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FOLLOW-UP TO THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: FAO CONTRIBUTION TO THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Introduction

1. The exacerbation of chronic food insecurity in low-income food-deficit countries by soaring food and input prices in 2007 and early 2008 called for urgent, comprehensive and coordinated action by the international community. On 29 April 2008, the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) decided to establish a High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis, under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, which brought together the Heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions and relevant parts of the UN Secretariat. The FAO Director-General was asked by the Secretary-General to serve as Vice-Chair of the HLTF. The mandate of the Task Force was to promote a unified response to the global food security crisis, including by facilitating the development of a priority action plan and coordinating its implementation.
2. The HLTF agreed on a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA), which was presented by the Secretary-General at the Summit of the G8 Leaders in July 2008 in Hokkaido and at the UN General Assembly in September 2008. The CFA sets out the joint position of the HLTF members on proposed actions to: i) address the threats and opportunities resulting from food price rises; ii) encourage policy changes to avoid future crises; and iii) contribute to country, regional and global food and nutritional security.
3. FAO contributed significantly to the work of the HLTF and the preparation of the CFA. The Organization seconded a senior staff member to New York to coordinate FAO's inputs to the Interagency Working Group charged with the drafting of the CFA. FAO has contributed by

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providing data and information, proposing course of actions and reviewing several drafts of the CFA.

4. While the CFA is an agreed product of the HLTF members, it has been widely consulted with other parts of the UN system, international experts and think-tanks, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and major international NGOs.

5. The CFA aims to be a catalyst for action by providing governments, international and regional agencies and organizations, civil society groups and NGOs with a menu of policies and actions for which to draw context appropriate responses. The Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) launched by the FAO Director-General in December 2007 to address the simultaneous price increases of food commodities and agricultural inputs has been integrated into the CFA under the short-term objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS

6. FAO plays a central role in facilitating the implementation of the actions of the CFA to achieve its two main objectives, namely: i) improve access to food and nutrition support and take immediate steps to increase food availability; and ii) strengthen food and nutrition security in the longer-run by addressing the underlying factors driving the food crisis. FAO has a leading role in both the short- and longer-term CFA goals related to increasing small farmers' food production in a sustainable way, and is contributing to the deliberations on food and nutrition security policy adjustment and the emerging issues of climate change and biofuels. FAO also plays a key role in one of the CFA objectives vital for planning and measuring achievement of the short- and long-term objectives: the strengthening of global information and monitoring systems. This applies particularly to food and agriculture market information and analysis at global and country levels.

7. By mid-October 2008, under the ISFP, FAO had mobilized USD 102 million, of which USD 35 million approved through its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and USD 67 million from donors (the European Commission, France, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund and the World Bank). Another USD 79 million of donor funding was in the pipeline. FAO was supporting ninety-four countries in developing appropriate technical and policy response to the rise of food prices. Part of its own resources from the TCP have been utilized in projects to boost smallholder farmer food production and assist in revising and adopting policies to quickly increase access to, and availability of, food.

8. Input distribution activities through emergency and TCP projects were ongoing or planned in 79 countries. Over half of these TCP projects had targeted the planting seasons in 2008 and would benefit nearly 300 000 small farmers and their dependents, i.e. more than 1.5 million people. Implementation has progressed well, despite the tight market of fertilizer which had delayed procurement of this input in some cases. Whenever possible inputs are provided through input fairs and voucher schemes to promote local input markets.

9. FAO is working closely with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank, regional organizations and development banks and donors. For instance, FAO has coordinated 30 inter-agency joint assessment missions aimed at identifying the priority needs of countries worst affected by the combination of chronic food insecurity and increased food and input prices, developing Country Action Plans to address the priorities, and mobilizing additional funds to implement the plans. With funding from the European Commission, FAO is updating six country assessments and coordinating joint rapid assessments in another 32 countries. The purpose is to validate the programming of the European Commission's proposed EUR 1 billion Food Facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries, for which FAO, IFAD and WFP have jointly developed, in collaboration with governments, detailed and integrated proposals of interventions at country and regional levels.

10. In Africa, FAO has been working closely with the African Union and the NEPAD Secretariat particularly in the framework of Pillar 3 of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) focused on food security.

ACTIONS TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS

11. The CFA defines actions to meet immediate needs as new or existing initiatives that need to begin now or be scaled up quickly so that they can yield immediate and short-term results to assist vulnerable populations.

12. Under Objective 1 of the CFA: “*Improve access to food and nutrition support and take immediate steps to increase food availability*”, there are three main CFA Outcomes to which FAO contributes: (i) smallholder farmer food production boosted; (ii) trade and tax policy adjusted; and (iii) global information and monitoring systems strengthened immediately.

13. FAO has prepared a programme document to identify requirements and mobilize funds for an immediate response to high food prices, mainly in Low-Income Food-Deficit countries (LIFDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and countries facing a food crisis. The programme outlines the type of actions countries need to undertake in the short term (between now and the upcoming planting seasons through 2009) to address soaring food prices:

- policy analysis and technical assistance and advice in the area of trade and commodity markets and policy;
- productive safety nets to increase access to inputs (immediate support to small farmers/net food buyers through direct distribution of inputs or the provision of vouchers that can be exchanged for inputs);
- rehabilitation of small rural and agricultural infrastructure (scaling up of ongoing rehabilitation through cash for food or work on small-scale irrigation structures, market infrastructure and roads);
- improvement and intensification of production systems (e.g. seed development and multiplication and sustainable increase in soil fertility);
- reduction of crop and livestock losses (e.g. post-harvest support and reinforcement of veterinary systems); and
- disaster risk management (e.g. reinforcement of existing prevention systems, early warning and control of transboundary diseases and pests).

