

**Summary of the first session of the International seminar on "  
Parliamentary networks and food security challenges "**

**Thursday, October 31- 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 2019**

**House of Counselors , Kingdom of Morocco**

The session was opened with an intervention on the state of food security and nutrition in the world for 2019, by Carlos Juan Garcia Cebolla (specialist in right to food from FAO).

At the outset, Mr. Carlos reaffirmed FAO's commitment to working together to overcome these emerging challenges and free the world from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

He considered that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development puts forward a transformational vision recognizing that our world is changing, bringing with it new challenges that must be overcome if we are to live in a world without hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in any of its forms.

He stated that more than 820 million people in the world are still hungry today, underscoring the immense challenge of achieving the Zero Hunger target by 2030. Hunger is rising in almost all sub regions of Africa and, to a lesser extent, in Latin America and Western Asia.

Another disturbing fact is that about 2 billion people in the world experience moderate or severe food insecurity. The lack of regular access to nutritious and sufficient food that these people experience puts them at greater risk of malnutrition and poor health. Although primarily concentrated in low- and middle-income countries, moderate or severe food insecurity also affects 8 percent of the population in Northern America and Europe. In every continent, the prevalence rate is slightly higher among women than men.

He stressed that our actions to tackle these troubling trends will have to be bolder, not only in scale but also in terms of multisectoral collaboration, involving the agriculture, food, health, water and sanitation, education, and other relevant sectors; and in different policy domains, including social protection, development planning and economic policy.

A number of presentations were made, mainly:

**Theme 1: reviewing the global experiences of parliamentary networks on food security and their role in achieving the second SDG:**

In this context , global experiences of parliamentary networks and their role in achieving part of the Sustainable Development Goals were presented .

**Latin America and the Caribbean :**

Mr. Jos Seramo, Vice-President of the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean, reviewed, in his presentation, the efforts being made in the region to implement FAO's strategic direction for eradicating hunger , where regional initiatives were unified to implement the organization's objectives based on the priorities set by member countries , in which some of the objectives have been achieved, including :

- Promotion of sustainable rural development, the Initiative focuses on strengthening inclusive food systems -centered in nutrition- through mechanisms such as public procurement programs for family farming, school feeding programs, the improvement of public supply systems, in order to exchange experiences and integrating member States into the Central American Integration System.
- Family farming and inclusive food systems for sustainable rural development , as well as promoting synergies between social protection programs, agricultural sustainability and economic integration of people living in poverty and vulnerability in rural areas.
- Sustainable use of natural resources, adaptation to climate change and risk and natural disaster management through the development of voluntary guidelines for agro-ecological policies for Latin America.
- Realizing significant achievements at the level of regulation of public supply systems, facilitation of policies on agriculture and the empowerment of women and promotion of family farming and rural development.

-Making rules and legislation to support the right to food while strengthening the resilience of coastal and agricultural systems in the greater South through the restoration of ecosystem services and the establishment of green infrastructure rehabilitation centers.

He concluded that the Constitution of Ecuador was a pioneer in this area and an incentive to develop a range of activities to help achieve food security such as family farming and traditional fishing.

### **Mediterranean: -**

Vice-President of the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, Kareem Darwish stated that the projects , including the development of agriculture and fisheries as well as increasing the green belts to stop desertification, aimed at achieving food security for 34 countries in the basin. Mr. Darwish referred to the role of the Assembly, through its researches and efforts, especially in the field of water economics and soil quality, in raising the level of safe food production, adding that the financing of projects in this area, by the European Development Bank and the World Bank, helps to ensure Food , not only in both sides of the Mediterranean, but on the continent of Africa, which has about 1.2 billion people.

### **Central America and the Caribbean: -**

The intervener said that parliaments of the region were supported to create parliamentary fronts specialized in food thanks to the continued support of FAO, where a set of laws that support the right to food was issued in a number of countries such as Ecuador which constitutionalize the right to water .

### **Andean Parliament: -**

The Executive Secretary of the Andean Parliament proposed a set of recommendations mainly including :

- Creation of programs to ensure food security in terms of strengthening expertise, poverty eradication and cooperation between countries.
- Encouraging family farming and scientific and technological research.
- Promoting policies and strategies that ensure quality and quantity.

-Developing education programs to raise awareness on the importance of food education in educational curricula.

After discussions and interactions among participants , a number of proposals were made to help parliamentarians achieve the second Sustainable Development Goal ( Zero Hunger ) :

- **Integrating the right to adequate food in the Constitution:** The Constitution of the country is the supreme law and is the foundation on which the rights of citizens and the obligations of the State are built. When programs are supported by legislation, they become government policy. Nepal can be considered as a model, which was supported by FAO during the process of adding the right to food to its constitution in 2015.

-**Making laws that take food security into account while also considering the needs of all different sectors:** ensuring food security requires the participation of the various sectors that make up the food system. This means considering the needs of small farmers, pastoralists and artisanal fisheries and helping them to build capacity through social protection initiatives that target the weakest links in the food system .

- **Taking advantage of the knowledge held by academic institutions:** legislators need to understand the extent of the problem and the ability to measure the impact of policies. Therefore, they can utilize the experiences of the academic community in formulating and implementing legislation or public policies on the right to adequate food. In this regards , they can inspire the experience of Spain where Global Governance Research Center was established in the University of Oviedo to encourage research on topics related to food security, policy assessment, programs coordination and making strategy for reviewing annual reports.

- Maintaining dialogue with civil society, partners and various government sectors

- Raising awareness and integrating food education within educational programs and curricula.