

**35<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Consumer  
Protection of the German Bundestag**

**17th Parliamentary Term**

**Monday, 04.04.2011, 13:00 Meeting room: 3 101 Venue: Berlin, Marie-Elisabeth-  
Lüders-Haus Adele-Schreiber-Krieger-Straße 1**

**Public Hearing on**

**“World Food Security”**

**Personal statement by Dr. Manfred Kern, March 2011**

**List of questions:**

**1. In your opinion, what are the most important causes and solutions for the figure of one billion hungry people with a kilocalorie production that is mathematically sufficient for the entire population?**

Most important causes:

- 'well-known/classical' causes of the vicious cycle of poverty and hunger: high birth rate, inadequate agriculture, inadequate nutrition, inadequate health, inadequate education, high unemployment, low income, low purchasing power, no capital, hardly any legal/property basis, discrimination against women, no access to existential security systems, hardly any access to resources, no access to modern technologies, ineffective agricultural service, inadequate promotion of research, hardly any access to markets, inadequate infrastructure, low investment capacity, prolonged political instability, local/regional military conflicts, wars, corruption, uncontrolled ethnic displacements/migrations, resource-poor habitats, low soil fertility, little protection against extreme weather events, floods, droughts, frosts, earthquakes
- blatant public misjudgement of global food demand and the production required between 1995-2015 and 2025
- traditional, sustainable value creation in agriculture and in food production was not a top priority in many countries for many years/decades, both on the donor and on the recipient side
- many project commitments within the framework of Agenda 21 were not kept on time
- Important goals were not realistic from the outset
- plus new causes: see question 2

**Solution approaches: What not to do:**

- do not set unrealistic goals
- do not propagate ideal-typical, unrealistic, utopian or ideological wishful thinking
- do not promote polarization between production methods
- do not claim a 'royal road'
- do not make any pseudo-moral exaggerations
- do not prescribe solutions

- do not offer solutions that do not take into account the significant differences in natural resources between LDC countries
- do not allow poverty to be instrumentalized
- do not make a linear, simple extrapolation of the past with regard to the future
- do not develop initiatives that tie people into unsustainable activities
- do not initiate activities without clear measurement indicators and defined timetables
- do not provide aid that does not lead to an increase in purchasing power and a long-term reduction in poverty
- do not launch any initiatives on the part of industrialized nations whose time limits and implementation are only determined by election periods.

**Possible solutions: What to do:**

1. focus on poverty reduction by increasing productivity and purchasing power
2. prioritize the development of agriculture and food production again after many years/decades
3. focus on solving problems for small farmers, farmers, cooperatives
4. focus primarily on rural but also peri-urban regions
5. enable connection to value chains/networks
6. enable effective and efficient use of resources in terms of: land, water, nutrients, crops, biodiversity, genetics, CO<sub>2</sub> management, human resources
7. strive to avoid land use changes
8. establish fair, nationally and internationally legally binding regulations in the area of land and water rights to protect the local population as well as necessary investments
9. establish agricultural production systems that are resilient to climate change
10. promote the development of strategies to minimize greenhouse gases in agricultural production processes. This involves promoting plant and animal production as well as the production of renewable raw materials (decentralized production of agrofuels)
11. the development of strategic warehouses/storage capacities in countries struggling with hunger, buffer capacity in the event of extreme weather-related crop failures, ensuring availability (2010 Europe: wheat 5-year high, 144 million tons)
12. achieve a significant reduction in harvest and food losses: a. Pre- and post-harvest losses >50%, b. Food production losses (production/distribution) >60%
13. establish efficient national and regional research institutions in the field of agriculture in cooperation with the private sector and expand research and technology transfer
14. double the applied and development-oriented German agricultural research capacities with a focus on LDC countries by 2015
15. small farmers and farmers in LDC countries must be guaranteed free and unrestricted access to modern agricultural inputs (especially for women); their own freedom of choice must be respected
16. the development of higher value crops (primarily through public activities) that are resistant to abiotic and biotic stress factors:

