



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

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-fifth Session

Rome, 17 – 18 November 2008

**Report of the Thirty-fourth Session of the Committee on World Food
Security
Rome, 14 – 17 October 2008**

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**MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION
BY THE COUNCIL**

**IN REVIEWING THIS REPORT, THE COUNCIL
MAY WISH TO GIVE PARTICULAR
CONSIDERATION TO THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN
PARAGRAPHS
7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 17**

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The Committee on World Food Security held its Thirty-fourth Session from 14 to 17 October 2008 at FAO Headquarters in Rome. The Session was attended by delegates from 106 out of 117 Members of the Committee, by observers from nine other Member Nations of FAO, the Holy See, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Sovereign Order of Malta, by representatives from 3 United Nations Agencies and Programmes; and by observers from 3 intergovernmental and 27 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. James G. Butler, Deputy Director-General, made a statement, which is attached as Appendix E. H.E Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, made a keynote address, which is attached as Appendix F; the list of presenters of Agenda Item II.B. is attached as Appendix G, and Appendix H contains summaries of the Special Event and Side Events that were held in conjunction with CFS, for information only. 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 Mr. Christer Wretborn of Sweden and Mr. Yüksel Yücekal of Turkey as they were no longer available to serve on the Bureau. The Committee approved their replacement on the Bureau respectively by Ambassador Anders Klum, Permanent Representative of Sweden to FAO, and by Mr. Fazil Dücünceli Alternate Permanent Representative of Turkey to FAO. In addition, Dr. Carlos de Sousa, Minister of Youth and Sports, Mozambique, was replaced by H.E. Caterina Pajume, Deputy-Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Mozambique. These three, along with Mr. M. Abdul Aziz, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh will continue as Vice-Chairpersons till the end of the 34th Session.
3. Brazil pointed out that the overview document regarding the follow-up of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), which had been referred by the 20th Session of Committee on Agriculture (COAG) to the 34th CFS for consideration, was not on the CFS agenda. They proposed that this document be revised by the Secretariat and be placed on the agenda of the 35th Session of CFS as an item for discussion. El Salvador on behalf of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) supported this proposal, which was accepted by the Committee.
4. The Committee appointed a Drafting Committee composed of Australia, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Philippines, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, and the United States of America under the chairmanship of Mr Lee Brudvig (USA).
5. During the last session of the meeting, the Committee elected by acclamation the members of the incoming CFS Bureau: H.E. Doña Maria del Carmen Squeff, Counsellor, Alternate Permanent Representative of Argentina to FAO as Chairperson, and Mr Hugo Verbist, Counsellor, Alternate Permanent Representative of Belgium to FAO; Mr Ibrahim Abu Atileh, Agricultural Attaché, Alternate Permanent Representative of Jordan to FAO; H.E. Jean-Pierre Rafazy-Andriamihango, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Madagascar to FAO and Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to FAO, as Vice-Chairpersons.

II. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION

A. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

6. The Committee appreciated the concise and timely assessment prepared by the Secretariat as provided in document (CFS:2008/2). The Committee noted with concern the worsening situation in world hunger, which caused an additional estimated 75 million people to fall below the hunger threshold. The Committee also noted the lack of progress in meeting the World Food Summit goal, even before the impact of high food prices. The Committee called for vigilance to ensure that the current global financial crisis does not divert attention away from the problem of world hunger and aggravate a full-fledged food security crisis. The Committee welcomed the assessment report but some Member states stressed that it did not cover the full range of constraints on developing countries dealing with high food prices.

7. The Committee appreciated the overviews presented and subsequent discussions on recent initiatives and actions to deal with rising food prices (under item II.B., see Appendix G for list of presenters). It called upon all stakeholders to respond appropriately with a renewed sense of urgency to implement and take advantage of these initiatives. Members welcomed the improved collaboration among the key partners within the UN system, especially the Rome based Agencies (RBAs) and other stakeholders and encouraged these efforts to continue and be strengthened programmatically.

