



Impact of the Financial and Economic Crisis on Nutrition – Policy and Programme Responses

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Summary

Increases in the cost of food often leads to changes in the quantity and type of foods that are purchased. This may result in a reduction in the amounts of foods consumed and/or the substitution of higher priced foods for less expensive foods which are often less nutritious. Over a prolonged period such changes may have negative consequences for nutrition, both through the quantity of foods consumed for maintaining energy balance as well as for the quality of foods consumed for maintaining sufficient intakes of proteins, fats and micronutrients such as vitamins, minerals and trace elements. In adults this will affect the ability to do work and resist disease, and if this situation becomes widespread and prolonged, it will act as a brake on the economy. In women of child bearing age this will reduce birth weight, increase the prevalence of low birth weight babies and increase maternal and child mortality. These foods are crucial for the growth and development of young children. For children the prevalence and severity of undernutrition, including stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, and wasting will increase as well as the number of child deaths from undernutrition. Higher expenses for food items will probably also lead to a decrease in expenditure on essential services (e.g. health expenses, school fees) which in turn can have immediate and long-term damaging effects on the growth of young children. The overall result will be a halt to the progress which has been made in several countries toward achieving the MDGs. The nutritional consequences of increased food prices will have long-lasting detrimental effects and needs to be prevented vigorously.

FAO's 2009 State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) "Economic Crises and Food Security: Impacts and Lessons Learned" describes in detail the effects the current financial crisis has had on food security and on the numbers of the hungry and the malnourished. It observes that:

- The financial and economic crisis has greatest effects on the poor in least developing countries.
- Many, but not all, poor people will be able to maintain caloric intake in the face of economic crisis as they cut back expenditures on other essential items that may jeopardise longer term food security.
- People will shift the composition of their food expenditures toward staple foods and away from more nutritious foods such as meat and dairy
- Distress sales of assets and cutbacks in health expenditures due to a temporary negative income shock can have permanent effects.
- A healthy agricultural sector can provide an employment buffer in times of economic crisis, especially in poorer countries
- Financial and economic crisis should not be used as an excuse for postponing re-investment in pro-poor nutrition focused agriculture using a reinvigorated twin track approach for agricultural development
- In addition to the above, targeted direct nutrition interventions are required to help the hungry.

1. Background

In responding to the FAO Director General's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP), the Declaration of the High Level Conference on World Food Security made the commitment to eliminate hunger and to secure food for all today and tomorrow. It called for immediate support for increased agricultural production, particularly small-scale producers in low-income food-deficit countries and for those most affected by soaring food prices. Explicit in this is the call to urgently "*address hunger and malnutrition*" by ensuring that the poorest and most nutritionally vulnerable benefit from policies and programmes. This includes in the short term resources for agencies to "expand and enhance their food assistance and support safety net programmes" and in the longer term, measures that "fully embrace a people-centred policy framework supportive of the poor in rural, peri-urban and urban areas and people's livelihoods in developing countries".

If the end result really is to address hunger and malnutrition, then we must go beyond the immediate need of simply providing basic inputs to stimulate production of staple crops and to boost smallholder food production. Rather, we need to focus more on people, not only on farms but on farmers and their families. This is because increasing the availability and diversity of foods, although essential, is not always sufficient for reducing malnutrition. From a nutrition perspective, crop diversification is a means to improve the quality of the diet, i.e. the consumption of foods adequate in quantity and in quality in terms of variety, diversity, nutrient content and safety of foods. To achieve this, we need to ensure that crop diversification comprises a nutritionally adequate mix, and leads to dietary diversification. In this regard, a number of nutrition-related activities are required in which the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division of FAO (AGN) has a comparative advantage. This includes actively encouraging the consumption of diversified diets, establishing safety nets and implementing specific social nutrition programmes for the poor and vulnerable who are unable to take advantage of increased production programmes, strengthening institutional capacity for ending hunger and malnutrition, assuring the safety of the food supply, and monitoring impact on nutrition and foods consumed.

2. Consequences of the Slow Progress in Reducing Hunger and Malnutrition

Reductions in hunger and malnutrition are proceeding too slowly to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target for halving hunger by 2015.

