



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

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**HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS FORUM ON ADDRESSING FOOD
INSECURITY IN PROTRACTED CRISES**

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VI. THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS

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The Committee having taken into consideration the attached document and relevant discussions:

1. Approves the proposal to organize a High-Level Expert Forum (HLEF) on Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises with a view of *inter alia* elaborating an “Agenda for Action for Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises”
2. Agrees that the CFS Bureau will decide on the dates of the forum taking into consideration the overall CFS programme of work
3. Agrees that the CFS Bureau will oversee the modalities for the organization of the said HLEF in collaboration with the Secretariat, the Advisory Group and the High Level Panel of Experts as appropriate. The report of the outcomes of the HLEF will be considered by the plenary of the Committee
4. Approves the proposal to hold an extensive consultation process with all stakeholders on the outcome of the HLEF with the view to presenting a proposed “Agenda for Action for Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises” for the consideration of the plenary of CFS as appropriate.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Thirty-six Session in October 2010, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) welcomed the outcome from the policy roundtable “Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises: Issues and Challenges”. The background document emphasized the spread of hunger and malnutrition in countries where continuous and prolonged states of crises pose threats to their very survival.
2. The Committee endorsed the spirit of the three recommendations regarding food security in protracted crises. The recommendations were the following:
 - i. Support further analysis and deeper understanding of people’s livelihoods and coping mechanisms in protracted crises in order to strengthen their resilience and enhance the effectiveness of assistance programmes
 - ii. Support the protection, promotion and rebuilding of livelihoods, and the institutions that support and enable livelihoods, in countries in protracted crisis
 - iii. Examine the procedures for external assistance to countries in protracted crisis to match the needs, challenges and institutional constraints on the ground taking into consideration best practices.
3. CFS made six additional specific recommendations, one of them being to support “mechanisms for consultation and policy dialogue to increase understanding and collaborative efforts to deal with food and nutrition security in protracted crises. In that regard the Bureau in consultation with the Advisory Group will explore the possibility of organizing a High-Level Experts Forum on Protracted Crises no later than 2012 with a view of discussing the elaboration of a new Agenda for Action for Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises in collaboration with other specialized agencies and humanitarian partners”.

4. In most countries in protracted crisis a series of external assistance initiatives are presently contributing to local and/or national programmes, some providing humanitarian support while others are supporting projects for longer-term development. Therefore, as preparatory work for the organization of a High-Level Experts Forum (HLEF) a review of programmes, initiatives and related stakeholders has been undertaken in order to determine how such a forum could add value to what is already underway and planned. Such a review will also be used to "chart" the participation of relevant stakeholders in a global debate and, eventually, in the elaboration of an Agenda for Action, thus contributing to improving the way protracted crises are addressed and accordingly provide more effective assistance for overcoming peoples' food insecurity.

5. The organization of a HLEF is considered by stakeholders as a timely opportunity to bring related expertise together and discuss how different experiences can contribute to setting a long-term horizon to address food insecurity in protracted crises. This concept note provides elements on what can be expected from a HLEF and suggests its scope and outcomes, as well as some organizational issues for such a meeting.

II. WHY A HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS FORUM ON PROTRACTED CRISIS?

A. POOR FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES

6. Food insecurity is significantly worse in countries in protracted crises than in the rest of the developing countries in four key food security indicators: proportion of undernourished, proportion of children stunted, mortality rate of children under five years old, and the Global Hunger Index.¹ The level of undernourishment in this set of countries is estimated to be more than three-fold when compared with the rest of developing countries (excluding India and China). They represent 166 million people, roughly 20 percent of the world's undernourished people (or more than a third of the global total if China and India are excluded).

7. In countries in protracted crises the Millennium Development Goal 1 and the World Food Summit goal are very unlikely to be met by 2015.

8. These poor food security outcomes are not a new phenomena. They are long-lasting and are closely related to recurrent natural disasters and/or conflict, the number of years in crisis, the breakdown of livelihoods, weak governance or public administration and most importantly the overall insufficient capacity to react to the crises. In some of these countries crises are localized to certain areas or regions.

9. The depletion of assets and the impoverishing effects of conflicts and repeated natural hazards on many households and the way they reduce their resilience to further shocks have been acknowledged. However, they are still often underestimated. General lack of adequate access to food - as a result of the inability to produce and/or purchase food following, in particular, surges in food prices - is not only an outcome of protracted crisis but is also a catalyst for further instability.

10. In addition, the interplay of current food security challenges, like food price volatility and climate change, in these contexts in particular are pushing communities and households further into poverty and hunger. Poor agricultural performance and natural resources degradation, adds to a worsening situation in a time when resources - including financial - are becoming increasingly scarce.

