



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Thirty-ninth Session

Rome, Italy, 15-20 October 2012

Item V.e

ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN COUNTRIES IN PROTRACTED CRISES

Outcome of the High Level Expert Forum (HLEF) - 13-14 September 2012

Matters to be brought to the attention of the CFS

The Committee expresses satisfaction with the High Level Expert Forum on Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises (HLEF) and welcomes the report on the discussions and outcomes of the Forum as summarised in the document CFS 2012/39/7. In particular, the Committee:

- 1) Recognises the seriousness, particular characteristics and nature of food insecurity in protracted crises situations;
- 2) Notes the role of the Forum's findings and recommendations in guiding further action to promote food security in protracted crisis countries and contexts;
- 3) Re-iterates its support for a consultative process including all relevant stakeholders with a view to presenting for consideration by the CFS Plenary an "Agenda for Action for Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises", building as appropriate on the elements provided in para 28 of CFS 2012/39/7;
- 4) Requests the CFS Bureau in consultation with the Advisory Group and the Secretariat to oversee the process of arriving at an "Agenda for Action" as per the decisions of the 36th and 37th sessions of the Committee.
- 5) Calls for immediate, purposeful and coherent action by all stakeholders to promote food security and nutrition in the context of protracted crises.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Thirty-sixth session in 2010¹, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was presented with the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010 (SOFI) on Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises. This topic was also discussed during a policy round table with the same title. One recommendation of CFS 36 was to explore the possibility of organizing a High-Level Expert 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.

2. A more detailed proposal on how the HLEF could contribute to addressing food insecurity in protracted crises was approved at the Thirty-seventh Session of CFS². More specifically, the Committee:

- i) Approved the proposal to organize a High-Level Expert Forum (HLEF) on Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises with a view to inter alia elaborating an “Agenda for Action for Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises”;*
- ii) Agreed 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;*
- iii) Approved 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; and*
- iv) Agreed that the CFS Bureau will decide on the dates of the forum taking into consideration the overall CFS programme of work.*

3. In this context, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), under the auspices of CFS, organized the HLEF with a view to assess the challenges and opportunities for addressing food insecurity in protracted crises. The process was guided by an active Steering Committee made up of representatives of FAO, IFAD, WFP, the High Level Task Force on Global Food Security (HLTF), the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Brookings Institute, the UN Peace Building Commission and Civil Society representatives. The Bureau and the Advisory Group of CFS were regularly briefed by the Secretariat during preparations for the forum.

4. The HLEF took place from 13 to 14 September 2012 at FAO Headquarters in Rome. Participants included more than fifty experts from organizations including the World Bank, USAID, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, OECD, research organisations, academia, government and civil society organisations. The session were moderated by: Dan Maxwell, Associate Professor and Research Director Feinstein International Center Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy Tufts University; Sue Lautze, Senior Programme Officer, FAO; François Grunewald Executive Director – Group URD; and Alexandra Trzeciak-Duval, Head, Policy Division Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD. The final HLEF session, covering "the way forward" and formulating elements for an “Agenda for Action”, was moderated by David Nabarro, coordinator of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition.

5. An overview of the HLEF and a summary of the main outcomes is provided below. More details regarding the forum can be found on <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/hlef-home/en/>.

¹ CFS 2010/FINAL REPORT – paragraphs 24-25.

² CFS 2011/FINAL REPORT – para 64.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE HLEF

6. The main purpose of the HLEF was to provide an open space for experts and key stakeholders to discuss issues related to food insecurity in protracted crises as well as to identify immediate actions to be taken and elements for an Agenda for Action for eventual consideration by the CFS. In addition, the HLEF provided an opportunity for consultation and policy dialogue to increase understanding and strengthen collaborative efforts to appropriately deal with food security and nutrition in protracted crises situations.

7. The HLEF consisted of five interactive panel discussions featuring practitioners and academics in the areas of food security and peace building, national and regional policymakers, and civil society representatives with specific expertise and experience in addressing the interplay of food insecurity and other dimensions of protracted crises. Participants engaged freely with the panel and the chairs and moderators summarized points of consensus for each panel. The forum was informed by four briefs summarising critical issues for discussion in relation to tackling food insecurity in the context of protracted crises³. These briefs were drawn from a set of background papers written by leading practitioners and experts in the field as well as from the outcome of a two-day technical consultation among those authors held at FAO on 28-29 June 2012.

