

Summary of the first meeting of the parliamentary Network for

Food Security in Africa and the Arab world

Wednesday 30- Thursday 31 October 2019

House of Counselors , Rabat

The meeting opened with a welcome speech by the Speaker of the House of Counselors, Mr. Abdelhakim Ben Chamach, Chairman of the Association of Senate , Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and Arab World (ASSECAA), in which he confirmed that the launch of the Parliamentary Network for Food Security constitutes a starting point for revitalizing ASSECAA's role in strengthening the links of cooperation among the countries of the region, and enabling the Association to perform more effectively in terms of the efforts related to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG2-Zero hunger.

For his part, ASSECAA Secretary-General delivered a speech in which he confirmed that food security is a war that must be fought successfully, which calls for focusing on the production of food rather than the manufacture of lethal weapons, as well as on the development of investment systems in the agricultural field and the enactment of laws and legislation to ensure food security.

Florence Rolle, FAO Representative in Morocco, for her part, explained that 826 million people suffer from hunger in the world, 246.4 million of them live in Africa. She also stated that the establishment of the Parliamentary Network for Food Security stems from the belief in the role of parliaments in achieving such security, as well as from the collective responsibility to achieve the 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals based on new approaches and creating an effective institutional framework for impact.

Following the opening session, a number of presentations were made, mainly:

Presentation by Mr. Jean Leonard Touadi of FAO:

The role of networks of parliamentarians to achieve Goal 2

He touched upon the problems that the continent is suffering from because of malnutrition, whether it is hunger, emaciation, or inadequacy of vital materials for the (human) body and their economic and health costs for the population, explaining that the establishment of networks is based on the discussions that resulted from international meetings, which are:

- Second International Conference on Nutrition
- The Rome Declaration
- Agenda 2015
- World Parliamentary Summit Against Hunger and Malnutrition

She concluded that multilateral partnerships were important and that parliamentarians were key players in the equation. She touched upon the quality of the relationship between FAO and parliaments, which is characterized by:

- Facilitating the sharing of information between parliaments on the one hand and between them and the various parties on the other.
- Providing technical equipment (statistics, data, studies...) to help draft public laws and policies.
- Strengthening technical competencies and knowledge on issues of agriculture, real estate systems and food security.
- Supporting the creation of alliances and networks.
- Facilitating relations and cooperation between parliamentarians and alliances through knowledge sharing and sharing of best practices.

She explained that there are 40 global parliamentary alliances concerned with food security issues, and that Africa witnesses four regional parliamentary alliances and eight national ones.

The second presentation had as its theme “The overall objectives of the Guidelines for Responsible Land Tenure by RIGAVA MACKAY VEET”

- The presentation focused on a number of challenges including:

-Land tenure in Africa is mainly related to multiple systems of tenure, predominance of traditional methods, lack of recognition of customary land registration systems, problems of women's access to land, and degradation of natural resources.

Faced with these challenges, he pointed out that a series of international meetings were held that resulted in:

-African Declaration on Land Tenure (2009 + Dubai Declaration 2018)

- Considering land as a key driver of development.

- Granting land to various parties to end food insecurity.

- Engaging as many actors as possible.

- Improving land management systems.

- Developing policies related to management and regulation.

- Protecting women's right to land.

In this context, the Voluntary Guidelines for Land Tenure prepared by FAO are:

A soft law on tenure, for guidance only, which is voluntary and does not replace any laws or agreements, nor does it abrogate compulsory obligations. These lines have confirmed that parliament's responsibility is essential in strengthening governance through the development of policies that will facilitate responsible governance through a legal framework to create an economic and social space.

The first presentation of Thursday morning session entitled: Principles of rational investment in agriculture and food systems by EMMA MCGHIE (FAO) addressed the importance of agricultural investment, which would work on:

-Contributing to sustainable and inclusive economic development and poverty eradication based on a range of measures, including:

- Respecting the basic principles of labor rights in agriculture while creating new jobs and improving working conditions and health safety.

- Improving income and generating shared value through fair and enforceable contracts, and enhancing entrepreneurial opportunities and access to employment.

- Ensuring equality between individuals and abolishing all discriminatory practices, particularly those that violate rights.

- Promoting tenure of productive land and natural resources.

- Engaging young people by giving them access to productive land, natural materials as well as advisory, financial and legal services.

She stressed that rational investment proceeds from a set of principles, including:

- Respecting land tenure, fisheries and forestry and access to water.

- Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, increased resilience and reduction of natural disasters and climate change.

- Respect for cultural heritage and traditional knowledge and supporting diversity and technological innovation, especially in the agricultural field.

- Promoting safe and healthy systems of agriculture and food.

- Including evaluation mechanisms for all investments through the application of mechanisms that allow independent and transparent assessments of potential impacts, identification of baseline data and indicators for monitoring and measurement.

Session 2: Interaction on lessons learned and future prospects towards food security through the Parliamentary Network for Food Security in Africa and the Arab World and how FAO and the Association can work together in the future.

There was consensus among all the speakers that different parties should support the government in order to achieve change.

- Creation of partnership among the various stakeholders to promote the idea of interdependent groups of political parties to exchange experiences among all countries and to open dialogue at the regional level.

- Establishing communication between the parliament and the various social parties, especially in the absence of research institutions providing technical assistance.

- The need to consolidate regional initiatives as a mechanism for the implementation of FAO's work was based on the priorities set by Member States to eradicate hunger and achieve the second Sustainable Development Goal.