

## SEMINAR PROJECT

### *Food security in the MONA region: civil society participation and partnership*

Madrid, November 30 and December 1, 2011  
*Hotel Catalonia - Las Cortes (6, Prado Street)*

#### **Introduction:**

The Euro-Arab Network for Development and Integration (READI) association, created in 2001 by FPSC, is composed of 40 NGOs from the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean sea, specialized in human and social development.

The overall goal of the READI is *"to promote the integration of NGOs in the Mediterranean countries, by creating an inter-institutional network that promotes new forms of co-participation between civil society organizations, governments and business sector, which generate effective and efficient actions for all-round human development"*.

Since its beginning, READI chose to acquire an innovative framework for a fruitful dialogue between the societies of the South and North. Thus, it aims to strengthen links between the Spanish NGOs and European civil society and their counterparts in the South, and strengthen the integration of its members, helping to achieve their objectives efficiently. To this end, READI wants to promote participation, dialogue and design specific actions to reduce, through the collective efforts of the society as a whole, inequalities between North and South, and thereby ensure sustainable and equitable development for all.

With this new seminar, READI wants to take another step in its progressive consolidation as a permanent and inclusive space of dialogue, opened 10 years ago within the established framework of the necessary participation of different social agents. Therefore, READI seeks to promote and consolidate this space in the Euro-Mediterranean area, to include NGOs from South Mediterranean shore in search of shared solutions and to increase their participation in decision-making development policies.

Therefore, the READI aims during this seminar, to contribute to the improvement of living conditions in the MONA region, particularly in countries where READI members are working: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, Jordan, Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria, fighting poverty through a deeper study of the relationship between food security and development. The analysis will be carried out at two levels: macro, pointing to national needs in specific countries, and micro, showing the situation of households and families affected, for this latter

the concrete experiences from READI partners working in different economical sectors will be crucial.

Attention will be given primarily to agricultural and water resources development: treatment and use of water for agriculture and consumption (we understand food security in this region also has to be referred to the security of access and use of water consumption, this latter being the scarcest resource in this part of the world). Weaknesses of the region (scarcity of water resources, agricultural production not enough adapted to environmental characteristics and needs of the population of the area, as well as the requirements for modern technology and infrastructure...) shall be therefore analyzed, in order to find ways to search for solutions (as an example, how to enhance a better use of water in storage deposit and irrigation).

Favorable conditions for to the strengthening of the industrial sector most affected by these circumstances will also be discussed, in order to increase the production of the sectors directly related to food processing and thus ease up imports dependence and, therefore, dependency of the MONA countries to prices fluctuation in international market, especially when it regards cereals importation.

Each of the NGOs member of the READI present during the seminar, as well as other invited personalities and associations all of them with a proven long experience of working in the Middle East and North Africa, will try to define:

1. The state of the matter: related to food security, especially with regard to agricultural production and access and distribution of water resources in the region.
2. The causes of food security and its consequences.
3. The actors involved, with special emphasis on the role of NGOs.
4. Presentation of some concrete solutions to achieve access to food to families, under favorable conditions.

Furthermore, will study how to support ways for the development of local and national agricultural economies based on local production and processing, and the creation of local marketing networks in order to allow the construction and consolidation of a national market.

The actions will focus on the most vulnerable people, based on the degree of food insecurity of the populations (to be addressed in the micro analysis of the problem).

The conclusions and recommendations of this seminar shall be posted on the website of the READI, and an executive report / working document (guide-line) will be prepared to be distributed among the members of the READI and other guests, international organizations and institutions working in the MONA region in

the field of development coming from the Community of Madrid as well as other Spanish regions.

The purpose of these publications is to raise awareness and disseminate knowledge of the specific problems faced by societies in these countries, so that the shared experience can benefit the cooperation for development in the Mediterranean areas promoting partnership between both shores, providing, in addition, a new opportunity for Spanish society to be aware of its necessary contribution in building peace being the development of the region, a previous requisite for it.

