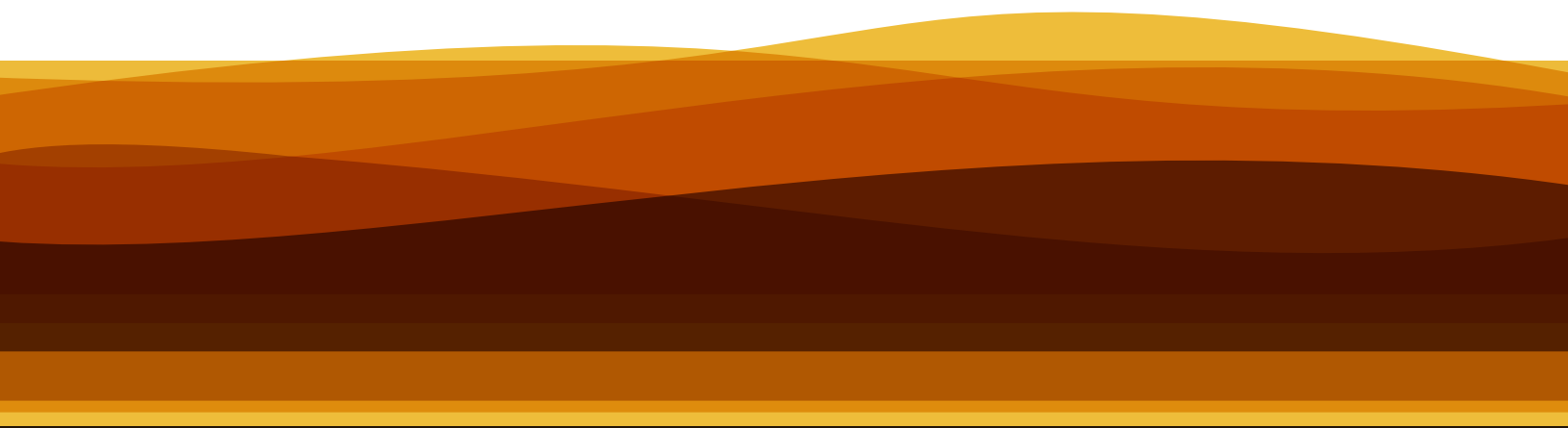


Food comes first

FAO and the eight
Millennium Development Goals



FAO AND THE
EIGHT MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



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Food comes first

FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

In 2009, the number of hungry people on our planet was about one billion. No matter how we try to put it in words that anyone can understand – one out of every six human beings is hungry, a child dies of hunger every six seconds – it remains almost impossible to conjure up a mental image of what hunger looks like at that scale.

In May 2010, FAO initiated its “1billionhungry” campaign, which features an online anti-hunger petition. Its goal: to bring this untenable situation to the attention of the world through social networking outlets and inspire a grassroots outcry that will reach the ears and hearts of world leaders who are in the position to do something about it.

In spite of the solemn commitment of world leaders who made the reduction of hunger and poverty their very first Millennium Development Goal, the political will and financial resources offered have not measured up to the goal. Now, two-thirds of the way to the day of reckoning for the MDGs, we must face the very tragic reality that we are lagging behind to meet the goal for the very same reason just mentioned – the lack of political will and financial means.

With our world facing the double dilemma of rapidly increasing demand for agricultural commodities and changing climates that affect our ability to produce food, it raises our awareness of the importance of linkages. We see the eight Millennium Development Goals, each with its own sphere, but we also know that all of those spheres touch each other and progress toward achieving one will have a cascading effect in helping the others. Under its mandate, FAO has developed strong experience and expertise not only to fight poverty and hunger and to ensure environmental sustainability, but as this report shows, the output of the Organization links across the whole MDG universe.

FAO reaffirms its commitment to support the development and implementation of the types of policies needed at all levels and in all sectors of society – nationally, regionally and globally – to ensure that the necessary resources are mobilized. The fact that hunger and malnourishment are a predominantly rural phenomenon, and that farming constitutes the principal livelihood for 70 percent of the world’s poor, puts agriculture and FAO’s activities at the centre of our global effort to meet the MDGs.

FAO will continue to support its Member Nations to take on this challenge and work unfailingly to sharpen the focus and improve the efficiency of its activities and programmes, with a view to contributing effectively to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.



Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations (FAO)

CONTEXT 2010

2000

UN adopts the MDGs.
Global population
stands at 6.1 billion.

2010

UN convenes to report on
progress in achieving the
MDGs. World population
reaches 6.9 billion, a
13 percent increase.

2015

UN gathers for final reckoning
of the MDGs. Global
population is projected to
reach 7.3 billion, a
20 percent increase in 15
years. The world has 1.2
billion more people to feed.

Population. The world's rapidly increasing population puts pressure on all aspects of human existence and must be superimposed over all efforts to achieve the MDGs. Looking toward a population of more than nine billion by 2050, no sector feels this pressure more dramatically than agriculture, which deals from a finite resource base but must find ways to increase agricultural production by a projected 70 percent, to feed those extra billions. But bringing down global food supply to the household level reveals that the major issue is the access, utilization and stability dimensions of food security. Promoting the human right to food in the fight against hunger and poverty becomes essential.

Urban-rural gap. 50 percent of the world's population now lives in urban areas, meaning they rely on purchasing rather than growing their own food. Supplying them with safe, nutritious and affordable food strains food supply and distribution chains – especially in developing world cities where people spend more on food than in rural areas but consume fewer calories. While most population increase will be urban, 75 percent of the developing world's poor still live in rural areas.

Climate. Climate change affects the frequency of extreme weather events, alters agricultural growing patterns and affects the distribution patterns of pests, weeds and diseases that threaten crops and livestock. The overall impacts of climate change on agriculture and food security are expected to be increasingly negative, especially in areas already vulnerable to climate-related disasters and food insecurity.

Nutrition. Increasing agricultural production must go hand-in-hand with improving nutrition. The health risks of malnutrition are especially acute among those who spend more than 60 percent of their incomes on food and often switch to poorer diets for economic reasons. In the first years of a child's life, malnutrition can permanently stunt mental and physical growth. At the same time, some developing countries have had impressive agricultural growth but increasing malnutrition.

Economy and trade. Developing countries are much more integrated in the global financial and trade system than in the past, so the negative effects of economic crises in developed countries are transmitted to developing countries through private direct investments, exports, financial flows, debt, official development assistance and also because of decreases in migration remittances. As globalization of trade increases, the importance of supporting developing countries as they build their trade infrastructure becomes more evident.

Resilience. During crises, such as the soaring food prices in 2007–2008, the poor tend to sell their assets and cut down on their dietary, health and education expenses, leaving very little at their disposition to face another crisis. This was the case when the 2009 global economic crisis hit after the poor had depleted their coping strategies during the food price crisis, resulting in the number of chronically hungry people in the world passing one billion for the first time in human history.

Emergencies and protracted crises. In addition to the 200 million people affected by natural disasters each year, the number and scale of conflict-related food emergencies is increasing. There are strong links between emergencies and food insecurity with natural and human-induced disasters often reinforcing each other. In many countries, emergencies are recurrent, and can become protracted structural factors that hinder development and poverty reduction efforts.

When the Millennium Summit made the elimination of poverty and hunger its number one goal, it recognized two key points:

- without rapid progress in reducing hunger, achieving all of the other MDGs would be difficult, if not impossible, and
- the fight to eliminate hunger and reach the other MDGs would be won or lost in the rural areas where the vast majority of the world's hungry people live.

Now, ten years into the process, the reality of this is more evident than ever. Food comes first.

FAO APPROACH TO THE MDGs: FOOD COMES FIRST

INTRODUCTION

For more than six decades, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has led global efforts to alleviate hunger, focusing on ways to improve agricultural production and the lives of rural people, while assuring their recognition in a global society. Under its mandate, FAO spearheads activities that focus on making sure the environment is protected, that food produced is safe to eat and that all people have enough to live healthy lives.

In 1996, at the first World Food Summit (WFS), FAO's members drafted the Rome Declaration in which they pledged to reduce the number of hungry people by half by 2015. Four years later, the Millennium Summit picked up where the WFS left off – making the reduction of extreme hunger and poverty its number one Millennium Development Goal.

When the MDGs were set, FAO estimated some 840 million people were chronically hungry. By 2009, despite the concerted efforts of an entire global community that recognizes hunger and malnutrition as the root causes of poverty, illiteracy, disease and the mortality of millions in developing countries, that number had spiraled to more than 1 billion, meaning that one in six people on our planet faces a daily fight to find enough food. Of equal importance is the fact that, even if the original goal were achieved, and the proportion of hungry people were reduced by half, there would still be some 400 million people without enough to eat.

The drastic increase in the number of hungry – and, even more, the fact that this number has remained above 800 million for the past 40 years – indicates the fragility of the present food system and the vulnerability of countries in many parts of the world to external shocks. FAO realizes that the solution requires more than improving agricultural production and yields. Many of the new hungry are the victims of global economic crises that have led to reduced incomes and increased unemployment, while others have been victims of increased natural and human-made disasters that have upset agricultural production and displaced tens of millions of the world's most vulnerable people.

ABOUT FAO

As the UN organization with the global mandate of ensuring that all people everywhere have enough to eat, FAO has had to face the reality that the war against hunger is far from being won. This is in spite of its ongoing and concerted efforts to create a broad united front against hunger by working with its Member Governments and the international community in support of policies and programmes that promote food security.

FAO recognizes that food security requires more than improved agricultural yields. Priorities for reducing hunger cannot be separated from those for sustainable management of resources and resilient ecosystems. The close linkages among hunger, poverty and environmental degradation underscore the need for multidimensional approaches to their reduction and have been important considerations in the development of FAO's priorities.

Knowledge repository. FAO is, above all, a knowledge repository. Its paramount objective is to gather, analyse, disseminate and apply information that can be used by Member Governments in their policy and standard setting and in their on-the-ground development activities. This includes information management systems and global databases that provide information on the world's fish, forest, crop and livestock resources, monitoring systems and climate early warning systems, as well as easily accessible and user-friendly Web portals, manuals, guidelines, best practices and e-learning courses.

