

# MOSTAFA TERRAB

## Chairman and CEO, OCP Group

### Mostafa TERRAB, Chairman and CEO, OCP Group

OCP is a fertiliser company and we stumbled across the global challenge of food security as a fertiliser company trying to make sense of some of the figures. You probably already know them, but they are worth repeating. What is the challenge and how can we measure the challenge for food security? We talk about climate change and we talk about the implications for the end of the century, but let us look at something much closer, 2050.

In 2050, we will have a global population of 9-10 billion. The latest estimate I have seen is 9.6-9.7 billion people to feed. By the way, half of the growth will come from Africa, so Africa will add 1-1.5 billion by 2050. That is only 35 years from now. There is limited arable land and the population is growing, but usable arable land as a net addition is very limited. That means that we are going to have to double food production without doubling available arable land. That is a big challenge and it would probably mean more production or yield per fixed amount of arable land. This is a big challenge which will come in only 35 years, if we look at the figures.

What are the global policies? As you mentioned, Kemal, it is now in a prominent position among the SDGs, but what are the global policies to address that? This is where I would like to turn a bit to zoom on Africa. As I said, Africa will add 1-1.5 billion people by that horizon, and Kemal associated Africa with the problem. On a global scale, if people associate food security and Africa, it is negatively. If you look at the figures, you come very quickly to the conclusion that Africa will be part of the solution globally, not just be part of the problem. The figures show that an amount of the remaining global arable land is in Africa. 60% is the estimate for the remaining arable land unused is in Africa. You can come very quickly to the conclusion that we need a global approach on the agricultural front, with a strong focus on Africa. Africa can help feed the world, so to speak.

Are we there? No. We are reacting sporadically or in the short term, to short-term situations. The last time there were food riots in Africa was in 2008, if I recall. Then food security and the development of the agricultural sector in Africa became a priority, but frankly a short-lived priority on the global agenda. There are still meetings, but how much concrete investment has been made in Africa in the agricultural sector? I am afraid that this is not up to the challenge. The World Bank had almost no agricultural activity for several decades. Then in 2008, the flagship annual report was on agriculture. However, if you look concretely at how many instruments were invested in Africa and in agriculture, they remain very limited if we look at the challenges.

My second point links this issue of food security and the imperative of making Africa part of the solution to some of the issues we have discussed. For example, in the last session yesterday, we talked about the future and what is the future of the Middle East. We should also talk about the future of Africa, which is an important issue. We looked at it from a security point of view. If we look at the current challenges on the security front, Youssef alerted us to the fact that the solutions have to be multidimensional. You cannot solve these issues just from a security, political or even religious point of view. We have addressed how to deconstruct some of the narrative there, and it is feasible. However, there is a fourth leg, so to speak, that was missing yesterday, at least to a large extent, which was the economic development issue.

How much of the crisis in Syria, Libya and what we are witnessing today with the exodus to Europe is related to political or democratisation issues? How much is related to basic lack of economic opportunities for youth? After all, the Arab Spring started because of that. Imagine if we did not address the rural and agricultural development challenge in Africa. Then we would be strengthening the rural exodus which is already happening. Thank God most African countries still have a population today which is 60-70% rural, but they are moving to the cities and there is a lack of economic opportunity in the cities. That rural exodus to the cities is translating into the exodus through the Mediterranean. Let us face it, if we do not contribute to rural and agricultural development in Africa, the security challenge that we discussed yesterday will simply be exacerbated.



I will finish with a small point which may be technical but is not really technical. How do we address the agricultural development challenge of Africa? There are two extremes and we have seen some thought along that way and some desire to address it in some way. 60% of land is still arable and not used. Some say "let us move to intensive, mechanised, large-scale agriculture." This is probably going to be part of the solution. Let us bring technology in to solve the problem.

However, I would submit that this will only increase the rural and security issues, because this type of agriculture dramatically shrinks the agricultural labor force and thus accelerates the rural exodus. The other solution, and it is probably the right one, is a mix of this. It is to address the small-farmer challenge, with more precision and more small-scale farming and agriculture. I know many African countries are addressing that challenge and Ethiopia is one of them, to give an example. I will stop there.

**Kemal DERVIŞ, Vice President and Director of Global Economy and Development, Brookings Institution, former Minister of Economic Affairs of Turkey**

The last point about that choice, although you said both are needed, raises a real question. Then there is also the whole issue of supporting the hungry. It is important to support them with production rather than feeding per se. If people are hungry, they have to be fed, but there is also the emphasis on actually producing the food, as opposed to just feeding them. This is another issue I want to come to later on in the discussion.