



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

CONCEPT NOTE

Regional Workshop on

“Ensuring Resilient Food Systems in Eastern African cities”

FAO Kenya and FAO Food for the Cities multi-disciplinary initiative

Nairobi, 13-14 December 2011 (tbc)

Background

The world's population is becoming increasingly urbanized as a result of both natural increase and rural-urban migration. According to the United Nations Population Division, the percentage of urban population has exceeded 50% of the total world population, and it will continue to increase for the next decades to nearly 70% by 2050. This increase will be particularly high in Africa as African cities are constantly growing, for some at very fast rate.

Feeding people in growing urban areas is a challenge for many countries. With climate change and extreme weather events, natural and man-made disasters and crises, urban populations are facing increasing challenging constraints with regards to their food and nutrition security. As the urban population increases, more food needs to be produced, processed, transported and distributed to cities while maintaining its quality and freshness.

Changing food habits of urban dwellers modify the food production systems in urban, peri-urban areas and rural, the links with the ecosystem and the management of the natural resources. The new consumption patterns change the whole food distribution and marketing system from a local and traditional one to a more diversified retailing system.

Urbanization creates the need for modifications in marketing, processing and distribution systems as food for urban dwellers becomes more expensive. Indeed, storage, transportation and distribution costs increase. Poor linkages between rural areas and cities can result in a high rate of food lost, resulting in constricted food supply and higher food prices. This also necessitates better infrastructure especially in terms of cold storage and appropriate transportation. Climate change can make these challenges both more acute and overwhelming. This is particularly true in coastal zones or in other areas where natural disasters, including droughts, are jeopardizing the food and nutrition security of the people.

Urban households are generally dependent on purchased food supplies from various sources: urban wholesale and large retail markets, supermarkets, small neighbourhood markets, local shops, street vendors (often of the informal sector) or sometimes directly from rural markets. The people living in cities have to face important challenges, including the rising of food prices, and its consequences in terms of social and economic costs. Despite an overall great quantity and diversity of food available, the urban poor are limited in their choice of locations to purchase food and, due to lack of purchasing power and increasing food prices, often suffer from hunger and malnutrition mostly. Urban households who practice urban and peri-urban agriculture as a means of supplementary income and for direct household consumption are generally more food secure and benefit from a more diverse diet. Urban and peri-urban food production also helps increase the availability of healthy and affordable food - mainly fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs and dairy products - for a larger number of urban consumers.

Changes in lifestyle have contributed to the changes in dietary patterns and nutritional status of urban dwellers. Because many of them have limited time for shopping and cooking, they rely increasingly on processed and convenience foods, street foods and food served in restaurants and kiosks. As a result, under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, coupled with over-nutrition and rising problems of obesity and diet related chronic diseases, the so-called double burden of malnutrition, are found in many cities, often within the same families. This situation is further exacerbated by low levels of physical activities.

Food consumed in urban areas is not necessarily of high nutritional quality and food safety. It is a growing concern in many urban environments. Poor shelter, lack of sanitation and hygiene and insufficient social services in slum areas further compound the problems. Food safety and nutrition concerns revolve around the hygiene of raw and processed foods whether these are sold in public markets, on the street or in restaurants, in the formal or informal sectors. Threats to consumer health include lack of clean water for the washing of fruits and vegetables, contamination of foodstuffs by dust and airborne pollutants, poor hygiene, improper storage, deteriorating urban environments and, finally, the threat of communicable diseases being spread via the food system. There is also the issue of waste management and disposal which further contaminates the food and water supplies.

A multi-stakeholder approach is needed. Local authorities are key actors having knowledge of the different dimensions of the local conditions. They have the capacity to coordinate the design and implementation of programmes to respond to very specific situations regarding the social, economic and environmental aspects. But they also need to interact with a wide range of actors at different political and territorial levels to develop and strengthen resilient food systems in cities. The role of awareness and education for consumers on both food safety and nutritional aspects plays a very important role in this context. For further info on the concept see the newly published position paper “Food, Agriculture and Cities” available online at the following link: <http://www.fao.org/index.php?id=28645>

Objectives

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Identify specific local issues regarding food and nutrition security of the cities in Eastern Africa;
- Discuss country and regional action plans, identifying priorities and key governance and investment areas to improve and develop resilient food systems for the cities of Eastern Africa;
- Explore mechanisms to coordinate between different stakeholders (public, private and civil society);
- Identify recommendations for the international organizations including projects, activities and collaboration mechanisms;
- Advocate for establishing a community of exchange of information and good practices.

Expected Outputs

- Local, country and regional action plans with priorities and key investment areas
- Recommendations for international organizations with regard to resilient food systems for the cities of Eastern Africa
- Concept of local, national and regional coordination mechanism
- Project outline(s) for technical interventions

Participants

The 2-days workshop will have approximately 40 participants from:

- Governments and local authorities, consumer organizations , NGOs, private sector and/or producers’ organizations; 3-4 representatives from around 9-10 countries, possibly Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan/Karthum, South Sudan/Juba, Uganda, as well as Egypt and Madagascar (list t.b.c.)
- Partner organizations – UN HABITAT, WFP, UNEP, WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, RUAF, IWMI, etc. (t.b.c.)
- FAO SFE officers from countries’ projects

Organizer

The workshop is being organized by FAO Kenya, with the FAO Subregional Office for Eastern Africa in collaboration with Food for the Cities Initiative (FCIT).