

Post-2015 Development Agenda, CIHEAM and G20 2015 Turkish Presidency Food security and tackling food loss and waste

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The year 2015 is globally an important year where major strategic negotiations are taking place on sustainable development, agriculture, food security, nutrition, rural development and other related issues.

The United Nations is working on a new set of goals for 2016-2030, known as the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs in the framework of Post-2015 Development Agenda. The goals will be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. The SDGs are a follow-up effort to the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, in effect from 2000 to 2015. The SDGs may be said to be more enthusiastic when compared to the MDGs. They are intended to be more inclusive and equitable. They include goals like ending poverty in all its forms everywhere; ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

This year, there are also other significant events being realized related to agricultural production, food security, sustainable development, inclusive growth which are paving the way for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Some of them can be mentioned as Milan Expo 2015, with the theme of "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life"; 21st Conference of Parties on Climate Change (COP 21); 7th World Water Forum; preparation of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD); debates on the future of Euro-Mediterranean regional cooperation; International Year of Soil...

CIHEAM is taking part and making good contribution to most of these events, becoming more visible day by day. With its new strategy, CIHEAM is expanding and improving its relations with the European Union (EU) and the Commission, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Union for the Mediterranean (UFM), European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSDD), World Bank and the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) and several other international forums and organizations with the aim of strengthening communication, conducting synergistic activities and increasing capacity of collective/collaborative efforts. CIHEAM participated to the review process of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) by the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), established in the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). CIHEAM has also focused on the development of several strategic initiatives in the framework of the gradual repositioning process of the CIHEAM and the development of its missions in a changing regional context.

The Organisation has repeatedly expressed the crucial need to consider agricultural and food sustainable development around four complementary pillars: "the environment to preserve" (the resources, with climate-intelligent practices), "social matters for the sharing of resources" (food, with the struggle against waste), "the economy to produce" (food and income) and "innovation to adapt" (the role of knowledge, know-how and inventiveness). This vision of sustainable development based on four complementary pillars considers that human security should be a central priority in the debate addressing issues related to food and agriculture.

CIHEAM is therefore implementing a set of activities to assist the European, North African and Middle Eastern Countries to face these challenges so together with FAO, it takes place in the studies to present a strategic Action Plan in the Mediterranean for the next ten years. This action plan would be structured around the themes of food and nutritional security, small-scale family agriculture and water resources.

The more the CIHEAM is coherent in its strategic approach ("interior diversity for a unique exterior action") the more its areas of expertise and technical interventions will be recognised. The challenges in the Mediterranean are such that it seems to have become imperative that all the organisations working in the field of development and multilateral cooperation in the region should work together, whatever the focus of their mission is.

Another point of importance for the year 2015 is the G20 Turkish Presidency, not only because Turkey is a Mediterranean country and a founding member of CIHEAM but also because Turkey has placed the issues related to food and nutrition security among the thematic priorities in its G20 agenda. More specifically, Turkey decided to focus on achievement of more sustainable food systems and the reduction of food loss and waste (FLW).

FLW is a global problem of enormous economic, environmental and societal significance. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 1.3 billion tons of food, worth almost 1 trillion USD, is wasted and lost every year.¹ This amount is equivalent to the one third of world food production consisting of approximately 30% of cereals, 40-50% of root crops, fruits and vegetables, 20% of oilseeds, meat and dairy, and 35% of fish.² Due to hunger and malnutrition, nearly 10 million people lose their lives every year and 795 million people (one out of every nine) are malnourished and suffer from chronic hunger.³

However, with the prevention of only 25% of food waste, all food requirements of the starving people in the world can be met. Consequently, FLW has recently become an increasingly important topic both domestically and globally. Recognising this, Turkey has launched a very important campaign in 2013, targeting to prevent bread waste and have gained very successful outcomes. Up to now, daily bread waste and total consumption has decreased 18% and 10%, respectively. As a result, national economy has gained 2.8 billion TL (1.04 billion USD) savings in one year.

Thus, as the G-20 2015 Presidency, besides the issues related with agriculture, food security and nutrition, Turkey decided to attract attention to the crucial importance of reducing FLW. In this part of this article you will find a brief summary of the related activities of the G20 2015 Turkish Presidency. As part of Australia G20 Presidency in 2014, the G20 Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Framework has been developed and endorsed. The FSN Framework sets three multi-year priority objectives: (i) increasing responsible investment in food systems; (ii) increasing incomes and quality employment in food systems; and, (iii) increasing productivity sustainably to expand the food supply.