- drought, temperature, salt, ozone tolerance
  - ICM pests, plant diseases and weeds
  - establishment of seed centers
  - Optimization of the photosynthetic efficiency of crops
  - Application of innovative technologies (epigenetics, ...). The quality/genetic potential of locally available seeds is already insufficient today for resource-efficient production; with increasing climate pressure, especially in LDC regions, this will otherwise become even more problematic by 2025/2050.
17. the dissolution of the scientific apartheid in matters of "green genetic engineering".
18. the establishment of agricultural colleges, supra-regional agricultural/food centers (agro-marketing).
19. protection against the high volatility of prices:
- fast information systems
  - micro-credit, insurance
  - fair trade agreements
  - own regional, national international stockpiles.
20. a time / financing plan: climate change and agriculture (2015/2020/2020):
- see Agenda 21 / Rio+10 ...Rio+20
  - global action plan with prioritization (see, e.g.: Charter for Food Security, Maxwell 1997)
  - new realistic goals: What can or must be done by whom, where, to respond to the challenges in a timely manner?
21. set up a "round table" with the private sector at CEO level and take up the initiative of the agricultural and food industry:
- all value chains/networks, linking the agricultural, food, energy and biomass industries
  - recognize and exploit synergy potentials at an early stage
  - agree on strategic clusters of cooperation.
22. induce an improvement in consumer behavior in industrialized nations:
- reduce the 'unethical' valuation of the production of basic foodstuffs (industrialized nations)
  - discarding of food by consumers (industrialized countries: -30%) should in my opinion be punished in future
  - quo vadis pet food? (booming markets / increasing consumption of resources).
23. reducing dependence on fossil fuels in food and food production as a whole must be addressed
24. new challenges for agriculture: ('FFFF FFFF FFFF FFFF FFFF') are to be met at:
- 'Factor Fn': Future Farming, Food, Feed, Fitness, Fuel, Fiber, Flowers, Freshwater, Fishery, Forestry, Flora, Fauna, Fun, Fortune, Freedom are milestones on a roadmap for tackling the challenges of the 21st century'.
  - Do more with less - and better - in time!
  - Increase efficiency and effectiveness in everything we do.
  - d. Dematerialization, de-carbonization and reorganization of resources.
25. an immediate sustainable intensification of basic food/food production worldwide with a focus on developing countries/LDCs must be realized.
26. establish internationally binding rules to prevent excessive speculation with agricultural commodity derivatives, proposals by Welthungerhilfe should be taken up:

- establish transparency on the commodity futures exchanges as to who trades in agricultural commodities; this market should only be accessible to traders and not to financial speculators
- issue restrictions on the trading volume
- establish price ceilings to prevent panic reactions and price distortions which ultimately exacerbate hunger and poverty as well as social and political instability

27. the FFF report ("The Future of Food and Farming: ..."), which takes a broad view of 2030 and 2050, should be used in many countries as a strategic basis for action in order to significantly improve their own efforts in the area of global food security, poverty and hunger reduction, resource conservation and sustainable social development. This FFF report should be required reading for all decision-makers, for schools and ultimately even for every individual.

28. continue a fact-based dialog, but act immediately and in a timely manner.

29. encourage people to develop a vision that is supported by ethical considerations and who also have the courage to implement this vision

30. an increase in the price of food and oil within the next few months of 20-30% worldwide must be prevented at all costs

## **2. Are there any new findings on the causes of the food crisis that need to be taken into account?**

New findings on the causes are:

- increasing decline in crop yields in developing countries due to accelerated climate change
- accelerated increase in weather-related extreme events (drought, storms, frost, flooding)
- low stockpiling in the EU (decoupling in the EU) and in many developing countries (politically not considered, economically not feasible)
- new use of plants for the production of bioenergy, especially in developed countries
- high losses of food from the field to the plate
- high misuse of food in industrialized nations
- high degree of coupling between food and energy prices
- high volatility of agricultural markets
- developing countries increasingly find themselves directly/indirectly caught between 'TTTTTTT' ("plate, trough, animal feed, tank, barrel, waist, tarot")
- significant increase in dependence on food imports; more than 30% of all food will be imported or exported in 2025
- lack of accompanying safety measures in agricultural production
- worsening of the situation due to the emergence of epidemic diseases (AIDS, TB, malaria)
- unregulated national export and import bans on agricultural products
- increasingly good prospects for speculators in the agricultural sector
- increasing pressure on resources of all kinds (soil, water, agricultural inputs)
- greater demand for agricultural land (often 2-3 times more than in Germany)
- uneven and unsecured yield situation, increasingly large yield gaps and production gaps
- unregulated land seizure by external investors in developing countries (national, private) "land grabbing"
- no timely transfer of new/modern agricultural technologies
- increasing lack of interest among young people (e.g. in emerging countries) to engage with agriculture and food production
- increasingly insufficient purchasing power in developing countries
- an increasing number of revolutions in various Arab countries
- the direct and indirect impact of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan
- the political will to eradicate hunger is not really being implemented in a concentrated manner

