Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Issues Paper for the informal consultation with stakeholders of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to be held on 11th February 2013

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Summary of Key Messages

1. On the characteristics of the Post-2015 development framework:

- **Ensure the new development framework is concise and easily understood.** The Post-2015 development framework must be simple, transparent, measurable and easy to communicate. There is wide support for continuing with a limited number of concrete, quantitative, time bound goals, targets and associated indicators, such as those included in the Secretary General's 'Zero Hunger Challenge'.
- **The framework must be inclusive and goals must be linked to practical action.** While building on the existing MDG framework, the Post-2015 development framework must apply to all, but must also allow different countries (or groups of countries) to define their objectives, based on their own circumstances. The development goals should be linked to implementation strategies that address the complex underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- **A comprehensive approach to the eradication of food insecurity and malnutrition is needed.** Positive action in agriculture, food and nutrition are intimately linked with and contribute directly to issues of poverty, health, water and sanitation, maternal and child care, environmental sustainability, climate change, resilience and equity. Hence, future goals within the new development framework must reflect the interconnectedness and multi-disciplinary nature of underlying issues and solutions towards the realization of food security and good nutrition for all.

2. Drivers of the new development framework:

- **Political commitment and good governance at all levels** are key to reducing food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition. This should be fostered through enhanced national ownership, more explicit rights-based approaches, and strengthened, time-bound, accountability frameworks.
- **Importance of nutrition.** Goals and action needed to address nutrition concerns must be strengthened, emphasizing the importance of a balanced diet, in addition to dietary energy consumption (a measure of the current hunger reduction goal), in particular for women of reproductive age, infants and young children. The dual challenge of addressing undernutrition, as well as overweight and obesity, needs to be addressed. Key action areas include dealing with unsustainable food systems, lack of access to safe drinking water, poor hygiene and sanitation, and support for women in all contexts to breastfeed their infants during the first six months.
- **Sustainable increases in food production**. A rapidly growing and more affluent world population is increasing the demand for food commodities. Sustainable growth and diversification of food production, with specific attention to productivity of small-scale producers, is needed within a context of rapid urbanization, climate change, dwindling natural resources, and increasing competition for those resources.
- **Building sustainable food systems.** Food production should be compatible with sustainable management of natural resources and eco-systems. One third of food produced globally is wasted or lost to spoilage, damage and other causes. Making the most of what is available – in particular local biodiversity and using inputs, such as water, more efficiently – and what we already harvest and produce, will make it much easier to feed and employ a growing population and to minimize the impact on ecosystems.
- **Investing to protect the most vulnerable.** Investments in social protection are key to ensuring support to the most vulnerable, including through targeted transfers and other interventions, while enhancing human development and laying the basis for long term growth.

Towards a Post-2015 Development Agenda

Structures and Process

In 2000, leaders of the world community set forth a shared vision for development in the form of the Millennium Declaration, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that followed provided milestones for global and national development efforts. With the MDGs due to expire in 2015, there is increasing attention on what should follow - referred to here as the 'Post-2015 Development Agenda'.

At the request of the Member States, through the UNGA, the Secretary-General (SG) has established structures and processes to support recommendations on the Post--2015 Development Agenda. Important elements of this include the UN System Task Team (UNTT) and a High-Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom.

The task of the UNTT is to coordinate system-wide preparations and to propose a unified vision and road map for the definition of a UN development agenda in close consultation with Member Countries beyond the year 2015[1]. The HLP - comprised of representatives of Member Countries, civil society and the private sector - has been asked to advise, provide recommendations and submit a report to the Secretary-General in May 2013. This will inform the SG's subsequent report to the 68th Session of the General Assembly in September 2013.

The UN-led Thematic Consultations

In support of the preparation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, a number of national, regional and global consultations have been organized. This includes eleven global thematic dialogues. These provide space for a diverse range of stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) to voice their expert opinions, proposals, analysis and aspirations for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The outputs of the thematic consultations will inform and influence the discussions leading up to the UN General Assembly on the Post-2015 agenda in September 2013.

