

May 2007



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

E

COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-second Session

Rome, 18-22 June 2007

Report of the 33rd Session of the Committee on World Food Security
(Rome, 7-10 May 2007)

Table of Contents

	Paragraphs
I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS	1 - 3
II. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD SECURITY SITUATION	4 - 13
A. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	4 - 13
III. STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM SPECIAL, NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR FOOD SECURITY AND OTHER RELEVANT FAO FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMES	14 - 21
IV. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST HUNGER (IAAH)	22 - 29
V. OTHER MATTERS	30 - 36
A. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION	30
B. ANY OTHER BUSINESS	31 - 36

APPENDIX A: Agenda of the Session

APPENDIX B: Membership of the Committee

APPENDIX C: Countries and organizations represented at the session

APPENDIX D: List of documents

APPENDIX E: Statement by the Deputy Director-General

**MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION
BY THE COUNCIL**

**IN REVIEWING THIS REPORT, THE COUNCIL
MAY WISH TO GIVE PARTICULAR
CONSIDERATION TO THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN
PARAGRAPHS
13, 20, 21, 27, 28, 30, 31 and 34**

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The Committee on World Food Security held its Thirty-third Session from 7 to 10 May 2007 at FAO Headquarters in Rome. The Session was attended by delegates from 118 out of 137 Members of the Committee, by observers from 4 other Member Nations of FAO, the Holy See, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Sovereign Order of Malta, by representatives from the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme; and by observers from 5 intergovernmental and 29 international non-governmental organizations. The report contains the following annexes: Appendix A - Agenda of the session; Appendix B - Membership of the Committee; Appendix C - Countries and Organizations represented at the session; and Appendix D - List of documents. Mr David A. Harcharik, Deputy Director-General, made a statement, which is attached as Appendix E. The full list of participants is available from the CFS Secretariat.
2. The Session was opened by Professor Michel Thibier of France, as Chairperson. He sought and obtained approval of the Committee for the replacement of two Vice-Chairpersons, namely H.E. Tomas F. Mandlate, Minister of Agriculture, Mozambique, and Mr Kazi Abul Kashem, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh, as they were no longer available to serve on the Bureau. The Committee approved their respective replacements on the Bureau by Dr. Carlos de Sousa, Deputy-Minister of Youth and Sports, Mozambique, and Mr. M. Abdul Aziz, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh. Mr Christer Wretborn, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Sweden to FAO and Mr Yüksel Yücekal, Alternate Permanent Representative of Turkey to FAO continue as Vice Chairpersons for the 2006-2007 biennium.
3. The Committee appointed a Drafting Committee composed of the Members of Austria, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Germany, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Oman, Paraguay, Philippines, San Marino and Sweden, under the chairmanship of Mr Francisco Coy (Colombia).

II. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

A. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

4. The Committee commended the Secretariat for the generally balanced nature of the document (CFS:2007/2) describing the world food security situation, and the timeliness of the special focus on the issue of bioenergy, in particular in relation to food security dimensions. The Committee noted with concern the lack of progress in reducing the number of hungry people, especially in recent years, and called for immediate action by all to ensure that the World Food Summit and Millennium Development goals are achieved.
5. The Committee noted that food emergencies persist in some 34 countries worldwide which will require some type of food assistance.
6. Most Members supported The State of Food and Agriculture 2006 recommendations on food aid, namely:
 - the elimination of untargeted form of food aid;
 - the untying of food aid from domestic production and shipping requirements;
 - the use of in-kind food aid only where food insecurity is caused by a shortage of food;
 - the use of local and regional food aid procurement where appropriate; and
 - the improvement of information systems, needs analysis and monitoring to ensure that appropriate and timely interventions are undertaken.