14. FAO has also developed a *Guide for immediate country level action*, which reviews various policies and actions that are available to respond to the food security crisis, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches and instruments.

15. In addition to monitoring food market prices, the food insecurity situation and the impact of high food prices, FAO has been monitoring the policy response of countries to the crisis. FAO is preparing a paper on countries’ policy response to the high food prices, to be presented to the Committee on Commodity Problems in April 2009.

16. The CFA outlines that leadership will need to come at all levels. At the country level, government supported by donors, technical agencies, the private sector, civil society and NGOs will need to take action to avoid overlaps and identify gaps, review existing monitoring mechanisms and promote effective public communications. FAO through its country, subregional and regional offices is playing a key role in this process and is cooperating with regional and subregional organizations, and the regional development banks to achieve a coordinated response to the food security crisis.

ACTIONS TO BUILD LONGER-TERM RESILIENCE AND CONTRIBUTE TO GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

17. The CFA defines the priority actions required to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and yield sustainable results over the medium- and longer-terms.

18. Under Objective 2 of the CFA: “*Strengthen food and nutrition security in the longer run by addressing the underlying factors driving the food crisis*”, there are four main CFA Outcomes to which FAO contributes: (i) smallholder farmer food production growth sustained; (ii) international food markets improved; (iii) international biofuel consensus developed; and (iv) global information and monitoring systems strengthened.

19. FAO is preparing a Programme Document for Medium- and Long-Term Actions to “Strengthen food and nutrition security in the long run by addressing the underlying factors which have driven the food crisis”. The Programme Document would elaborate the menu of long-term actions outlined in the CFA, especially in the intervention area of “sustained growth in food availability through smallholder led production”. At the same time, it would provide indications of how CFA orientations can be mainstreamed in national agricultural development and food security strategies and programmes, and outline the kind of interventions that FAO could support technically based on its experience and knowledge.

20. FAO has developed templates for medium- to long-term interventions in water control operations, natural resources management, seed multiplication and certification, fertilizer supply, storage and other post-harvest actions, rural infrastructure, research and extension, marketing, and institutional building based on experience acquired through the FAO Field Programme and particularly the National and Regional Programmes for Food Security. The templates will serve as guidelines in the preparation of the medium- and long-term programmes/projects once funding become available.

21. Many of these interventions will involve support to rural institutions, including in particular farmers organizations, and capacity building in more effective modalities of institutional support to small holders. Technical support to build capacity, particularly for rural institutions, is one of the Core Functions in the new Strategic Framework. As such, the modalities and resources to provide this support will be taken into account when preparing the Medium Term Plan 2010-13 and Programme of Work and Budget 2010-2011.

22. FAO’s food security and market information and analysis is another important contribution to the CFA outcome of strengthened global information and monitoring systems. FAO is putting in place a more accurate system for monitoring price fluctuations and their impacts at the local level. The local effects of international price increases can be different. Together with WFP, FAO is assessing how vulnerable groups are being affected by high food prices. These mechanisms are being studied to provide informed policy guidance.

23. Regarding biofuels, FAO is an active partner in international initiatives such as the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) and its Task Force on Sustainability. In addition, FAO will launch a multistakeholder process aimed at developing internationally agreed sustainable bioenergy principles and standards with respect to food security and poverty reduction, building upon the results of its Bioenergy and Food Security Project. As co-responsible agencies of the renewable energy cluster within UN-Energy, FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have started to develop practical bioenergy guidelines on safeguard measures for decision-makers to help them decide on how to minimize risks of increasing investments in bioenergy on global and national food security and the environment. FAO is also working on a Bioenergy Environmental Impact Analysis framework, a tool to assist decision-makers in understanding and managing environmental impacts of bioenergy, and on a review of the livelihood impacts of small-scale bioenergy initiatives (in collaboration with the Policy Innovation Systems for Clean Energy Security – [PISCES]). Other relevant activities include the publication of *The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2008 on Biofuels: prospects, risks and opportunities*; analysis of the role of biofuels in food prices, which is reflected in the *OECD/FAO Agricultural Outlook 2008-2017* report; and a study entitled *Fuelling exclusion* produced in collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development addressing the relationships between biofuels and land tenure.

24. Following the FAO June High-Level Conference, the G8 Leaders, at their Summit in Hokkaido in July 2008, issued a Statement on Global Food Security renewing their commitment to address the multifaceted food crisis. They proposed the forming of a global partnership and a network of high-level experts on food and agriculture, in which the Rome-based Agencies stand ready to play their role. As requested by some of its members, and consistent with the debates at the last session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), FAO is ready to put together the high-level expert group.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

25. At the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008, some USD 11 billion were promised by various donors to face the global food security crisis. With the addition of other announcements made before and after this conference, the total pledges reach USD 22 billion. FAO has fielded 17 high-level missions and made contacts at very high level to facilitate the mobilization of these resources for the implementation of the CFA and the ISFP. Several donor missions have also visited FAO to discuss modalities of cooperation. Thus far, only 10 percent of the pledged funding has materialized and mostly for emergency food aid.