

Report
of the Meeting of High Level Officials from OIC Member States
on Food Security

Izmir, Turkey
28-29 September 2010

I. Proceedings

In accordance with the decision of 25th Session of COMCEC and upon the invitation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, the Meeting of High Level Officials from the OIC Member States on Food Security took place in Izmir, Turkey on 28-29 September 2010. Delegates from 29 OIC Member States, comprising Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development, attended the Meeting. Similarly, representatives of some international and regional organizations namely, FAO, UNDP, WFP, ECO, GCC participated in the Meeting. The OIC institutions which participated in the meeting were the General Secretariat, COMCEC Coordination Office and the IDB. The full list of participants is enclosed.

The opening session was addressed by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Mr. Mehmet Mehdi Eker, the representative of the OIC Secretary General, Ambassador Hameed A. Opeloyeru, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs and the Deputy Undersecretary of State Planning Organization Mr. Ahmet Yaman. Speaking in his capacity as the chairman of the meeting, The Turkish Minister of Agriculture observed that OIC agricultural commodity trade accounted for 11% of the world trade, while the total volume of agricultural commodity trade amounted to US\$ 303 billion, comprising exports value of US\$ 132 billion and imports valued at US\$ 170 billion. Therefore the amount of US\$ 38 billion which represents imports sourced from outside the OIC countries can be adequately supplied within the OIC. He further dwelt extensively on the various options towards a coordinated action by OIC Countries on agriculture, rural development and food security.

On his part, the OIC Secretary General urged the meeting to study closely the recommendations of the various expert group meetings on the creation of the common framework for intra-OIC cooperation in Agriculture and Rural Development, particularly the document titled “Synthesis of Efforts within the Organization of the Islamic Conference and at the International Level to Achieve Food Security”. Similarly the COMCEC Undersecretary Mr. Ahmet Yaman gave a detailed account of the amount of work already carried out by COMCEC in this domain with particular reference to the mandate of COMCEC Task Force on Food Security.

Thereafter Ministers and Heads of Delegation gave their respective countries perspectives on modalities for addressing the identified challenges in agriculture and rural development.

II. Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing, the meeting submitted the following recommendations for consideration of the 26th Session of COMCEC. The recommendations identified three level interventions at national, OIC, regional and international levels.

A. National Level

There were many recommendations that emerged within the light of the challenges and the constraints that were presented during the meeting. For the sake of conceptual clarity, these are grouped within 5 broad areas as outlined below.

1. Policies and Institutions

Public Sector Investment: Increase amount of official investment in agriculture with an intent of achieving self-sufficiency in at least some primary commodities.

Private Sector Investment: Implement incentive policies to create enabling environment for private sector, including Foreign direct investment (FDI); Promote Public-Private sector Partnerships (PPP).

Capacity Building: Build technical capacities for policy, program and project formulation; Prepare long-term action plans, recognizing the time required for impacts to be felt; Conduct awareness campaigns on climate change.

Regional Cooperation: Promote efficient use of water resources for agriculture, including modern irrigation methods; promote intra-regional market integration; promote investments in regional infrastructure; promote regional sharing of information and knowledge.

2. Natural Resource Management

Water Management: Support creation of water users' associations; Improve efficiency of water use and delivery; Maximize water productivity; Promote water harvesting; Promote supplementary irrigation; Promote conservation agriculture, accompanied by machinery and equipment provision; Provide incentives for sustainable and optimal use of ground water; Promote technologies for use of brackish water for irrigation.

Land Management: Maintain soil quality with appropriate fertilization and soil nutrient maintenance schemes; Keep soil well-drained to prevent salinity, Maintain thick vegetative cover to protect against soil erosion during flooding.

Human Resource Management: Promote human capital development and appropriate population growth policies to enhance food security.

3. Sustainable Productivity Growth

Research and Extension: Give greater priority to investment in research on how to bridge the yield gap; Better integrate research and extension through holistic programs; Integrate and harmonize official and private sector extension services; Promote franchising of extension services, using NGOs; Conduct research program on adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change, and on development of drought and salt-tolerant crop varieties, strengthening comparative advantage and competitiveness on food production. Initiate Carbon trade exchanges and methodology for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Initiate activities on bioenergy and biofuels.

Technology Transfer and Input Supply for Smallholders: Identify and disseminate technologies appropriate for smallholders; Promote literacy and numeracy training; Promote exchange of knowledge and experience, example through SSC; Target technology development to smallholders; Put in place efficient seed delivery mechanisms, including development of informal seed production systems; Integrate fertilizer and water delivery; Invest in development of alternative energy sources (bio, solar); Put in place ‘Smart Subsidies’ for fertilizer and seeds.

