

Caritas Europa response to the Consultation on the Issue Paper "Towards a EU policy framework to assist developing countries addressing agriculture and food security challenges"

Created in 1971, Caritas Europa is one of the seven regions of Caritas Internationalis, the worldwide confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations working to build a better world, especially for the poor and oppressed, in over 200 countries and territories. Caritas Europa is the umbrella organisation of the European network of 48 Caritas member organisations, established in 44 European countries. Caritas Europa focuses its activities on policy issues related to poverty and social inequality, migration and asylum within all countries of Europe as well as on the coordination of actions of the members with regard to emergency humanitarian assistance, international development and peace throughout the world.

“Hunger and malnutrition are unacceptable in a world which has, in fact, levels of production, resources and knowledge sufficient to put an end to such dramas and their consequences”

Pope Benedict XVI, 3 June 2008

Caritas Europa welcomes a policy framework of the European Commission to support developing countries to address its emerging agriculture and food security challenges. In thousands of projects and institutions, Caritas organisations are in daily touch and interaction with millions of people experiencing poverty and hunger worldwide. Based on this vast grass-roots experience we would like to share with you our approach and recommendations regarding eradicating poverty and hunger, by responding to the consultation¹.

Sudan, being one of the poorest countries in the world, but with a huge agricultural potential, received 673.000 metric tons of food aid of WFP in 2008 but at the same time is aiming to export 65 million litres of Ethanol in 2009. The first figure is mainly for the benefit of poor people living in rural areas which have been neglected for many years, while the second figure is for the benefit of foreign investors in the country. Which type of agriculture the European Commission is willing to support?

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the 1 billion people living in extreme poverty. For them and for us, agriculture is not just about producing more food; food is not just a commodity. It is evident that a solution to eradicate poverty and hunger will be found in the development of agriculture provided that policies in the first place will benefit this part of the population.

The EU is the largest player in agricultural trade (first importer and second largest exporter of food products); the EU is also the world's biggest donor of development aid. Therefore the EU has leverage in negotiating trade agreements, proposing governance structures and shaping policy environments supporting the overall goal of the right to food for all. Caritas Europa asks the European Union and its Member States to adopt a people's centred approach to improve food security and agriculture in developing countries. Caritas wishes to emphasise that the **right to food** is a vital basic human right. Dying of hunger is a violation of human rights. Communities, farmers, their families, living in rural areas should be at the centre of the decision- making process of agriculture policies.

Smallholder, family based agriculture has proven to be the most sustainable way to enhance food security. Investments in agriculture, after being neglected for too many years, should increase while supporting local priorities. The multifunctional aspects of agriculture must be recognised. Thus, EU assistance and investments will effectively contribute to the realisation of the first Millennium Development Goal and the Right to Food.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/development/how/consultation/index.cfm?action=viewcons&id=4785>

Answers to selected consultation questions:

What rationale for an EU policy on agriculture and food security in developing countries?

General Comments:

In the 1960s and 70s, the implementation of agricultural extension programs contributed to reducing world hunger. In the 80s, the neo-liberal policies of the World Bank and the IMF virtually eliminated this type of support to farmers. Agriculture ministries in developing countries' lost political weight, budget, staff and their connection with the rural communities.

The result is dreadful: the number of hungry people has grown year by year to exceed one billion in 2009, and 75% of them are farmers... in spite of the 1996 World Food Summit commitment to halve the number of people facing hunger and the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000.

We must learn from past mistakes: a new approach, a policy shift and greater coherence are necessary.

Our impression is that the rationale of the Commission's Issue Paper is too much focused on the need to increase agriculture production in order to cope with the different challenges such as increasing world population, malnutrition, changing dietary habits, agro-fuels, climate change, etc. All those are important but let us not forget that by far, the majority of the poor people live in rural areas (70%) and are highly, if not only, dependent on agriculture in order to survive. **Food is more than a commodity.** Caritas supports the concept of the **multi-functionality of agriculture**. This approach requires a complete change in production practices to take into account social, environmental and economic dimensions. Therefore, we believe that **the EU agriculture and food security policy framework should be first of all a framework for alleviating global hunger and poverty.**

Another critical point is to ensure that those who will benefit the most from the foreseen enhanced food production and productivity are indeed the poorest and the small farmers. **The right to food and the right to development** must be absolutely placed at the centre of the EU strategy. For Caritas, the most vulnerable, the 1 billion people living in extreme poverty, have to be both the beneficiaries and the engines of an EU agriculture and food security policy in developing countries.

In order to reach the maximum impact on poverty and hunger, the EU food security policy framework needs to address the **linkages between all European policies that affect directly and indirectly the situation of poverty and hunger in developing countries**, namely the Common Agriculture Policy, trade, development, migration, climate change, disaster preparedness, etc. In addition, it is essential to achieve a **political consensus, shared and implemented by both the European Commission and the Member States**. The importance of the EU's role as a major donor highlighted in the Issue Paper can only be genuinely brought forward if it is in fact the result of a coordinated and consistent contribution of the EU as a whole, at the levels of policy, cooperation programmes and financial support to developing countries.

1. Do you see other drivers that could justify the development of an EU policy on agriculture and food security and which could need to be addressed in the policy?