FAO and WFP are co-leading the global thematic consultation on '*Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition*'[2] (HFSN), in close collaboration with IFAD, Bioversity International, and the Special Representative of the SG for Food Security and Nutrition. In line with the other thematic consultations, the objectives are to identify possible building blocks for the Post-2015 agenda, drawing from: lessons learnt from the design and implementation of relevant development goals (including the MDGs); emerging trends and challenges; the outcomes of other on-going processes; globally agreed policies and strategies; and preliminary approaches to monitoring implementation.

The global thematic consultation on HFSN is organized in three stages:

1. A world-wide on-line consultation, jointly moderated by FAO and WFP and hosted by the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum)[3];
2. An FAO-WFP convened informal consultation with stakeholders of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), to be held the 11th of February 2013; and

[1] The UNTT report ''*Realizing the Future We Want For All*'' serves as a key reference for the overall process.

[2] Other thematic consultations are on Inequalities, Health, Education, Growth and employment, Environmental sustainability, Governance, Conflict and fragility, Population dynamics, Energy, and Water and Sanitation. For further information, consult: www.worldwewant2015.org

[3] The FAO/WFP-led on-line thematic consultation ran between 19 November 2012 and 10 January 2013. This elicited over 270 contributions from a diverse set of respondents including views from governments, NGOs and CSOs, academia, professional bodies and interest groups, the private sector and individuals. The geographical scope was wide, drawing from all countries in most of the regions, north and south, developed and developing.

3. A high level consultation, hosted by the Governments of Spain and Colombia, to be held in Madrid in early April 2013.

This issues paper is designed to facilitate the second phase: the consultation hosted by FAO and WFP with stakeholders from the CFS. This second consultation will refine the emerging issues and suggest preliminary messages on hunger, food security and nutrition drawn from a wide group of stakeholders in support of the new Post-2015 framework.

This paper synthesizes contributions from a number of sources. It builds upon several global statements that provide recommendations on ending hunger and ensuring food and nutrition security. This includes, among others, the 2009 L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, the 2009 Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) developed by the UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (2010), the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) endorsed by the CFS in 2012, and various statements in the context of the Rio+20 Summit, including the SG's "Zero Hunger Challenge". It draws from the FAO-WFP facilitated on-line consultation[4], which brought up additional views and evidence from research, academia and think tanks, and position papers prepared by civil society, professional bodies, UN agencies and the private sector, some of which in the specific context of the emerging Post-2015 agenda. All of the above provide contemporary concerns and specific reflections useful to the design of the Post-2015 agenda.

The organization of the report follows the structure of the guidance provided by the UN Development Group (UNDG) to the various Global Thematic Consultations, namely to:

- Compile lessons learned from the design and implementation of the MDGs
- Identify trends, challenges and future scenarios which need to be taken into account when defining the Post-2015 framework
- Consider the outcomes of other on-going and recently completed processes - including lessons from sectoral goals, policies and strategies
- Identify possible building blocks for the Post-2015 agenda
- Consider preliminary elements for monitoring of implementation

This report highlights key issues, on which public and policy attention may be most usefully focused, amongst the many facets of hunger, food security and nutrition. Areas of consensus have been highlighted, and areas for further debate flagged. This succinct summary is offered as an input to the informal discussion by the stakeholders of the CFS.

Lessons learned from the current MDG process[5]

As we examine what a Post-2015 framework may look like, a useful starting point are the current MDGs, and the role they have played. Existing literature and the on-line consultation on HFSN reiterates several elements of the wider debate on the MDGs, and highlights sector-specific lessons.

The various sources and opinions agree on the overall value and importance of the MDGs. The MDGs have served as an important catalyst to encourage governments and the development community to focus support on improvements in human development and poverty reduction, not solely economic growth, including the welcome and necessary attention to hunger and malnutrition.

