**The 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) and its significance for food security in Africa**

**Collection of contributions received**

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# Topic note

Through the 2014 Malabo Declaration, African governments made a specific and clear commitment to boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services, and to harnessing market and trade opportunities locally, regionally, and internationally. This is increasingly regarded as a means to promote agricultural transformation in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), to help address the key challenges in the region related to agricultural development such as diverse agro-ecological systems and small national markets.

At the same time, the relationship between trade and food security is attracting increased attention on both the trade and the development agendas. The eradication of global hunger by 2030 is a key goal in the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and trade is recognized as one of the means for achieving the SDGs. The challenge is how to ensure that the expansion of agricultural trade works for and not against, the elimination of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This challenge has been at the forefront as governments’ struggle to negotiate the changes to the current global agreements on agricultural trade that allow sufficient flexibility to countries to pursue their individual needs.

Ahead of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires from 10 to 13 December 2017, FAO and IFPRI, through the FSN Forum and the IFPRI Food Security Portal, are joining forces to provide a platform to share knowledge and exchange views on the significance of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference for Africa.

This is an opportunity to increase awareness on the linkages between trade and food security, and on the significance of the WTO agreements in relation to these linkages.

We invite all interested FSN Forum members and colleagues to join this debate on the FSN Forum (open from 20 November to 8 December) and on the [IFPRI Africa South of the Sahara Food Security Portal](http://ssa.foodsecurityportal.org/forum) (on the 27 November) reflecting on the following questions:

**1. Do you think the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) provide sufficient policy space for domestic support for countries in Africa? Why or why not?**

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| The general approach of the Agreement on Agriculture with regard to domestic support is to allow unlimited support through policies that meet certain criteria (Green Box, Blue Box and Development Box)[[1]](#_ftn1). Support through other policies is subject to limits. Countries that have a positive Bound Total AMS[[2]](#_ftn2) in their Schedule of Commitments, have space to provide non-exempt support up to the Bound Total AMS ceiling. Most developing countries, however, have a Bound Total AMS of zero. This generally limits their AMS support to their 10% de minimis levels. Many countries in Africa implement some form of domestic support programmes, such as input subsidies, market price support and public stockholding measures, and support is increasingly geared toward to increasing the adoption of climate-smart practices.  [[1]](#_ftnref1) Green Box: Support to agriculture that is allowed without limits because it does not distort trade, or at most causes minimal distortion. It refers to Annex 2 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture. Blue Box: Support with constraints on production or other conditions designed to reduce distortion. Currently, no limitation is applied to it. Development Box: Certain development measures, allowed without limitation only in developing countries. They are outlined in Article 6.2 of the AoA.  [[2]](#_ftnref2) AMS – Aggregate Measurement of Support: Refers to the calculation of support for agriculture that is considered to distort trade and therefore subject to reduction commitments. |

**2. In your opinion, do export restrictions enhance or undermine food security in African countries? Should the WTO disciplines on export restrictions be stricter or allow greater flexibility?**

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| In the WTO, export restrictions are mainly governed by Article 12 of the Agreement on Agriculture[[1]](#_ftn1), and GATT Article XI[[2]](#_ftn2).  Article 12 of the AoA foresees that when any member institutes any new export prohibition or restriction on foodstuffs, in accordance with GATT Article XI, then: advance consideration should be given to the effects upon importing WTO Members’ food security, advance information on the measure, and further information or consultations upon request should be provided. There is an exemption from such requirements for developing countries unless they are net-food exporters of the specific foodstuff concerned. Export restrictions – particularly of key staple commodities – are common policy instruments used in many countries in Africa, to respond to food security concerns; particularly to lower prices and ensure adequate domestic availability of food. However, these policies are often implemented in an ad hoc way, and their impacts on food security at the national vs. the regional levels, and in the short vs. longer terms are debated.  [[1]](#_ftnref1) [www.wto.org/English/docs\_e/legal\_e/14-ag\_01\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/English/docs_e/legal_e/14-ag_01_e.htm)  [[2]](#_ftnref2) [www.wto.org/english/res\_e/booksp\_e/analytic\_index\_e/gatt1994\_05\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/analytic_index_e/gatt1994_05_e.htm) |

**3. What efforts can be made at the multilateral level, to complement regional integration efforts? In your opinion, are there some policy areas that are better addressed at the multilateral level, and others at the regional level?**

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| There has been renewed attention to the debate on whether regional trade agreements (RTAs) provide an alternative to the multilateral trading system (MTS), or whether RTAs and the MTS complement each other, in the goal of reducing barriers to trade. While overlapping memberships in the various regional economic communities (RECs) in Africa can create a number of challenges, the RECs have each achieved varying degrees of economic integration, and negotiations for the tripartite free trade area (TFTA) and the continental free trade area (CFTA) aim to further these efforts. |

We look forward to an interesting and lively exchange.

Georgios Mermigkas and Ishrat Gadhok  
FAO Trade and Markets Division

# Contributions received

## Emile Hougbo, National University of Agriculture, Porto-Novo, Benin

Agricultural trade and food security are two factors important for economic growth and development. They are concerned about public policy. That's why, through the 2014 Malabo Declaration, African governments made a specific and clear commitment to boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services, and to harnessing market and trade opportunities locally, regionally, and internationally. This is also why a place of choice has been given to the fight against hunger in the SDGs, especially the 2nd SDG, which aims to eliminate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Unfortunately, the logic that governs agricultural trade is fundamentally different from that governing the achievement of food security for the population. While agricultural trade is governed by the economic rule of profit maximization, food security is governed by the social rule of justice and altruism for the production of sufficient human resources for development. It even happens that this contradiction of logic leads to what I called "perverse trade" in my article entitled “When Food Trade Threatens Food Security of Small Farmers in West Africa: the Perverse Food Trade”. This article is accessible on:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318099303\_  
When\_Food\_Trade\_Threatens\_Food\_Security\_of\_Small\_Farmers\_in  
\_West\_Africa\_the\_Perverse\_Food\_Trade](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318099303_When_Food_Trade_Threatens_Food_Security_of_Small_Farmers_in_West_Africa_the_Perverse_Food_Trade)

This means that trade is not the right way to eradicate hunger by 2030 as the SDGs provide. Precise answers to the three questions of the discussion are provided below.

**1. Do you think the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) provide sufficient policy space for domestic support for countries in Africa? Why or why not?**

The general approach of the Agreement on Agriculture with regard to domestic support is to allow unlimited support through policies. As far as I’m concerned, I think these provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) could provide surely sufficient policy space for domestic support for countries in Africa.  For, if properly applied, they can improve production, crop yield, product conservation and the limitation of food losses and waste. In short, they are provisions that will lead globally to abundant agricultural production. But, it should be emphasized that to be effective, the efforts must be centered on "staple crops". Effective promotion of the staple crops requires taking into account the different food systems at both national and intra-national levels in West Africa.

