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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. FAO's early lead in addressing the food crisis that began in 2007 has made it possible for the Organization to take a prominent role in framing the international response in a broad range of fora. FAO has continued to work for the achievement of the objectives defined in the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) of the UN High-Level Task Force (UN HLTF), while developing programmes and initiatives under FAO's own Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP). FAO played a key role in supporting the Madrid High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All (in January 2009). Cooperation has been especially close with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank (WB), with whom FAO has carried out 61 joint assessment missions, and coordinated closely the development of project proposals for the EUR 1 billion EU Food Facility. FAO has also been working together with the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat, particularly in the framework of Pillar 3 of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), dedicated to food security.

FAO has as of 1 June 2009 mobilized USD 248.8 million for short- and medium-term project interventions in countries affected by the food crisis, with a further USD 129.5 million in the pipeline. FAO has also developed an important food price information tool that is available online, published two key reports on country project and policy responses to the food price crisis and is an active partner in international initiatives.¹

INTRODUCTION

2. The exacerbation of chronic food insecurity in low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) 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 facilitation of the development of a priority action plan and coordinating its implementation.

3. 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.

4. 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 providing data and information, proposing courses of action and reviewing several drafts of the CFA. The HLTF has now established its major Secretariat office in Rome, hosted by IFAD, to which FAO is also contributing through the secondment of two staff members.

5. While the CFA is a document agreed on by the HLTF members, other parts of the UN system have been widely consulted thereon, as well as international experts and think-tanks, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and major international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

¹ Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) and its Task Force on Sustainability, which has drawn up a preliminary list of policy-relevant sustainability criteria for all bioenergy pathways.

6. 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 set of policies and actions from which to draw context appropriate responses. The Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) was launched by the FAO Director-General in December 2007 to enable farmers of the poorest countries to have access to seeds, fertilizers, animal feed and other inputs before the next agricultural season in order to boost domestic production. The ISFP forms part of the CFA.

7. The Madrid High-Level Meeting on Food Security, held from 26 to 27 January 2009 in Madrid, and convened by the Government of Spain and the UN, brought together a broad range of stakeholders from 126 countries, including national governments, civil society trade unions, private sector, academia, donor agencies and multilateral organizations. The purpose was to accelerate progress in meeting MDG 1 and addressing the effects of price fluctuations in vulnerable populations. Participants worked together to review progress achieved since the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy (HLC) held in Rome in June 2008. The FAO Director-General opened the Madrid meeting in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the UN HLTF.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS

8. FAO is playing a central role in achieving the CFA's main objectives, namely: i) to improve access to food and nutrition support and take immediate steps to increase food availability; and ii) to strengthen food and nutrition security in the longer-run by addressing the underlying factors driving the food crisis. FAO also plays 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 furthermore plays a key role in the strengthening of global information and monitoring systems. This applies particularly to food and agriculture market information and analysis at global and country levels.

9. By 1 June 2009 under the ISFP, FAO had mobilized USD 248.8 million, of which USD 36.7 million were approved through its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), USD 147.4 million from the European Union (largely under the Food Facility), and USD 64.7 million from a broad range of other donors (France, IFAD, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund and the World Bank). Another USD 129.5 million of donor funding were in the pipeline. FAO was supporting ninety-four countries in developing appropriate technical and policy response to the rise of food prices.

10. To date, FAO has deployed 74 input supply TCP projects within the context of the ISFP. The objective of these projects has been both to provide a concrete and immediate response to the request for assistance of member countries, as well as to provide a catalytic role for the mobilization of additional donor resources, both through FAO and bilaterally. Distribution of inputs funded through these projects is either completed or ongoing in 80 percent of the 74 projects. The TCP also funded 35 technical assistance operations in support of the ISFP for a total of USD 6.6 million. This includes six regional and subregional TCP projects approved in September and October 2008. These projects aim to complement the 74 ISFP input supply TCP projects by providing additional support and capacity building at the country level in the areas of beneficiary targeting, monitoring, evaluation, coordination and lessons learned for further development of national initiatives.

11. FAO is working closely with IFAD, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), WFP, the World Bank, regional organizations and development banks and donors. FAO has coordinated and participated in 17 large-scale interagency 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. FAO also specifically directed the focus of

ten regularly planned Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions to analyse the impact of the food crisis. With funding from the European Commission, FAO also coordinated 31 additional Rapid Assessment missions to support the development of strategies and proposals for funding under the EUR 1 billion EU Food Facility. The results of all 58 Interagency Assessments have since been analysed and published in a joint FAO-WFP-EU report “Responding to the Food Crisis: synthesis of medium-term measures proposed in interagency assessments”.

