

SESSION 2: Summary of the presentations and discussions

In this session entitled “**Food Security: Future Scenarios,**” four presentations were made. They were based on the past experiences (in the 1960s and 1980s) and the current situations of most of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and of other developing countries, particularly Haiti, Senegal and Ghana.

These countries moved from self-sufficiency and surplus status in foodstuffs to dependency and the status as a net food importer with high prices (a 54% increase) and enormous bills paid for food (up to a 50% increase) in certain cases.

. From the assessment made by the speakers, the main causes of the change in the situation of these countries regarding food production and food delivery are:

- Harsh and disproportionate cut in tariff rates (from 50% down to 3%) under the Bretton Woods institutions’ measures and recommendations;
- Depressive impact on agriculture and food production in the Developing Countries and in the Least Developed Countries due to the huge amount of domestic support and export subsidies granted to the producers and exporters of some developed countries;
- Lack of policy space and Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Net Food Importing Developing Countries (NFIDCs);
- Impact of the proliferation of Free Trade Agreements (FTA);
- Impact of the liberalisation and deregulation of the financial system on the productive capacities of the Least Developed and Developing Countries;
- Lack of coherence between the Bretton Woods institutions’ rules and models and the World Trade Organization rules;
- Role of the agribusiness (increase in food prices as a result of speculation in the market)
- Weakness of the agricultural production capacities in the Least Developed Countries and the Developing Countries;
- Oil price increases and consequences of climate change on food production and food prices;
- Decrease in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) from 13% to 3%.

The speakers questioned what role the WTO should play in addressing the food crisis issue. They largely commented that while the WTO has a role in some trade aspects of this issue, many other stakeholders (both at local, national, regional and international levels) should contribute to finding sustainable solutions to the problem.

There was a cautioning view expressed by a speaker that the current language on food aid monetization under non exceptional circumstances is too broad, which can lead to abuses.

Recommendations

The main recommendations made are:

✓ Under the trade aspect

- Substantial reduction of trade distorting agriculture supports with the goal of eliminating them;
- Elimination of export subsidies in agriculture;
- Revision of trade policies in agriculture, providing flexibilities to Developing Countries and to LDCs, such as SPs; SSM, export restrictions and prohibitions;
- Feeding policy space in structural adjustment programs;
- Observance of coherence in the interventions and activities of the International Organizations, particularly the WTO, the UN, and the Bretton Woods Institutions,
- Differentiation between the situations countries, taking into account the situation of acceding WTO Acceding Members;
etc.

✓ Under the development aspect

- Demonstration by the governments of a real political commitment to solve the food crisis;
- Setting new priority for agriculture & food production;
- Promotion of land reforms;
- Infrastructure capacities building;
- Access to agriculture inputs and credits;
- Food stocks , irrigation, research and development management ;
- Promoting sustainable small scale family farms;
- Promotion of national and regional projects and programs in agriculture and related areas;
- Provision of technical and financial support by bilateral donors and regional and international organizations;

- Technical and financial support through Trade Facilitation; the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and Aid for Trade activities.