Field activities. At any one time, FAO manages more than 2000 field programmes and projects around the world with budgets totaling some US\$800 million. This can include working with farmers in their villages, with scientists in their laboratories, with governments and their ministries and in international partnerships. Each project is designed to add more understanding, more information, more recognition of the various elements that stand in the way of achieving food security. Each project has a specific goal – a specific problem to solve. FAO provides the tools and expertise to make a difference, always looking for ways to glean best practices and share what is learned. This serves the double purpose of giving field projects a catalytic affect while ensuring that FAO's assistance is based on up-to-date practical experience.

Norms and standards. At the global level, FAO generates and oversees the establishment of norms and standards that help guide activities ranging from developing regulations for global food trade to setting codes for responsible fishing. FAO also collects, organizes and analyses information at regional, subregional and national levels which it then disseminates in

the form of policy, legal and technical advice, accompanied by activities designed to develop human resources, strengthen institutions, initiate emergency operations, develop pilot projects, and support public and private investment in the sector.

Neutral forum. FAO provides an open setting where nations can come together to discuss issues of mutual importance and build common understanding. It hosts many international mechanisms such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Rotterdam Convention for Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the International Plant Protection Convention and the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. Each year, it also provides facilities for hundreds of meetings and workshops that deal with aspects of food security and nutrition.

Partnership. Throughout its history, FAO has relied on partnerships to create a broad, united front in its efforts to achieve global food security. Its staff of experts – agronomists, foresters, fisheries and livestock specialists, nutritionists, social scientists, economists and statisticians – work with government ministries, with non-governmental and civil society partners, with academic and research institutions and with the private sector, including farm households and rural families, to share expertise. FAO teams with other UN agencies and a host of inter-agency mechanisms, task forces and committees, to maximize resources and raise the visibility of its programmes. FAO has strengthened its UN collaboration, especially through partnering with its sister Rome-based UN food agencies – World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – in order to respond more effectively to the challenge of achieving the MDGs.

Approach to hunger and malnutrition. In the early 2000s, FAO developed and began promoting a twin-track approach to the fight against hunger, specifically by linking immediate hunger relief interventions with a long-term strategy for sustainable growth and enhancing resilience during protracted crises. With this approach, critical short-term safety nets and social protection programmes focus on reaching those most in need while, simultaneously, ensuring that smallholder farmers have access to indispensable tools and technologies that will allow them to boost production. In the medium and long term, FAO sees the structural solution to hunger lying in increased agricultural output in countries prone to food shortages. This will require national and international investments in the agricultural sectors of poor countries to strengthen their productivity and income potential.

ROME-BASED UN FOOD AGENCIES LEVERAGE AND SHARE EXPERTISE

The three Rome-based UN food agencies – FAO, WFP and IFAD – have a history of working together, combining their expertise and comparative advantages, to maximize support to their member countries. Leveraging FAO's strength in agriculture, food security, nutrition and natural resource management, IFAD's ability to provide critical financing for developing countries, and WFP's ability to provide food rations to the world's most vulnerable has proven an effective formula for achieving positive outcomes of activities they undertake together.

This partnership stands as an excellent example of the UN goal of facilitating UN-system-wide cooperation. The three agencies, positioned to work together to assist countries in integrating food security and rural development objectives into national poverty reduction strategies, illustrate that the sum of the total Rome-based Agencies is greater than their individual parts and roles. In 2009, the FAO Conference accepted the Directions for Collaboration of the Rome-Based Food Agencies, which the three agencies developed jointly to guide future collaboration in support of the MDGs, but also to facilitate sharing of human resources, training and administrative operations.

1 BILLION HUNGRY PROJECT

FAO battle against hunger goes virtual

FAO has taken its efforts to eradicate hunger into a virtual realm with its "1billionhungry" campaign. Recognizable by its yellow whistle logo, "1billionhungry" is a powerful, cutting-edge communication project designed to take the story of world hunger to the widest audience possible, raising awareness of the magnitude of the problem and encouraging the public to get involved by signing a petition demanding action from world leaders. The yellow whistle serves as a metaphor for "blowing the whistle" on an unacceptable situation, namely the fact that a billion people worldwide live in chronic hunger. With a combination of online petitions, SMS messages, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter outlets, along with traditional live events, posters and advertising campaigns, FAO has ensured that the story of hunger is taken to both young and old. The campaign is being carried forward with support of FAO partners and Goodwill Ambassadors, and at entertainment and sporting events that feature the yellow whistle. The challenge to raise the million signatures is just the beginning. The next step is for world leaders to feel the pressure from the million or more who sign the petitions, to recognize the public support and to respond by moving the effort to eliminate hunger to its rightful place at the top of the international development agenda.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES TO REALIZE THE RIGHT TO FOOD FOR ALL

The right to food recognizes the fundamental right of all people to have access to safe and nutritious food – not only to be free from hunger, but also to lead active and healthy lives. It aims at ensuring that people have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity or are granted such access in case they are unable to do so. When the 2009 FAO Conference voted to include the right to food in FAO's new Strategic Framework, it represented a crucial step in the efforts to mainstream the right to food in the work of the Organization and to raise awareness of its role in global efforts to eliminate poverty and hunger.

Although 160 countries have ratified the Right to Food Covenant since it was adopted by the UN in 1966, commitment to actually implement the right has been slow forthcoming. The 1996 World Food Summit included the right to food in its Rome Plan of Action, and the 2002 World Food Summit: *five years later*, called on FAO to establish an international working group to develop a set of voluntary guidelines that would support member countries' efforts to promote right to food initiatives. The ultimate adoption of those voluntary guidelines by the FAO Council in 2004 represented the first time the international community had agreed on the full meaning of food as a basic human right and practical ways to achieve it. Now, FAO's right to food team works with member countries and other relevant stakeholders, developing tools and building their capacities for implementing the guidelines. It hosts workshops, offers technical expertise and policy advice, and provides a global platform for exchange of experiences and lessons learned, supporting countries' efforts to embed the right to food into national legislation, strategies, policies and programmes.

ABOUT THE MDGs: THE BIG PICTURE

The Millennium Summit's commitment to the achievement of eight unique development goals in effect created a mosaic, with each goal adding its pixel to the bigger picture of a better world where hunger, poverty, illness and illiteracy no longer stunt lives and potential, where men and women have equal opportunities and where national borders disappear when nations work together to build and support regional and global development.

When world leaders gathered for the Millennium Summit at UN headquarters in New York for three days in September of 2000, it was the largest gathering of world leaders in history. According to the resolution that led to the Summit, the occasion of a new millennium represented a "unique and symbolically compelling moment" to affirm a powerful vision for the UN in its efforts to help the citizens of the world's poorest countries achieve a better life by the year 2015. The 100 heads of state, 47 heads of government, three crown princes, five vice presidents, three deputy prime ministers and 8000 other delegates rose to the occasion by adopting the Millennium Declaration by which the Summit participants committed their nations to a new global partnership to work towards a series of eight time-bound Millennium Development Goals.

- Goal 1:** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2:** Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3:** Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4:** Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5:** Improve maternal health
- Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease
- Goal 7:** Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8:** Develop a Global Partnership for Development

The MDGs are a national responsibility, under national ownership. FAO and other UN agencies are on board to help countries achieve the goals, but the onus on their achievement lies squarely with the national governments.

Although each of the eight goals is a world unto itself and represents a monumental global challenge, they also are all interdependent and, as such, efforts to achieve them must be multidimensional and multisectoral. Progress towards achieving any one of them will have positive influence on the success of the others, just as lack of progress by one will impact negatively on the potential of the others to succeed.

In keeping with its mandate to achieve global food security, FAO's most direct contribution is, of course, to MDG 1, the elimination of hunger and poverty. In addition, FAO's technical expertise in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and sustainable resources management gives it a comparative advantage in guiding efforts to support the achievement of MDG 7, ensuring environmental sustainability. Persistent hunger slows progress toward all of the MDGs and eliminating hunger is key to achieving them. Yet at the same time, progress in achieving the other goals will contribute to achieving MDG 1 – after all, overcoming hunger and poverty will be easier if children are educated, if rural women are given access to the inputs and services they need to provide for their families, and if rural populations are healthy.

ILLUSTRATING MDG INTERRELATIONSHIPS THROUGH FORESTRY

Forests make direct contributions to eradicating poverty and hunger (MDG 1) and ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG 7). But, think about it. Forests also have an indirect role through their multiple social, economic and environmental functions. They help reduce child mortality and improve maternal health (MDG 4 and 5) through contribution to food security and by providing natural medicines. Forest-derived incomes help rural families send their children to school (MDG 2), gender-sensitive forest programmes help empower women and improve their access to forest benefits (MDG 3), and forest-related measures are taken to mitigate the negative impacts of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

The following section introduces the eight MDGs individually, specifically looking at how they impact and are impacted by the one goal that according to FAO and to the Millennium Declaration itself, is crucial to the achievement of the other seven – eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

FAO CONTRIBUTES TO MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

The eight MDGs were set up with specific, quantifiable and time-bound targets, measured by 60 indicators. FAO monitors and reports on progress toward reaching indicators of MDGs 1 and 7. These include:

- MDG 1, Indicator 1.9 – the proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption;
- MDG 7, Indicator 7.1 – the proportion of land area covered by forest; Indicator 7.4 – the proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits; Indicator 7.5 – the proportion of water resources used; and (reported through IUCN) indicators 7.6 and 7.7 – the proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected and the proportion of species threatened with extinction.

Though the MDGs were set in 2000, the years 1990-1992 provide the baseline against which progress is monitored. The data used in the reporting on the indicators are gathered by the FAO Statistics Division, as well as through a host of FAO global information systems and assessments such as the Forestry Department's Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), the Fisheries Department's State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) and AQUASTAT, a global information system on water and agriculture prepared by FAO's Natural Resources Management and Environment Department. FAO has also designated focal points to represent each of the eight MDGs within the Organization.

