

## Ensuring food security in times of climate change and politically fragile environments

**On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung organized an expert roundtable on food security and climate change together with experts from UNIDO, the European Parliament, International NGOs as well as representatives from the most affected regions in Africa such as Mali and Ethiopia.**

Human Security<sup>1</sup>, describes a new concept of security mainly focused on the security of the individual. Food Security forms part of this concept of human security and includes both chronic food insecurity, associated with problems of continuing or structural poverty and low incomes, and transitory food insecurity, which involves periods of intensified pressure caused by natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict. In this context Climate Change acts as a multiplier in terms of increased occurrence of extreme weather events such as the current drought in the Sahel. The Expert Roundtable discussed the best practice experience from Ethiopia, the influence of bio fuel production and climate change as well as the conflict situation in the Sahel Region on food security in order to discuss policy recommendations and support a comprehensive approach towards stabilization in the region.

MEP Michèle Striffler, first Vice-Chair of the Committee on Development of the European Parliament strongly emphasized the importance to regulate better the acquisition of

cereals, biofuels and price speculation on food products. In 2008, the EU had quickly reacted to the sudden crisis by allocating 1.6 billion EUR, however issues such as ensuring the continuity between humanitarian aid and development still pose difficulties. The EU also should strengthen aspects such as access of the poor to the land and ensure that rural zones become a focus of the activities. In the upcoming budgetary period 2014 – 2020 sustainable agriculture will become one of the focus areas of the EU's activities in this field.

Karl Deering, Climate Change and Food Security Team Leader of Care International UK pointed out that even though the early warning systems are there, their reports don't translate into action easily. Countering food insecurity has to include several aspects in a holistic approach, such as gender equality, community-led adaptation to shocks and stresses, expansion of safety nets, and building of resilience. Especially the aspect resilience building has received increasing attention in the last years as communities should be aware of their options to react on crisis situations.

Teferi M. Desta, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of Ethiopia to the European Union emphasized that in his country, the effectiveness of measures is challenged by the size of the area which has to be covered, which encompasses almost twice as big an area as France, as well as the diversity of the population living in rural areas in Ethiopia. Even more so, over 80% of Ethiopians live in rural areas. The EU is one of the major partners in Ethiopia's measures against food insecurity and its programme includes for instance voluntary resettlements of peo-

<sup>1</sup> Aspects of Human Security enclose economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.

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ple in order to improve access to land. In the last nine years 200.000 households have been resettled. The Productive Safety Net Program provides transfers to the food insecure population, so far to more than seven million people. The Household Asset Building Programme on the other hand focuses on delivering agricultural packages, which enables the households benefiting from this measure to earn additional income and to increasingly cover their consumption needs from own resources. A complementing measure is the community investments in infrastructure development in strategically well placed areas. Teferi Desta stressed however that pastoralists as well as people living on rain-fed agriculture remain the most vulnerable to impacts of climate variability and change.

The next panel discussed the implications of agribusiness, climate change and biofuels on food security. Philippe Scholtès, Director of the Agribusiness Development Branch in UNIDO explained that African agriculture presents a major source of green house gas emissions (GHG). 60-80% of available water is being used for agricultural production and furthermore the burning of wood by agribusinesses is fostering desertification. Therefore, agribusiness has to adapt to climate change in order to provide food security in Africa. In terms of quantity it is therefore important to reduce post harvest losses as well as to take in scientific developments such as drought resistant varieties or drip irrigation systems. The introduction of common food quality standards would improve the accessibility of foods by an increase of trade between countries. UNIDO also supports a value chain approach in which larger companies are linked with local products and small holder farmers.

Both Hugo Valin, Research Scholar, Ecosystems Services and Management of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and Gloria Gaupman Energy Policy and Environmental Affairs, ePURE – European Renewable Ethanol representing an interest representation of the ethanol producing industry agreed that there are several factors influencing the price development for food. Food and nutrition security is

based on the very complex interaction of various drivers. Prices are determined by the factors access and volatility and include also a geographical dimension. Volatility can be both short term as well as having long term effects. Prices for biofuels which have been criticised in 2012 for being core responsible for the 2011/2012 pikes in food prices are not the only influencing element as also oil prices, climate events, low stocks and finance speculations play their role in determining the price of food. Valin also stressed that policy design does matter a lot in influencing the price of food, be it measures stabilizing the price or measures stabilizing the quantity of food available. Gaupman on the other hand pointed out that whereas Ethanol already only represents a small part of biofuel productions, the production structure in the EU is quite diverse with many different agricultural products being used to produce ethanol only 2% of which are produced through cereals. Therefore the current prices of cereals cannot be said to be mainly influenced by biofuel production.

Jean-Piella Halkin, Head of Unit for Rural Development, Food Security and Nutrition in DG DEVCO assured that food security will also in the future remain high on the agenda for European development cooperation. On country level also ineffective governance play a role: while the Millennium Development Goal on poverty may be reached, undernutrition can still remain a problem in a specific country. He also agreed with the assessment of the experts that other factors such as speculation and biofuels also play an important role. The accountability of countries has to be improved, e.g. through adherence to the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security.

In Panel III, the effects of food insecurity on populations in the Sahel Zone in the 2012 crisis were discussed. Clau Nankam, Food Security and Capacity Building Advisor of World Visions West Africa Regional Office explained that the 2011 food crisis was largely caused by a deficit in resilience rather than a deficit in food. In the last years the frequency of shocks has been increasing through a lack of rainfall as well as

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instability caused through the terrorist group Boko Haram. The most recent data from Mali show 426.000 displaced persons, of which ca. 250.000 are refugees and 174.000 internally displaced persons which are overproportionally at risk of food insecurity and moreover these displaced persons also create an additional risk in the areas where they settle. While the UNHCR is already providing relief, part of the funds which had originally been earmarked for food security is now used to help refugees. The effects of refugee camps on the environment have yet to be evaluated.

Bartosz Lercel, responsible for the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid, Unit Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection in the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU presented the Sahel Strategy of the European Union which was adapted in 2010 and already then focused on Security and Development. As the current developments stand a CSDP civilian mission with a focus on capacity building may be envisaged. However other measure will be needed to complement these efforts. These include amongst others the building up of resilience or the introduction of safety nets.