8. Members during their deliberations:

- re-iterated the need to maintain the world's attention on food security issues, and supported a functional twin-track approach that addresses both long-term structural issues and policies that affect food security, as well as short term measures to meet immediate needs;
- underlined the fundamental role of agriculture and the need to increase world agricultural production and investment in agriculture for the resolution of the crisis and also in preventing similar crises in the future;
- called for increased support to smallholder farmers in order to increase productivity, food and agricultural production and reduce rural poverty;
- expressed concern that high food prices hurt women-headed households disproportionately and recognised the importance of the role of women in food production and food security;
- emphasised increased attention to fragile states that need to import food and energy and find themselves in a desperate situation;
- emphasised the need for further steps in liberalizing international trade in agriculture and reduce trade barriers and market distorting policies that limit the ability of agricultural producers particularly in developing countries to increase access to world markets;
- noted that there are challenges and opportunities associated with production of biofuels using various types of feedstock. The effects of biofuels production on food security, energy security and environmental sustainability should be carefully weighed;
- underlined the importance of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in promoting food security;
- supported a renewed global partnership to address food security and recognised the importance of using existing institutions, especially the Rome based Agencies (RBA). Such an expanded partnership would include systematic collaboration with other actors;
- urged that all resource commitments made to deal with the food security crisis be fulfilled in a timely manner;
- expressed concern that the implications of the global financial crisis will negatively impact the food security situation;

- underlined that the current reform process must lead to the strengthening of FAO, as to allow it to completely fulfil its mandate.
9. Recommendations for FAO:
- Ensure, through analysis and informed advocacy that both short and long term food security concerns and agriculture remain a priority on the global political agenda independently of the movements in food prices;
 - Strengthen its work on gender issues, and the role of women in food production;
 - Provide analysis into the possible effects of the financial crisis on food security as well as the role of speculation on price increases;
 - Foster discussion on the various aspects of biofuels;
 - Strengthen its work on the implications of trade distortions in agricultural markets;
 - Analyse constraints to pathways out of poverty for smallholder farmers and the implications for national and international policies;
 - Expand its work on fragile states and early warning systems;
 - Promote the inclusion of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in national food security policies and strategies;
- In close collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies, other UN agencies and relevant actors support initiatives to strengthen a global partnership and expert network on food security and agriculture.

III. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST HUNGER

10. The Secretariat presented the work and the achievements of the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) in combating hunger and malnutrition, and briefly outlined the future directions proposed for the development of the Alliance and National Alliances Against Hunger (NAAH) (as given in Document CFS 2008/4). A representative of Bioversity International added that the strength of the Alliance is that it is a platform and joint effort of Rome based Agencies (RBA), CSO/NGOs and governments, as hunger cannot be fought independently, and encouraged delegations to foster the creation of National Alliances Against Hunger (NAAHs) in their countries.

11. Members generally welcomed the proposals for the Resource Mobilization Strategy (RMS) given in CFS:2008/4, especially in support of NAAHs, stressing the need to secure long-term funding. It was also stressed that priority should be given to global approaches to combat hunger and invited the RBAs to reinforce collaboration in joint efforts. The Latin American and Caribbean Initiative Without Hunger was recognized as a successful example in combating hunger and could be used as a model to support other countries in developing their food security programs. Members commended the report and agreed that further efforts are needed to raise awareness and visibility of the work done by the Alliance and to improve its structure and governance.

IV. FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

12. The CFS Secretary presented document CFS:2008/3, which summarises actions taken by countries towards implementing the World Food Summit Plan of Action (WFS PoA) and suggests ways to improve monitoring its implementation. While the importance of the Committee's task to monitor overall implementation of the WFS PoA is recognised and various approaches have been used to do this, putting together a meaningful synthesis report is very difficult due to a number of

reasons, including too few country reports being submitted, the heterogeneity of reports, and the difficulty of demonstrating links between policies and programmes and food security objectives.

13. The Committee confirmed the need to continue monitoring WFS PoA implementation and to improve the format and process currently used, inter-alia by ensuring a better linkage between MDGs and WFS follow-ups. Bearing in mind the considerable time required to conduct an in-depth review of monitoring and reporting processes, the Committee supported the proposal from Brazil that such an exercise be undertaken by the incoming Chairperson in consultation with Members and assisted by the Secretariat. The outcome of this task will be submitted to the 35th Session of the Committee.

V. PROPOSALS TO ENHANCE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY / NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs/NGOs) IN THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

14. The Secretariat presented proposals to enhance CSO/NGO participation in CFS Sessions drawing on experience in FAO and other UN Agencies (CFS 2008/5). Members emphasized the valuable role civil society plays in providing diverse perspectives directly representing the voices of rural and agricultural communities. The Committee took note of the supportive statements made by CSOs/NGOs, with respect to the proposals for systematizing and enhancing their role at CFS and other Governing Bodies.

