



National Alliance Against Hunger in Lebanon

1) What went wrong in your country which prevented the most vulnerable and the poor to improve their access to safe and healthy food?

In General the continued war, occupation and political instability in the last twenty years in Lebanon are seen as the main causes behind poverty which in its prevalence in many parts of the country is considered the main cause of malnutrition and food insecurity affecting the poorest and most vulnerable groups of the population.



As a consequence the Country became reliable on foreign funded projects which were mainly oriented for immediate relief and emergency activities and left the country with no long term planning.

The government neglected adopting long and medium term policies in particular for food and agriculture sectors. And if any policies were adopted as a response to Lebanon commitments to International trade agreements, these are facing a lot of constraints at the implementation level due to institutional weaknesses.

In the absence of social nets and support schemes for small producers the agricultural areas became the main reservoirs for the poor. These facts have weakened the agriculture sector and lead food producers to abandon agricultural areas and migrated to Beirut suburbs. Consequently agriculture contribution in national economy is diminishing and poverty is increasing.

Weak rural infrastructure as well as development services in remote areas despite the numerous development activities chaotically scattered in the absence of any coordination policy, and leading to thinly spread funds and resources.



The absence of national food consumption surveys and the rapidly changing food consumption habits shifting to "fast food" with weak orientation policies and programmes.

2) Did you see any improvement in addressing hunger and malnutrition problems since the High Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy held last June at FAO headquarters, Rome?

In the absence of new assessment of the Lebanese food security situation in relation to climate change and biofuels after Rome conference in June 2008 it will be difficult to talk about improvements since that date. However, since Lebanon is a highly food importer and a net fuel importer, the country will be always vulnerable to any world disruptions in fuel and or food prices. Through the several steps adopted by the Lebanese government as a response to rise in food prices in 2007 have revealed how much the country's food systems is fragile.

(Reference: Country case study on soaring food prices in Lebanon, June 2008 prepared by Ms Amal Salibi, Ministry of Agriculture).

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