**2. In your opinion, do export restrictions enhance or undermine food security in African countries? Should the WTO disciplines on export restrictions be stricter or allow greater flexibility?**

Generally, export restrictions of agricultural products are not effective. Two reasons justify this phenomenon. First, export restrictions are never effective in the long run. They can only really be used in case of emergency to respond punctually to a random phenomenon that has negatively affected food availability (flood, drought, ...). The second reason is that trade is still essential for a proper distribution of agricultural products. As then, trade is a means of optimizing labor productivity among the countries in the West African sub-region. This is an economic theory already known and supported by the Economist David RICARDO; the theory of comparative advantage.

**3. What efforts can be made at the multilateral level, to complement regional integration efforts? In your opinion, are there some policy areas that are better addressed at the multilateral level, and others at the regional level?**

Regional legal measures hardly succeed in West Africa. The success of decisions will not necessarily come from regional or multilateral measures, but from objective, realistic and inclusive national measures. For, corruption, language barriers, poor communication routes and poor physical security of people are often obstacles to compliance with regional legal provisions in Africa in general, and West Africa in particular.

## Krishna Rao Pinninti, Climate and Development Strategies LLC, USA

Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services, when properly handled to reap the benefits of comparative advantage in agricultural production, tends to be a good idea. However, various rules and regulations under the WTO regime do not mean much on the ground. This is because of lack of transparent and accountable mechanisms and enforcement of rules at different levels. Various provisions may remain on paper rather than enhance trade and food security. Given the limited total market power of the region for trade volume there should be little surprise that the mechanisms cannot contribute to effective agricultural transformation.

What remains more relevant in this context is the role of value chain approach to production, processing and export, within the region and outside - based on sustainable agriculture methods and focus on small farm innovations. Provision of self-enforcing incentive mechanisms (such as recognizing and supporting high productivity) could be useful. Inter-agency cooperative efforts (domestic and international) will be rewarding to the populations, in general.  Excessive expliotation of natural resources to maximize trade can be detrimental to sustainable production, trade and development. The focus needs to be more on the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goals using pragmatic mechanisms in this context.

see also: *P K Rao International Environmental Law and Economics*(Blackwell)

*P K Rao The World Trade Organization and the Environment* (Macmillan)

## Jacques Berthelot, SOL, France

#### French version

La concession accordée aux PMA de ne pas avoir à réduire leurs droits de douane – que les politiques d’ajustement structurel les empêchaient en réalité déjà d’augmenter – et permettant que leurs exportations ne soient pas taxées dans la plupart des pays développés et émergents a été un cadeau empoisonné. À la suite de l’initiative « Tout sauf les armes » (TSA) de l’UE ouvrant son marché sans droits de douane ni quotas à leurs exportations, Via Campesina et le Réseau des organisations paysannes et des producteurs agricoles d’Afrique de l’Ouest (ROPPA) ont souligné dans un communiqué commun du 13 mai 2001 que « les priorités des paysans et de leurs familles dans les PMA est d’abord de pouvoir produire pour leur famille, puis d’avoir accès au marché intérieur, bien avant d’exporter. La décision européenne ne va au contraire que renforcer les bénéfices des grandes firmes utilisant les ressources et la main d’œuvre des PMA pour les cultures d’exportation vers l’UE […] augmentant ainsi l’insécurité alimentaire ». De fait, selon les chiffres de la CNUCED, les exportations des PMA d’Afrique ont bien moins augmenté vers l’UE28 que vers le monde entier de 2001 à 2016 : 38,5 % de moins pour l’ensemble des produits et 43,6 % de moins pour les produits alimentaires, malgré le programme TSA. Et la part des produits manufacturés dans leurs exportations totales vers l’UE28 est passée de 34 % en 2001 à 20 % en 2016. Toutes les ressources mobilisées pour ces exportations ont réduit celles disponibles pour l’autosuffisance alimentaire. Ainsi, le déficit alimentaire des PMA a augmenté de 12,5 % par an de 1995 à 2016, puisque leurs importations ont augmenté de 9 % et les exportations de 6,6 %.

Or, l’UE impose aux PMA des pays ACP (Afrique-Caraïbes-Pacifique) de réduire de 80 % leurs droits de douane sur ses exportations dans le cadre des accords de partenariat économique (APE) régionaux, violant par là même sa Déclaration « Tout sauf les armes ». L’APE conclu avec l’Afrique de l’Ouest pourrait ainsi réduire les recettes douanières – droits de douane plus taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (TVA) à l’importation – cumulées de ces pays de 32,2 milliards d’euros entre 2020 et 2035, dont 15,5 milliards d’euros pour les PMA, et parmi lesquels 3,9 milliards d’euros sur les produits agricoles.

Un autre scandale réside dans l’importance des subventions aux produits agricoles exportés par les pays développés, notamment par les Etats membres de l’UE, qui refusent de prendre en compte les subventions internes, jamais traitées dans les accords de libre-échange, en particulier les APE, sous prétexte que les règles les concernant sont de la compétence exclusive de l’OMC. Or l’UE y a refusé un débat sur la boîte verte, au titre de laquelle elle notifie ses subventions découplées – 38,3 milliards d’euros en 2015 – et ne tient pas compte des subventions aux aliments du bétail pour ses produits animaux exportés. Ainsi les subventions de l’UE28 à ses exportations mondiales de produits laitiers ont atteint 2 milliards d’euros en 2016, au taux de dumping de 13,2 %. Sur ce total, les subventions à l’Afrique de l’Ouest ont été de 168,6 millions d’euros, au taux de dumping de 20,8 %. De même, les 59,3 Mt de céréales exportées par l’UE28 en 2016 ont été subventionnées à hauteur de 3,585 milliards d’euros (60,4 euros/tonne), au taux de dumping de 34,4 % sur les céréales brutes. Sur ce total, les 3,4 Mt de céréales exportées en Afrique de l’Ouest ont bénéficié de 215 millions d’euros de subventions. Là encore la finalisation de l’APE régional augmenterait fortement ce dumping puisque le droit de douane sur les céréales, hors riz, passerait de 5 à 0 %, ce qui va déjà se passer pour les APE intérimaires de Côte d’Ivoire et du Ghana.

Il est urgent de refonder radicalement les politiques agricoles de l’UE et des pays en développement, dont l’Afrique subsaharienne, sur la souveraineté alimentaire afin d'atteindre le deuxième des ODD sur la sécurité alimentaire. Pour assurer un développement agricole durable, les pays d’Afrique subsaharienne doivent en effet modifier radicalement leurs politiques agricoles en assurant des prix stables et rémunérateurs aux agriculteurs. Cela implique que les communautés économiques régionales comme la Cedeao et la CAE deviennent membres à part entière de l’OMC, au même titre que l’UE. Elles bénéficieront alors de droits de douane consolidés car leurs tarifs extérieurs communs (TEC) ne portent que sur les droits de douane appliqués. Elles pourront alors refonder leurs TEC sur des prélèvements variables – si efficaces pour développer la production agricole de l’UE avant l’OMC – tant que l’équivalent ad valorem des prélèvements variables ne dépasse pas le droit consolidé.