7. Some Members also noted that no mechanisms for addressing food emergencies should be eliminated from donor arsenals, including in-kind contributions.
8. The Committee agreed that food aid was an important element in the twin-track approach which combines humanitarian food aid and actions that lead to rehabilitation and development.
9. Many members recommended that FAO continue to mainstream “The Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security” in its food security analyses and policies.
10. The Committee recognized bioenergy as a complex new area with potential positive and negative implications for food security. Members expressed that socially and ecologically sustainable biofuel production offers potential to meet increasing alternative fuel demands and to provide income to producers, and export earnings for developing countries.
11. However, there is a need for an in-depth analysis of the multiple challenges, risks and opportunities offered by biofuels from all sources.
12. Due to various circumstances of different regions and to concerns regarding bioenergy, some Members noted the necessity of seeking ways of increasing the use of alternative energy resources like solar, wind and other renewable energy.
13. The Committee made the following recommendations:

For Governments:

- pursue a twin-track approach to food security and ensure that food security is accorded priority in national development and poverty alleviation plans and strategies;
- enhance investments in agriculture and rural development and all related institutions;
- implement coherent bioenergy policies and strategies with a multi-sectoral perspective (agriculture, trade, environment and energy) in the context of food security; and
- continue to promote the participation of women in decision making processes and their access to resources to ensure food security.

For FAO:

- provide a more analytical overview of the variable performance amongst the regions in reducing food insecurity;
- identify the causes of the positive developments and trends in some countries in Africa;
- include more explicitly the issues of economic growth and demographics and their impact on food security in future assessment documents;
- pay due attention to the role of non-cereal crops in the food security situation of African countries;
- continue to develop and implement the Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification (IPC) methodology and tool in conjunction with other UN agencies, NGOs and other specialized institutions;
- develop an analytical framework with a regional perspective for assessing the impact of bioenergy on the food security situation in different contexts, including consideration of the agricultural policies adopted by Member States, with particular regard to small, marginal and poor farmers; and
- ensure that various studies being undertaken by FAO on bioenergy are coordinated and that comprehensive information is available to members.
- provide technical advice to developing countries interested in production of biomass or bioenergy in line with their specific needs, comparative advantages, and within the context of food security.
- provide guidance for governments, agricultural organizations and farmers to help them adapt to climate change and to the new challenges of bioenergy.

For all concerned parties:

- improve food security data and analysis that support policy and programme development and implementation;
- ensure needs assessments incorporate more detailed analysis of options for responses to crisis and reflect the multidimensional nature of food security with a long-term perspective;
- continue to support local, national and regional institutions to ensure that both short and long term food security concerns remain a priority on the global political agenda;
- promote South-South cooperation as a partnership tool for food security programmes and sharing of experience, knowledge and technology in relation to bioenergy; and
- ensure the inclusion of nutritional strategies in the plans and programmes on food security to meet people's need, particularly those that take advantage, when possible, of the available knowledge on ancestral crops and foods, and help to preserve the cultural identity of the concerned populations.

III. STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM SPECIAL, NATIONAL, AND REGIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR FOOD SECURITY AND OTHER RELEVANT FAO FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMES

14. The Committee acknowledged the work of the Secretariat in preparing the document (CFS:2007/3) describing the impacts of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) and the transition towards National and Regional Programmes for Food Security (NPFS and RPFS respectively) as well as other relevant FAO activities in support of food security in member countries.
15. The Committee expressed appreciation for the contribution made by the SPFS in demonstrating intensification, diversification and water management technologies, resulting in increased production and improved livelihood as well as the contribution made to creating policy and institutional environments that are favourable to achieving food security.
16. The Committee noted the efforts made by the Secretariat to implement the recommendations of the 2002 Independent External Evaluation of SPFS, in particular the progressive shift towards more comprehensive food security programmes while ensuring national ownership. FAO should continue playing a catalytic role in building institutional capacities and facilitating the formulation and implementation processes of the NPFS and RPFS.
17. The Committee also noted that national commitment and ownership of NPFS will foster coordination and integration with relevant sectoral and national poverty reduction policies, strategies and programmes. In those countries which have decided to launch the NPFS, it is expected to play a major role in implementing the WFS Plan of Action.
18. The Committee commended the use of South-South Cooperation in the implementation of food security programmes. Some members emphasized the need for South-South cooperants to satisfy technical and language skill requirements and be able to adapt to cultural environments different from their own.
19. The Committee emphasized the importance of establishing systems for quantitatively monitoring and evaluating NPFS and RPFS and assessing their impact and called for using this exercise as an opportunity for drawing lessons learned including successes and shortcomings of NPFS, RPFS and other relevant experiences.
20. The Committee agreed that starting in 2009 and until 2015, the CFS agenda will include a standing item on 'Status and Lessons Learned from National and Regional Programmes for Food

Security' every two years, in Conference years, and that extracts from the Committee's debate on this item will be presented as part of the documentation for the Regional Conferences' review of Progress in Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action that takes place every two years, in non-Conference years.

