

# FAO AND THE EIGHT MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

- 2: Achieve universal primary education
- 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4: Reduce child mortality
- 5: Improve maternal health
- 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8: Develop a global partnership for development

### MDG 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. It has three targets:

- between 1990 and 2015 halve the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day;

- achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and
- between 1990 and 2015, halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

The number of hungry people in the world is currently at an historic high. FAO estimates

that there were 1.02 billion undernourished individuals in 2009. Hunger has increased not as a result of poor harvests but because of high food prices, lower incomes and increasing unemployment due to the economic crisis. Some developing countries, however, have made impressive gains in achieving their hunger-related targets.

## WHAT FAO IS DOING

FAO focuses on poverty and hunger reduction through a twin-track approach:

- improving agricultural productivity and incomes and promoting better nutritional practices at all levels; and
- promoting programmes that enhance direct and immediate access to food by the neediest.

FAO's programmes contribute to all dimensions of food security: availability, access, stability and utilization of safe and nutritious food. FAO helps developing countries to improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices, to sustainably manage their forest, fisheries and natural resources and ensure good nutrition for all.

### Key facts

In 2009 about 1.02 billion people were estimated to be chronically deprived of adequate food.

According to *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*, the number of undernourished people increased by 105 million from 2008 to 2009.

The Asia and Pacific region were home to over half the world's population and nearly two-thirds of the world's hungry people.

The World Bank has indicated that higher food prices and the economic crisis were expected to push as many as 100 million more people into poverty in 2008.

In spite of the deteriorating situation, close to 40 developing countries had either reached the MDG 1 hunger reduction target by 2009, or experienced very low levels of hunger.

## Field activities

FAO's activities in the field deliver practical assistance to fight hunger. In 2009, FAO's field programme provided technical assistance and ran emergency and rehabilitation operations worth US\$715 million. The available budget at the start of 2010 was over US\$1.5 billion. FAO field activities cover a wide range from controlling animal or plant diseases across

whole countries or regions, to renovation of village grain storage to providing policy and capacity building assistance.

FAO's field programme fills critical gaps in rural development and has a catalytic effect such as attracting support from partners. It promotes good agricultural practices.

FAO helps developing countries to identify and plan effective and sustainable programmes and projects for funding by international financing institutions. Such funding amounts to US\$3 billion annually.



Experimenting with new wheat varieties.  
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## Food security programmes

Since 1995, pilot programmes under the Special Programme for Food Security have been launched in 106 countries. Of the US\$890 million raised for these pilots, more than half has been provided by the countries themselves and the balance by donors. Learning from the experiences of the SPFS and other similar programmes, since 2001 FAO is providing technical assistance to national governments and Regional Economic Integration

Organizations in designing and implementing nationally- and regionally-owned large scale programmes for food security (NPFS/RPFS) that aim to achieve national, regional and global targets of hunger reduction, in particular the MDG1 targets. As of April 2010, 18 NPFS and 4 RPFS are under implementation.

[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)



## Emergencies

In emergency response and rehabilitation efforts, FAO's expertise in farming, livestock, fisheries and forestry is crucial. FAO works quickly to restore agricultural production, strengthen the survival strategies of those affected, and enable people to reduce their dependence on food aid.

In 2008, FAO operated 755 emergency projects in 114 countries or regions.

FAO also plays a crucial role in prevention, preparedness and early warning. FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) draws attention to current

and potential emergencies. Disaster risk reduction and contingency planning programmes help countries to minimize the impact of disasters on the food and livelihood security of affected populations.

## Global action

**Food summits:** Since 1996 FAO has convened three world summits to encourage commitments from its member countries to fight hunger. In 1996, nations pledged to eradicate hunger and committed themselves to a basic target: halve the number of undernourished people by 2015. This was reaffirmed in 2002 at the World Food Summit: five years later. In November 2009 world leaders met at FAO headquarters at the World Summit on Food Security and renewed commitments based on the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security. These include focusing on country-led and country-owned plans, fostering strengthened coordination, designing actions pertaining to a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security, ensuring a strong role for the multilateral system, and facilitating commitment by all partners to investment in agriculture, food security and nutrition.

### Committee on World Food Security (CFS):

The CFS was established in 1974 as an intergovernmental body to serve as a forum in the United Nations System to review food security issues. Over the last few years in the wake of rising food prices and the global economic and financial crisis, there has been renewed political attention given to world food security and its governance with the intention to address both the immediate effects as well as the long term factors that cause hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. In order to address this challenge, in 2009 the CFS underwent a reform process which aimed to make it the foremost, inclusive platform for different stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.

**Right to food:** FAO has led the way in developing the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of right to food in

the context of national food security. It has also been part of the negotiation towards their adoption. FAO is supporting the implementation of these guidelines in several countries.

### Food security and early warning information:

In a rapidly changing global food security context, the demand for relevant, accurate and timely information has become critical. FAO continues to support member countries in generating more reliable and detailed information on the nature of food security and malnutrition in vulnerable populations. This is done through the provision of global information products, such as early warning, support to strengthen national food and agricultural statistics, and periodic reports of the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI).



**Delegates arrive at the World Summit on Food Security in Rome.**  
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## Recent initiatives

- The **Initiative on Soaring Food Prices** is FAO's response to the food emergency of 2007–2008. Although international prices have come down from their record highs in 2008, they have yet to drop to their levels before the food crisis. FAO is engaged in over 90 countries, helping to boost food production through the supply of improved seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs as well as technical assistance.
- The **High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis** which was established by the United Nations in 2008, developed a global strategy and action plan called the Comprehensive Framework for Action. FAO has a leading role in the framework's goal to increase smallholder farmers' food production in sustainable ways.