Pour que le relèvement des prix agricoles ne pénalise pas les consommateurs pauvres, ces communautés économiques régionales mettraient en œuvre une aide alimentaire intérieure massive en produits vivriers régionaux, comme le font l’Inde et les Etats-Unis, financée par la coopération internationale, notamment par des prêts à très long terme de l’Association internationale de développement (AID), filiale de la Banque mondiale. Cela serait une composante d’un « plan Marshall » pour l’Afrique subsaharienne, à côté d’une composante « infrastructures » pour les échanges intérieurs, d’une composante « transformation des produits vivriers locaux » pour se substituer aux importations de blé et d’une composante « emplois non agricoles » en relevant les droits de douane sur la filière textile-habillement afin d’assurer des débouchés rémunérateurs au coton africain. Cela suppose que l’UE cesse de s’aligner sur les Etats-Unis pour trouver à l’OMC une solution permanente aux règles sur les stocks publics de sécurité alimentaire.

**English translation**

The concession granted to the LDCs of not having to reduce the customs tariffs, -- given  that the structural adjustment policies in reality already prevented them from being  increased -- and allowing  for their exports  not to be taxed in the majority of developed and emerging countries, has been a poisoned chalice. Following the EU Everything but Arms (EBA) initiative opening its markets without customs taxes or quotas on their exports, Via Campesina and  the Réseau des organisations paysannes et des producteurs agricoles d'Afrique de l'Ouest [West Africa Network of Peasants and Agricultural Producers] (ROPPA) underlined in a joint communication of 13th May 2001 that "the priorities of the peasants and their families in the LDCs is firstly to be able to produce for their family, then to have access to the domestic market, much before exporting. The European decision on the contrary only goes to strengthen the profits of the large companies using LDCs' resources and labor to export crops towards the EU … thus increasing food insecurity."  Indeed, according to UNCTAD data, exports from African LDCs have increased much less towards the EU28 than to the rest of the world, from 2001 to 2016: 38.5% less for all products combined and 43.6% less for food products, despite the EBA program. And the manufactured products share of their total exports towards the UE28 has passed from 34% in 2001 to 20% in 2016. All the resources mobilized for these exports have reduced those available for food self-sufficiency. In this respect, the food deficit of the LDCs has increased by 12.5% per year from 1995 to 2016, because their imports have increased 9% and their exports 6.6%.

Furthermore, the EU obliges LDCs of the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) to reduce by 80% their custom tariffs on their exports in the framework of regional Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), violating in this way its Declaration "Everything but Arms."  The EPA combined with West Africa could therefore see a reduction in the customs receipts - custom tariffs plus VAT on imports - accumulated for these countries of 32.2 billion euros between 2020 and 2035, of which 15.5 billion euros for the LDCs, and among these 3.9 billion euros on agricultural products.

Another scandal arises in the importance of subsidies to agricultural products exported by the developed countries, in particular the members of the EU, who refuse to take into account the internal subsidies, never considered in the free trade agreements, in particular the EPAs, under the pretext that the rules concerning them are the exclusive competence of the WTO. Yet, the EU has refused a debate on the green box, under which title they notify the detached subsidies - 38.3 billion euros in 2015 - and which does  not take into account subsides on animal food in exported animal products. Thus, the EU28 subsidies to its world exports of dairy products has reached 2 billion euros in 2016, with a dumping rate of 13.2%. On this total, the subsidies to West Africa were 168.6 million euros, with a 20.8% dumping rate. Likewise, the 59.3 Mt of cereals exported by the EU28 in 2016 were subsided by 3.585 billion euros (60.4 euros/ton), a rate of dumping of 34.4% on bulk grain. Of this total, the 3.4 Mt of cereals exported to West Africa have benefited from subsidies of 215 million euros. There again ,the completion of the regional EPA will strongly increase this dumping because the customs tariffs on cereals, other than rice, will go from 5 to 0%, which will already happen for the interim EPAs  of Ivory Coast and Ghana.

It is urgent to radically reform the EU agricultural policies, and those of developing countries including South Saharan Africa, in respect of food sovereignty so as to achieve the second of the SDGs on food security. To ensure a sustainable agricultural development, the Sub-Saharan African countries must modify radically their agricultural policies by ensuring stable and remunerative prices to farmers. That means that the regional economic communities like ECOWAS and EAC become complete members of the WTO, in the same way as the EU. They will benefit from consolidated customs tariffs because their common external tariffs (CET) only affect the customs duties applied. They could then reform their CETs on variable levies - so efficient for the EU to develop agricultural production before the WTO - so that the ad valorem equivalent of variable levies does not exceed the consolidated duty.

So that the levies on agricultural prices do not penalize the poor consumers, these regional economic communities will implement a large scale domestic food aid program, in the form of regional food products, as is done in India and the USA, funded by international cooperation, in particular, long term loans from the International Development Association (IDA), subsidiary of the World Bank. That would be one element of a” Marshall plan” for Sub-Saharan Africa, besides an infrastructure component for the domestic exchanges,  a component for the transformation of local food products to substitute imports of wheat and a component for  non-agricultural employment by lifting the customs duties on the textile-clothing sector to ensure profitable outlets for African cotton. This assumes that the EU stops aligning itself with the USA in order to find within the WTO a permanent solution to the rules on public stocks of food security.

## Wajid Pirzada, Roots Pakistan, Pakistan

Impact of import surges on regional/national food security needs to be closely monitored and evidence-based informed policy choices be explored, to avail policy spaces including inter alia safeguards under WTO Agreements. At the same time, proficiency in competitiveness needs to be developed, by investing/specialization in areas of comparative advantage, diversification of production & trade base, and standards' economy.  Alongside these, value chain development & management and Sanitary & Phytosanitary (SPS) compliance can help leverage both trading opportunities alongside attainment of food security and thus SDGs.

## Ismaelline Eba Nguema, Université Mohammed V-Rabat, Morocco

Bonjour chers tous,

Je vous fais parvenir ci-joint un article susceptible d'enrichir les discussions en cours.  Cet article traite notamment de l'interaction entre l'Accord sur l'agriculture de l'OMC et la sécurité alimentaire en Afrique.

