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FOOD SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY

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To ensure the country's food security, fundamental changes are needed in the current socio-economic conditions, the implementation of a wide range of socio-economic measures aimed at reviving agriculture and the agro-industrial complex as a whole.

Scientific support for the exit of the agricultural sector from the systemic crisis involves the solution of a set of theoretical, methodological and practical issues of increasing the efficiency of agriculture as the basis for achieving food security in the country.

The epidemiological shocks of this year, which have affected the whole world and all spheres of public life, most often characterized by the word "crisis", cannot but affect the state of food security in the world and individual countries. At the level of individual social groups in each country at the beginning of 2020, alarming trends of physiological under consumption of food, changes in the dietary structure, and a decrease in the standards of healthy and safe nutrition have already emerged and are developing.

Concerns about global, regional and national food security are not only related to the pandemic. Even before its appearance, international organizations recorded a deterioration in such basic indicators as the number of hungry and malnourished from 784 million people in 2015 to 821 million people in 2018 and an increase in the share of these categories in the total population over the same period from 10, 6% to 10.8%. [1]

The main reasons for such dynamics include a slowdown in economic growth and economic downturns, a deepening connection between the dependence on raw materials of a number of countries with food security and nutrition, inequality and marginalization of rural communities, and imperfect agricultural policies. Most of these reasons can be attributed to the state of the conjuncture of the world markets for food and agricultural raw materials, which made it necessary to consider many of the trends in food security in relation to the conditions and factors of the market environment.

Some analysts and officials say high food prices and food shortages in a number of poor countries are at least in part due to the liberalization of global agricultural trade, which has prompted countries to produce high-value export crops instead of staple foods. To improve food security - that is, provide food for the population - should governments adopt trade and other policies to stimulate staple food production and increase self-reliance?

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen believes food security and self-sufficiency are two different things. Food security is not determined by where food is produced, but by whether the population has access to it (Sen, 1981). In his study of major famines in the 20th century, Sen concludes that food security can be extremely low even when there is sufficient food available in a country. He also noted that the country's authorities can improve food security by allowing food imports when prices would otherwise rise. Food security is influenced by trade policies at both the national and global levels. And trade policy is just one type of intervention that affects the access of the poor to food. [2]

Agricultural trade reform in developing countries can improve food security by lowering the cost of food for the poor and thus improving the security of their access to food. The impact of global liberalization is more complex as it leads to higher world prices, which reflect an

increase in global import demand and the removal of export subsidies. Our analysis shows that, on average, global trade reform will lead to a slight decrease in the prices of staple foods in poor countries and, therefore, will contribute to some reduction in global poverty. The creation and maintenance of an open trade regime is an important but insufficient condition for achieving food security. In the short term, trade liberalization must be coupled with social safety nets to insulate the poor from shocks caused, for example, by higher international grain prices. In the longer term, productivity gains will be key, leading to higher incomes for poor families.

The number of people suffering from hunger and food insecurity is no longer on the decline; over the past few years, this figure has been gradually increasing. The progress made in reducing the prevalence of stunting in children and increasing the number of exclusively breastfed infants is commendable, but the rapid spread of obesity is alarming; this problem is faced by all regions and countries without exception, regardless of income level. As early as 2016, the total number of obese people in the world exceeded the number of malnourished people. Children living with hunger and food insecurity may be at increased risk of being overweight, obese at an older age, and unhealthy diets are now the leading risk factor for mortality worldwide. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue to meet the urgent needs of the hungry, while not being limited to fighting hunger and ensuring access not only to adequate food, but also to nutritious foods that make up a healthy diet.

In light of trends in recent decades, as well as persisting socioeconomic and geographic inequalities in food insecurity and malnutrition, priority should be given to addressing such inequalities at the community, national and international levels.

Hunger is on the rise in many countries with slower economic growth or worsening economic performance. In 65 of 77 countries, between 2011 and 2017, hunger increased amid a slowdown or recession. Economic shocks usually lead to slower economic growth or economic downturns and become secondary and tertiary factors that significantly prolong and exacerbate food crises, especially in countries experiencing severe food insecurity and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance². In 2018, economic shocks had a tangible impact on 33 of the 53 countries facing food crises; more than 96 million people were injured. A slowdown in economic growth, as a rule, means a situation when, against the background of sluggish business activity, economic growth still continues. An economic downturn occurs when there is no growth. These economic phenomena often lead to higher unemployment and lower wages and incomes, making it difficult for poor people to access food and basic social services. This can make it difficult for people (especially those in financially disadvantaged populations who spend a significant portion of their income on food) to access high-quality, nutritious food that tends to be less affordable, as well as basic services such as healthcare.

One of the main indicators used to measure the health of a country's economy is the gross domestic product (GDP), often referred to as the size of the economy. To establish whether economic growth is slowing down and economic performance is generally measured, the percentage change in real GDP per capita or the rate of economic growth in one period compared to another is measured. In most regions, these indicators have recovered after a sharp decline in the global economy in 2008-2009. However, this recovery has been uneven and short-lived, and since 2011 there has been negative economic development in many countries. In addition, real GDP per capita growth is declining in countries with rapidly expanding populations, such as Africa and South Asia, where food insecurity and malnutrition are particularly acute. The situation is even more dire in the subregions. Over the past few years, average GDP growth has declined in seven sub-regions, five of which have experienced negative growth over the years. In 2018, these five sub-regions were home to nearly 263 million hungry people and over 56 million stunted children under five years of age. It is expected that in the future in many of them, including in Central, South and West Africa, West Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, negative dynamics will continue.

Threats to food security in the short term, in addition to general economic ones, can be structured according to such groups as epidemiological (actual morbidity, forced isolation as the

impossibility in a number of regions to ensure the availability of food), trade networks, trade and political (the introduction of protective export duties and other export restrictions on the part of some countries and changes in the policy of food access to the domestic markets of other countries.) In addition, in the countries, most vulnerable to all of the listed indicators of food security, the situation is aggravated by such local phenomena as the plague of locusts in Africa, which is becoming more difficult to combat in a pandemic.

Efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition in conflict situations must be combined with urgent humanitarian assistance and long-term development projects aimed at building resilience and maintaining peace. In general, the situation with food security in the world in the short term can be assessed as alarming, and in a number of countries - as critical, which once again emphasizes the need to strengthen the interaction of the countries of the world in solving this global problem of mankind.

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