



## AFA Secretary General Speech

In the opening ceremony of the

**22<sup>nd</sup> AFA Int'l. Fertilizer Technology Conference**

Marrakesh: 30/6 – 2/7/2009

**"In the Name of God, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful"**

Mr. Ahmed Reda Chami,

Minister of Industry, Commerce and New Technologies

Mr. Mostafa Terrab,

President Director General of OCP Group

Mr. Mohamed Nagib Benchekroun,

AFA Board Chairman

AFA Board Members,

Arab and International Companies and Institutions

Ladies and Gentlemen

May peace and blessings of Allah be upon you

It is really a great pleasure to welcome the generous sponsorship and the special attendance of Mr. Ahmed Reda Chami, Minister of Industry, Commerce and New Technologies in the opening ceremony of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Fertilizer Technology Conference, convened in Marrakesh.

We deeply appreciate holding such a conference, for the third time, in Morocco, the State we are all proud of its authenticity, nobility, friendship and wise leadership, guiding the people toward all good and welfare. So, allow me on behalf of all the attendants to convey a message of loyalty and

salutation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI and his wise government, which continuously sponsor AFA proceedings. This sponsorship is clearly manifested in the attendance of such a galaxy of ministers and officials representing a great number of authorities, universities and academic centers.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

This conference is an unexampled event, abundantly supported by Al Sharif Industrial Compound for Phosphate, the leading and unprecedented pioneer in phosphate fertilizer industry on both regional and international levels. Therefore, in your name I extend deep thanks and express profound gratitude to Mr. Mostafa Terrab, President Director General of OCP, for providing all necessary assistance for our international event, believing in the role of fertilizer industry in boosting economic and social development and in contributing with the international system to enhance international food security and promote concerned institutions status.

The great participation, exceeding 450 people from 40 countries representing 145 fertilizer industry international companies, is a reflection of the due concern paid to the event regionally and internationally. It further highlights the important role of Arab fertilizer industry in advancing agriculture, providing

strategic food crops and valuing AFA role as a regional framework encompassing fertilizers and fertilizers' materials producers and exporters.

## **Your Excellencies**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

AFA, since its outset in 1975 and via its board vision and leadership and its members' keenness and support, has been working strenuously to develop its mechanisms and annual programs to run in line with the regional and international developments, challenges and legislations facing fertilizer industry and trade. All the efforts exerted by AFA targeted the improvement and promotion of member companies endeavors, so as to maximize the benefit from the available natural resources and the distinguished geographical location of the Arab region, as a main exporter of different fertilizers, depending on the availability of main materials, at the top of which about 70% of phosphate rock international stock and about 35% of natural gas international stock, both of which represent the backbone of phosphate and nitrogenous fertilizer industry.

Thus, bearing in mind all the aforementioned, AFA members' annual plans and policies aim at:

- Following up the usage of the state-of-the-art technologies in order to be in line with the progressing fertilizer industry.
- Entrenching the culture of vocational health and safety, taking the required measures, conducting periodical reviews of inter-criteria and avoiding risks endangering human-beings and environment.
- Encouraging scientific research targeting fertilizer industry service.
- Building managerial and technical capacities specialized for such an industry.
- Concerting efforts with international specialized organizations in:
  - Studying the rapid changes in the international climate and the global warming phenomenon and its impact on human-beings and environment.
  - Enhancing the usage of renewable energies, the necessity of using the available ones and minimizing the dependence on fossil fuel.
  - Rationalizing usage of water, supporting researches in this regard and searching for the best ways to reduce water used in industry, as water represents the cornerstone of economic and social development.

Moreover, the Arab region is considered one of the driest regions of the world, least in rain water besides most of its countries suffer from a decreasing water stock. Consequently, the current and future competition is between using water for drinking, agriculture and industry purposes.

So, the previously mentioned objectives and directions were taken into account when selecting the to-be presented papers, with special emphasis on the ones consistent with the identified goals, in order to choose international speakers and experts and a number of successful industrial applications conducted by Arab countries reaching the best international criteria in productivity. In line with the former task a special attention was paid to vocational health and safety dimension, the matter confirming the decision-takers and concerned parties sense of responsibility, underscoring Arab fertilizer industry ability and preparedness to move forward in playing a leading role as a main developmental and social actor and maximizing its role and status as an international supplier of fertilizers characterized by high levels of quality and commitment.

It is noteworthy that the Arab Companies commitment to human-being and environment protection is clearly demonstrated in a number of Arab companies consecutive successes and obtainment of international awards in health, safety and environment issues together with representing some of the

highest international references in this concern. These companies undoubtedly deserve all praise; an issue requiring the generalization of the said achievements and exchanging expertise between member companies, so as to acquire more successes and entrench health, safety and environment concepts as a culture, approach and practice maintaining human-being, machines and surroundings, all of which represent an integral unit.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Fertilizer Industry, similar to any other industry, face a number of challenges that should be borne in mind:

- The increasing population growth rate and the rise in food and dress international demand. To elaborate, the number of hungry people reaches about one billion, on the world level, and the food international stock decreased to about 20%, which is the least amount recorded internationally from more than 30 years.
- The impact of international financial crisis, taking place since the last quarter of 2008, and its aggravation to become an economic crisis seriously affecting developing countries economies in addition to the shortage in cash and credit facilitations provided by banks and lending bodies. This situation was reflected on fertilizer international demand rate,

during the first months of 2009, as there is a close relationship between the international rate of GDP and fertilizer consumption.

The referred to factors, together with other factors, require from Arab fertilizer industry decision takers to take in consideration, during such a phase in particular, the following points:

- Seeking more production capacities and providing continuously different kinds of fertilizers.
- Intensifying the search for new places for phosphate rocks and potash, as fears arise of reserve decrease.
- Reviewing, comprehensively, the expenditures and necessarily rationalizing such expenditures together with promoting productivity, so as for fertilizer industry to be highly prepared for and capable of providing high quality and efficient fertilizers to fulfill the required needs. Furthermore, signs to indicators expressing the potential of new food crisis in the coming year should be noticed.

At the end, I re-express my thanks to the generous sponsorship and the distinguished attendance of the participants and speakers.

Thank You

Secretary General

Shafik Ashkar