MDG 1 ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

It is well understood that extreme poverty is at the root of chronic hunger and undernutrition. Poor people do not possess the means to access or produce the food necessary for an active healthy life and have less resilience to unexpected events.

There is, however, less recognition that hunger can be an important cause of poverty. Yet the numbers tell us that one-sixth of the world's population is hungry and that hunger, in turn, affects both their health and their productivity. It causes the loss of millions of productive life years as a result of the premature death, disease and disabilities it inflicts.

PUTTING A PRICE TAG ON HUNGER

The present discounted value of the combined costs of protein-energy malnutrition, low birth weight babies and micronutrient deficiencies such as iron and iodine through the lifetime of one cohort of undernourished children would add up to at least 5–10 percent of the GDP of the developing world – roughly US\$500 billion to US\$1 trillion. This hunger-low-productivity-extreme-poverty nexus acts as a trap from which hungry people find it hard to escape.

Given the importance of hunger and undernutrition as causes of poverty, illiteracy, disease and mortality, and given the fact that 75 percent of the world's poor live in rural areas of developing countries, it is hardly surprising that these same rural areas are home to the vast majority of the 72 million children who do not attend primary school, to the 800 million people lacking access to safe water, to the 2.5 billion people lacking access to safe sanitation, to the 10 million children who die each year before reaching the age of five and the half-million women who die during pregnancy and childbirth, and to the estimated 33 million people living with HIV and the two million AIDS deaths each year.

Hunger and undernutrition are not limited to rural areas. While there are certainly more foods available year round, and more jobs and social services in urban areas, not everyone can benefit equally. A growing number of urban poor, including migrants, face a daily struggle to feed their families adequately. People who move to cities must adopt new methods of acquiring, preparing and eating food. Poor shelter, lack of sanitation and hygiene, and insufficient social services in slum areas further compound the problems of the poor.

Increasing food production: a partial solution. The latest hunger figures are particularly unsettling as they indicate that undernourishment is not a result of limited international food supplies. The FAO Food Outlook reported a record output level in 2008 and only slightly less in 2009. FAO has long touted that the world produces enough food to feed all of its people, but there are inherent problems in terms of economic access, distribution and waste.

In other words, recognizing that agricultural development and access to nutritious food are essential for reducing poverty, food insecurity and undernutrition is just part of the battle, because those numbers also tell us that improving the lives and livelihoods of the world's poor and hungry requires more than improved crop yields. They need committed support from their national governments in the form of investments to improve education, employment and income opportunities in rural areas, and they need responsible private sector investment in commercial agriculture and agroprocessing to help them improve their agricultural practices or enable them to migrate out of agriculture into other economic sectors. Practically speaking, they need infrastructure.

Infrastructure. Poor countries do not have the infrastructure needed to get fresh food production from their rural areas to the cities or to ports for export. They do not have proper storage facilities or transportation for their seasonal grains and fresh fruits and vegetables, so they face threats from pest infestations or spoilage before they can either consume or ship their excess harvests to market.

Economic access. As seen during the soaring food price crisis in 2007–2008, a rise in the cost of food has an enormous impact on hunger and undernutrition because many poor households are net purchasers of food. Even those who grow most of what they consume still must purchase a portion of the family's food and thus suffer when prices rise. Experience has shown that the first move by poor households is to reduce food expenses and cut down on non-staple food consumption. These coping mechanisms first affect the diversity (micronutrient content) and safety of diets, the size of portions and, ultimately, the energy intake. This is compounded by cutbacks on other expenditures, such as healthcare, further jeopardizing the nutritional situation of vulnerable families.

In addition, increased food costs can lead poor households to sell assets such as livestock, to seek farm and non-farm employment, and to cut back on their purchases of agricultural inputs and expenditures for education. These coping strategies affect future production and income streams and increase the vulnerability of the poor.

Ironically, as some developing countries move out of poverty, economic progress itself can contribute to increased food prices and therefore affect the ability of the poor to purchase food. The majority of the world's hungry survive primarily on vegetarian fare. However, as national economies improve, their populations naturally wish to improve their diets, which often includes adding more food of animal origin. Animals tend to be fed the same grains that would otherwise be used for human consumption, an increase in demand that has contributed to the increased prices of grains worldwide. At the same time, global food prices also have been impacted quite dramatically by, inter alia, demand for biofuels, biofuel subsidies, high oil and fertilizer prices, and commodity speculation.

SUPPORTING SUCCESS

FAO SUPPORTS COUNTRIES IN ACHIEVING MDGs THROUGH NATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR FOOD SECURITY

One of the broadest programmes in FAO's history – the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) – assisted 106 countries with pilot projects that demonstrated how smallholder farmers could use low-cost technologies to raise levels of production, improve productivity, diversify food production and, ultimately, improve their dietary intake. From the time it was initiated in 1995 until it was finalized in 2008, the SPFS helped raise US\$890 million for grassroots work on food security, supported by South-South Cooperation as a source of know-how about locally adapted and feasible technologies and best practices.

Now, the focus has shifted from small-scale pilot demonstrations to building national and regional programmes – programmes with potential to reach the entire food-insecure population. Some 20 countries have already started to develop their National Programmes and 40 more are under discussion. No two programmes are alike because they reflect the specific needs of the country. However, they all have the achievement of MDG 1 as their overriding goal and, in general, focus on investment in rural infrastructure, off-farm income-generating opportunities, urban agriculture and safety nets. Budgets range from US\$30 million to US\$2.2 billion, depending on the country's need and vision. Some have chosen to focus on rural infrastructure, others on value chain but, of most importance, the countries themselves decide the direction their national programmes will go and, in many cases, they also allocate their own budgetary resources to the implementation.

For example, Mexico has established a Strategic Programme for Food Security (PESA) that targets its most food insecure areas, providing political, institutional and technical support at all levels. Funded entirely by the Government of Mexico, it has had positive results in meeting well-defined targets and has withstood changes in national political leadership, indicating that it has been accepted at an institutional level.

In Sierra Leone, where most of the resources are from external sources, the government takes a very strong leadership position on its NPFs, known as Operation Feed the Nation. Previously, the government dealt with infrastructure and agricultural production issues as two separate issues but now, under the NPFs, it looks at the entire value chain to determine which mechanisms would best serve to bring profits to the farmers.

In the Pacific Region, 14 island countries have agreed to work together under a Regional Programme for Food Security, supported by Italy, FAO and a broad alliance of development partners. In this case, the overarching goal is making island life healthier through encouraging islanders to eat more nutritious local foods and reducing their intake of processed imported foods. This programme has the parallel benefits of increasing national markets for the food output of local farmers and fishers while regionally, it will develop new trade relations among the islands. The programme has relied on South-South cooperation, bringing in experts from the Philippines and China to provide technical advice.

FAO is basically on standby to help countries by working with national teams to develop, design, prepare and implement their national programmes. FAO provides the technical advisors, organizes the exchange of experts, and ensures that the programmes are technically sound.

FAO APPROACH TO MDG 1

FAO has raised the world's awareness that improvements in agricultural production and related sectors lead to increased farm and rural incomes and household food security. At the same time, agricultural growth focused on smallholders promotes rural and non-farm employment which, in turn, has a strong poverty-reducing effect. FAO also has increased its efforts to provide emergency relief and rehabilitation operations to reduce the vulnerability of those affected by natural and human-induced disasters. By facilitating better access to the skills, tools, services and rights that help the rural poor make lasting improvements in their own livelihoods, programmes addressing the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger increase the impact of work targeted to the other goals.

RURAL INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES (RIGA): MAPPING PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY

While crucially important, agriculture is not the sole or even necessarily the principal activity of the rural poor. Rural households in the developing world are involved in a variety of economic activities, as part of complex livelihood strategies. The Rural Income Generating Activities (RIGA) project is a collaborative effort of FAO and the World Bank, established to increase understanding of the role of these economic activities so they can be factored into planning for poverty reduction and development.

RIGA provides the international development research community with an innovative database on sources of income. The database is constantly expanded and currently includes 29 surveys covering 17 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Researchers in government, public and private think tanks, universities and international organizations use RIGA data to investigate a variety of policy-relevant questions. FAO researchers and analysts also make extensive use of the dataset in investigating key policy issues such as income diversification, farm and non-farm linkages, asset ownership, the household level impact of food price hikes, rural wage employment, urban agriculture, gender and rural employment, and the role of livestock in poverty reduction.

COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (CFS) ADOPTS REFORM, WIDENS STAKEHOLDER BASE

The CFS is an intergovernmental body that serves as a forum in the United Nations System for the review and follow-up of policies concerning world food security. In 2009, CFS underwent a reform process that has opened it up to a wider group of stakeholders and has increased its ability to promote policies that reduce food insecurity. The vision of the reformed CFS is to be the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform that gives a voice to a broad range of stakeholders in the world food system. These stakeholders will work together to exchange views and experiences and monitor the effectiveness of actions towards reducing hunger and malnutrition. Under the reform, the 13-member Bureau is complemented by an Advisory Group made up of representatives from UN agencies and other UN bodies, civil society and non-governmental organizations, international agricultural research institutions, financial institutions, the private sector and philanthropic foundations. The CFS secretariat duties are shared by the Rome-based UN agencies, FAO, IFAD and WFP. CFS will facilitate support for national anti-hunger initiatives, strengthen linkages at regional, national and local levels and establish a high-level panel of experts on food security and nutrition to ensure that proposed solutions to ending hunger are based on the latest scientific knowledge.

ATOMS FOR PEACE: NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE

From isotope tracking that enables scientists to determine optimal application and timing of fertilizers to mutation breeding technologies that speed the development of higher yielding disease- and drought-tolerant crops – the Joint FAO/IAEA Programme for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture assists member countries in applying cutting-edge nuclear technologies to improve food security. It is the only joint division in the UN system and the only UN programme that has its own laboratories. In addition to the work done in its laboratories, located near IAEA headquarters in Vienna, the joint division also brings together research institutes in both developed and developing countries to work together on coordinated research projects. Approximately 600 research institutions and experimental stations currently cooperate in some 25 projects per year. The joint division participated in the successful project to eradicate rinderpest disease and now is applying the sterile insect technique in an effort to control the tsetse fly, both critical contributions to improving livelihoods of the poor in rural areas of the developing world. It also provides scientific support to over 200 national and regional technical cooperation projects.

