

Mr. Taoufik BACCAR, Governor of the Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT), presided over on Saturday 31 January 2009 in Sidi Bouzid the opening session of works of the regional conference on investment in agricultural projects and boosting of partnership programmes in presence of Mr. Abdessalem Mansour, Minister of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources and Mr. Mabrouk Bahri, Chairman of the Tunisian Union for Agriculture and Fishing (Utap).

On this occasion, Mr. BACCAR pointed out that 26 projects (out of 46 organised meetings) secured approval in principle for financing, while the other projects will be deeply examined.

The Governor of the BCT considered this result "positive" compared to sums devoted to financing the approved projects (11 million dinars) and taking into account the contribution of projects in job creation. These initiatives will be created in the area of agricultural mechanization, services, red meat, oil mill, poultry farming, fodder, fruit growing and market garden crops.

He pointed out that the agricultural sector represents an absolute priority given its role in achieving food security in the wake of world financial crisis' challenges.

He stated that the volume of investment in the sector amounted to 4.2 billion dinars in the Xth development Plan. These efforts will be indeed pursued in the XIth development Plan and will reach some 5 billion dinars.

In this framework, the Governor added that the financing system was consolidated thanks to the new presidential decisions, of which notably, increase of the ceiling for financing of agricultural projects by the Bank of financing small and medium-sized business (300 thousand dinars) and the Tunisian solidarity Bank (100 thousand dinars).

The Governor indicated that the banking sector spares no effort to widen its area of intervention to back up investment in the agricultural sector.

Worth of note that the volume of loans granted to this sector in the governorate of Sidi Bouzid totalled 5.8 million dinars and loans to farming industries and foodstuffs amounted to more than 18 million dinars.

Mr. BACCAR called the banking sector to enhance investment while focussing on identification, follow up and supervision.

Apart from this event, Mr. BACCAR inaugurated in the sub-governorate of Sebbela a subsidiary of the UIB bank.