



Wednesday, 15 October 2008
17:30 - 19:00
Green Room: Building A, Room 122

SIDE EVENT

Initiative on Partnership and High-level Expert Group to address Global Agriculture and Food Security

The side event is organized in response to requests from member countries to learn about the status of the initiatives for a global partnership and high-level expert group on food and agriculture, including the one envisaged by the G8 leaders at their annual Summit in Hokkaido, Japan on 8 July, 2008.

Members are particularly interested in a discussion on the implications for the three Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) of such initiatives.

The side event will provide an informal forum for preliminary exchange of views and brainstorming on these issues.

1. The High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis

On 28 April 2008, at Berne, on the occasion of a meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the United Nations Secretary-General established a High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis under his chairmanship and composed of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, Bretton Woods institutions and relevant parts of the UN Secretariat. He has asked the Director-General of FAO, Jacques Diouf, to serve as Vice-Chairman of the Task Force. UN Under-Secretary-General, John Holmes was appointed as Task Force Coordinator and Assistant Secretary-General David Nabarro as Deputy Coordinator. 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 prioritized plan of action and coordinating its implementation.

The High Level Task Force has prepared 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.

The CFA is a framework for setting out the joint position of the HLTF members - including the three RBAs - on proposed actions to: i) address the current threats and opportunities resulting from high food prices; ii) propose policy changes to avoid future food crisis; and iii) contribute to country, regional and global food and nutritional security. While the CFA is the agreed product of the HLTF, it has been widely consulted with other parts of the UN system, international experts, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and NGOs. The CFA aims to be a catalyst for action by providing governments, international and regional agencies and organizations, and civil society groups a menu of policies and actions from which to draw appropriate responses. The key to achievement of the outcomes set in the CFA will be close partnerships between national governments, HLTF members, civil society and private sector organizations, donors as well as other vital actors.

2. The G8 Proposal

The G8 communiqué states:

"(...) We commend the leadership of the United Nations (UN) and Bretton Woods institutions in convening the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis to establish the "Comprehensive Framework for Action," and urge the relevant stakeholders to swiftly implement plans to achieve prompt delivery for countries in need.

(...) To coordinate and implement this effectively, we will work with the international community in forming a **global partnership on agriculture and food**, involving all relevant actors, including developing country governments, the private sector, civil society, donors, and international institutions. This partnership, by strengthening and building on existing UN and other international institutions, could provide efficient and effective support to country-monitoring and assessment of progress made. The UN should facilitate and provide coordination.

(...) As part of this partnership, a **global network of high-level experts on food and agriculture** would provide science-based analysis, and highlight needs and future risks."



(...) We have tasked a G8 Experts Group to monitor the implementation of our commitments, and identify other ways in which the G8 can support the work of the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis and work with other interested parties for the next UN General Assembly to realize the global partnership."

3. Towards a Global Partnership on Agriculture and Food

According to the G8 statement, this Partnership would involve all relevant actors "building on existing UN and other international institutions". With other UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes and the Bretton Woods institutions, the RBAs have been playing a key role in elaborating the CFA. The RBAs with their institutional structures, knowledge, expertise, and field presence, in cooperation with the World Bank and regional development banks, NGOs and civil society, are providing effective support to governments for the effective implementation of the CFA.

Institutional Structures:

- The Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which was established following the World Food Conference of 1974 as a standing committee of the FAO Council serves as a forum in the United Nations system for the review and follow-up of policies and programmes concerning world food security. Mandated with the direct responsibility to monitor the implementation of the World Food Summit (WFS) Plan of Action, the Committee also examines major problems and issues affecting the world food situation, monitors stakeholder actions and proposes necessary steps to promote the goal of world food security. The CFS is open to all Members of FAO and the UN, and involves representatives of other international agencies, NGOs, civil society and the private sector. As such it provides a neutral forum where stakeholders meet to negotiate agreements and debate policy.
- The International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) brings together key UN and civil society players at international level to work jointly on hunger and malnutrition issues at global and country levels. Its principal functions are joint advocacy, networking/support for national programmes, and reporting to the CFS on progress made towards the WFS and MDG goals. National Alliances Against Hunger (NAAHs) now exist in 18 developing countries, 5 OECD countries and an additional 25 NAAHs are at various stages of implementation. The IAAH is fostering networking and partnership among NAAHs. The Heads of the RBAs have confirmed their support to strengthening the IAAH in a joint statement signed on 26 May 2008. This statement calls for expanding the membership of the IAAH and strengthening its global work, notably by developing the advocacy capacities of National Alliances against Hunger.

