
PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY

Parliaments addressing agriculture, hunger and food insecurity in times of global crisis

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Organized by the Italian Parliament in cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF THE PROCEEDINGS BY THE IPU PRESIDENT, DR. THEO-BEN GURIRAB

We parliamentarians have come together to contribute to the outcome of the World Summit on Food Security that will start in two days' time in this city.

We have learned a lot from each other along this journey.

Yes, the world is still facing a food crisis. However, this food crisis cannot be seen only as a problem of production. It is also a problem relating to:

- Distribution of the food produced, from the small farmer to the markets
- Affordability of food
- Quality and nutritional diversity
- Social inequalities and poverty
- Marginalization of women and gender inequality
- Insecurity and conflict
- Effectiveness of programmes and corruption.

These challenges and other problems have to be addressed to ensure food security. We members of parliament hold an important key to finding solutions through accountability and enhanced and democratic governance.

As we have heard today, there are many things that we, as parliamentarians, can do. Let me list a few of them:

- Adopt legal frameworks and laws to protect the right to food and ensure that there is a comprehensive national strategy in place to ensure food for all;
- Ensure that women are empowered. For example, we should adopt entitlement law that covers women's access to land, credit and markets;
- Give agricultural development the priority it deserves in the budget, examine current agricultural policies from a climate change perspective and promote different policies and methods that have a less severe impact on our climate;

- Monitor implementation of programmes to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable in society are met; and
- Monitor the impact of trade agreements on the right to food.

We are now in the run-up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Today, we were reminded once again that food insecurity and climate change are twin crises that jeopardize human survival. As parliamentarians, we strongly urge governments and industry to spare no efforts in their joint commitment to make a real difference to the lives of the world's millions.

We are aware that the challenges are enormous, but I leave this meeting confident that we want to be part of the solution and contribute towards a better world.