

REGIONS FACING THE COMING FAMINE

A MANIFESTO FOR THE IV SUMMIT "ZERO HUNGER"

ZERO HUNGER
IV World Summit of Regions on
Food Security and Sovereignty

TEMUCO, CHILE

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Presented by the ORU Fogar Food Safety Core Group

The Fourth Summit of Regions on Food Security comes at a very relevant time. We are all seeing how, all over the world, the perfect storm is brewing for what Paul Roberts called "The end of the food" or "Hunger Coming". In recent months there has been an unprecedented increase in the prices of raw materials and food. The causes are diverse. Here there are problems very deep and coming from far.

We thought that globalization gave us security. Food came from all over the world. They were bought where they offered better conditions. In fact, much progress has been made: today there are 300 million less people hungry than in 1992, despite the fact that there was a population increase of 1.9 billion people.

The COVID19 pandemic, however, put obstacles in the way of all supply chains, completely disrupting world food trade. The war in Ukraine then made the price of fossil fuels more expensive, raising the price of transport and fertilizers, with a direct effect on food. Before, during and after these situations, climate change. And with heat, fires, droughts and floods, agricultural production is at best reduced.

With this scenario, it will be impossible to meet the Objective 2 Zero Hunger that the United Nations had set in the 2030 Agenda. Malnutrition figures are rising. So are those of people suffering from acute hunger. The Ukrainian War, in any case, is putting many millions of people at risk of hunger, especially in Africa.

Nobody escapes the gravity of the situation. On September 21, 2021, Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, convened a Summit on food systems. At that important event, the United Nations focused on some aspects in which ORU Fogar has been dedicated for years. Thus, it was said that rural development is essential to achieve the Zero Hunger goal. It has been a long time since an important UN document was so clearly in favour of rural areas.

The regions and networks of regions gathered in Temuco, Araucanía, Chile, at the IV Summit "Zero Hunger", we must land those conclusions at the territorial level. The meeting, above all, must serve, however, to reiterate that **we want a world without hunger**. We know that this is a goal that no one can achieve alone. International organizations, local, regional and national governments, citizens, civil society organizations and the private sector must work together to invest, innovate and create durable solutions. We regions will not shirk our responsibility; a shared responsibility in a dynamic that we always put in the framework of the North-South relationship.



FACTORS DETERMINING THE FOOD CRISIS

Reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) warn that the effects of climate change, the coronavirus pandemic and war in Ukraine would prevent achieving the zero hunger challenge by 2030. The United Nations is also warning of the danger posed by desertification processes and poor management of water policies. On the other hand, there is no doubt that a certain conception of agricultural development is having perverse consequences. ORU Fogar, for its part, has always pointed out that poor governance and failure to respect the principle of subsidiarity prevents progress towards SDG 2.

Climate change

There is a growing risk of crop and livestock loss, including reduced availability of marine, forestry and aquaculture products. Extreme weather events will have a negative impact on food availability. Thus, the most vulnerable sectors, rural and urban, will be at risk of food insecurity. Climate change will worsen the living conditions of farmers, fishermen and forest dwellers. This will result in increased hunger and malnutrition.

Covid 19

About 828 million people were starving by the end of 2021. A report by five UN agencies warned of the difficulty of reaching the goal of ending hunger and malnutrition by 2030. Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2019, the number of people going hungry has increased by 150 million. At the end of 2021, some 2.3 billion people (almost 30% of the world's population) were not guaranteed food, 350 million more than before the arrival of COVID-19.

The war in Ukraine

Ukraine and Russia are two of the world's largest cereal producers and exporters. Together they account for 30% of world wheat, 50% of sunflower oil and 15% of fertilizers. The production difficulties caused by the conflict, the blockade of ports and the blockade of transport have in the end become a serious obstacle for food for many countries. This was because the products did not reach their destination, but also because of the effect on price increases. But the war also altered the hydrocarbon market, raising the cost of transportation and fertilizers, especially in countries that export cereals both for their diets and for feeding livestock.

Desertification and poor water policy

Climate change is desertifying territories and, at an unexpected rate, depleting water resources in many geographies. While it was an abundant resource, not much attention has been paid to freshwater management. In many countries, resource planning and management remains extremely centralized, making it, in many cases, very inefficient. Ensuring water security demands strong policies from all levels of government.

Agricultural model

Over the past 30 years, an intensive, competitive, market-oriented agricultural model has developed, while family farming has deteriorated. This model has been shown to be ineffective in ending hunger, or solving the problems of malnutrition or anemia in many regions. In the same period, on the other hand, the agricultural and rural sectors have been neglected and have not received sufficient investments. Although 75 per cent of the world's poor live in rural areas, agricultural countries spend a very small percentage of public spending on agriculture and the rural environment. The capacity of agriculture to promote development has been largely wasted. Pressures from food crises also tilt public budgets and donor priorities towards direct food provision, rather than investments that generate growth and income growth.

Bad governance

Centralized and bureaucratic administration is inefficient in solving hunger problems. The coming struggle will require governance in which all levels of government assume the principle of subsidiarity. For this reason, regional governments cannot be spared either their powers or their economic and human resources.



