state has deployed several solutions to help the South Malagasy. Among them, the organization of several caravans from the South to deliver humanitarian aid with basic necessities.

Also, the systematization of the cash transfer for more than 100,000 families. An initiative responding to immediate humanitarian needs in this time of crisis. With the support of Technical and Financial Partners, we also launched a flash appeal to the international community. As a result, nearly a million people have received food and medical assistance and have gained access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

To support students, but also to fight against dropping out of school, we have set up the school canteen program nationwide. It is also with pride that a few months ago we set up the first nutritional food factory, NUTRISUD, to fight against child malnutrition. The plant will produce 600 tons, or 8 million pods of nutritional solution for use in school canteens.

As demographic control is central to our action strategy, a family planning program will be implemented. Because, unfortunately, in these regions of great precariousness, we see the young age of mothers: they are between 16 and 20 years old, and they already have three or four or even six young children. Without this program, all our efforts will be in vain.

The construction of a large pipeline to supply water to the southern region to irrigate the land, is one of our main projects. Water being a source of life, and more than vital, this large-scale project will allow a real renaissance in these regions, in the field of Agriculture and Livestock to create jobs and promote community resilience. The populations will be able, finally, to cultivate and to live.

Preserving the environment and a more reasoned management of global resources are fundamental if we want to permanently stem food insecurity. I therefore call on my counterparts,

opinion leaders, the global private sector to mobilize in favor of the protection of forests, the preservation of coastlines and the popularization of renewable energies and biofuels alternating with firewood and charcoal.

The issue of food security is a global emergency, for which we must mobilize massively. So, it's time for us to join forces to make food security a priority for all Leaders. The struggle is still long, the challenges are still great, but the hope that I place in these actions taken and to be carried out is even greater.

So let us make sure, dear friends, that at the end of this high-level event, currents, operational strategies of action, far from the theory, that we can deploy quickly. We must do everything to achieve tangible, measurable and quantifiable results in order to eradicate malnutrition in all its forms.

I cannot conclude this declaration without thanking all the stakeholders and all those who spare neither their efforts nor their time in this fight against malnutrition.

Your commitment is precious and vital.

Thank you for your attention.

Andry RAJOELINA

President of the Republic of Madagascar

Videospeech on December 07, 2021

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