Although present global food supplies are more than adequate to provide everyone with all the needed *calories*, if the food were equally distributed, at the end of the decade, 925 million people have calorie-deficient diets. Even if a person consumes a sufficient quantity of food in terms of calories, this does not guarantee an adequate intake of the quality of food in terms of proteins, fats and essential micronutrients – vitamins, minerals and trace elements. Micronutrient malnutrition, also known as "hidden hunger", has serious public health consequences. For example, over one billion people consume diets deficient in iron. Iron deficiency is responsible for roughly half of the global prevalence of anaemia. Iron deficiency anaemia causes 20 percent of global maternal mortality, can impair children's health and development and reduce adult work performance. Vitamin A deficiency disorders affect 40 million people causing blindness and contributing to infections and death.

Around the world 10 million children die before their fifth birthday every year. Over a third of these deaths are associated with undernutrition. One in three developing-country children under the age of five – 178 million children – suffers stunting due to chronic undernutrition and poor quality diets. Eighty percent of them live in just 20 African and Asian countries. Stunting is associated with higher rates of illness and death, reduced cognitive ability and school performance in children and lower adult productivity and lifetime earnings. Chronic malnutrition during the first two years of life usually results in irreversible harm.

At each stage in the lifecycle, malnutrition has consequences for each successive stage and/or the next generation. Malnourished mothers are more likely to have low birth weight babies; they face higher mortality and disease rates, impaired mental and physical development and increased risk of adult chronic diseases. Stunted children with inadequate food, health and care become stunted adolescents; the girls among them growing up as the next generation of malnourished mothers.

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the highest prevalence of undernourishment and the largest increase in the number of undernourished people following the global economic downturn. An estimated 126 million African children are underweight, 200 million are chronically malnourished and 5 million die of hunger annually. At this rate, the chance of reaching the Millennium Development Goals by African countries is in jeopardy. About 80% of the continent's population relies on agriculture for their livelihood. Due to recurrent droughts and poverty, nutrition security remains elusive for many segments of the population. Vulnerability in the region is exasperated by the high prevalence of HIV in several countries. Women provide most of the agricultural labour and are responsible for producing the food consumed by their families, yet they bear the brunt of food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition and the disease burden, such as HIV infection. Therefore, to sustain the nutritional status and health of rural families in times of crisis, it is particularly important to acknowledge, support and promote the importance of food crops that are normally grown by women.

Three major challenges threaten to efforts to overcome food insecurity and malnutrition: the impact of the financial and economic crisis and in particular the soaring of food prices, climate change, and the growing use of food crops as a source of fuel.

3. Financial and Economic Crisis

The effects of the volatile food prices and the financial and economic crisis can impact the most vulnerable in at least two ways; lowering or disrupting real wages and their major sources of income; and, reducing the funds committed by donors to development assistance for social protection and emergency food interventions. Already the severity of the current financial crisis coupled with any stronger rebound in prices of many food commodities will prove an added burden to an already exceptional difficult situation confronting the institutions responsible for ensuring world food security.

Unfortunately the poor and the weakest will once again find themselves at the forefront of this failure to address the impending food problem. The poor people that spend 50 to 80 percent of their incomes on food and have already seen their livelihoods undermined by the soaring food prices would now have to face the brunt of the financial crisis. The challenge now is to avoid the negative effects that the financial crisis will bring for the most vulnerable and ensure investment in smallholder agriculture and strengthening social protection systems.

Soaring food prices

International prices of basic food commodities increased steadily during 2006, rising sharply throughout 2007 and during the first half of 2008 in particular. World food price jumped by 56 percent between 2006 and 2008 and affected negatively millions of people, particularly consumers in net food-importing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The effects of increasing food prices contributed to riots and violent protests that erupted in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

High food prices threaten to reverse critical gains made toward reducing poverty and hunger as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and risk pushing over 100 million more people below the US\$1 a day poverty line. FAO estimates 75 million more people were thrown below the hunger threshold due to the impact of high prices in 2007 and another 40 million in 2008 pushing up the total number of undernourished people to nearly 1 billion by the end of 2008 before improving slightly in 2010 to around 925 million.

This alarming situation triggered a number of responses to the crisis in developed and developing countries. It re-emphasized the need to deal with both the current crisis as well as the underlying causes of chronic hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. In April 2008, the UN High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis was established to promote a unified response to the global food security crisis and a prioritized plan of action, the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) was produced to address it. The FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, held in Rome in June 2008, called for increased assistance for those most negatively affected by high food prices. Later, G8 Leaders during the Hokkaido Toyako Summit expressed their commitment to reverse the decline in food aid and in investment in agriculture.

