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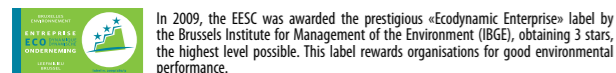
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European Economic and Social Committee

EESC President's Conclusions from the Conference

“Food for everyone
- towards a global deal”

Civil society input to G 20
discussions on food security

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Preamble

On the basis of the conference proceedings, the president

- condemns in the strongest possible terms the fact that a billion human beings suffer from hunger in various parts of the world and particularly in developing countries - a situation wholly at odds with the aim of achieving the first of the Millennium Development Goals;
- notes that access to food may be limited not only because of shortages and lack of access to food production, but also because of high prices, poverty and huge social inequalities;
- notes that the nutrition regime in developed countries, and in particular the growing consumption of meat, is part of the food security problem;
- notes that food security begins by promoting the development of agriculture in developing countries without stifling the development of agriculture in developed countries;
- considers that a two-track approach is needed, i.e. direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable and alongside medium and long-term development programmes designed to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty;
- **proposes that, in a bid to reach a global deal on food security, the G20 agriculture ministers adopt the following recommendations based on six pillars:**

1. promotion of sustainable agriculture,
2. crucial role of civil society,
3. recognition of the right to food,
4. need for policy coherence,
5. better functioning of agricultural markets,
6. protection of the most vulnerable.

Promotion of sustainable agriculture

1. Promote investment in agriculture

Recognise that decades of underinvestment in agriculture, and especially in smallholder-based production and processing systems, is one of the causes of the current food insecurity.

Stimulate sustainable investment in food production by creating a more conducive climate for investment, including well-defined and transparent business regulation, contract enforcement and improvements in basic transport, communication and power infrastructure

Develop agricultural financial services and rural financial institutions in order to strengthen access by smallholders and other food value-chain players to financial and risk management instruments.

2. Increase the share of developing countries' national budgets earmarked for agriculture

Recommend that developing countries increase the share of their budgets earmarked for agriculture and, as regards Africa, that the commitments made in Maputo under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme to dedicate at least 10% of their national budgets to agriculture and rural development are met.

3. Develop research, development and innovation in agriculture

Promote demand-driven research, development and innovation in food and agriculture sciences and in biotechnology in order to increase productivity and resource efficiency and to provide affordable and sustainable inputs for farmers and small farmers in particular.

Ensure that such research does not preclude efforts to exploit the full potential of existing, conventional production methods which in many developing countries remains unused. In particular it is important to draw on local know-how as regards local farming methods and knowledge of local plant and seed varieties that have a high productive potential.

4. Develop infrastructure in developing countries

Recognise that lack of infrastructures (road and transport, storage, etc) in many developing countries is one of the major causes both of produce wastage and the inability to market local food, thereby preventing farmers from selling their produce and poor city dwellers from gaining access to food.

Stimulate investment in basic transport, communication and energy infrastructure and in post-harvest storage and cooling facilities, processing, packaging and marketing and in knowledge transfer. Storage facilities would allow farmers to hold back some of their harvests for sale at the best market opportunity (warrantage schemes).

Promote private and public investment in infrastructure conducive in particular to the development of small and local farmers and also ask the donor community to give priority financing infrastructure that supports food security objectives.

5. Promote environmentally-friendly agriculture and adaptation to climate change

Agricultural policies, development aid and investment should promote agricultural systems that minimise pollution, ensure the sustainable use of vital natural resources, support species and ecosystem diversity, and promote mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Conserving the environment and mitigating climate change must be chief concerns of agriculture policy. It is vital to foster agro-forestry, encourage action to combat deforestation and develop efficient irrigation techniques, and promote the use of locally-generated inputs such as manure, compost and organic fertilisers. In the same vein, subsidies for unsustainable agriculture (and the large-scale use of pesticides) must be reviewed and pesticides should be used only when needed and, even then, in a sustainable way.

6. Support agriculture policies that promote local and regional markets

Call for a range of actions to foster increased production and improved efficiency but also better target local rural communities and promote food crops. This dual approach should be implemented rapidly, not only in order to boost agricultural production at local level but also to open up prospects for the economic development of rural areas and

slow down rural-urban migration, which is causing growing problems of access to food in urban areas.

Promote domestic support measures, and particularly targeted programmes, in order to supply critical inputs such as locally adapted quality seeds, appropriate fertilisers, small irrigation pumps and veterinary drugs and services. The examples of a number of developing countries that have been successful in agriculture policy renewal, such as Ghana, Malawi and Rwanda, should be replicated

Encourage farmers to form cooperatives or other groups at local level to enhance farmers' negotiating power and help them market their products. In addition, encourage farmers' involvement in more value-added activities such as the processing, packaging and marketing of their products.