15. The Committee welcomed the proposals in the document CFS:2008/5, especially those in paragraph 26¹ and requested the Secretariat to consider modalities to move forward with these initiatives.

1 Extracts from document CFS:2008/5, paragraph 26:

Measures specific to CFS are the following:

- Bearing in mind the reciprocal benefits of strengthening partnerships between CSOs/NGOs and FAO, and recognizing the work of the autonomous networks which CSOs/NGOs have established to ensure continuity of civil society reflection and action on food security and effective civil society participation in CFS debates, the following measures are proposed to improve interaction between the CFS and CSOs/NGOs able to contribute to food security policy:
- Establish some mechanism for tripartite communication among the major autonomous civil society organizations and networks devoted to world food security issues, the FAO/CFS Secretariat, and the CFS Bureau in order to involve CSOs in the CFS sessions and in the follow-up to, and implementation of, decisions taken. Such communication can contribute to better CFS deliberations and create ownership of the outcomes on the part of civil society actors, leading to their determined involvement in implementation. Enhanced outreach to peoples' organizations in developing countries who have least access to global policy forums is particularly important.
- Invite Member Governments to involve CSOs in policy debate related to food security issues and in monitoring the implementation of government commitments at national levels, including by involving them in the preparation of periodic reports to the CFS on follow-up to the WFS and on national programmes for food security.
- Invite Member Governments to accommodate a space for civil society input to policy debates on food security issues and WFS follow-up at FAO Regional Conferences, building on the existing experience of regional civil society consultations feeding into Regional Conferences.
- Make adjustments in the procedures of CFS sessions as discussed in the previous sections, including:
 - Allow observer interventions prior to decision making.
 - Note interventions of observers for future information.
 - Encourage CSOs to present their own autonomous reports under the agenda item on WFS follow-up, as already suggested at the 25th session of CFS, and on other standing CFS items.
 - Organize a multi-stakeholder dialogue on a selected CFS agenda item with Chair's summary in CFS Annex, as already suggested at the 33rd Session of CFS.
 - Organize informal panels and side events whose results can also lead to effective dialogue between CSOs/NGOs and member governments and are referred to the CFS and recorded in annex to the Report.

VI. PROPOSALS TO STRENGTHEN THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (CFS) TO MEET NEW CHALLENGES

16. The CFS Secretariat presented two sets of proposals, which strive towards more focused, policy-oriented CFS Sessions (CFS:2008/6). The first set of measures, described in paragraph 37, were implemented on a trial basis and de facto endorsed in this Session. They concerned the length of CFS sessions, focussing discussion on a central theme regarding food security, streamlining the report of the drafting committee to focus on action items and the tenure and participation of the CFS Bureau. The second set of proposals, described in paragraph 38 of the same document, concerned recommendations to be further developed and introduced later, which included: the frequency and timing of CFS sessions, the structure of the CFS, the reporting process, participation by non-state actors (already discussed under agenda item V), and the format of the WFS-PoA report (already discussed under agenda item IV).

17. Several members of the Committee expressed their appreciation and complimented the CFS Secretariat on the new measures adopted this year. Except for the issue of timing and frequency of meetings, the other recommendations were generally supported by the Committee. The Committee agreed that the final decision should be taken on timing and frequency by the 35th Special Session of the FAO Conference in November 2008.

18. The Committee recommended that Secretariat implement the proposals made in the document other than the one concerning the timing and frequency of CFS Sessions.

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.A. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORLD FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE IMPACT OF HIGH FOOD PRICES**
- II.B. PRESENTATION ON RECENT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS TO DEAL WITH RISING FOOD PRICES AND FOOD SECURITY**
- III. INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST HUNGER**
- IV. FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: REPORT ON THE PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION**
- V. PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY**
- VI. PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT TO CFS SESSIONS**
 - a) Arrangements for the Thirty-fifth Session
 - b) Proposals for changes to future Sessions
- VII. OTHER MATTERS**
 - a) Any Other Business
 - b) Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons
 - c) Report of the Session

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE
(as of 17 October 2008)