Since the FAO High-Level Conference in June 2008, the world food situation has been affected by falling international commodity prices and the global financial and economic crisis. World prices of major agricultural commodities fell during the second half of 2008, partially because of increased levels of production, halving of world crude oil prices, the financial crisis and the appreciation of the US dollar. Nevertheless, prices remain high compared to previous years and it is expected for most crops they will remain so until 2015 as a result of continued high energy costs, expansion of the bio-fuels industry and rising demand from emerging economies.

However most of the increase in production has been in developed countries. Although policy measures (input vouchers and subsidies, credit, reduction of import taxes, exemption of producers from taxes, governmental purchase or governmental price support) have resulted in a significant increase in food production in some countries (e.g. maize in Malawi, rice in Burkina), for many the net impact of higher prices for inputs in a context of downward pressures on prices has resulted in little significant boost to smallholder food production at global level. FAO considers that production by developing countries slightly decreased (excluding Brazil, India and China). With the sudden decline in food prices, high input costs and the credit crunch, farmers reduce plantings and early signs of reductions have already been evidenced which will again increase the pressure on world food supplies and evoke greater price instability and volatility.

Low stock levels and climatic shocks are expected to lead to greater price volatility. Volatility increases both consumption and production risk, reduces supply response, and is especially hard for the poor to handle as either consumers or producers. Those farmers who took advantage of rising agricultural prices to invest in expanding production, may not be able to pay their debts because of falling output prices. Smallholder farmers shift to risk-reducing strategies which lower input use, decrease outputs, and lower returns through shifting out of non-staples that often have higher returns, leads to more poverty, and due to the reduction in dietary diversity and hence quality of the diet, further malnutrition.

Furthermore, despite the decline in world food prices, domestic prices remain high in many developing countries and in several countries continue to increase, affecting the food security situation of large numbers of vulnerable populations. In Afghanistan, Eritrea and Ethiopia prices of food staples are twice or more their levels of a year earlier.

4. Impact on food consumption and nutrition

A rise in the food bill for households that are net buyers of food may lead to the substitution of starchy staples for micronutrient-rich animal source foods, legumes, processed foods, fruits and vegetables and to a reduction in the average number of meals and the amount of food consumed and therefore to reduced micronutrient intakes among poor people. Extremely poor people will experience decreased calorie consumption.

Inadequate dietary intake and disease are the immediate causes of malnutrition. Inadequate food consumption heightens vulnerability to infectious diseases, which, in turn, can keep the body from absorbing adequate food. These immediate causes stem from insufficient access to safe and wholesome food, poor maternal and child rearing practices and inadequate access to clean drinking water, safe sanitation and health services. Food insecurity, ill health and sub-optimal caring practices are all closely related to poverty. Poor people generally consume fewer than 2,100 calories per day. Lower-income households experience significantly higher rates of preschooler stunting and illness and worse caring practices than better-off families. Taken together, chronic and acute child malnutrition, low birth weights, suboptimal breastfeeding and micronutrient deficiencies lead to the deaths of 3.6 million mothers and preschool children each year, accounting for 35 percent of all preschooler deaths and 11 percent of the global disease burden. Difficult pregnancies and illnesses due to malnutrition cost developing countries \$30 billion annually. Lost productivity and income resulting from early deaths, poor school performance, disability and absenteeism raise the yearly total into the hundreds of billions of dollars. Malnutrition also reflects and contributes to inequity, disproportionately affecting poor, marginalized and extremely vulnerable groups. While the policies and programmes needed to address malnutrition will require substantial resources, the costs of not tackling malnutrition are considerable. Temporary crises may have long lasting effects as poor people sell their assets and become destitute. Permanent effect of crises on education and nutrition is part of the story.

5. Future Challenges for Improved Nutrition

The following factors will constrain efforts to reduce malnutrition in the coming years:

- demographic forces;
- widespread land degradation and scarcity of fresh water resources, resulting from both bad management practices, inappropriate land uses for a certain land class and impacts from climate change and extreme climate variations;
- structural shifts in the food and agricultural system;
- transboundary movement of diseases;
- environmental and energy pressures, biofuels.

World population will increase by 37 percent, to 9.2 billion people by 2050. Anticipated economic growth of 6 percent per year in developing countries during the next few years and rapid urbanization will also lead to increases in demand and structural shifts in diets.

Productivity growth in cereals, the main staple food crops, declined dramatically in the 1990s and continues to decline for maize. A major reason is under-investment in agriculture by aid donors and developing-country governments.

