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International Policy Coordination in the Face of Emerging Global Food Crises

Lessons from the Past and Potential
Pathways for the Future

Presentation to CFS Workstream
on Coordinated Policy Responses
to Emerging Food Crises
September 5, 2024

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1970s

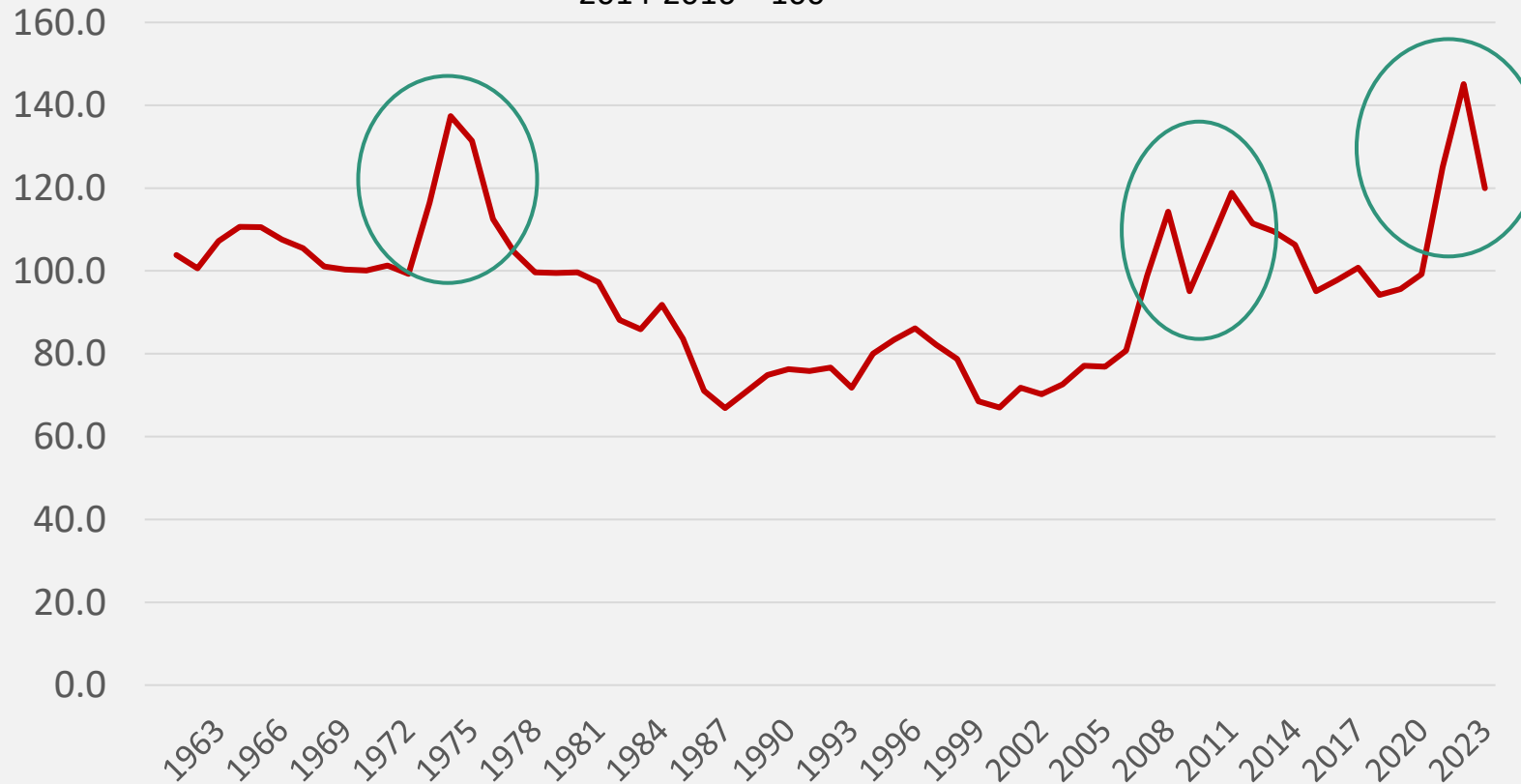
2008-12

2020-2024

Major worldwide food crises over the past 50 years

FAO Food Price index (real prices):

2014-2016 = 100



Tendency to establish new institutions and initiatives in the face of crises

Long history of institutional and policy coordination – uneven results

Lessons and role of CFS in policy coordination

The 1970s food crisis

The World Food Conference (1974) established three new institutions:

- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- World Food Council (WFC) – coordination role, but now defunct



Photo credit: United Nations



Photo credit: United Nations

2008-12 food price crisis

A new proliferation of initiatives in wake of this crisis:

- UN High Level Task Force on the Food Security Crisis (HLTF) and CFA
- Reform of the CFS (2009)
- Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) – G20
- New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) – G8 - now defunct
- Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS)

2020-2024 Food Crisis

- UN Food Systems Coordination Hub
- Global Crisis Response Group (UN)
- Global Alliance for Food Security (G7 and WB)
- Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty (G20)
- CFS – Effort to undertake its mandated international policy coordination role in face of crises



Photo credits: United Nations & FAO

In terms of substance:

- Important to focus on human right to adequate food and not be influenced by commercial or geopolitical interests
- Need to address root and structural causes of hunger and food insecurity, not just increases in agricultural production

In terms of process:

- Uneven power dynamics and patchy representation undermine legitimacy and effectiveness
- Lack of sufficient resources can weaken effectiveness
- Evidence-based policy recommendations can facilitate agreement on policy responses in face of crises
- Need for flexibility and capacity to have genuine debate about sensitive issues

What are the lessons for international policy coordination in response to emerging food crises?

Potential Challenges

- Worldwide food crises are becoming more frequent and complex
- Geopolitical dynamics and economic interests can still influence deliberations
- Resources for key functions, including monitoring and enforcement must be secured



Photo credit: FAO

The CFS is well situated to take the lead in global food crisis policy coordination:

- Right to Food at centre of its mandate
- Unique legitimacy
 - Wide representation and participation
 - Evidence-based HLPE
- Proven track record of policy guidance including that relevant to global crises

Potential first steps...

Begin in areas where there is already consensus by CFS on policy guidance, to support a food crisis response framework, for example:

- Bolster national and local safety nets and use local purchase mechanisms (2011)
- Promote diverse market arrangements for greater resilience and flexibility in face of disruptions and promote an open rules-based trading system (2021)
- Diversify production to improve resilience to climate change (2016)
- Pledge to not use food as an instrument of political or economic pressure (2015)
- Establish or scale-up of food reserves, including at community, national, and regional levels (2015)

Thank you for listening

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nature food

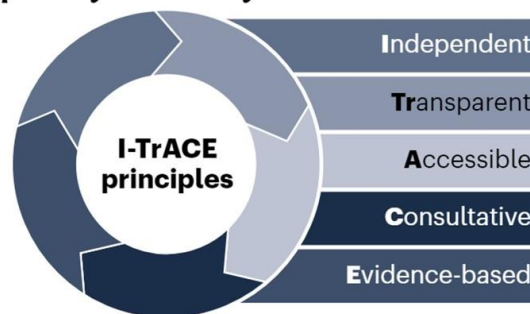
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The I-TrACE principles for legitimate food systems science–policy–society interfaces

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