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REPORT*

“Food security in the BSEC Member States”

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At the thirty third meeting of the Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental affairs Committee held in Thessaloniki on 21 October 2009 Committee members decided to take up the subject on “Food security in the Black Sea region” as a main item of the Thirty Fourth meeting of Committee, whereas the food and nutrition safety becomes more critical issue at the background of the current economic tendencies. In spite of fact that the Black Sea region comparatively is not facing severe food shortage comparing with some other regions and continents of the world, it is necessary for the BSEC member states to take concrete and long-term measures on ensuring safe, qualified and healthy food.
2. Issue of food security has been considered by the PABSEC in the past in various aspects. Thus, in its Recommendation 54/2001 on “Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development” the Assembly recommended the national parliaments and governments of the BSEC member states in the field of legislation to introduce legal instruments in compliance with international requirements concerning food quality and safety standards, genetic resources, plant protection, fisheries and animal health, in the field of farming to introduce appropriate policies and institutional structures with a view to informing and assisting farmers to confront the threat of land degradation and nutrient depletion, in the field of production practices to improve the structures which provide the veterinary and phyto-sanitary control of the food quality and consumers protection by increasing the number of the laboratories and modernizing the already functioning laboratories.
3. The PABSEC adopted Recommendation 94/2007 on “State and prospects of fisheries in the Black Sea countries”, in which, recognizing the role of the living water resources as an important natural renewable source of food, the Assembly recommended the BSEC member-states to improve legislation framework in the field of fisheries, as well as to facilitate the elaboration and adoption of the international convention, which will regulate fishery in the Black Sea.
4. The subject of quality of food has been touched upon by the Assembly in the following Recommendations: 49/2001 on “Black Sea Environmental Protection: New Challenges”, 74/2003 on “Fight against poverty in the BSEC member states”, 81/2005 on “Economic aspects of resolving environmental problems in the BSEC Member States”, 90/2006 on the ‘Cooperation in combating the bird flu in the Black Sea region’, 99/2007 on “Global Climate Change: Consequences for the BSEC Member States”, 111/2009 on “Water Resources Management in the Black Sea Region”, 112/2009 on Rational Management of Natural Resources in the Black Sea Region: Enhancement of Legislative Framework” and 113/2009 on Shaping Ecological Awareness and Behaviour in the BSEC Member States”.
5. Necessary information for the report has been obtained from the relevant sources, including specialized UN agencies and other international institutions. Rapporteur is thankful to the delegations of Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine for providing contribution in preparing present report.

II. FOOD SAFETY: PROBLEMS, CURRENT CHALLENGES, ACTIVITIES

6. The food security as a concept originated in the mid of 70-ies, during the discussions of international food problems at a time of global food crisis. The initial focus of attention was primarily on food supply problems - of assuring the availability and to some degree the price stability of basic foodstuffs at the international and national levels. That supply-side, international and institutional set of concerns reflected the changing organization of the global food economy that had precipitated the crisis. A process of international negotiation followed, leading to the World Food Conference of 1974, and a new set of institutional arrangements covering information, resources for promoting food security and forums for dialogue on policy issues.
7. Thus, according to the internationally adopted definition, the food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their needs and preferences for an active and healthy life. Undernourishment exists when caloric intake is below the minimum dietary energy requirement (MDER). MDER is the amount of energy needed for light activity and a minimum acceptable weight for attained height, and it varies by country and from year to year depending on the gender and age structure of population. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal, or temporary, occurring at the household, regional, or national level.
8. According to the UN estimates, there are 840 million undernourished people in the world. The majority of undernourished people (799 million) reside in developing countries, most of which are on the continents of Africa and Asia. This figure also includes 11 million people located in developed countries and 30 million people located in countries in transition.
9. In developing countries, the root causes of food insecurity include: poverty, war and civil conflict, corruption, national policies that do not promote equal access to food for all categories of population, environmental degradation, barriers to trade, insufficient agricultural development, population overgrowth, low levels of education, social and gender inequality, poor healthcare status and natural disasters.
10. Before the consecutive food and economic crises, the number of undernourished people in the world has been increasing steadily for a decade and this trend continued into 2004-2006. The number of hungry people increased between 1995-97 and 2004-2006 almost in all regions of the world. At the same time, in spite of the negative consequences of the food and energy crisis on the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations groups, better-than-expected global food supply in 2007-2008 has led to decrease of undernourishment down to 915 million from 963 million.
11. While the number of hungry people has been increasing since the 90s, the number of undernourished in the world was actually declining in the 1970-80s and in spite of rapid population growth during those decades, and the proportion of undernourished in developing countries was declining quite rapidly. At that time large investments in the agricultural sector, including for scientific research, rural roads and irrigation, led to rapid growth in cereal yields and lower cereal prices, in turn, significantly reduced food insecurity. During those decades, the proportion of official development assistance (ODA, i.e. development aid contributed by donor governments) devoted to agriculture was also relatively high.
12. During the 90s and current decade, however, the number of undernourished people has risen, despite the slower population growth, and the proportion of undernourished increased in 2008. The main factor of this negative tendency in that period was

