



**48th Session of the Commission for Social Development**  
**General discussion on agenda item 3a: priority theme – social integration**  
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On behalf of FAO, I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate on this important theme and would like to focus my intervention on the following points.

**1) Investment in agriculture and rural development contribute to ensure a greater and sustained social integration.**

Given the fact that by 2050, world population is projected to reach 9.1 billion, and that the number of undernourished people has risen above one billion, it is crucial to expand food production by 70% and at the least invest 44 billion USD per year in agriculture and rural development. At the World Food Summit on Food Security held in Rome in November 2009, World leaders committed to increase short-medium- and long-term national and international investment in agriculture in developing countries. They also committed to substantially enhance the share of ODA for agriculture and food security based on country-led requests.

The shift in policy at the L'Aquila G8 Meeting in July 2009 in favor of production by small-holders in developing countries was also an encouraging sign. While developing countries are appealed to redouble efforts towards investing in agriculture, private investment should also be explored from both national and international sources.

As rightly mentioned by a number of delegations, such as Ghana, Senegal, Nicaragua, ensuring food security is essential and lessons could be drawn from programmes implemented in various countries. It is however necessary to go beyond food production and agricultural investment, and include an additional dimension that focuses on the right to adequate food. Basing food security interventions on human rights will give voice to the hungry, promote empowerment and non-discrimination, and thus a greater social integration.

**2) Rural employment is a critical means in enhancing social integration of marginalized rural population.**

Three out of every four poor people in developing countries live in rural areas, and most of them depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihoods. As a consequence, promoting agriculture, as well as other rural income generating activities and in general decent rural employment, is imperative for fostering a sustainable, inclusive and equitable development and for reducing poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

Together with ILO, FAO is fully committed to promoting development strategies in rural areas that are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable, gender sensitive and equitable. However, many rural jobs do not ensure decent levels of income and sustainable livelihoods. It is therefore essential to raise on- and off-farm incomes and to explore emerging forms of employment in sectors such as fishery, forestry and others. The expansion of value chains associated with agribusiness and agro-industry could improve rural labor systems. Promoting productive work that delivers a fair income, workplace security and social protection for workers and their families, could be one of the means towards a greater social integration and personal development.

### **3) Other dimensions of social integration**

As in this year's CSocD agenda item 3(c) social consequences of the financial and economic crisis, and its gender dimension which will be discussed in depth, I wish to emphasize the need to take into consideration the impact of soaring food prices on social integration.

Attention should also be focused on rural women. They make up the majority of the world's poor and much of their work as household providers and agricultural producers is unpaid, making their contribution monetarily invisible. Therefore, gender-sensitive policies should be adopted at different levels to facilitate rural women's social integration.

In conclusion, investing in agriculture and rural development, promoting emerging forms of rural employment, tackling the impacts of soaring food prices, and taking in consideration the gender dimension of the financial and economic crisis, could greatly contribute to ensure sustained social integration.

Thank you.