Knowledge and Expertise: The RBAs are fundamental repositories of data, information and analysis at all levels on food security and agriculture. FAO as a knowledge organisation and centre of excellence is present throughout the spectrum of information and knowledge generation, collection, analysis and dissemination at global, regional and national levels on a wide range of thematic areas: food, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, policy, nutrition and rural development. In many of these areas, FAO is the main supplier of data, information and knowledge leading to numerous high-quality publications and reports. The World Food Programme's World Hunger Series reports on various aspects of hunger in the world. WFP is also a key partner in conducting joint FAO-WFP crop and food supply assessment missions (CFSAMs) which form the basis for humanitarian response to food emergencies. In addition, WFP is the key partner in the inter-agency webpage information source on emergencies, the HEWS (Humanitarian Early Warning Service), and conducts and disseminates EFSAs (Emergency Food Security Assessment) and CFSVAs (Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis) studies around the world. IFAD, with 30 years of investment and work experience with small farmers and rural communities, has gained strong knowledge and expertise in innovative approaches for agricultural development and poverty reduction.

Field Presence: FAO, IFAD and WFP have multi-disciplinary expertise and vast field presence, such as the Food



Security Theme Groups (FSTG) at the country level. The FSTGs were established in March 2007 by the RBAs to serve as a coordination mechanism for joint food security programming, information sharing, inter-agency harmonization, as well as interaction with counterpart governments. Special attention is paid to linking the FSTG's work to ongoing development processes, such as the National and Regional Medium-Term Priority Frameworks, the MDG Africa Initiative, the "One UN" Programme and collaboration in the UN Country Teams coordinated by the Resident Coordinators, the National Alliances Against Hunger (NAAHs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) at country level. Currently, FSTGs are established in 55 countries around the world, including two regional mechanisms for Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Building on these existing and growing country-level efforts would allow the Global Partnership to draw on available data and information, knowledge and expertise, investment programmes, strong capacities in the design and implementation of initiatives, and a wide field presence across the globe which can play a vital role in combating the scourge of hunger and food insecurity.

Finally, many mechanisms exist with the direct support of the RBAs. Such mechanisms have to be more coordinated, complemented and strengthened. Building on existing structures permits also to accelerate a process of implementation, to limit administrative and operational costs and to use the gained experience and knowledge in the field.

4. Towards a Global Network of High-level Experts on Food and Agriculture

On 5 June 2008, on the occasion of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security held at FAO headquarters in Rome, President Nicolas Sarkozy called for the creation of a Global Network of High-Level Experts on Food and Agriculture (GNEFA) and requested that FAO collaborate with the French authorities on this project. The G8 Leaders at their Summit in July 2008 at Hokkaido stated: "As part of the Global partnership on agriculture and food, a global network of high-level experts on food and agriculture would provide science-based analysis, and highlight needs and future risks."

An independent and neutral forum: Strengthening the existing expert groups on food and agriculture could bring an additional and valuable contribution to the current political and scientific context by widely disseminating high-level analyses of food insecurity issues, with increased visibility. Such mechanism would provide a synthesis of scientific knowledge to decision-makers dealing with food security and also regular and reliable information on the current and long-term economic situation of world food security, based on a scientific consensus at the highest level. It would need to develop strong relations with international academic and research institutions.

Building on existing structures: Strengthening of the existing expert groups should not result in a new, parallel intergovernmental structure which would compete with already existing institutions. This would ensure its recognition by Member States of UN food organizations and allow the participation of representatives of civil society, NGOs and the private sector who have already institutional links with them. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) could be considered, among others, as an interesting example.

Taking stock of the expertise framework: FAO as a Knowledge Organization is a world centre for collection and dissemination of data and information in food and agriculture. With its special and general committees, FAO is working today with 400 renowned international experts. The Organization builds its own technical expertise on specialized information systems and makes data and knowledge globally available through various information portals. Obviously, FAO's work is closely integrated into the international development agenda. As a broker for international agreements/conventions, FAO hosts numerous international agreements, conventions and guidelines, which have been developed and concluded under its auspices and/or are being serviced by the Organization. It offers an independent international forum for discussions and decisions on matters of a technical and/or political nature and provides the necessary technical and secretarial support. Examples include the Rotterdam Convention, the International Plant Protection Convention, Codex Alimentarius, the International



Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, guidelines on sustainable forest management and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Right to Food in the Context of National Food Security. The technical experience within the FAO secretariat serves to support these conventions and agreements successfully. FAO also conducts a considerable part of its technical analyses in close partnership with other international institutions such as the WTO, WHO, World Bank, CGIAR, OECD, WFP, IFAD.

In addition to the annual monitoring reports, FAO hosts a system of short, medium and long-term outlook products. FAO's medium-term outlook is undertaken in close co-operation with the OECD. The projections are updated annually and published jointly. Its long-term perspectives, offering in-depth analyses of the entire spectrum of agriculture, food and natural resources, are widely quoted and published in the "World agriculture: towards 20xx/xx" series. FAO's long-term outlook work includes projections for global fish supply and demand (e.g. "Fish to 2030"), again is a joint effort that is undertaken in close cooperation with international partners (World Bank, IFPRI and Worldfish).

Many committees are active in the area of food and agriculture. As part of its mandate, FAO has established numerous committees and panels of experts composed of external collaborators recognized as experts in their field of activity. FAO has identified about 400 experts who could contribute at a high-level.