- **MDG 1:** The objective to reduce extreme poverty and hunger by 50% by 2015 is far from being achieved: people living in extreme poverty worldwide have increased from 86 million to 1 billion in 2009.
- **The right to food:** The right to food should be the guiding principle of all relevant policies. Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human rights states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, (...)". This right was reaffirmed in 1966 by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which clearly calls for the 156 signatory countries to legislate the right to adequate food. In 1996, 185 nations ratified the Rome Declaration on World Food Security Summit World Food, and in 2004, were adopted the FAO **voluntary guidelines** on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in

the context of national food security². Today's food insecurity situations must be considered as grave violations of human rights. The EU policy must place the right to food and on the Millennium Development Goals at the heart of its policy, for the benefit of the most vulnerable, poorest and most marginalized people.

- **IAASTD recommendations:** The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) recommends to recognize better the multi-functionality of agriculture for social, environmental and economic sustainability. The aim is to empower rural communities by giving them access to basic services (water, credit, crop protection, health ...) and provide small farmers (women and men) with safe and decent living conditions. The EU policy must primarily benefit those who suffers the most from hunger; 75% of them are farmers.
- **Forced migration:** Food insecurity is one of the push factors of forced migration and internal displacement. Moreover, many factors that are causing food security such as natural disasters, conflicts, inequitable access to natural resources, bad governance and unjust trade regime also force millions of people to leave their countries and families in the search for a better life elsewhere. Internal displacement, refugee movements and mass migration not only cause humanitarian emergencies but can also erode the gains of development initiatives and investment as well as prolong destabilisation in the migrants' countries of origin, transit and destination. On top of this, the mass arrival of these people puts pressure on the often limited resources of communities where they seek shelter, which may lead to exacerbating a latent food security risk. At the risk of their life, some of these forced migrants may be tempted to embark on another migration journey towards Europe, and suffer the consequences of irregular status.
- **Policy Coherence for Development:** PCD is an obligation under the EU Treaty and should be considered one of the main thrusts of the EU policy framework on food security. This framework should critically reviews the impact of EU decisions in many different areas (trade, agriculture, energy, climate, etc) which affects the reality of world hunger and contribute to re-shifting the balance in favour of the needy and vulnerable people. The European Union should take into consideration the analysis and recommendations of the civil society, notably laid down in the report of CONCORD "Spotlight on Policy Coherence"³, to which Caritas contributed.
- **Maputo Commitment:** Most African countries are far from achieving the 2003/2004 Maputo commitment to allocate 10% of the national budget to agriculture, a commitment that was taken by all African Heads of State.
- **"Advancing African Agriculture"** (AAA): the European Commission should take account of the European civil society organisations analysis and recommendations regarding the 2007 AAA Communication, laid down in the 2008 monitoring report⁴. Some Caritas organisations signed up the report.

2. In your view, which are the main strengths and weaknesses of the current European Community/EU Member States action in the areas of agriculture and food security?

Strengths:

The EU is the biggest donor of official development assistance and it made available or reallocated funds to meet the food crisis since 2008, resulting in a significant weight in the fight against food insecurity and hunger world.

Weaknesses:

- Development aid (ODA) for agriculture and rural development has been declining over the past decades.
- The EU and Member States cooperation instruments lack flexibility and complementarity to address the complex situations. The EU Food Facility funding regulations are inadequate with the objectives.
- In the current absence of an EU strategic framework on food security, the lack of coherence of EU policies (agriculture, trade, development, climate change) is particularly visible. Coordination and coherence of policies and programmes between the European Commission and the Member States is also lacking.

² <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/009/y9825e/y9825e00.HTM>

³ http://www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/internetdocumentsENG/5_Press/1_Press_releases/00pressreleases2009/CONCORD_PCD-Spotlight-report_light.pdf - CONCORD, September 2009

⁴ <http://www.europafira.info/en/documenti/advancing-african-agriculture-2> - November 2008

3. What advantages/disadvantages do you see in a "whole of the Union" policy on agriculture and food security compared to the current European Community/EU Member States policy frameworks and compared to existing global/regional policy frameworks?

The main advantage of a genuine "Whole of the Union" policy would be **greater coherence** between the policies of the European Commission and of the Member States, as well as their adequacy with existing global and regional policy frameworks, including the commitments regarding aid effectiveness. If EU Member States would subscribe, and behave in line with, a common EU policy framework, the impact on poverty and hunger would be bigger. In this regard, the European Parliament and national parliaments have a crucial role to play. The same coherence and consistency should translate into cooperation programmes, in the field, in the developing countries. However, civil society remains concerned that the "whole of the Union" approach could be a **threat to ODA criteria** and an incentive to camouflage decreasing levels of aid. As the approach focuses on non-ODA financial flows, objectives other than development objectives may undermine the development impact of EU development cooperation. Further clarification on the concept is needed.

4. Which European policy/set of policies could the EU build upon in order to support regional integration responses to food production challenges in developing countries?

