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THEMATIC SESSION 3

Local and regional authorities: drivers of action in ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable groups and in the progressive realization of the right to food

18 January 2010 – 14.30-18.30

Chair: Mr Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Coordinator: Mr Gaëtan Vanloqueren, Agro-economist at the University of Louvain (Belgium), Adviser to the United Nations Special Rapporteur

Rapporteur: Mr Seyni Ndao, Director for Development and Rural Planning, Senegal

OBJECTIVES AND FOCUS

The session aims to identify the role(s) of the Regions and other local and regional public bodies in ensuring access to food for the most vulnerable groups and in the progressive realization of the right to food, as recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The right to food is achieved in real terms when each citizen has access to adequate food, either through access to productive resources (land, input, etc.) or through sufficient purchasing power (and thus sufficient income) to enable people to buy it.

In 2004, all FAO member countries approved its Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. These are a set of recommendations offering governments a practical guide on the best way to honour their obligation to respect the right to adequate food and ensure that nobody suffers from hunger, in the framework of international legislation.

The Regions and other subnational public bodies also have a role to play, particularly in:

- identifying vulnerable groups and analysing the causes of their food insecurity;
- implementing national programmes (where they are decentralised) and/or regional programmes (support programmes for vulnerable groups who work the land, social security, promoting access to resources, and so on);
- creating mechanisms to involve vulnerable groups in the development of policies on food issues;
- the creation of appeal mechanisms in cases where the right to food is violated.

The experiences of what several Regions are doing to improve these two areas will be discussed, in order to learn some lessons from the most encouraging policies and programmes.

SESSION AGENDA

1. Introduction

The role of the Regions and local public authorities in ensuring access to food and the progressive realization of the right to food, by the Session Chair, **Prof. Olivier De Schutter**.

EN PARTENARIAT AVEC



2. Expert contributions

Ms Barbara Ekwall, Coordinator of the FAO Right-to-Food Unit

Barbara Ekwall will explain how the right-to-food framework, which has been implemented at national level in several countries, is gradually involving a growing number of local bodies in countries where there is some decentralisation, and the way in which the FAO can support them in the processes related to the right to food. In particular she will talk about the experience of Mozambique, where the FAO is working with eleven districts to implement a national food security strategy.

3. Experiences from the world's Regions

- Brazil: Participation of local authorities in national programmes for access to food and promotion of family farming

Mr Renato Maluf (President of the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSEA).

Brazil has been developing a range of food security policies since President Lula came to power in 2002. Several programmes are decentralised, with the wide involvement of federal states and municipalities. Particular attention will be given to intersectoral projects which forge links between food production and access of the most vulnerable people to food, for instance the public food purchasing programmes for school canteens, which have been giving priority to family farm production with special schemes since 2009.

- India: Implementation by the districts of an Act guaranteeing 100 days' work on the minimum wage in rural areas

Dr Reetika Khera, Centre for Development Economics, Delhi School of Economics

India's 330 districts now benefit from the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which guarantees 100 days of work on the minimum wage for people who cannot obtain regular employment. The public works accomplished as a result of the NREGA include both road construction projects (which means improvement of access to markets), and works to improve agricultural systems. This programme helps to increase the incomes of rural communities.

- Mali: Joint drafting of the Agricultural Framework Law by the government and local stakeholders

Mr Mamadou Goïta, Executive Director of the Institute for Research and the Promotion of Alternatives in Development (IRPAD Africa), Mali

Mali's recent Agricultural Framework Law has been highlighted as an example of a participative process. Local bodies and social players, including farmers' organisations, were involved at various stages in the law-making process. This participation is a key dimension to ensuring the right to food.

- Cantabria Region (Spain): Policy and projects on support for fair trade in Central America

M. Alberto Garcia Cerviño, Director of European Affairs and Development Aid, Government of Cantabria

Cantabria will present its projects on support for fair trade, which firstly involves raising awareness in the region and secondly entails development schemes with Regions from Ecuador and Nicaragua. The aim is to increase household income in order to reduce poverty and guarantee better access to food.

- El Oro Province (Ecuador): Food Security Programme

Mr Wilmer Encalada Ludena, Representing the Prefect, Government of the Autonomous Province of El Oro

The Prefect's Representative will present El Oro Province's agro-food production programme, which aims to develop food security and social inclusion.