

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO ENSURE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 121st IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 21 October 2009)*

The 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recalling that under Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food ...",

Also recalling Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), in which the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger is recognized,

Further recalling the commitment made by parliamentarians under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to establish, under the auspices of the IPU, a parliamentary network on the UNCCD to promote information and interaction aimed at increasing parliamentary involvement and efficiency in combating desertification, soil erosion and land degradation,

Taking into consideration the cooperation agreement of 24 July 1996 (A/51/402) between the United Nations and the IPU, which laid the foundation for cooperation between the two organizations,

Noting, in that regard, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/24 of 22 January 2009 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Welcoming the IPU's contribution to shaping the agenda and work of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), recently established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council,

Taking note of the resolution adopted by the 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Beijing (China) on 20 September 1996 on "Policies and strategies to ensure the right to food in this time of globalization of the economy and trade liberalization",

Also taking note of the 1996 Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, which pledged to reduce the proportion of undernourished people to half their 1996 level by no later than 2015,

Further taking note that under Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1, Target 3 aims to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger,

Recalling Articles 61, 62 and 65 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), which deal with aspects of overfishing,

Recalling the recommendations of the 17th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, adopted in May 2009, on the importance of promoting agriculture and development in a sustainable way,

Welcoming the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of the UN High-Level Taskforce on the Global Food Security Crisis and the Task Force's Comprehensive Framework for Action, released in July 2008,

Bearing in mind the June 2008 Declaration of the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security, which called for greater international efforts to address the challenge of global food security,

Welcoming the G8 Statement on Global Food Security, adopted at the G8 Outreach Session on Food Security in L'Aquila, Italy, in July 2009, in which the leaders of 40 countries and international organizations emphasized five basic principles to govern cooperation related to food security and agreed to act; *also welcoming* all multilateral and regional commitments to tackle the issue of food security,

Realizing that climate change will affect developing countries the most and will pose a threat to food security,

Recognizing that the world is experiencing various natural and man-made disasters, ranging from drought, famine and floods to locust invasions, which have had either a direct or indirect impact on agricultural productivity and consequently on the macroeconomic status of countries, particularly developing ones, and which have led in the long run to low agricultural productivity, starvation and even death in some cases,

Realizing that severe weather patterns, droughts and floods have become so common globally that they have led inter alia to the loss of life and property and the destruction of farmlands and transport infrastructure,

Reaffirming that although each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication, concerted and concrete measures are required at all levels to enable developing countries to achieve their sustainable development goals as

they relate to the internationally agreed poverty-related targets and goals, including those that arise out of the relevant UN conferences and the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

Deeply concerned that despite the progress made by the international community in recent years towards eradicating hunger, the number of malnourished people in developing countries has increased to more than one billion,

Also concerned that the global economic crisis is leading to increased poverty, thereby further reducing the food security of the poor, and is widening the gap between rich and poor,

Further concerned that while food prices have fallen from their recent peaks, they remain volatile, due among other things to speculative trade in the futures markets in food grains, and are expected to remain relatively high in the foreseeable future,

Remaining concerned at situations of armed conflict, which cause a steep decline of socioeconomic conditions, particularly on food security,

Concerned that the international community's capacity to respond to the growing demand for food is constrained by increasing urbanization, water scarcity, the decline in investment in agricultural research and development, distortions in global food markets, increasing energy prices, environmental degradation and climate change,

Recognizing that appropriate, affordable and sustainable investment in research and scientific advancements to boost agricultural productivity and combat drought-induced famine, severe weather patterns and floods can play an important role in helping States alleviate poverty and eradicate hunger,

Noting the importance of sufficient food storage facilities and an adequate transport infrastructure to facilitate both the storage of food and its transportation to markets,

Recognizing that food security and poverty are fundamentally interrelated and must be addressed within a broad framework that encompasses social concerns and economic growth,

Also recognizing the negative effects that distortionary agricultural policies have on agricultural production, investment, trade and food security,

Acknowledging the importance of fair and efficient markets and trade flows in promoting economic growth and food security,

Also acknowledging the importance of sustainable development and real progress in tackling environmental challenges, such as the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, to achieving global food security,

Believing that the fulfilment of the right to food requires the adoption of economic, environmental and social policies aimed at increasing both the availability and the accessibility of food,