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/Current%20Situation%20of%20Agricultural%20Trade_%20What%20Effects%20does%20it%20hav.pdf>

## Annah Mutinda, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Kenya

**In your opinion, do export restrictions enhance or undermine food security in African countries? Should the WTO disciplines on export restrictions be stricter or allow greater flexibility?**

Export restrictions, in the long run, generally have a negative impact on food security even in the producing country. When governments impose export restrictions, it limits market access for the producers. This in most cases leads to lower prices at the domestic level and can subsequently lead to reduced investment in production. This ultimately leads to reduced food availability and also accessibility. If these policies are implemented upharzardly, they lead to uncertainity and consequently instability in both availability and accessibility to food. For the importing countries the impact of export restriction is that there is continued inadequate availability of the food stuffs which tends to keep the prices high. Thus such a policy seriously undermines both the availability and accessibility pillars of food security in the importing country. Export restrictions can contribute to promoting informal cross-border trade. Due to the relatively higher prices in the importing country, traders in the country with export restrictions sell their wares to traders in the importing country without passing through the formal channels.

WTO disciplines on export restrictions should be stricter so as not to unnecessarily distort trade. Any country intending to impose export restrictions should seek permission from the WTO and present satisfactory reasons as to why it intends to impose the export restriction.

## Lal Manavado, University of Oslo affiliate, Norway

**Ascertaining the Impact of WTO Agreement on Agriculture on Regional FSN**

The importance of the subject is timely enough to tempt one to answer the three questions FSN Forum has raised without giving much thought to the standards against which the above impact could be justifiably ascertained. These comments are restricted to suggesting such a standard intended to render such an assessment as holistic as possible.

In the context of global FSN, that of Sub-Saharan Africa represents one of its regional components. However, whether it is global, regional or local (national in this context), the possible variations in the impact of WTO agreement on agriculture are only a question of degree with respect to the state of public nutrition and food security. So irrespective of the locale, it is the yardstick one ought to use when considering those questions.

Thus before proceeding, one needs to seek some consensus on as to what may justifiably constitute the state of public nutrition and food security. It would be reasonable to suggest that the adequacy of the former represents how many individuals in a given group are appropriately nourished and how many are not. Such a group may be the population in a part of a country, or in a nation or a group of them.

Those who are not appropriately nourished suffer from its ill effects owing to (availability) the lack of food needed for a a varied, wholesome and balanced diet or it being not affordable, or secondly, because of people’s lack of relevant dietary competence even when suitable food is available and affordable. The second is an important cause of the increasing incidence of obesity among the affluent throughout the world.

In order to pre-empt the possible objections to terms ‘varied’ and ‘wholesome’, it would be salutary to note that during last six millennia, people everywhere have applied a great deal of ingenuity to vary and enhance the dietary enjoyment of their meals by preparing even their staple food in huge number of ways. What to use and how to do so constitute a major part of human food culture, a priceless common heritage not to be just dismissed by advocating the injestion of packets of a fortified powdered algae, or some Ersatz stuff yielding X calories and containing y% of all the needed nutrients per 100 grammes.

As for what is wholesome is obvious, nevertheless it may be defined as a food is wholesome when it is free of known toxic substances as well as chemical additives that are not found in food coming from plants and animals, spices, herbes and condiments of natural origin. It is often claimed that ‘precaution is better than cure’, while in industrialised countries where content of additives in various food stuffs is high, one has observed a declining human fertility, higher incidence of allegies, etc. Hence, developing countries would do well not to tread the same dangerous path.

Meanwhile, food security implies having a sustainable adequate supply of varied and wholesome food needed for a balanced diet. Its sustainability depends on the sustainability of the ecosystem dservices on which agriculture, animal husbandry and food harvesting (fishing etc.) intimately depend. Irrigation, use of fertilizers and biocides merely represent a technically sophisticated supplementation of those services that should be used with caution in order to avoid disastrous consequences (Aral Sea disaster, aftermath of the ‘green revolution’ of the 70-ies, etc.).

Sustainability of those ecosystem services depends on the well-being of our environment. The latter in turn, depends on the biodiversity indigenous to a locale and the sustainable population of each individual species there. This applies with equal force to man as well as to the Water Hycinth that clogs many a stream and irrigation canal.

So much for the availability and sustainability and now one runs into the thorny problem of affordability. Stating the obvious, the availability of a sustainable supply of varied and wholesome food would be of little use, unless it is affordable to all and the people knew how to make use of it, which requires them to have sufficient dietary competence.

Therefore, it would be reasonable to postulate that irrespective of the level involved, an adequate state of nutrition and food security requires that the following obtain:

1. Restoration of weakened ecosystem services by regeneration and preservation of the area’s environment. This requires restoration of the local indigenous bio-diversity as much as possible and undertaking to build-up or reduce its individual populations as is necessary. Actions that have the opposite effect threaten sustainability in ways too well-known to be noted. Such undesirable actions include:
2. Utilising the ecosystem services at a rate in excess of the rate they are replenished (intensive irrigation).
3. Excessive removal of earth’s green cover through deforestation and ploughing up of grasslands.
4. Over and/or non-selective exploitation of sea, lake and river fisheries by foreign and local harvesters.
5. Diminution of the area’s agro-biodiversity through monoculture and by introducing methods that deprecate its food culture.
6. Use of energy and capital-intensive methods in food production and harvesting it from the environment, and in improvements in infra-structure (especially transport and housing) when proven more energy-efficient and labour-intensive alternatives are available.
7. All are end-users of food, but most of use cannot be totally self-sufficient enough in food to secure for ourselves a varied and a wholesome balanced diet. So, the majority is compelled to procure at least some of their food by purchase, hence the need for a decent livelihood (not to mention the other needs). But a large number of people in both urban and rural areas of the developing countries are unemployed (particularly the youth) or under-employed. A fair number of those, after a relatively short training appropriate in the context, may earn a decent living in agriculture, food harvesting, and suitable related pursuits. If the environment remains felicitous, apart from the shortage of requisite competence and the initial cost of making and implementing the plans needed to remedy the situation, the greatest obstacles to this approach are the following:
8. Use of development approaches that depend on energy- and capital-intensive solutions, whose notion of effectivity is highest possible yield/profit at the least possible expense, i.e., less human labour. Any policy on industry and development embodying those would only exacerbate the situation.
9. Trade policies that permit the following:
10. Establishment of high capacity locally or foreign-owned food packing/processing installations at a few locations whose products are principally for export. Not only does this ignore to address the employment issue, but it may often reduce the food availability for local consumption.
11. Trade policies that permit the export of local foods for cash when malnutrition exists in a country or would lead to it.
12. Trade policies that permit the establishment and manufacture or import and distribution of industrial foods and beverages that are outside a country’s food culture or known to promote obesity.
13. Any trade policy that promotes the establishment of near monopolies or a limited number of large concerns to engage in food production, processing and storage, transport and sales (chains of outlet) that creates more and more unemployment, hence fewer and fewer people able to afford the available food.
14. Any trade policy that enable vested interests either to infringe on the current laws on land tenure, or prevent their just adjustment towards a fairer sharing of world resources.
15. Trade policies that promote the exploitation of, or the export of materials that will directly or indirectly have an adverse effects on a country’s food production.
16. All trade policies that entail ‘labour efficiency’ in countries where unemployment is a major issue.
17. Any labour policy that deprecates or is inimical to the traditional co-operative movement in food production, preservation, storage and distribution to end-users.
18. Trade policies that do not provide real incentives to family farms, small to medium sized processing units, sales outlets, family-run restaurants, etc., all run on a cooperative basis.
19. Any trade policy that entails even the smallest environmental degradation, for at present, such changes can have unpredictably serious consequences for food production.