- The EU should promote the consolidation of regional integration in a **comprehensive manner**. Regional integration cannot be reduced to integration through trade, but it must be based on processes aiming at reinforcing economic, social, political and institutional links, involving actors from civil society and under parliamentary control.
- The **Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)** with ACP countries must be revised; in particular interim agreements which jeopardize the objectives of regional integration (see question 8). EPAs must depart from liberalization policies, and allow **greater ownership** to the developing countries.
- **European policy on agro-fuel:** A vigilant approach towards agro-fuel production is necessary to avoid exacerbating food insecurity, for the benefit of European car owners. The EU should consider adopting a system of certification attesting that any agro-fuel that enters the EU has been produced and managed in a sustainable way, from the origin, i.e. the agricultural producer to the final consumer in Europe, in compliance with a set of economic, ecological, social and energy-related criteria.

5. Do you think that rights-based approaches to food security could be an added value in the redefinition of the EU approach to agriculture and food security? If so, please explain why and how these approaches could be operationalised.

The right to food is a vital basic human right. This right has a legal value, higher than others rules, such as WTO agreements. In a world of plenty dying from hunger is a major violence against mankind. Caritas believes that this right should be at the core of all policy-making. The European Union as defender of democracy and respect for human rights, should review its policies in this view, and correct practices that are promoting violations of human right to food. The EU should demonstrate the **primacy of the right to food and food security** concerns over commercial and geo-political interests. The **rights-based approach**, together with policy coherence, is undoubtedly one of the greatest added-value to the design of the EU policy framework on food security. The right-based approach must also be used in the design of the EC country strategy papers and the cooperation programmes of the EC and the Member States. The EU delegation and the Member States should promote this approach in their support to the formulation of partner countries' national strategies for food security.

The **FAO voluntary guidelines** on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security⁵ are appropriate tools for governments and the EU. The EU can also refer to the work of the special rapporteur on the human right to food as well as to the analyses of many organizations and civil society networks.

In addition, in order to mitigate the past and present serious failures of **global food governance**, the right to food should be the foundation of it (see question 24).

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/009/y9825e/y9825e00.HTM>

Increasing availability of food

General comments:

The fight against hunger requires **giving priority attention to small farmers, fisher folk, women and other vulnerable groups and their access to resources needed to produce food**. The priority must be given to a model of sustainable family farming production for local consumption at affordable prices without hindering participation in international trade family production. This implies that:

- small farmers have sufficient land and of good quality to cover at least their own demand for food, or even the demands of a specific number of individuals in their community;
- the products that they bring to their local or regional markets must not be exposed to competition with subsidized products;
- families have access to quality and sufficient inputs.

6. Based on your experience which actions could be promoted in short, medium and long term to foster food supply, and which actions could be promoted at global, regional and national levels? In particular at regional level what do you think the role of agricultural policies/strategies should be and how best could the European Commission and EU Member States support them?

In the short term:

- In times of crises, the EU should provide **food assistance** based on a transparent needs assessment of the most vulnerable groups, linked to livelihood programs, and in a form that is culturally appropriate. This assistance should be integrated in a framework where donors show a genuine desire to help the poorest in the long-run, implying that predictable aid, targeting the poorest, is delivered to developing countries governments.

In medium to long terms:

- At global level:
 - The **Global Partnership** for agriculture and food security should establish objectives and recommendations covering all policies impacting food security (i.e. trade, agriculture, energy, climate change) and contribute to enhancing stakeholders coordination.
 - To **regulate the market and the stakeholders**. This means to firmly fight against **price volatility and speculation** in agricultural commodities (see question 20). **Stocks** on local, national, European and international levels should be used to regulate market prices in order to enhance access to food (see questions 20, 22).
Activities of the **large companies**⁶ that control large parts of the agro-food world should be better regulated in their countries and abroad. A fairer system of production, consumption and distribution of power should be promoted for the benefit of small local producers. The export subsidies, which enable agro-food multinational companies to control the world markets must be removed.
Reference is made to the European Parliament report (of Katerina Batzeli, MEP), which calls for “proactive” measures, such as:
 - the setting up of a European system of market monitoring
 - the creation of an international observatory for food and energy product prices
 - the adoption of policies to create more and more direct links between producers and consumers.
 - To develop strict regulations regarding **land grabbing** in the South by financial institutions and agribusiness, which aim at ensuring food security in developed countries or producing agro-fuels without consideration for local people who suffer from hunger. Land grabbing to the detriment of food self-sufficiency should never be accepted.
 - To establish **trade rules that comply with human rights commitments**, based on the principles of participation, transparency and accountability: The right of developing countries to have a policy space in trade agreements should be recognized. The international trade rules to curb the dumping must be applied and enhanced (see question 11). The regulation of agricultural trade within the **WTO**, an institution that is outside the UN system, which does not meet public interest criteria and is governed by commercial law, may not be the most appropriate way forward in

⁶ Most of these large companies are located in the USA and in Europe.

ensuring food security and the right to food. It would be desirable to explore a possible differential treatment for agricultural trade and food, covered in a UN field.

- Regionally and nationally:
 - The EU should encourage a **policy environment** at national and regional levels that improves the lives of small farmers: access to fertile land and water, financial services for the rural poor, political participation, reliable access to local and regional markets (especially through transportation and communication tailored to local and regional needs), support for farmers' cooperatives.
 - The EU should support **regional integration beyond trade** (see questions 4, 8).
- At European level:
 - The **Economic Partnership Agreements** (EPA) and interim agreements imposed by the EU to ACP countries should be revised in a less liberal way and more consistent with the interests of poor countries' agriculture.

