



Remarks

by

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at

**Panel on Enhancing Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security in Small Islands
Economies**

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Security**

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Mr. Michael Hailu,

Distinguished panelists

Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the outset allow me to say that, my office, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, is very happy to jointly convene this important panel with the Centre for Technical Assistance for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) as part of the forum of IFPRI.

We have already been working closely together in the past and we look forward to continuing our collaboration as we move forward together. I thank Mr. Hailu, CTA's Director, our moderator for today, for his continued strong support for SIDS – particularly in the crucial area of agriculture and rural development.

I commend CTA for your continuous work in bringing a SIDS perspective in your important work.

I am pleased to be with you today to share some thoughts on the need to enhance resilience for food and nutrition in small islands.

Agriculture is the backbone of many societies including SIDS. As it is the basis upon which the food and nutrition needs of human sustenance and existence is premised, the role of Agriculture in the overall prosperity of human societies the world over cannot be overstated.

Over the centuries agricultural practices have evolved and progressed often times mimicking man's own advancement. Challenges in production were met through a mixture of trial and error, deliberate design and human ingenuity.

the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda is taking up the issues of people and planet together. In this day and age, it is unacceptable that so many people have to go with little food and or unbalanced food when there is sufficient food for all.

It is in recognition of the need to eradicate hunger and malnutrition that the United Nations Secretary-General has led the Zero Hunger initiative with a focussed and coordinated approach. Its focus areas are:

- Zero stunted children in less than 2 years
- 100% access to adequate food all year round
- All food systems are sustainable
- 100% increase in smallholder productivity and income, and
- Zero loss or waste of food

I encourage all stakeholders to work closely with the United Nations towards achieving the important goals of the Zero Hunger.

With their inherent vulnerabilities of small size, narrow resource base, isolation and remoteness, SIDS have themselves recognised for a while now that sustainable agricultural practices, including in their food production, must be adhered to if they are to thrive. Access and affordability, productivity and income generating activities and sustainability and resilience have to go together.

Many have built agricultural and food production based on traditional knowledge which has served their societies well over the years, helping build resilience. Such traditional knowledge in SIDS, which include planting, harvesting practices and food storage practices need to be acknowledged and encouraged.

However, the modern day pressures on land have come with the drive towards unplanned economic growth, lack of protection of soil productivity and systemic impacts of climate change. These pressures further exacerbate the vulnerabilities of SIDS. The need to build resilience, including through SIDS specific international initiatives that compliment SIDS own initiatives, is therefore imperative. Especially when we look at the combined effects of land degradation, salinization of aquifers and coastal erosion, it becomes obvious to us all that a holistic approach with sustained protection of natural capital is critical to ensure sustainable progress in these countries, more than anywhere else.

The encouraging fact is that the international community have also acknowledged this special situation for SIDS, including on issues concerning agriculture and food production and nutrition.

SIDS specific international plans of actions, including the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS and its Mauritius Strategy of Implementation, recognise the need for SIDS to build resilience.

In the Barbados Programme of Action adopted in 1994, the international community recognised that there was an urgent need in SIDS to address the constraints to sustainable development, including scarce land resources, which lead to difficult land and agriculture use decisions; limited fresh water; education and training needs; health and human settlement requirements; inordinate pressures on coastal and marine environment and resources; and limited means available to use natural resources on a sustainable basis.

The Barbados Programme of Action also recognised that competing demands for the use of land resources must be resolved and more effective and efficient ways of using those natural resources must be developed and adopted in a sustainable manner.

As populations grow in SIDS, there is a need for resolution of competing demands, particularly where land is limited and where commercial development of comparatively large tracts of land can result in shifts in small scale and subsistence agriculture to marginal lands.

National policies should be coherently put in place, but they will need the support of the international community in their implementation.

The Mauritius Strategy adopted in 2005 had also called for SIDS in the implementation of Agriculture and rural development initiatives through taking action to promote agricultural competitiveness through the long-term development of efficient agricultural systems, diversification and value-added activities, and to ensure food security, inter alia, through research and development.

Let me stress here that a piece meal approach is not an efficient and effective way to address this issue. Therefore, a holistic multi-sectoral approach that combines food and nutrition security for all with sustainable development of the agriculture sector, land use, water and energy, aquaculture and investment in agriculture services is critical for SIDS.

For example, we know that fresh water is vital for agriculture. But for many SIDS, this is a scarce resource for many, which presents its own challenges in terms of its availability and management.

This calls for an integrated approach to planning and development of water resources, seeking mutually-supportive arrangements between the different water use sectors, including industries, and tourism.