extraordinary rise of global food prices in early 2008 already experienced by the most vulnerable population groups.

13. The rising prices stemmed from the cumulative effects of two essential long-term trends - increasing demand of food due to the growing world population and a decline in agricultural investment. Other trends are more immediate supply and demand dynamics, including those related to the rapidly increasing oil prices and diversions of various types of food production. Altogether, the crisis exposed underlying structural problems in the food systems of poorer countries, partly linked to serious distortions in world food markets (associated with production subsidies in rich countries and trade tariffs), that predispose to price spikes and problems with food availability.
14. Undoubtedly, current economic and financial crisis substantially affects the problem of food security that is topical as it is, because such a crisis firstly has impact on poverty and income levels of population. The degree to which countries are affected by economic crisis depends on their degree of integration with international markets for goods and services, including financial products. Countries with large current account deficits and low level of foreign reserves are particularly at risk, because these deficits are paid for with inflows of private or public capital, such as foreign direct investments, remittances, foreign aid and borrowings.
15. Current difficult global economic environment has a substantial influence on national food security in a number of low-income countries, which are the net food importers and have become increasingly dependent on grain imports over the past decade. This reliance on food imports was stimulated by trade liberalization policies and the expansion and improvement of the global transportation system. From another side, increased reliance on grain imports has helped keep prices more affordable for consumers, but the lack of domestic agricultural growth that drove the imports has exposed to instability on the international markets.
16. From 1970-80ies to 2000ies import dependency grew most among the least-developed countries compared with higher income country groups. During the last decade least-developed countries relied on imports for 17-20 percent of their grain consumption (compared with 8-10 percent in 70-80ies), 45-48 percent for sugar and sweeteners (18-20 percent in 70-80ies) and 55-58 percent for vegetable oils (9-12 percent in 70-80ies).
17. For countries that are dependent on food imports, assuming no domestic production shortfalls, two critical determinants of food import capacity are export earnings and capital inflow. As the decline in export and capital inflows observed during the last years, many countries have forced a reduction in food import. At the same time, economic recession and global food crisis of 2006-2008 prompted many countries to reconsider the virtues of relying on imports for a significant share of their food consumption.
18. Since the period of 70-ies, food security started to be considered by the world community as integral part of sustainable development. UN system and its specialized agencies along with other international institutions, as well as with non-governmental sector, initiated a process of elaborating global strategies and policies on the food security. The major organization in this respect is **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** founded in 1945 in Quebec, when representatives of forty-four countries signed the FAO Charter. FAO has become the main UN agency specializing in all aspects of food quality and safety, and in all the different stages of food production, harvest, storage, transport, processing and distribution. At the same time, FAO adheres to the food chain approach in managing

food safety and quality as recognition of the responsibility of all actors in the food chain for the supply of safe, healthy and nutritious food.

19. FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy, being also a source of knowledge and information. One of the priority aspects of FAO's activity is to assist developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition for all stakeholders. FAO shares its experience with member countries in devising agricultural policy, supporting planning, drafting effective legislation and creating national strategies to achieve rural development and hunger alleviation goals.
20. Development of the FAO in terms of institutionalizing and setting international norms on the issue has been marked by a number of events and adoption of international treaties, programs and strategies. One of the most last significant events symbolizing a new stage of consolidated efforts of international community was the **World Summit on Food Security** held in Rome on 16-18 November 2009, attended by 60 heads of state and 192 ministers from 182 countries. Summit unanimously adopted a declaration pledging renewed commitment to eradicate hunger from the face of the earth sustainably and at the earliest date, as well as confirmed the current target for reducing hunger by half by 2015. Countries also agreed to work to reverse the decline in domestic and international funding for agriculture and promote new investment in the sector, to improve governance of global food issues in partnership with relevant stakeholders from the public and private sector, and to proactively face the challenges of climate change to food security.
21. Another basic UN agency involved in the fight on food security is the **World Food Programme (WFP)** established in 1963. WFP carries out its activity along with partners, including the **Food Aid for Development (FAD) Office of the World Health Organization (WHO)**.
22. Since its inception, WFP has invested \$27.8 billion and more than 43 million metric tons of food to combat hunger, promote economic and social development, and provide relief assistance in emergencies to eighty-three countries. WFP has three main programs:
 - Food-for-Life.* Eighty percent of WFP resources are used by this program for emergency relief activities for refugees and displaced individuals.
 - Food-for-Growth.* Projects in this program aim to prevent nutritional problems among pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, schoolchildren and elderly people.
 - Food-for-Work.* Chronically hungry individuals are paid with food through the Food-for-Work program. Workers assist with projects to improve local infrastructure, such as building roads and ports, repairing works.
23. Cooperation of FAO with the international community is carried out primarily within the framework of achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDG)**. These eight goals - each with specific targets and indicators - are based on the UN Millennium Declaration, signed by the world leaders in September 2000. They commit the international community to combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women. One of the eight Millennium Goals is eradicating poverty and hunger that focuses on two targets: Halve, till 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day, and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

24. Along with the UN system, the issue of food security was discussed and put on the world agenda in various formats. Leaders of the largest and most developed countries has constantly been addressing the food security in **G-8** framework, devoting particular attention to this problem both at the level of summits and ministerial meetings. The G-8 leaders adopted an ad hoc statement on food security at the Toyako Summit held in 2008 that contains a large number of pledges to act, both in the short term in response to the emergency and in the medium to long term on the structural factors to overcome factors for inadequate food production and mounting food insecurity.
25. The G8 also announced multi-year programmes with amount of about 10 billion Euros overall, to be used to fund farming projects and infrastructure required for rural development. The leaders also pledged to launch a **Global Partnership** on Food Security and to organize the first meeting of the G8 Agriculture Ministers, held in 2009. A key aspect of the partnership is the need for it to be based on the existing institutions, commencing with the United Nations facilities availing itself of the **High-Level Task Force** set up by the UN Secretary General. The partnership has been described as a crucial food security tool designed to serve three purposes: 1) keeping political attention to the issue running high, involving the private sector and civil society as well; 2) fostering the sharing of good practices among countries 3) creating a network of experts and scientists in support of political action.
26. Comprehensive food security strategy covering not just safe food, but also animal health and welfare and plant health, is reflected in the activities of **European Union**. The EU food strategy has three core elements – legislation on the safety of food and animal feed; sound scientific advice and decision-making on that base; enforcement and control. The legislation covers animal feed as well as food, and extends to food hygiene applying the same high standards across the EU.
27. EU-FAO partnership has strengthened both organizations in achieving their shared goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. The European Union became a member of FAO in 1991. Since 1993 the two institutions are engaged in technical cooperation, and in 2004 the EU and FAO became strategic partners. Working together on the ground in developing countries worldwide, meeting to discuss policy issues and sharing know-how and information, the EU and FAO foster global food security and safety, and help to promote sustainable rural development and natural resources management. Collaboration is particularly concerned with: policy dialogue, information and knowledge exchange, field cooperation.
28. Nowadays system-wide approach to the food security issue represents itself not only positive example of tackling a problem and cooperation in the framework of one or another multilateral institution, but also negative and contradictory aspects. One of the major issues considered by certain groups and people as a challenge for the current world food security is the present system of the **World Trade Organization**. WTO agreement on agriculture based on three main components: market access, domestic support and export competition. In this regard a number of experts, civil organizations and national governments conceive the WTO agricultural rules as threat to the food security. Such an attitude WTO opponents explain by the factor that WTO agreement on agriculture is fundamentally incompatible with the sustained existence of rural farm communities.