7. What role do you see, if any, for the EU development policy to contribute to increased food production in developing countries and the availability of food (directly and/or indirectly)? And how could animal and plant health best be integrated in all pillars of food security policies and strategies?

Caritas urges the EU to increase and refocus investment and aid going to agriculture by supporting **family farming** with particular attention to women who produce more than 50 % of the food in the world. The following elements are very important in order to increase food production in a sustainable way: Land, Seeds, Water and Other inputs, Microfinance, Agricultural and veterinary services, Markets, Processing, Chain-value development.

EU policies and aid should promote the **multi-functionality of agriculture** (as highlighted by the IAASTD), by securing small farmers' access to basic services, land, seeds, water, credit and access to markets, optimizing their skills and knowledge on biodiversity and improving their production capacities. Alternatives should be found to technology-intensive energy-based pesticides and chemical fertilizers, GMOs and increase yields for export that strengthen the private sector and fail to improve the productivity of small farmers. Agro-ecology, organic farming, conservation farming and agro-forestry are all production models that contribute to this "new" productivity.

The challenge is not to get more aid, but more effective and participative aid. Olivier de Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur of the right to food⁷, calls a "**triangular approach**" to development cooperation, where concerned citizens (small producers, women, change agents ...) actively participate alongside their national governments and donors. Aid should go more directly to producers through **farmers' organisations**. This support for the structuring of these organizations would both improve production conditions and living standards of farmers, and greater lobbying power of the farmers' organisations on the local and national institutions to improve their governance. On the other hand, the capacity-building of agriculture ministries should be supported for better and rights-based national food security governance.

In addition, the EU should also provide **food assistance and food aid** (see questions 6, 27).

Regarding **seeds**, farmer's seed systems should be recognized and developed. Seeds are first of all public goods. Farmers should have a free choice to choose between different types of seeds (commercial or farmers owned). Public and participatory research on important food crops and plant breeding should be encouraged. Traditional knowledge and biodiversity are crucial for food security on long term.

8. Which, in your views, are the main policy constraints and opportunities in developing domestic/regional trade markets in developing countries, in particular for south-south integration? Do you consider that the EU should play a role in such development and if so, which one?

The proliferation of North-South bilateral negotiations is a key challenge for the dynamics of regional integration in ACP countries through the EPA and in South America (through free trade agreements with the United States and the EU). In all regions, configurations negotiations are based on regional integration initiatives existing. Now it is for most integration processes in construction that have not achieved the desired objectives. **Regional integration must be a prerequisite for the establishment of new free trade**

⁷ <http://www.srfood.org/>

zones, even in North-South type agreements. As long as regional integration is not sufficiently on track, signing EPAs may backfire and hinder the development of poor countries.

The main factors explaining the low intra-regional trade are:

- the fact that the production of many developing countries is largely specialized on commodities (especially food) and low value added products;
- the lack of complementarity between the profiles of national productions;
- the existence of (mostly administrative) Non-Tariff Barriers interacting with technical barriers⁸;
- infrastructure constraints due to inadequate transport (few rural roads joining the main roads, and very low road maintenance), telecommunications and storage - hence added costs.
- gaps in the application of Community legislation, especially significant differences between the rates effectively applied and the theoretical rate (TEC). There are major traffic diversions and part of the trade goes beyond the community regulations.

The development of a number of priority sectors (mainly agriculture and food industry) should be encouraged through effective protection for sufficient time and measures to remove the main constraints that limit regional trade.

9. How to address pastoralism in this context?

Pastoralists are often as vulnerable as other farmers. Similarly to other smallholder farmers, access to land and water, adequate veterinary services, efforts to increase productivity of the animals, community-based environmental protection activities, can largely improve the situation of pastoralists and the environment.

In addition, particular efforts should be dedicated to resolve conflicts between nomadic and sedentary agriculture such as access to water points and boundaries of pastoral areas (to avoid damage to crops).

Improving access to food

General comments:

The best way to ensure economic access to food is to support access to production means (see questions 6, 7). Access to food has more than the 3 dimensions mentioned in the Issues Paper. Apart from the physical, economic and social dimensions, the political and cultural dimensions should not be forgotten.

- **Political dimension:** the voice of the small producer can be channeled through farmer's organisations which are in dialogue with governments. In a democracy hunger and starvation do not take place. The participation of farmers' and women's organisations and rural networks in the definition and monitoring of public policies is vital to ensure access to food.
- **Cultural dimension:** food is more than a commodity or something that is consumed in order to survive. Food plays a very important role in local tradition, culture.

10. How could the dimensions of access to food be better integrated in European Commission /EU Member States assistance programmes?

- Greater coherence between the policies and the cooperation programmes of the EU delegations and of the Member States, in the areas of food security, development, trade, climate change, etc.
- Investing in rural infrastructures and transports
- Support to a family farming model
- Promoting the right to food and supporting rights-awareness and empowerment programmes
- Supporting farmers' organisations and their lobby to local, national and regional institutions for better food governance.