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

13. FAO has provided knowledge and monitoring of market prices for staple foods, the food insecurity situation and the impact of high food prices at the global, regional and country level through the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS). In response to recent high food prices FAO is especially scaling up monitoring of local market prices and their effects in the most vulnerable countries; market price studies carried out in 30 countries show that prices in the most vulnerable countries remain high though international commodity prices have declined.

ACTIONS TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS

14. The CFA defines actions to meet immediate needs as well 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.

15. 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 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.

16. FAO prepared a programme document in May 2008 to identify requirements and mobilize funds for an immediate response to high food prices, mainly in 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 to address soaring food prices².

17. FAO has also developed a *Guide for immediate country level action* that 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.

18. 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 has prepared a paper on countries’ policy response to the high food prices, which was presented to the Committee on Commodity Problems³ in April 2009.

19. The CFA highlights that, at the country level, governments 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 decentralized offices, is playing a key role in this process and is cooperating with the members of the HLTF, regional and subregional organizations, and the regional development banks to achieve a coordinated response to the food security crisis.

² The programme document is available at:
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/worldfood/Reports_and_docs/ISFP_Programme_Document.pdf

³ CCP 09/8

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

20. 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.
21. FAO contributes to Objective 2 of the CFA: “*Strengthen food and nutrition security in the longer run by addressing the underlying factors driving the food crisis*” and, in particular, to the four main CFA Outcomes: (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.
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 establishing a more accurate system for monitoring price fluctuations and their impacts at the local level. In cooperation 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. With respect to the implementation of CFA item 2.4 “International biofuel consensus developed” FAO is actively contributing to the establishment of a common reference framework for biofuels as a partner in the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) which is developing policy-relevant sustainability criteria for all bioenergy pathways, and in the Round Table on Sustainable Biofuels which is working towards a sustainability standard for liquid biofuel projects by end 2009. In addition, FAO is launching a multistakeholder process aimed at developing internationally agreed sustainable bioenergy principles and standards with respect to food security and poverty reduction, the results of which will also feed into relevant international initiatives. This work will build upon FAO's Bioenergy and Food Security Project and its results in four countries. As co-responsible agencies of the renewable energy cluster within UN-Energy, FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have developed a first draft of practical bioenergy guidelines on safeguard measures for decision-makers in developing countries that were presented to stakeholders at CSD 17 in May, 2009. FAO is further developing a bioenergy environmental impact analysis framework and collaborating with UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to assess innovative, cost-effective and sustainable systems for the production of liquid biofuels in developing countries.
24. Calls for strengthening the governance of global food security were made at different instances, including the FAO HLC in June 2008, the G8 Summit in Japan in July 2008 and the Special Session of the FAO Conference in November 2008. The proposals relate in particular to the establishment of a global network of high-level experts on food and agriculture to provide science-based analysis and a global partnership to enhance the coordination and implementation of action plans. Members of the UN HLTF have been playing an active role in the ensuing discussions on the agenda of strengthening the governance of global food security.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

25. At the FAO HLC held in Rome in June 2008, some USD 11 billion were promised by various donors to face the global food security crisis. Before and after the HLC, additional announcements were made raising the total pledges to USD 24 billion at the end of 2008. Availability of reliable and up-to-date information on pledges, allocations and disbursements has been one of the main constraints to determining the status of global funding initiatives in response to the food crises. While there are encouraging signs of increased investment support for agriculture, such as approval of the EUR 1 billion EU Food Facility, the enhanced replenishment for IFAD and the International Financial Institutions’ (IFI) increased lending for the sector, there can be no doubt that a significant funding gap exists for agriculture, food and nutrition assistance compared with the estimated requirements to reach MDG 1.

26. The High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, held in January 2009 in Madrid, undoubtedly helped bring food insecurity awareness back into the media and onto government and civil society agendas, regaining some of the momentum that was generated by record food prices in the first half of 2008. It called for improved partnerships and advocated for a leap in resource mobilization to tackle the unacceptable level of food insecurity in the world and the high risk of a worse scenario due to population increasing faster than food supply and other threats such as climate change. Prime Minister Zapatero signalled the way, despite Spain's economic recession, by pledging EUR 1 billion to help fight hunger over the next five years. At the same time, the World Bank, the UN and others have advocated that devoting just 0.7 percent of the economic stimulus packages adopted by the wealthier countries would meet the immediate needs of the hungry and the malnourished and provide for the investment in farming and food production systems and safety nets that would help ensure food security for all in our time.