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Agriculture, Access to Food, Nutrition: Regions in Action against the Food Crisis

DAKAR DECLARATION

Presented by the

Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR) and its members on the occasion of the Summit of the World's Regions on Food Security, Dakar, 19th January 2010

We, the representatives of regional governments and associations of regional governments from the five continents, assembled at the Summit of the World's Regions on Food Security in Dakar on 18th and 19th January 2010:

- Note that more than 13 years have passed since the undertaking made at the World Food Summit to halve the number of undernourished people in the world by 2015, that progress in this respect is disappointing and that the global food situation has now reached a critical level.
- Remind the Summit that the effects of the global economic crisis have now combined with the effects of the food crisis to swell the numbers of victims of famine. For the first time in the history of mankind, **the number of undernourished people has now exceeded one billion** with a further two billion people suffering from malnutrition.
- Emphasise that the food crisis is threatening the stability of international relations and affects every Region in the world.
- Recognise that the **causes of famine are many and complex** e.g. poverty, wars, the difficulty of accessing land, water and credit, the poor organisation of the farming sector, the burden of debt and the consequences of structural adjustment programmes on public expenditure (especially as regards agriculture) and the weakening of national agricultural policies.
- Reaffirm that there is a twofold aim to food security: i) to increase the availability of food as a means of feeding populations and generating adequate income for stakeholders in the agricultural sectors in order to promote rural development: and ii) to give the most vulnerable populations immediate access to food by introducing safety nets and social protection measures.
- Remind the Summit that the right to food is one of the fundamental guidelines adopted by all countries.
- Also remind the Summit that the FAO was warned at the previous World Summit on Food Security in Rome (16th - 18th November 2009) that, to feed a global population expected to exceed 9 billion in 2050, **agricultural production will have to increase by 70% by that date.**
- Note that, before achieving this, there are a number of substantial technical challenges to be overcome because agriculture will not only be required to supply adequate quantities of human and animal foodstuffs as well as biofuel for an ever-increasing population but will also be asked to cover these requirements even though the resources base is limited and climate conditions are changing.

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- State that, quite apart from the technical difficulty, **global food security represents a political challenge**: the time has come for each stakeholder to tackle the many deep-seated causes of food insecurity, turn its political will into real action and guarantee the necessary resources for investment in agriculture.
- **Deplore the fact that public aid for development (PAD) has fallen in the agricultural sector from 18% in 1980 to approximately 5% in 2009** following the strategic decisions promoted by certain international bodies (withdrawal of central governments encouraged by the IMF, failure on the part of the World Bank to consider agriculture, insistence on “market access” only by the WTO to the benefit of leading exporters) at a time when, to meet the technical challenges, it is essential to massively increase investments, especially in agricultural research and development in developing countries whose rural areas hold huge potential for production.
- Welcome the G8 Declaration in L’Aquila, in July 2009, which **refocused agricultural development in the poorest nations on the strategy to combat famine** and poverty and welcome the reform from the Committee on World Food Security which aims to improve the worldwide system of governance as it relates to food security.
- Welcome **the recognition of the role of local authorities in support of development** by the European Union, formalised by the launch of the programme specifically targeting non-State actors and local authorities.
- Remind the Summit that, with 60% of the population concentrated in rural areas in developing countries and up to 80% in certain LDCs, the rise in poverty and the increasingly difficult access to healthy food and a balanced diet, **rural areas have considerable significance as regards the problem of food security**.

Achieving the food security goal requires assistance from bodies acting on several distinctly different scales (from global down to towns and villages). **The Summit of the World’s Regions on Food Security hopes to promote the little-recognised and neglected role of players on a regional level (sub-State level) and give these regions a voice.**

Involving regional governments in consideration of the problem of food security adds value over and above what can be provided by central governments, thanks to the complementary role of these levels of government, **their proximity**, their understanding of various groups within populations, their **ability to formulate their specific interests clearly and precisely** and their ability to fill the gap between the objectives set and their actual achievement. Moreover, regional authorities are relevant as the intermediate level of governance, **expressing the needs observed** and the consistency of local development practices with national strategies. Finally, they are able to ensure the **participation of stakeholders in their areas** in defining and introducing policies, thereby guaranteeing a compromise, equal rights for all parties and sustainability for the new project or policy.

We welcome the gradual consolidation of the decentralisation process on every continent, especially in developing countries in which regional authorities are given a wide range of competencies in agriculture, transport, training for stakeholders in various sectors, regional development, the management of natural resources and the safety nets that are key factors for food security.

Regions in the “North” and “South” are establishing partnerships that allow them to act together to combat food insecurity. Through support for stakeholders in the development sector, the structuring of professional organisations, exchanges of expertise, political involvement and increased abilities, the Regions are creating new drivers for development.

Thus, because of their knowledge and their close proximity to farmers and their productive land, the Regions should play a comprehensive role in the design and introduction of food security policies put forward by States and supported by international cooperation agencies. **This is their area of expertise and their responsibility.**

We are convinced that involvement and action on the part of Regions, in their role as sub-State territorial authorities working with the other stakeholders, ensures that all men and women have access to food corresponding to their nutritional preferences, in sufficient quantities and of sufficiently high quality. This is one of the elements of food security.

