

Updates on Global and Regional Initiatives and Linkages with the Committee on World Food Security

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Good morning everybody,

It is with great pleasure that I'm here to report on the work of the High Level Task Force. I was here last year to do the same and my objective today is to offer an update over the last year. The High Level Task Force is a system wide coordination mechanism that involves United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, the World Trade Organization and the OECD – 22 different bodies that are brought together under the chairmanship of the United Nations Secretary-General, with the Director-General of FAO as the vice chair. It was set up in response to the rising food prices of 2008 with the objective of trying to make sure that the whole of the United Nations system works in a coordinated way in supporting countries and regional bodies as they seek to tackle food insecurity.

One of the first tasks of the High Level Task Force was to establish a common approach to food security, the Comprehensive Framework for Action. This was updated in 2010, and I presented the update to the chairman this time last year. The update focuses on food and nutrition security from a perspective of human rights. It is people-based and rights-based. It reflects the principles of the Summit on World Food Security of 2009: Country leadership, a comprehensive approach, coordination and increased resources.

It very much focuses on the four dimensions of food and nutrition security:

- **Availability** of all agricultural produce, including grains, pulses, vegetables, fruits, livestock and livestock products, fish and forest products.

- Year-round **access** to nutritious food in local markets at an affordable price, with well-developed mechanisms to ensure access, particularly social protection and safety nets.
- **Utilization**, the third dimension, with its focus on food and nutrients and energy for healthy life at all phases.
- And **stability**, particularly trying to make sure that food supplies are stable and that prices also are stable and not volatile.

These four dimensions of food security, of availability, access, utilization and stability, are at the heart of all efforts to increase food security. But I have to say that in the experience of our High Level Task Force, they are often not treated together. Doing so requires a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach, with food security being taken on as a national priority and involving all ministries, with the ministry of agriculture at the center. Within our comprehensive approach we put smallholder farmers, particularly women farmers, at the center, with a special focus on pastoralists, fishers and agricultural laborers.

During the last three years we have intensified support for coordination by different parts of our system at country level, trying to ensure that whether it is working with governments or working with regional bodies, when you talk to different parts of the UN system or the World Bank or the IMF, you get a similar overall approach and a consistent policy response and support.

We put special emphasis on nutrition, encouraging countries who want to scale up nutrition to come together in a movement, called the SUN movement, which you will hear about shortly from the Standing Committee on Nutrition.

We have also put special emphasis on the way on which our United Nations system works in protracted crises, trying to end the divide between humanitarian action and longer term development. We focus on encouraging resilience that saves lives and livelihoods, that leads to quick recovery from crisis, and also to long-term management of arid and semi-arid lands and support for communities whose livelihoods are endangered.

This focus on resilience in protracted crises which was brought up last year in the Committee on Food Security has been a major emphasis in our work and has been carried forward in response to the current crisis in the Horn of Africa. Obviously it is not easy but with the African Union and IGAD at

the center, with strong support from the African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, and the leadership of countries in the region, that we saw demonstrated in recent meetings, this emphasis on resilience with a rights-based approach, seems to be gaining traction and should hopefully be practiced in more protracted crises in the future.

Another area of emphasis in the last year has been to encourage more private sector engagement in food security, taking account of the fact that there is a business element to all parts of agriculture and food. In seeking to engage with the private sector, governments want to do so in a principled way that has farmers' organizations at the center, and involves civil society and rights-based organizations at all times. We have seen this developed particularly in the African region, with the African Union and NEPAD developing an Africa Growth and Investment Task Force, working in conjunction with the World Economic Forum. Similar approaches are seen in Indonesia, Mexico and Vietnam. And this, we believe, offers promise for multi-stakeholder approaches to getting greater investment in food security.

The last area of attention of the High Level Task Force that I would like to highlight now is the work on the intersection between water, food, energy, environment, land and climate. Not so much dealing with these issues at the level of policy discussions and global conferences, though these are hugely important particularly next year in Rio+20, but more trying to ensure that governance of these combinations of resources at the national and local level pays attention to the necessary trade-offs if people and their rights are at the center of discussions. We look forward to working across the United Nations system on this nexus.

We heard an excellent count just now of what has been happening in the G20 context and the AFSI context and I am very pleased to report to there has been good coordination between UN system's agencies and the international financial institutions across these processes, again with the interest of governments and particularly with their people right at the center.

I am pleased to announce today that the High Level Task Force Comprehensive Framework for Action is now available in a short summary version in English, French and Spanish, with other languages coming shortly. It is accompanied by a two page overview. The objective is to try to

make certain that everybody has a chance to understand the comprehensive approach. I hope you will enjoy reading it. I personally greatly enjoyed working with the different parts of the UN system to develop it, because it puts much more emphasis on key principles and on clear outcomes, bringing all the different elements of food and nutrition security together in one document. It gives me always pleasure to present these documents to the Chair of the Committee on World Food Security because this is the ultimate governance authority for food security and whatever we do is designed to facilitate you in your work as nations, as civil society, as private actors, as research bodies in contributing to food and nutrition security for all.

Thank you very much.