11. Which could be the priority areas for action at national/regional and international level to improve physical access to food?

- A priority area for action in order to improve physical access to food is **job creation** and in particular, **decent work** opportunities.

⁸ In West Africa, for example, the decision to harmonize the rules of origin has created additional conditions, which has generated new barriers to trade, especially for Nigeria. The way for companies to circumvent red tape was to seek access to the informal market or to limit themselves to the domestic market.

- **Early warning systems/Disaster Risk Reduction** should be developed on local, national and regional level with participation of the communities. **Safety nets** will ensure a better food security for the most vulnerable in emerging situation but this should be temporary solutions.
- Caritas calls on reasserting the primacy of agricultural and food policies over trade policies, starting with an end to the policy of **dumping** subsidized agricultural goods produced in the North onto developing countries' markets. This practice literally destroys local agriculture, damages the local economy and reduces economic access to food, although subsidized food is cheaper for consumers.
- The real needs of small producers must be given priority. Their physical access to food can be improved by putting **family farming** at the center of the cooperation frameworks, which means:
 - improvement of food crops
 - organization of food chains (local, national and sub-regional)
 - support to farmers' representative organizations.

12. How can donors, and in particular the European Commission /EU Member States, address most effectively the social dimension of access to food?

- In times of crises (especially when food prices become unaffordable for the poor), to provide **food assistance** in the form of grants or food stamps and subsidies for small farmers to purchase inputs and equipment. But this assistance should be integrated in a framework where donors show a genuine desire to help the poorest in the long-run, implying that predictable aid, targeting the poorest, is delivered to developing countries governments.
- Support to programmes for **nutrition surveillance** and for **nutrition education** for men and women

13. How could the EU contribute to improving the governance of food markets in developing countries?

The EU must actively participate in the organisation of global regulation of food trade and exchanges in the context of a reformed WTO. The EU must firmly support **mechanisms for stabilizing prices** of basic food materials (intervention stocks as India and China created, and the process of releasing reserves in case of shortage) and **oversight bodies** that allow avoiding speculative excesses.

Governance of food markets in developing countries can be improved through further **regional integration** (see questions 4, 8).

Improving quality and ensuring appropriate utilisation of food

General Comments

The quality of basic nutrition is a fundamental component of a primary healthcare strategy. Access to basic healthcare should be universal, and public healthcare systems should incorporate work on nutrition: nutrition surveillance, monitoring cases of both acute and chronic malnutrition, nutrition education, especially aimed at ensuring adequate nutrition during pregnancy and the early years of the child, nutrition programmes for schools, nutritional support programmes, etc. There are a number of factors related to nutrition and the utilization of food that affect the health of people, which need to be taken into account: access to water and sanitation, nutrition education, physical condition, housing and a healthy environment (especially the kitchen), balanced diet, and so on. In this area, it is important not to isolate interrelated areas of work which must be well coordinated.

14. In your view, what policies and approaches could be developed by donors in particular the European Commission /EU Member States to improve the prevention and management of malnutrition?

Prevention and management of malnutrition is linked to both health and food security. The grave consequences of the food crisis in 2007-2008 on vulnerable groups need to be identified at the local and microeconomic level taking into account variations in topography, access to food and quality of nutrition. **Nutritional surveillance** in developing countries should therefore be supported and scaled up. Young children were particularly hit hard by the food crisis. It is therefore important to **invest in the improvement of child health**. In this way children may realise their physical and intellectual potential which indirectly increases their economic potential contributing to the prevention of food insecurity in the future.

Therefore, the European Commission and Member States should coordinate their support to developing countries in formulating **national health and nutrition policies**. Once these have been institutionalised, the reinforcement of health systems and the implementation of national policies should be supported. At the same time, **civil society** should be consulted both for the development and implementation of these policies as civil society organisations deliver basic health services in many developing countries.

15. **How could nutritional components best be integrated in other pillars of food security policies and strategies?**
16. **How could the EU better target chronic malnutrition? How could the European Commission better address the vicious cycle linking malnutrition to ill health and impaired individual growth and loss in productivity?**
17. **How could a smoother shift from nutrition in emergency situations to post-crisis and development situations be ensured?**
18. **How could a multisectoral response to nutrition be operationalised at national and international level? Which could be in your view the main challenges to such operationalisation?**

Crisis prevention, preparedness and management

General Comments:

The experience of the 2007-2008 food price crisis has taught us that food is not just any commodity. The means to guarantee the human right to food are of primary importance in order to satisfy the basic need for human life. The crisis of 2007-2008 has shown that the market is not a suitable institution for regulating food trade. A major problem of the agricultural market is that price volatility depends on a few products required for industrialisation. This commercial interest causes a shift away from the production of crops that could meet the food needs of the population of developing countries and improve the diet of hungry people. For example, the increasing demand for industrial agro-fuels contributes to the increase in food prices as arable land for growing food is used for growing agro-fuels instead. Caritas calls for reasserting the **primacy of agricultural and food policies over economic and geopolitical interests**.

The **lack of coherence** of food and agricultural policies of the European Union has impacted adversely on the development efforts of Southern countries and undermined their right to food (see question 11).

