

May 2007



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COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-second Session

Rome, 18-22 June 2007

QUADRENNIAL 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

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in its resumed organizational session in March 1999 invited the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "to transmit to the Council every four years, starting in 1999, a report prepared by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) on progress in the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, highlighting its linkages with the coordinated and integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits undertaken by the United Nations system" (ECOSOC decision 1999/212 of 25 March 1999).
2. At its One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Session (Rome, 23-28 June 2003), the Council considered and approved a Report of the Committee on World Food Security through the FAO Council to ECOSOC on the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. It consisted of the Declaration of the World Food Summit: *five years later*, and the decisions of the Committee with regard to the two sets of reviews in 2000 and 2002, as reflected in the Report of the Committee to the Council and the related comments of the Council as reflected in the Council reports.
3. This quadrennial report consists of the decisions of the Committee with regard to the two sets of reviews in 2004 and 2006, as reflected in the associated CFS and Council reports. The highlight of the Thirtieth CFS Session in 2004 was the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National

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Food Security¹. As foreseen in Objective 7.3 of the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit (1996), a Special Forum, was held within the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on Food Security, in 2006, to undertake a major broad-based progress assessment of the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action and a mid-term review of achieving the target of reducing by half the number of undernourished people no later than 2015. This Special Forum involved active participation from governments, relevant international organizations and actors of civil society².

II. THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

CL 127/10 - REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

(Rome, 20-23 September 2004)

(paras 11-17; 23-26)

11. The Committee reviewed the progress in the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action on the basis of document CFS:2004/3. It noted that the document was based on information from reports of 33 countries, the European Union (EU) representing its 25 Member States, 3 UN agencies and 2 international organizations, using the Revised Reporting Format approved and recommended by the FAO Council, at its Hundred and Twenty-fifth Session. The committee underscored the need to improve the reporting rate to make the synthesis report more representative of all countries.

12. The Committee re-iterated its concern that the progress in reducing the number of the undernourished remained very slow at the global level. It recognized that the on-going efforts to fight hunger were important but insufficient. It also called for an adequate response to the challenges of poverty and hunger reduction and display of strong political will so as to ensure the achievement of the goals of the WFS and Millennium Declaration.

13. The Committee was informed by the Brazilian delegation that Representatives from several countries, including Head of States and Government, and International Organizations were meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 20 September 2004, at the invitation of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil in a "Summit of World Leaders for the Action Against Hunger and Poverty". The Committee was also informed by the Brazilian Ambassador that the purpose of the meeting was to mobilize international attention and political will to the challenges of combating hunger and poverty and searching for innovative financing mechanisms for development.

14. The Committee expressed concern that the performance of countries in tackling poverty and hunger and their progress towards internationally agreed targets was uneven. It noted with satisfaction that most countries with sound policies and well developed institutional and physical infrastructure have succeeded to attain economic growth and reduce poverty and food insecurity. The Committee regretted that there has been no progress towards the goals in some countries, and that in others poverty and hunger were even deteriorating. In this context, the Committee re-emphasised the overriding importance of an enabling political, social, economic and sustainable natural resource environment, conducive for economic growth and poverty reduction.

15. The Committee stressed that the success in improving food security is contingent upon improved economic conditions in general and agricultural growth in particular, and agreed that to

¹ For a Report of the Chair and the details of the Voluntary Guidelines see <ftp://ftp.fao.org/unfao/bodies/council/cl127/J3345e1.pdf>.

² Refer to Appendix E of the Council document CL 131/6 (<ftp://ftp.fao.org/unfao/bodies/council/cl131/j8689e.doc>) for a Chairperson's Summary of the outcome of the Special Forum.

be successful the fight against hunger needs to follow a broad based approach involving all stakeholders. In this connection, the Committee stressed the importance of a holistic approach in implementing the seven commitments in the WFS Plan of Action. The Committee stressed that the primary responsibility for the fight against hunger rests with national governments. The Committee pointed out that good governance and a conducive policy environment at national level are essential for accelerated development and reduction of poverty and hunger. It also noted that progress in these areas should be supported by a conducive international environment. The need for enhancing ODA, reducing export subsidies, and trade distorting domestic support to agriculture and reducing the debt burden of developing countries was also underscored. The Committee underlined the importance of food aid particularly under emergency situations, but stressed that hunger cannot be sustainably eradicated by food aid alone. The Committee also emphasised the importance of strengthening co-operation at sub-regional and regional levels in the struggle against hunger. The Committee stressed the need for renewed attention to strengthen south-south co-operation.