III. BSEC AND ITS MEMBER STATES POLICIES

A. REVIEW OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

29. As far as the Black Sea region concerns, it should be noted that the region essentially continues to undergo major structural economic changes affecting production, trade and consumption patterns. Various economic reforms in the BSEC member states, such as price and trade liberalization, led to sharp changes in agricultural sector and consequently had an impact on the food security.
30. There is an increasing concern among BSEC member states about the sustainability of agricultural and rural development policies. Most BSEC countries are still confronted with the challenge of satisfying food demands and reducing poverty in the region while preserving their natural resources. At the same time, maintaining a competitive agricultural sector that can be successfully integrated in the global markets is a long-term policy goal. The economic potential of the region is significant and the rural economy will continue to form a significant part of BSEC's economic and social structure well into the 21st century.
31. In spite of the current global economic crisis the Black Sea region still can be considered as the region that can contribute to the projected increase in world food needs. It is characterized by the region's potential in terms of geographical diversity, great ratio of agricultural sector and natural resources base. The contribution of agriculture, livestock and forestry to GDP varies widely, from 15% to over 50% while the percentage of people living in rural areas ranges from 25% to 60%.
32. BSEC member states give one of the essential contributions to the world grain supply, and in many countries grain consumption has increased since the late 1990ies. According to the 2009 statistics, Russia is the fourth largest grain grower, whereas Ukraine according to the 2007-2008 statistical data is the tenth largest country on grain production and export. Economic crisis has led to sharp reductions in feed grain demand (usually in the form of imports), as well as per capita food grain use declined 15-20 percent per year.
33. Majority of the BSEC countries consolidate their efforts on strengthening institutional and legislative framework on the issue of food security considering this issue as an integral component of the national security. Consequently, state policies on the problem acquire the conceptual framework comprehensively covering all the factors of food security. Number of the national governments has adopted the long-term strategies on enhancement of food security by determining priority aspects and challenges, liberalizing price, trade and tax regulations. Basic concern of all BSEC member states is sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas. In this regard competent authorities of member states take measures on supporting production and processing industry, including land property reforms in some states, improving management, developing infrastructure and increasing the quality and safety of agricultural products. Last trends in the national policies of the BSEC member states indicate growing interest of governments to actively cooperate with private sector and civil society.
34. In **Albania** the agriculture sector continues to play an important role in Albania contributing about 21 percent of the GDP and employing more than half of the active labor force in the country. About 52 % of the population is living in rural area. Agriculture sector has, generally, experienced high growth rates during last years. The rapid growth and recovery during these years resulted mostly in the ability of farmers to quickly adapt to the changes brought about through the privatization by modifying their production structures. However, producers still continue to face many obstacles that are beyond their control such as: small and fragmented land holding, limited access

to markets and poorly developed business relations with agribusinesses at the commercial end of the agricultural supply chains, limited access to rural finance, poor rural infrastructure, etc. In spite of this, farmers' interest and investments have significantly increased during last years, especially in vegetables, vineyards, fruit trees, olive, livestock and processing, leading to higher annual growth in these sub-sectors. For example, in Albania the annual growth of the food industry output was about 11% during 2007 with annual growth of agriculture is 3,5 %. The main exported products are fishery products, medicinal and aromatic plants, vegetables etc. The main imported products are cereals and fruits. Increase of the productivity and competitiveness of the sector and integration of Albanian agricultural market into the EU and regional markets constitutes the medium-term goals of the government policies in this sector. In order to achieve this goal, the main measures being taken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection include: increasing public investments for market infrastructure and market information systems; introduction of direct support schemes for farm competitiveness; improvement of standards and food safety; development of rural finance, foster cooperation and business linkages. Currently Ministry of Agriculture is working on approximation of legislation with *acquis communautaire* as well as, restructuring and upgrading of laboratories network in the country. This reform is being supported by the EU through CARDS program.