Recognizing the importance of global action to address inadequate food security and the need for a timely process for reporting on progress,

Believing that agriculture can be a part of the solution in combating climate change and *calling on* the international community to put agriculture on the agenda at the UN Climate Change Conference Copenhagen 2009 (COP15),

1. *Calls on* parliaments to take urgent and decisive action to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015;
2. *Stresses* the critical need for increased investment in rural development in developing countries in order to improve food security;
3. *Urges* donor countries to honour their commitments and mobilize additional resources to help achieve global food security;
4. *Urges* States, parliaments and relevant UN agencies to make greater efforts to promote investment in research and scientific progress in order to boost agricultural productivity and combat drought-induced famine, floods, coastal erosion and other natural disasters under fair, transparent and mutually agreed terms;
5. *Calls upon* parliaments to promote investment in research and scientific progress on issues such as tree planting, wetland and dryland conservation, afforestation and deforestation that will reverse the effects of climate change, which in turn affect other interventions in this area;
6. *Urges* all parliaments to make greater efforts to stop the continuous overfishing of many marine species that has occurred in recent years in several regions of the globe, and which affects the food security of many countries;
7. *Calls for* support for national efforts to foster the effective use of local know-how and technology and promote agricultural research and technologies to enable poor rural men and women to increase agricultural productivity and enhance food security;

8. *Encourages* States to make knowledge and know-how in the field of agricultural technology and agricultural innovation systems more accessible, in particular to the poor, subject to appropriate arrangements;
9. *Urges* the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to support the efforts of States, in particular developing countries, to take full advantage of new knowledge in agricultural technology, innovation, research and development with a view to achieving the relevant MDGs, in particular the eradication of poverty and hunger;
10. *Recognizes* the important role of the private sector in the development of modern and efficient agricultural and food systems, while *stressing* the need for proper regulations to limit potential abuses by the private sector;
11. *Calls for* the empowerment of farmers' organizations in the decision-making process;
12. *Urges* parliaments, relevant UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and donors to invest in improved transport infrastructure, including road and rail networks, as well as adequate food storage facilities, all of which have an important role to play in bringing available food production to markets and areas of immediate need;
13. *Calls upon* public and private institutions to further develop improved crop varieties that are suitable to various regions, especially those challenged by environmental factors, including climate change, and to develop and manage these crops in a sustainable manner; *calls for* further efforts by all stakeholders to ensure that improved crop varieties are made available and affordable to small farmers, especially those in developing countries, in a manner consistent with national regulations and the relevant international agreements;
14. *Encourages* parliaments to exchange information on technological development and international cooperation in the area of agricultural productivity;
15. *Stresses* the need for greater coordination between parliaments, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and farmers' and fishermen's associations in their efforts to improve global food security;
16. *Calls for* the implementation of national and regional agricultural strategies to improve food security through country-led coordination processes, as called for in the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the UN High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security;
17. *Encourages* parliaments to expand national social protection systems in order to shield the poor in developing countries from future food price rises and crises and loss of livelihood;
18. *Stresses* the critical need for affected populations to have free access to food and other essentials in areas of armed conflict in order to alleviate the humanitarian situation and improve food security;

19. *Urges* parliaments to take measures, in addition to actions to improve global food security, to adapt to and mitigate climate change as well as strengthen the sustainable management of water, land, soil and other natural resources, including the protection of biodiversity;
20. *Calls on* governments to show renewed commitment to a balanced outcome of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization, and to conclude the negotiations by the end of 2010;
21. *Urges* governments to refrain from erecting barriers to trade and investment in agriculture and to take measures to foster a well-functioning banking system, including microfinance schemes that give access to women and guarantee them a minimum of 50 per cent of available funds;
22. *Encourages* world leaders to agree effective measures to tackle food security at the forthcoming World Summit on Food Security;
23. *Calls on* developed countries to make a renewed commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions during the COP15 meeting so as to reduce the adverse effects of climate change on food supply;
24. *Calls on* all parliaments to submit an annual report to the IPU Secretariat on national progress in addressing the food crisis and *calls on* the IPU to explore the possibility of creating a permanent mechanism to address the subject of food security.