RENEWED EFFORTS AGAINST CHILD HUNGER (REACH)

FAO has joined forces with UNICEF, WFP and WHO as well as key stakeholders to focus on country-level actions to alleviate child undernutrition through Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger (REACH). FAO actively contributes to the REACH process, leading capacity-building efforts in food security and nutrition and exploring the potential of indigenous foods to diversify homestead food production and improve diets. REACH builds on existing efforts and experience, ensures synergy, promotes upscaling of good practices in food security, public health and social protection, and works to build national frameworks where intersectoral and interagency activities can focus on building stronger and more sustainable results of humanitarian and development efforts. For example, in Mauritania, REACH partner agencies work with government ministries and NGOs to identify current activities and gaps related to food and nutrition. In Lao PDR, FAO has worked with the government to develop a comprehensive nutrition strategy, plan of action and guideline for what needs to happen to break the current cycles of malnutrition. The prevalence of underweight children is a key indicator in efforts to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS OF WEST AFRICA FARMER FIELD SCHOOL PROGRAMME

A Farmer Field School (FFS) programme established to improve farming skills and raise smallholder farmers' awareness of alternatives to toxic chemicals is increasingly making its expertise available to other projects and organizations. The West African Regional Integrated Production and Pest Management (IPPM) Programme, funded by The Netherlands, GEF and the EU All ACP, has worked with 116 000 farmers in four West African countries, resulting in improved yields and incomes. While continuing its original mandate of training in IPPM, the programme invites other development initiatives to partner with its established infrastructure which includes efficient national coordination units, hundreds of trained facilitators, established trust between the FFS staff and national and district-level institutions and local communities, and expertise in translating technical messages into farmer-friendly language. As a result, development projects dealing with rice, cotton, river pollution, agro-forestry, conservation agriculture, climate change and a host of specialty crops are now using the FFS infrastructure and expertise, and the programme is expanding to three more countries.

MDG 2 ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Education has long been acclaimed as a powerful engine for reducing hunger and poverty. Yet today, hunger and poverty not only persist, they stand in the way of the drive toward universal primary education because they contribute to poor health and compromise children's abilities to learn.

Lack of education and illiteracy of rural people undermines their potential to be productive and employable and affects their earning capacities. Rural areas lag far behind urban areas in attendance and completion of primary education, even though it is known that every year of schooling increases individual earning potential by about 10 percent. Farmers with just four years of education are 9 percent more productive than those with no education, and the number increases to 13 percent when combined with the availability of inputs such as fertilizers and farm machinery.

Recognizing the needs of rural areas. Current surveys indicate that of the 72 million children of primary school age who are not in school, 80 percent live in rural areas where poverty and hunger are most widespread. In addition, attendance and completion rates are lowest among rural children. The gender gap is present throughout, with girls being less likely to enroll, attend or complete their primary educations. Further, many poor rural families cannot afford school fees. They often depend on their children to handle menial tasks such as collecting fuelwood, weeding or caring for animals and thus are not inclined to send them to school.

Educating children requires holistic approach. While MDG 2's stated target is universal primary education, those involved in achieving the goal recognize the need for taking a holistic approach that also includes education for youth and adults. Ten years before the Millennium Summit, FAO was among participants in the World Conference on Education for All (EFA). EFA convened in Thailand to discuss issues of illiteracy and agreed to go beyond the primary education model that focuses only on children's reading, writing and arithmetic and add "skills for life" for all age groups. In other words, the goal was an educational curriculum that would introduce all – children, youth and adults – to topics such as agriculture, nutrition and health, providing the knowledge needed to live in dignity and to be productive. Skills for life give students the background to make informed life choices that can include issues such as how to grow crops, when to have children or how to survive a typhoon.

Today, with the progress in achieving universal primary education in many developing countries, it is necessary to be realistic as to what comes next. Children who complete primary education in rural areas most probably will never go to secondary or to higher education because those facilities simply do not exist in rural areas and the majority of rural families cannot afford to send their children to secondary schools in urban areas. This means that unless efforts are made to make Education for All a holistic exercise that includes all rural children, youths and adults, the chances are slim that the populations of poor rural areas will emerge as leaders or contribute to making the policy of their countries.

FAO APPROACH TO MDG 2

FAO is involved in programmes and activities that aim to reduce childhood malnutrition, improve the access of rural children to primary education, and provide education and skills training to youth and adults in rural areas. Internationally, FAO facilitates formulation of policies to include rural people in education, and the exchange of good practices and knowledge on education for rural people. Nationally, it stimulates cooperation between education and agriculture ministries in formulating strategies that combine rural development with EFA goals. FAO provides the type of technical support that addresses the basic education needs of rural people, with assistance in areas such as setting up school garden programmes that educate children in horticulture while also providing fresh, nutritious foods for school feeding programmes, or formulating education programmes and distributing teachers' manuals and learning materials relevant to rural life that cover issues such as biodiversity, food safety and the future of the forests.

ERP PARTNERSHIP AND TOOL KIT AVAILABLE TO ALL

Education for Rural People (ERP) is an FAO-led partnership of 60 countries, 200 NGOs, 30 universities and a host of on-the-ground programmes and local organizations as well as international organizations such as UNESCO. It offers education and skills training activities to all rural citizens, not just those involved directly in agriculture. In all, more than 350 partners participate in ERP activities that include research, policy, advocacy and field projects and bridge the efforts of those working in the education and agricultural sectors.

Under FAO's guidance, ERP has developed a tool kit – available to all online – that offers educational training materials for extensionists, rural teachers, instructors, trainers, parents and researchers in formal and non-formal education for rural people.

LITERACY COURSE INCLUDES SKILLS FOR LIFE

"When a hurricane came, my friends were afraid. But I had taken a literacy course and they taught me what to do when a storm comes. I knew that I had to cover my chickens. When the storm was over, my chickens were safe but my friends who had not gone to the literacy course had lost their chickens. Because of the literacy course, I know that I am a person. If I lose everything tomorrow I can start again because I have knowledge inside."

Female adult education student, Nicaragua

MDG 3 PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Although gender equality is an essential goal in and of itself, it is also increasingly recognized that the elimination of gender disparities is necessary for the achievement of all the MDGs.

MDG 3 on gender equality measures the ratio of girls to boys in education; the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; and the proportion of seats held by women in national legislatures. While these are undoubtedly important areas for women's and girls' empowerment, experience shows that empowerment necessitates a more comprehensive approach, one that includes strategies to improve women's access to credit, training, land rights. It also requires adequately resourced government services that are mandated to eliminate gender inequality.

Moreover, not enough emphasis has been placed on addressing gender issues in agriculture, or on understanding the role of rural women's informal and formal employment and the contribution they make to food security and the elimination of poverty. Despite the fact that in some parts of the world agriculture provides the vast majority of jobs for women, MDG 3 does not capture women's participation in the agricultural sector, which is mostly informal and non-waged. In sub-Saharan Africa for example, according to the ILO, almost 7 out of 10 women work in the agricultural sector, mainly in subsistence-level agriculture.

Both rural women and men make major contributions to agriculture and food security, but it is rural women who are usually more responsible for household food security and nutrition. Women and men contribute to biodiversity management with women most often being responsible for seed selection and planting of traditional crops. However, these traditional agricultural roles are changing due to globalization, external market demands and climate change and have to be monitored to ensure that gender equality remains an achievable goal.

Promoting gender equality makes good sense. FAO considers gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making as one its 11 key corporate objectives in agriculture and rural development for the next ten years. FAO has long worked to address the gender aspects of poverty and hunger within its programming to assist member countries in addressing inequality at the local, regional and national levels.

In a world in which rural people are increasingly impacted by global crises such as soaring food prices, climate change and rapid growth in the number of severe natural disasters, it is critical to target the more vulnerable members of communities.

FAO's work on gender equality entails ensuring that projects and programmes promote the equal participation of rural women and men in decision-making, equal ability to exercise their human rights, and equal access to and control over resources. FAO works with local institutions, civil society and government ministries to ensure that development policies and programmes are more gender and socially inclusive.

Sex-disaggregated data tell the true gender story. The impact of gender inequality on rural areas often remains hidden because of lack of reliable agricultural data that have been disaggregated by sex and age, and a lack of global databases that confirm the universality of the issues. To fill this gap, FAO has been developing training methodology and materials aimed at building the capacity of member countries to produce and use sex-disaggregated data and statistics.

FAO's programming focuses on the empowerment of the rural poor with a specific emphasis on promoting gender equality in the context of improving food security, and on agricultural and rural development, all of which, in turn, contribute to poverty reduction. To make this possible, FAO works with countries to raise their capacities to collect, analyze and re-tabulate data disaggregated by sex and age. FAO also works with other UN partners and with UN Country Teams to raise awareness and to address gender equality issues in the context of agriculture and rural development. With gender-sensitive qualitative and quantitative information, governments can formulate adequate agricultural development strategies, interventions and rural development plans that take into consideration the priorities and needs of rural women and men, and use them as the foundation for sustainable development in the agricultural and rural sector.

A FOCUS ON RURAL WOMEN IS ESSENTIAL FOR ATTAINING ALL MDGs

As the nations of the world focus on achieving the MDGs, global awareness of the relationship between achieving gender equality and the achieving of all of the MDGs is essential: MDG 1 – rural women's agricultural production and participation in the labour force contributes to reducing poverty and hunger and stimulating economic growth; MDG 2 and 4 – rural women's lack of access to education and assets contributes to high rates of child and infant mortality; MDG 5 – the highest number of maternal deaths is in the rural areas and relates to women's lack of access to reproductive health services; MDG 6 – gender inequality has a role in the spread of HIV and AIDS; and the roles of rural women in the daily management of natural resources and sustainable management of land, water and biodiversity relate to ensuring environmental stability.