The MDGs have raised awareness amongst politicians, the public, media and business, and have mobilized action across the world in support of poverty reduction and human development. They have amplified the global conversation about development, defined its terms and created a common

[4] Full proceedings of the on-line consultation (400+ pages) can be found under: www.fao.org/fsnforum/post2015/

[5] It is noted that these lessons learned apply largely to the overall MDG framework and process and not specifically to those MDGs most relevant to hunger, food security and nutrition.

vision. There is evidence that they succeeded in getting economically advanced countries to pay more attention to poor nations. It is generally accepted that this has resulted in greater development resource commitments and focused flows to countries in greatest need. Furthermore, there has been a more explicit focus on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger as the overarching objective of development assistance policies.

The great appeal of the MDGs is seen as lying in their concise and clear agenda, a simple structure and a framework for monitoring progress and highlighting areas of achievement. The MDGs go beyond a statement of general objectives and define quantitative and time-bound targets, so progress can be measured and gaps identified. There is wide support for these strengths to be carried through to any next set of development goals. Therefore a *new development framework must be simple, transparent, measurable and easy-to-communicate.*

The acknowledged strengths are tempered by longstanding critiques concerning a number of apparent design flaws and gaps. The most consistent observations made through various research, position papers and the on-line consultation include:

(1) The separation into stand-alone targets on poverty, hunger, nutrition, health, water and education – which reflects the work of the different UN agencies – by and large has contributed to fragmented implementation of the goals, and which has discouraged coordinated, multi-sectoral approaches needed to deliver greater and more sustainable improvements in food security and nutrition. The use of a high-level integrated framework illustrating the roles of different sectors can facilitate coordinated, multi-sectoral actions—all of which are necessary, but none alone are sufficient to achieve food security and nutrition goals.

(2) A concern that the MDGs specify the ends, but not the means. *We could have done better, if the development agenda had been linked to implementation strategies right from the start.* As they are currently conceived, the MDGs address the symptoms of poverty and underdevelopment, but mostly ignore the deeper causes. This can lead to an over- focus on the aid-based alleviation of the symptoms, rather than sustainable, longer-term development solutions.

(3) It is recognized that the MDG process could have been more successful with greater national ownership and accountability, while embedding the goals and targets within a rights-based approach. Civil society, in particular, has been vocal in calls for adopting a rights-based approach to future development goals, where *governments should adopt a legislative framework in line with the realization of economic and social rights, including the right to food.*

(4) The new development framework should not be limited to developing countries. There is an emerging consensus that *we need a global development agenda that applies to all, but which will allow different countries (or groups of countries) to adapt their strategies, based on their own circumstances*. A global approach is a pre-requisite for substantive progress on global challenges such as sustainable development and climate change.

(5) The MDGs were criticized, in particular during the e-consultation, for focusing on outcomes and not adequately *addressing underlying social issues*. *Gender* equality, including improved targeting and empowerment of women, especially in agriculture and related economic development initiatives, is seen as necessary to accelerating progress in reducing food insecurity and malnutrition. Specific attention should also be given to *marginalized population groups*. The UN 'Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues' carried out a desk review on national MDG reports in 25 countries (Africa, Latin America and Asia and the Pacific) to determine to what degree indigenous issues were considered. With very few exceptions, indigenous peoples had not been involved/specifically considered in the design, implementation, monitoring of policies designed to achieve the MDGs[6].

[6] http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/CrossThematicIssues/MDGs.aspx

Trends and challenges

A new framework needs to recognize the changes that have taken place in the world since the inception of the existing MDGs in 2000. The post-2015 framework must acknowledge, and respond to these important trends. Based on both the on-line consultation and a review of the literature, the following major trends and challenges are important in establishing the context for a future development framework:

Hunger and malnutrition continue to be major challenges. The global prevalence of malnutrition and hunger remains unacceptably high. FAO estimates that nearly 870 million people (12.5 percent of the global population or one in eight people) remained undernourished in 2010-12 compared with one billion people in 1990-92. One in three developing country children under the age of five (171 million children) are stunted due to chronic undernutrition. Micronutrient malnutrition or 'hidden hunger' affects around 2 billion people (over 30 percent of the world population) with serious public health consequences.