35. **Armenia** have made impressive progress on macroeconomic reform and land privatization that positively affected agricultural sector taking into consideration the limited agricultural land of the country requiring supplementary irrigation. Due to the fact that Armenia heavily relies on import of food (about 60%), government places importance to the increase of Armenian production as one of the basic components of strengthening food security of country. Thus, state policy of Armenia on food security concentrated in two aspects: improvement of national production and adaptation of legislation to the international standards. In the near term, Armenian government is planning to elaborate and adopt the concept on the food security (scheduled for 2010) that will define priority tasks and objectives in resolving the problem. In 2002 the Law of the Republic of Armenia on promoting food security that defines fundamental directions of government in this sphere, including implementation of measures aimed at enhancement of macroeconomic performance and increasing on this base purchasing power of the population, regulation of the food market and food stock building at the Government Reserve of Armenia and their effective use.
36. In **Azerbaijan** share of agricultural sector in GDP is about 22-25%, as development of agriculture and strengthening food safety is one of the governmental priority tasks. In this regard, government adopted the State programme on long-term sustainment and ensuring food security for the period of 2008-2015. The government of Azerbaijan allocated 75 \$ million for funding this programme in 2009, including additional 15 \$ million for agricultural lending. Besides, government assigns subsidies to farmers for the development of livestock, fishery and poultry.
37. **Bulgaria** is applying considerable efforts on issues related to food security and its provision that includes also increasing the size of investment in farming, with emphasis on small and medium-sized farms and successful absorption of European Union funds allocated to help the competitive development of the industry. The country's national policy on this extremely serious issue is in essence identical with the European Union's common policy and committed to resolving the issue of food security both through its national policies and through its actions within the European Union and the cooperation with international relief organizations, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the international community.

38. **Greece**, in the frame of European Legislation requirements and for ensuring its effective implementation, has drawn up - among other things - the following National strategic goals, as described in the Hellenic Multiannual Control Program 2007-2011: a) control and management of zoonoses and zoonotic factors and aspects, eradication of specific zoonoses at the level of primary production; b) prevention and management of chemical and biological hazards in foodstuff and animal feeds; c) protection of consumer interests through measure implementation towards the effective guarantee of legitimate practices for foodstuff supply and processes contributing to making reasonable and updated choices; d) taking of measures ensuring the effective implementation of community legislation on plant health checks for the protection of national capital, national resources and the environment.
39. In 2009, agriculture of **Russia** demonstrated stability and growing indices in several sectors, with the growth of production rates totaled 0.5% in 2009. In the same year, Russia produced the good harvest of grains – 97 mln tonnes in clean weight, as the Russian grains became the strategic export product – the country sold over 20 mln tonnes of grains on the export market. Thus, Russia came to the group of three leaders of the world grain market and became one of the guarantors of the global food security. According to the governmental forecast, in the terms of continuation of the positive situation of the world market, in 10-15 years, the exports will grow to the level of 30-40 mln tonnes. The further increasing of grain production and exports is the strategic task of the Russian government, and the main attempts of the Ministry of Agriculture focus on modernization and development of grain infrastructure, including exports, stimulating of innovation technologies, and development of processing capacities. The Ministry also regulates the price stability of the domestic market through realization of the public purchasing and commodity interventions, and pledge operations. On 1 February of 2010 country's food security doctrine was approved, aiming at ensuring a reliable food supply, developing domestic agricultural and fishery facilities, rapidly responding to internal and external threats to the stability of the food market, and effectively taking part in international cooperation on food security. In order to safeguard Russia's food security, the doctrine stipulates that domestic food production should be stabilized with necessary reserves and stocks guaranteed and the share of domestic products in the country's market should be no less than 85 percent. The doctrine also called for early prediction, detection and prevention of internal and external threats to food security.
40. In **Serbia** the National Agricultural Program is a basic document defining short-term and mid-term goals of the agricultural policy, the methods, sequence and deadlines for the fulfillment of priority tasks in the agrarian sector. This National Program covers the 2009-2011 periods and determines the measures, which the Serbian government shall implement during the aforementioned period. Generally, the Serbian National Program includes the following measures: a) building up a sustainable and efficient agricultural sector, which can compete on the world market and thereby improve the GDP; b) providing food products, which satisfy the consumer needs in terms of product safety and quality; c) ensuring the life standards support for people, who are dependent on the agricultural industry, but are incapable to follow the economic reforms; d) ensuring the support for the sustainable development of villages; e) protecting the environment from the negative effects of agricultural production; f) preparing the agricultural industry of Serbia for the EU integration; g) adapt the trade policy to the WTO standards.
41. In **Turkey**, which is the major agricultural producer in the region, land is used for the production of various food products with respect to its climate and physical nature. The share of the crop in agricultural production of country is 73,5%, the share of wheat in grains is 67%. In the process of integration with the EU, the government has been

improving its legal framework. Within this context and by considering situation in the country and examining studies and recommendations of international agencies, the Law on “Production, Consumption and Inspection of Food Stuffs” was adopted in 1995, which contains provisions on hygienic and technical production, processing, preservation and storage of food. In March 2002, with cooperation of WHO and FAO, Turkish government initiated the activities on development of the National Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition (NPAFN). General objectives of the NPAFN was: a) to show the situation in food security, safety and nutrition; b) to make clear the issues in current policy implementation; c) to advice on new policy applications and needs for legislative and administrative changes. NPAFN includes actions for food security, food safety and related activities for nutrition with participation of Ministries of Agriculture and Rural affairs, Health and Education.