DEALING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE: GENDER DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Men and women farmers in drought-prone districts have different perceptions and responses to extreme weather events, climatic variability and long-term climate changes, according to a study undertaken in a rural area of India. FAO and local Indian institutions in Andhra Pradesh, with the support of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), designed the research project Gender Sensitive Strategies for Adaptation to Climate Change: Drawing on Indian Farmers' Experiences. The research aimed to capture farmers' understanding of climate variability such as increased drought in the last 30 years, and their coping strategies.

With information gathered through qualitative analysis and quantitative surveys, focus groups and institutional and meteorological analyses, the project paints a fuller picture of gender specific-dimensions of risks and coping strategies and illustrates the importance of including gender analysis in preparing policies and future strategies for adaptation to climate change. The study found that women – the caretakers of family food security and health – are under increasing burdens while men are pressured by uncertain economic conditions. More specifically, the study found that:

- perceptions – farmers' perceptions of decreasing rains and unreliable weather in the last 30–40 years coincide with the meteorological records and data collected for the same time period in the region;
- impacts – men are more likely to report that weather changes impact farm production while women are more likely to report they affect health; and women (26.4%) are more likely than men (7.4%) to report that women are most affected by drought;
- livelihood strategies – men prefer to migrate further away in search of wage labour while women opt for finding wage labour closer to home when weather becomes no longer predictable;
- food scarcity – 17% of women report that women eat less as a coping strategy while 5% of men note that women eat less; however the whole family is affected by food insecurity, especially children;
- weather information – 21% of women but 47% of men have access to weather information, while government recommendations for changing crops or other agricultural information for coping with drought is directed only to male "farmers", as very few women are considered "farmers", a designation determined by land holdings.

The study found that gender is the greatest predictor of institutional support, greater than caste or size of land holding.

MDG 4 REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

Each year, nearly 11 million children die before they reach their fifth birthdays. This includes eight million children less than one year old. Many of these infants die from a handful of treatable infectious diseases such as diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria and measles. Yet the reality is that they would survive if their bodies and immune systems had not been weakened by hunger and malnutrition. Lack of essential vitamins and minerals increases the risk of dying from childhood diseases. Vitamin A deficiency, for example, increases the risk of death from diarrhoea, measles and malaria by 20–24 percent.

Improving health with complementary feeding. FAO has been particularly involved in efforts to improve complementary feeding for infants and young children – ensuring that foods given in addition to breast milk contain sufficient micronutrients and are consumed in the right quantities to enable the children to develop and grow well. In spite of the recognition that adequate and nutritious food intake for children is critical for breaking the poverty and hunger cycle, some 200 million children under five years suffer from acute or chronic symptoms of malnutrition and, in many regions of the developing world, more than a third of all children suffer from micronutrient deficiencies.

Reducing hunger and improving nutrition reduces child mortality. Analysis of recent trends confirms that child mortality has fallen fastest in countries making the most rapid progress in reducing hunger. Reducing the prevalence of child underweight by only five percentage points could save the lives of 30 percent of the children who die between ages one and five. According to the FAO publication *State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI 2005)*, a study conducted in 59 developing countries found the prevalence of underweight children under five to be as high as 45 percent. The study also found that previous success in reducing child mortality between 1966 and 1996 could be credited to improved nutrition and reduction in the proportion of underweight children.

Through its nutrition education programmes, FAO has shown that providing practical nutrition education through food preparation demonstrations, to mothers and caregivers is effective in improving the quality of children's diet, especially when linked with activities that improve household access to nutritious foods, such as home gardening and livestock raising.

RECIPES FOR LIFE: HEALTHY FOOD, HAPPY BABY, LIVELY FAMILY

Acute malnutrition can be easily prevented with exclusive breastfeeding up to age six months and then by complementing breastfeeding with nutritious foods up to age two years. Yet, often poor communities cannot afford to purchase the complementary foods their children need and must produce them locally. The FAO-UNICEF publication *Healthy Food, Happy Baby, Lively Family: Improved feeding practices and recipes for Afghan children and mothers* contains a series of guidelines and recipes meant to improve family knowledge of nutrition and provide practical ideas and skills for including more nutritious foods in family gardens and, in turn, children's meals. The recipes were developed based on field testing with mothers and children. The book is being distributed to government health workers, NGOs and others involved in areas of childhood nutrition and family food security. FAO is now expanding this programme and compiling recipe books for other countries, including Lao PDR and Cambodia.

FAO APPROACH TO MDG 4

FAO's goal is to support healthy childhoods and increase a child's chance of becoming a healthy, productive adult. With estimates that about five million child deaths each year can be traced to hunger and malnutrition, and recognizing that child undernutrition and mortality cannot be treated in a vacuum, FAO supports programmes to improve household food security to ensure that children have access to nutritionally adequate diets. FAO develops and implements programmes to assist poor households through community-centred initiatives, development and dissemination of training materials on household food security and nutrition, and development and implementation of nutrition education programmes for families and for national and local staffs. FAO also promotes a forum on household food security and community nutrition that includes informal meetings, expert consultations, networks and interactive Web sites to facilitate information exchange, collaboration and sharing of lessons learned. This includes producing and disseminating nutrition information to policy-makers and health professionals as well as those who make family food decisions.

MDG 5 IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Half a million women die of complications from pregnancy and childbirth each year, almost all of which could have been avoided if the women had access to proper nutrition, sanitation and health services. But, that's just part of the story. These deaths have an add-on effect that make the situation even more chilling.

Children who have lost their mothers are ten times more likely to die prematurely than those who have not. Malnourished women are far more likely to give birth to low birth weight babies, as are women whose own growth was stunted by malnutrition during their childhoods. This situation is often made worse by girls becoming pregnant before they have reached 18 years, as girls who become pregnant early stop growing and also limit the growth of their babies, thus contributing to the intergenerational cycle of growth restriction. In some developing countries, more than 30 percent of children have a low birth weight, which condemns them to a greatly increased risk of dying during infancy.

Almost all of these deaths – 99 percent – take place in the developing world where maternal mortality is typically 100–200 percent higher than in industrialized countries. This, of course, is closely related to the high incidence of hunger and malnutrition that exists in the developing world, and the fact that in the rural areas of these countries, women's heavy workloads combined with poor diets, early and frequent pregnancies take a toll on their overall health.

Through its overall efforts to improve nutrition and food security, FAO provides technical assistance, in the form of developing policies and programmes that recognize the need to improve public understanding of healthy diets and to raise levels of nutrition. FAO has identified several ways forward in combating seemingly intrinsic situations that threaten women's health. First there must be proactive efforts that directly target the improvement of women's nutritional status. But in parallel, there must be comprehensive measures aimed at improving the level of healthcare, education and social services available for women, strengthening women's legal positions and rights to own and inherit assets, integrating nutrition education into national school curricula, raising women's nutritional awareness, introducing labour-saving technologies that can lighten women's workloads, and working from the policy level toward ensuring greater food security.

WOOD ENERGY SURVEY METHODOLOGY CONTRIBUTES TO LIGHTENING WOMEN'S WORKLOADS

In the developing world, almost all fuelwood collection is done by women, a task that is time-consuming and, if not done in a sustainable manner, can contribute to deforestation. Woodfuel Integrated Supply/Demand Overview Mapping (WISDOM), a methodology to support strategic wood energy planning developed by FAO in collaboration with the Institute of Ecology of the National University of Mexico, has had the add-on effect of lightening women's workloads and improving family health and income while, at the same time, contributing to the sustainable use of the resource. Through WISDOM's site-specific surveys and capacity-building exercises, local communities are trained to manage their woodfuel resources sustainably which results in improved yields, less time for collection and reduced indoor pollution. The WISDOM methodology is being used both nationally and regionally to provide holistic views of the entire wood energy sector.

FAO APPROACH TO MDG 5

FAO promotes nutrition awareness among women, especially in rural areas, supports development and introduction of labour-saving technologies, and provides technical assistance to increase public awareness of healthy diets. FAO not only supports training of health and agricultural extension workers in nutrition education, it also works with respected community members including grandmothers, religious leaders, midwives and traditional healers, sharing up-to-date nutritional information they can factor into their work with communities. In addition, FAO supports national policies to provide better health care and increase household food security which, in turn, contributes to better maternal health.

MDG 6 COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Today, there are some 33 million people living with HIV and AIDS, eight million new active cases of tuberculosis each year and more than 300 million acute malaria attacks. Any efforts to combat these scourges must include recognition of the relationship between malnutrition and infectious diseases. As with other aspects of development, malnutrition is both a cause and a result of the spread of these and other diseases that are entrenched in the very fabric of life in the developing world.

AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis kill more than six million people a year, the vast majority in the rural areas of the world's poorest countries. AIDS was originally a mainly urban problem that affected more men than women. Now the epidemic has moved into rural areas and 95 percent of people living with – and dying of – HIV and AIDS are in developing countries. In fact, 143 million children under the age of 18 have lost one or both parents to AIDS or other causes in 93 developing countries.

Recognizing relationship between AIDS and agriculture.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on agriculture and food security was neglected for many years. Originally, the epidemic was perceived as a health issue and the potential role of the agricultural sector to assist in the prevention and mitigation of its impacts was not recognized. FAO led the work to identify and describe the interrelationships between AIDS and agriculture. This was done in a systematic way. FAO started by demonstrating the impacts of AIDS in selected rural settings. Based on this, it gradually moved towards identifying opportunities for agricultural policy interventions, elaborating specific responses, and pilot-testing promising interventions. As a result of this pioneering effort, it is now widely recognized that HIV/AIDS represents a major obstacle in achieving food security in today's global context.

All dimensions of food security – availability, stability, access to and utilization of food – are being adversely affected by AIDS. The epidemic is impoverishing rural households irreversibly, pushing many into destitution.

Countering zoonotic threats. People living in rural areas also face threats from zoonotic diseases such as Rift Valley fever (RVF), one of the most dangerous viral diseases spread from ruminants to humans by mosquitoes and other blood-feeding insects. In humans, it normally develops a mild form but a small percentage of cases can be quite severe. With outbreaks usually linked to rainfall that affects the mosquito populations, FAO and WHO monitor climatic data and use early warning systems to raise alerts and predict onsets of RVF epidemics in rural areas.