Despite improvements in a number of individual countries, overall progress in reducing hunger and malnutrition has slowed significantly since 2007-08. Nevertheless, with sufficient political will, achieving the MDG1 target of halving the prevalence of undernourishment in the developing world by 2015 is still within reach.

At the same time, obesity rates have doubled over the last 30 years. 43 million children under five years of age are overweight, and obesity affects around 500 million adults, increasingly in low and middle-income countries, with consequences ranging from increased risk of premature death to serious chronic health conditions including an increase in the prevalence in non-communicable diseases. This double burden of both under- and over-nutrition highlights key challenges faced in achieving food and nutrition security.

A rapidly growing and more affluent world population is increasing the demand for food. The global population is projected to increase from 7 billion today to 9 billion by 2050, with practically all of the increase expected to take place in less developed countries. With rising incomes, globalization and urbanization, diets are changing; in particular, there is an increasing demand for animal products, which are particularly resource-intensive to produce. FAO estimates that these factors mean that global food production must increase by 60 per cent to meet the demand for food and biofuels by 2050.

Agricultural and food systems are subject to vast changes, including in the organization of agricultural and food markets, with growing integration and organization of supply chains creating new opportunities for food producers. A major research and development agenda is emerging for productivity growth, combined with an emphasis on greater resilience. Furthermore, there is growing private investment in agriculture in developing countries, and the emergence of innovative public-private partnership models, and business models, affecting food availability and access of both producers and consumers. Diversion of significant portions of farmland from food to biofuel production is ongoing, while with changing market structures, cash crops are on the rise. These developments call for an appropriate balance between food and cash crops, also at local level, not to undermine future food security.

At the same time *there are multiple challenges to the stability and sustainability* of the global food system and the achievement of food and nutrition security as a result of pressure on natural resources. The world's ecosystems and biodiversity are under extreme pressure from overexploitation and degradation. There is increasing environmental degradation of productive land and other productive natural resources. Over the past 40 years, approximately 30 percent of the world's cropland (1.5 billion hectares) has become unproductive. Levels of groundwater are declining as a consequence of over-use. Without good management of natural resources, we could undo much of the progress thus far achieved and impoverish future generations.

The *impacts of climate change* are being felt across the world. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, some 70 percent of disasters are now climate related, up from 50 percent two decades ago. Their impact is worsened by unsustainable management of natural resources. Increasingly, these erratic weather patterns are leading to major year-on-year fluctuations in production levels, and contribute to high and volatile food prices; extreme weather events often result in acute food crises. Climate change related events are likely to intensify in the coming years, while rising temperatures are expected to reduce levels of agricultural productivity in large parts of the developing world.

Other important risk factors have surfaced. The *2008-09 financial and economic crises* were associated with rising food insecurity and increased levels of hunger and malnutrition. *Rapid urbanization* (largely the result of rural-urban migration, often linked to decreasing economic opportunities in traditional rural livelihoods) has generated a large new class of poor food buyers, who are highly vulnerable to rising prices and other risks. Given this rapidly evolving context, the new Post-2015 Development Agenda must not adopt a "business as usual" approach. Rather, an innovative approach is demanded by stakeholders world-wide.

Policies, Strategies and On-going Processes

At the global level, recent political developments have taken place in support of action towards greater food and nutrition security. These seek to reinforce political and policy coherence, alignment, coordination and cooperation across the food, agriculture, health and other sectors. The CFS and the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UN-SCN) are recognized as key forums at the international level, where policy measures on food security and nutrition concerns are discussed, and statements stemming from these forums are acknowledged as representing the interests of a wide group of stakeholders. The Zero Hunger Challenge recently launched by the Secretary General at the Rio+20 Conference further reinforces the need for common action.

Specifically, the 2012 declaration of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20) recognized ''the importance and utility of a set of Sustainable Development Goals'' that ''should be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015''. An Open Working Group has been formed to draft proposals for the formulation and agreement on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Existing global frameworks addressing food security and nutrition concerns were reviewed as inputs to this Issues Paper. These include the Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the GSF of the CFS with its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. The substance of selected policy recommendations is discussed further below.

