

SUMMARY OF THE FSN FORUM DISCUSSION No. 48
FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND CITIES
FROM 2 NOVEMBER TO 7 DECEMBER 2009

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This summary has been prepared by Julien Custot (FAO Food for the Cities interdisciplinary initiative), topic raiser and facilitator of the discussion.

I. ISSUES RAISED

Three questions were raised for this discussion:

1. How would you illustrate or highlight the links between food security in cities, urban-centred food systems and urban-rural linkages? Do you have any examples, good practices or lessons learned to be reported?
2. Regarding the priorities at a national and local level, what issues/themes would you propose and would like to focus on?
3. At a global level, how could you and your organization participate/contribute to a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform? What priorities would you have?

There have been 22 different and complementary contributions. They have brought valuable highlights on these different points. A complete reading of each and all of them is needed to understand the different approaches and propositions. The following extracts just underlines main analysis, examples or propositions regarding the three proposed questions.

II. HOW WOULD YOU ILLUSTRATE OR HIGHLIGHT THE LINKS BETWEEN FOOD SECURITY IN CITIES, URBAN-CENTRED FOOD SYSTEMS AND URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES? DO YOU HAVE ANY EXAMPLES, GOOD PRACTICES OR LESSONS LEARNED TO BE REPORTED?

1.1. How would you illustrate or highlight the links between food security in cities, urban-centred food systems and urban-rural linkages?

Marc Cohen (Oxfam, USA) recently published with James Garrett a paper titled “The food price crisis and urban food (in)security” arguing that “the disproportionate attention that policy solutions to the food price crisis give to rural dwellers is likely misplaced”. It outlines “the pathways of impact of food price rises on urban dwellers; highlight the evidence so far on how those impacts have played out during this crisis; and describe current policy responses and suggest how to improve them to better protect the urban poor in the short- and longer-term”.

Moreover, Siddharth Agarwal (Urban Health Resource Centre, India) identifies “factors contributing to high levels of food insecurity among city dwelling poor” that may affect about 50 % of the population in some cities (total dependence on cash purchase of food, cash at hand to afford a satisfactory diet, impact on the whole family if lack of cash, compromised access to food subsidy programs, important population in slums, food shortages due to environmental and human factors).

Laurent Parrot (CIRAD, France) illustrates with the case of Cameroon that “health and sanitary [and consumption patterns] issues are important components of food supply for cities and urban

consumers". It "reveals the need of managing different points of view and constraints for the various stakeholders."

That is also expressed by Shashi Kumar (Bangalore University, India) who writes that "numerous problems abound in a food system that is highly concentrated in ownership and unresponsive to community needs" and that "there is a need to study comprehensively, the impact of food problems on the growing cities."

1.2. Do you have any examples, good practices or lessons learned to be reported?

Marielle Dubbeling (ETC Urban Agriculture, The Netherlands) note that if even if "in many countries the growing urban food insecurity and malnutrition problem remained largely unattended and did not yet translate into policy action", "many good examples exist of cities and countries that have developed innovative policies and programmes on urban and peri-urban agriculture ([in] countries as varied as Peru, Sri Lanka, Jordan, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso and others).

David O. Ojo (National Horticultural research institute, Nigeria) reports that it has been hinted "in the All Africa Horticulture Congress held in Nairobi (<http://www.globalhort.org/news-events/all-africa-horticulture-congress/>), horticulture stands best chance in the urban and peri-urban areas especially in Africa for many reasons. [...] All that is needed are commitments by government and development partners to make bring these technologies [particularly irrigation, as well as road networks, electricity supply for agro processing industries] to the stakeholders" that need to have stronger "leadership".

Thilak T. Ranasinghe (Sri Lanka) presents "the Family Business Garden (FBG) introduced with "Vertical Living Structures" that addresses the value of utilizing limited vertical space available in cities for urban agriculture" with "five strategic components": "family nutrition, technology adoption, crop management, post harvest management & value addition, and landscaping & housekeeping". "The key technical input is to achieve better mix of "indigenous-technical-knowledge" and "scientific-advancements" in establishing sustainability of micro-agro-entrepreneurships by allowing urban communities to expose their creativity."