Panel 1: Causes and consequences of food insecurity in protracted crises

8. The first panel session explored the complex and overlapping set of causes and consequences present in protracted crises (be they man-made or environmental) and provided participants with a common platform of understanding on key aspects of food security in protracted crises. There was general agreement that countries in protracted crises share common features (as detailed in SOFI 2010) and require a similar set of related policy and operational responses. However, a consensus emerged for context specific analysis in order to effectively understand the root causes present in any given protracted crisis and to tailor responses and develop integrated strategies to address both short and longer term needs. The panel also underlined the importance of reinforcing country and regional ownership, stressing that ownership must be built upon consultation and input from a range of local actors including civil society. Similarly, tools and processes of analysis should be multi-dimensional and deployed in ways that reinforce in-country, multi-stakeholder ownership of both the process of better understanding each crisis situation and the process of planning for the needed responses.

9. The first panel also commented on the strong inter-play between food security and governance/fragility with a number of panelists and participants emphasizing that the success and sustainability of food security interventions depends to a large extent on governments achieving trust and legitimacy. There was a consensus that food security interventions themselves could contribute to positive governance (for example through adopting principles of inclusiveness and transparency) and therefore food security actors should strive to work not just “within”, but also “on” protracted crises. In other words, food security related actions should be part of, and contribute to, broader responses addressing protracted crises. Recent country-led assessments under the New Deal⁴, known as “fragility assessments”, have identified food security as both as a root cause of, and a path out of, fragility. This further underlined the important inter-relationship between food security and governance/fragility and pointed to a specific opportunity for future action.

10. The linkages between food security, conflict and violence – often a key characteristic of protracted crises - were also highlighted. Opportunities for food security programming to contribute to peace building objectives through activities that promote social cohesion, inclusion and trust were noted as well as the need to develop ways to integrate ‘security’ into ‘food security’ programming (i.e.

³ Briefs are available at : <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/hlef-home/en/> in all UN languages, background documents are also available in English only.

⁴ At the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, a number of countries and international organisations endorsed an agreement on a new global direction for engagement with fragile states. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States sets out five goals — legitimate politics, justice, security, economic foundations and revenues and services — to give clarity on the priorities in fragile states. Please refer to the website: <http://www.oecd.org/international%20dialogue/anewdealforengagementinfragilestates.htm> .

going beyond 'do no harm' principles and ensuring a focus on protection). Participants concluded that conflict analysis and political economy assessments need to complement food security analysis in order to inform appropriate design and implementation of food security programmes as well as to ensure those programmes are integrated into broader initiatives to promote peace and address fragility.

11. Participants also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of using countries as the unit of analysis for identifying protracted crises given that these recurrent and/or prolonged crises are often not defined or contained by national borders. However, SOFI analysis was restricted at national level due to data limitation.

12. Finally, a number of other factors - which can initiate and/or sustain protracted crises - were raised by participants including climate change, land distribution, and social and economic inequalities.

Panel 2: Political and governance opportunities and challenges: catalysts to create change

13. The second panel explored the role of governance and politics in protracted crises, looking at formal and informal institutions at national and local levels. Participants agreed that efforts to strengthen governance systems are critical. There was broad consensus that concerted governance and political actions are required in parallel to efforts to address food insecurity and that governance related efforts should move decisively beyond support to central government entities and include a wider range of stakeholders and institutions that impact on rural livelihoods.

14. Participants noted that many actors working to address food insecurity in protracted crises are not the primary agents responsible for addressing broad governance and political issues. However, food security actors could learn from existing tools and guidance on governance and political economy analysis to both inform their food security programming efforts and to guide key decisions on when and how to engage in governance and political issues. Such decisions range from opportunities to use food security programmes as a vehicle for building social capital or supporting traditional social protection mechanisms, to the possible need to engage with militarized actors.

15. Discussions also focused on some of the key areas for improvement to better address food insecurity in protracted crises, including: the need for more flexible and stable funding / investment approaches (i.e. overcoming the humanitarian vs. development funding dichotomy as well as smoothing out the volatility in investment levels pre, during and post crises); the need for enhanced coordination (i.e. common analysis, integrated strategies); and the need for more effective monitoring systems (i.e. better tracking of results and monitoring systems that are designed to assist practitioners to adapt and respond to rapidly changing contexts).

16. The importance of accountability was also underlined. There is a need to reinforce and support mechanisms for ensuring international law and humanitarian principles are respected and applied. In addition, participants noted the potential opportunity to reinforce accountability within the post-MDG dialogue on peace building and state building goals.