In rural areas of the developing world, millions of households are pushed deeper into hunger and poverty by the illness and death of breadwinners, not to mention the cost of support for orphans and other dependents left behind and of health care for those who are sick. Conversely, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are all diseases of hunger and malnutrition which alter people's behaviour and weaken their bodies and immune systems, greatly increasing their vulnerability.

Hunger and poverty drive men to migrate to crowded urban areas seeking work, women to turn to prostitution or other dangerous sexual relationships for income, and children to drop out of school, all of which greatly increase risk of infection. For example, young people with little or no education are twice as likely to contract HIV as those who have completed primary education, HIV patients who are malnourished are more vulnerable to opportunistic infections which accelerates the progression of the disease to full-blown AIDS and death; tuberculosis spreads quickly among poor people whose immune systems are weakened by malnutrition and are living in crowded conditions; and severe malaria attacks are more common and more often fatal for children and pregnant women who already suffer from anaemia or nutritional deficiencies.

FAO APPROACH TO MDG 6

Adequate nutrition makes an immense contribution in the fight against illness. Sustainable alleviation of malnutrition requires the integration of food security, public health and social protection at all levels. FAO has developed special support services such as Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools for HIV/AIDS orphans and nutrition programmes in rural areas to help mitigate the effects of AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

MILLIONS OF ORPHANS LEARN ABOUT AGRICULTURE AND LIFE IN FAO FIELD SCHOOL PROGRAMME

FAO, together with WFP and other partners, has developed Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS), a 12-month programme that follows the cropping cycle, to teach both life and agricultural skills to orphans and vulnerable children ages 12–18. The JFFLS take over where the parents left off, with practical teaching of good agricultural practices and entrepreneurship and life skills education. WFP provides food support with on-site hot meals and take-home portions while FAO develops the school curriculum and provides the agricultural expertise. Beyond classroom and in-field education, the JFFLS focus on building children's self-esteem as well as minimizing their vulnerability to destitution and coping strategies that would place them at risk of HIV or other diseases.

FROM HOSPITALIZATION TO HEALTHY GARDENS AND IMPROVED NUTRITION – THROUGH NUTRITION REHABILITATION UNITS

FAO provides technical assistance to household gardening projects in HIV-affected communities in many countries of Africa and Asia. For example, Nutrition Rehabilitation Units (NRUs) that target children suffering from malnutrition by providing emergency nutrition interventions through food and medical care, provide an entry point for training caretakers in vegetable or small-scale livestock production, as well as basic nutrition. Caretakers are given basic information on nutrition, health and sanitation, and they learn the linkages between nutrition and HIV and AIDS, and the importance of kitchen gardens and small-scale livestock production in better diets. They also take part in cooking demonstrations and are provided a take-home kit including vegetables seeds and basic tools so they can set up their own gardens. Combining the training with the provision of agricultural inputs enhances household access to vegetables throughout the year and contributes to improved diets. In turn, improved nutrition boosts the immune system, prolongs the progression of HIV to full-blown AIDS, increases effectiveness of medication (especially anti-retroviral drugs), and can help the body fight off some diseases and quicken recovery periods.

MDG 7 ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No segment of humanity depends more directly on environmental resources and ecosystem services than the rural poor. They make daily use of soil and water for farming and fishing, of forests for food, fuel and fodder, of the biodiversity of a wide range of plants and animals, both domesticated and wild. Their lives are interwoven with the surrounding environment in ways that make them both particularly valuable as custodians of environmental resources and particularly vulnerable to environmental degradation.

With 30 percent of the earth's land used for crops and pasture, another 30 percent covered by forests and a full 70 percent of abstracted fresh water used by agriculture, there is no question that agriculture needs to be at the centre of any discussion on natural resource management and global environmental objectives.

Although MDG 7 has a host of targets ranging from slowing deforestation to conserving biodiversity and from maintaining soil and water resources to protecting the world's fisheries, attaining each of them depends to some extent on the ability of countries to adapt to or mitigate the effects of climate change. Already, climate change has put its mark across the entire planet, but the threat looms more immediate in the agriculture sector, including forestry and fisheries, where it is significantly increasing production risk and rural vulnerability, particularly in regions that already suffer from chronic soil and water resource scarcity, high exposure to climatic extremes, poverty and hunger. In other words, developing countries will suffer the most from climate change yet their populations are the least able to adapt.

Recognizing that 75 percent of the world's poor live in the rural areas of developing countries brings this threat into a sharp focus. With population growth putting incredible stress on natural resources and changing climates affecting what people grow and what they eat, the spectre of hunger looms even larger. FAO estimates that agricultural production will need to grow by 70 percent by 2050 if it is to feed the world's population. Only about 10 percent of this increase will come from availability of new lands. An estimated 80 percent of future increases in crop production in developing countries will have to come from intensification, putting importance on the need for integrated systems with higher yields and sustainability. As has been seen time and again, hunger can drive people to plough under or overgraze fragile rangelands, cut their forest areas, or overfish their waters, threatening the very resources upon which they depend. Going even further, the promise of growing cash crops instead of subsistence crops has led farmers to give up their traditional crops in favour of exotic or high yielding commercial varieties. This replacement of local varieties is one of the major causes of genetic erosion.

PARALLEL EFFORTS SEEK FOOD SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

FAO, always in the forefront of efforts to attain global food security, is now leading parallel battles recognizing that the efforts to improve food security for a growing world population and contain climate change can be fought on the same front – the world's farming, forest and fishing communities.

Forests. Forests cover 30 percent of global land area, contain most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity and more carbon than the atmosphere. They are vital for rural livelihoods, biodiversity, climate mitigation, energy supply and soil and water protection. FAO promotes sustainable forest management by making its technical expertise in forestry accessible to member countries through field projects and maintaining a two-way flow of information between norm-setting and on-the-ground activities.

Fisheries. More than 500 million people depend directly on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods while 2.9 billion rely on fish for at least 15 percent of their animal protein needs. Yet, most of the socially and economically important marine fish stocks are fully exploited while it is estimated that another 19 percent are overexploited and eight percent are depleted. In striving to meet the challenge of securing the future of the world's fish stocks and achieving sustainable fisheries, FAO addresses the environmental, social and institutional problems arising from inside and outside fisheries through an ecosystem approach and facilitated coordinated action at national, regional and global levels.

Farmland. One out of three people on earth is in some way affected by land degradation which already affects nearly two billion hectares of land worldwide and, in turn, reduces productivity and disrupts vital ecosystem functions. FAO promotes sustainable land management to ensure optimal use of land resources which creates a win-win situation – increasing land productivity and, in turn, food security while at the same time enhancing carbon sequestration and ecosystem resilience which are necessary to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Water. Water use has been growing globally at more than twice the rate of human population increase. An increasing number of regions are reaching the limits of reliable water service delivery while at the same time, climate change is making rainfall increasingly unreliable. The scope of FAO's involvement with water resource management is extremely wide, from working with technologies that indicate precise application of water to the root zone, to development of livestock watering strategies and aquaculture, to offering technical and policy advice to member governments and regional groupings, particularly those having to reconcile water scarcity with agricultural development. FAO sees investment in improved water control and water management as a global priority.

BIODIVERSITY

Crops, farm animals, aquatic organisms, forest trees, micro-organisms and invertebrates – thousands of species and their genetic variability – make up the web of biodiversity in ecosystems that the world's food and agriculture production depends on. This biodiversity is indispensable, be it insects pollinating plants, microscopic bacteria needed for making cheese or the thousands of varieties of crops sustaining food security worldwide. Yet this biodiversity, and in particular genetic diversity, is being lost at an alarming rate. Erosion of these resources also erodes the potential of agriculture to adapt to new socio-economic and environmental conditions, such as population growth and climate change.

FAO, with its intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, has taken the lead in addressing the conservation and sustainable utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, for present and future generations. FAO leads country-driven assessments of the state of the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture, provides a permanent forum where governments discuss and agree on global policies relevant to biodiversity for food and agriculture, and supports countries in the implementation of action plans and other agreements that the Commission develops. In 2001, the Commission finalized the negotiations of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

NEW TOOLS ALLOW COUNTRIES TO MONITOR THEIR WATER SUPPLIES

Within the framework of AQUASTAT, FAO's global information system on water and agriculture, a two-year FAO-implemented project to strengthen national water monitoring capacities in Benin and Ethiopia developed a new water monitoring methodology that now can be applied in other countries. As a follow-up, FAO is implementing a new project to train participating countries in applying the new methodology. Building the capacity of countries to monitor their own water usage gives decision-makers the correct information to target programmes and interventions in rural areas with an emphasis on management of their scarce water resources.

INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

In just the last century, more than three-fourths of all known food crops slipped into extinction, irreversibly and irrecoverably lost. With them has gone all of the unique genetic traits they acquired over the millennia that allowed them to survive in their unique environmental conditions – traits that could provide crucial solutions to problems brought about by changing climates that alter growing conditions and degraded natural resources. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture adopted in 2001 after seven years of negotiations and signed by more than 123 countries is housed at FAO. It offers nations innovative approaches to conserve and share what remains of the world's crop genetic diversity through a multilateral system of access and benefit-sharing. The treaty recognizes the enormous contribution made by farmers over the millennia to the development and conservation of genetic resources. It also provides for their sharing in the benefits from the use of those resources in the form of grants and projects which are now a reality. In addition, the Treaty helps to adapt our crops to the new conditions created by climate change and promotes the maintenance of diverse farming systems and associated knowledge.

Transboundary pests and diseases. Changing climates are opening new avenues for the movement of animal and plant pests and diseases and invasive alien aquatic organisms, with warming temperatures allowing them to invade areas where they have not been able to survive in the past. Diseases such as West Nile Virus and African swine fever, formerly found only in tropical regions, now have spread internationally. In addition, other animal diseases and plant pests such as foot-and-mouth disease, avian influenza, and the wheat fungus UG99, are spreading between countries as a result of international trade and movement of people, animals and goods. FAO has taken the lead in efforts to combat transboundary diseases and pests, working in partnership with organizations such as the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to secure political commitments, and establish the kinds of public-private partnerships and regional and international coordination needed to establish efficient prevention and control strategies.