19. How could the impacts of crises be mitigated at national and household levels?

At the national level, the impact of the crisis can be reduced by preventing the volatility of prices of agricultural products (see question 20) and by providing and managing stocks (see question 22).

At the household level, EU cooperation programmes and investments should be targeted to support **family farming** and promote the **multi-functionality of agriculture** (see question 7).

20. Do you think that specific instruments could be developed to prevent the volatility of food prices? If so, which could be in your view the most effective for that purpose?

Food stocks at on local, national, European and international levels are crucial for controlling the volatility of food prices. These levels include the household level, the community level, the local level, the national level and the regional level. In order to encourage food production and the creation of stocks for local food security, local authorities should be able to control import and export by specific regulations such as taxes. Besides ensuring the availability of stocks when needed, a key step for stabilising food prices is the **regulation by the European Union and the United States of speculation on the market of raw materials**. This regulation should:

- reaffirm the authority of governments to regulate financial markets;
- require investors to declare all their transactions in raw materials;
- impose limits on the amount invested in raw material exchanges depending on the size of the market for a given raw material;
- advocate for a variant of the Tobin tax on these exchanges. This would discourages excessive speculation and promote development projects;
- prohibit index funds (with adverse effects on the volatility of prices) which cover up to 24 raw materials (agricultural and others).

More stable prices for consumers and more profitable prices for small producers must also be sought by appropriate management tools on the local, regional and international level. This also means abandoning the policy of dumping stocks by the EU and the USA.

21. What policies and instruments could be put in place, by who (donors, beneficiaries?) and at which level (international, regional, national?) to prevent and mitigate food crisis?

The food price crisis which began at the beginning of 2008 was a result of long and short term trends and policies. It is difficult to determine which factors had the most significant impact on the food price crisis. Nevertheless, it is clear that a failure of international food and agricultural policies has undermined people's fundamental right to food.

- Policy responses to the crisis –immediate, medium and long term– need to address the structural causes of the crisis through **adequate trade and agricultural policies**. Food prices should be stabilised, local production should be expanded and agricultural stocks should be available when needed.
- Policies should also address the need to increase the **capacity of smallholder farmers** in developing countries. These policies should be formulated together with farmers' organisations.
- In addition, policies should address the need to enhance **social protection** to support the worst affected people. In this respect, nutritional surveillance should be scaled up by local governments. **Food assistance** should be linked to sustainable livelihood programmes (see question 6).

22. Do you think regionally or globally managed food stocks – physical or virtual – would be a useful alternative for national level stocks? How could such supra-national food stocks be managed?

Priority should be given to the establishment of food stocks when the ratio of stocks / use is lower, which makes the market particularly vulnerable to shocks. In order to do this, countries and experts must establish best practices for the establishment of reserves and develop a coordinated approach to program management of food stocks by defining the cost-sharing and the process of releasing reserves in times of shortage.

The global level is not suitable for the establishment of inventories and past experiences have resulted in failure. However, it is the appropriate level for the implementation of information systems (monitoring and dissemination of prices, crop prospects and stocks of the major commodities traded) and for coordination and coherence of different measures for inventory management.

The national and regional policies are relevant for a combining stockpiling and measures to fight against internal and external price volatility. These policies include:

- national policies on stockpiling that take into account the different types and regional coordination;
- instruments / policies to control price volatility in the short term (safeguards, interventions in domestic markets by public buying and selling, taxation of imports and exports), and in the long-term agricultural policies ensuring less dependence on world markets;
- tools compensating the impact of price volatility on the most vulnerable, through financing of social transfers.

Areas of intervention

23. Do you think that other areas of intervention could/should be included?

24. Based on your experience how would you see a reformed international governance system? Which reform options that are currently under discussion do you think could be the most appropriate and viable and why? Which alternative options would you propose?

The **right to food** should be the foundation of the global food governance. Importantly, the EU must speak with one voice on the reform of global food governance.

- The discussions about a "**Global Partnership for agriculture and food security**" and the **reform of the Food Security Committee (CFS)** are opportunities to establish global governance on food, agriculture and nutrition within the UN system, and as such, ensure consistency of actors and policies at international and European levels. The CFS should represent a strong and authoritative global policy forum based on the principle of "one member, one voice". This would require that national

governments defend the right to food of citizens and formulate their policies based on local realities with the participation of all stakeholders. The accountability of governments and multilateral institutions would need to be enhanced and the effective participation of civil society would need to be ensured.

- The reformed **Food Aid Convention** (FAC) should be integrated into the emerging Rome-based international food security architecture⁹. Under this umbrella, food assistance provided under the FAC should be one pillar in a holistic approach towards food security. In addition, a stronger mechanism should be set up to monitor FAC commitments and encourage compliance by both donors and recipients adhering to the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles. The membership of the FAC should be expanded to **include all stakeholders** including NGO representatives, UN representatives (FAO and WFP), recipient governments and new food aid donors.
- The **WTO** should be involved in regulating tied food aid to ensure that it does not contribute to trade distortions. However, it should not be involved in other aspects of international food aid governance (and especially in term of food assistance) because it lacks the capacity and the expertise to play this role.