Panel 3: Resilience of individuals, households, communities and local institutions in protracted crises

17. Protracted crises tend to erode the resilience capacity of vulnerable people and groups, often prompting unsustainable adaptation strategies. Protracted crises with conflict can lead to irreversible and often damaging changes for individuals (in particular the long-term effects of malnutrition), institutions and societies. Resilience sits at the junction between risk-informed and conflict-sensitive programming. A resilience based approach seeks responsive and innovative capacities to cope with crisis over long periods of time as well as develop recovery strategies that build safer futures. Given this set of realities, this panel explored the value of resilience based programming.

18. The local, contextualized nature of resilience strategies mirrors the local and contextualized nature of crises themselves. There was strong consensus on the need to look at resilience from the individual level upwards, towards households, communities and institutions. In addition, the need to ensure that resilience building programming is demand driven and informed by an understanding of the risks and resilience strategies and needs of local populations was emphasized.

19. Participants recognized the value of the concept of resilience for the following reasons: resilience recognizes individuals as agents; resilience drives a simultaneous focus on short term needs as well as long term investments; resilience stimulates new and different kinds of multi-stakeholder partnerships; and it helps break the barriers between humanitarian and development funding sources. Participants also pointed to how resilience-focused programming has driven innovative funding changes (e.g. USAID's crisis modifier approach, which allows for greater funding flexibility). Other opportunities arising from resilience-focused programming include: engaging with markets and the private sector; supporting women's empowerment as a key factor for individual and household resilience; and creating greater synergies across sectors where different international and in-country actors operate (i.e. climate change, water, etc).

20. This panel endorsed the value of creating a community of practice around the concept of resilience, based on a knowledge sharing platform that would bring together data, tools and lessons learned on new approaches to building resilience in protracted crises.

Panel 4: Building partnerships to break cycles of recurrent or protracted crises: lessons from experience

21. The fourth panel provided an opportunity to share specific lessons learned on how to develop partnerships to help countries emerge from protracted crises. There was strong consensus that dramatic progress in terms of the modalities of engagement and outcomes of international and in-country efforts to promote food security in protracted crisis is imperative in the next decade. Panellists identified different types of partnerships and new ways of working that are proving to be effective in addressing food insecurity in protracted crises (or in preventing shocks from turning into protracted crises) and that could be models for changing the terms of engagement. Critical to these new models of partnership is the necessity for all actors to commit to addressing not just immediate consequences but also the underlying causes of protracted crises. Furthermore, international and in-country actors must commit to providing more predictable support for predictable needs (i.e. investing in stable safety net systems).

22. Strong consensus emerged on the need to support national and local actors and institutions in a manner that empowers them to take action and build their own capacities to address food insecurity. Key to this is keeping the primary stakeholders - individuals and communities alike - at the center of programming and accountability systems and processes. Efforts to promote state building in protracted crises need to give adequate attention to supporting institutions and capacity within local communities as well as to protecting and building resilience. Participants called for synergies to be created between ongoing efforts at global and regional levels (eg. New Deal, NEPAD / CAADP, IGAD, CILSS, etc). New ways of working with different sets of partners that are successful should be replicated, where possible (eg. FAO/WFP/UNICEF integrated strategies/analysis in Somalia; or USAID/Ethiopia). The need to more explicitly engage in partnerships with the private sector (in particular farmers and their organizations), marginalized stakeholders (i.e. women, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, etc.), and civil society in general was seen as crucial.

23. When discussing lessons learned, HLEF participants emphasized the critical link between nutrition and food security. Donors, experts and practitioners at regional and national levels all asserted that nutrition should be a central part the analysis and programming undertaken as part of a resilience agenda. They concluded that efforts to deal with nutrition – and the implications that this has in terms of partnerships - should be a central part of all future strategies to address protracted crises.

24. The following key requirements for effective partnerships were identified: trust, flexibility and shared values and objectives. Participants also acknowledged that maximizing collaboration across institutions and sectors is inherently challenging as is ensuring timely and responsive implementation of programmes on the ground. The forum underscored that time constraints often pose particularly difficult challenges and emphasized the urgent need to leverage and expand the valuable network of stakeholders created through the HLEF with the overall aim of committing collectively to work together in new ways until sustainable results are achieved.

