Resolution 1139 (1997)[1]

Global challenges for agriculture (including aquaculture, fisheries and forestry)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls its Recommendations 1048 (1987) on the consequences for agriculture of current soil degradation, 1142 (1991) on the labelling of quality food products, 1213 (1993) on developments in biotechnology and the consequences for agriculture, 1232 (1994) on the management of water resources in relation to agriculture, and 1244 (1994) on food and health, as well as its Resolution 979 (1992) on agriculture's contribution to enhancing energy security and saving the global environment.

2. It also refers to the Council of Europe Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), to the European Water Charter and the European Soil Charter of the Council of Europe, to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21, adopted in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and to the Pan-European Strategy on Biological and Landscape Diversity of the Council of Europe.

3. In spite of these conventions and other agreements, the destruction of biotopes and biodiversity continues throughout the world.

4. The degradation of air quality affects the health of organisms and alters the Earth's climate.

5. Soil erosion and water pollution may threaten food security and have severe environmental consequences.

6. Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture interact in a particular manner with nature.

7. Non-sustainable exploitation practices in these four sectors, combined with an increasing world population, have caused damage to the environment, but these sectors could also contribute positively to re-establishing the natural balance of the Earth's ecosystem and assure universal food security if sustainable management policies and production systems were adopted.

8. The success of the "green revolution" in feeding the world and greatly reducing the number of undernourished children has also shown the need to monitor and regulate certain of the practices which have been so successful, if modern intensive farming is to be sustainable.

9. Consequently, the Assembly calls on the governments of member states and the European Union to :

   9.1. introduce relevant incentives for the promotion of sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture;

   9.2. increase research and development in support of such measures;

   9.3. give priority to programmes for reafforestation and for the maintenance of vegetation cover;

   9.4. increase research into existing biodiversity and the beneficial uses that can be made thereof;

   9.5. promote recycling of materials and gradually reflect the full costs of any environmental and social damage in the prices of non-sustainable, wasteful, polluting and/or unhealthy products and production methods;

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1. See Doc. 7845, report of the Committee on Agricultural and Rural Development, rapporteur : Mr Scheer. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 7 November 1997.

9.6. favour the maintenance of local markets as a complement to increased world trade for the enhancement of food security, for the benefit of rural economies and for the maintenance of a living countryside (thus reducing transport pollution);

9.7. ensure that European quality standards for products and production methods also apply to imported commodities;

9.8. seek agreements within the World Trade Organisation that will not jeopardise social and ecological standards;

9.9. take concerted action for a significant introduction of renewable, non-polluting energies using biomass as well as wind, water, tidal and solar power;

9.10. promote the use of renewable raw materials in all branches of industry;

9.11. prepare for a reduction in the use of fossil raw materials and charge the full costs of environmental and social damage caused by them;

9.12. take steps to phase out, replace or use in a harmless manner all input factors in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture (such as pesticides, chemical fertilizers, equipment, antibiotics, feed ingredients, and so forth) that can cause health hazards to humans, animals or plants, or that cause unacceptable environmental and social damage;

9.13. promote the production of quality food and assure the necessary controls.

10. The Assembly asks the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, in co-operation with the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and, where appropriate, the Council of Europe, to continue and strengthen work for the establishment of satisfactory pan-European regulations for the conservation of clean air.