25. Do you agree that a “whole of the EU” approach could enhance the effectiveness of the EU actions to address current developing countries' challenges in agriculture production and food security?

See question 3.

26. Which could be in your view the main features of a national or regional agriculture and food security strategy? In application of the principle of subsidiarity which could be the respective areas of competence of national policies/strategies vs regional ones?

Greater ownership should be recognized to developing countries to regulate and protect their own agricultural markets, so that they can respond adequately to their needs. Their **national food security strategy** should be based on their assessment of their local needs: this assessment should be prepared with inputs from civil society organisations which in many cases deliver essential basic services to the population, especially to the poorest and most vulnerable. Donors should align their support on the local needs and national strategies, in compliance with the alignment principle of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. **Regional strategies** will enhance food security provided that they take into account and contribute to the national strategies.

27. What would you consider to be the key policy issues to be addressed for the successful transition between emergency interventions and long term food security objectives?

The **rights, the dignity and the protection of women, men and children** must be always placed at the core of the policies and actions of both emergency relief and development.

In times of emergency, food aid is most often the best way of assisting the affected population. Emergency interventions should be **based on real needs** assessed in the local context. Mid- and long-term effects in the phases of recovery, rehabilitation and development should be taken into account in the choice of tools to address emergency situations. This assistance should be integrated in a framework where donors show a genuine desire to help the poorest in the long-run, implying that predictable aid, targeting the poorest, is delivered to developing countries governments. Food assistance must be culturally appropriate and **linked to programs regarding livelihood**, increased resilience against shocks and decreased vulnerability. Thus, **Disaster Risk Reduction** strategies should be built in major food security programmes and the concept of **Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development** should be mainstreamed at both policy and programme levels.

28. Which common principles could be set out to coordinate emergency and development actions? How could positive synergies be established between short-medium and long term responses?

Caritas believes in integral human development. As a result, we support a **risk management approach** which integrates humanitarian action in the broader context of sustainable development. Focus should be on risk management as a social process whose ultimate goal is risk reduction, forecasting and risk control. Besides the humanitarian response to the population affected by an emergency, the causes of (natural or

⁹ Caritas Europa is a member of VOICE and supports VOICE response to DG ECHO questionnaire on the Food Aid Convention.

man-made) disasters and of the vulnerability of populations must be tackled in order to avoid or reduce the impact on a society. Risk management involves the prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, rehabilitation and reconstruction. All these measures do not correspond to a linear process in which phases succeed one after the other. Depending on the context, these are combined to effectively respond to the complexity of the crisis.

29. What are the main challenges to promoting food security in fragile states, and how could the EU best position itself to work in such contexts?

The EU and member states have a crucial role to play in reinforcing **institutional and civil society capacities** in fragile states. Civil society can play a more important role in food security promotion when government capacities are not sufficient yet. In addition, civil society organisations, such as Caritas, are permanently present in countries and country areas where institutional cooperation has become difficult and very limited, because of security or diplomatic problems. The EU should enhance its cooperation through civil society organisations, which have access to the persons in need.

Flexibility and complementarity of the EU and Member States cooperation instruments must be promoted to address the complex situation of fragile States and post-conflict countries, where efforts must be devoted to better link relief and development.

Implementation

30. How could synergies and complementarities and division of labour between the European Commission, the EU Member States and the UN agencies be improved? How could synergies with private foundations be improved?

The EU is the largest player in agricultural trade (first importer and second largest exporter of food products). Therefore the EU has leverage in establishing trade agreements and in many intergovernmental agencies. The EU has the ability, if it wants and if it puts in place appropriate structures (see question 31), to shape a policy environment supporting the overall goal of the right to food for all.

The **CFS reform** towards recognising the “one member, one voice” UN principle should be endorsed by the EU and Member States (see question 24).

31. How could synergies amongst different EC/EU policies with an impact on food security (notably trade, energy, agriculture, humanitarian, nutrition etc) be increased?

In order to create synergies, the EC and Member States should apply their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, and to Policy Coherence for Development:

- The **rights, the dignity and the protection of women, men and children** should be the foundation of all policies. Through the systematic application of a human-rights based approach, synergies between policies could be identified more clearly.
- **Policy Coherence for Development** is an obligation under the EU Treaty for both the European Commission and Member States. PCD should be considered one of the main thrusts of the EU policy framework on food security. Sustainable development and the fulfilment of human rights are important objectives of EU development cooperation – all other policies possibly affecting the development of developing countries including trade, energy, climate, agriculture, migration policies must take these objectives into consideration. The European Union should take into consideration the recommendations of the civil society, notably laid down in the CONCORD report “Spotlight on Policy Coherence” which analyses the coherence of food, climate, trade, finance and migration policies with development objectives¹⁰.