The crucial role of civil society

7. Involve all stakeholders

Recognise that food security is a global issue and that it needs the involvement of all stakeholders and in particular a strong contribution from farmers, consumers, the private sector, workers and NGOs.

Promote the role of civil society organisations as a key element of consultation and follow-up in international, multilateral, regional or bilateral negotiations.

8. Involve farmers' organisations in decision-making

Better integrate farmers' organisations in decision-making processes that concern them. This means involving them in framing policy taking decisions and monitoring compliance. Give farmers access to agricultural statistics and market data in order to assist them in taking decisions about investments and production.

Request that developed countries, and especially the European Union, make the involvement of civil society, especially farmers' organisations, in the machinery of political decision-making one of the criteria for assessing the way in which a country is governed.

9. Develop the capacities of farmers' organisations

Facilitate access to international and European funding for farmers, and small farmers in particular, in order to promote a more professional structure in the sector and consolidate capacity. The rules on funding imposed by the EU and other donors are often very cumbersome, and small professional organisations can be excluded. It is recommended that consideration be given to making the main donors' rules on financing more flexible and to providing training for farmers' organisations on how to access international funding.

10. Promote the role of women in rural areas

Recognise that women contribute significantly to agriculture production but face many constraints which limit their ability to ensure food and nutrition security within their households and communities.

Grant women equal and unrestricted access to productive resources. This must include the right to own and inherit land, the right of access to land and the right to equal treatment in land and agrarian reform and rural development projects; it must also include customary rights, such as access to common areas. There is a need for national and international training and awareness-raising campaigns in this area.

Strengthen women's organisations in the farming sector. Under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), countries must take steps to ensure that women in rural areas are able to organise self-help groups and cooperatives. International organisations should develop special programmes for women in rural areas and ensure that women are at the centre of action for food and nutrition security.

11. Promote the role of young farmers

Pay special attention to young farmers through dedicated national policies and by supporting the establishment of training centres and programmes that help them become self employed, give them access to credit and promote their integration to the working life of rural areas.

Give thought to the creation of an international exchange programme for young farmers inspired by the existing Erasmus programme.

Recognition of the right to food

12. Recognise the right to food at international level

Agree that food security should be built on three pillars: the availability of sufficient quantities of good-quality food either produced nationally or imported (including food assistance); people having access to the resources they need to obtain nutritionally balanced food; and finally, the necessary stability to enjoy food security.

Adopt a human-rights-based framework as a foundation for establishing a right to food, in line with Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Give priority, when providing assistance, to countries implementing the Voluntary Guidelines in order to support the progressive attainment of the right to adequate food adopted by the FAO in 2004.

13. Recognise the right to food at national level

Adopt legislation and strategies on the right to food at national level and establish the appropriate institutional mechanisms. The legislation and strategies should cover areas such as land ownership, access to water, wage levels, social security arrangements, loans, rural markets, food production and food quality. Such legislation should also establish the principle that the right to food is enforceable before national courts in order to prevent governments from either doing nothing or acting in a discriminatory fashion. More than twenty countries have incorporated the right to food in their constitutions and have adopted legislation on the right to food either for the whole population or specifically for children. The example of Brazil and the Brazilian Food and Nutrition Security Council (CONSEA) is worth noting.

Develop multi-annual strategies for the progressive attainment of the right to food, involving a variety of sectors, have to be developed. Stronger cooperation between different government departments and a definition of their responsibilities and targets will be necessary. Transparency and civil society participation are key.

Review the implementation of existing legislation at national level and establish a comparative analysis in order to identify best practices.

14. Improve the right to own and to access land

Support the ongoing development of Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and Other Natural Resources and use these guidelines to support and strengthen national and regional policy processes.

Ensure a transparent land tenure policy and implement land reform with a view to (giving the most vulnerable communities) secure access to land ownership under legally protected conditions, and to providing farmers with the minimum level of security they need to take decisions to invest. At the same time create the necessary favourable environment, including establishing partnership arrangements between farmers in order to enable new land owners to make a living from their land.

Secure access to land and its use for vulnerable communities and individuals, especially indigenous people.

15. Keep land-grabbing in check

Protect access to land by speeding up consultations on and drawing-up of principles for responsible agricultural investment that respect rights, livelihood and resources at international level in order to keep checks on the handing-over of land to large domestic and international investors or foreign governments.

