



## PRESENTATION PAPER

### *What should the Summit of the World's Regions on Food Security seek to achieve?*

August 2009

#### CONTEXT OF THE SUMMIT

1. Over 12 years have passed since the commitment made at the World Food Summit to reduce by half the number of undernourished people by 2015. Progress in this area is disappointing and the world food situation is now critical. One year ago, food riots broke out in 38 countries across Africa, Asia and Central and South America. Today, the effects of the global economic crisis have combined with those of the food crisis to increase the number of people suffering from hunger. According to FAO estimates, the number of undernourished people has exceeded one billion for the first time in the history of mankind, and two billion people are suffering from malnutrition.
2. Under the influence of the economic crisis, climate change, population growth and dwindling natural and energy resources, forecasts are that the situation is going to get worse and affect regions from the South in the short term, as well as regions in the North, even if this is just due to migratory pressures and threats to security and the stability of international relations. In the medium term, global production will need to be doubled to combat food shortages which will affect all the world's regions, to varying degrees but without exception. It is therefore essential that agriculture should again be considered a top priority issue, in the wide sense of the term, including aspects such as the access of the most vulnerable people to food and the nutritional quality of existing foodstuffs.
3. With current food policies failing at both national and international levels, there is reason to believe that things need to be done to improve the coordination and involvement of local governments in the debates on food security. The regions are in effect able to act quickly to give coherence to the multitude of actions and projects that exist at different levels in this field by targeting coordinated action that responds to immediate needs and triggers the implementation of long-term solutions.
4. In this context, the networks of regions (as the top tier of sub-state public authorities) that are members of the Global Forum of Associations of Regions (FOGAR) have decided to mobilise to try to help tackle hunger in the world, alongside and complementary to the efforts of central governments and international organisations. This association, which brings together 17 networks of regions from five continents, was launched in March 2007 at the First International Convention for a Territorial Approach to Development in Marseille by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, the UNDP and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region with support from the European Commission. It aims to promote the views of the regions on the international stage as local public authorities that are stakeholders in a form of globalisation that furthers equity.

At the Second International Convention for a Territorial Approach to Development in Tangiers (Morocco) in May 2008, the global networks of regions committed themselves to efforts to improve people's food security. The CPMR announced its support for such action at its General Assembly in Bayonne (France) in October 2008 and at its Political Bureau meeting in Aarhus (Denmark) on 23 January 2009. These commitments have led to the organisation of the **Summit of the World's Regions on Food Security**, which will be a major event in 2010. It will be held in **Dakar on 18 and 19 January 2010** at the invitation of Mr Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, and is supported by the FAO, the UNDP, the French Development Agency, the European Commission, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

## WHY THE REGIONS?

5. The concept of food security refers to both the availability of and access to sufficient and nutritious food. Guaranteeing a population's food security does not just mean producing foodstuffs in sufficiently large quantities so that people can eat as they should. It also means ensuring that they are made available through packaging, transport and systems for bringing them onto the market, as well as through the creation of safety nets to ensure access to food for the most vulnerable groups of people. In these two areas, the regions are working firstly to mobilise local stakeholders and pool everyone's skills in order to improve the capacity to produce, process and distribute foodstuffs, and secondly to increase household incomes in order to improve access to food.

6. In order to come together to tackle hunger, local and regional authorities from the North and the South are becoming more and more actively involved in international cooperation projects in various fields of action through education, training, stepping up meetings between actors and the transfer of technical and institutional skills in different areas, e.g. improving agricultural production techniques, developing suburban farming, improving access to the market and distribution of products, providing greater access to credit, improving infrastructures, developing a type of agriculture in coherence with the territory and available natural resources, adapting to climate change, introducing nutrition education programmes and preventing wastage and loss from farming production, etc. Through this policy for decentralised cooperation, regions from the South are responding more to the legitimate demand of their citizens despite limited budgetary resources.

An increasing number of regions affected by undernourishment and malnutrition are being given powers to implement public policies aimed at tackling the various forms of food insecurity, with different funds and in cooperation with other levels of local government. Aside from this institutional approach, local stakeholders are organising themselves at local level in order to improve people's food security in areas where the decentralisation process is not yet complete.

The regions thus work on different factors of food security, including those that are of a temporary nature, especially outbreaks of pests and diseases, climate-related events (floods, drought, etc.) and major fluctuations in prices (the 2007/2008 food crisis), and those that are of a structural nature, such as difficulties accessing property, unsuitable or non-existent irrigation systems, the lack of sectoral organisation, problems regarding access to inputs etc.).

7. The reason behind the success is that, thanks to their in-depth knowledge of the territories they manage and their ability to work together with actors on the ground, the regions have the capacity to lead concrete actions that respond to the actual needs expressed by fellow citizens. Unfortunately, this emerging strength lacks visibility at present owing to the fact that information on these practices is not widely disseminated. **The political and technical role of the regions in preventing and reacting to undernourishment and malnutrition therefore suffers from a widespread lack of recognition.**

Involving the local government level in the debate on food safety at this Summit will provide added value in terms of its complementarity with regard to central government, closeness to local people and ability to understand the needs of different groups within the population, ability to articulate its

specific interests clearly and precisely, and ability to ensure that objectives are met as effectively as possible. The regions thus constitute powerful channels for guaranteeing people's food security.

