



South-South cooperation is paramount

Opening of the conference with Minister of Agriculture Gaston Dossouhoui.

Technical conference of the global programme Food and nutrition security, enhanced resilience in Cotonou. Participation of political partners.

The conference of SEWOH's¹ global programme "Food and Nutrition Security, Enhanced Resilience" in Benin was in the spirit of the promotion of South-South exchange and cooperation. The Minister of Agriculture, Gaston Cossi Dossouhoui, opened the event in Cotonou early November together with the German Ambassador Achim Tröster, the responsible BMZ² officer Anna Friedemann, and the programme manager Claudia Lormann-Nsengiyumva.

Around 80 participants came from African and Asian countries in which the global programme is implementing to present, discuss and disseminate proven approaches in the field of nutrition and food security for one week. In addition to international colleagues, national staff as well as implementing and political partners participated for the first time in order to strengthen the global network.

The participants were particularly concerned with the question of year-round availability of nutritious foods, but also with the issue of anchoring the measures beyond the programme's duration and nutrition governance. Panel discussions brought together representatives from the partner ministries of the country packages to discuss their successes and challenges. The multi-sector approach needed to overcome hunger and malnutrition is often difficult to assign to a single ministry. Agriculture, health and social security measures, for example, must be implemented jointly by the respective authorities. This requires, in particular, good coordination between the various working units – whether at national or local political level.

1 Special Initiative ONE WORLD – No hunger of the BMZ

2 Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany



Meeting with the mayor of Comè during the field visit.



Volunteers of the Nutrition Assistance Groups carry out screenings

Topics such as behavioural change for healthy nutrition and hygiene, gender mainstreaming, climate change challenges and methods for evaluating programme impact data were also on the agenda. It became clear that the project offices of the country packages have each developed special competences, but are also exposed to different challenges. Mali and Yemen in particular are additionally affected by a precarious security situation, which represents an extraordinary burden for the people of the countries. At the same time, the possibilities for implementation in rural areas are severely limited. According to a government representative of the Malian delegation, there are hardly any donors and organisations on the ground other than GIZ that are in a position to implement measures.

Field visits provided an insight into the local conditions in Benin. The selection included a multi-sector project of the Beninese Council for Food and Nutrition (Conseil de l'Alimentation et de la Nutrition) in cooperation with the World Bank, an agricultural training centre, and two small



Visiting the local nutrition committee in Comè.

to medium-sized agricultural enterprises that are supported by GIZ projects. The visits underlined that measures must focus even stronger on the prevention of hunger and malnutrition. The question of a sustainable political and structural anchoring accompanied all field visits. The extent to which the voluntary commitment of villagers to nutritional counselling at household level and long-term financing of the respective projects can be ensured was also discussed.

Finally, participants received a training on food security where experienced participants could pass on their knowledge through collegial advice.

In order to encourage exchanges beyond the event and return to the projects with fresh ideas, during the week the various country packages decided on concrete topics and measures they would like to address more intensively.

One example among others is to promote bilateral exchange between country packages of the global programme with similar conditions and challenges. A visit by an Ethiopian delegation to Zambia is currently being organised. Regional meetings with political partners have already taken place and are continuing. The Togo country package, for example, has recently had a good experience with the combination of a training course on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and a one-day exchange on anchoring these measures politically with participants from other country packages. A follow-up is planned for February next year in order to further expand the South-South exchange, form networks and draw on the potential of a global programme with its diverse perspectives of the respective local contexts.



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