

We can stop hunger

International Alliance Against Hunger



No. 2 August 2004

MAKING PROGRESS

Since the launching of the International Alliance, World Food Day 2003 and our last Newsletter, much has happened and considerable more is underway.

The UN agencies and several of the international NGOs which are part of the Rome-based Working Group have fostered National Alliances. They have communicated with their staff and national offices encouraging them to participate in the formation of National Alliances.

Concrete results can already be seen. Some National Alliances in developed countries are "twinning" with National Alliances in developing countries. Discussions in International and National Alliances were held and information packets provided at the five Regional FAO Conferences. Thus far, 84 countries, up from 50 in February, have expressed interest in establishing a National Alliance or have already created one.

The Working Group is developing a draft strategy document to stimulate exchange of views among a broad base of institutions and organizations. It is sharing the paper with its national affiliates and its network.

During the CFS Meeting at FAO in Rome, Italy, on September 22nd, the Alliance will organise a side event which will afford wide participation in its development.

Much has been achieved, more is needed. However, a new era of cooperation and action is emerging to join forces to urgently reduce and to ultimately eliminate hunger.

Eva Clayton

Assistant Director-General, Special Adviser to the Director-General on World Food Summit Follow-Up

Renewed efforts welcomed

A joint Declaration was prepared by FAO, IFAD and WFP for their meeting with the French president Jacques Chirac, last March. Cooperation at the international level and between Rome-based institutions (FAO, IFAD, WFP) is being reinforced as the International Alliance is pursuing its own development.

This meeting was a follow-up to the Joint Declaration made by French President Jacques Chirac, Brazilian President Inacio Lula da Silva, Chilean President Ricardo Lagos and UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan in January 2004 in Geneva about the necessity to reinforce the international community's commitment to fight hunger and poverty and to explore innovative means of raising additional resources.

During the meeting with President Chirac, the importance of decentralized institutional and financial mechanisms to support organizations owned by

the poor and their communities was stressed. The Rome-based agencies are already working closely with civil society through the International Alliance against Hunger. They are prepared, with additional resources, to scale-up their activities to support governments that demonstrate real commitment to reducing hunger in their countries. President Chirac underlined the necessity of better coordination between UN agencies and increased resources for the eradication of hunger and poverty.

The text of the joint Declaration can be read here: www.rdfs.net

Biodiversity for food security

This year's World Food Day will emphasize the importance of biodiversity for agriculture and food security.

Agro-biodiversity is essential for sustainable agricultural development and for human survival. It provides the raw materials plant breeders need to develop new varieties to face unpredictable future challenges such as climate change, unknown pests and plant diseases, and to ensure a more nutritious diet. Agro-biodiversity also includes animal, forestry and fisheries diversity, micro-organisms that regenerate agricultural soils and insects that pollinate fields. However, agro-biodiversity is threatened by urbanization, deforestation, pollution and the conversion of wetlands. Three-quarters of crop genetic diversity have been lost over the last century.

The legally binding International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture came into force on June 29, 2004. Countries will now take steps to bring it into full operation. The Treaty will ensure that countries have shared access to some of the most important plant genetic resources needed for world food security. Through sharing the benefits of their use, it will also help developing countries to conserve and use plant genetic resources. These benefits include technology transfer and access, building capacity at local levels, and monetary and other benefits of commercialization will be shared. More information at: www.fao.org/wfd/index_en.asp

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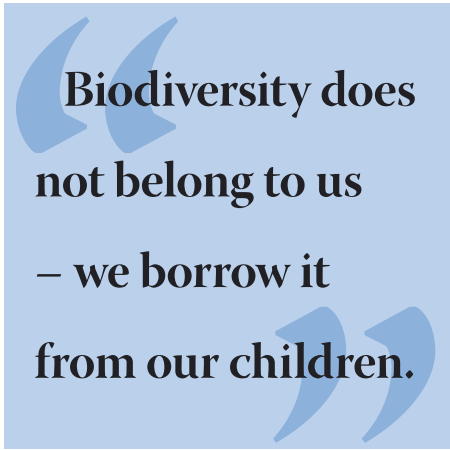
Biodiversity for food security