It is hoped that those who are versed in the trade agreement in question will trouble to ascertain whether any one or more of its provisions in real life terms will permit A to J above. If any one of those are permitted, the trade policy that embody such a permission will have an inevitable adverse effect on a country’s state of nutrition and food security, not to mention the civil instability that often follows in the wake of persistent high unemployment. At a mere policy-level, permitting A-J will result in a national trade policy that can neither be in harmony within, nor yet with any humane and responsible health, education, security, etc., policies.

Best wishes!

Lal Manavado.

## Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla, IFPRI

I think Lal makes the correct point that "All are end-users of food, but most of use cannot be totally self-sufficient enough in food to secure for ourselves a varied and a wholesome balanced diet. So, the majority is compelled to procure at least some of their food by purchase, hence the need for a decent livelihood (not to mention the other needs)."

In fact, the number of people, even small farmers in low income countries, that provides completely for their own food is very, very reduced. Therefore, "the majority is compelled to procure" not "at least some" but most of their food. That is why employment and income generating options for all are crucial. In that regard the notion that producing cash crops for export may reduce food security because of the lack of availability has been shown not to be correct if those activities generated employment opportunities, which facilitated economic access to food (I discussed some of the evidence  in pages 32-33 of this report [http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/129861/f...](http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/129861/filename/130072.pdf))

## Georgios Mermigkas and Ishrat Gadhok, facilitators, FAO, Italy

Thank you to all the participants who have contributed to this forum. There are some very interesting views that are emerging on the themes of this discussion, reflecting the differing experiences and perspectives of the participants. We have heard some thoughts on the importance of designing trade strategies based on an understanding of the specific food security situation in a country; of evidence-based decision making such as through thorough analysis of the potential impacts of bilateral or regional trade policy reforms; of enforcement of trade rules at different levels; and of inter-agency cooperation.

On export restrictions, there seems to be some convergence among the views of the participants who responded to this question. If we can paraphrase, it was noted that while export restrictions are put in place to address short-term food security concerns, they might not be effective in improving food security in the longer-run, particularly when such measures are not implemented as part of a long term strategy. This is because they can contribute to lower price incentives for domestic producers, and overall uncertainty in markets that leads to lower investment. Strengthened trade rules, that would better regulate the conditions under which export restrictions are applied, were encouraged. It would be interesting to hear other thoughts on this important issue.

We would also like to draw our attention back to the other two questions posed in the forum.

On the question of policy space for domestic support in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), the issue of a agreeing on a permanent solution to the rules governing public stockholding was raised. What about other forms of domestic support such as input subsidies, which are a common feature of agricultural policies in African countries? Do you think the AoA provides sufficient policy space for the implementation of such measures? Why or why not?

On the question of complementarity between multilateral and regional integration efforts, there was a comment about enforcement of common external tariffs, and complementary measures to support consumers at the regional level. There was a related comment about improving compliance at the national level, with provisions in regional or multilateral agreements. What capacity gaps can you think of, for improving compliance of African countries with the provisions in regional and multilateral agreements on the one hand, and for enhancing their engagement in trade negotiations on the other?

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**French translation**

Merci à tous ceux qui ont participé à ce forum. Des opinions très intéressantes se dégagent sur les thèmes de cette discussion, reflétant les différentes expériences et perspectives des participants. Plusieurs réflexions soulignent l'importance d'élaborer des stratégies commerciales fondées sur une compréhension de la situation spécifique de la sécurité alimentaire dans un pays, d’une prise de décision fondée sur des données probantes, comme une analyse approfondie des impacts potentiels des réformes de la politique commerciale bilatérale ou régionale, et de l'application des règles commerciales à différents niveaux et de la coopération interinstitutions.

A propos des restrictions à l'exportation, une certaine convergence de vues semble se dégager parmi les participants qui ont répondu à cette question. Si nous pouvons paraphraser, les participants ont fait remarquer que s’il est vrai que des restrictions à l'exportation peuvent être mises en place pour répondre aux préoccupations à court terme en matière de sécurité alimentaire, celles-ci risquent de s’avérer inefficaces pour améliorer la sécurité alimentaire à plus long terme, en particulier lorsqu’elles ne sont pas mises en œuvre dans le cadre d'une stratégie à long terme. En effet, elles peuvent contribuer à réduire les incitations à la baisse des prix pour les producteurs nationaux et à susciter l'incertitude générale sur les marchés, ce qui entraîne une baisse de l'investissement. Les participants se sont montrés favorables à un renforcement des règles commerciales, qui permettraient de mieux réglementer les conditions d'application des restrictions à l'exportation. Il serait intéressant d'entendre d'autres réflexions sur cette question importante.

Nous voudrions également attirer à nouveau l’attention sur les deux autres questions posées dans le forum.

Quant à la marge politique requise pour le soutien interne au sein de l'Accord sur l'agriculture de l'OMC, la question d'un accord sur une solution permanente aux règles régissant les stocks publics a été soulevée. Qu'en est-il des autres formes de soutien interne telles que les subventions aux intrants, qui sont une caractéristique commune des politiques agricoles dans les pays africains? Pensez-vous que l’AsA offre une marge politique suffisante pour mettre en œuvre de telles mesures? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?

A propos de la complémentarité entre les efforts d'intégration multilatérale et régionale, un participant a envoyé un commentaire sur l'application des tarifs extérieurs communs et de mesures complémentaires pour soutenir les consommateurs au niveau régional. Un commentaire connexe concerne l'amélioration du respect des dispositions des accords régionaux ou multilatéraux au niveau national. Quelles sont, à votre avis, les lacunes à combler en termes de capacités pour que, d'une part, les pays africains respectent davantage les dispositions des accords régionaux et multilatéraux, et d'autre part, pour qu’ils renforcent leur engagement dans les négociations commerciales?

## Harriet Nsubuga, Agribusiness Management Associates, Uganda

The export restrictions within the concerned African country can enhance food security in the short run because Governments are ensuring food availability and accessibility for their people. This however has to be temporary because the export restrictions affect neighbouring countries that are food importers in that food becomes expensive due to limited availability. It means the people with low incomes might not access such foods due to the high cost leading to malnutrition. For countries within the same Regional Economic Community for example East African Community (EAC), the export restrictions should be avoided so as to build trade between member countries.

