



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION  
124<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings  
Panama City (Panama), 15 – 20 April 2011



Second Standing Committee on  
Sustainable Development,  
Finance and Trade

C-II/124/DR-pre  
13 December 2010

**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH  
THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION  
AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE**

***Preliminary draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs  
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The 124<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

(1) *Noting that:*

- (a) Following a steady drop in poverty levels between 1990 and 2007, hunger rose sharply in 2009 according to the United Nations; according to estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 830 million persons will go hungry in 2011,
- (b) The food crisis of 2007-2008 revealed the international community's vulnerability vis-à-vis food security,
- (c) Arable land is being increased to the detriment of forested areas and fragile ecosystems,
- (d) Desertification in many places is due to long droughts and poor land use,
- (e) The United Nations has indicated that the world has lost 13 million hectares of forest every year for the past 10 years, thereby rendering the environment more vulnerable, without counting the 60,000 km<sup>2</sup> lost each year to desertification,
- (f) Deforestation accounts for 14 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions and the spiral of climatic alterations,
- (g) Many regions in the world, notably the Middle East and North Africa, find themselves in a difficult situation regarding water supply, with the Sahel countries always suffering from water shortages,
- (h) This situation heightens the risk of conflict over access to and the use of water resources,
- (i) Many countries, in particular developing countries, are hard hit by collapsing exports, capital flight and rising unemployment,
- (j) Over the past decades, agriculture has too often been neglected in both national and international policies, thereby contributing to conflict and instability,

- (2) *Also noting that:*
- (a) The growing needs of a burgeoning urban population and extensive agriculture - both thirsty for water - oblige governments to concentrate their efforts to meet those needs by increasing the number of dams on rivers and streams and high-speed pumps to get water from the water table without taking appropriate measures to ensure a more rational use of water,
  - (b) Seventy per cent of the fresh water supply is used in agriculture worldwide, while competing claims on water for other purposes are increasing,
  - (c) The quality of fresh water is being lowered due to the intensive use of fertilisers, pesticides and weedicides,
  - (d) For some years now, certain regions have been experiencing an unusual overabundance of water, while others find themselves suffering increasingly from water shortages,
- (3) *Further noting that:*
- (a) Significant demographic changes are marked by:
    - lower birth rates and an ageing population in countries of the North;
    - a high birth rate in Africa, more or less pronounced depending on the country;
    - exponential urbanization compounded by higher levels of migration to coastal areas; and
    - more significant migratory flows - forced or voluntary - due to armed conflict or for economic reasons.
  - (b) According to certain projections, in the next 50 years, the population of almost all developed countries will be smaller and older as a result of lower fertility rates and longer life expectancy,
  - (c) All countries and regions of the North need immigration to prevent their population from declining, however, the level of immigration, based on past experience, varies greatly owing to the immigration policies adopted by each country,
  - (d) Africa is experiencing an unprecedented baby boom and its population will reach close to 2 billion by 2050,
  - (e) There are about 200 million migrants in the world today, representing 3 per cent of the global population,
  - (f) Expatriation of highly educated human resources impoverishes developing countries and causes them to further lag behind in terms of science and technology,
- (4) *Aware that:*
- (a) There is a direct link between the use of land, soil, space, resources and food production on the one hand, and between food production and poverty on the other,
  - (b) Poverty occurs in rural areas, where an increasing number of larger-scale farmers are finding it difficult to make a living,