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The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) has a mandate to advance research on the conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity, with an emphasis on crops. **Coosje Hoogendoorn**, Deputy Director General, Programmes at IPGRI, explains how important biodiversity is for food security:

“Biodiversity on the farms has traveled the world. For example, maize and cassava are very important food crops in Africa, but originate from Latin America. It is therefore important for their food security that countries continue to exchange agricultural biodiversity on fair and simple terms. The new International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture provides such a framework and takes into account the interests of local communities. National Alliances should therefore actively support its implementation in their countries. We consider the National Alliances Against Hunger key partners to communicate the importance of biodiversity in the fight against hunger at country level.”

See more information at: www.ipgri.org



**Biodiversity does
not belong to us
– we borrow it
from our children.**

José Esquinas- Alcázar, Secretary of FAO's Intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, underlines that though the adoption of the Treaty is crucial for conserving agro-biodiversity for future generations, it is not enough:

“Biodiversity does not belong to us. As a proverb says, “we borrow it from our children”. Public awareness is a major task for National Alliance members in helping governments to

implement the Treaty and making it fully operational. NGOs in particular have already played a most important role in pleading for the negotiation and the adoption of this Treaty, which includes provisions for the realization of Farmers' Rights. However, efforts must continue through activities such as on-farm conservation projects, fund raising for conservation and sustainable use, as well as equitable sharing of benefits.”

Question to three NGOs involved in fighting hunger

Which activities are you focusing on to help reduce hunger?

▶ World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)

“The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts circulated a letter to its 144 National Organisations, gathering 10 million youth. This letter explained the aims of the IAAH and highlighted the importance of setting up or joining existing National Alliances. During WAGGGS Regional Conference for Africa in July 2004, national member organisations have been further informed of the work of the IAAH and urged to contact National Alliances existing in their countries.

Several school-based WAGGGS organisations are already running nutrition projects in developing countries. For instance in Italy, the 200 000 Guides and Scouts have, since 2002, co-funded projects carried out by girl guides in different countries.

Anna Rappazzo, a volunteer from WAGGGS, has worked at IAAH headquarters in Rome for six months. She has been responsible for establishing an inventory of existing National Alliances and collecting information about their activities, in developing contacts with NGOs to improve the participation of civil society on an equal basis in the Alliance. She also assisted in preparing progress reports on FAO's hunger reduction related activities.”

Contact: Giovanna Cavarocchi, Team Coordinator of WAGGGS UN Representatives.

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Internet site: www.wagggsworld.org

▶ The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW)

“ACWW is the largest international organisation of rural women and homemakers with over 9 million members in 70 countries worldwide, the majority of whom depend on agriculture for living. It is part of the Ad Hoc Group of International NGOs. ACWW aims at improving the standard of living of women, their families and communities through a world-wide network of advocacy and grass-roots projects.

ACWW is mainly active in agricultural training and development, micro-credit and income generation, nutrition and health issues including HIV/AIDS prevention and education, literacy, and access to clean water and sanitation.

For instance, in Kenya, a project is being implemented for reducing poverty by helping farmers' groups to expand the acreage under crops from five to seven acres, digging out trenches and canals, installing irrigation water systems and sprinklers, and setting up an operation and maintenance fund. The production of food crops and vegetables has been diversified and has increased by 15% more than the projected output.”

Contact: Carol Summers, Secretary to the UN and Agriculture Committees.

E-mail: un@acww.org.uk

Internet site: www.acww.org.uk

▶ Bread for the World

“Bread for the World, one of the most active members of the US Alliance to end Hunger, is building on already existing partnerships involved in advancing the cause of reducing hunger. It is pushing hard – in media, grassroots, direct lobbying, and work with church leaders. For instance, it is pleading for increases in the public budget for foreign assistance and has contributed to make hunger an election issue in the United States.