21. The Committee further recommended that:
- Reporting on Status and Lessons Learned from National and Regional Programmes for Food Security draw from both successes and shortfalls and identify challenges ahead;
 - Systems be put in place for quantitatively monitoring and evaluating NPFS and RPFS and assessing their impact, and appropriate assistance to countries be provided; and
 - NPFS and RPFS be integrated with relevant sectoral and national poverty reduction policies, strategies and programmes.

IV. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST HUNGER (IAAH)

22. The newly appointed Assistant Director General of the Knowledge and Communication Department (KC), Mrs Lorraine B. Williams, presented the report of the Secretariat on the recent developments and future challenges of the International Alliance Against Hunger (CFS:2007/4). This document recalls the discussions and recommendations made during the Side Event which involved various National Alliances organised during the last 32nd session of the CFS in October 2006 and during the 131st Session of the FAO Council in November 2006. It highlights the need for preparing a resource mobilisation strategy and for securing adequate resources in support of National Alliances and the functioning of the IAAH Secretariat.

23. The Committee welcomed the ADG/KC who will take over the responsibility of managing the IAAH Secretariat. It acknowledged the continued activities of the International Alliance Against Hunger and its National Alliances in different countries. Most Members and regional groups reaffirmed their support to the IAAH. Several Members provided details on their National Alliances activities and/or on linkages between national alliances and programmes on the fight against hunger and poverty. They noted the major role that civil society and the private sector play in building and developing Alliances.

24. Specific activities related to twinning arrangements between National Alliances, such as Guatemala and the United States of America and the possible cooperation between Lebanon and France Alliances, were presented.

25. Several Members highlighted the regional Initiative "*Latin America and the Caribbean Without Hunger 2025*" as a good example of national and regional commitment for public awareness and cooperation, providing details on the status of implementation of the initiative. They also referred to the recent visit of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil to the FAO Regional Office for Latin America to sign a Memorandum of Understanding. These Members thanked the Government of Spain for its important contribution to the above mentioned initiative.

26. In their interventions, several Members welcomed the good collaboration established between the Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International) for the implementation of the IAAH and recommended this be strengthened.

27. The Committee emphasized that FAO has a crucial role for coordination, communication, advocacy and capacity building of National Alliances. Some Members recommended increasing linkages with the national programmes for food security whenever possible and with other food security programmes and networks. Others highlighted the IAAH's catalytic role for supporting concrete activities at field level and for exchanging information, experiences and good practices between National Alliances. One Member proposed to include a standing agenda item on the IAAH during the FAO regional conferences.

28. Many Members supported the concept of preparing a resource mobilisation strategy which would help the IAAH to become increasingly self-supporting, proposing innovative sources of funds such as philanthropic foundations. However some Members indicated that continued support would be needed from the Rome-based UN food and other agencies to continue running adequately the Secretariat of the IAAH and fulfil their initial commitment to develop the IAAH.

29. The Committee commended the Secretariat for its report and efforts to continue developing its activities and to support those of the National Alliances in collaboration with NGOs/CSOs and the Rome-based agencies.

V. OTHER MATTERS

A. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

30. The Committee recommended that its Thirty-fourth Session be held in October 2008 and linked to the World Food Day, to the extent possible. Many Members called for a general discussion in the appropriate fora on the format and the frequency of CFS Sessions. The Chairman indicated that this should be carried out in appropriate Governing Bodies.

B. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. Based on the request of many Members at the Thirty-second Session in 2006, the Committee was presented with four options for the continued engagement of multi-stakeholders in future years. The Secretariat provided background information on practice and past experience that have been discussed or implemented in the past and identified four complementary options. The Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare a document outlining these and other possible options for the continued engagement of multiple stakeholders, which would be discussed as a separate agenda item at the Thirty-fourth session.