Collating and sharing best practices between SIDS themselves can also contribute towards increasing capacity and building resilience. Areas where these best practices and lessons can be exchanged include those on land management and agricultural water use; empowerment of users as the managers of the resource, including community participation and training of land and water users; public-private sector linkages, to address in particular the need for investments and small-scale farming as well as water storage through rainwater harvesting and groundwater management.

Going forward, negotiations have begun in New York on the outcome for the Third International Conference on SIDS as well as on post 2015 development agenda. The issue of food security and nutrition are among the major issues under consideration. The fact that many SIDS are primarily net food importing countries which also leave them vulnerable to availability and price volatility of food imports is well recognised.

The links between imported food to SIDS that lack nutritional properties and the rising cost of food import bill as well as the growing incidences of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in SIDS, and indeed the globe, should not be overlooked. In the Pacific SIDS for instance, the burden of NCDs in the region is already extremely high, causing up to 70% of deaths and much long-term illness and disability. The Caribbean on the other hand has the highest prevalence of chronic NCDs in the Americas with the 25% of the population of some countries suffering from one or more NCDs. Strategies will need to be put in place to build resilience in this particular area for all SIDS.

One of the ways that the international community can support SIDS in building their resilience in the area of food security is in the area of research, innovation and diffusion of the scientific knowledge and methods. Their specific and unique circumstances dictates a dedicated research into programmes which provide practical support to SIDS in such matters as the diversification of agriculture; alternative uses for crops; resilient crops; improved husbandry; irrigation and water management; aquaculture; and the use of appropriate modern technologies for smallholder agriculture, including for female headed households and agricultural extension services.

In this regard, I commend the work of the CTA in its continued support of SIDS specific initiatives, including through technical and practical approaches via the ACP mechanism, and call on research institutions such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to also focus on a dedicated research that are SIDS focused.

The other obvious link for many SIDS is in the nexus between agriculture and tourism. The potential that this linkage has in job creation, and contributing to improved livelihoods and eradicating poverty in SIDS should be viewed as an opportunity, especially for the smallholder farmers. Here the role of the private sector in SIDS as well as the global private sector will be critical.

In this regard, my office, jointly with the Government of Samoa, will be convening a Private Sector Partnerships Forum in Apia, Samoa, on 30 and 31 August this year. We are happy to be working with CTA on the segment on Agriculture, where we hope to showcase, scale-up and provided a platform for announcements of concrete partnerships with the private sector in the support of SIDS sustainable development aspirations.

Indeed, I recognise that the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) and Samoa's Women in Business, both of whom are also partners for the Apia Forum.

It is my hope that the Forum will be a catalyst where the private sector also plays its role in building SIDS resilience, including in the area of Agriculture and other related sectors.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

Post 2015 OWG discussion on food, nutrition and sustainable agriculture systems

- a) ensuring year-round access by all to affordable, adequate, safe and nutritious food;
- b) ending child malnutrition and stunting;
- c) increasing agricultural productivity, including through adequate irrigation, seeds and fertilisers, while in parallel halting and reversing land degradation, drought and desertification;
- d) improving efficiency of water use in agriculture;
- e) eliminating use of toxic chemicals;
- f) enhancing all forms of agricultural biodiversity;
- g) promoting indigenous and sustainable farming and fishing practices;
- h) strengthening resilience of farming systems and food supplies to climate change;

- i) enhancing adherence to internationally recognized guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests, including full consultation with local communities;
- j) improved access to credit and other financial services, land tenure, and agricultural extension services, for all, including smallholders, women, indigenous peoples and local communities;
- k) increased investment and support to research and development on sustainable agricultural technologies;
- l) reducing post-harvest crop losses and food waste along food supply chains;
- m) addressing harmful agricultural subsidies;
- n) addressing price volatility, including through market information and oversight on commodity markets; and
- o) appropriate means of implementation

Presentation by panelists

Mr.Green : Caribbean region

Food and nutrition, rural modernization as part of CAP in the Caribbean. Agriculture disaster risk management and climate change management is built into it. Farmers classification is important they are: commercial, semi commercial and subsistence farmers. Caribbean week of agriculture with interactions of all has been useful for practical action.

Small farmers have less than 5 acres. small farmers must own the value chain. That means the children of farmers should go to farming by eliminating middlemen and inefficiency through cooperatives and distribution. Bring the supermarket chain to farmers, that is the way of sure success. A School program through curriculum in education on agriculture will create a strong awareness.

