



HAMBRE CERO

BARCELONA, 2-4 OCTUBRE 2024

V CUMBRE MUNDIAL DE LAS REGIONES
SOBRE SEGURIDAD Y SOBERANÍA ALIMENTARIA



CATALUÑA, DONDE LA COMIDA ES CULTURA

Concept note 9

ZERO HUNGER, THE ROLE OF THE REGIONS

GOAL

During the III Zero Hunger Regions Summit, held in Azuay, Ecuador, in 2018, former Spanish president José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero affirmed that SDG 2 was a goal that could be achieved: “We can be the generation that manages to end hunger.” Today, we know that it will not be like that. FAO’s 2023 report predicts that almost 600 million people will be chronically undernourished by 2030. In Azuay, we affirmed that the role of regional governments was vital to achieving the goal of zero hunger. The forecasts have changed, but the regions’ commitment to continue fighting for this goal has not.

CONCEPTUALISATION

What is the context in which this summit of regions is being held? The 2023 report on *The state of food insecurity in the world* by FAO states that between 691 and 783 million people go hungry. This is about 122 million more people than in 2019, before the pandemic. World hunger remained relatively unchanged from 2021 to 2022, but remains well above pre-Covid-19 levels. In 2022, it affected around 9.2% of the world’s population in 2022.

According to the World Health Organization, 3.1 billion people (42%) cannot afford to pay for a healthy diet. This represents a global increase of 134 million people compared to 2019. Paradoxically, 2 billion people are overweight or obese, with the resulting health problems. The FAO report, like those of previous years, shows that global food fragility is related to economic precariousness, but also to political-social conflicts, climate variability, extreme weather events or the ongoing consequences of the pandemic.

From 2021 to 2022, progress was made in reducing hunger in Latin America and Asia, but hunger continues to be on the rise in West Asia, the Caribbean and all subregions of Africa. Almost 600 million people are expected to be chronically undernourished by 2030. This represents about 119 million more than there would be if the pandemic had not occurred, and about 23 million more than if the war in Ukraine had not occurred. This highlights the immense challenge of achieving the SDG goal of eradicating hunger, especially in Africa.

Around the world, food insecurity disproportionately affects people in rural areas. In 2022, moderate or severe food insecurity affected 33% of adults living in rural areas, compared to 26% of those residing in urban areas. The gender gap in global food insecurity, which increased after the pandemic, narrowed from 3.8 percentage points in 2021 to 2.4 percentage points in 2022.

In Africa, the proportion of the population that is food insecure and cannot afford a healthy diet is among the highest in the world. The report challenges the traditional idea that food



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purchases represent a small part of rural household food consumption in Africa. Food purchases are high among urban households in these countries, but they are also surprisingly high along the rural-urban continuum, even among rural households far from an urban centre.

In this context, regional governments, as the governments working closest to their citizens, can have a very important impact on the transformation of food systems. At ORU Fogar, we continue to insist that poor governance aggravates food problems. Centralisation, neglect of rural areas and the lack of strong and trained regional and local powers make policies to overcome food-related problems difficult. At the same time, the context of the food crisis experienced during Covid-19 showed the resistance and resilience of local and regional food systems, those most closely linked to the territory, which provides even more arguments for working towards food sovereignty from a regional framework.

The 2023 FAO report indicates that another key is for public institutions to improve connectivity between rural and urban environments. To this end, the role of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in towns and small and medium-sized cities stands out as essential. Who are these public institutions? From ORU Fogar's point of view they are, without a doubt, regional governments, which can play a key role in the formulation and implementation of policies other than the traditional top-down approach, ensuring policy coherence at local, regional and national levels.

The role of regional governments will also be key in ensuring that healthy diets are available, affordable and accessible to all, especially to those living in vulnerable circumstances. Having a healthy diet and having food produced in a sustainable way is part of the right to food. Achieving this requires clear, well-established and aligned actions, which can only be achieved with strong and competent regional governments.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

- What are the key competencies for regional governments to be able to work towards SDG 2 “Zero Hunger”?
- Does your regional government have the ability to improve life in rural areas?
- Is there available budget to guarantee a healthy and nutritious diet for the vulnerable population?
- How can shorter food chains be encouraged?
- When will SDG 2 be achieved and what are the main obstacles detected in the different regions?