

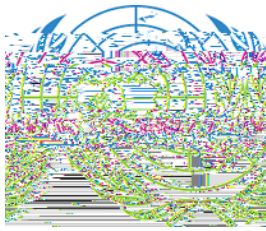
The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with armed conflicts, have disrupted supply chains of food and essential materials. These factors are driving food prices to new highs and threatening lives and livelihoods.

Food security was already a challenge in Africa, but recent events have highlighted how Africa's challenges are magnified by external shocks.

Added to this are the continued and ever-increasing impacts of climate change. Floods and droughts in Africa and throughout the world continue to impact agricultural production.

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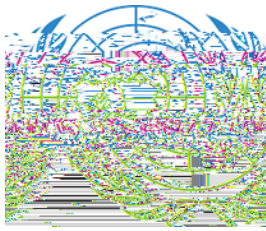
Against this background, the African Union's theme of the year,
and the Africa Dialogue Series, Ses



Second, digitization is a gamechanger that can easily support increases in production. Financing for small holder farmers is an indispensable tool that can enable African farmers access to the latest technologies to improve their productivity.

Third, food-based social protection initiatives, such as school-feeding programmes, are essential to building resilience against socio-economic crises, to address malnutrition, and to invest in Africa's greatest resource: its youth.

And fourth, understanding the food-climate-energy nexus is critical to achieving resilience. Implementing climate smart agricultural technology, including off-grid renewable energy solutions to deploy irrigation systems, is indispensable to equip African farmers with the tools they need to overcome the risks created by climate change.



My friends,

We are not lacking in food; indeed, we have enough to feed the planet. What we do have is gaps in distribution, in access, in purchasing power.

Transforming food systems therefore requires addressing these underlying inequalities and restoring fair, or equitable, access to resources, including water, land, and seeds, as well as access to information, technology, and justice.

It also includes support for vulnerable groups, such as women, indigenous peoples, farmers and fishers, and migrants.

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The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and now, the war in Ukraine, have shown us that developing nations are constantly faced with external shocks whose sources they cannot prevent nor control.

More efforts are needed to prevent, anticipate, prepare for, cope with, and recover from shocks, and to not only bounce back but to go further, stronger.

I am confident that these two days of High-level Policy Dialogues will provide the opportunity for insightful discussions, and I trust they will feed into the discussions

