



Dr. Shafik Askar delivered the following Speech at the Opening session:

- Allow me, on your behalf, to express gratitude to and warmly welcome the representatives of the Egyptian government for the generous sponsorship to our Annual International Conference, as represented by His Excellency Mr. Amin Abaza, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and His Excellency Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, Minister of Investment.
- It is worth mentioning that our Annual Event is steadily held on the great land of Egypt, since 16 years ago.
- Also, we further express our thanks to the fertilizer producing Egyptian companies for their invaluable support to our Event since its starting point.
- All appreciation to the representative of fertilizer industry in Arab Republic of Egypt, and the AFA Board member, Engineer Mohammad Adel Al Mouzi, for his enhancement to AFA works and proceedings.

- Fortunately, our gathering regularly meet on annual bases, privileged by the attendance of all fertilizer producing Arab companies and industry related Arab institutions and organizations together with their regional and international counterparts. Therefore, such a gathering underscores the economic significance of fertilizer industry as an essential strategic sector and effective factor, playing a major role in raising agricultural productivity, supporting food system and promoting international strenuous efforts to fight the widened scope and unprecedented rates of poverty and hunger. Being a tocsin, international political leaderships met in Rome Conference, convened in November 2009, in a heated attempt to rapidly contain the problem, before it is too late; moved by the number of hungry people - surpassing one billion persons – and the expectation of the world population to exceed 9 billion people by 2050. Such a situation will take place, despite of the total agricultural crop production reaching last year nearly 2300 million tons, with a surplus of about 90 million tons compared to total international food requirements, hence a clear imbalance is shown between food abundance and hunger. Remembering here the following saying:

"food is a fundamental right for human beings."

- On an equal footing with the scientific preparedness made to face poverty and hunger, strong calls from all over the world rose to warn against the attacking danger threatening mankind, that is to say the unmatched rise in temperature degrees and the emergence of global warming phenomenon with its negative aspects and direct impacts on the global and human beings futures, as a result of the accumulating reactions of various activities, at the top of which industrial activity besides other destructive actions committed against our world.
- Hundreds of researches and studies emphasized the fact that the Earth planet temperature has risen to high levels and is approaching an increasing hike in temperature degrees, as proved by the ice-melting phenomenon, which in return will lead to an increase in the water level in rivers and oceans and an ongoing erosion of shores, thus, exposing many cities, coastal agricultural lands and estuaries' deltas to both erosion and

salinity, leading to people movement and millions of geographical migration waves.

- In the light of the irrefutable facts and the troubling pressing results of the soaring financial crisis, widened poverty and hunger gap, high rates of unemployment, decrease in rainfall average, consecutive draught waves, limited agricultural lands, burst in population and repeated migration waves from rural to urban areas searching for better job opportunities and living standards;
- We, from such a podium and on your behalf, call upon the international community to concert efforts to set serious strategies in order to deal with the current unprecedented challenging reality, design and implement agricultural policies concerned with producing more food, execute reclamation schemes to lands, fight desertification, apply good governance practices in agriculture and fertilization, launch extension programs to raise agricultural productivity in addition to rationalizing water resources usage, in the shed of the existing competition over water usages between industrial and agricultural needs and potable water, especially in the Arab region, which is actually suffering from draught and decrease in per capita share of water.
- Despite all of the aforementioned stressing and pressing indicators, the convention of such an International Annual Conference is crowned with optimism concerning fertilizer industry, as manifested in the slogan **Further Step Ahead**. Hopes prevail that 2010 would be a new qualitative phase and a leap for fertilizer industry to recover from the shock of the international economic downturn, which impacts afflicted the world since the last quarter of 2008 and expanded to reach and affect all economic and social development programs and sectors, hence leading to the loss of enormous resources and the escalation of unemployment, poverty and hunger problems in most of the world regions with varying rates.
- Fertilizer industry sector was significantly affected. To elaborate, it faced a decrease in the fertilizer purchasing power and demand, resulting in a serious drop in prices, consequently leading to some companies being forced to decrease their productivity to cope with demands level.

- On the other hand, fertilizer producing Arab companies worked on evaluating their performance and reconsidering their requirements so as to lessen production costs, maximize the benefits from production inputs components, save expenditures, assess plans and promote productivity. Thus, getting prepared for a new era, as Indicators show signs of improvement in the business atmosphere, rise in demand and gradual increase in prices, hence promising that 2010 and the following years would be a new step in fertilizer industry trade, leads to an expectation increase of demand ranges between 2.5% and 3.5% annually.
- With reference to the previously mentioned issues, AFA invited a galaxy of regional and international experienced experts and specialized people to tackle and analyze these issues. They would also highlight the international efforts in an attempt to narrow poverty gap and to produce and provide more food for people. These issues are closely related to the present and future of fertilizer industry. They further represent a challenge before the promotion of such an industry production capacity and the preparations taken to fulfill these requirements in order to increase production and provide food and clothes. In this regard, the continuous efforts led by FAO to such an end are highly appreciated.
- In relation to the scientific research issue targeting environment preservation, and pursuant to AFA strategy and respectable board policy aiming at the encouragement of scientific research in the field of agriculture, fertilizer usages, fertilizer industry and protection of both environment and human beings, and in continuation of the course AFA started from several years, the opening ceremony will include the announcement of the two AFA awards winners:

First Award: is for factories distinguished in the field of Health, Safety and Environment (HSE), preceded by a number of awards for researchers in fertilizer industry field.

Second Award: is for the best practical researches made in the field of raising the agricultural productivity via usage of fertilizers. This is the fourth time for AFA to provide this award.

- Also, a number of leaderships concerned with supporting fertilizer industry and AFA course will be honored.
- Once again I thank the Conference sponsors, experts, speakers and participants, wishing them constructive interventions during our three day event and emphasizing on the strategic and pivotal role of fertilizer industry, which is indispensable for the service of Man and the provision of food and clothes.

Looking forward to have a more prosperous world and a greener planet.