RINDERPEST ERADICATION: A TRANSBOUNDARY ORGANIZATION TO TACKLE A TRANSBOUNDARY PROBLEM

The FAO programme established in 1994 to eradicate rinderpest – known since the days of the Roman Empire as the “cattle plague” – represents one of the most successful endeavours in the history of veterinary epidemiology. Reference to the fatal disease can be found in reports of the famine that accompanied the fall of the Roman Empire, the conquest of Christian Europe by Charlemagne, the French Revolution, the impoverishment of Russia and the colonization of Africa. In the eighteenth century, it killed 200 million cattle in Western Europe and a nineteenth century epidemic killed up to 90 percent of all cattle in sub-Saharan Africa. Through its Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP), FAO provided a global platform to improve veterinary systems and diagnostic laboratories and promote collaborative vaccination campaigns. As a result, the last known rinderpest outbreak was in 2001, suggesting that global eradication has been achieved.

With the fast-growing livestock subsector representing 43 percent of the value of world agricultural output and supporting food security and livelihoods of over a billion people, it is critical to have a broad vision for efforts to fight animal diseases, especially those such as rinderpest that can easily cross borders.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION THROUGH AGRICULTURE

Effective adaptation measures can manage the extent and nature of the negative impacts of climate change. However, the degree of effectiveness will depend on adjustments and changes at every level – from community-based to national and international – and the capacity to adapt will vary significantly from country to country, community to community and, in particular, according to the level of development. In general, the preferred adaptation strategies will call for actions that have multiple economic and environmental benefits.

Agriculture including forestry and fisheries not only suffers the impact of climate change, it also contributes to climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) calculates that agriculture contributes 13.5 percent of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions, yet this number only includes actual agricultural production, not those activities directly related to agriculture, such as fertilizer manufacture and use, and land use change. Adding these "value chain" components brings livestock alone to 18 percent of the total. Yet adding another level to the scenario, agriculture also has the potential to be a part of the solution.

Agricultural land. Grasslands and fields can sequester greenhouse gasses that, at the same time, can improve soil fertility. Importantly, 70 percent of the mitigation potential could be realized through soil carbon sequestration in developing countries. In fact, the sequestration can be increased by increasing the soil's organic matter – of which carbon is the main component. Thus, by initiating or improving agricultural practices such as low tillage farming and organic management that increase soil organic matter through green manure, composting or mulching, and by using perennial crops to cover soil, the organic content will increase, resulting in better nutrient content, increased water retention capacity, better structure and improved fertility, eventually leading to higher yields and greater resilience.

Biofuel production. While increased use of biofuel is touted as a route for mitigating climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels and, in turn, their emission of greenhouse gasses, biofuel production also has the potential to change the fundamentals of the agricultural market system as well as the energy sector. With biofuel production set to increase by nearly 90 percent, reaching 192 billion litres by 2018, food production may face competition from the biofuel market with energy crops competing with food crops for land and water resources.

Forestry. Climate change and forests are intrinsically linked. Forests are already stressed by changes in global climate including higher mean annual temperatures, altered precipitation patterns and more frequent and extreme weather events. Increased temperatures and drought have led to more frequent outbreaks of pest infestations and more forest fires and increased alterations in populations of plant and animal species, severely affecting forest health and productivity. At the same time forests trap and store carbon dioxide, which gives them a major role in mitigating climate change. The world's forests and forest soils currently store more than 600 trillion tonnes of carbon, while destruction of forests adds almost 6 trillion tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year. Sustainable forest management can reduce deforestation and forest degradation and, coupled with forest restoration, can increase carbon sequestration.

FAO APPROACH TO MDG 7

The diverse array of goods and services provided by natural and agricultural ecosystems must be safeguarded in ways that allow the food needs of the population to be met but also must ensure maintenance of other environmental, social and economic services. FAO supports the integrated management of land, fisheries, forest and genetic resources through a variety of good practices such as conservation agriculture, organic agriculture, integrated pest management, sustainable land management, integrated crop and livestock systems, watershed and rangeland management, water conservation and responsible water-use practices, ecosystem approaches to fisheries and aquaculture, and protection of biodiversity. FAO also recommends employment of ecosystem management practices, in, for example, environments that are at risk and assists those living in marginal areas with livelihood support programmes.

FAO devotes considerable portions of its resources and efforts towards these objectives, which make up the centrepiece for addressing MDG 7. At the same time, FAO facilitates partnerships and collaboration among a range of actors representing communities, governments, the private sector and international institutions to enhance their contributions to MDG 7.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY (GEF) AND FAO: A STRATEGIC MATCH

GEF, an independent financial organization, is the largest funder of projects to improve the global environment. FAO has worked closely with GEF since its founding in 1991, and since 2006, has served as a GEF Executing Agency. This gives FAO direct access to all GEF resources and allows it to assist member countries in developing and implementing GEF projects that will help them meet increasingly complex environmental challenges. FAO also collaborates with the GEF Secretariat, contributing to the development of GEF focal area strategies. GEF has allocated more than US\$8.8 billion plus another more than US\$38 billion in co-financing for more than 2 400 projects in more than 165 developing countries and economies in transition.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES SPAWNS MEASURE TO COMBAT ILLEGAL FISHING

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, a set of guidelines for responsible fishing adopted by FAO's member countries in 1995, is a non-binding international instrument which promotes responsible fishing and long-term sustainability. An FAO study indicated that the code has become a basic policy reference in most countries. It also has spawned four international plans of action and, most recently, the 2009 FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This agreement recognizes that the most cost-effective way to combat IUU fishing is by raising the diligence and capacity of port states to identify and reject fishing boats that have illegal catches. The PSMA grew out of an expert consultation held in 2007 under the auspices of the code, followed by four sessions of a technical consultation. Voted on at the 2009 FAO Conference, it now is open for signature on its way to becoming a binding international instrument.

GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT (FRA) MONITORS PROGRESS TOWARD MDG 7

When FAO was established in 1945, its founders were concerned about the perceived lack of wood to reconstruct Europe after World War II and also felt that a wood industry could help poor countries develop economically, especially in the tropics. Thus, they established the FAO Forestry and Forest Products Division to assess the supply and demand of wood. As a result, FAO has produced a yearbook of forest products every year since and has undertaken assessments of the world's forest resources at 5-10 year intervals. Now, of course, the assessments monitor more than wood. The Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 (FRA 2010) is the most comprehensive forest assessment ever undertaken, with information collected and analysed from 233 countries and areas. FAO works with the countries themselves in the design and implementation. For FRA 2010, more than 900 contributors were involved in the collection and assessment of the data. FRA 2010 provides valuable information to national policy-makers and to international organizations on a series of themes, such as the biological diversity, health and vitality, protective, productive and socio-economic functions of forests, and legal policy and institutional frameworks guiding their conservation, management and use. FRA 2010 provides new information for the MDG 7 indicator on forests, and includes data collection on carbon stocks in forests for all countries, which can be used for climate change modeling.

MDG 8 DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

While MDGs 1–7 focus on objectives that must be attained largely through the efforts of developing countries, MDG 8 spells out the responsibility of the industrialized nations to assist in those efforts. FAO has undertaken an advocacy role in support of developing a global partnership for development that will help maintain a steady increase in agricultural trade and significant increases in development assistance offered to the basic social services and agricultural sector – including increases that will help sustain the benefits from agriculture in the longer term.

In working within its mandate to reduce hunger and improve agriculture and food security, FAO gives high importance to the special needs of least developed, land-locked and island nations. Its advocacy work is maximized through its working in partnership with national governments, UN and intergovernmental agencies, donor agencies, civil society and the private sector.

FAO was among the first in the UN system to recognize the impending food crisis when it began to emerge in 2006. It launched an Initiative on Soaring Food Prices 4–6 months before other agencies reacted to the situation. The result was that public awareness of the crisis was raised and resources were identified that helped some of the poorest countries avoid even worse disaster.

In 2008, after two decades of declining investment in agriculture, the World Bank World Development Report warned that the agriculture sector must be placed at the centre of the development agenda if the MDGs were to be realized. It also reported that agricultural growth is 2–4 times more likely to reduce rural poverty than growth in other economic sectors. The previous decades had seen the percentage of development assistance to agriculture fall from 17 percent in 1980 to under four percent in 2003.

Maintaining awareness of need for strengthened partnerships and investment in agriculture. Well in advance of the 2008 World Development Report, FAO already had committed to keeping the need for investment in agriculture and food security in the public consciousness, starting with convening the first World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996. This was followed by the World Food Summit: five years later, held in 2002, the 2008 High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, all focusing on drawing attention to the critical need for development support to agriculture and food security.

The 2009 World Summit on Food Security adopted the five principles for sustainable global food security that included, among other priorities, to invest in country-owned plans and strengthen partnerships in agriculture, food security and nutrition and to foster strategic coordination and improve food security governance at national, regional and global level. In particular, the Summit stressed the need to support the implementation of the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which as a central component of the evolving Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition ...“ constitutes the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings”.

Supporting developing countries in global trade. As globalization of trade increases, the importance of supporting developing countries as they build their trade infrastructure becomes more evident. This means creating an open, fair and rules-based multilateral trading system that is cognizant of the need to support food and agricultural trade and trade policies that are conducive to food security. FAO is deeply involved in these efforts, not only through the more visible programmes and instruments such as Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention, but also through the Organization-wide efforts to mobilize financial support and provide assistance to raise productivity in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and to strengthen supply-side capability and build infrastructures.

FAO APPROACH TO MDG 8

FAO has ongoing activities with its member countries to develop national and regional programmes for food security. FAO also collects, assesses and makes available data on agriculture, fisheries, commodities, nutrition and sustainable development and advises governments and rural communities on management and use of agricultural information ranging from e-learning to tool kits to guidelines and best practices.