16. Pointing out that the Heads of State and Government at the World Food Summit (WFS) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) have identified rural development as essential to sustainable development and poverty eradication, several delegates stressed that sustainable agriculture in itself is not sufficient to tackle all the underlying causes of rural poverty, hunger and environmental degradation. They expressed concern that food security and rural development issues were not adequately reflected in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers of many countries, and that there was a lack of interface between policies and programmes for agriculture with those of water management and biodiversity. In this connection, the Committee emphasised that monitoring should not only focus on the progress of hunger reduction but also on the impact of policies and of a wide range of development efforts in the form of projects and programmes at country level.

17. The Committee made the following recommendations:

For follow-up by FAO:

- undertake analytical studies on the countries which have succeeded in reducing poverty and food insecurity so that lessons could be drawn for the benefit of other countries;
- assist developing countries build their capacity to benefit from the opportunities provided by a liberalized trading environment; and
- increase its efforts to liaise with other UN Organizations and international financial institutions in order to better address the complexity of food insecurity, mainly education, health and other related social aspects.

For follow-up by countries:

- provide, in future reports on the follow-up on the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action, information on the impact of policy and specific projects and programmes on poverty reduction and food security; and
- strengthen national agriculture, rural development and food security policies and strategies and accord high priority in budget allocation to rural and agricultural development with the view to fostering economic growth and development and reducing poverty and food insecurity.

For the follow-up by donors and international organizations

- give preference, where appropriate, to local and regional purchase in the provision of food aid to developing countries for emergency assistance and for development programmes.

Reports on the Third and Fourth Sessions of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) for the Elaboration of a Set of Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (IGWG-RTFG)

23. The Chair of the IGWG-RTFG, Mr Mohammad Saeid Noori-Naeeni (Iran), introduced the Reports of the Third and Fourth Sessions of the IGWG-RTFG held 5-10 July 2004 (CFS 2004/5) and on 23 September 2004 (IGWG RTFG 5/1) at FAO Headquarters. He recalled that the IGWG-RTFG had been established as a subsidiary body of the CFS by the 123rd Session of Council, and that the WFS:*fy*l and Council had mandated the IGWG-RTFG to finish its work in a period of two years.
24. The Chair summarized the conduct and process of negotiations of the Voluntary Guidelines and presented the text of the Voluntary Guidelines as adopted by the IGWG.
25. The CFS commended the work of the Chair, the IGWG Bureau and the Members, which had negotiated in a constructive manner. The CFS took particular note of the important role that other stakeholders had been able to play in the development of the Voluntary Guidelines. The CFS also expressed its appreciation for the work of the Secretariat.
26. The CFS endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines as submitted and decided to transmit them to Council for final adoption. The Final Report of the Chair is appended to this Report as document CL 127/10-Sup.1.

CL/131/6 - REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (Rome, 20-25 November 2006)

(paras 7-9)

SPECIAL FORUM

7. The Special Forum was conducted as a multi-stakeholder dialogue according to Commitment Seven of the World Food Summit (WFS) Plan of Action and the further guidance provided at the 30th and 31st Sessions of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).
8. The multi-stakeholder dialogue assembled the Committee and representatives of over 100 Civil Society Organizations of farmers, fishers, Indigenous Peoples, Alliances against Hunger, NGOs, the private sector, youth and women from worldwide, and of representatives of Inter-Governmental Organizations. The outcome of this dialogue is presented in the Annex as the Chairperson's Summary of the Multi-Stakeholder Special Forum Discussions on "A World Free of Hunger: Progress and Prospects for Achieving the World Food Summit Plan of Action".
9. The Chairperson's Summary was neither negotiated nor agreed upon by the participants in the Special Forum. It is therefore not binding to the Committee, its Members or to the Civil Society or other Organizations which participated in the Special Forum.

III. FAO COUNCIL DECISIONS

EXTRACTS FROM CL 127/REP

REPORT OF THE THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (Rome, 20-23 September 2004)

(paras 17-26)

17. The Council endorsed the Report of the Thirtieth Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and the conclusions and recommendations contained therein. With regard to the World Food Summit goal, the Council expressed concern that progress in reducing the

number of undernourished remained very slow at the global level. It stressed in particular that the situation in sub-Saharan African countries was disturbing. The Council noted that efforts to fight hunger remained insufficient. In this connection, the Council recalled that rural development was essential for sustainable development and for poverty and hunger eradication, and called on countries to accord higher priority to food security through agriculture and rural development in national strategies and budgets. Several Members informed the Council on the actions taken by their governments to overcome poverty and hunger.

18. The Council stressed that the primary responsibility for the fight against poverty and hunger rested with national governments. It agreed on the overriding importance of strong political will and an enabling political, social, economic and sustainable natural resource environment, conducive to economic growth and poverty reduction. The Council emphasized that efforts at national level should be supported by a conducive international environment, and agreed on the need to enhance the allocation of resources, including Official Development Assistance (ODA), to agricultural and rural development. Many Members stressed the importance of alleviating the debt burden of developing countries. The Council underlined the importance of food aid, particularly under emergency situations, but stressed that hunger could not be sustainably eradicated by food aid alone.