WTO disciplines on export restrictions should be stricter, but this depends on whether they can be enforced. There some instances where the WTO discipline may not be considered; for example developing and Least Developed Countries were allowed flexibilities to institute export restrictions if there is likelihood of food insecurity within their countries.

## Adebayo Depo, Togo

#### French original

1/ Les dispositions de l’Accord de l’OMC sur l’agriculture limiteraient les manœuvres politiques de nos pays en voie de développement. Ces critères doivent prendre en compte les niveaux de vie, les niveaux de contraintes, l’impact des changements climatiques et leurs adaptations. Ces critères doivent aussi tenir compte des capacités des pays à s’autonourrir, à être apte aux changements climatiques et à assurer leur sécurité alimentaire. Notons aussi que cette sécurité est en étroite relation avec le développement de ces échanges économiques, qui passent par le désenclavement des zones et le développement routier.

En effet les MGS peuvent être un frein dans le processus d’échanges puisque les pays qui subventionnent assez les produits agricoles, verront ces produits traversés les frontières vues que ceci joue ou influence sur la sécurité alimentaire dans d’autres pays ainsi que sur les politiques.

2/ Nous pensons qu’aucun pays ne peut faire une restriction à l’exportation si ce pays ne considère pas que ceci pourrait atteindre ou affecter sa sécurité alimentaire. De plus, le surplus, plus la production prochaine risquent de baisser le prix de vente vue que l’offre va augmenter. Ainsi la restriction de l’exportation renforce la sécurité alimentaire des pays africains si cela est fait dans le strict respect des normes et pour le développement.

Les disciplines de l’OMC en matière de restriction à l’exportation doivent permettent une grande flexibilité. Les éventuels évènements peuvent surgir, donc si les disciplines ne permettent pas une flexibilité ceci pourrait être un risque. La situation socio politique, les déplacements dus aux changements climatiques, ou à des crises politiques, sont des genres de situations qui peuvent affecter la production et aussi le niveau ponctuel de la sécurité alimentaire. D’où une flexibilité s’avère nécessaire pour régler au mieux certains problèmes d’ordre alimentaire qui en découleront.

3/ Les efforts peuvent être entrepris au niveau multilatéral pour compléter les efforts d’intégration régionale. L’ouverture de leurs frontières, élimination ou diminution des contraintes de normalisation et financières peuvent rendre les exportations plus faciles vers ces pays. Il a certains domaines d’actions mieux pris en compte à certains niveaux. Les restrictions et observations d’exportation entre les pays au niveau multilatéral sont plus flexibles et alléger entre eux qu’entre le niveau régional et multilatéral.

Au niveau régional, les pays préfèrent exportés vers les pays au niveau multilatéral à cause des devises et des capacités d’échanges. Néanmoins il est préférable que les pays au niveau régional se comprennent et consolident leurs marchés avant d’aller sur le marché international.

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**English translation**

  1/ The provisions of the WTO Agreement on agriculture would limit the political maneuvering of our developing countries. These criteria must take into account the standards of living, the degree of constraints, the impact of climate changes and the adaptations to them. These criteria must also take into account the capacity of the countries to feed themselves, to be able to adapt to climate change and to ensure their food security. Please also note that this food security is in direct relation to the development of those economic exchanges which are derived from the opening up of zones and the development of the road network.

Indeed, the AMSs could be a brake on the process of exchange because the countries that give many subsidies for agricultural products will see those products cross the frontiers, given that this will have an effect on or influence food security in other countries as well as on policies.

2/ We think that no country should restrict exports unless that country considers that this could affect or influence its food security. Additionally, surplus, plus the upcoming production risk lowering the selling price because the supply is going to increase. Therefore export restrictions reinforce food security in African countries if that is made in strict observance of the norms and in favor of development.

The WTO disciplines in terms of export restrictions must allow for great flexibility. Possible eventualities could occur, and if the disciplines do not allow flexibility it could be a risk. The socio-political situation, the displacements due to climate change or to political crises, are the kind of situations that could affect production and also the level of food security at a given time and place. Hence, flexibility is necessary to best deal with certain food problems which these situations will provoke.

3/ Efforts could be made at multilateral level to complete the regional integration efforts. The opening of their frontiers, elimination or reduction of normalization and financial restrictions could make exports easier towards these countries. There are certain types of actions that are better taken into account at certain levels. The export restrictions and observations between countries at multilateral level are more flexible and simplified between them than between the multilateral regional level.

At regional level, countries prefer to export towards the countries at multilateral level due to foreign exchange and trading capacities. Nevertheless, it is preferable that the countries at regional level understand each other´s markets and consolidate them before going to the international market.

## Kelvin Nkai, Export Promotion Council, Kenya

**1. Do you think the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) provide sufficient policy space for domestic support for countries in Africa? Why or why not?**

It’s my view that the AoA provides sufficient policy space for domestic support for countries in Africa. However my issue is box shifting that is done by some countries in which you find some support measures in Amber box are being shifted to green box which is trade distorting. Disciplines on green box need to be adhered to.. When it comes to export competition, developed nations are yet to implement the Nairobi decision to remove all export subsidies which needs to be a reality at MC 11. On Public Stock-holding for Food Security, it’s my view that a permanent solution needs to be found at MC11 or we extend the peace clause.

## Fenosoa Ratsimandrata, Ministère de l'Industrie et du Développement du Secteur Privé, Madagascar

#### French original

A propos de la complémentarité entre les efforts d'intégration multilatérale et régionale, un participant a envoyé un commentaire sur l'application des tarifs extérieurs communs et de mesures complémentaires pour soutenir les consommateurs au niveau régional. Un commentaire connexe concerne l'amélioration du respect des dispositions des accords régionaux ou multilatéraux au niveau national. Quelles sont, à votre avis, les lacunes à combler en termes de capacités pour que, d'une part, les pays africains respectent davantage les dispositions des accords régionaux et multilatéraux, et d'autre part, pour qu’ils renforcent leur engagement dans les négociations commerciales?

**Réponse**

Le problème pour les pays comme Madagascar est que beaucoup d’accords commerciaux ont été signés mais ces derniers ne profitent pas réellement au pays. Pour basculer la situation il faudrait en premier une volonté politique de la part des dirigeants pour réellement s’engager dans les différents accords commerciaux. Toutefois, l’engagement gouvernemental seul ne suffit pas, il faut également impliquer le secteur privé. A Madagascar par exemple, il existe déjà une plateforme de dialogue public-privé. Ce qu’il faut c’est de la rendre effective car ses fondements ne sont même pas encore clairement régis. Il faut ainsi veiller à ce que chacune des problématiques portées au niveau de cette plateforme soit résolues et qu’une planification des actions à mettre en œuvre soit réalisée, ce qui n’est pas encore le cas. Par ailleurs, l’implication de tous les partenaires potentiels dans cette plateforme devrait également être envisagée pour avoir un retour plus enrichi sur les stratégies à mettre en œuvre.