Other key initiatives have called for international attention to better address nutrition concerns and ensure inter-disciplinary collaboration, including the Scaling-up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, the UN REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger) partnership, and the WHO Comprehensive Implementation Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition. The CGIAR system has recently embarked on a Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health[7]. Following the 1992 FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), a follow-up conference on nutrition is being convened in Rome. The outputs are expected to support the further articulation of nutrition objectives in the Post-2015 agenda.

The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the

[7] http://www.a4nh.cgiar.org/

Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security negotiated among Member Countries world-wide are highlighted as important reference documents for more equitable, rights-based and accountable policies and programmes designed to achieve food security for all.

In addition, international donors have made a series of commitments to strengthen their support to food security and improved agricultural productivity and nutrition. These include commitments made under the 2009 L'Aquila Food Security Initiative and subsequently under the 2012 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. It is recommended that the final Post-2015 documents need to reflect and build on these substantial commitments.

Findings in the research and position papers consulted, supported by the feedback from the on-line consultation on HFSN, emphasize the importance of placing environmental sustainability and resource constraints at the heart of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. There is a strong call to unify the processes of follow-up to the MDGs with setting the SDGs called for by the Rio+20 Conference. Overall, the importance of working towards political and policy coherence, alignment, coordination and cooperation, when formulating the Post-2015 agenda was confirmed by a review of recent events and publications, as well as contributions to the on-line consultation. Special emphasis was given to identify actions that have the greatest possible impact in the reduction of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, in particular at the local level.

Building Blocks for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The objective of the series of consultations on HFSN facilitated by FAO, WFP and key partners is to reach consensus on the contours of an agenda that adequately identifies the development needs of present and future generations, and is capable of crystallizing these priorities in clear, easy-to-communicate development goals that will help guide coherent policy action at the global, regional and national levels.

Presented below is a synthesis of the opinions and views drawn from a range of stakeholders on what should be included in a Post-2015 Development Agenda, as the world aims to eradicate hunger and achieve food and nutrition security. Much of this reflects well-established knowledge and positions among those who are familiar with what it takes to achieve these objectives. It is important to complement this with a forward-looking position that blends continuity with innovative elements.

Unless otherwise indicated, the suggestions outlined below reflect frequently expressed opinions from the various inputs. Some proposals were supported by empirical evidence, others based on logical argument.

Scope of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Food security and nutrition communities world-wide have provided a range of comments on the organization of the Post-2015 agenda and framework. Observations offered through a range of channels. Based on the materials reviewed and the e-consultation, a number of key cross-cutting issues are proposed to sharpen the formulation of a next set of food security and nutrition-related goals, including those clustered under the Zero Hunger Challenge[8]:

- Ensuring *sustainability* – in terms of food consumption and production systems that deliver food security and good nutrition, while preserving the well-being of future generations;

[8] Overall, participants in the on-line consultation said that they supported the Zero Hunger Challenge – that the level of aspiration was appropriate. They requested, however, that there should be time-bound targets, as 2030 was not seen as a reasonable timeline for achieving 'zero goals'.

- Increasing the *resilience* of agricultural- and food systems, and of livelihoods, especially against the effects of climate change and possible future political and economic shocks;
- A stronger emphasis on *rights-based approaches*, including the right to food, and the right to secure and sustainable tenure of land, forestry, fisheries and natural resources;
- Improving *governance,* focusing in particular on reducing inequality and assuring transparency and inclusion in legislative and other rule-making processes;
- Integrating *social protection systems* with food assistance to improve efficiency and reach;
- Strengthening *gender equality***,** an important precondition for accelerating progress to reduce food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition; and
- *Aligning food-based responses with public health interventions* at all levels.

In addition to the above cross-cutting issues, we expand below on three areas that deserve particular emphasis in the context of this thematic consultation: (i) the need for a greater focus on nutrition; (ii) a call for a more comprehensive food security approach; and (iii) calls for improved governance and rights-based approaches in addressing food security and nutrition concerns.