19. The Council referred to the impact of the locust plague in West and North Africa, to the recent emergencies caused by a series of hurricanes in Central America and the Caribbean, and to their effects on national food security and on worsening the poverty and hunger of the poor. Several Members affected by the locust crisis expressed their gratitude to FAO and donor countries for the support provided and appealed for additional assistance to supplement major efforts already under way. The Council recommended that donor countries, FAO and UN Agencies concerned accelerate coordinated and urgent assistance to the affected countries to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

20. The Council recognized with satisfaction that the Committee had welcomed the WTO July 2004 Package of Framework Agreements, and supported the Committee's view that serious work was needed to provide substance to the consensus reached. It also supported the Committee's recommendation that trade analysis continue to be part of the assessment of the world food security situation, and that FAO assist developing countries in building their capacity to benefit from the opportunities provided by a liberalized trading environment.

21. The Council supported the decision of the Committee to hold a Special Forum in 2006 in order to review progress made in the achievement of the Summit objectives, consonant with the recommendations contained in objective 7.3 viz 7.3 (g) and 7.3 (h). The Council agreed that at the Thirty-first Session of the Committee in 2005, a Multistakeholder Dialogue would take place, funded from within available resources between governments, international organizations and representatives of civil society.

22. The Council noted that, based on its recommendation at its Hundred and Twenty-fifth Session, the CFS had considered the revised reporting format for monitoring of the implementation of the World Food Summit Follow-up. The Council agreed that the Secretariat should convene a regionally-balanced Working Group of Experts to review and finalize a revised reporting format and a related set of indicators.

**Intergovernmental Working Group for the Elaboration of a
Set of Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate
Food in the Context of National Food Security (September 2004)**

23. The Council recalled that at the request of the World Food Summit: five years later, the Hundred and Twenty-third Session of the Council had established an Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) to elaborate a set of Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security. The Fourth Session of the IGWG had adopted the text of the Voluntary Guidelines on 23 September 2004, and had

submitted it to the Thirtieth Session of the Committee on World Food Security (Rome, 20-23 September 2004). That Session of the Committee had endorsed the Guidelines and had submitted them to the Council for final adoption.

24. The Council expressed its gratitude to the Chair of the IGWG, its Members and Observers, as well as the Secretariat for the successful conclusion of the negotiations which had been conducted in a transparent and participatory manner.

25. The Council adopted the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, attached to this Report as Appendix D. The Council recommended that Members implement the Guidelines, decided to bring the Guidelines to the attention of the next Session of the Conference, and requested the Director-General to ensure their wide dissemination to all relevant UN Bodies and Agencies.

26. Many Members furthermore requested the Secretariat to ensure, through mainstreaming and inclusion in the next PWB proposal, adequate follow-up action on the Voluntary Guidelines, including the preparation of information, communications and training materials, and to strengthen its capacity to assist Members in their implementation. Many Members also requested the Secretariat to seek additional extrabudgetary resources to further mainstream the Voluntary Guidelines.

EXTRACTS FROM CL 131/REP
REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE
COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (CFS)
(Rome, 30 October – 4 November 2006)³
(paras 15-21)

15. The Council unanimously endorsed the Report of the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). It commended the Secretariat for the organization and conduct of the Special Forum which generated many interesting views on the hunger and poverty situation in the world, and raised concern regarding the lack of progress towards the World Food Summit goal. While some Members requested institutionalization of the Special Forum, others indicated they did not support such a proposal. Many Members requested that options for continued engagement of multi-stakeholders in future years be discussed at the next Session of the CFS.

16. The Council noted with satisfaction the steady progress with regard to the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) and welcomed proposals for it to become increasingly self-financing in the future through mobilization of new resources, recognizing that FAO still had a significant catalytic role to play and that efforts should be undertaken to strengthen the dialogue and networking with other existing platforms also at regional and global level.

17. The Council recognized the “Initiative Latin America and Caribbean Without Hunger 2025” as an effort to promote the achievement of the objectives of the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals.

18. The Council noted that emerging issues, that were at present intensively discussed internationally such as bio-fuels, agricultural biodiversity, climate change, as well as the use of the term “global public goods”, were raised in the CFS discussions.

19. The Council also noted that there were several countries calling for rapid implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, but stressed the voluntary nature of the Guidelines.

³ CL 131/6; CL 131/PV/2; CL 131/PV/11.

20. While many Members requested the Secretariat to mainstream the Voluntary Guidelines its work programme, others opposed it.
21. Many Members invited FAO to increase its efforts to coordinate and cooperate with other United Nations organizations, especially with its sister organizations in Rome.