The vast majority of farms (85 percent) are of less than two hectares but the 0.5 percent of farms that exceed 100 hectares captures a disproportionate share of global farm income, enjoy privileged access to policy makers and, particularly in developed countries, receive generous subsidies. Outside of farming, buying power is increasingly concentrated in the hands of supermarkets and other powerful corporate actors. Preferences of affluent consumers in high- and middle-income countries are shaping global food and agricultural systems, offering smallholders opportunities and niche markets. However, they may face difficulties in being able to produce up to the standards of the buying agents.

Efforts to intensify agricultural production have helped boost food output, but some agricultural practices have affected the natural resource base. In the absence of a yield-boosting technological breakthrough, increases in food production will have to come from area expansion. That would require cultivation of fragile or marginal land and further destruction of forests and wildlife habitat, causing biodiversity loss and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Fears of rising petrol prices have made biofuels an attractive alternative energy source. Estimates of the effects rising demand for biofuels has on increasing food prices varies but it can lead to the diversion of land for food and feed crops for biofuel production which can reduce food availability and may consign food and feed production to less productive land, reducing yields. Biofuel production can have negative impacts on nutrition also through the environmental damage caused by burning forests to clear land for crop cultivation, as well as through direct effects on health and sanitation and reduced food availability and associated price effects. Growth of the biofuel sector may lead to water shortages and contamination which is a cause of concern for agricultural productivity as well as for health and sanitation. Poorly managed input use in energy crop cultivation could pollute drinking water, adversely affecting human and animal health. IFPRI projects that in 2020, if biofuel development

proceeds at or exceeds its current pace, calorie availability will decline and child malnutrition will increase substantially, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Biofuel production in developing countries should be carefully designed so as not to reduce food security. Nutrition impact assessments should be undertaken before launching biofuel projects to ensure that they are nutritionally friendly. Biofuel production is labour-intensive, offering new job opportunities and policies should ensure that smallholders, including women farmers, have access to resources so that they can participate in biofuel production on a fair basis. Poor farmers might be able to grow energy crops on degraded or marginal land not suitable for food production. Further investment is needed in developing technologies to convert cellulose to energy, which could provide smallholders with a market for crop residues.

6. Policies and Programmes for Safeguarding Nutrition

We need to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations while at the same time building longer-term resilience by addressing the underlying causes. We can do this by using a “nutrition lens” to safeguard nutrition, which can add value to agriculture's response to soaring food prices in a number of ways. For example through:

- i. *improved targeting* - giving a clearer focus to identify those population groups at greater risk, where they are and who they are;
- ii. *refined problem identification* - better identifying the major constraints and difficulties faced by such groups in terms of access to and consumption of adequate quantity and variety of foods that provide an appropriate diet;
- iii. *improved programme design* - on the basis of the above, identifying more effective nutrition and agricultural intervention programmes with greater focus on people;
 - a. advising on the selection of crops and seed varieties on the basis of consumption patterns and the nutrient composition of foods and diets, and
 - b. advising on the choice of agricultural practices as appropriate for the weak, nutritionally disadvantaged and marginalised groups
- iv. *improved monitoring and evaluation* - data collection activities looking at the impact of price changes on consumption patterns, household food insecurity and dietary diversification using assessment tools developed.

Although much immediate attention is being given to supply issues, if the goal of eliminating hunger and malnutrition is to be achieved, it is essential that the intended targets of such inputs and the variety of seeds and type of inputs are clearly identified based both on the ability to benefit nutritionally from such inputs, as well as on the level and nature of nutritional deprivation and food safety. This implies that an agreed methodology and approach is required on how to target beneficiaries, how to support implementing partners reach them with relevant materials, as well as on supporting community-based organisations provide relevant nutrition education and training programmes to ensure that crop diversification is translated into dietary diversity.

Short-term actions

In the short-term, technical support is needed for taking immediate steps at improving availability and access to nutritionally adequate quantity and diversity of good quality and safe food and to providing nutrition support for the most food insecure and nutritionally vulnerable including the following activities:

Assessment:

- Identify major nutritional and food safety problems and target groups most affected;
- Prioritise major problems and opportunities and monitor and evaluate effectiveness of intervention programmes with the view to give feedback for their improved design.