A Greater Focus on Nutrition

There is a strong consensus that nutrition was by and large missed out in the MDG process and a focus on nutrition should be included in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The parallel concerns of undernutrition and overconsumption should both be dealt with in the Post-2015 agenda, given the considerable consequences of inaction and cost to governments and society. Undernutrition leads to sub-optimal physical and cognitive development, poor educational outcomes, lower resistance to illness, increased risk of chronic diseases in adulthood, and hindered productivity as adults - all factors that lower the economic potential of individuals and societies and perpetuate poverty. Overconsumption, likewise, increases risk of chronic diseases and associated health care costs. Within the broad goal a number of important sub-issues emerge from the on-line consultation and relevant literature:

i. Food insecurity is one cause of undernutrition. However, nutrition security is only achieved when access to an appropriately nutritious diet is coupled with a sanitary environment, including access to safe water and to adequate health services and care. Future goals must reflect the interconnectedness of these development issues and provide sustainable responses.

ii. The first 1000 days of life, the period between conception and two years of age is crucial in young children's survival, growth and development and determines the future nutrition and health status of any individual. This consideration should be mainstreamed in all relevant policies, programmes and projects. In food insecure households and vulnerable communities, individuals with specific nutritional needs should be given particular attention. Policy and social support must enable women to exclusively breastfeed for the first six months.

iii. Diet-related diseases associated with obesity have large and growing fiscal, economic or human costs. Balanced and safe diets prevent all forms of malnutrition. Micronutrients are essential to health, as well as physical and mental development. Policies should therefore aim to improve food consumption and not be limited to availability of staple foods and calories.

iv. Appropriate care practices are recognized as essential for good nutrition. The most effective practices are well established, but justify further reinforcement. Infants and small children should be breastfed immediately and exclusively up to six months. Safe, nutritionally adequate complementary foods for infants should then be introduced and breastfeeding should be continued for up to two years.

v. Preventive health and hygiene are essential; programmes and projects should therefore support appropriate household and community care systems.

Ensuring a Comprehensive Food Security Approach

Several documents stemming from broad-based consultation following the high food price crisis in 2008-09 have called for specific action to address food security and nutrition concerns. These include the 2009 L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the UN-HLTF, which reinforces the need for a 'twin-track' approach, the GSF for Food Security and Nutrition recently endorsed by the CFS, and various statements in the context of the Rio+20 Summit, including the Zero Hunger Challenge. These documents have served as key references for the on-line consultation, in which many of the arguments made in these documents were endorsed in one way or another. Overall, a broad-based approach to addressing food security concerns is strongly advocated.

Specifically, the need for *food availability* to keep pace with the projected rapid growth in global demand for food was emphasized. Part of the response requires continued increases in productivity – in ways that are sustainable, equitable and resilient. It is also recognized that increased food production has to happen in the face of dwindling resources and increasing competition for those resources. More will have to be produced per unit of land, using less water, fertilizer and pesticides. The overall food supply can furthermore be significantly increased through a reduction of the estimated 30 percent loss and waste of food produced. Some advocated reducing the diversion of limited food resources to bio-fuels and animal feeds.

Investment is also needed to make agricultural production more resilient to the effects of climate change and other economic and political shocks, while support to the agricultural sector should include targeted support to smallholders, especially women. Responsible tenure systems are needed to secure access rights to land, fisheries and forests for people who depend on them. Smallholder agriculture was highlighted as being essential for achieving multiple goals in many developing country contexts.

Ensuring economic and physical *access to food* clearly remains one of the key pillars of food security. As the affordability of food relates largely to questions of income, there are linkages with the wider anti-poverty agenda. Apart from recognizing the growing challenge of meeting the needs of a growing urban population, boosting smallholder and rural incomes, and establishing social protection systems, including food assistance, with expanded access to safety nets have been highlighted as priority areas for a Post-2015 agenda. On questions related to food price policy, some participants in the e-consultation advocated greater market liberalization, while others called for state interventions in food markets.