32. The Committee noted that in accordance with the decisions of the 20th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (25-28 April 2007) an overview on the follow-up of the ICARRD is to be “submitted as an Information document to the Conference, in November 2007, and to be considered by the 34th Session of the CFS in 2008”.

33. The Secretariat informed the Committee on the main outcome and recommendations of the International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security, 3-5 May 2007, Rome. The objective of the meeting was to identify organic agriculture’s potential and limits in addressing the food security challenge, including conditions required for its success through the analysis of existing information in different agro-ecological areas of the world. Some Members emphasized the importance of including organic agriculture as an element in National Programmes on Food Security. Other Members appreciated the insights into organic agriculture provided to the CFS by the Conference but felt that further analysis was needed.

34. The Committee approved the document CFS:2007/Inf.7 – Quadrennial Report on the Progress in the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action: A Report of the Committee on World Food Security through the FAO Council to ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council of the United Nations) which will be presented as Council document CL 132/LIM/... with the correction of the title : Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security in paragraph 3 and other similar omissions.

35. A few Members stressed the voluntary nature of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security; they consider this as one among many potential actions that governments and other actors can take to address food insecurity and did not support the mainstreaming of the Voluntary Guidelines

in the work of the Organization. They noted with concern that in some documents issued by FAO, including an FAO news release, dated May 7, entitled “What about the right to food?”, the careful balance that was reached in the development of the voluntary guidelines was not reflected. To the contrary, the guidelines were incorrectly described as representing a legally binding obligation.

36. On a related issue, one Member expressed extreme concern over a phrase in a joint FAO/World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts publication that stated their aboriginal peoples were pushed off their land and their rights not recognized; whereas, the rights of all aboriginals are fully protected in the Member’s Constitution. The Member indicated that the information should have been verified with the Member and there may be further official communications with the Organization on this subject.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA**I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

- a) Adoption of Agenda and Timetable
- b) Statement by the Director-General or his Representative
- c) Membership of the Committee

II. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

- a) Global Assessment
- b) Biofuels

III. SPECIAL/NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR FOOD SECURITY**IV. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST HUNGER****V. OTHER MATTERS**

- a) Arrangements for the Thirty-fourth Session
- b) Any Other Business
- c) Report of the Session

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY
(as of 7 May 2007)

Afghanistan	Cuba	India
Albania	Cyprus	Indonesia
Algeria	Czech Republic	Iran, Islamic Republic of
Angola	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Iraq
Argentina	Democratic Republic of Congo	Ireland
Armenia	Denmark	Italy
Australia	Djibouti	Japan
Austria	Dominican Republic	Jordan
Azerbaijan	Ecuador	Kenya
Bangladesh	Egypt	Kuwait
Belarus	El Salvador	Kyrgyz Republic
Belgium	Eritrea	Lebanon
Benin	Estonia	Lesotho
Bhutan	Ethiopia	Liberia
Bolivia	European Community	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Brazil	Finland	Lithuania
Bulgaria	France	Luxembourg
Burkina Faso	Gabon	Madagascar
Burundi	Gambia (the)	Malawi
Cameroon	Germany	Malaysia
Canada	Ghana	Mali
Cap Vert	Greece	Mauritania
Central African Republic	Guatemala	Mauritius
Chad	Guinea	Mexico
Chile	Guinea-Bissau	Moldova
China	Guyana	Morocco
Colombia	Haiti	Mozambique
Congo	Honduras	Netherlands
Costa Rica	Hungary	New Zealand
Côte d'Ivoire	Iceland	Nicaragua
Croatia		Niger

Nigeria	Saudi Arabia	Tonga
Norway	Senegal	Turkey
Oman	Serbia	Uganda
Pakistan	Seychelles	Ukraine
Panama	Sierra Leone	United Arab Emirates
Papua New Guinea	Slovakia	United Kingdom
Paraguay	Slovenia	United Republic of Tanzania
Peru	Solomon Islands	United States of America
Philippines	South Africa	Uruguay
Poland	Spain	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Portugal	Sri Lanka	Yemen
Qatar	Sudan	Zambia
Republic of Korea	Sweden	Zimbabwe
Romania	Switzerland	
Russian Federation	Syrian Arab Republic (the)	
San Marino	Thailand	