Caribbean food bill is 5 billion dollars a year, but much of it one can source from the region. The problem is partly because of overemphasis in the past by world bank on tourism and other sectors. Roots food are resilient in the face of hurricane. Jamaica and Barbados are promoting local fruits. Large percentage has gone to waste still today. Regional integration is key.

Gibson Sununu from the pacific

Food security framework in the pacific has been developed. That is a progress. Leadership and coordination, integrated approach are very important. less support for food security but more for climate change from international community is a challenge. strengthening regulations food safety and standards, marketing and consumption of local food will enhance productivity and

production of local food. NCD crisis is the highest in the world due to the poor quality of imported food. Strengthening food security information and data needs a lot of work and support for finding right solution.

Adi, women in business from the Pacific

Isolation and market issue for subsistence farmers. Add value to the agriculture at farm gate through organic and fair trade certification as value addition. Sole suppliers of virgin oil for Body Shop has been successful work for small farmers. In Samoa. We try to expand and share markets in the region and the Caribbean.

For high value added products, sharing the successes and mistakes is critical. Tonga will join the program with Body Shop.

Ms Nurse from the Caribbean

Rural women are critical but make unrecognized contribution in food resilience. Nutritional health of rural children is much better than that of the urban children in the Caribbean.

Rural women need stronger support to fulfill the government policy. Eat what you produce. We are active in 12 Caribbean countries. Problem is networking and marketing and scaling up. Many children do not know the local variety of products. Cassava flower included in the food chain in Nigeria was a great improvement to promote local produce.

Tourists like new cuisine to test. Until we start forcing the people to eat local food, we cannot progress. Fruits go waste in Caribbean. Scaling up local produce and quality assurances are not difficult but time consuming. Policies are critical.

Maria from PIPSO

Increase in tourists arrival in the Pacific with a high share of Fiji. 40 per cent growth in the decade. Food imports for tourism sector is getting bigger. Fiji used tax incentives to promote food production as a result of devaluation resulting from political instability. Import of Tomato, capsicum and lettuce were drastically reduced with right incentives in farm policies including reduction of tax on farm machinery. Connection between farmers and hoteliers to ensure value chain and logistical linkage. Quantity and quality and preferences are main issues. Farmers association is needed in the Pacific.

Santa Kumar, Fiji

Third party certification is a barrier to small farmers from the islands. Impact of media from advertisement is changing food habit. we are importing a lot of food. Supermarkets are fastest growing business. problem of shelf life, security issues. Organic growth of fruits is key to success.

Ambassador Laurent from the Caribbean

Trade and green economy and agriculture are interrelated. Solutions need to be tailored to the particular challenges. What is the relationship between diagnosis and solutions, import substitutions is traditional approach. We should think about in modern way. But meat, fish should be given due priority. Competitiveness and productivity need to be improved. Consumption habits are also key to it. Therefore trade is also part of the solutions.

Environmental products, forestry and fish can be commercialized. Eco tourism is very important. Festival tourism is another new possibility. Integrated and holistic policy approach is needed. SIDS face unique challenges and as such need a different mindset, internally and among the international community.

Comments

Resilience needs more research, public private partnership and competitiveness building, Trinidad and Tobago
G-20 food and nutrition security how to deal with that. Australia

Opening ceremony highlights

Resilience is much more than coping with crisis but coming out better than before and preventing from such impacts later. Local communities are the best teachers to such solutions, it has to be built on inclusiveness, asset creation, market linkages, insurance and social protection system and strong policy imperatives. IFAD President

Bangladesh in 70s lost 2 million people, a couple of years ago just lost 2000 people from similar intensity of cyclone. In 2011, Ethiopia faced the 60 year cycle of draught in Horn of Africa with much better resilience than others in the neighborhood. WFP and African Union.

Today transformation of agriculture is key, as it has 80 per cent population with 50 per cent contribution. But best agriculture development with second largest. Horticulture in Africa with 15 per cent of the budget going into agriculture.

Priority is agriculture, infrastructure and industrial progress in a green economy environment to reach middle income status by 2025. Ethiopian PM

Global price volatility and regional food sourcing will be critical. Building reserves, and managing them will help them deal with that. National leadership has no alternative but multistakeholder is key with a strong role of the community, as smallholder farms supply 80 per cent of global food today. African Union

Humanitarian and development program should have resilience running through it. Best practices and solutions sharing are very important. Role of women and farmers themselves have to be at the centre. Role of IFPRI in finding right policy approaches were invaluable for Africa. WFP IFPRI