FORWARD-LOOKING APPROACHES

Food Sovereignty

The concept of Food Security is associated with food "sufficiency" and assumes availability and access to food. It does not, however, call into question the fact that the resource reaches thousands of kilometres. Nor does it question whether this food, often at low prices, has the effect of destroying the local production system. Given this limitation, we are committed to overcoming the concept of "Food Security" by that of "Food Sovereignty". The aim is that food should not only be sufficient, but should also contribute to the strengthening of the local economy, the defense of local biodiversity and the earning of income by producers in the region. On the other hand, it is clear that at a time when international trade may be threatened by multiple factors, resilience in the territory must be strengthened and food production in the region must be maximized.

A Zero Hunger Governance

The looming crisis calls for a new commitment to improve global food security governance. Centralized and bureaucratic structures must be overcome, in favour of more flexible operations in which all levels of government participate under the principle of subsidiarity. Regional governments, local governments, are the ones that manage services. In these circumstances, there should be a debate on the need for the regions to be allocated a larger share of the national budget.

Priority attention to rural areas

The UN Food Systems Summit was very supportive of the rural world. It was stated that food security was about rural prosperity. The importance of investing more in rural farms and local small and medium-sized enterprises was cautioned as they can help create more inclusive, fair and sustainable food systems. Thus, there was a cry for small farmers in developing countries, who grow a third of the food consumed in the world, to receive "decent wages". The regions can only endorse and support the approach.

Betting in favour of agriculture

Agriculture remains one of the most promising instruments for reducing global poverty. ORU Fogar therefore urges increased investment in agriculture in developing countries and warns that, in order to achieve the Zero Hunger objective, the agricultural sector must become the axis of the development agenda. The main requirements for a good agricultural sector would be: improved market access through good transport, processing and marketing infrastructure, commercial policy, non-discriminatory taxes, High levels of investment in agricultural research and extension, a system of property rights that promotes private initiative, the creation of non-agricultural employment and, finally, good functioning of institutions that make all these policies efficient.

Family farming

An intensive, competitive, market-oriented agricultural model has developed over the past 30 years. Today it is clear that the most appropriate recipe is to give priority to family farming, which puts the food of peasant families in the foreground. The main problem is not food production, which is important, but distribution and access. To be effective in eradicating hunger in the world, priority must be given to small-scale farmers, artisanal fishermen, women and other vulnerable groups, and their access to the resources needed to produce food. Food sovereignty must therefore be the focus for achieving food security for those one billion people living in hunger. Any strategy to combat hunger is not worth any agricultural model; it requires rural development geared primarily to family production.

Proximity food

In order to be consistent with the policy of food sovereignty, priority must be given to local food, the production of km0, the creation of designations of origin, family farming and even indigenous gastronomy. At this time of climate change it is also important to adopt resilient and less water-dependent crops. In the same vein, it should be noted that the native varieties are usually the ones that best adapt to the territory.

Water policies

With a climate crisis that is desertifying territories and depleting water resources in many geographies, proper freshwater management will require very effective management. Water security will demand funding like never before. It will be necessary to avoid losses and leaks (with very important percentages in many countries), take advantage of rainwater, recycle waste water and build desalination plants. As important as funding, will be to recognize the role in this management of territorial governments. Around the world, municipal governments have recognized the role, both in the supply of water to homes, and in the disposal of wastewater. In many countries, however, resource planning and management remains extremely centralized. The threat facing many countries should be an opportunity to rethink the distribution of competences in the field of water management, so that regional governments take a leading role. They are, finally, who, with a precise knowledge of their territory, know where the resources are and where the water needs.

Soil protection

An active soil protection and regeneration policy is needed. Higher quality soils are needed, so it is important to prioritize organic fertilisers to inorganic chemical fertilizers, which are causing problems of pollution of aquifers, subsequent sources of water supply. The agricultural and

livestock world must incorporate the concept of "circular economy" and the public sphere must ensure good management of livestock manure, manure, plant remains... so that these become, as appropriate, biogas or a good fertilizer. At this time of food crisis, it is also important to prioritize food production in agricultural soils over other uses (for example, energy crops).

Food education

Malnutrition is a global health problem, which can lead to anemia, but also obesity. It is caused by unhealthy diets. Families usually ensured adequate education. The disappearance of traditional diets, food advertising and the strategies of the food industry have, however, destroyed that ancestral knowledge. Thus, today it is necessary and relevant to carry out plans for food and nutritional education that, in many cases, the regional government can implement. The aim of these plans is to achieve the voluntary adoption of eating habits conducive to health and well-being.

Crash Plan / Strategic Plan

In the current generalized price hike, we propose that each region develop a shock plan that guarantees the supply of food, ensuring that distribution networks reach all corners of the territory. This shock plan, in our opinion, must include:

Ensure the provision of food to the most vulnerable populations.

Special attention should be paid to children so that this crisis does not affect their development.

Support for agriculture and the primary sector in general with local and regional networks for the distribution of their products.

Protection and support for distribution networks and local markets.

Having overcome this situation in the coming months, regional governments must have a Strategic Plan for Food Security updated periodically.