

FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT
NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORT
BULGARIA

About: The status of the income, the consumption and the social policy carried out in R. Bulgaria.

1. Introduction

Republic of Bulgaria is in the third group of countries with 1 200 000 people of the population undernourished, according to “The map of hunger”, made by The World Food Program for livelihood and agriculture (FAO) of the United Nations. Data for the period 1998- 2000 determine 15% of the country’s population as undernourished. Simultaneously, in the FAO’s report “World’s undernourishment risks status” Bulgaria has 16% of all the starving people or 1 300 000 men for the period 1999- 2001.

By the point of view of the international standards for extreme poverty Republic of Bulgaria does not have the same problems that are typical for the countries with low living standard and high share of undernourished population. In that meaning the terms “hunger” and “undernourished population” could not be applied in Bulgaria. In support of such a position are the data of the national, international statistics and the successes of government’s social policy.

According to the last 3 global reports of the UNDP for the development of the man (2000- 2002), Bulgaria is between place 59 and 61 in the upper half of the mid-developed countries. Giving characteristics of the Bulgarian transition in the report of Bulgaria “The objectives of the millennium for development” as an objective N1 is indicated “Reducing in half the extreme poverty and the undernourishment”.

Most accurate picture of the measures of the problem can be given by the periodic actualization of the verge of poverty and determining the quota the extreme poor people. Reducing the risk of undernourishment is just one of the measures for overcoming the extreme poverty. In Bulgaria the studies for determining the levels of poverty are done by the methods of Eurostat and The World Bank, which is a guarantee of impartiality and representativeness of the results.

In the research of FAO, examining of the so-called “Hot spots of hunger”, are indicated the regions and countries, urgently supported by food, as well as the duration of the humanitarian measures. It is obvious that Bulgaria is not in the list of the “hot spots” i.e. among the countries stricken by war, turbulence, epidemics or serious nature disasters. The country has not been

an object of any major humanitarian operations, as the ones carried out in the countries of former Yugoslavia after the war. In spite of these facts, Republic of Bulgaria is on the “Map of hunger” in a group with Bosnia and Herzegovina for example, nevertheless the hard post war inheritance of the former Yugoslav republic.

2. Brief analysis of the actual situation in the country.

2.1 Poverty.

Merit of the present government is that for the first time in the new political history of the country there is an engagement on determine actual level of poverty, identifying of the low income groups and applying of a purposefully policy for reducing poverty.

In a detailed research of the budgets and the domestic consumption structure in Bulgaria there are clearly emerged positive trend. Data from the research of the National Statistic Institute: Households in Bulgaria- studying the domestic budgets for the period 1995- 2002, NSI, 2003. Shows that during the studied period, despite of the increasing level of poverty, quota of poor households is decreasing.

In 2002 the level of relative poverty in Bulgaria is reduced to 12.55%.

The quoted data shows the considerability of the state’s part in carrying its social functions out. Poverty is multiaspect phenomenon and it would be out of truth all poor people to be identified as starving.

2.2 Income and standard of life.

The Bulgarian government treats the global goals of the millennium for development for development with extreme responsibility. Global goal N1 for Bulgaria is reducing in a half of the worst poverty and the undernourishment and the priorities for its achievements are

- Increasing the income of the population, guaranteeing of social defense for the mot vulnerable groups and decreasing the quote of people living under the level of poverty;
- Increasing of the employment, particularly among the youth, decreasing the quote of durably unemployed and the people in unequal statement, using active policy on the work market;
- Economic development, decreasing the quote of the economy in shadow in the GDP, legalizing of the unregistered income and etc.

One of the basic principles at the realization of given objectives is co-ordination of the policies carried out by the government. In the circumstances of economic stability a complex of economic social legislative and etc measures are led, their affectivity is increasing.

Increasing of the employment is the main instrument for reducing the quote of the poor people, the incomes and the quality of live

In year 2003 the average annual number of the unemployed reached its lowest level since 1999- 528 041 people. The level of unemployment to 31.12.2003 is 13.5%. By level of unemployment Bulgaria in 2002 (17.7%) is closer to the integrating on 01.05.2004 the European Union ten Countries, in which the average level of unemployment is for the same year is 15.1%. in 200 the average level of unemployment in Bulgaria is 14.25% or 3.45 points lower that the previous year.

The number of people who changed their life to better is increasing. The program “From social help to ensure of work” is designed for the poorest people – on a social help. It ensures employment, income, motivation for education and labor, and social integration on continuously unemployed and badly off people.

- The households income in nominal value indicates permanent tendency of increasing during the last 9 years. After the extreme for the economy of the country 1996 – 1997, the tendency is characterized as stable. Data from NSI of the household incomes study in 2003, indicates, that just for the last studied year (2003) towards 2001 the average total income of household member is increasing from 1 589 Lv. to 2 129 lv. or with 34%.

The real income of the house holds also increases for the period. In 2003 the real income still can't reach the level of 1995, but it is higher towards the rest of the years taken as a basic. Towards the beginning of the millennium (2000) it is higher with 16,35%, towards 2001 – with 23,7% and towards 2002 – with 4,8%.

2.3 Consumption

The average quote of the consumer's expense of the general expenses of the households in 2003 reached 86.6%, as it is increasing with 0.5 points towards 2001, towards 1995 the increase is 2.9 points. The most considerable share as consumers expense, also of the total household expenses is the expense for food, which in 1995 is 46.2% and in 2003 reached 40.4% quantity that is the lowest for the examined period of time. The highest share of the food expense for the examined period of time is in 1998 – 47.8%.

3. Social policy.

The social model is expressed in very new approach for solving the social problems in Bulgaria. Its carrying out is based on the principles of: differentiated method of approach to the groups of people in social bad off, active influence over the reasons for becoming poor, financial decentralization and co-ordination of the actions and the policies. The

government has realized considerable part of the basic objectives of the new social policy, which are:

- Saving and encouragement of employment through individual methods to every jobless, increasing work suitability, preferences for the employers and stimulation of the enterprising.
- Increasing the income and drive against poverty through elaboration of the paying system and contracting, guarantee of what is earned and development of national policy against poverty.
- Modernization of the system for social help, support for the people with unequal social status, restriction of social isolation, development of the social services.
- Stable contemporary system of social security through introduction of insurance levels in every branch and profession, and registration of the labor agreements.
- Decreasing of poverty and increasing of prosperity of the people is the main objective of the government's policy, as for its achievement are mobilized all the institutions and Non governmental organizations, including syndicates, employers organizations, foundations, organizations and companies offering social services.
- With resolution № 694 from 06.10.2003 was accepted Strategy of raid against poverty and social isolation, which included the period of years 2003 to 2006. The major objective is decreasing of poverty and avoiding of risk for social isolation. All the state's institutions are mobilized in carrying out of the strategy.

With resolution of the council of the ministers from 19 of January 2004 was accepted National scheme for raid against poverty and social isolation for 2004. The scheme was developed with the participation of all the ministries, interested departments and non-gornmental organizations, also with the support of the Bulgarian academically society.

I conclusion we would like to notice, that we fully share the Secretary General of FAO d-r Jacques Diouf concern for the impossibility of the governments to take care of the challenges of a global dimension. In this connection we consider that Bulgaria could establish useful and equivalent partnership with FAO for achieving of the common global objectives.