

## WORLD FOOD DAY

**"Investing in agriculture for food security".**

The world will come off better

The FIMARC, International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements, is pleased to celebrate, as we do every year, the World Food Day. We consider the theme chosen by the FAO for this day as important, even if we'd have preferred the expression Food Sovereignty, which enables farmers to choose their production, instead of food security. Indeed, nobody can be opposed to the development of food security, including multinational companies, one of the main actors in the destruction of peasant family agriculture.

Like many people, we underline the paradox of a population suffering from malnutrition when it is the source of the world food production. Thus, we can only agree with the need for investing in agriculture and rural development. Nevertheless, we believe it is extremely restrictive to only talk about investing in agriculture, even if supporting education and health, if the current trade policies are not radically questioned.

We know that the current production can feed the whole world, that food research keeps on developing and that it would consequently be possible to ensure food security for all the people of the world, only with food aid, the development of GMOs and of an industrial agriculture that would, in the best case scenario, turn peasants into farm workers serving these industries.

Consequently, we have many doubts and questions on the new cooperation model that is being promoted in the development of relationships between the public and private sectors. We know it is necessary to establish an environment more propitious for investments in agriculture, to provide basic public goods such as rural infrastructures, especially in terms of communication, but we fear to see more and more small farmers disappear when narrowing the gap between producers and the food processing industry and establishing product categories and production standards, as well as, undoubtedly, the imposition of processing, packaging and marketing standards.

Rather than seeing « Supermarkets about to become the main stakeholders in the national and regional supply chains... », we propose that we should equip farmers so that they can give an added value to their products, which would enable them to directly benefit from their production, instead of accepting to be the last links of the chain and, consequently, the last who benefit from it. Let's not miss the right target, the objective is not to invest to compensate for the problems of developing countries' food processing industries such as « bad roads, railways, market infrastructures, the absence of categories of products and recognized standards, weakness of the judicial structures that are supposed to make sure that contracts are respected and difficulty in making business with a high number of small farmers » but the development of peasant agriculture.

We share the idea of the FAO that the public sector should play a part in this and invest the required capital and foster cooperatives. Our world needs more States but States that are autonomous enough to establish policies that serve their population.

We advocate this solidarity economy, the access to food sovereignty, in a dialogue with public authorities in order to define the agricultural and trade policies that we promote for all producers, in transparency and with good governance in order not to have one sector developing to the detriment of the other but to the benefit of all through a production of quality, in the respect for the culture of every country and making sure that all people can exercise their legitimate right to food.

October 2006

---

Membre de la Conférence des OIC  
Observateur auprès de la FAO  
Consultant auprès de l'ECOSOC  
Consultant auprès de l'UNESCO

Secrétariat de la FIMARC aisbl  
rue Jaumain 15  
5330 ASSESSE  
BELGIQUE

Banque : 250-0132789-81  
E-mail : [fimarc@skynet.be](mailto:fimarc@skynet.be)  
TEL/FAX. +32-(0)83-65 62 36

---