It has taken the lead in the development of promising international and domestic campaigns. These activities are the fruit of past efforts, by Bread for the World and others, to build a larger movement. They begin to set up a global network of anti-hunger initiatives. For instance, Bread for the World Institute has worked with the U.N. food agencies to launch the More and Better Campaign, an international NGO coalition to build commitment to the goal of cutting world hunger and poverty in half by 2015. Giving the Alliance a strong launch is a major goal of Bread for the World during this three-year period. This will help to build a much stronger anti-hunger movement, which will add energy to Bread for the World”.

Contact: David Beckmann, President.

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Internet site: www.bread.org

News from the field

► February 2004:

50 National Alliances were registered.

► July 2004:

84 National Alliances were active.

Burkina Faso: a civil society initiative

The National Alliance against Hunger of Burkina Faso was born in October 2003 and initially gathered 20 civil society organisations. The Alliance has set up its statute and internal rules and is currently designing its plan of action. The focus of its activities is on publicity and sensitization on food security. The Alliance has participated in several communication events in order to raise public awareness and to enlarge its membership. For instance, a partnership with the Telefood Club of the University of Ouagadougou has been established and workshops organized on the valorization of wildlife, forestry and fishery products.

Contact: Marie-Noëlle Koyara, FAO Representative in Ouagadougou.
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People's Caravan 2004: emerging Alliances in Asia

Next September, members of one hundred grass-roots, civil society organizations will travel in a "People's Caravan" across eleven countries in Asia under the banner of "Asserting Our Rights to Land and Food".

The Caravan aims at raising public awareness and offers opportunities for mass education on food sovereignty issues. A key element of the campaign will be dialogues with public officials and policy makers in each country to adopt national programs of food sovereignty and support the "People's Convention on Food Sovereignty" with FAO.

Communication between the relevant FAO Country Offices and the participants in the People's Caravan organized by Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PANAP) will be encouraged to develop synergies between the two campaigns.

Contact: Thomas Price, Senior Programme Officer, Resources and Strategic Partnerships Unit (TCDS), FAO.
E-mail: Thomas.Price@fao.org

Ireland: Gorta's long experience of fighting hunger



Photo: Gorta

Gorta Granny Project in South Africa. Grannies have adopted parentless children into their households with the support of Gorta which provided vegetable gardens backed up by water collection and storage facilities.

Gorta, The Freedom From Hunger Council of Ireland, has been working to eliminate hunger, poverty and related diseases in the developing world for 40 years. In Ireland, it naturally took the lead for building a National Alliance Against Hunger. All projects are concentrated in the most needy areas and are aimed at benefiting the poorest of the poor with emphasis on food security, empowerment of women and improving the health of children to ensure growth and development. Currently, Gorta is working on 38 projects, mainly in Africa, including a major development in the Gambia in association with ADWAC, Agency for the Development of Women and Children, a local NGO.

Contact: Jim Coughlan, Chief Executive Officer.
E-mail: admin@gorta.ie
See also website at: www.gorta.ie

Sierra Leone: Operation Feed the Nation

In order to achieve the President of Sierra Leone's goal that no Sierra Leonian should go to bed hungry by May 2007, FAO with national institutions and the financial support of Germany is organizing the establishment of a Right to Food Secretariat to ensure better coordination among all actors of government, donors and other stakeholders. Many NGOs have been helping to reduce hunger during the emergency period and they are building new food security programmes based on this experience. The National Association of Farmers of Sierra Leone (NAFSL) is also gearing up to play a larger role. Many other elements of civil society could also make their contribution – churches and

other religious groups, sports clubs, artists, trade unions, women's associations. They can ensure that their own members are adequately fed, raise funds and support projects. The setting up of a real National Alliance is under way: donors, NGOs and CSO representatives are invited to be members of the Right to Food Coordination Committee, with a view to enhancing coordination among these actors as well, and to seek their advice on government policies.