APPENDIX C

COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE SESSION

Afghanistan	Eritrea
Algeria	Estonia
Angola	European Community (Member Organization)
Argentina	Finland
Armenia	France
Australia	Gabon
Austria	Germany
Azerbaijan	Ghana
Bangladesh	Greece
Belgium	Guatemala
Bolivia	Guinea
Brazil	Haiti
Bulgaria	Honduras
Burkina Faso	Hungary
Cameroon	India
Canada	Indonesia
Cape Verde	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Chad	Iraq
Chile	Ireland
China	Italy
Colombia	Japan
Congo	Jordan
Costa Rica	Kenya
Cuba	Kuwait
Cyprus	Lebanon
Czech Republic	Lesotho
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Liberia
Denmark	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Djibouti	Lithuania
Dominican Republic	Luxembourg
Ecuador	Madagascar
Egypt	Malaysia
El Salvador	

Mali	Switzerland
Mauritania	Syrian Arab Republic
Mauritius	Thailand
Mexico	Turkey
Morocco	Uganda
Mozambique	Ukraine
Netherlands	United Arab Emirates
New Zealand	United Kingdom
Nicaragua	United Republic of Tanzania
Niger	United States of America
Nigeria	Uruguay
Norway	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Oman	Yemen
Pakistan	Zambia
Panama	Zimbabwe
Paraguay	
Peru	Equatorial Guinea
Philippines	Namibia
Poland	Togo
Portugal	Tunisia
Qatar	
Republic of Korea	Holy See
Romania	Palestine Liberation Organization
Russian Federation	Sovereign Order of Malta
San Marino	
Saudi Arabia	
Senegal	
Serbia	
Seychelles	
Sierra Leone	
Slovakia	
Slovenia	
South Africa	
Spain	
Sri Lanka	
Sudan	
Sweden	

REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

OBSERVERS FROM INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ACTION AID INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD
UNION MONDIALE DES FEMMES RURALES
CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS
GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL
INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION IUS PRIMI VIRI
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LIONS CLUBS (LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL)
INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC RURAL ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HOME ECONOMICS
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN IN LEGAL CAREERS
INTERNATIONAL NGO/CSO PLANNING COMMITTEE
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FAMILY ORGANIZATIONS
MORE AND BETTER CAMPAIGN

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS

WORLD CONFERENCE OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

WORLD FORUM OF FISH HARVESTERS AND FISH WORKERS

WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES

WORLD ORGANIZATION OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT

WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

APPENDIX D

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document No.	Title
CFS:2007/1 Rev.1	Provisional Agenda and Agenda Notes
CFS:2007/2	Assessment of the World Food Security Situation
CFS:2007/3	Status and Lessons Learned from Special, National and Regional Programmes for Food Security and other Relevant FAO Food Security Programmes
CFS:2007/4	International Alliance Against Hunger
CFS:2007/Inf.1	Provisional Timetable
CFS:2007/Inf.2	List of Documents
CFS:2007/Inf.3 Rev.1	Membership of the Committee on World Food Security
CFS:2007/Inf.4	List of Delegates and Observers
CFS:2007/Inf.5	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Community (EC) and its Member States
CFS:2007/Inf.6	Statement by the Director-General or his representative
CFS:2007/Inf.7	Quadriennial Report on Progress in the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action: A Report of the Committee on World Food Security through the FAO Council to ECOSOC (CL 132/LIM/2)
CFS:2007/Inf.8	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD): Excerpts from the COAG Report
CFS:2007/Inf.9	Report on the development of FIVIMS
CFS:2007/Inf. 10 Rev.1	Summary of the outcome of the International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security (Rome, 3-5 May 2007)

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

*Mr Chairperson
Distinguished delegates and Observers
Ladies and Gentlemen*

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to this Thirty-third Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

Assessment of the world food security situation is the most fundamental role of this Committee. For sure, there has been progress. Since FAO's founding in 1945, increases in food production have been extraordinary. Today, when viewed globally, enough food is produced to feed the world's entire population. It is tragic, therefore, that despite this progress, there are some 854 million undernourished people in the world, of which 820 million are in developing countries. Some progress! Worse yet, the number keeps going up, not down, despite the commitments made at the two World Food Summits. Your first substantive order of business today is to assess this situation, to understand it, to take stock of where real progress is being made and where food security is worsening, and, hopefully to identify why. The most recent estimates of hunger, throughout the world and in the various regions, are presented in the document related to Agenda Item 2.