### **Specific Objectives:**

1. Which benefits might bring the platforms and networks, either NGOs or other organizations working for development in the fight for food security in the MENA region?
2. What strategies have to be followed in order to boost productivity in these countries and cut imports? Which type of negotiations could be initiated in order to lower the cost of purchasing raw materials while dealing with increased food prices and volatility of international market?
3. How to promote a more active and effective participation of the population benefiting from the aid to ensure sustainability of implemented actions and avoid reliance on aid in a region heavily dependent on foreign funding?
4. Women in rural areas, such as in Upper Egypt, Tunisia and northwestern Morocco, especially those who are also heads of households, are among the most disadvantaged social groups. In this case, moreover, subsidies given by the authorities for these rural areas do not reach these women, so ways has to be explored to try to give a satisfactory answer to this situation.
5. The current wave of revolution sweeping the Arab world, fueled by rising food prices and the difficult socio-economic situation of most of its population, should be kept in mind. Whether the political instability in many of these countries is affecting or could affect food security in the MONA region shall be considered also.

### **Expected Results:**

To promote a greater participation of European and Arab NGOs and research centers in the design and implementation of development policies related to food security, looking for ways to incorporate best practices, recommendations and conclusions undertaken by all development actors involved in this seminar.

Speakers are expected to present concrete reflections and at the same time be able to avoid particularism by submitting valid experiences for other countries in the region. Making the best efforts to stick to the theme of the panel as well as synthesizing experiences, insights and suggestions for improvement are expected.

The findings, conclusions and research arising from this meeting and their subsequent impact will be included in publications and broadcast over Internet. The purpose of the publications is to reflect the progress and the new ideas exposed in this forum and its dissemination.

### **Structure and organization of the conferences:**

The seminar will be structured in round tables with a wide representation of speakers coming from the MONA region. Each session will start by a 15-minutes presentation given by each experts followed by an open debate with the audience. The room will be distributed so that all guests can participate to the debate. The written presentations have to be previously submitted to the secretariat of the seminar. Each session will have a moderator, all of them experts who will introduce the speakers and rapidly summarize the most representative ideas. At the end of the sessions, a scheduled open debate panel will take place in order to draw final conclusions and recommendations.

The sessions will address the general theme of the panel proposal according to the guidelines developed, which aims, is to be an instrument to direct the course of the discussions, both for the speakers and for the participants, these latter are also invited to actively take part of the debate.

### **Time, date and place:**

The seminar will take place in Madrid, in the hotel Catalonia Las Cortes, the 30<sup>th</sup> of November and 1<sup>st</sup> of December of 2011.

### **Participants of the seminar:**

It has been considered that 40 experts as the most appropriate number of participants, representatives of regional Cooperation Agencies (public sponsors), International NGOs for development, Local NGOs for development, Multilateral agencies for development, and Experts and consultants working in the Middle East.

The countries represented in the Conference are: Spain, Italy, Tunisia, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco.

### **Visibility:**

Brochures, posters and publications of minutes will clearly show the identity of the Conference's fund-raisers.

### **Technical structure:**

The conference's organizers will provide a simultaneous-interpreting service for English, French and Spanish languages.

### **Organization of the panels:**

Presentations will last for fifteen minutes in the framework of an interactive dialogue between all participants. Please send your paper before November 20<sup>th</sup> to the Conference's technical office for subsequent publication.

All papers should follow the following structure:

1. Brief report of the Country situation: highlighting the specific problems for achieving food security in the particular country.
2. Analysis of the causes of the situation as described in point 1.
3. The actors involved in food security and in the improved access and use of water; concrete experience of work of the particular NGOs in the field of food security and/or better water use. Highlighting the importance of partnership and the role it can play as a working methodology.
4. Recommendations and conclusions.

Please attach a half-page curriculum vitae.

### **Travel, accommodation and board expenses in Spain:**

The Conference's technical office will take care of flight and rail bookings and payments from the point of origin to Madrid, plus the accommodation in Madrid for the 30 of November and 1 of December and if necessary the 29 of November. Guests should keep boarding cards of both flights and send them back by post to the technical office of the READI to the address found below.

READI

Félix Sánchez

c/ Huertas, 71- 5º dcha.

28014 – Madrid (España)

Tel.: 00 34 91 344 01 76

Fax: 00 34 91 344 03 66