Policy advice and programme support:

- Provide policy analysis and assistance working with policy makers and existing institutions to develop and implement appropriate policy instruments that support nutrition and food safety;
- Provide advice on the improved design and expansion of safety nets and broad social protection mechanisms that protect the basic consumption needs of the poor;
- Scale up direct nutritional support including the management of undernutrition, promotion of school feeding, food safety management;

Capacity building and advocacy:

- Build national institution capacity to support nutrition and food safety policies and programmes;
- Create, foster and develop partnerships and alliances with existing government, NGO and CBO implementing partners and UN bodies;
- Develop best practices of what works, reach consensus on priorities and participate in the preparation of national action plans;
- Disseminate good practices in nutrition education and communication that protect and promote nutrition.

Longer-term actions

These are also needed to start immediately to strengthen food and nutrition security by addressing the underlying factors driving the food crisis. These include:

- Provide advice to concerned authorities on the implications of policy choices for nutrition and food safety; and disseminate policy experiences on good practices across countries;
- Strengthen capacity to design and implement agricultural technologies and best practices for scaling up that improve the quality and diversity of foods;
- Support the incorporation of nutrition considerations into agricultural research, the adoption of technologies, and the transfer and diffusion of varieties and proven small-farmer community-based technologies and techniques that will lead to better nutrition;
- Disseminate good practices in nutrition education and communication that protect and promote nutrition;
- Strengthen capacity to design and implement social protection policies and safety net programmes that protect and promote nutrition;
- Support the development of community-based organisations and associations;
- Collaborate with the MDG Africa Initiative to accelerate achievement of MDG 1 within the framework of CAADP Pillar III and the NEPAD Framework for African Food Security and with the World Bank's new commitment to agriculture in developing countries.

A Revitalised Twin Track Approach

FAO's "twin-track approach" for combating hunger and poverty aims to i. strengthen the productivity and incomes of hungry and poor people, targeting the rural areas, and ii. provide hungry people with direct and immediate access to food through social safety nets.

Social safety nets may be cash-based or food access-based transfers. They may be conditional or unconditional, targeted or universal and include public work programmes that are used to minimise the social impact of the crisis and avert starvation and malnutrition. For the poorest countries mobilizing the necessary cash or food for these programmes has not been easy.

Countries used cash transfer programmes to help poor citizens, frequently conditional to attending training or health centres, sending children to school, etc. Some of these countries already had ongoing cash transfer programmes and they only scaled up the level of payment (to compensate for the high prices) or expanded the coverage of the programme. In response to the high food prices, 23 countries have introduced or expanded cash transfer programmes.

Food assistance included direct food transfer, food stamps or vouchers and school feeding. Self-targeted food-for-work programmes were implemented as well as distribution of emergency food aid. In some countries food was sold at subsidized prices to targeted groups. School feeding programmes were also frequently used means for distributing food. In response to the high food prices, 19 countries have introduced food assistance programmes with the support of international organizations.

FAO needs to retain its focus on a twin-track approach but this now needs to be made more explicit to ensure that policies and programmes are put into effect to boost supply, not only by the larger commercial farmers but also targeted to smallholders, while at the same time designing social protection and safety nets that protect the vulnerable and direct nutrition interventions.

High food prices exacerbate food insecurity and create social tensions, but high agricultural commodity prices also present a potential opportunity for reversing the decline in public investment in agriculture. More food needs to be produced where it is urgently needed to contain the impact of soaring prices on poor consumers and simultaneously boost productivity and expand production to create more income and employment opportunities for rural poor people. Smallholder farmers need to have proper access to resources, infrastructure and services. This will allow them to increase their supply response to higher prices. Agricultural research needs to enhance its focus on mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and on pro-poor biofuel development. Increased agricultural productivity can increase food availability, rural employment and access to food by reducing prices. Agricultural growth will stimulate growth in other sectors. Appropriate policies and institutions, such as organization and collective action, can help facilitate smallholder participation in value chains on a fair basis. Agricultural and rural development strategies must recognize the important roles that women play in food security and nutrition and take into account the need for sustainable natural resource management.

Direct nutrition interventions

Direct nutrition interventions have a unique, essential role to play in efforts to protect the vulnerable that complement measures to improve the physical and economic access to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilization. These interventions use a “nutrition lens” to direct participatory and multi-sectoral actions to improve household food security; improve food quality and safety; prevent, control and manage infectious diseases and micronutrient deficiencies; promote appropriate diets, including breast-feeding and healthy lifestyles; provide care for the vulnerable, including people living with HIV/AIDS; introduce productive safety nets; and provide direct assistance;

At the regional and national level, developing countries have issued national policies and plans of action on nutrition, but these often do not prioritize nutrition actions, assure adequate budgetary allocations, or incorporate appropriate specific actions to address the problems identified. Accelerated progress against food insecurity and malnutrition requires that governments put appropriate policy responses much higher on their agendas, with adequate resources provided. Harmonised, large-scale, multi-component programmes are required to make a difference.