11. These results highlight the question as to whether the standard categories of assistance are fit for purpose and whether they adequately address the food security and livelihood needs of the people. This is a key question to be discussed by the HLEF. Furthermore the HLEF can assist in

¹ FAO-WFP, The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010. Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises, Rome.

identifying an agreed programming framework and objectives for context based interventions with a focus on local ownership, building institutions and impact evaluation.

B. HAVE WE DONE ENOUGH?

12. The thinking around protracted crises has evolved over time. More than a decade ago the term 'complex emergencies' was coined to categorize humanitarian crises resulting from conflict and which required an international response beyond the mandate of any single organization of the United Nations. More recently, the term 'fragile states' has been used to characterize situations where states have been unwilling or unable to deliver services, maintain legitimate political institutions and provide security to its people. Under this category the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development- Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) and the World Bank include situations of post conflict, prolonged crisis, fragile transition, slow progress and deteriorating governance.

13. The United Nations (UN) pays particular attention to transition situations through the UN Development Group (UNDG) and the Executive Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Working Group on Transition. This partnership between development, political, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and humanitarian actors of the broader UN System develops policies, guidelines, methodological approaches and tools to support countries in post-conflict transition settings. Transition may refer also to post disaster situations.

14. The same country may fall under multiple categories (ie post-conflict, transition, fragile situations), a situation which can create confusion as to how to analyze the problem, as well as design, programme and fund appropriate responses. In fact, the protracted crisis concept intends to contribute some clarification by emphasizing the persistent nature of emergencies. These shocks are not one-off events that briefly interrupt the process of development but instead indicate the persistence of an unstable and volatile situation. Therefore interventions require going beyond short term emergency responses to addressing underlying causes and related preventive measures.

15. Reference to multiple categories for the same country may also be the result of the co-existence of different situations within national boundaries, with crisis in localized areas. Similarly, protracted crisis may affect a region covering contiguous zones of neighboring countries sharing similar agro-ecosystems as well as elements of institutional weakness.

16. The combination of state fragility, conflict or post conflict situations with long-lasting crisis raise questions that a HLEF could address on how operating principles (the Humanitarian Principal, the Principle for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Principles for Development) could better support the immediate and long-term engagement in protracted crises and how priorities are set. National led development planning processes are a key reference for programming interventions and for a dialogue for mutual commitments. The same concept applies for regional efforts (eg those led by the African Union) when dealing with regional protracted crisis. Furthermore stakeholders could discuss the over-arching question regarding mutually reinforcing objectives of peace and development. More specifically, the attention that should be given to addressing food insecurity, livelihoods and institution building when compared with other peace-building and state-building priorities (ie security, justice and reconciliation in protracted crises contexts).

C. FOOD SECURITY POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND RESPONSES

17. People living in - or having been displaced from - countries going through long-lasting crises as a result of conflict, natural disasters and/or political instability are confronted with tremendous social, economic, political and insecurity threats. Looking at these situations with a food security lens puts people's wellbeing at the center of the interventions and policy debate.

18. In general, hunger reduction requires a twin-track approach - advocated by the Rome based agencies since 2002 and more recently by the UN High Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis. The twin-track combines:

- (a) Direct interventions and social investments to address the immediate needs of the poor and hungry (like food assistance and social safety nets) with
- (b) Long-term development programmes to enhance the performance of the productive sectors, create employment and increase the value of the assets held by the poor.

The combination of the twin-track approach with food security and nutrition dimensions: availability, access, stability of availability and access, and utilization explicitly implies policies, interventions and actions at national and local levels that address these issues.

19. Further refinement of the four pillar framework should also account for protracted crises conditions, with a view to linking emergency interventions with opportunities to rebuild resilience of food systems and capacities of local institutions, while reducing risk and building resilience to future disasters. However, more work still needs to be done to incorporate the institutional context.

20. As already mentioned, the HLEF will provide a platform for a broad conceptual debate benefiting from knowledge generated through new research and analysis of best practices in protracted crises contexts. Of particular relevance will be drawing lessons from the food crisis faced by the Horn of Africa in 2011, analyzing the underlying causes of the crisis, the long-term development investment in the last 20 years and how they have - or not - changed livelihoods in certain areas, and what type of responses follow early warnings.

21. One of the challenges to be addressed by the HLEF will be how to (re)establish a sustainable food system in an unstable situation, serving as a reminder of the need to bring elements from the livelihoods framework. Food security, formulated in terms of livelihoods, emphasizes risk reduction and the notions of vulnerability and resilience, critical for policy formulation in unstable situations.

III. ONGOING RELATED INITIATIVES

22. To avoid duplication and overlap in mandates and to identify potential partners, it is worth noting the current efforts being carried out by the international community - and for the purposes of this note - broken down into four groups according to their functions.

