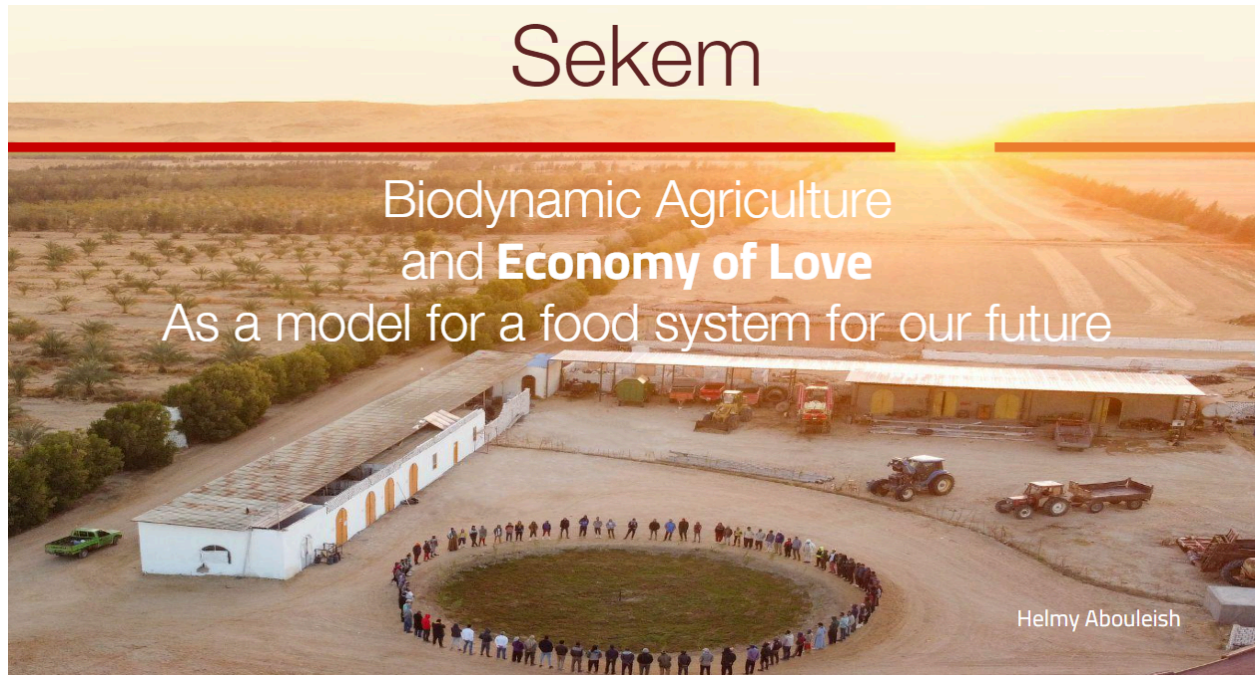


**Mr. Helmy Abouleish's speech at the Agricultural Ministers conference, GFFA  
( Global Forum For Food and Agriculture)**



Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm very happy to be here with you today to present to you a model for a food system for our future which is based on biodynamic agriculture, and what we call "Economy of Love", which we have developed over the last 46 years in Egypt.

And in particular, I am happy to be here, because as the President of the Biodynamic Federation, Demeter International, which is active in 60 countries in the world, we are celebrating this year, our 100 years anniversary together with the whole organic movement, which evolved out of our movement.

Now, Egypt is facing the same challenges as many many other countries in the world, but in particular we have a big problem because we have only seven million Acres along the Nile, on which seven million farmers produce food for 110 million Egyptians.

We have only the Nile which is giving us about 50% of the water, which we would need to feed our whole population. And our 110 million people cannot afford to pay premium prices for biodynamic or organic products in Egypt.

So, this is why, when my father, Ibrahim Abouleish, established SEKEM in 1977 as a model for a food system of the future, everyone told him:” *forget it, this is crazy, this is never going to work in Egypt and it’s a mission impossible*”.