B. BSEC POLICY

42. **The BSEC Economic Agenda for Future** places great emphasis on developing a Regional Strategy for Agricultural Development and Food Security referring particularly to the need to expand regional food and agricultural trade based on the complementarity of the BSEC countries.
43. BSEC addresses the issue of food security through the **Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry**. Among the priorities of the Working Group for the current period are the following actions: a) holding consultations on elaboration of efficient measures of control and surveillance for the fishing in the boundary-neighbouring aquatories; b) assessment of the prospects for optimization of cooperation in wine production sphere between the BSEC Member States; c) exchange of information on social partnership in the area of agriculture based on the experience of the BSEC Member States; d) cooperation in selection, reproduction and protection of plants, further enhancement of cooperation among agrarian research and educations institutions; e) elaboration of a joint program for countering proliferation of high-patogenous avian influenza and other diseases; f) development of cooperation in the field of food safety among relevant institutions and accredited laboratories of the BSEC Member States.
44. Efforts of the BSEC member states concerning cooperation on the issue of agriculture and food security are reflected in project initiatives. Thus, two project applications were considered within the framework of the Working Group, namely: 1) “A Feasibility Study for Variable Rate Irrigation in the Black Sea region: Economical and Environmental Benefits” submitted by Greece (Lead Partner), Turkey and Bulgaria; 2) “Fatty liver incidence on mini dairy cow farms in the Republic of Serbia, Romania and the Republic of Moldova” submitted by Serbia (Lead Partner), Romania and Moldova and were recommended to the PDF Steering Committee for approval. The projects have been approved and the participation institutions started their implementation.
45. The cooperation between BSEC and UN/FAO has reached a qualitative level after the approval of the Project on "Institutional Strengthening to Facilitate Intra-and Inter-regional Agricultural Trade of the BSEC Members States" within the Technical Cooperation Program of the FAO. This project is currently being implemented.
46. Priorities of cooperation between FAO and BSEC are: agricultural development and food security, food safety for trade facilitation, consumer protection, and harmonization within the BSEC region. FAO will also contribute to implementation of the project concept on "Promotion of Bee Keeping among Low Income Rural Families

for Supplementary Earnings in the Black Sea region" as well as the project idea on "Plant Genetic Resources" and "Bread Wheat Network".

47. At the same time, in order to mitigate the effects of natural and manmade disasters which highly the well being of rural zones and food security accordingly, the **BSEC member states signed the Agreement on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Manmade disasters in 1998.**
48. With regard to enhanced cooperation on strengthening food security among the BSEC member states the following initiatives have emerged: a) ushering bio-technology, cultivation of high yield wheat, corn, rice and other cereals; b) guiding SMEs to export-oriented agriculture products with emphasis in food processing and packing industries; c) determining types of agriculture most suitable for mountainous terrain; d) establishing small-sized (family) farms specialized in fisheries and aquaculture taking into account also the potential in the eight seas which the BSEC region is endowed; e) exchanging experience and expertise, including training facilities in the development of fisheries and aquaculture covering also cultivation of specific breeds in fisheries.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

