

Egypt's Mubarak Will Take Biofoolery to FAO

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on May 18, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said the burning of food in the current global food emergency must end, and he promised to take up the issue at the June 3 meeting of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome. Mubarak's call to arms against bio-fuels has been almost completely blacked out of the Western press, in favor of reporting the ranting speech, at the same conference, of President George Bush, lecturing the Arabs on "democracy."



Agência Brasil

Hosni Mubarak

The following are excerpts from Mubarak's speech, translated from Arabic by EIR:

The Davos conference is returning to Sharm El-Sheikh, as the Middle East and the world are facing a crossroads, amid difficult regional and international conditions. The world is facing an acute economic crisis that started with the collapse of the U.S. mortgage credit market, together with which the expectations for the rates of growth of the world economy declined. Severe inflationary currents are sweeping the world, where we are witnessing unprecedented record hikes in prices of energy, basic foodstuffs, and raw materials. These are throwing the greater part of their impact and consequences on poor nations, and the people of least income within each nation. . . .

Ensuring food security for the poor is an essential challenge. It is a great responsibility towards the poor and those of lower income, including those in the rich, developed nations. And this target must not become a subject for speculation that raises the price of food, or other tendencies that use the food of human beings as fuel in car motors. Is it reasonable that some would go ahead with the production of biofuels, with support from the governments for its producers? Is it reasonable or even acceptable that agricultural crops are used for the production of ethanol, making the crisis of food prices worse?

The international community is in need of reassessing the

real cost of the production of biofuels, including all the social and environmental effects, and the consequences for the food security of humans. The need for an international dialogue is becoming urgent, where the exporters and importers of energy and food from developing and industrial nations meet around one table: a dialogue which would present solutions ensuring the meeting of the needs of the world population for food, and would provide, at the same time, the necessary supplies of energy internationally. A dialogue which will result in solutions that we all agree on and commit ourselves to. . . . We are facing a vicious cycle, imposed by the correlation between food supplies and energy, whereby each of the two factors becomes both a cause and an effect, simultaneously, for the current crisis of the world economy. The two are threatening to turn the crisis into a permanent one, unless we move swiftly to contain them.

I will carry this call for dialogue on this important international issue to the coming meeting of the FAO in Rome next month. And I am looking forward to seeing this meeting place both the developing and industrial nations on the right track.