4. Market Performance

Market Institutions: Develop relevant market institutions in order to enhance price discovery processes, improve decision making at each link in the value chain and allow better management of inherent market risks; Create crop insurance schemes and indemnization funds to encourage farmers to become risk-takers; Create enabling environment for technology transfer (credit, market access).

Integrated Value Chain Approach: For horticulture and staple food crops, introduce precision agriculture in conformity with international certification standards, establish input delivery systems that provide precision inputs, codify standards and use Intellectual Property Rights to protect quality of inputs and products, place collection points near to production areas and ensure producers gain adequate return for value added, rely on investors at processing and marketing end to create demand and establish standards for target markets; For livestock, Organise producer groups; Introduce improved breeds that meet standards and are appropriate for smallholders; Provide adequate animal health care services and promote good animal nutrition; Facilitate access to land, using participative methods at local level; Introduce simple procedures for establishing processing and marketing enterprises; upgrade local and central markets, with

relevant storage facilities to curb post-harvest losses; facilitate to overcome the impediments of rural markets by effectively putting in place measures to mitigate and open-up relevant trade channels. Promote activities in the area of fisheries and aquaculture.

Reduction of Post-Harvest Losses: Link agro-processing development to productivity; improvement, so as to absorb excess supply; Invest in processing industries that create marketing chains; Reduce post-harvest losses by investing in storage, packaging and transport facilities that eliminate need for long-term storage of bulk commodities.

5. Community Driven Development, Micro-Finance and Women Empowerment

Community Driven Development: Create greater awareness about the CDD approach and the benefit to both communities and governments; Apply CDD methodologies for establishment and development of farmer organizations, cooperatives, and women's organizations at all levels.

Micro-Finance & Innovative Financing Schemes: Establish funds that mobilize investment capital from rural enterprises for qualifying agricultural and rural development projects; Promote micro-finance schemes for disadvantaged and marginalized persons; developing both informal and formal insurance cover, in order to mitigate inherent and external risks involved in the agriculture and its related sectors.

Women Empowerment: Provide greater access to education-vocational training and technology for women villagers; Provide legal access to land, assets and credit for women; Ensure that extension services reach women farmers.

B. OIC Level

1. COMCEC should mandate its Task Force on Food Security to incorporate Agriculture and Rural Development and request the Task Force to engage OIC member States and relevant Institutions for the establishment of an Executive Framework for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development for OIC Member States. This should embody identified Programmes and Projects in the critical sectors with time-lines, benchmarks accompanied by Lead Countries, Lead MDBs and Regional and International Organisations working Agriculture and Rural Development .
2. Consideration should also be given to the existing Regional Programmes on Agriculture and Food Security especially the African Union's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), as well as the Strategy for Sustainable Arab Agricultural Development and Emergency Programme for Arab Food Security and the African Union-Arab League Joint Plan of Action on Food Security with similar programs available for Asia such as the Regional Programme for Food Security of ECO and similar programs for ASEAN and SAARC countries.

3. Fostering Intra-Trade in Agricultural Commodities.
4. Enhancing Intra-OIC FDI in the Agriculture Sector. Harmonize existing national legislations to facilitate public-private investments.
5. Establish emergency food stocks in certain countries of OIC countries.
6. Establish a suitable fund for food security interventions in OIC Countries.
7. Establish an OIC seed bank and promote improved seedling activities.
8. Establish comprehensive database on all aspects of food security.

C. Regional and International Level

1. Utilize existing national networks in OIC Countries to share research outcomes amongst the member countries.
2. Call upon the collaboration of Regional Specialized Agencies and relevant OIC Institutions to link-up with the Private sector aimed at building capacities, linkages and harnessing resources for the development of the agricultural sector.
3. Enhance collaboration and coordination with specialized regional and international institutions to support agriculture and rural development in Member States.

III. Vote of Thanks

Ministers, Heads of Delegation at the meeting expressed their appreciation to the President, Government and People of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Meeting of High Level Officials from the OIC Member States on Food Security and for the warm reception and brotherly hospitality accorded to all delegates and the participants at the meeting. They also expressed appreciation that the OIC Secretary General and the COMCEC Coordination Office for their logistical support and arrangements for the meeting. They particularly commend the wisdom and astuteness of the Chairman which facilitated the successful outcome of the meeting.

Izmir, September 29, 2010