Si cette plateforme est réellement effective, le premier point qui devrait être discutée concerne le renforcement de la compétitivité du secteur privé malgache et l’amélioration de leur accès aux marchés extérieurs. Il faudrait ainsi une consultation publique-privée pour voir les orientations stratégiques et donc les actions à mettre en place pour favoriser les échanges commerciaux du pays avec les pays signataires des accords. Toutes les actions doivent s’articuler autour de l’amélioration de la productivité des produits concernés par les accords, en termes de quantités et de qualité. En effet, il faut que le pays assure une production suffisante et de qualité pour pouvoir honorer les accords et permettre qu’ils profitent réellement à l’Etat malgache. En ce sens, il faudrait voir ensemble les améliorations à mettre en œuvre en termes d’infrastructures (transport de marchandises, infrastructures industrielles, infrastructures d’appui, etc.), en termes de renforcement de capacités pour tous les acteurs des chaînes de valeurs concernées par les accords commerciaux (formation, suivi et accompagnement), en termes d’amélioration de la normalisation (laboratoires de référence, vulgarisation des normes internationales, techniques de contrôle et de certification internationales, etc.).

Toujours dans cette optique d’amélioration des échanges commerciales, les efforts devraient également se concentrer sur la facilitation des procédures douanières. Le fait est que les procédures de dédouanement des marchandises prennent énormément de temps à Madagascar. Ainsi, il faudrait se pencher sur les actions à mettre en œuvre pour pallier à ce problème. Mais dans l’un ou l’autre des 2 axes d’amélioration proposés, le tout est de veiller à ce qu’ils soient validés entre les secteurs publics et privés et qu’il n’y ait pas de décisions unilatérales.

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**English translation**

In relation to the synergy between the multilateral and regional integration efforts, one of the participants sent a commentary on the application of common external tariffs and complementary measures to support consumers at regional level. A related commentary is concerned with the improvement of respect for the provisions of regional or multilateral agreements at national level. What are, in your opinion, the weaknesses to be overcome in terms of capacities so that, on one hand, African countries have more respect for the provisions of regional and multilateral agreements, and on the other, they reinforce their involvement in commercial negotiations?

**Response**

The problem for countries like Madagascar is that many commercial agreements have been signed but they do not really benefit the country. To transform the situation, firstly, there should exist a political will on the part of the leaders to commit themselves fully to the different commercial agreements. Nevertheless, governmental commitment alone is not enough the private sector should also be involved. In Madagascar for example, there is already a platform for public - private dialogue. What is missing is to make it effective because its bases are not yet really clearly laid out. We must ensure that each one of the problems brought to the level of this platform is solved and that a plan of actions to be implemented is drawn up, which so far is not the case. Furthermore, the involvement of all the potential partners in this platform should equally be foreseen in order to have a more enriched feedback on the strategies to be implemented.

If this platform is really effective, the first point that should be discussed relates to the strengthening of competitiveness of the Malagasy private sector and the improvement of their access to external markets. A public-private consultation will be needed to look at strategic orientations and therefore the actions to be implemented to promote the country’s commercial trade with the countries signing the agreements. All the actions must be formulated around improving the productivity of the products affected by the agreements, in terms of quantities and quality. Indeed, it is necessary that the country ensures sufficient production and quality so as to be able to honor the agreements and ensure that they really benefit the Malagasy State. In this respect, we should jointly review the improvements to be implemented in terms of infrastructures (transport of goods, industrial infrastructure, support infrastructure, etc.); in terms of strengthening capacities of all actors in the value chains affected by the commercial agreements (training, follow-up and support); in terms of improvement of standardization (reference laboratories, common application of international norms, audit mechanisms and international certification, etc.).

Always with the aim of improving commercial trade, efforts should equally be concentrated on simplifying customs procedures. It is a fact that the process of clearing goods through customs takes an enormous amount of time in Madagascar.  Thus, we need to concentrate on the actions   required to solve this problem. But in whichever of the two lines of action proposed for solving this problem, the essential is to take care that they are validated between both the public and private sectors and that there are no unilateral decisions.

## Ousmane Gueye, Association pour la promotion des artisans et ouvriers, Sénégal

#### French original

Toutes les actions doivent s’inscrire dans une dynamique globale d’amélioration du niveau de vie. Les producteurs agricoles constituent la population active la plus nombreuse et la plus marginalisée du système économique du Sénégal. Ce sont également eux qui vivent les effets néfastes de la pauvreté et ses corollaires de problèmes sociaux et économiques.

En impulsant une dynamique d’autopromotion et d’autogestion au sein des communautés villageoises par la mise en place de dispositifs organisationnel du genre sociétés coopératives ceci permettra d’une part l’accroissement des revenus des producteur à travers l’amélioration de leur productivité et le développement de la compétitivité de leurs produit, et d’autre part, de contribuera à créer un environnement favorable à la mobilisation des recettes fiscales au niveau local pour le financement des programme de développement local.

Ainsi, les réflexions et stratégies devront se reposer sur:

1. la mise en œuvre des activités de formation des communautés villageoises sur les techniques de production et de gestion économique des exploitations agricoles à travers l’appui conseil permanent, la réalisation et la diffusion des supports d’information et de sensibilisation et la réalisation des tests variétaux en partenariat avec les institutions de recherche ;

2. l’orientation et l’accompagnement des paysans vers la professionnalisation agricole à travers des activités de sensibilisation et de formation sur l’entrepreneuriat productif, et la mise en place d’un fonds pilote de soutien à la création et au développement de l’entrepreneuriat agricole au niveau locale;

3. la recherche permanente des possibilités d’augmenter la productivité des paysans à travers la vulgarisation des mesures et des techniques d’exploitation, de conservation et de fertilisation des sols et le choix des variétés à forte potentialité économique;

4. la poursuite de l’expérience de la commercialisation à travers la stratégie de la vente groupée en permettant aux coopératives de production, de conservation, de transformation et de commercialisation de démarrer véritablement leurs activités et de mettre en place un mécanisme de veille et d’intermédiation pour la commercialisation des produits agricoles;

5. l’engagement des OP vers son développement institutionnel et son autonomisation financière à travers l’amélioration de la gouvernance par la promotion de la communication interne et externe, par l’adoption de mesures relatives à la contribution et la participation active des paysans.

Par ailleurs, l’analyse du milieu démontre de la nécessité de sensibiliser les producteurs à intégrer leurs charges (familiales, sociales) dans l’élaboration de leur compte d’exploitation. Cette démarche doit permettre de valoriser l’activité a en permettant aux producteurs agricoles de réduire les risques de dépendance sociale. La mise en place de la Mutuelle agricole de Prévoyance Sociale devrait également contribuer à cette vision.