Under the Turkish G20 Presidency, for ensuring continuity between the presidencies, the Development Working Group (DWG) recognized the need for an Implementation Plan for the G20 FSN Framework. At its first meeting on 2-3 February 2015, the DWG requested FAO to coordinate the relevant international organizations for preparing Implementation Plan of the G20 FSN Framework for eventual approval by the DWG at its June meeting. The objective of the Plan is to identify specific, concrete and practical actions that make real progress towards the achievement of the Framework's three priority objectives, with a focus on low income developing countries (LIDCs).

The Implementation Plan mainly prioritizes practical actions in the areas of responsible investment, incomes and employment and sustainable productivity growth including reduction of FLW. It pays particular attention to smallholder and family agriculture, with an emphasis on women and youth. In parallel to the preparation of the Implementation Plan under the DWG, G20 Agriculture Ministers discussed how the G20 can best support the achievement of sustainable food systems and issued a Ministers Communiqué outlining their views and recommendations at G20 Agriculture Ministers Meeting in Istanbul on 7-8 May 2015.

As an important outcome of the Communiqué, the Agriculture Ministers requested the Agriculture Deputies in collaboration with the DWG to bring together the conclusions of Ministers' Meeting and the recommendations of the Implementation Plan into a G20 Action Plan on Food Security/Sustainable Food Systems for consideration at the Antalya Leaders' Summit in November 2015. The Action Plan is intended to be a high-level deliverable for G20 Leaders, incorporating elements of the Agriculture Ministers Communiqué and the DWG Implementation Plan.

In line with the request of the Agriculture Ministers Communiqué, a zero-draft Action Plan, mainly considering conclusions of implementation plan and the Ministerial Communiqué were prepared and presented at the 3rd Agriculture Deputies Meeting held in Izmir on 2-3 July, 2015. In this meeting, action plan was broadly discussed and revised according to the views and contributions of the participants. Development Working Group and Senior Agriculture Officers are now working together to finalize the Action Plan. In the Ministerial Communiqué, it is also stated that a platform should be established with cooperation of FAO, IFPRI and other relevant international organizations, building on existing systems, for sharing information and experiences in measuring and reducing FLW.

Another important event that took place during the Turkish Presidency is the Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS). While Implementation Plan highlights that G20 members will continue to support annual MACS, the Ministers Communiqué emphasizes the important role of the MACS "in promoting international collaboration to identify global research priorities and facilitating collaboration between public and private sector organizations in the key areas most likely to drive sustainable productivity gains". Furthermore, the Ministers asked MACS "to consider these needs and propose ways to support the G20 agenda on agriculture and food security issues with a particular focus on supporting transition towards sustainable agricultural and food systems."

In this regard, fourth Meeting of G20 Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS), with the main theme of FLW, was held in Izmir, Turkey on 27-29 July 2015. In response to Ministers request mentioned above, MACS agreed to establish a working group which will explore the alignment of research priorities and collaboration with the aim of reducing gaps and avoiding duplication with due consideration to other existing efforts e.g., by FAO/WHO/OIE and STAR-IDAZ.

¹ See <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/an894e/an894e00.pdf>

² See <http://www.fao.org/save-food/resources/keyfindings/en/>

³ See <http://www.fao.org/hunger/key-messages/en/>

MACS also agreed to support FAO, IFPRI, and other relevant international organizations to develop the platform mentioned in the Ministers Communiqué and share information and experiences relating to agricultural science and technology in measuring and reducing FLW. Additionally, MACS compromised on idea of establishing a working group with a subset of members and in consultation with FAO and IFPRI. This working group would conduct a preliminary mapping of their existing science and technology activities related to FLW, so as to contribute to enhanced information sharing and global coordination.

The G20 Leaders Summit will be held on 15-16 November 2015 in Antalya. Our objective here is to bring the agreement gained at both Ministers and MACS Communiqué to the attention of our leaders while keeping agriculture, food security and nutrition high at G20 agenda. On the other hand, after the G20 presidency is over, Turkey will continue to follow-up and lead agriculture related issues and events in 2016, too. EXPO 2016 Antalya will be a significant event to be realized in Turkey, beginning in April 2016, with the theme of "flowers and the children", where there will be several activities in parallel.

As a result, it is clear that the Mediterranean Agenda of CIHEAM Member Countries is complementary to the G20 Members Agenda on food and nutrition, and G20 can make a great contribution to the efforts for achieving food security at global level. Therefore, there is a need for greater cooperation among the G20 Member countries and international organisations like CIHEAM for achieving the SDGs especially on food and nutrition security, because the Mediterranean Future as well as the global welfare depends certainly – if not only – on a better food security.