- i. *Coordination*: The first group refers to the United Nations coordination mechanisms, from humanitarian response to peace building. These include:
 - a) Coordination of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for humanitarian assistance, in particular the global Food Security Cluster, the Global Nutrition Cluster, the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery, and the Plan of Action on the Greater Horn of Africa, coordinated by FAO, OXFAM and the World Food Programme (WFP)
 - b) The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Executive Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Working Group on Transition
 - c) The follow-up of the Hyogo Framework for Action: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and the UN International Strategy for Disasters Reduction and d) the UN Peace Building Commission.

- ii. *Financing:* The second group refers to the multilateral and bilateral financing mechanisms for humanitarian, transition and development assistance. For example, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) managed by the UN's Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), and the work done by the IASC Group on Humanitarian Financing; the humanitarian and development aid funds from the European Commission; the OECD DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) on Multi-Donor Trust Funds for transition financing and fragile states; the UN-Peace-building fund; and the State and Peacebuilding Fund managed by the World Bank
 - iii. *Information management:* A third group on food security and nutrition (FSN) information, assessments and monitoring, fundamental for decision making, such as the Post Conflict and Post Disasters Needs Assessments (PCNA and PDNA), the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) to measure the severity of food security crisis, in addition to the instruments applied by FAO and WFP on Global Early Warning, Emergency Food Security Assessments and Vulnerability Analysis, the instruments developed and applied by the Global Nutrition Cluster for standardized monitoring and assessment of relief and transitions for measuring mortality, nutritional status and food security
 - iv. *Analysis:* The fourth group consists of food security analyses being carried out on protracted crises by specialized international organizations and research centers. Moreover, the Global Food Security Crisis Initiatives, such as the UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, or the Food Security pillar of the G-20 Seoul Multi-year Action Plan on Development include relevant issues related to food insecurity in protracted crisis
23. The HLEF will gather actors and build synergies from initiatives that pertain to the aforementioned groups/functions. Lessons learned will be extracted to further contribute to building coordination and conceptual and operational frameworks to address food insecurity in protracted crises in a more holistic and integrated way.

IV. WHAT IS THE VALUE ADDED OF HOLDING A HLEF?

24. It is anticipated that the HLEF will:
- Build a case for why addressing issues of food insecurity should be a priority in countries in protracted crisis
 - Provide an informed platform for a sound dialogue among humanitarian and development stakeholders from different perspectives linked to food security in the context of countries in protracted crisis
 - Bring a food security lens to transition situations and further build on, and contribute to, existing initiatives
 - Be an opportunity for further elaboration of a comprehensive food security policy framework in protracted crises
 - Focus on breaking successive cycles of short-term responses by considering a long-term horizon and risk reduction and management
 - Contribute to the elaboration of an Agenda for Action for Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises.

V. PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES

25. Bearing in mind the recommendations of the CFS 36, the overall purpose of the HLEF is to provide an open space for consultation and policy dialogue to increase the understanding and strengthen the collaborative efforts to deal with food security and nutrition in protracted crises.
26. The outcomes envisaged from the HLEF:
 - i. Better understanding of institutional and funding challenges in protecting and promoting livelihoods in protracted crises, and options to overcome constraints for “building back better”
 - ii. Identify more suitable vehicles or mechanisms of intervention to support the protection, promotion and rebuilding of livelihoods in protracted crises, along with enabling institutions, built on best practices and impact evaluations
 - iii. Mapping interested stakeholders, expectations and contributions to an Agenda for Action
 - iv. Elements for a comprehensive food security framework for better understanding people’s livelihoods and coping mechanisms in protracted crises and enhance the effectiveness of responses and external assistance in order to strengthen their resilience
 - v. Elements for an Agenda for Action for Food Security in Protracted Crisis (principles include: people centered, need for long-term development oriented external assistance and engagements, strengthening local learning capacity).

VI. THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS

27. The two day HLEF will be held in September 2012 in FAO, Rome.
28. Participants at the HLEF will be senior experts coming from governments, in particular from countries in protracted crisis, humanitarian, development and policy coordination agencies, humanitarian and development Civil Society Organizations, financial institutions, donor agencies and academia.
29. To build ownership on the process, preparation for the HLEF will follow a consultative approach. Experts from different sectors will be invited to prepare a series of issue papers and case studies from the field to be discussed in panel sessions in the forum.
30. Depending on resource availability, electronic and or physical consultations will be organized prior to the Forum to facilitate initial discussion on the key issues to be debated in the HLEF.
31. Based on the HLEF results, the final formulation of the Agenda for Action for Food Security in Protracted Crisis will follow a broad-based process of dialogue and consultations.
32. The outcome of the HLEF and proposed process for the elaboration of the final version of the Agenda for Action will be reported to the plenary of the Committee. Thereafter, the final version of the Agenda for Action will be presented to the Committee for approval as appropriate.
33. An Organizational Committee which will include representatives of specialized agencies and humanitarian and development partners as well as a Technical Advisory Committee will be appointed.