As you know, FAO, IFAD and WFP advocate a twin track approach to reducing hunger. The first track focuses on policies and investment in rural areas and agriculture to improve the productivity of smallholders and to create employment opportunities for the rural poor. The second is the direct and immediate access to food for the most vulnerable groups. Still, we have had to point out repeatedly that insufficient progress is being made. I hope that your deliberations this week will shed light on how more and faster progress can be made.

Bio-energy

In recent years, the Committee has also considered special key issues that represent either 1) unusual threats to food security, or 2) unique opportunities for progress. At this 33rd Session, it is timely to consider the important issue of bio-energy, and especially at how this growing sector could contribute to food security or, conversely, how it may even hamper it.

It is an understatement to say that the search for alternative energy sources is intensifying; it is growing by leaps and bounds, driven by high petroleum prices and increasing concerns about energy security and global climate change. On the one hand, the expansion of modern bio-energy systems could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to energy security for energy-importing countries, generate new income opportunities in rural areas, and improve energy access for the poor, with positive implications for the environment and poverty reduction. On the other hand, rapid shifts to bio-energy and the related conversion of land and other productive resources from food to biofuel, could reduce food availability and inflate food prices. Thus, bio-energy offers both opportunities and risks for food security. The impacts will vary depending on the evolution of market forces, technological developments and policy choices at both the national and international level. Consideration of these important issues is on your agenda this week.

National Programmes for Food Security

You will also be reviewing the status of, and lessons learned, from pilot projects of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), and the progress that has been made in moving from these pilots to larger National and Regional Programmes for Food Security. The report presented under Agenda item III is in response to a specific request made by the Committee at its last session.

While each country decides the content of its own National Programme for Food Security (NPFS), FAO promotes a systematic village-by-village approach aimed at increasing agricultural productivity, diversifying livelihoods and building local capacities, while simultaneously assisting, through safety net programmes, those in most immediate need. At the beginning of this year, National Programmes were operational, or under formulation, in nearly 50 countries; and it is anticipated that eventually most of the 106 countries which implemented pilot projects will formulate National Programmes.

The SPFS has benefited greatly from South-South Cooperation (SSC) since this initiative was launched ten years ago. Under this initiative, field technicians and experts are sent to recipient countries for two-to-three years, where they live side by side and work hand in hand with farmers and fisher folk in rural communities. By the end of last year, 38 South-South agreements had been signed, which sent 1,350 technicians and specialists to developing countries. Currently, there are nearly 400 SSC experts in the field, and we expect this number to grow rapidly.

I hope you will use this session of the CFS to share your experiences on National Programmes for Food Security and on South-South Cooperation, and to suggest improvements.

International Alliance Against Hunger

Finally, I would like to mention very briefly the International Alliance Against Hunger. You will recall that this initiative is a direct outcome of the 2002 World Food Summit: five years later. The IAAH is a coordination mechanism for building multi-stakeholder advocacy against hunger at the international level and for promoting National Programmes at the country level. Reporting on its progress has become a regular feature of the CFS, and we do so again this year under Agenda item IV.

Our report this year calls special attention to the need for a resource mobilization strategy and plan. So far, the Alliance has operated on a shoestring budget pieced together by the Rome-based agencies with additional contributions in kind from other contributors. However, the shoestrings are well worn and are coming undone. We need your guidance on how to put the budget for this important initiative on a firmer footing.

Conclusion

In closing, let me highlight that 2015, the deadline for reaching the goal of the World Food Summit, is rapidly approaching. The economic cost of not reaching the target is overwhelming, and the human cost is appalling. With each passing year, it is becoming more and more apparent that we may need to bear these costs. I hope that this week you can help find a way to avoid such a tragic situation.