Now, I'm very happy that I can tell you that over the last 46 years a miracle evolved in the desert, where out of desert sand, we could prove that biodynamic agriculture is capable of developing living soils, where all crops of Egypt can be produced. And where today, five thousand farmers -small holder farmers - produce all kinds of crops with similar yields than conventional farmers, with less water per crop than conventional farmers, sequestering hundreds of thousands of tons of CO2 in their soils and trees and have a better income than conventional farmers.

And besides that our 2000 SEKEM co-workers process out of this biodynamic raw materials food, pharmaceuticals and garments for the local Egyptian market. And out of their profits can even establish schools, hospitals and a university for sustainable development.

Still the question is, is this a scalable model? I'm very happy to see many many International reports today referring to the issues we are raising, proving that regenerative, biodynamic and organic agriculture can be a big important part of the solution of climate change. And that in our latest reports, for example, we could see that when we follow the principles of True Cost Accounting, including hidden costs, external costs, already today regenerative, biodynamic, and organic agriculture is cheaper than conventional agriculture.

Now, our system of “Economy of Love” is based on biodynamic certification and it's based on 100% transparent supply chains, so that everyone knows what everyone else is earning. We are verifying and validating carbon credits ecosystem services for our farmers to improve their incomes. We have developed innovative funding for their transition and continuous education. And we are answering the four questions which any food system of the future must be able to answer:

- 1- What is the impact of food on the environment?
- 2- What is the impact of food on people?
- 3- What is the impact of food on society?
- 4- What is the true cost of food?

And we have been able to do this successfully in our “Economy of Love” scheme by developing our own high integrity, whole system, agriculture carbon credits based on UNFCCC, IPCC and CDM methodologies, which if applied by all seven million farmers - and this will happen somewhere in the future- it will we make a huge impact. Egypt’s emissions will be reduced by 30% only by farmers, the real climate heroes.

And our farmers will earn 50% to 100% percent better incomes, because their carbon credits will be sold even at a low price of 25 to 30 Euros and improve the income per acre from 200 to 400 euros, which it's more than our farmers are earning for many crops, which in turn enables them to sell their biodynamic crops in Egypt at conventional prices.

Now, inspired by this vision, we have now really done a lot of efforts to scale up the "Economy of Love". We are now aiming for 40,000 farmers in the next two years, we are already heading for 250,000 farmers over the years to come. And we have been very happy that we have received a lot of acknowledgements for this system. We received the Livelihood Award, which is the alternative Nobel Prize Award and the Social Entrepreneurship Award of the World Economic Forum. I have been asked to be a member of the Club of Rome and a counselor of the World Future Council and recently I was a member of the Directive Committee of the Climate Champion team, which developed the Declaration for COP28, which was signed by 159 countries.

Now, having said all this, of course this joint call needs your support, because we are asking for the acknowledgement of the whole system, agricultural carbon credits and their access to the voluntary carbon market for a fair price for agricultural carbon credits.

Please support us on this mission as it will help all of your farmers in all of your countries.

We are happy that Egypt's government has supported us. We have seen voluntary carbon law in Egypt last year, which enabled our financial regulatory authority to set up on the Egyptian Exchange, the African Carbon Exchange, on a platform on which our farmers - smallholder farmers - can auction and sell their carbon credits today to local and international companies.

Now, having said all this, which gives a lot of hope, there are still a lot of people who do not believe it's possible to change our food system. I tend to answer them with a quote from our great African brother - Nelson Mandela - who once said "*It always seems impossible until it's done*".

In this spirit, I wish you all the best for the transformation of the food system. I'm happy to offer you the support of the biodynamic and organic movement, whatever we can do and I am individually happy to invite you to come to Egypt to visit SEKEM, to see what we do on the ground, because future generations will judge us on our deeds not only on our intentions.

Good luck and thank you.

Helmy Abouleish