Contact: Mohamed Farah, FAO Representative in Freetown.
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Who stands behind the International Alliance Against Hunger?

Since the creation of the **International Alliance**, a few people regularly get together on a voluntary basis to discuss the best way of progressing in the creation of partnerships and National Alliances. They constitute an Interagency/NGO Working Group on IAAH, which meets every three months. Its members are representatives of the Rome-based UN agencies (IFAD, WFP, IPGRI, FAO) and of two NGOs, the Ad Hoc Group of International NGOs and the International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) as equal partners. IPC gathers mainly farmers' organisations and the ad hoc Group represents NGOs which already are partners of FAO. The Working Group has been discussing a strategy for the International Alliance for the next two years and organizing events on World Food Day and for the Committee on Food Security (CFS) meetings. The IAAH Secretariat is provided by the Office of the Special Adviser to the Director-General of FAO on Follow-Up to the World Food Summit, Eva Clayton.



Photo: FAO/G. Diana

From left to right: **Mrs Carmela Basili**, Representative, Ad Hoc Group of International NGOs, **Mr Mario Ahumada**, General Coordinator, Movimiento Agroecológico para Latino América y el Caribe - MAELA, **Mr David Harcharik**, Deputy Director-General, FAO, **Mrs Eva Clayton**, Assistant Director-General/Special Adviser to the Director-General for World Food Summit Follow-up, FAO, **Mr Francesco Strippoli**, Director, Division of External Relations, WFP, **Mr Emile Frison**, Director-General, International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, **Mr Cyril Enweze**, Vice-President, IFAD, **Mr Mamadou Cissokho**, President, Network of Peasant Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA).

The Working Group will evolve and be expanded to other partners wishing to join the Alliance such as religious groups or the private sector. A mechanism will have to be established to give an equal voice to all members whether coming from public sector, civil society or the UN system.

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What comes next

The priority of the following months will be to enlarge the Alliance's membership, disseminate information and exchange experiences on difficulties in building partnerships and creating National Alliances or, on the contrary, on progress and good practices in managing a network of actors committed to the same objective of reducing hunger.

The International Alliance secretariat has discussed with the Ad Hoc Group of International NGOs its members' involvement and how they could contribute to building or participating in National Alliances. Exchange of information with FAO Representatives in different countries also took place to enhance their involvement.

To support this move forward, an interactive website has been initiated and will enable the Alliance's members to post information on their activities, ideas and experiences. The World Food Summit Follow-up Internet site is being reorganised in order to focus on "Monitoring progress and action in the fight against hunger". It will provide information on FAO initiatives, country and partners' activities, and will include a section on useful resources and contacts.

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Upcoming Events

■ 22 September: Side event on the development of the International Alliance against Hunger at CFS meeting

This side event is organized during the Committee on World Food Security meeting at FAO headquarters to debate and to write recommendations on a developmental strategy for the IAAH. First, leaders from different international organisations such as the Rotary Foundation, the Ford Foundation or W.K.Kellogg Foundation will present their views on the role and opportunity of civil society in the IAAH. Then, five National Alliances will present their work to fight hunger. The expected participants are representatives of FAO member countries, civil society and National Alliance leaders who will share their experiences and explore different ways of working together.

■ 16 October: World Food Day on Biodiversity

Conserving biodiversity for agriculture requires efforts on many fronts including measures to preserve the environment, better education in particular of farmers and environmental groups, increased research and government support. More than 100 countries will be celebrating World Food Day 2004. This is an opportunity for National Alliances to join and contribute to this effort by organizing exhibits, conferences or other events. The International Alliance's partners will again this year be responsible for an exhibit on biodiversity at headquarters.

For more information:
World-Food-Day@fao.org