

Committee: Environment

Question: An Eco-farming revolution

Author: Senegal

Industrial farming is nowadays the most common farming system worldwide. It is a widespread technique used in Senegal. Today, in this country, Eco-farming is not considered a priority as Senegal heavily relies on industrial farming for its economical health. Indeed, Senegal is a net food importer, (particularly for rice, which represents almost 75 % of cereal imports). Peanuts, sugarcane, and cotton are important cash crops, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables are grown for local and export markets. In 2006 gum Arabic exports soared to \$280 million, making it by far the leading agricultural export. Green beans, industrial tomato, cherry tomato, melon, and mango are Senegal's main vegetable cash crops. The Casamance region, isolated from the rest of Senegal by Gambia, is an important agriculture producing area, but without the infrastructure or transportation links to improve its capacity. As local inhabitants depend on these industrial productions to feed themselves, and it currently is the most affordable solution to meeting Senegalese food needs, the development of Eco-farming represents a great challenge.

Furthermore, most of Senegal lies within the drought-prone Sahel region, with irregular rainfall and generally poor soils and with only about 5% of the land irrigated, it continues to rely on rain-fed agriculture, which occupies about 75% of the workforce. Despite a relatively wide variety of agricultural production, the majority of farmers produce for subsistence needs. Production is subject to drought and threats of pests such as locusts, birds, fruit flies, and white flies. Millet, rice, corn, and sorghum are the primary food crops grown in Senegal, the land is consequently prone to erosion.

Moreover, in the 1970's, Chinese agricultural advisers came to the rice-growing area and taught new methods that involved a lot of chemical fertilizer. But by 2002, the soil was seriously degraded and many villagers decided to take action. Organic farming being the ultimate goal, we see a clear intention of change in the farming sector.

Despite the lack of modernization of artisanal fishing, the fishing sector remains Senegal's main economic resource and major foreign exchange earner. The livestock and poultry sectors are relatively underdeveloped and have potential for modernization, development and growth. Senegal imports most of its milk and dairy products. The sector is inhibited due to low output and limited investments. The potential production of fauna and forest products is high and diversified and could, if well organized, benefit poor farmers in rural areas.

Altogether the State of Senegal would be greatly impacted by an Eco-farming revolution, as the resources it owns are limited and precious, it would lead to a greater sustainability. Therefore the delegation of Senegal welcomes a transition from industrial farming to Eco-farming, that in so far as the country's economical, social, environmental needs are not negatively impacted.