49. Undoubtedly, food security becomes the most critical problem in the world, particularly taking into consideration the current economic trends and new global challenges. The world community actively addresses the issue of food security in various formats. Elaboration of new mechanisms of cooperation and effective implementation of the joint policies on short, medium and long-term base is the priority task of the international community. Recovery and development measures for establishing resilient global food system are based on several components. First, is a research of factors affecting food system, which is the structure of the food economy as a whole, agricultural production, technology, diversification of food processing, markets and consumption. Second, is the realization of measures on providing support to most vulnerable groups of population by programmes on the social rehabilitation, nutrition intervention, targeted food aid etc.
50. During the last decade the problem of food security has been exacerbated by new negative factor that is the increase of food prices. Generally, dynamic of increasing food prices is conditioned by such causes, as the climate change and bad weather conditions, increase in population, growing economies of India and China, high energy price, boosting the cost of processing and growing agro-products, increase in bio-fuel demand, decrease in farm land designated for growing of agricultural products, increased market competitions, limitation of access to market of small farmers and aggressive investments in the agriculture sector by the speculative funds, non equal distribution of investments.
51. As it was mentioned, the BSEC region is not crucially facing the problem of food security in comparison with some other parts of the world due to the geographical and economic advantages. At the same time, global food crisis and world-wide processes certainly have an impact on the Black Sea region that led to an increasing concern among BSEC member states about sustainability of food security. All the BSEC countries in a varying degree are confronted with the challenge of satisfying food demands and reducing poverty in the region. Taking into account the sound ground of agricultural traditions in the region, maintaining and developing competitive agricultural sector with the view to integrating in the global markets is the long-term policy goal for every BSEC member state.

52. Taking into consideration the current economic situation, BSEC member states could consolidate their efforts on the following directions:
- 1) strengthening the institutional framework for food safety with the view to elaborating joint regional strategy on enhancement of food security;
 - 2) strengthening the cooperation with food business operators associations;
 - 3) improving continuously the methods for official control of food on the entire food chain;
 - 4) campaigning for stakeholder information regarding food safety issues;
 - 5) sharing experience among the member states by organizing relevant meetings, workshops and conferences with possible subsequent establishment of common data base on the issue.
53. It's clear that the food security cannot be considered in isolation from other economic aspects, which have influence on sustainability of situation in the food sector. Simplification of internal administrative trade procedures aimed at facilitating export-import of foodstuffs is a topical problem for the BSEC member states. These measures should include facilitation of customs procedures, applying import customs duties at rates for the most favoured nations (MFN), to make bilateral lists of agricultural products for which import duties and taxes shall be gradually decrease until their abolition, to apply the measures for phyto-sanitary and veterinary control on the principle of reciprocity together with recognition of accredited laboratories of the BSEC Member States.
54. As the share of agricultural sector is great in national economies of the BSEC countries, rehabilitation and development of rural infrastructure needs immediate measures based on regional factors and specificities. States are committed to provide rural areas with necessary infrastructure facilities – communications, transport and energy supply. Joint efforts on strengthening rural infrastructure would lead to the improvement of the overall social and entrepreneurial environment in rural areas that have direct impact on sustainability of agricultural sector.
55. A significant aspect of ensuring food security is the more intensive use of scientific research in agriculture and the overall scientific potential for the purpose of supporting primarily small and medium-sized farms to increase their productivity and competitiveness in the global market. Experience of the international institutions, especially good practice of the EU in this field, can make essential contribution to the development of scientific researches in agriculture.
56. Due to the rich presence of the natural resources in the region, it is of the utmost importance for the BSEC member states to avoid an imbalance between the potential of resources and national food supply, and the reduction of basic food products from agriculture and the food&beverage industry. Restricting the food produce would have harmful consequences for the domestic and foreign markets and would endanger the national food security.
57. Private sector is the vital element in promoting food security and its mobilization will provide investment capital, production and services. Obviously, BSEC member states made some progress in attracting private sector in the development of agricultural sector, but the real potential still remains unrealized. Creation of relevant regulatory framework and necessary financial mechanisms that allow the increase of competitiveness of private sector and efficiency of markets is the mandatory step in

this case. Governments need to develop the investment strategies with the view of shaping favourable environment for active participation of private sector.

58. Dialogue with the civil society is another prerequisite for the development of social security of populations. Some member states expressed their interest in establishment more close links with non-governmental institutions and have already taken certain measures. Nevertheless, this dialogue is not at the level of efficient interconnection, while citizens strongly need transparent accountable institutions dealing with regulation of legal mechanisms in agricultural sector.
59. As the all BSEC member states are the FAO members, as well as of other specialized UN agencies and international institutions, tight international cooperation and concerted actions is the first requirement for operative and effective resolution of food related problems. Food security is the responsibility of not only national governments, but supranational institutions, and all plans to deal with the challenges in this area must be formulated, prepared, managed and created on the basis of wide global consultations with all key actors at the national and international levels. Food security, as a main priority issue, should be addressed and solved on the base of consensus and in the context of political security of all countries in the world.