Sharon Gordon (USA), who is doing garden research, and KV Peter give examples of many different small size, high yield projects, for different climatic conditions. They can be easily reproduced and adapted.

Mary Krane Derr (Illinois, USA) presents NeighborSpace: "this is a charity that buys up community garden lands to preserve them from development" as "after all there is no food security without land security". It's supported by Colin Shaw from the UK.

Ganesh Parida (CYSD, India) focuses on an example of group farming in Tumajore village for "making market work for poor farmers:". This case of Tumajore strived to explain that through formation of social and human capital [...], agricultural production capacity of the community can be raised".

III. REGARDING THE PRIORITIES AT A NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL, WHAT ISSUES/THEMES WOULD YOU PROPOSE AND WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON?

Maria van Heemstra (the World Council of Churches, Switzerland) insists on the "rural migration to cities". Edward Mutandwa (RDA, Rwanda) follows up as in Rwanda "urban food security relies to a large extent on production in rural areas. [...] Much of the products are bought at low prices [...] yet they are sold at exorbitant prices to final consumers meaning that farmers get a low percentage of the income from the food value chain."

For Joëlle Diani (Urban Planning Agency for the Development of Greater Lyon, France) there is a clear discrepancy between, on one side, the intentions expressed in sometimes incantatory speeches on proximity and the virtues of short supply chains, on the other side, the achievements that remain sometimes still timid.

As Remi Kahane (Global Horticulture Initiative, Tanzania) writes, the recent political crisis in Antananariv as well as a study case in Kenya “revealed the dependency of the city [despite enormous growth] toward the countryside, and the essential link, not only made of food, also of history, culture, humanity, between urban and rural areas” that shows “the importance to balance both developments of rural and urban areas.” “This is to advocate for coordination and consultation in any urban planning project with rural partners and communities.” Moreover, “agricultural activities shall not be criminalized but organized and integrated in densely populated areas. It can generate well being instead of pollution, with good practices of water and waste management. It produces employment, generates high value products, and diversifies incomes of many women and some very poor people.”

Violet K. Mugalavai (Moi University, Kenya) proposes a research proposal relying on the use of “a Small-scale Cluster Model for Sustainable Urban Agriculture and Development among Interactive Livelihood Groups” where “recycling and reusing livelihood resources such as rain and grey water, organic refuse, indigenous knowledge, maximum utilization of land, growing of food/fruit trees to green the environment, sustainable harvesting, preservation and better marketing systems will be practiced”.

Maria van Heemstra stresses the “waste of food” and the spread of “the unhealthy Western diet too rich in meats and fat [...] to developing countries. Women should particularly be targeted for nutrition education as they are to main ones to prepare meals and teach children eating habits”.

Girma Taddese (International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Ethiopia) with two examples of Upper Awash River Basin of Addis Ababa Sub-Catchment (“low quality water in agriculture” and “Community Based Traditional Irrigation Schemes Performance”) proposes that, related to water management, the “central aspect is how we could really design the urban agriculture to benefit the poor and improve health concerns.”

IV. AT A GLOBAL LEVEL, HOW COULD YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATE/CONTRIBUTE TO A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE PLATFORM? WHAT PRIORITIES WOULD YOU HAVE?

Maria van Heemstra says that “food production should managed in a holistic manner, and integrated with health issues, employment issues as well as environmental issues in policy making and not be looked at in terms solely of yield per hectare on a crop by crop basis.”

Colin Shaw “cannot see any real answer other than government intervention”. Therefore “if the UK is to work towards increasing its food security in the coming years then there has to be a shift in priorities for land use”.

Jacky Ganry proposes 4 ideas concluding that “the research and development agendas must be aligned accordingly around multidisciplinary and multisectoral projects” :

1. Urban food systems must be considered as a major issue for research and development institutions
2. We have to pay attention to food transition due to food habit changes
3. The value of urban agriculture in terms of feeding the city, of employments, greening and cleaning the cities needs to be recognized

4. It is time to advocate for multisectoral approaches and policies, bringing together all ministries and administrations.