Panel 5: The Way Forward: elements for an agenda for action

25. The final panel was dedicated to building on the principles, insights and recommendations identified during the first four panels with a view to identifying critical actions that will ensure momentum on the issue of addressing food insecurity in protracted crises. The experts and participants confirmed that despite contextual differences regarding the drivers of food insecurity in protracted crises, common characteristics and constraints exist. These commonalities argue strongly in favor of elaborating an Agenda for Action - built on the basis of wide stakeholder consensus - to guide action at global, regional and national level. There was a discussion on possible political perceptions around the term “Food Insecurity in Countries in Protracted Crises”, with some participants questioning whether national governments might prefer alternative terms. However both CFS 36 and CFS 37 have endorsed the term “Food Insecurity in Countries in Protracted Crises”, as coined in previous literature and in SOFI 2010. In addition, the term is associated with specific analyses, policies, actions and processes. Participants pointed out that it is the characteristics and constraints shared by countries that are struggling to achieve food security in challenging environments that is important rather than the term.

26. The panellists and participants identified a number of possible immediate actions to be considered by different stakeholders, including: mainstreaming, on a pilot basis, food security concerns into other key agendas and plans of actions such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States; promoting resilience at the core of selected responses to food insecurity in protracted crises; scaling up positive experience on flexible funding mechanisms (short-term, long-term); and creating a multi-stakeholder knowledge platform to share lessons learned and analyses related to the topic.

27. Participants also strongly voiced their conviction that suffering from persistent food insecurity in specific geographic areas or among specific population groups/communities as a consequence of protracted crises can no longer be tolerated. The panel called on the wide range of stakeholders represented in the HLEF to help spearhead a transformative process, putting the needs of countries in protracted crises – including strategies to address their persistent food insecurity, which is linked to societal stability more generally – at the forefront of a new commitment to improve and enlarge investments of resources from national and local governments, the international community, regional bodies, the business community and civil society. Such a transformative process requires new solutions and new ways of working in partnership to achieve sustainable progress.

28. Based on the outcome of the discussions, participants proposed that an Agenda for Action be developed - under the auspices of CFS and in a consultative manner with all key stakeholders - that would build on the following elements:

- Recognition that country ownership and accountability for response strategies is critical;
- Recognition of the supporting role played by regional bodies in assisting countries in protracted crises to integrate food security into their development and governance reform plans;
- Recognition of the important contributions of local social institutions, civil society and the private sector in addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity in protracted crises;
- Recognition of the critical role of governance, fragility and peace building processes in addressing food security in protracted crises, and, conversely, the contribution food security plays in addressing state fragility and conflict resolution. In particular:
 - food security related considerations, investments and planning need to be fully mainstreamed into other key initiatives – such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States - aimed at peace and state building as well as reducing poverty and vulnerability in situations of fragility, conflict and weak governance;
 - food security and related analytical tools need to be mainstreamed into relevant analytical frameworks such as peace building, conflict/political economy analysis, or state fragility assessments;

- Recognition of the need to develop more flexible, responsive and stable funding mechanisms and investment vehicles suited to the specific needs of protracted crises situations. The consultative process should engage with resource partners on strategies and specific actions to achieve this;
- Prioritisation of actions based on results-based approaches and realistic objectives that increase accountability of all stakeholders for food security-focused interventions in protracted crises contexts;
- Recognition of the opportunities presented by “resilience building programming” to develop integrated strategies and programmes to address both short term food security needs arising in protracted crises contexts and longer term structural causes underlying food insecurity in protracted crises;
- Potential development of a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience among national and regional practitioners and policy makers as well as international agencies and resource partners working on food insecurity in protracted crises with a view to integrating systematic learning into responses strategies;
- Exploration of preventative, preparatory and early actions (by relevant stakeholders) that could assist countries in preventing shocks from developing into protracted crises as well as to mitigate the negative impacts of unavoidable shocks;
- Need for a transformative agenda that would stimulate:
 - a) greater understanding of the multi-dimensional causes of protracted crises;
 - b) the continuous development and sharing of more effective analytical tools to assist in identifying root causes as well as the appropriate combination of political and technical responses to address these diverse root causes;
 - c) the implementation of new ways of working in partnership in protracted crises and harmonized action at global, regional, national and local levels;
 - d) improved monitoring of the overall progress made towards reducing the number of countries affected by protracted crises and the prevalence of food insecurity in those countries, including through integration and partnership with wider initiatives related to the monitoring and analysis of food insecurity.
- Elaboration of an Agenda for Action through a fully consultative and inclusive process that also seeks support from various political and policy processes at national, regional and global levels (e.g. G20, g7+, CAADP, AU, etc.).