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Report Template for EU Events at EXPO

Event Title :	Territorial Approach to Food Security and Nutrition Policy	Date:	19 October 2015
Event Organiser:	FAO, OECD and UNCDF in collaboration with the City of Milan and the Scientific Committee for Expo 2015		
Event Target Group:	Ministers and high level representatives of developed and developing countries, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, international and regional organizations		
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Event Concept

During Expo Milan 2015, 19-20 October, FAO, OECD and UNCDF - with the support of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany and in collaboration with the City of Milan and the Scientific Committee of Expo 2015 - jointly organized an international conference, as part of a multi-year initiative to assess Food Security and Nutrition policies from a territorial perspective. The conference was attended by high level representatives from developed and developing countries (Ministers and Vice-Ministers), development partners (multilateral and bilateral) and international experts. During the conference, the key findings from five country case studies that are to be included in the upcoming joint FAO-OECD-UNCDF publication *Adopting a Territorial Approach to Food Security and Nutrition Policies* were presented, including commentaries by representatives from the countries involved in the study, namely: Cambodia Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Morocco and Peru. In addition, ministers from Benin, Mali, and Niger further enriched the dialogue by sharing their experiences from applying a territorial approach to Food Security and Nutrition policies.

During the conference, the project partners reaffirmed their commitment to working together on the joint initiative on *The Territorial Approach to Food Security and Nutrition Policy*, underlining the value added by the complementary nature of their different mandates and fields of intervention. As a result, it has been decided to combine efforts based on comparative advantages. While OECD gives an overarching strategic vision for territorial/rural policy reviews, analysis and dialogue, in particular through the New Rural Paradigm and focuses on knowledge generation and dissemination, UNCDF has a long experience on local governance, local public financial management, innovative financing models for territorial development including local governance of Food Security, policy dialogue and advocacy and is playing a key role on the localization of the new SDGs. FAO is naturally well placed to contribute to Food Security and Nutrition aspects, in particular it facilitates global and national networks in the area of FSN and rural poverty, it generates information on FSN, develops analysis, tools and methodologies and provides capacity development for FSN. It was noted that the sum of these competencies brings great potential to the project.

The key rationale behind adopting a territorial approach to food security and nutrition policies stems from the fact that despite the high economic performance of developing countries over the last two decades, income inequalities have increased and geographical disparities have widened. Moreover, the evidence shows that food insecurity, poverty and geographic disparities are strongly correlated. A consensus was reached among the participants that in order to ensure more inclusive growth and achieve the challenging SDGs objectives of eradicating hunger and extreme poverty by 2030, a shift of paradigm in policy making is required; the territorial approach provides an appropriate framework for this change to happen.

In broad terms, the territorial approach put forward during the conference stresses the multi-dimensional

nature of FSN, and hence calls for effective coordination across policy sectors and between national and sub-national authorities. It advocates a multi-level governance system where all actors, in particular local actors, are empowered to better participate in the definition of national policies and pursue their own priorities based on the local context. In this framework, particular attention is paid to the alignment of social, environmental and economic development agendas, which are too often seen as separate policy spheres, with the risk of overlooking untapped development potential in rural areas. The establishment of territorial information systems monitoring where the poor and hungry live is therefore seen as key to successfully applying a territorial approach.

Presentations by the project partners underlined that using national averages to guide decision-making can be problematic, particularly for targeting food insecurity and poverty that tend to be concentrated in space. Nevertheless, inadequate production of sub-national statistics is not a problem limited to developing parts of the world: many OECD countries have some way to go in order to put in place territorial information systems.

Bringing the multi-dimensional and cross-sector framework forward, it was further suggested that additional focus could be given to the role of infrastructure, investment and gender aspects in the proposed framework for applying territorial approaches.

The case studies of the project confirmed that applying territorial approaches is far from a straightforward matter and that experiences and good practices are limited in the developing countries, hence the need to generate more evidence on how to implement territorial approaches to FSN. For example, while the complexity of coordinating interventions across policy sectors and levels of government has proven to be a key barrier to putting the approach into practice, the question remains of which models of coordination would best apply to the territorial approach. The five country studies have reviewed examples of both horizontal and vertical coordination approaches and highlighted some principles that are common to all the countries of the research study.

In this regard, there was overall agreement among the project partners and other attendants that further empirical work is required to generate the evidence required and that implementation necessarily involves a learning-by-doing exercise. It was further suggested that knowledge sharing of experience and best practices among the project stakeholders and beyond mostly in Mali, Benin and Niger should continue and strengthened.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the Conference were to:

- obtain an endorsement of the findings of the first phase of the project by the countries;
- raise awareness and reach a consensus on the potential effectiveness and on how a territorial approach can help raise the effectiveness of food security and nutrition policies and thereby accelerate progress towards eradication of hunger and achieving sustainable food security;
- agree on the way forward and in particular on how to move from the first phase of territorial policy reviews to the implementation of country level support programmes aimed at strengthening territorial approaches to FSN in the selected countries.

