



Recommendations for the Implementation of the Food Facility

The South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) together with Eurostep as its European partner, have been actively following the food facility process with timely interventions. On 14 October 2008, SAAPE-Eurostep organised a roundtable hearing in the European Parliament, **“Hearing the Farmers’ Voice: How can the €1billion EU contribution help resolve the worldwide food price crisis?”** that was jointly hosted by Gay Mitchell MEP (Rapporteur of the food facility) and Thijs Berman MEP (Shadow Rapporteur). SAAPE representatives from the region that participated in the Parliament hearing also had bilateral meetings with concerned officials from the Permanent Representations of the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. Follow-up to this advocacy process has been sustained since.

SAAPE and its small farmers’ constituency in Southasia believe in and promote “food sovereignty” which is the inalienable right of peoples, communities and countries to define, decide and implement their own agricultural, labour, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. Food sovereignty includes the Right to Food and to produce food which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources, technologies and ability to sustain themselves, their resources and societies.

SAAPE, therefore, believes that any initiative to address the hunger and food price crisis should be based on the frame work of food sovereignty. With regard to an effective implementation of the food facility, SAAPE calls on the Parliament, Member States and the Commission to give due consideration to the following issues and concerns:-

Key Role of Civil Society Organisations: CSOs actively working and engaging with the local farmers and populations have a cutting edge in terms of both intellectual and technical expertise with regard to the agricultural systems in place locally, as well as properly attuned to the socio-political local conditions and dynamics. Effective and efficient on-the-ground work including its monitoring and evaluation is therefore guaranteed if CSOs play the key role in the implementation of activities. Additionally, mobilisation of CSOs strengthens their capacity- and alliance-building which eventually leads to sustainability of actions/interventions, as foreseen and expected by the food facility. Therefore, in this context, all International Organisations should also be mandated to work along with CSOs in their activities.

Programming/Fund allocation: The proposal as it stands now indicates that 60% of the funds would go to the International Organisations and 40% to the CSOs/NGOs as well as Member State’s development agencies. This proportion should be reversed as the fund allocation is inadequate especially if a proper balance has to be duly maintained between the CSOs and MS development agencies. Further, in the first reading of the Parliament’s Development Committee vote in early October 2008, MEPs had specified that only 40% of the funds should go to IOs and that the list of entities should be expanded to include NGOs and MS



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development agencies besides the IOs. Any co-financing requirement expected from CSOs should be at a lower rate than other actors.

NO to World Bank: The prescriptions of the World Bank, in particular, commercialisation and privatisation of agriculture have only brought doom to the small farmers as well as to vulnerable and marginalised populations deriving their livelihoods from agriculture. NO to World Bank in Southasia!!!

Target Countries/Regions: Proper regional balance should be maintained giving priority to the Least Developed Countries. In this context, Southasia requires due attention with 5 LDCs in the region and with rampant hunger and food price crisis demanding urgent humanitarian as well as agricultural development assistance. The region is also characterised by both conflict and post-conflict country situations.

Activities/Interventions: In light of the short- and medium-term focus of the food facility, following activities are recommended in recognition of the interests and local sustainable practices of small farmers and local populations:

- ✓ Safety-net measures such as food relief/delivery to meet the immediate humanitarian needs, prioritising procurement of food grains from local and national markets
- ✓ Micro-credit facilities to small farmers
- ✓ Local seeds and organic fertilisers to boost the practice of sustainable eco-agriculture systems by small farmers. Use and promotion of hybrid/GM seeds and chemical fertilisers have led to the current unsustainable agriculture systems that only create the farming community's dependency on high capital-intensive external inputs
- ✓ Support and encourage the practice of (food) crop diversification, such as, developing productivity of millets where it is the staple food
- ✓ Creation and promotion of local seed villages to empower small farmers to conserve, develop and control their own indigenous seeds
- ✓ Rural infrastructure development such as irrigation facilities, roads and rural electrification

Gender-balance must be guaranteed and therefore, all interventions should directly benefit the women farmers and populations including children. Women not only engage in farm labour but also play a key role in preserving biodiversity and traditional indigenous knowledge systems.

In the long term, to achieve strengthening of the productive capacities of small farmers as well as proper governance of the agriculture sector, **SAAPE urges the EU to initiate following measures through its development cooperation instruments:**

- ✓ Promotion of eco-agriculture including local food systems to sustain farming and farm-based livelihoods
- ✓ Increased budget support towards agriculture development
- ✓ Promotion of genuine agrarian reform to facilitate people's access to land and productive resources
- ✓ Re-think on trade and agricultural policies as the existing WTO framework on agriculture will only exacerbate the current crisis situation.

SAAPE fully supports the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur Olivier de Schutter in his recent report on 'The role of development cooperation and food aid in realizing the right to adequate food: moving from charity to obligation'.