Concretely, the EU could translate these commitments into establishing appropriate institutional mechanisms and adopting different policy actions:

- **Institutional mechanisms:**
 - The coordination and coherence of the Commission and the Member states should be improved among their staff (from Brussels or capital cities and delegations, embassies and field offices), their

¹⁰http://www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/internetdocuments/ENG/5_Press/1_Press_releases/00pressreleases2009/CONCORD_CD-Spotlight-report_light.pdf - CONCORD, September 2009

- policies, programs and departments, through **joint programming**, the **country strategy papers** (CSP) and a synergy between **financial instruments** and analyses;
- Enhancing the **transparency** of and **participation** in EU decision-making in order to allow all interests to be voiced and taken into consideration: this should include broad-based consultations and democratic debates;
 - The European **Parliament** and national parliaments should be more active in ensuring policy coherence;
 - A **complaints mechanism** should be introduced in order to improve accountability and coherence;
 - Ex-ante and ex-post **research on the impact** of EU policy on poverty reduction in developing countries should be conducted, including sustainability impact assessments by independent bodies. They should be fully transparent and should include the views of different groups affected and their representative bodies;
 - New **working tools** should be developed and a **budget** allocated for their implementation. These tools could include benchmarks for assessing whether another priority is overriding a development objective, a screening exercise following the experience of the establishment of the IPCC, new guidelines for conducting a sustainability impact assessment that not only takes into account the impact of the proposed policy initiative, but also shows the inter-linkages with other thematic policy areas;
 - The European Commission and the EU Member States should work together to raise **awareness**, strengthen their staff and organisational **capacity** and use more effective and ambitious PCD mechanisms.
- General policy level: Food security should be addressed as a **cross-cutting issue** and not in isolation. **Integration of food security** is required in climate change adaptation, agricultural policies, sustainable energy, water resource management, trade, migration, humanitarian aid and development.
 - Specific policy actions:
 - **Agriculture and trade**: ending dumping policies (see questions 6, 11, 20), revising EPAs (see questions 4, 8)
 - **Migration**: taking account of the links between food insecurity and forced migration (see question 1)
 - **Humanitarian**: mainstreaming Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (see question 27), adopting appropriate DRR policy and programmes (see questions 11, 27, 28). In addition, there is a need to coordinate the drafting of the new EU framework policy on food security with the ongoing drafting of the new **Humanitarian Food Assistance Policy**, developed by ECHO, which is based on a wide consultation of stakeholders.

32. How could synergies between existing financial instruments be maximised and how should budget support be best used to support food security objectives?

The fight against hunger requires **greater resources** to be dedicated to agriculture and food security at national and regional level and also requires the **coordination of these resources** with clear strategies as a basis. In particular, the various financial instruments of the EU must be better coordinated, and the bilateral programs of each member State must be further harmonised.

The 2008 Food Facility of 1 billion € was intended to fight against rising prices in developing countries, over 3 years (2009-2011) in 50 priority countries. Out of the 1 billion euros, only 420 million from the Flexibility Instrument represent a new expense and the other 580 million from the redeployment of the Reserve for emergency aid is not additional. The European Development Fund, the Development Cooperation Instrument and the Food Security Thematic Program are also components of the Food facility. **All this is complicated and lacks transparency.** Moreover, the funding regulations are **inadequate** with the longer-term objectives of the EU Food Facility¹¹. Objectives such as increasing supply and food production capacity and improving the way agriculture is managed in the long term are not compatible with the availability of the fund limited to 3 years and the obligation to disburse and spend all the funds by the end of 2011.

¹¹ European NGOs welcome the 1 billion € fund for farmers but ask for long term measures – [press release](#) (September 2008)

The EC has opted for new aid mechanisms, through sectoral projects with sector **budget support** or general budget support (now the preferred method of allocation). Some **negative effects** of this method evident, especially for food security. It strengthens the central government, which led to the neglect of local and remote locations (where hunger more often prevails). It may also involve expenditure favoring the middle class and elites instead of the poor. Moreover, the impact of this aid is difficult to assess, as the EC and especially the recipient countries do not yet have the necessary tools for monitoring and allocation. Some actors of civil society believe that the transition to the **protection of basic services** can have a more direct impact on food security, sustainable agricultural development and the fight against poverty.

In addition, **flexibility and complementarity** of the EU and Member States cooperation instruments must be promoted to address the complex situation of **fragile States and post-conflict countries**, where efforts must be devoted to better link relief and development.

33. What lessons can you share from your work within the area of food security that could be useful for the implementation of the proposed EU policy?

Lessons learned from our work and projects on food safety have convinced us that support to **sustainable family farming** is a major challenge for the future of the billion people who suffer from hunger. This way of farming concerns 2.8 billion people or 45% of the world population. This model would allow a maximum number of farmers around the world to live decently from their work producing healthy food without jeopardizing the natural resources of tomorrow. It entails many advantages:

- Optimisation of the use of family labor and slowing down of the rural exodus;
- Relatively high productivity per hectare
- Effective contribution to the fight against hunger and poverty: the focus is on the production of agricultural food and therefore represents a more equitably distribution of wealth produced;
- Diversification of family activities (mixed cropping and livestock), which generally allows better respect for the environment than large farms with monocultures.

34. How could in country coordination be improved in line with the principles of the L'Aquila Declaration?

Coordination is not about saying who has to do what but to look into who is doing what, what works or what is more efficient and sustainable. In order to improve coordination among donors, it is necessary that the various organisations concerned and the main donors involved are coherent with their strategies and funding in each country. These should also be in accordance with the political authorities and civil society (including farmer organisations) of the aid receiving country.

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