Good nutrition makes an essential contribution to the fight against poverty. It protects and promotes health; reduces mortality, especially among mothers and children; encourages and enables children to attend and benefit from school; and enhances productivity and incomes in adulthood. The increased participation of poor and vulnerable people and of women in the development process that may arise from effective community nutrition programmes will likely lead to more effective demands for improved services and to better use of existing resources.

With regard to preschooler malnutrition, the crucial “window of opportunity” is from conception through the first 18-24 months of a child’s life. Effective interventions targeting infants and young children include improving food consumption and nutrient intakes through improved complementary feeding and dietary diversity, breastfeeding promotion, salt iodisation, vitamin A and zinc supplementation, vitamin A fortification, hand-washing and hygiene interventions and treatment of severe acute malnutrition. Interventions should not neglect other age groups, other family members, or low-income childless households who may equally be in need of support. The care of adolescent girls and pregnant women is vital for protecting their own health and that of their future children.

FAO, together with other partners, is putting in place a more accurate system for monitoring food price fluctuations and their impacts at the local level and for assessing how vulnerable groups are being affected by high food prices. These mechanisms are being studied to provide informed policy guidance.

Finally resources for nutrition are inadequate. Annual donor funding runs at less than US\$300 million, compared to US\$2.2 billion for HIV/AIDS and several billion dollars in food aid. In real terms, aid to agriculture is about half the level of 25 years ago. However change may be coming. The African Union seeks to boost agriculture to 10 percent of member budgets and bring agricultural growth to six percent per year and the World Bank has put renewed stress on both nutrition and agriculture. We shall see how this is reflected in specific nutrition improvement programmes.

7. Joining Forces to protect and improve nutrition

The need for better coordination of national and regional programmes is clear. The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action called on development partners to provide a more co-ordinated approach in providing assistance in close co-operation with governments and with specific efforts to enhance local capacities. Increasingly, programme priorities and funding arrangements are discussed at multi-donor government fora within the country.

The renewed international, high level interest in nutrition provides yet more opportunities for resource mobilization to improve nutrition at national and regional levels. There are several initiatives which countries and regions can tap into to promote nutrition, such as:

- Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, a collaborative process including governments, academia, research institutions, civil society, the private sector, UN organizations and the World Bank to address the continuing high levels of under-nutrition and the uneven progress towards the MDGs. The SUN roadmap (www.unscn.org/files/Announcements/Other_announcements/FINAL_SUN_Road_Map_FINAL_dn.pdf) provides practical guidelines for joint action to be adapted on a country-by-country basis.
- The UNSCN - UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (presently chaired by Alexander Müller, Assistant Director General, Natural Resources Department, FAO - see www.unscn.org). Its mandate is to promote cooperation among UN agencies and partner organizations in support of community, national, regional, and international efforts to end malnutrition in all of its forms in this generation. It participates in relevant working groups and task forces, as well as discussions on emerging issues and organization of inter-institutional events.
- REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger) initiative, endorsed in 2008 by the heads of agencies of FAO, WHO, UNICEF and WFP. REACH facilitates joint action at country level to reduce under-five child malnutrition in the context of MDG1 (www.reach-partnership.org);
- The World Bank's "The New Deal on Global Food Policy" To help those who will be hit the hardest, the World Bank Group is calling for a New Deal for Global Food Policy. This New Deal should focus not only on hunger and malnutrition, access to food and its supply, but also the interconnections with energy, yields, climate change, investment, the marginalization of women and others, and economic resiliency and growth.

The food and agriculture sector needs to join forces with other development sectors to address malnutrition. FAO therefore welcomes the increase in UN Joint Programming which allows the UN systems to build on existing efforts and experience and accelerate progress towards the MDGs, and participates in UN Joint Programmes (UNJPs) in many countries. FAO is thus involved in the 24 UNJPs for the thematic window Children, Nutrition and Food Security (www.mdgfund.org/content/childrenfoodsecurityandnutrition) of the UNDP/Spain Fund for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.