Afghanistan	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Ireland
Algeria	Denmark	Italy
Angola	Dominican Republic	Japan
Argentina	Ecuador	Jordan
Armenia	Egypt	Kenya
Australia	El Salvador	Kuwait
Austria	Eritrea	Latvia
Azerbaijan	Estonia	Lesotho
Bangladesh	Ethiopia	Lithuania
Belarus	European Community (Member Organization)	Luxembourg
Belgium	Finland	Madagascar
Benin	France	Malaysia
Bolivia	Gabon	Mali
Brazil	Germany	Mauritius
Bulgaria	Ghana	Mexico
Burkina Faso	Greece	Moldova
Cameroon	Guatemala	Morocco
Canada	Guinea	Mozambique
Cape Verde	Haiti	Netherlands
Chile	Honduras	New Zealand
China	Hungary	Nicaragua
Colombia	Iceland	Niger
Congo	India	Nigeria
Costa Rica	Indonesia	Norway
Côte d'Ivoire	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Pakistan
Croatia	Iraq	Panama
Cuba		Paraguay
Cyprus		Peru
Czech Republic		Philippines

Poland	Slovakia	Ukraine
Portugal	Slovenia	United Arab Emirates
Qatar	Spain	United Kingdom
Republic of Korea	Sri Lanka	United Republic of Tanzania
Romania	Sudan	United States of America
Russian Federation	Sweden	Uruguay
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Switzerland	Venezuela
San Marino	Thailand	Yemen
Saudi Arabia	Togo	Zambia
Senegal	Tunisia	Zimbabwe
Serbia	Turkey	
	Uganda	

APPENDIX C

COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE SESSION

Afghanistan	El Salvador
Algeria	Eritrea
Angola	Ethiopia
Argentina	European Community (Member Organization)
Armenia	Finland
Australia	France
Austria	Gabon
Azerbaijan	Germany
Bangladesh	Ghana
Belarus	Greece
Belgium	Guatemala
Benin	Guinea
Bolivia	Haiti
Brazil	Honduras
Bulgaria	Hungary
Burkina Faso	Iceland
Cameroon	India
Canada	Indonesia
Cape Verde	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Chile	Ireland
China	Italy
Colombia	Japan
Congo	Jordan
Costa Rica	Kenya
Cuba	Kuwait
Cyprus	Lesotho
Czech Republic	Lithuania
Côte d'Ivoire	Luxembourg
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Madagascar
Denmark	Malaysia
Ecuador	Mali
Egypt	Mauritius

Mexico	Switzerland
Morocco	Thailand
Mozambique	Tunisia
Netherlands	Turkey
New Zealand	Uganda
Nicaragua	United Arab Emirates
Nigeria	United Kingdom
Norway	United Republic of Tanzania
Pakistan	United States of America
Panama	Uruguay
Paraguay	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Peru	Yemen
Philippines	Zambia
Poland	Zimbabwe
Portugal	
Qatar	Burundi
Republic of Korea	Chad
Republic of Moldova	Equatorial Guinea
Romania	Georgia
Russian Federation	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
San Marino	Monaco
Saudi Arabia	Oman
Senegal	Somalia
Slovakia	South Africa
Slovenia	
Spain	Holy See
Sudan	Palestine
Sweden	Sovereign Order of Malta

REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN FUND

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

AFRICAN UNION

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION

OBSERVERS FROM INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ACTION AID INTERNATIONAL

ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

EASTERN AFRICAN FARMERS FEDERATION

EUROPEAN NGO CONFEDERATION FOR RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT

FIAN INTERNATIONAL - FOOD FIRST INFORMATION AND ACTION NETWORK

FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL

HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST HUNGER

INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC RURAL ASSOCIATION

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

LA VIA CAMPESINA

MORE AND BETTER CAMPAIGN, FOR FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL
DEVELOPMENT TO ERADICATE HUNGER AND POVERTY

OXFAM INTERNATIONAL

PLATEFORME SOUS-RÉGIONALE D'ORGANISATIONS PAYSANNES DE L'AFRIQUE
CENTRALE

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

RÉSEAU DES ORGANISATIONS PAYSANNES ET DE PRODUCTEURS AGRICOLES DE
L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

TERRA NUOVA

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

APPENDIX D

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Document No.	Title
CFS:2008/1	Provisional Agenda and Agenda Notes
CFS:2008/2	Assessment of the World Food Security and Nutrition Situation
CFS:2008/3	Follow-up to the World Food Summit: Report on the Progress in the Implementation of the Plan of Action
CFS:2008/4	International Alliance Against Hunger
CFS:2008/5	Proposals to Enhance Participation of Civil Society/Non-Governmental Organizations (CSOs/NGOs) in the Committee on World Food Security
CFS:2008/6	Proposals to Strengthen the Committee on World Food Security to Meet New Challenges
CFS:2008/Inf.1	Provisional Timetable
CFS:2008/Inf.2	List of Documents
CFS:2008/Inf.3	Membership of the Committee on World Food Security
CFS:2008/Inf.4	List of Delegates and Observers
CFS:2008/Inf.5	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Community (EC) and its Member States
CFS:2008/Inf.6	Statement by the Deputy Director-General

