

*Innlegg Lars Peder Brekk OECD ministermøte 25. og 26. februar*

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

This meeting is indeed timely. Global agriculture and food markets have undergone fundamental changes since the last Ministerial meeting in 1998. The World Bank and others – including to some extent the OECD – have refocused their efforts over the last few years to strengthen work on climate change, development aid and food security. I warmly welcome, and encourage a further strengthening, of these efforts. The growing awareness of new challenges makes it important to keep a long-term perspective in our focus today.

In the years ahead, our challenge to the OECD is to come to grips with the complexity of food production. In a world of climate change, of price volatility and instability of food markets – simplicity does not work. Not for the OECD, and not for agriculture in the OECD-countries, nor the non-OECD-countries.

As a trained economist, I am perfectly capable of drawing up simple models that prescribe an end to agriculture as we know it in a number of countries. As politicians, however, and as people of common sense, we are aware that such models do not cover all the important roles agriculture fulfills.

We need different models – ambitious models that take into account the complexities of global food production and rural policy, and that recognizes our common challenges connected to climate and food security.

An important reason why the simple models don't work is the **multifunctionality** of agriculture. Norway has particularly challenging conditions for agricultural production with a harsh climate and low population density. Other countries have other challenges. Still, the multifunctional values of agricultural production; such as:

- viability of rural areas,
- food security,
- cultural heritage,
- environmental benefits such as
- agricultural landscapes,
- biodiversity,
- land conservation, and
- high standards of plant, animal and public health

are goals by themselves. Most of these values cannot be produced without agricultural production. We will continue to promote, support and defend these values. OECD needs to take these values into account when they make their models. OECD must continue and strengthen its work to include multifunctionality in its models.

In my view, the main instrument for global food security is national food production for national consumption. Trade is important, but trade alone cannot solve the fundamental challenges regarding rising hunger. Trade can have positive effects, but can also be a threat to national food security and other multifunctional

roles national agricultural production fulfills. It is important both to strengthen national food production and to increase agriculture related development aid. This must be reflected in the OECDs work and priorities.

Another complex issue is the distortion of price signals to producers, due to the murkiness, and inequity, in distribution of benefits of the food **supply chain**. I am convinced that we need to enhance transparency in, and to establish more insights on the formation of power and the functioning of the total supply chain. To this end Norway has established a commission to inquire into the power relations in the food chain. It would contribute to the relevance of this organization to work on these issues.

Last but not least, **climate change** is one of the most challenging issues for the world's agriculture in the coming decades. We have triple challenge: We need to reduce emissions, conserve and protect agricultural land, and we have to take care of the soil and the forest as a carbon sink. At the same time we need to increase food production in a sustainable way. Agriculture is a part of the solution. OECD needs to prioritize this work also in the future.

Norway looks forward to congratulate the OECD in meeting these challenges at the next OECD agriculture ministerial meeting.

Thank you for your attention.