Main Conclusions

Experiences shared by high-level political representatives

Ministers and vice-ministers from the case study countries all recognised the need to address geographic

disparities within their national borders in terms of food security and nutrition outcomes. While economic growth, accompanied by productivity growth in the agricultural sector, has tended to lead to significant poverty reduction and improved food security and nutrition at national scale, the countries involved in the study still experience a rural-urban gap, sometimes with acute malnutrition and poverty in remote rural areas.

The country representatives pointed out various challenges in terms of applying a territorial approach to food security policies, but also raised several opportunities and lessons learned from experimenting with such approaches.

It was clear from most of the case study countries that the recognition of food security and nutrition is starting to take root in national policy agendas, and efforts are being made to formulate cross-sector policies and strategies. Nevertheless, when it comes to *implementation*, in many cases the approach appears to remain largely sectoral, with agricultural development to boost food supply on the one hand, and social programmes to address poverty and malnutrition on the other. The need to bring in other sectors, and to develop a more holistic vision for rural development was expressed by several ministers. For example, the Minister of Social Prosperity of Colombia acknowledged that a lot of the country's "territorial richness" is largely unexploited, partly due to the fact that many rural areas remain inaccessible. Investment in infrastructure networks is hence seen as a key priority for removing barriers to rural development. The country further suffers from the additional challenge brought by armed conflict and internal displacement - problems that reinforce the conclusion that interventions have to be tailored to specific territorial needs.

There was overall agreement that while decentralisation of government functions can help to bring policies closer to local needs, it should not be seen as a blanket solution. As pointed out by the President of the General Council of Agricultural Development of Morocco, a country that has undergone comprehensive decentralisation reforms in the past few years, more inclusive and territorialized policy making processes require a fundamental culture change at all levels: politicians, public administration and all other stakeholders involved. Moreover, devolution of political power and financial resources to decentralized administrations requires competencies, skills and capacities that are still missing in the country. In terms of horizontal coordination the experience of "*Aggrégation*" was put forward as a good example of how family farmers can become family enterprises.

Long term vision, continuity, commitment and leadership are fundamental pillars underlying efforts to eliminate poverty and hunger, as further highlighted by the Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation of Peru, where efforts are made to build on existing programmes targeting marginalised areas, and to institutionalise these as part of the country's commitment to remove geographic inequalities.

Putting in place a multi-level governance system that brings together national and sub-national policy priorities further necessitates that capacity is built at local level. In Cambodia, this has become evident in light of recent decentralisation reforms, the latter of which have begun to move policy-making closer to its territories. Nevertheless, weak capacity and inadequate resources to implement policies at provincial level means that decision-making remains a largely centralised process, without the involvement of sub-national stakeholders.

The ministers from Benin, Mali and Niger, who were invited to share their views on the territorial approach to FSN and on the findings of the reviews completed in the selected countries, expressed their interest and willingness to adopt such a framework and to be involved in the second phase of the project. They recognised that their political systems could benefit both from a cross-sectoral perspective as well as reducing the distance between national and local policy-making. They shared the efforts their Governments are doing to shift from a sectoral approach to intersectoral and multilevel governance approaches. All of them presented their experience with the establishment of interministerial committees on food security and nutrition, generally placed at the highest level of the government (President's office or Prime Minister's office). The Minister Commissioner to Food Security of Mali explained that FSN in the country could not be achieved only through agricultural growth and that education and health have to be integrated in food

security and nutrition strategies. He further asked to know more about “how we do *intersectoriality*”. The Minister, High Commissioner for the 3N Initiative in Niger illustrated how the Government is strengthening inclusive decision making and coordination. He mentioned the experience of the “*Communes de convergence*” where multi sectorial interventions are made as a good example of effective coordination mechanisms to be expanded and also talked about the “*Maison des paysans*” as a way to strengthen access to knowledge, information and crop and livestock production inputs. The Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Benin underlined that the country is also starting to launch consultation processes at local level, but that progress has been halted by lack of adequate resources to invest in these issues. One important aspect raised in this regard was the need for strengthened accountability at all levels of government, especially in countries that suffer from high levels of corruption.