Vide Adedayo (University of Lagos, Nigeria) also insists on “the role of government in supporting urban agricultural activities”. Otherwise, urban agriculture is “associated with extremely bad and unhealthy practices that pose threats to consumers, farmers and the environment”.

Serge Bonnefoy (Terres en Villes, France) presents a network of cities and local authorities in France and Europe, developing “new relationships with private actors, associations and economic world” for a better local food governance with “a real place in the “joint construction” of policy for all stakeholders”.

Edward Mutandwa (RDA, Rwanda) ask for “strengthening the value chain through auspicious policies and involvement of all stakeholders [...] for improving food security in the cities around the globe.”

Joëll Diani says that urban planners and farmers have to work together: new “approaches require changes in the posture of [urban planners] to organize a consultation for an effective territorial project and not a simple zoning, and of [farmers] to open to an approach integrating sales, surpassing the single aspect of production.”

Marielle Dubbeling stresses that on the short term “we should continue supporting local level activities, involving various sectors and disciplines [...]. Such multi-stakeholder processes will make the outcomes of policy development and action planning not only robust and comprehensive, but also better accepted and sustainable.”

Remi Kahane (Global Horticulture Initiative, Tanzania) proposes that, for the local authorities, “researchers shall provide some data, describe dynamics and present some [contrasted] scenarios for the next 5-10 years: without any public regulation, with little public regulation and with strong public measures like investments, enabling environment on food land natural resources for instance.”

George Kent insist on the need to “develop better means for sharing this information, especially among the poor.” “Poor people may [...] add up to a substantial market for goods and services.” Moreover “the Internet could be used to help build household food production by linking websites that provide information in user-friendly forms, and by supporting networking among interested users.” As a conclusion, “the linkage of modern technology with the old-fashioned neighbours-helping-neighbours concept could help to promote local food production on a whole new scale.”

V. RESOURCES

FAO Food for the Cities website
<http://www.fao.org/fcit/en/>

FAO Food for the Cities brochure
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/012/ak824e/ak824e00.pdf>

United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT
<http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=584>

1st all Africa Horticulture Congress
<http://www.globalhort.org/news-events/all-africa-horticulture-congress/>

Taddese G., Peden D., McCornick P., “Extent and significant use of low quality water in agriculture: The case of Addis Ababa Catchments the upland of the Awash Basin”
http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/ExtentSignificantUse.pdf

Tadesse B., Taddese G., Peden D. "Community Based Traditional Irrigation Schemes Performance: A Case Study of Upper Awash River Basin of Addis Ababa Sub-Catchments"
http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/CommunityBasedI_TadeseBekele.pdf

Cohen M. J., Garrett J.L., "The food price crisis and urban food (in)security" August 2009
<http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/10574IIED.pdf>

Internet references on urban gardens

<http://neighbor-space.org/main.htm>
<http://organicgarden.org.uk/>
<http://www.cityfarmer.info/category/sri-lanka>
<http://www.cityfarmer.org/colombo.html>
<http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/southasia/ruaf/Partner.html>
<http://verticalfarm.com/designs.html>
<http://www.fourseasonfarm.com/>
<http://www.permaculture-magazine.co.uk/>
<http://www.permacultureactivist.net/>

Food supply chains

EU Communication on a better functioning food supply chain in Europe
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/thematic_articles/article16028_en.htm

Promoting Agricultural Value Chains: the case of Kenya,
[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Rural-Urban linkages in Kenya.pdf](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Rural-Urban_linkages_in_Kenya.pdf)

L'importation massive de poulet congelé au Cameroun (in French)
[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Poulet congelé Cameroun.pdf](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Poulet_congelé_Cameroun.pdf)

Other resources

AMAP, France
<http://www.reseau-amap.org/>

Know your farmer know your food
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/knowyourfarmer?navid=KNOWYOURFARMER>

Global coordinator RUAF-From Seed to Table Programme
www.etc-urbanagriculture.org; www.ruaf.org