Therefore FOGAR and its members:

1. **Are demanding global governance of food security integrating players on every level, including the Regions**, with a view to establishing an integrated more consistent and more effective food security and anti-poverty strategy based on a new institutional system with transversality as its main characteristic. Measures must be taken urgently to create a global Partnership for agriculture, food security and nutrition, reflecting the wishes recently expressed by a number of high-level bodies such as the G8, G20 and FAO summits.
2. Intend to become involved in global food governance through **proactive participation in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** (reformed in November 2009) to ensure that its recommendations are fully implemented at territorial level.
3. Require/wish the Association of Regions to be involved in the preparation, introduction and governance of national food security programmes.
4. Call for the conclusion to the WTO Doha round of negotiations to take account of the repercussions of rampant liberalisation of agricultural products on a territorial level, given the specific nature of agricultural markets and the increased gaps in competitiveness and productivity between developing countries, especially LDCs, and developed countries. In this respect, it is essential to provide protection against low-cost imports that compete with local sectors, especially in LDCs, and threaten food security.
5. Ask funding providers to ensure that **agriculture and food again find their rightful place in PAD**, and ask States to ensure that the budget for agriculture, food and nutrition corresponds to their level of importance in terms of food security, the eradication of poverty and development.
6. Demand funding mechanisms that will encourage the use of sustainable farming technologies and practices and compensate governments and farmers for any reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
7. Ask States to meet their responsibilities again in terms of agricultural production and access to food for the most vulnerable sections of society, beginning with **negotiated conditions that are respectful of local people when land resources are the subject of international negotiations**.
8. Call for improvements to the availability of food by involving smallholders and taking account of traditional expertise within developing Regions. To work towards ecologically intensive farming, there must be maximum enhancement of the advantages and constraints inherent to the soil, climate and water supply and this must be done **within and by each territory**.
9. **Undertake to introduce a policy of sustainable partnerships** with a view to achieving the objectives set out in this declaration and promote intercontinental triangular cooperation to feed into discussions and take forward drivers for development. The wealth of regional and local actions taken with regard to food security is undeniable but, to be truly effective, some of them must go beyond the "pilot scheme" stage and create a **system of mechanisms that are clear, coordinated, shared and consistent with national and international strategies**.
10. **Undertake to contribute towards tackling food insecurity in the sectors in which the Regions can provide real added value:**

Economic role: The Regions are the relevant level on which to undertake the following development actions:

- Promotion of local markets and short distribution channels within a national and cross-border context, and funding for these markets;
- Encouragement of grassroots investments to help smallholders to increase yields (better water management, new technologies, genetic improvements) and their income;
- Enhancement of the territorial logic by organising territorial amenities (strategic silos and storage, transport infrastructures etc.);
- Mobilisation of local knowledge and enhancement of traditional production techniques, storage, processing and marketing that are environmentally-friendly (respect for biodiversity, limited use of fossil fuels, short distribution channels, etc.);
- Encouragement for emerging local initiatives by support for stakeholder training;

- Simultaneous promotion, at local level, of sustainable production and storage techniques for natural resources and measures to alleviate climate change and adapt to its effects;
- Federate producer organisations to create strategies in situations where demand outstrips supply.

Operational role: The Regions are the relevant level on which to improve the circulation of information: the Regions can contribute to information systems (radio, mobile, early warning) designed to provide territories with forecasts and forward planning on areas such as local prices, stocks, climate-related issues, the import situation, etc.

- In the short term, these information systems must prevent crises and influence stakeholder strategies; in the long term, they must pave the way for changes in the farming and food sectors in territories, providing alerts and introducing the appropriate policies for change;
- They must receive from, and circulate to, territorial stakeholders clear reliable information from supra-regional levels on factors that might affect food security for their population. Inversely, they must carry back up to supra-regional levels all local information, especially as regards the identification of vulnerable sections of society.

11. To fulfil these commitments, we must:

- Give greater depth to the decentralisation process, especially in developing countries and LDCs to ensure real exercise of increased responsibility by local players;
- Strengthen the Regions' regulatory and institutional aspects and their specific means of intervention to improve acceptance of the concept of food security and increase the sustainability of the corresponding programmes;
- Establish a clear division of powers between the various public stakeholders and between the public and private sectors.

To cater for these concerns and comply with our proposals, **the Regions undertake to set up a "North" and "South" Regions group during the first semester of 2010** to work closely with FOGAR on multi-Region, multi-country and intercontinental cooperation programmes within a framework of multipartner assistance (EU, FAO, UNDP, AECID (Spanish agency for cooperation and development), AFD (French development agency), national cooperation projects etc.). The aim is to combat the risk of fragmented cooperation and ensure greater impact on food security.

All of us here would like to thank the delegates at the Summit of the World's Regions on Food Security in Dakar for their assistance and, on their behalf, we should like to express to the President of the Republic of Senegal, His Excellency, Mr. Wade, Senegal's national authorities, the Association of Senegalese Regions and the Dakar Region which hosted the Summit, our deep gratitude for their hospitality.

Dakar, 19th January 2010