Development partners

Multilateral and bilateral development partners participating in the event (eg. GIZ, Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, JICA, EC DG DEVCO, IFAD, UNDP, etc.) acknowledged the importance of this approach to address FSN. Some of them are already supporting initiatives related to the territorial approach. The key motivation behind adopting a territorial perspective appeared to remain the same: the urgent need to eliminate poverty and hunger for everyone, *everywhere*.

It was generally agreed that the common challenges faced by all nations, as expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, cannot be dealt with in isolation. The SDGs are intrinsically interlinked, and achieving one will depend on progress towards achieving another.

It was therefore stressed that not only the direct causes of development issues (such as the lack of roads) need to be addressed, but to also the indirect root causes of barriers to food security and nutrition (like for example administrative and coordination issues). In this regard, a point of caution was raised concerning the tendency to treat local authorities as mere delivery agents, rather than the political agents that they effectively represent. A better understanding of the wider territorial management system was therefore seen as a key advantage of adopting a territorial perspective, which further entails looking at entire value chains as integral components of such systems. In terms of moving from a mainly project-driven approach towards a more holistic and long-term vision for rural development, the need to establish suitable platforms for interventions was suggested, whereby priorities could be better aligned and fragmentation reduced.

Nevertheless, one key concern from a development partner perspective was the inevitably complex nature of territorial approaches, as well as the time frame needed to adequately integrate such a framework within the context of national programmes and strategies. Development partners tend to struggle with complex concepts, since their role is often to provide relief based on crisis narratives and urgent needs, rather than getting bogged down in government agendas. Therefore, there is strong need to be innovative as well as concrete, focussing on the rural transformation discourse that has started to figure in the global donor community. This implies thinking in terms of investment rather than development aid, redefining the relationship “donor-beneficiaries” to a partnership approach to development. This shift is well reflected in the territorial approach to FSN policies.

Remarks by International Experts

Towards the closing of the conference, some additional observations and comments were offered by experts from academia and specialised research institutions. Some key elements discussed and presented during the conference were rehearsed and commented upon.

One of these was the paradox derived from the fact that most food insecure people are concentrated in rural areas. In other words, people who are physically close to where most food production happens tend to be worst affected by food insecurity. In today’s food markets, the necessity to create alternative livelihoods in rural areas is therefore strong in order lift people sustainably out of acute poverty and hunger. To realise the full development potential of rural areas, there is need to bring capacity to local areas, and to generate

more expertise in applying territorial approaches. As discussed among the country representatives, both political power and capacity (both human and financial) needs to go along with decentralisation efforts made to bring policy-making closer to the population.

Applying a territorial approach to food security and nutrition implies looking beyond the rural areas and focus on the urban-rural linkages which allows for a better understanding of the complementary and synergistic functions and services that can make rural and urban areas mutually reinforcing in eradicating hunger and poverty not only in the rural areas but also in the urban areas, where food insecurity and malnutrition is expected to increase in the future relative to rural areas. Territorial information is hence key to understanding the broader picture of poverty and food insecurity, to guide the decision makers in the right choice of the policy mix required (economic, social, environmental) depending on the context-specific situations and to prioritize investment accordingly. In addition, it is often forgotten that territories are not merely political or economic areas, but further involve social and cultural aspects that contribute to the territorial assets of a specific place. Without consideration for such parameters, it is likely that interventions fail to provide the best possible support to a given locality. The regional level is seen as an important intermediary level between national government and local communities in this regard.

What follow-up actions emerged from this event?

The conference transmitted a sense of urgency to move from theory to practice, and to start implementing the lessons learned from the first phase of the project. Therefore, the main goal is now to launch the second phase of the project on implementation which aims at piloting the policy innovations inspired by the findings of the knowledge generation phase in some countries. Building on the momentum started in Milan, FAO, OECD and UNCDF stand ready to i) involve Mali, Benin and Niger at the level of the pilot countries, ii) develop support programmes tailored to the specific needs of each country, further seeking to engage with other possible stakeholders and partners to complement the existing consortium.

As stressed in the concluding remarks of the Conference on the way forward, the immediate next step to follow is to incorporate the deliberations shared during the conference into the final Publication, which will hence be fine-tuned based on the conference findings and further comments provided by the project stakeholders, and released in early 2016.

The findings of the project will also be presented at dedicated national workshops, both in the case study countries and in Mali, Benin and Niger. The target of these workshops will be high level policy makers, development partners and other key national stakeholders, with the goal of obtaining endorsement of the publication and present the next phase of the project.

A similar event will also take place at the global level, with the participation of countries that have expressed their interest to proceed to the implementation of the second phase of the project. The global event will further serve to discuss concrete proposals for technical assistance in terms of applying territorial approaches to food security and nutrition policies. The event will take place tentatively in April 2016 in Paris (OECD HQs).