- (c) Overcoming hunger requires an increase in both small-scale and large-scale agriculture and effective policies that focus on both categories,
  - (d) The private sector on the national and international levels has a key role to play in climate-smart agriculture and food security, food production, processing and marketing, and in the development and application of new technologies, including eco-efficient and responsible investments,
  - (e) The allotment of more and more land for the production of biofuels compounds the growing imbalance between supply and demand for foodstuffs,
  - (f) The growing demand at the global level for biofuels, compounded by the heightened need for land, may put pressure on marginal lands that are used for subsistence farming by the poor in rural areas,
  - (g) Sustainable development in rural areas should focus on the construction of social networks, such as cooperatives and knowledge centres, where people can acquire knowledge and qualifications, combine them and hand them down to the next generation,
- (5) *Mindful* that agriculture, food security and climate change are closely linked,
- (6) *Aware* that the multiple challenges facing the world in terms of climate change, ecosystem degradation, food insecurity, and the financial and economic crises require an integrated response that ensures that short-term emergencies are addressed while developing long-term strategies for sustainable development based on the premise that countries must pursue development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs,
- (7) *Underscoring* that the growth of the world population (approx. 9 billion by 2050) will require higher food production, and that increasing water and energy shortages hamper food production, which drives inter alia migration flows,
- (8) *Also underscoring* that growth in the agriculture sector, particularly in food production, remains fundamental for poverty alleviation, economic growth and environmental sustainability, while improving agricultural water productivity, integrated land and water management and sustainable agricultural intensification – more with less - without expanding areas under cultivation, and halting biodiversity loss and curbing and reversing land degradation and desertification are equally crucial,
- (9) *Highlighting* that it is crucial to create the requisite conditions and provide the opportunities and resources for farmers and other people living in rural areas to increase their food production or income, send their children to school, and enjoy rising living standards and fulfilling lives in order to avoid large-scale migration with high risks for stability, peace and security in many regions of the world,
- (10) *Recognizing* that an integrated and sustainable approach has to be adopted in order to give future generations a fair chance at tackling this multitude of challenges,
- (11) *Acknowledging* that in order to implement an integrated approach, research, education and the proper application of research results are vital, and that traditional and indigenous knowledge need to be linked with modern technologies and the latest scientific

knowledge about sustainable agricultural production, in particular food production and the sustainable use of natural resources,

(12) *Also acknowledging* that it is critical that countries share experiences and innovative technologies and cooperate in training and developing human and technical capacities,

(13) *Aware* that much of the technologies and knowledge that are needed is already available, but their wider dissemination and uptake are a key challenge that must be addressed,

(14) *Underscoring* that an integrated and sustainable approach has to be adopted in the management of:

- (a) Natural resources;
- (b) Agricultural production; and
- (c) Demographic change.

(15) *Considering* that management of the world's natural resources (soil, land, forests, water, energy and air) has to become more sustainable, focusing on conservation and renewal (sustainable use) instead of depletion and spending,

(16) *Also considering* that developing countries, with their growing populations and rising living standards, should be at the centre of agricultural and rural revival and that for many of them, halting and reversing land degradation and desertification is a high priority,

(17) *Cognizant* of the fact that many developing countries need to urgently boost agricultural productivity in a sustainable manner,

(18) *Aware* that intensifying agriculture for food security must include a vigorous response to major environmental changes such as desertification, land degradation and drought,

(19) *Considering* that Africa, above all, should benefit from a sustainable green revolution, that is, an agricultural productivity revolution that is economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable,

(20) *Also considering* that a green revolution, particularly in Africa, should be tailored to the needs of diverse local agro-ecological conditions and cropping systems,

(21) *Underscoring* the major role of the agricultural sector in feeding a world population of 9 billion in the coming decades,

(22) *Also underscoring* that a paradigm shift is needed and agriculture should no longer be seen as part of the problem, but part of the solution,

(23) *Aware that* agriculture is at the heart of poverty eradication, sustainable development and, increasingly, of climate change,

