



Summary of Workshop – China

October 16, 2014 10:30-12:15 Chaired by Jiaqi Huang

China is now under rapid urbanization and massive migration. In this context, the food and nutrition security problems faced by particular groups of people are serious and need to be paid great attention. For example, malnutrition of left-behind children in rural areas, food safety issue of migrant workers, and hunger of urban poor. This workshop discussed potential solutions to those problems based on participants' knowledge, experience, and similar cases in other countries. Those issues of different vulnerable groups of people are closely linked to each other and can hardly be relieved by just one or two specific actions. It calls for an institutional lead to make a healthy urbanization. For farmers, secure conditions, rights, and services should be given to produce sustainably. For migrant workers, adequate social protection should be offered to integrate themselves better into cities.

For rural residents, agricultural productivity is constrained by small scale land and farms, but at the same time, many farms are abandoned because rural labors migrate into cities. It is due to a lack of standard and reliable land transfer mechanism. Farmers should be given secure property rights, especially land tenure, enabling them to transfer lands to make better use of the limited land resources. In addition, agricultural services, extension and communication programs could be offered by the government to help and encourage farmers to use new technology and understand new policy benefit. Thirdly, a Swiss participant shared a new pattern of farm operation; farm collaboration where each household is responsible for a particular farm work (e.g. raising sheep or planting fruits), making the farm running in a diversified and collaborative way. Fourthly, the case of the U.S.A. may be a good reference to China. Food enterprise will decide what kind of seeds the farmers should use, and train and supervise the producing process to make sure the raw materials meet with their standard. In China, the majority of the food production is not following this model, farmers decide what they want to farm and how to farm by themselves. With limited market information and knowledge, they can hardly access a stable market and have to face the risks themselves. Those interventions above could help to farm more effectively, which may make more profit for farmers, save land resources, and pollute the environment less by standard management in larger scale operation.

For migrant workers in urban areas, the government could organize them and give special care and social protection. For example, build schools for children of migrant works and give them free education, which may decrease the number of left-behind children. Grants could be given to targeted poor families in urban to ensure their basic food requirement.

For food safety issues in China, transparency and enforcement should be guaranteed by law and the government. The public should get a transparent channel to know the food safety monitoring and examination results. To make the results more plausible, a third party, like a NGO, which have no inter-



est relations with the food industry should be fostered and encouraged to join in the examination and labeling work. Those food enterprises that “cross the line” should be strictly punished by law.

An idea to shorten the food value chain may be a good one to increase income of farmers, save cost of consumers, reduce food loss and waste, and retain more nutrients in food. Two examples have already happened in China, one is direct purchasing for consumers by using applications on their mobile phones (Apps). Fresh and quality food bought online may be a new trend of food consume pattern in the future. The other is “farmer-supermarket direct purchase”, which is already adopted by some supermarkets in China.

All in all, the participants came to an agreement that in China, the “biggest player” – policy makers – have to take the largest responsibility to make the right policy decisions in many aspects to lead China towards a prosperous rural and agricultural development, an efficient, organized, and safe food value chain, and a smooth and healthy urbanization.