ACHIEVEMENT FUND SPEEDS PROGRESS TO MDGs

The MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) was established to speed up progress toward the MDGs and to improve aid effectiveness. The MDG-F supports efforts that build on the collective strength of the UN system by bringing together several agencies to collaborate in addressing issues that cut across the mandates of individual organizations. In all of FAO's country programmes, the MDG-F works through the UN and with dozens of governmental and non-governmental organizations ranging from farmers' associations to national alliances and ministries, in order to ensure that development processes are owned and driven locally. MDG-F was established in December 2006 with a US\$710 million grant from the Spanish Government to the UN system. FAO has a role in 74 FAO-approved projects, out of which 64 are already operational, for a total budget of US\$82.9 million.

HAITI: FAO, IFAD AND WFP WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS RECOVERY

In January 2010, a devastating earthquake left more than 200 000 dead and millions hungry and homeless in Haiti. In the aftermath of the catastrophe, the three Rome-based UN food agencies, FAO, IFAD and WFP, geared up to strengthen their partnership in the country. The agencies, in collaboration with other donors and financial institutions, agreed to combine their unique resources and expertise to deliver coordinated assistance to the Government of Haiti in the implementation of a long-term recovery strategy. The strategy focuses efforts on rural development and growth in the agricultural sector, to ensure Haiti's long-term food security.

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AGAINST HUNGER

The International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) was created on the recommendation of the World Food Summit in 2003 by FAO and three other Rome-based agencies – IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International. A global partnership with the aim of promoting national-level policy dialogue in the fight against hunger, the IAAH brings together local, national and international institutions, and has facilitated the establishment of National Alliances Against Hunger in 34 countries on five continents. While the IAAH works at global levels, the National Alliances work within their countries to bring together civil society, the private sector and governments to build political will to cut hunger and malnutrition.

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

As farm and food processing systems become more sophisticated and food trade becomes more global to meet the food demand of expanding populations, the need for systems to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in the food trade has become more urgent. The Codex Alimentarius Commission, founded by FAO and WHO, is the UN body that assumes that role. From determining how much residue of a pesticide can remain on a crop when it is harvested and the food additives that may be used to describing the quality characteristics of fresh fruits and vegetables, the Codex Alimentarius Commission is the international organization charged with setting international food standards, codes of practice and guidelines to protect consumers and ensure fair food trade. Codex has more than 180 Member Nations that work together in open debates through some 20 international scientific committees. Codex does not make laws, it establishes voluntary standards that member governments can use as guides to set their own national regulations and food laws. WTO relies on Codex standards, using them as the benchmark for determining trade disputes. This makes it critical for countries that want to import or export food to make sure their laws are compatible with Codex standards.

PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES: WORKING TOGETHER TO OVERCOME CONSTRAINTS

Pacific Island Countries (PIC) face both regional and country-specific constraints, opportunities and gaps. Remoteness and logistical constraints, narrow natural resource bases and the drain on resources caused by frequent natural calamities has meant that economic growth in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) has generally been sluggish, with up to a quarter of the region's population classified as poor. The PIC Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (FSSLP), implemented jointly by FAO, IFAD and the PICs, aims to contribute to improving the food security of poor and vulnerable populations, especially women and youth, in the PICs through: improved availability of and access to nutritious food; sustainable increase in crop and livestock production and productivity including fisheries and (agro)-forestry; better access of vulnerable communities, especially households in remote locations and women, to sustainable agricultural services, inputs and markets, through improved infrastructure and delivery systems; and strengthened capacities, enhanced policies and strategic actions at country and regional levels to address immediate and long-term food security and trade challenges. PICs provide an important opportunity for partnership building and coordination in accordance with the Paris and Pacific Declarations on improving aid effectiveness.

GLOBAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM: MAKING AID MORE PREDICTABLE

GAFSP, a multidonor financial facility administered by the World Bank, is one key instrument to bring to fruition the commitments made in the L'Aquila and G20 Pittsburg Summits to address the underfunding of country and regional agriculture and food security investment plans and to make aid more predictable in the fight against hunger and poverty. GAFSP was launched in April 2010 with initial pledges totalling US\$880 million. FAO is working with a number of low-income countries, supporting their preparation of investment strategies and plans, for which funding gaps have potential to be financed by the GAFSP, which is designed to provide grants, loan and equity investments aimed at raising agricultural productivity, linking farmers to markets, reducing risk and vulnerability, improving non-farm rural livelihoods, and providing technical assistance and capacity development.

PAYMENTS TO OFFSET CARBON HELP PROTECT WORLD'S FORESTS

An international plan to allow countries and private companies to offset their carbon emissions by paying poorer nations to preserve their forests represents an unprecedented display of cooperation between developed and developing countries. The UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) supports the international dialogue and negotiations through technical support and capacity building. UN-REDD also supports developing countries in preparing and implementing national REDD strategies and mechanisms. FAO, UNDP and UNEP are working in partnership to build developing countries' capacities for data collection and for monitoring, both of which are essential for the mechanism to work. It is estimated that payments for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions could reach US\$30 billion a year. Not only would the world's forests be better protected with this arrangement, the new funds could also support development initiatives, conserve biodiversity and secure vital ecosystem services.

CONCLUSION

When the UN Millennium Summit established the eight Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000, nothing of such a magnitude had ever been attempted. At the beginning, all the UN agencies faced the same 15-year blank slate, with the same unanswered questions about how to use their considerable expertise to help the countries achieve these goals. For the UN, it was necessary to move into many uncharted areas – set targets and markers, choose methodologies for interpreting data, and assign reporting responsibilities in a way that would bring all of the UN family together to pursue this unprecedented common development agenda.

Now, ten years into the process, the vision has been focused and the pursuit of the MDGs has proven a unifying factor for the UN. This report itself illustrates how deep and how broad the commitment has been by the UN in general and FAO in particular.

FAO directs over half of its total effort toward helping countries achieve MDG 1 to reduce poverty and hunger, and another fifth of its effort toward achieving MDG 7, ensuring environmental sustainability. But there is no question that FAO views the eight separate goals as the threads of the same tapestry. When FAO initially assigned focal points for each of the MDGs, they undertook a massive mapping exercise that showed the linkages among the eight goals across the Organization.

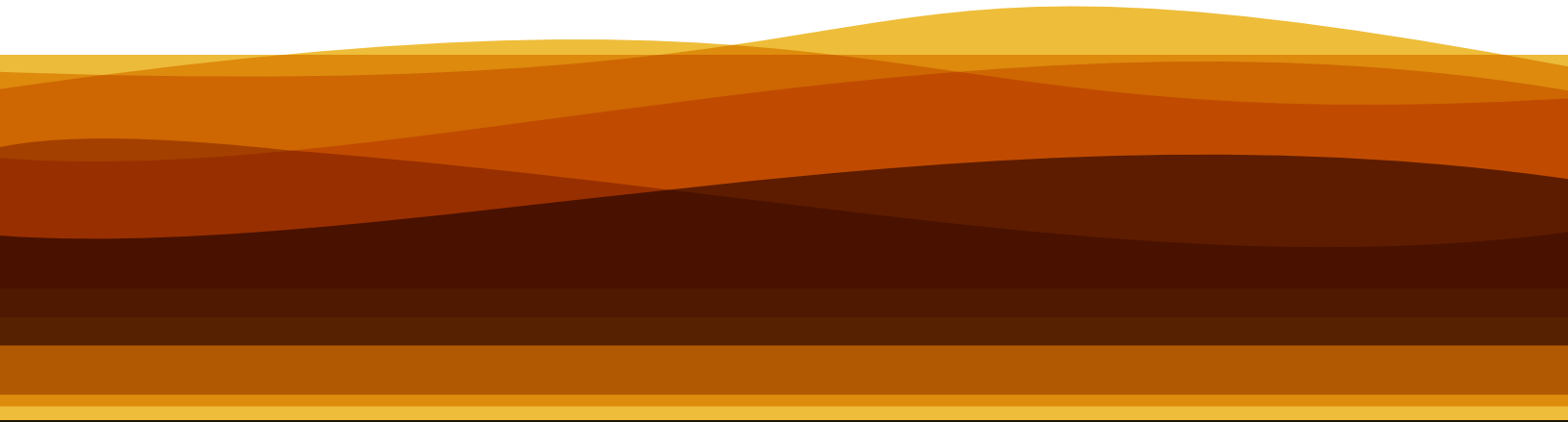
In 2005, five years into the process, FAO established an internal mechanism to ensure interdisciplinary support to FAO's contribution to all the MDGs. In 2006, FAO established a High-Level External Committee on Millennium Development Goals to advise the Director-General on the relevance and impact of FAO's programmes for meeting MDG targets. The committee placed special emphasis on MDG 1 and MDG 7 but recognized the importance of all eight goals. FAO also has made concerted efforts to identify and work with partners who can provide complementary areas of expertise and increase the efficiency and impact of its work.

Now, according to the UN Secretary-General's report *Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015* we know that a number of countries have achieved major successes in their efforts to reach the goals, including some of the world's poorest. Recognizing that in the last ten years our world has had to deal with unexpected economic and humanitarian crises brought on natural and human-made disasters, these successes clearly demonstrate that with the right policies, investments and international support, the MDGs are achievable.

The number of hungry people in the world recently reached an historic high. This makes the Millennium Development Goal 1 – eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – one of the worst performing of all the goals. However, there are some encouraging signs at regional and national level and after decades of implementation experience we can affirm that making rapid and sustainable gains in reducing undernutrition and hunger is possible. This is of utmost importance in our endeavour to achieve the MDGs by 2015, as reducing hunger and undernutrition is critical to the success of the other MDGs.

With only five years to go, the operative word is "accelerate" – it is critical to speed up interventions, speed up enactment of supportive policies, speed up the scaling up of successes and the dissemination of lessons learned in this global exercise. For sure, FAO has now mainstreamed and internalized its MDG responsibility, sharpened its focus on what needs to be done, joined with partners and is poised to make whatever efforts are necessary in the next five years to support its members in their efforts to reach their goals.





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