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

*Honourable (Heads of State and Government),
Honourable Ministers,
Mr Chairperson and Members of the CFS Bureau,
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Welcome to this Thirty-fourth Session of the Committee on World Food Security. In addition to representatives of Member Governments and of international organizations, it is my pleasure to also welcome representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations and of civil society. Your presence in this forum is a sign of your continued commitment and determination to address the urgent needs of the millions of hungry and poor in the world and to work towards their immediate and long-term food security and nutritional well-being.

Over the years, since the establishment of this intergovernmental body in 1974, the CFS has provided a forum to debate global food security and nutrition issues. The Committee is also mandated with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. This year, the CFS will once again have the challenge to discuss – and hopefully resolve – important issues affecting global food security. Your innovative and constructive ideas and contributions are needed for at least three reasons.

First, despite some successes in individual countries or regions, recent estimates on global hunger are a serious cause for concern. Yet again, based on statistics obtained from country level, FAO's estimates for undernourishment show that globally, nearly 850 million people worldwide continued to suffer from chronic hunger in 2003-05. This is an increase of six million people as compared to the 1990-92 WFS baseline period. This makes the World Food Summit (WFS) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) goals of halving the number/prevalence of undernourished people in the world by 2015 more difficult to reach.

Second, these disappointing results in global hunger reduction have been aggravated by the recent economic shock resulting from high food prices. FAO estimates that, mainly as a result of high food prices, the number of chronically hungry people in the world rose by 75 million in 2007 alone to reach 923 million. Many countries, including those who were on track towards reaching the WFS and MDG targets before the period of high food prices, have suffered setbacks. Globally, there has been a reversal in the downward trend of the prevalence of hunger as a result of high food prices.

*Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am sure you will agree that this situation is unacceptable and that more needs to be done to address the structural issues that keep an increasing number of people in a state of chronic hunger. We should all keep these worrisome trends in the forefront of our debates this week and explore solutions, which will ensure that the needs of the hungry and malnourished are addressed.

You are all aware of the wide attention paid to the topic of high food prices in the past months – in the media and at national and international conferences and forums. People around the world have been trying to understand the causes of this sudden change and, more importantly, how to deal with it. FAO has been active in initiating and designing responses to the situation.

As you know, FAO launched on 17 December 2007 the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP), which aims at assisting the most affected countries, especially low-income and food-deficit countries, to deal with the situation by boosting their food production. The Initiative is today active in 79 countries. In April 2008, the UN Secretary-General established a High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, under his chairmanship and the vice-chairmanship of FAO. It is composed of the heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, Bretton Woods institutions and relevant parts of the UN Secretariat. The Task Force has prepared a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA), which is a framework aimed to: i) address the current threats and opportunities resulting from high food prices; ii) propose policy changes to avoid future food crises; and iii) contribute to country, regional and global food and nutritional security. The CFA was presented by the Secretary-General at the Summit of the G-8 Leaders in July 2008 in Hokkaido.

In this context, this session of the CFS is geared towards discussing the *impacts of*, and especially *responses to*, high food prices so that their deleterious effects on food security and poverty are minimized and the potential benefits to agriculture can be exploited. In doing so, we must be aware of both the threats and the opportunities associated with high food prices. This will be done in an innovative way this year by focusing the session on the core theme of **“High prices and Food Security: Issues and Policy Responses”**, including during the side and special events. While reference to the causes of high food prices may be inevitable, I wish to encourage you to focus your interventions rather on practical aspects, including:

- What has been the impact of high food prices in your country/region?
- What measures have been taken and how can they be improved, for example, through regional and international efforts?
- How can high food prices be used to re-launch agriculture, or, how can this threat be turned into an opportunity?

