



United Nations
MOLDOVA

PRESS RELEASE

Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator

Debriefing on FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission

Following the severe drought during the 2007 agricultural season, the Government of Moldova requested that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations assess the effects of the drought on the food supply in order to develop appropriate measures to ensure food security, as well as to identify immediate and medium-term measures to mitigate the impact of drought on the agricultural sector.

The *FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission* was carried out during the period of 12 – 22 August 2007. The Mission's findings and recommendations were presented on 22 August, 2007, at a joint meeting of the government with the donor community, organized by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Moldova.

According to *Dr. Henri Josserand*, Mission Team Leader, the estimated cost of lost production is nearly €300 million for cereal crops only, while the losses to the livestock sector are likely to be even larger. The Mission also reported that the drought has caused a reduction in food available from home garden production, loss of savings, food and income source from liquidated family livestock, increased food expenditures and higher prices for other basic requirements (energy, gas, heating, etc).

The Mission advised that immediate support be provided to farmers to meet the requirements for winter season cereal seeds (mostly wheat, barley, and rye). In addition, it recommended that the current system of social protection be expanded to include people becoming vulnerable as a result of: (i) reduced agricultural incomes; (ii) loss of household savings; (iii) higher prices for food and other essentials.

With respect to mid-term measures, the Mission advocated for (i) better food security monitoring and establishment of early warning tools and systems; (ii) improved seed production and diversification and upgrading of crops; (iii) rebuilding of national herds by providing smallholders with subsidized breeding stock. In the long run, a sustainable strategy for the agricultural sector, including proper farming practices, crop mixes, and efficient use of the natural resource base (including water) should be developed and implemented. Better and more widespread agricultural insurance, including weather-indexed insurance, should be also developed.

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