Improved Governance and Human Rights

It is widely agreed that malnutrition and food insecurity are largely preventable, as the causes and solutions are generally known. Therefore, the rate of progress in reducing food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition is heavily influenced by the level of political commitment and support. Hence, there is strong support to foster greater political commitment to ensuring food security and nutrition concerns are adequately addressed in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

A principal suggestion is that the Post-2015 agenda should not only specify the outcomes, but also identify concrete actions to be taken by governments. Political commitment should be enhanced by strengthening national participation in defining elements of the goals and targets. There should be ample space for national policy design and adaptation to local settings, guided by an overall vision and its underlying principles. There are no blueprints for food security and nutrition strategies, and there is clear consensus that one size does not fit all.

There is a strong call, especially by civil society advocates, that human rights standards and principles should guide the formulation of the Post-2015 Development Goals. For food security and nutrition, this would involve establishing a legislative, policy and strategic framework, drawn up with

reference to the respective Voluntary Guidelines[9]. A complementary requirement is for strong accountability mechanisms to ensure that governments are held accountable for the realization of human rights.

Preliminary Elements for Monitoring

Until the structure and content of the Post-2015 agenda starts to crystallize, it is premature to identify concrete targets and indicators. However, some initial contributions have been made on both the principles and substance of a monitoring system. These may serve as inputs for further consideration by appropriately mandated groups including, the UNTT Working Group on Monitoring and Target Setting.

There is wide support for continuing with a limited number of concrete, quantitative, time bound (from 10 to 25 years) targets and associated indicators. The transparency of targets is seen as integral to the value of the MDGs and links to establishing accountability frameworks. There is a strong view that measurable progress must be shown to maintain or attract the necessary investments and commitments to achieve the objectives.

A new framework should include indicators and targets on inputs, process and impact. This will strengthen the accountability framework. It is difficult to hold governments solely accountable for outcomes that can have multiple and international causes. It will be easier to hold them to account to commitments on spending, policy reform and signing up to charters and rights.

Indicators should be disaggregated as much as possible to highlight inequalities or discrimination between population groups according to their location (rural/urban areas), age and gender. The facility could also exist for countries to submit their own voluntary and country-specific targets. National targets should seek realistic improvements on the baseline situation, taking account of the underlying trends. This should contribute to a sense of increased national ownership.

Effective monitoring depends on the ability to improve the timeliness and reliability of basic statistics. Therefore, investment in the statistical and other information systems should be supported through the Post-2015 agenda.

Targets and Indicators

The selection of the precise indicators will be driven by the eventual definition of what we are trying to achieve (the specification of goals and targets), what the best technical measure is and what is feasible to collect. There is a general consensus on the need to improve the indicators used by the MDGs to measure hunger and malnutrition. Furthermore, a more developed framework would demand a more sophisticated set of indicators.

The Zero Hunger Challenge identifies five targets relating to food access, stunting, sustainability of food systems, smallholder productivity and food waste. This proposal generated considerable feedback in the online discussion. There was general support for the limited number of targets and proposed priorities. However, the definition of appropriate target levels and respective indicators remains a point of debate. Furthermore, to avoid similar criticism as with the current MDG framework, a future framework must allow the very different baselines for each country, against which progress will be measured, to be taken into account.

There have been longstanding efforts in defining indicators and standards for the measurement of aspects of food security and nutrition. These include the 2006 WHO growth standards, the 'SPHERE' standards, as well as the on-going work of the CFS open-ended working group on

[9] The Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

monitoring. The deliberations and expertise of these groups can be drawn on in defining precise indicator lists for the selected goals and targets.

There is resounding support for stunting[10] to replace underweight as a primary indicator for malnutrition. This is aligned with the imperative of sustainable, developmental solutions with a specific focus on the window of opportunity in the first 1000 days of life. The inclusion of a measure based on dietary diversity is widely supported as a robust proxy for food consumption at the individual level, as well as being a direct indicator of quality of diet. Indicators exist through UNICEF/WHO such as 'minimum acceptable diet' for children, and food basket calculations for household level analyses. Ideally, indicators should also be time-disaggregated to show the cyclical character of food security and nutrition conditions.

[10] Stunting for children under the age of five with disaggregation by sex, and reporting of children under age two.