Il faut souligner l’importance du dialogue politique: les politiques (agricole, emploi, sécurité alimentaire) doivent être des politiques inclusives, qui nécessitent une implication de tous les acteurs à la fois dans la planification et dans la mise en œuvre, et notamment les jeunes. Impulser des initiatives innovantes. Ils ont un rôle démonstratif et d’incubateurs pour passer à des politiques structurantes et holistiques agricoles et d’économie rurale, favorisant l’emploi. L’agriculture revêt un caractère transversal et concerne tous les secteurs invite ainsi une meilleur coordination des interventions de tous les intervenants et d’impliquer également les acteurs des exploitations familiales, jeunes, femmes, et développer les partenariats publics-privés en associant les acteurs du monde économique et du secteur privé autour d’objectifs communs. Les politiques mises en place doivent notamment viser à améliorer la base productive avec des mécanismes incitatifs pour l’environnement des affaires, et également un cadre commercial cohérent avec les politiques en œuvre, ainsi que des mesures incitatives pour la compétitivité, pour le coût des infrastructures, pour la sécurisation du foncier (qui n’est pas du ressort du seul ministère de l’agriculture) ; il faut également pousser la structuration autour des filières de produits locaux (existantes ou nouvelles) et des chaines de valeurs. Il y a la nécessité d’accompagner et de soutenir les filières qui existent pour les renforcer ou identifier de nouvelles filières tout en appuyant les filières classiques.

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**English translation**

All actions must adhere to the global dynamic of improving the standard of living. The agricultural producers are the largest active population and the most marginalized of the Senegalese economic system. It is them who live the negative impact of poverty and the consequent social and economic problems.

Impulsing and auto-promotion and self-management dynamic at the centre of the village communities by implementing organizational mechanisms like cooperatives which will allow, on one hand, the increase of revenues for the producers through the improvement of their productivity and the development of competitiveness of their products, and on the other, to contribute creating a favorable environment to the mobilization of tax revenues at local level for funding local development programs.

Thus, the considerations and strategies must be based on:

1. the implementation of training activities on the village communities on the production techniques and the economic management of agricultural exploitations through the permanent advice support, development and dissemination of support information and awareness raising and the development of diversity test in partnership with research institutions;

2. Orientation and support of farmers towards agricultural professionalization through awareness raising and training activities on productive management, and the implementation of pilot fund to support the creation and development of the agricultural entrepreneurship at local level;

3. The permanent research of possibilities of increasing farmers productivity through the popularization of measures and techniques of exploitation, conservation and fertilization of soils and the choice of varieties with strong economic potential;

4. The quest of experience in commercialization through the strategy of group sales allowing the production, conservation, transformation and commercialization cooperatives to really start up their activities and to implement a monitoring and intermediation mechanism for the commercialization of agricultural products;

5. The involvement of popular organizations towards their institutional development and their financial autonomy through the improvement of governance by the promotion of internal and external communication by the adoption of measures relative to the active contribution and participation of farmers.

Furthermore, the environmental scan shows the need of raising awareness of producers to integrate their relatives (families, social) in the formulation of their operating accounts. This approach with allow to value the activity will enable agricultural producers to reduce the risks of social dependence. The implementation of the Mutuelle agricole de Prévoyance Sociale [Agricultural Fund for Social Coverage] must contribute equally to this vision.

It is important to emphasize the significance ot the political dialogue: the policies (agricultural, employment, food security) must be inclusive, which need the involvement of all actors at once in the planning and implementation and, in particular, the young people. Motivate creative initiatives. These policies have an illustrative and incubating role to change to a structural and holistic agricultural policy approach and rural economy, promoting employment. Agriculture assumes a cross cutting nature and concerns all sectors inviting this way a better coordination of intervention of all contributors and to equally involve the actors of family farms, young people, women and, develop public-private partnerships associating actors from the economic world and private sector around common objectives.  The implemented policies must aim mainly to improve the productive base with motivational mechanisms for the business environment, and, at the same time, a trade framework coherent with the policies implemented, as well as motivational measures for competitiveness, infrastructures costs, and land security (which is not the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture); it is also necessary to promote the structuring of local product chains (existing or new) and value chains. There is the need to guide and support the existing channels to strengthen or identify the new networks always supporting the classical channels.

## Georgios Mermigkas and Ishrat Gadhok, facilitators, FAO, Italy

Dear participants,

We would like to thank you all for engaging in a lively discussion on some topical issues for the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires (MC11), such as policy space for domestic support, disciplines on export restrictions, and the complementarity between multilateral and regional integration efforts. Your articulate and thought-provoking contributions provided a range of views and insights on these issues, and more generally, on the significance of trade and trade policies for food security and nutrition in Africa.

FAO, in collaboration with key partners, will be hosting and participating in a number of side events at MC11 this week. We encourage those who are accredited to join us at any of the events listed here: <http://www.fao.org/economic/est/est-events-new/ministerial-conference/en/>. This will be an excellent opportunity to continue the dialogue that was started on this forum.

In support of MC11 negotiations, FAO has also recently launched a series of briefs which some of you may find interesting: <http://www.fao.org/economic/est/publications/trade-policy-briefs/en/>. These cover topics such as the changing patterns of agricultural trade; evolution of import tariffs and issue of tariff escalation; agricultural export restrictions; trade and food standards; and many others.

Finally, FAO has recently launched an e-learning course “Trade, Food Security and Nutrition”, which delves into many of the themes raised in this discussion forum. We encourage interested participants to take this self-paced interactive course through the FAO E-learning Centre: <http://www.fao.org/elearning/#/elc/en/course/TFSN>, and also to check back for our next e-learning course “Agriculture in Trade Agreements” which focuses on the treatment of agriculture in multilateral as well as regional trade agreements.

Once again, thank you all for a quality debate on this topic!

Georgios Mermigkas and Ishrat Gadhok

## Aklilu Nigussie, Ethiopian Institutes of Agricultural Research, Ethiopia

**1. Do you think the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) provide sufficient policy** **space for domestic support for countries in Africa? Why or why not?**

I don't think so because the African agricultural market is dominated with small scale and it is yet to be mechanized in use of different infrastructure and innovation. Here the basic thing to be considered is the land holding of households in Sub Saharan Africa. So the WTO organization advocates policies of free trade; though it gives special safeguard provision, domestic support commitments and market access yet this can't be sufficient policy space because it needs change in the farming community with parameters that can pull the out from their vicious circle of poverty and feron/firon /pheroahnians farming system plowing with animal.  Even though the WTO tries its best to create  a good environment in the world market, the policy makers in Africa are tied only on their dynastical policy than the innovative system to create productivity for the small scale producers.