Propose that, drawing on these principles, national regulations should be adopted which include the following elements. Negotiations for investment agreements should be completely transparent and the local communities, whose access to the land might be impeded by the arrival of the investors, should be involved. In addition, the revenue generated by the investment agreements should be used for the benefit of the local community. Finally, these investments should fully comply with environmental concerns and be subject to prior impact assessments.

Give thought to the creation of an incentive mechanism to encourage countries to implement national legislations based on the general principles agreed at international level.

16. Promote access to water

Improve governance in water management both internationally and at national and local levels. It is recommended that water be used in a sustainable way to ensure access for the most needy and to protect water resources from pollution and depletion.

Place emphasis on building up irrigation capacity by investing in small irrigation projects and research into sustainable technological solutions such as drip irrigation systems and small-scale water recovery.

Need for policy coherence

17. Recognise the multi-dimensional aspect of food security

Take into account the complexity of food security and the fact that it relates to agricultural, trade and development policies but also to many sectoral policies, such as energy, and other policies such as employment, health and education.

Propose that, when major reforms of agricultural policy are implemented in developed countries, impact assessment studies be carried out in order to consider the possible impact on farmers in developing countries.

18. Promote better cooperation between international organisations to improve food security

Encourage better coordination and cooperation between international organisations and, most importantly, greater coherence in the actions they take. In this context, the role of the High Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis should be further expanded and the Comprehensive Framework for Action needs to be implemented.

Support the FAO Committee on World Food Security in the implementation of its 2009 reform and encourage it to pursue its discussions on the potential reforms aimed at expanding its powers and prerogatives with regard to food security.

19. Aim at consensus on biofuel development

Take note of the growing conflict between food security and energy security and the need to continue the debate on this issue at the international level. Stress that due account must be taken of the different contexts in which energy crops are cultivated and that cultivation of energy crops for export should be restricted in countries that have a food deficit. In addition, much greater investment is needed in developing more advanced technologies.

Continue, as suggested by the FAO, to build up an international consensus on the production of biofuels using existing processes such as the Global Bioenergy Partnership. Biofuel production should comply with shared principles and be subject to impact assessment studies in which the local community is closely involved, making sure careful attention is paid to the right to food.

20. Ensure that international trade rules promote food security

Ensure that, in trade reforms and trade negotiations, proper account is taken of the need to help reduce food and nutrition insecurity among the most vulnerable population within developing countries.

Substantially reduce trade-distorting domestic support and dismantle export subsidies.

Better define when and how export-restricting measures might be used, and at the same time strengthen and enforce consultation and notification processes. In particular, assess the negative impacts of such measures on the food security of other countries.

Remove the impediments to the export, transshipment and import of humanitarian food aid in recipient and neighbouring countries.

21. Ensure that developing countries derive greater benefit from trade rules

Enable and encourage developing countries to make sufficient use of provisions on special and differential treatment to help them protect their food markets. It is particularly necessary, within multilateral, regional and bilateral frameworks, to make it easier for them to use safeguard measures that allow them to act in the event of import surges that could undermine local food production.

Ensure better access for agricultural products from developing countries to developed countries' markets. Other developed

countries should follow the example of the European Union by adopting a system similar to the "Everything But Arms" initiative and there should be substantial reductions of customs tariffs on processed products from developing countries in order to promote the development of local processing infrastructure.

Ensure additional resources for Aid for Trade in order to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to engage in and reap the benefits of international trade in food products. Technical assistance to help developing countries comply with agricultural and food regulations and standards should be strengthened.

Encourage regional integration and South-South trade and cooperation through the promotion of regional economic groupings. The international community, and the EU with its valuable experience, should support that process.

22. Recognise the importance of food security in development policies

Recommend that the amount of aid intended for the agricultural sector be increased sharply, channelling the funds to areas that will facilitate the transition towards a sustainable form of agriculture. In recent years, the share of development aid budgets earmarked for rural development, including the agricultural sector, has started to pick-up, following many years of decline.

Ensure that development aid helps small farmers in particular. Aid should, among other things, encourage the creation of infrastructure and public services that foster the development of rural areas and improve the production of family farms and subsistence farming.

Respect the financial commitments made at international level with regard to development aid in general and the promotion of food security in particular.

Better functioning of agricultural markets

23. Combating price volatility and improving market transparency

Welcome G20 study group analyses to better understand price formation on agricultural commodity markets and to anticipate price fluctuations, and to assess the extent to which new financial actors on these markets (e.g. institutional investors such as hedge funds, pension funds and investment banks) have contributed to price volatility and speculation.