- agricultural-political utopias in developed and developing countries consume too much capacity, time, energy and resources - priority given to what is necessary and feasible
- lack of strategic development and establishment of value chains/networks and thus no connections to local/regional/global markets.

### **3. What measures must be taken to further promote the development of agriculture and regional and local trade in food in developing and emerging countries in implementation of the human right to food, in particular with regard to agricultural policy and agricultural research in Germany and Europe?**

#### **Measures:**

Essentially, Agenda 21 of Rio de Janeiro must finally be acted upon in the truest sense of the word - to do what was already agreed in 1992 and 2002!

In view of the fact and the need to improve all national and international measures in the area of future-oriented economic cooperation and development aid, these must be made more efficient and effective in future and implemented in a timely manner. The overarching goal should be: "Do more with less - and better - in time!"

A 'private-public partnership' as a 'cover' must be stopped immediately. The private sector should even be given a leadership role in some projects/sectors. A permanent "round table" should be convened in cooperation with the private sector at CEO level (all value chains/networks, combination of agriculture, food, energy and biomass industries) in order to identify and exploit synergy potential at an early stage and to agree on strategic clusters of cooperation.

#### **Agricultural policy:**

Despite excellent harvests in 2009, global hunger has worsened, with people in the poorest countries suffering the most. The situation is particularly precarious in Africa. A strategic reorientation on the part of the BMZ is urgently required. The first priority should be a sustainable, i.e. resource-conserving increase in agricultural production and productivity in rural and peri-urban areas. This includes an increase in value creation within plant and animal production, a more efficient and effective use of land, energy and resources and a minimization of the ecological footprint. Overarching goals should be taken into account wherever possible: Dematerialization, de-carbonization and re-organization of resources.

The high return on investment (ROI) of research and its application in industrialized nations as well as in developing countries is well described and undisputed if questions of efficiency and effectiveness are taken into account from the outset when planning and implementing research-relevant solutions to problems. Doing the right thing right, combined with clear timelines!

The financial framework as well as the institutional structures for development-oriented agricultural and ecosystem research with a focus on poverty reduction, labor facilitation, food security, the development of new markets, and increasing purchasing power should be doubled by 2015.

A clear differentiation and prioritization with regard to the objectives (sustainable increase in people's purchasing power), the target groups (subsistence farmers, small farmers, farmers, day labourers, cooperatives, medium-sized enterprises, farmers, contract farmers) of the target regions (rural, periurban, urban) and the time frame (2015/2020/2025/2030) are key strategic factors that need to be determined immediately.

#### **Agricultural research:**

In Germany, there is a high and diverse potential of expert knowledge on local and regional challenges in the agricultural and food sector in developing countries that needs to be pooled and utilized.

Without calling the freedom of research into question, there are subject areas that call for cooperation between “isolated focal points” and that need to be promoted and managed.

In contrast, very atomized, selective agricultural and ecosystem research within the framework of many previously funded projects has hardly contributed to sustainable developments in the desired target fields.

Development-oriented research projects should be integrated in a new and future-oriented way in order to help develop the basis for establishing economic and environmentally compatible value chains/networks (food, animal feed, animal production, bioenergy, aquaculture, infrastructure).

The aim should be to significantly increase the income of people in developing countries above the poverty line and to ensure this in the long term.

This includes, for example, the concerted and coordinated implementation of applied and development-oriented research projects in these areas in cooperation with important key partners (e.g. in the area of food production: food producers, food retailers, logistics companies, cooperatives, energy companies, infrastructure suppliers, education/training) in order to open up new markets.