- (24) *Underscoring* that measures to provide an enabling environment for investment in sustainable agriculture and rural development and for tackling the structural causes of food insecurity are needed by both small-scale and large-scale farmers,
- (25) *Also underscoring* that inclusive and secure access to finance, in particular for millions of small-scale farmers, has to be promoted, taking into account gender equality and the important role of women in agriculture,
- (26) *Convinced* that it is critical that appropriate land tenure systems for private and communal land are put in place to promote climate-smart agriculture and improve access to land, in particular for small-scale farmers,
- (27) *Also convinced* that the active engagement of all actors, including local government, civil society and private sector partners, should be mobilized in the planning and implementation of policies and practices,
- (28) *Underscoring* that measures for the efficient and sustainable use of land, water, energy and other inputs in climate-smart agriculture are needed and that it is important to generate opportunities for higher incomes through adding value to the production and supply chain,
- (29) *Acknowledging* that the private sector must play a central role in expanding agriculture production, building agricultural value chains and assessing the potential of new technologies, including genetically modified organisms,
- (30) *Also acknowledging* that investments in revitalizing developing country agriculture and promoting sustainable rural development will need to be supported by new and additional resources from all sources, including private, public, domestic and international sources,
- (31) *Underscoring* that an enabling environment is needed to support investments and domestic, regional and international - including regional partnerships - North-South and South-South partnerships and public-private partnerships among all relevant stakeholders,
- (32) *Convinced* that women play a crucial role and should be an important part of the solution,
- (33) *Also convinced* that parliamentarians and their constituencies worldwide, together with governments, private stakeholders, national and international agencies, could play a role in heightening the awareness of the close relationship between climate change, food security and agriculture,
- (34) *Considering* that land use for agricultural purposes can only be justified in cases of sustainable agriculture and the sustainable application of natural resources,
- (35) *Also considering* that a green revolution can only succeed if it goes hand in hand with a comprehensive and coherent set of political decisions, including financial incentives for small-scale farmers, communication and education policies and regulations on land management reform,

1. *Invites* the IPU, parliamentarians and parliaments to act as agents of change in identifying an integrated and sustainable approach to the management of natural resources, agricultural production and demographic change;
2. *Encourages* parliamentarians and parliaments to engage all actors, including local government, civil society and private sector partners, to mobilize in the planning and implementation of policies;
3. *Calls* on parliamentarians to acknowledge the crucial role of women in sustainable agricultural development and to support measures, inter alia legislation, education, access to micro credits, finance and other facilities, since women's empowerment is key to poverty eradication and sustainable development;
4. *Urges* parliamentarians to ensure that discussions about land use remain on the national and international political agenda;
5. *Encourages* parliamentarians to participate in drawing up or proposing plans for regional development and land use that are based on the imperative of saving agricultural land;
6. *Calls on* national parliaments and parliamentarians to encourage their governments to take all necessary measures to restore degraded land;
7. *Invites* parliamentarians to support policies and measures at the national, regional and international levels, improve water efficiency in agriculture, promote integrated land and water management and the development of innovative water efficiency technologies;
8. *Calls on* parliaments and parliamentarians to develop and harmonize legislation for adequate standards on the manufacture and use of fertilizers and pesticides;
9. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians to initiate or strengthen legislative mechanisms in the area of sustainable forest management and prohibit any form of exploitation that does not conform to terms of reference that impose reforestation and the reconstitution of forested areas;
10. *Calls on* parliamentarians to include, as part of their action, measures aimed at halting biodiversity loss and promoting plant and animal genetic diversity;
11. *Invites* parliamentarians to support widely the premise that a transition to climate-smart agriculture should become part of the solution to sustainable development;
12. *Calls on* parliamentarians, in particular those in developing countries, to support and encourage rural development policies;
13. *Encourages* parliamentarians in developed countries to call for transparent decision-making processes, including the setting of clear targets for official development assistance;

14. *Calls on* parliamentarians to support green growth strategies, in which policies on agricultural development, food production, rural development and the sustainable use of natural resources are integrated;
15. *Urges* parliamentarians and governments to create the requisite conditions and provide the opportunities and resources for the most vulnerable farmers to have access to land, increase their food production, participate in knowledge-sharing, send their children to school and enjoy rising living standards;
16. *Calls on* parliamentarians, in close cooperation with national, regional and international scientific institutions and agricultural organizations, to organize conferences, seminars and workshops to discuss, develop and support action to improve the sustainable development of agriculture, in particular food production, the sustainable use of natural resources and demographic development;
17. *Invites* the IPU to consider annual reports on global developments in these fields at IPU Assemblies.