

Regional Workshop on

“Ensuring Resilient Food Systems in African cities”

Nairobi, 13-14 December 2011

Opening

Mr Paul Munro-Faure – FAO Food for the Cities

Mr Chair,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here as chair of the “food for the cities” multi-disciplinary initiative in FAO, Principal officer within the Natural resources management and environment department, leading the land tenure team.

A special thank you goes to Mr Castro Camarada – head of the Sub-Regional office for East-Africa – and Mr Dan Rugabira, FAO representative in Kenya. I particularly want to thank his team for having supported all the logistic work, particularly in the last days.

I also thank Davinder Lamba for all his contributions to the “food for cities” work. It is once again confirm with the Mazingira institute being partner of the workshop.

Urbanization trends and challenges for food and nutrition security

The world’s population is becoming increasingly urbanized as a result of both natural increase and rural-urban migration. According to the United Nations Population Division, the percentage of urban population has exceeded 50% of the total world population, and it will continue to increase for the next decades to nearly 70% by 2050. It will particularly affect African cities. For Eastern Africa alone, the prospective is a shift from 2010 to 2050 of a population of 327 million among which 24 % are urban to 711 million with 47 % urban, that means an increase from 77 to 337 million of urban dwellers in just 40 years, with a development of big as well as medium size cities.

Men-made and natural disasters and crises increase the challenges for food and nutrition security of the urban dwellers. Climate change will make things even worst. And the conclusion of the Durban conference, finished just 2 days ago, is giving the clear signal to local communities that they have to get ready for climate change.

The food for the cities initiative

Considering the urbanization challenges for food, agriculture and management of natural resources, FAO has set up the “Food for the Cities” multi-disciplinary initiative in 2000 following up a decision of the Committee of Agriculture of FAO in 1999 making a reference to urban and peri-urban agriculture, after a group of agencies convened in Ottawa to formalise a support group on urban agriculture in 1993. In

fact, there is quite an long experience regarding urban issues. Some participants that are here today are long time partners.

The “Food for the Cities” initiative brings together all the different technical divisions of FAO which activities have a urban component or relate to urban issues: nutrition, urban and peri-urban agriculture, water management, food supply, processing and marketing, urban and peri-urban forestry, biodiversity, etc... In fact, it is about all the departments of the Organization.

Florence Egal, nutrition officer, and Sylvie Wabbes, emergency officer, are the 2 co-secretaries of the “Food for the Cities” initiative. The secretariat is supported by Julien Custot, facilitator, and Francesca Gianfelici.

Within FAO, more than 150 person are participating, within Head Quarters and Decentralized Offices, at all hierarchical levels.

FAO has worked with many partners:

- UN-agencies: WFP, WHO, UNICEF...
- association of local authorities, particularly ICLEI
- NGOs
- universities, research centers (CGIAR, and particularly the former Urban Harvest)
- resource centers, as RUAF
- donor organizations, as IDRC

The workshop today is the result of this long collaboration and contacts made through the last 10 years.

The team of people here from Kenya demonstrate how local networks have been very active in the recent years. The experience of Kenya should be inspiring for many other countries.

The “Food for the Cities” initiative is doing both advocacy and project implementation.

Regarding advocacy, information sharing and networking, most of the information is available on the website : www.fao.org/fcit

You will find different technical fact sheets and publications, and reports of past meetings.

Regarding the technical work done, I particularly want to mention the “urban producers resource book” which has been developed thanks to the support of the Canadian IDRC.

FAO has implemented more than 100 projects with a urban component. Some projects are limited, some other much more important; some deal mostly with development, some other with crisis and emergencies. Some are very thematic, some are developing a more holistic approach.

Particularly one ongoing project in Madagascar – Antananarivo with: urban agriculture, livestock, nutrition education, school gardens, organization of producers and access to market.

Besides, the “Food for the Cities” initiative has set up a global network “food-for-cities@dgroups.org” 2 years ago. It now brings together now more than 1000 people from more than 100 countries.

The “Food for the Cities” initiative has recently published a position paper “Food, agriculture and cities”. It has benefited from many contributions of the “Food for Cities” global network. Some of the contributors are here today. I want to thank them very sincerely.

The publication is in your folders. It develops a food system approach for food and nutrition security, with stronger urban-rural linkages. This paper has been presented at the last Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in October. Davinder Lamba and Russel Galt, here today, were both 2 of our panelists.

The paper will be presented in more details in the next session. The main message is that we need a holistic approach bringing all the components of the food system with strengthened urban-rural linkages. It is expressed by Alexander Müller, assistant director general of the Natural Resources Management and Environment department of FAO, quoted in the paper.

“Building resilient food systems for the future through integrating rural and urban areas and strengthening their linkages will benefit both small farmers and the urban poor”.

We propose to build on 4 dimensions for more resilient food systems:

- a people centered approach,
- a multi-level governance,
- urban and territorial planning,
- emergencies, disaster risk management and ecosystem management

We can now use this framework together as a basis to propose concrete actions. We have already built on this paper during a workshop organized for Asian cities in Bangkok last month. We are doing it with you now to focus on the specificities and challenges of Eastern Africa cities.

We should also get the similarities between the different urban contexts.

This workshop is a step in a process of the global agenda.

- Regional conference of FAO: opportunity to raise urban issues in the food and agriculture agenda? (Regional Conference for the Africa (ARC) (April 23-27 2012 in Brazzaville, Congo)
- Durban conference mentioned already. It is leading to Rio+20 where food, agriculture and cities will be major issues,
- ICLEI (local governments for sustainability) World Congress in Belo Horizonte
- World Urban Forum VI, organized by UN-Habitat, that will take place in September 2012 in Naples. FAO has participated to all the previous sessions. Opportunity to get food and agriculture in the urban agenda.

The workshop

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I am happy to be here with you and having the possibility to learn from the discussions and work we are going to do in the two coming days. The workshop is organized with presentation sessions and working groups. We have tried to manage time for discussion as we really want to build on your experience and inputs.

Three goals we may want to achieve are:

- Develop arguments that will persuade local actors to address food and nutrition security in urban areas;
- Strengthen the network of actors of the subregion, and
- Propose some simple and concrete ways of promoting food policies contributing to both rural and urban dwellers.

I hope that after these two days (probably too short) we will all have the desire to keep on working together after the workshop. The “food for cities” network, that FAO is facilitating and that will be presented to you, may be a good way to keep in touch and interact with a wider community.

I wish you very fruitful sessions of the regional workshop on “Ensuring resilient food systems for African cities”, and more particularly Eastern Africa cities.