## GOALS OF THE SUMMIT

8. The Summit will provide a valuable opportunity to work on a priority issue for the regions and establish dialogue on food security between local authorities, national governments and international organisations. It aims to enable the world's regions to work together with a view to proposing joint innovative methods for tackling food insecurity. More specifically, this event has five main objectives:

- **to discuss how regions from the South and the North perceive and are reacting to current and future food problems;**
- **to highlight the specific added value that the regions can provide in tackling undernourishment and malnutrition, drawing on concrete examples;**
- **to develop practical and political partnerships, firstly between donor agencies and regions, and secondly between regions themselves, in order to reduce global hunger effectively;**
- **to make recommendations on how effective and innovative food security schemes run by the regions can be rolled out on a wider basis;**
- **to ensure the regions' views are heard in order to promote their involvement on the world stage.**

This Summit will therefore constitute a specific and original event highlighting the added value of decentralisation in improving people's food security. Any cooperation agreements that are signed will be followed up regularly over a period of two years and then evaluated by the CPMR and FOGAR.

9. Highlighting and stepping up territorial actions in the area of food security can only benefit the world food situation. In order to maximise their results and make sure they are sustainable, these actions must be developed in synergy with national strategies and fall within the world guidelines set out in June 2008 by the UN Secretary General (CFA- « Comprehensive Framework for Action »). Furthermore, it is necessary for the regions to work closely with all actors involved in decentralised cooperation and local food development, and that all concerned are able to express their needs (technical expertise, funding, partnerships, exchanges of experience, etc.) and action proposals to improve people's food situation.

To achieve this, the Summit—which will be designed for some 800 people to attend—will bring together regions, associations of regions, national governments, the major regional blocs, multilateral development bodies (financial and non-financial), professional organisations, academics, representatives from civil society, especially NGOs, and the private sector, in order to establish a constructive dialogue and foster the emergence of innovative and sustainable solutions.

10. The agenda will alternate between plenary sessions and workshop debates to explore in detail the various aspects of food security and different types of local action concerned, and facilitate a useful exchange of experience leading to specific recommendations.

There will be six workshops. Three of them will have a specific theme, each dealing with one of the three main aspects of food security: i) food availability, ii) access to sufficient quantities of healthy food, and iii) nutrition. The purpose of these three thematic workshops will be to understand what the regions are doing in these particular fields. The three other workshops will cut across various different issues and examine the working tools and methods the regions are using to promote food security: i) the regions' support to local stakeholders, ii) the provision and management of public goods, and iii) the capacity to finance local schemes.

These workshops will entail the presentation of specific projects and initiatives aimed at improving food security and involving regional governments from both the North and South. Using these specific examples, we will help to shed light on the added value that local authorities provide when it comes to improving people's food security, complementary to national and international efforts. These local examples include:

- decentralised cooperation projects on food security, covering the whole range of issues this topic includes,
- action plans, programmes and public policies implemented by local authorities outside the framework of decentralised cooperation,
- the development of local projects by local stakeholders with no institutional support (especially in countries where the decentralisation process is limited or even non-existent).

There will be a simultaneous interpretation between English, Spanish and French. Hospitality arrangements will be coordinated by Senegal's Ministry of International Cooperation, Spatial Planning, Air Transport and Infrastructure.

## **PREPARATION OF THE EVENT AND EXPECTED RESULTS**

11. In order to achieve these objectives, the Summit needs to address the following questions: What makes a region successful in food terms? What are the determining factors in food insecurity? How can the regions influence these determining factors? What are the lines of action of effective decentralised cooperation projects in these areas? What mistakes have been made? What lessons can be drawn from them?

12. In order to illustrate these issues and base the Summit on real situations within the territories, a survey has been conducted among the world's regions, on their food difficulties and the measures taken to deal with them. This survey has also identified some interesting regional and local experiences that can be presented Summit.

13. To ensure the Summit is properly prepared, a Scientific Committee involving prominent international experts on food security has been set up to help the Steering Committee (which involves the FAO, the UNDP, the Senegalese authorities, the French Development Agency, the French foreign affairs and agriculture ministries, the European Commission, FOGAR and the CPMR) draft working papers, validate the Summit agenda, find suitable speakers from the five continents and identify decentralised cooperation projects and effective local agricultural and food development schemes.

14. During the preparatory phase for the Summit, the CPMR and FOGAR have drawn up some hypotheses and outline responses to some of the questions outlined above in a working paper on the regions' contributions to food security, which will be available soon. Other background papers will be used to prepare the different Summit workshops, in order to provide a detailed framework for the issues to be addressed.

15. It is vital to secure a strong political commitment on the part of the States if it is to be acknowledged that although there are global issues at stake, some actions deserve to be conceived at local level to be effective.

16. The wide variety of regional and local food security actions is undoubtedly useful, but to be effective, a number of them need to continue beyond the experimental pilot stage and enter the mainstream system with clear, coordinated and jointly-developed mechanisms. The regions are faced with very specific situations in their territories and are obliged to develop effective initiatives to meet needs. For example, publicity stunts have no place at local level and needs must be translated into concrete action. This is why the Summit will strive to formulate detailed recommendations and suggest some territorial actions for the future, further to the discussions that will take place during this event.

17. At the close of the Summit and by means of a final declaration, the regions should express clear views on a number of points:

- i. In which areas can the regions act to effectively reduce people's food insecurity?
- ii. In what respect is the region the relevant sphere for leading these actions?
- iii. Which policy recommendations may be made to boost regional actions in the field of food security?
- iv. What methodological tools should be used to develop effective partnerships?

In particular, the regions need to express political objectives with regard to:

- their involvement in food governance policies;
- solidarity between regions from the North and regions from the South;
- involving local governments in national and international programmes to eradicate hunger;
- the division of competences between public stakeholders and public and private stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of local projects and how they are coordinated with national and international strategies;
- coordination between international cooperation, development policies, agricultural policies and agricultural trade rules;
- identifying and boosting cooperation flows with actors working on the ground in the field of food security;
- creating concrete partnerships with financial backers;
- decentralisation to assist actions to tackle hunger;
- innovative financing mechanisms that are commensurate with the significance of the issues.