New requirement profiles for the orientation of German development-oriented agricultural and ecosystem research must be defined immediately in order to provide young scientists in this field with appropriate opportunities for orientation.

#### **4. Are the steps taken after the food crisis suitable for combating hunger in the world and thus setting the course in the right direction?**

- If one associates this with the fact that, after many years of neglect, the development of agriculture and food production in developing countries has once again been given top priority worldwide, then theoretically yes in principle - de facto no.
- There is no operationalized, clearly defined master plan in terms of plan for poverty reduction - in which country, by when and with which measurement parameters measurable.
- There is still a great danger that global influences and changes will have a full and complete impact on the regions affected by poverty and hunger.
- From a desire to 'increase the value of agriculture' to sustainable, locally and regionally recognizable results can realistically be estimated at 10-15 years; this does not guarantee a solution to the acute problems.
- Depending on the future development of the crude oil price, we are facing a similarly drastic situation at the beginning of 2011 as in 2008; clear signs are the unrest/fighting in the Arab countries.
- Uncontrolled national decisions will consciously or unconsciously exacerbate the global poverty and hunger situation.
- It must be expected that there will be a dramatic increase in the number of hungry people on earth to over 1.1 billion.
- Large-scale transnational migrations are very likely.

#### **5. How do you assess the current situation on the world grain markets? Is there a threat of a new food crisis?**

- The world grain markets are increasingly highly volatile due to a variety of factors.
- Fortunately, global stocks are higher than during the last food crisis due to two recent good harvest years. Nevertheless, world food security faces extreme challenges.

- A crisis in food prices is largely determined by the development of the oil price, political developments in many Arab countries and the economic impact of the economic effects of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan.
- Precautionary measures must be taken to keep food prices in developing countries below the critical level and not just react to them in extreme cases; price increases of 20-30% in a very short space of time cannot be compensated for locally.
- Global, European and ultimately also German agriculture will have to prove its effectiveness and efficiency - professionalism and productivity will take center stage.
- Critical problem areas are rising and rising animal feed prices and rising prices for plant biomass for biogas plants.
- Rising and rising crude oil prices and the effects of the earthquake/tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan will push up the prices of biofuels with a time lag.
- The increasing influence of speculators in the agricultural sector will exacerbate volatility.
- Rising energy prices will increasingly exacerbate poverty/hunger in developing countries.
- A significant increase in the oil price must be avoided at all costs in the coming months.

**6. How has the food situation developed since then in the countries that had a world hunger index above 20 (serious or severe hunger) in 1990, to what can a positive or negative development be attributed and how do you assess this world hunger index developed by the IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) as a measure of the food situation in developing and emerging countries?**

**Positive development:**

- In addition to a large number of parameters, progress in these developing and emerging countries (especially China: 'privatization and agriculture', national strategic food strategic food reserves) on the research and development of agriculture and the promotion of local and regional food production.
- This development was supported by corresponding investments in connection with improved infrastructure.
- Private investment in this sector has made a significant contribution to improving the situation.
- Increased public investment in applied agricultural research in recent years was an important key to the positive development.
- Private investment will help to increasingly improve this development.

**Negative development:**

- In addition to a large number of parameters, the development of agriculture (research and development) as well as local and regional food production and regional food production were of little importance.
- Public investment in this area was and is very low; in many countries it has been stagnating or even declining for many years.
- In almost all areas, the agricultural sector often suffers from inadequate infrastructure, declining investments, insufficient training opportunities and a lack of capital. This is partly due to unsuccessful development projects in which the overall economic return on investment at local level has not been realized.
- Another cause is the high volatility of agricultural, food and energy prices, to which countries were, and in many cases still are, unprotected.

**Global Hunger Index:**

- The Global Hunger Index is an important statistical tool that can provide guidance for strategic decisions.

- A single observation of the GHI (World Hunger Index) is not sufficient. Therefore the World Hunger Index should always be considered in conjunction with the ASTIs (Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators), with the MPI (Multidimensional Poverty Index) and especially with the especially with the HDI (Human Development Index) of the UNDP.
- Strategic decisions should focus on combating poverty and hunger using the GHI and HDI, i.e. close to human needs.