

## **Technical Consultation Meeting**

### **“Assessing the Potential of Insects as Food/Feed in assuring Food Security”**

FAO, Rome. Lebanon Room, 23-25 January 2012

Welcome words by Mr. Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director General  
Forestry Department, FAO

A very good morning to all of you and it is my pleasure to welcome you at FAO at this technical consultation to assess the potential of Insects to food security.

I am particularly pleased to welcome and express my gratitude to the representative of the Government of the Netherlands (Mrs Eva Van Woersem – Alternate Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations in Rome) for the financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. As well as taking this opportunity here to express my thanks to our partner agency, the University of Wageningen from the Netherlands, with whom we are jointly organizing this consultation.

Last but not least, I thank all participants for having accepted our invitation and for many of you having travelled from so far to come to Rome. I am very pleased to see here in this room people from all continents of the world, including people working in the private sector - running their own business, from universities and from food related research agencies, as well as seeing a good gender balance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, FOOD SECURITY is at the heart of FAO's business, as expressed through its mission statement: “for a world without hunger”! Still today almost one billion people are food insecure. Both the Millennium Development goals as well as the FAO objective are to halve the number of people in hunger on this planet, and “insects” as a source of food for humans and their livestock may be part of the solution.

For some 2 billion people insects are already a source of food or used as feed for raising chickens or fish. Insects can be found at food stalls in markets as far away as from Bangkok to Johannesburg, from Beijing to Mexico City or from Kinshasa till Bogotá. Insects are also being raised as “micro-livestock” in countries like Thailand, China or Laos to name just a few.

However, the majority of edible insect consumption is from wild gathering, particularly in forests: hence the importance the FAO Forestry Department is giving to raise awareness on- and to promote the role of edible insects to food security in general and particularly to help improve livelihoods of forest-dependent peoples.

Activities by the FAO Forestry Department to highlight the importance of edible insects to sustainable diets and food security started 10 years ago with a field study to document the importance of edible caterpillars in Central African Countries.

(ref. publication at - and of which a hardcopy will be provided :  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/007/j3463f/j3463f00.htm>  
[Contribution des insectes de la forêt à la sécurité alimentaire. L'exemple des chenilles d'Afrique Centrale](#) Produits forestiers non ligneux, Document de Travail No. 1, 2004 (F)

This study attracted significant attention including by the international media and raised awareness to further document the role of insects to Food security, particularly as this study showed that for example in the region of Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, the consumption of insects provided up to 30 % of the required daily protein intake during the rainy season when supply of fish and game is at its lowest.

In 2008, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, held an international workshop on Asia-Pacific edible insects resources and their potential for development (from 19-21 February 2008, at Chiang Mai, in Thailand): " Forest insects as food: humans bite back" ( and we are pleased to see its organizer, Mr. Patrick Durst, here with us at the meeting)

(Refer. publication at - and of which a hardcopy will be provided:  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1380e/i1380e00.pdf>).

Outcomes of this workshop included for example:

1) The start-up of a Technical Cooperation Project with the Government of Laos to strengthen the role of insects as complimentary food sources. This project is still ongoing with an expert working in this project participating with us here (Ms. Yupa Hanboonsong).

2) The FAO Forestry Department started in 2009 a collaboration partnership with the Wageningen University, to jointly elaborate a holistic and global programme to promote the role of edible insects for food security. And of which

this consultation meeting is part of, - as one of the initial steps - to compile the required technical baseline information.

This consultation aims to bring insects higher on the agenda of international and national agencies involved in food security and into the radar screen of private companies and investors active in the food and feed sector.

This consultation will bring together existing knowledge covering all relevant fields in the food sector from gathering or farming insects, to nutritional data and food safety aspects as well as food security policy issues in order to provide policy makers in food/feed sectors with validated baseline information and with proposals for further actions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are looking forward to listen to your inputs during this meeting covering the many and different perspectives that will be touched upon during these 3 days. We look forward to working with all you in addressing the huge challenges still ahead of us to fully realize the potential of edible insects as sources for Food.

I wish you excellent deliberations and look forward to learn about the results and recommendations from this meeting.

Thank you