

DOUALA DECLARATION

We, the government delegates from urban communities and local authorities, the mayors and city executives of Cameroon, joined together in Douala from 21 to 23 March 2005 on the occasion of the workshop “Local Governments and Food Security of Cameroon Cities” organized by the Urban Community of Douala, the Associated Young Researchers for Development (JACD) and the French Cooperation, under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, being aware that a significant number of Cameroonian households in urban and rural areas live under conditions of food insecurity:

1. state the pressing need for consumers to have access to varied and healthy nourishment, on a regular basis, by implementing participatory programmes aimed at reinforcing the efficiency of food supply and distribution systems (FSDS) in line with the recommendations of the World Food Summit, held in Rome in 1996;
2. recognise the importance of complementary national and local policies, strategies and programmes aimed at protecting food security in all the country and, in particular, in the disadvantaged regions;
3. recognise that city and local governments of Cameroon can and must play an important role in the strengthening of food security of less advantaged households in those areas under their management;
4. underline, on the one hand, the importance of partnership among the central governmental institutions, local authorities, civil society organizations (chambers, professional associations, trade unions, non governmental organizations and citizen movements), and, on the other hand, the need of a clear definition of functions and responsibilities of the various partnerships to improve FSDS efficiency;
5. recognise that the creation of job opportunities, particularly in favour of young people in rural areas, is necessary to fight poverty, strengthen food security and reduce the exodus from rural areas.

We commit ourselves to:

1. give higher priority to food security and to incorporate this objective in our global and sectoral policies and strategies for social, human and economic development;
2. develop and deepen exchange of information, knowledge and experience among city executives, local, regional and international organization networks, university and research institutions;
3. encourage the participation of primary actors (farmers, transporters, traders, wholesalers and retailers as well as consumers and their associations or trade unions) in our efforts to improve the efficiency of food supply and distribution systems;
4. strengthen our knowledge of food supply and distribution issues and implement the necessary studies to improve FSDS efficiency and create the conditions necessary for profitable and effective public investments;

5. to open ourselves, respecting the texts in force, to cooperation (national, decentralized or international) likely to contribute to enhancing food security and livelihoods in Cameroon and favour a more efficient north-south and south-south cooperation.

We lastly commit ourselves, in collaboration with the State, the civil society organisations and private local partnerships, to:

1. contribute to the development or the consolidation of the institutional basis to strengthen food security, in particular:
 - a) within the municipal councils, commissions, working groups, etc. involved in food security and in the follow-up of food supply and distribution activities in the administered areas;
 - b) at the decentralised territorial communities level, to engage in consultation and dialogue among the various FSDS actors with the aim to develop and implement a code of good practices;
2. create favourable conditions for the daily activities of formal and informal actors involved in food supply and distribution and facilitate the flow of food products by eliminating the many difficulties met by transporters and traders;
3. give priority and attention to the good development, management and maintenance of the infrastructure and services needed for the activities of FSDS operators;
4. work to strengthen the hygiene practices in the production, post-harvest, storage and processing sectors, as well as in markets so as to ensure food safety.

Douala, 23 March 2005.

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