Establish a market information system with the aim of improving transparency and enhancing wider access to reliable up-to-date data (e.g. on existing stock levels). Farmers should benefit from increased transparency, enabling them to make well-founded decisions on production and selling. When setting up the market information system for the agricultural sector, the example of an existing system in the energy markets (oil) could serve as a model.

Strengthen cooperation at international level between the competent regulatory and supervisory authorities in order to compare and combine market information and to obtain a complete overview of the situation on the agricultural commodity markets. Support efforts already underway in this regard, notably in the United States and the European Union. A global early warning system and a rapid response mechanism need to be set up in order to give an alert whenever market stability is threatened.

Welcome the ongoing review of the regulatory oversight of the global financial sector.

24. Set up an emergency food reserve system

Support the World Food Programme initiative to carry out a feasibility study on the setting-up of an emergency food reserve system. Such a system involving small, strategically positioned humanitarian food reserves would need to be targeted to the most vulnerable populations and countries. The reserves should supply food following natural disasters and other major food supply crisis.

25. Build up strategic stocks at regional level

Analyse the need to create regional strategic grain and other staple foodstuff reserves, supplied from producers in the region concerned, as the ASEAN has done for rice.

In this way, the reserves would also serve as a means of both supporting stable revenue for agricultural producers and ensuring that food will be affordable for the poorest people. The creation of reserves at regional level, in harmony with regional agricultural and food policies, could also protect vulnerable countries against supply shocks and price fluctuations.

26. Promote regional integration and the organisation of markets at regional level

Increase support from international organisations in order to foster the development of commodity exchanges in developing regions and in the emerging markets. Improving the functioning of commodity markets in developing countries can have several benefits: it would stimulate regional integration, increase South-South trade, enhance infrastructure, rationalise crop planning, and, ultimately, boost quality thanks to standardisation. Moreover, a commodity exchange connects rural areas to urban centres.

Protection of the most vulnerable

27. Better identify potential food crisis areas

Recommend that, with the help of FAO and other international organisations, existing information and mapping systems for food insecurity and vulnerability be improved. This would make it possible to better pinpoint the worst affected areas and communities.

28. Ensure protection for the worst-off

Recommend that governments adopt, when necessary, measures to protect the most vulnerable from hunger and ensure that emergency needs are fully met. Governments can, for instance, intervene through temporary price capping and price fixing and also help the poor through targeted programmes that provide them with access to food commodities and satisfy their nutrition needs through cash transfers, food-for-work or food stamp programmes. School meals should also be promoted.

Give special attention to indigenous people and to pastoralists. Support provided to such communities should not have any long-term distorting effects on their traditional way of life.

29. Ensure respect for agricultural workers' rights and implement ILO conventions

Recognise the importance of the issue of agricultural workers. Across the world, more than 450 million people are engaged in paid farm work (40% of the farm workforce). The fundamental rights of these workers are often violated: globally, fewer than 20% of these farm workers have basic social security cover and some 70% of all child labour is in farm work.

Foster social dialogue within the agriculture sector. Despite the existence and relatively high level of ratification of ILO Convention No. 11 concerning the Rights of Association and Combination of Agricultural Workers, collective bargaining and social dialogue are extremely limited and should therefore be encouraged through specific programmes.

Guarantee the right to a minimum wage. Measures should be taken to ensure that all countries enact legislation on minimum wages for agricultural workers, as provided for in ILO Convention No. 99, and monitor compliance with this legislation.

Include agriculture within the scope of national health and safety regulations. Enforce labour legislation and release funding to support programmes aimed to ensure implementation of labour legislation and develop labour inspectorates.

30. Set up a global reinsurance mechanism

Support the establishment of food security safety nets through a global reinsurance mechanism underwritten by international financial institutions. Countries must be able to protect their citizens from the impact of increasingly fluctuating food prices. In accordance with FAO directives, States should create and maintain safety nets to protect those unable to take care of their own livelihood. It is recommended that a global reinsurance mechanism be set up to provide poor countries with insurance against severe shocks, whether from inside or outside, when the increased need for support is such that the countries concerned would not have the financial resources to meet it.

31. Ensure a social security floor for the most disadvantaged

Support the ILO initiatives aimed at the implementation of social security floor. This should include a set of rights and social transfers and key services in the areas of employment, health, water and sanitation, nutrition, education and family support, designed to protect and empower the most disadvantaged and help them get out of poverty. These social policies need to be coordinated and integrated in a life-cycle approach, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups in society, including women, children and young people. Social security floors are necessary even for developed countries as they are a significant factor in achieving more equitable and sustainable globalisation.



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