I trust that you will agree that a key purpose for our meeting in a forum of this nature is to exchange views and experiences across nations with the aim of identifying better ways to counter the impact of high prices and to take advantage of the opportunities they offer to farmers. As you share your experiences and discuss recent initiatives that are underway to address high food prices, a common underlying theme will be the importance of coordinating and integrating responses by governments and all other stakeholders to achieve immediate and focused action. No single country or institution will be able to resolve this situation on its own.

In addition to focusing on current issues affecting world food security, *this session should also be seen as an opportunity to revitalize the functions and role of this very body, the CFS*. As you are aware, FAO, in follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation and in collaboration with the Conference Committee and the Working Groups on FAO Reform, is embarking on a process to strengthen the institution and to enhance its role and capacity. Several of the agenda items in this session are geared towards this end and some changes are already being tested this year, while others will be put before you for consideration.

For example, you will discuss several items that are intended to strengthen partnerships and advocacy towards addressing world food security, through the International Alliance Against Hunger, as well as considering proposals to enhance the participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations in the CFS.

With regard to the monitoring of implementation of the WFS Plan of Action, which is one of the key functions of this Committee, the report this year provides an overview of the broad lessons learned since the WFS on how to address hunger and poverty, summarizes actions taken by countries towards implementing the WFS Plan of Action, and suggests ways to improve the overall implementation and monitoring process - bearing in mind that the indicator of progress towards the WFS target is reducing by half the number of hungry people in the world.

And finally, I would like to draw your attention to Item VI, which puts forth proposed changes to strengthen the CFS with a view to having more focused discussions on key global food security issues as we are doing this year. Two sets of proposals are made in this document - those already introduced in the current 34th Session and whose adoption remains to be confirmed by the Committee; and those to be further developed and introduced in future sessions.

The CFS is your forum to articulate and make recommendations on how best to deal with global and national food security concerns - I trust that you will review the proposed recommendations and take an active role in setting the stage for a strengthened CFS, able to effectively address global food security issues and make concrete and viable recommendations on investment and action needed for a real reduction in the number of hungry and malnourished around the world.

*Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

While looking ahead to the outcome of your deliberations, I would like to wish you every success in your work and assure you of the Organization's support to your efforts.

Thank you for your kind attention.

APPENDIX F

STATEMENT BY H.E. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO
FORMER PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers,
Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee on World Food Security,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank the Director-General for his kind invitation to attend this Session of the CFS and to be able to contribute to this important debate.

It is indeed a pleasure and an honour to be able to share a few of my thoughts with you about the so called global food crisis and high prices of food facing many countries, and Africa in particular.

Let me begin with an attempt to provide a pig-eye view of the problem rather than the bird-eye view. Pig-eye view because, the pig is closer to the ground than the bird. The pig has its eyes and its nose on the ground. The pig-eye view is bound to provide deeper insight not only into the nature but also unravel the root causes of the problem, while at the same time help in fashioning out concrete strategies and requisite response mechanism for tackling the challenge.

As a farmer in Africa, I believe that the use of the terms “global food crisis and food price volatility” are both misleading, confusing and at best obscurantist. I say this because the continuous use of the term global food crisis can only divert our attention and thought process to the escalating prices of food rather than focusing on the main causes of the crisis. In which case we would be focusing more on fixing the symptoms rather than the disease. Whereas in truth, indeed and in fact, what we have today is decline in global food production and diversion of normal food items to industrial uses. It is when we take such a focused approach that we might begin to understand the true nature of the problem, the underlying causes and the required root and branch cure for the ailment.

My second point of departure is that food must not be seen merely in terms of what is edible. Its definition must recognize its nutritional value, the constituents and what people consume for energy, growth and sustenance, drawing essentially on their areas of natural endowments and availability of resources. Food and nutrition is a matter of life and death and takes precedence over other human security and human development issues such as shelter, etc. In essence, therefore, food security must and should be placed on the same pedestal as the defence of the territorial integrity of any country and protection of life and property. It is from this perspective that I believe we should view the current global food crisis. In effect, attainment of food security, which has been defined as the availability of guaranteed access to food at affordable prices by all segments of society, particularly vulnerable groups, must be seen as a desideratum of development.

Once again, as a practicing African farmer, I remain convinced that the major challenge in the years ahead will be the development and implementation of a sustainable mechanism that will accelerate food production in Africa. Let me thank the Deputy Director-General Butler for

outlining the challenge of preventing high and volatile food prices that can plunge more countries, in Africa into hunger and poverty. Nevertheless, it is equally important that we understand the genesis of the decline in agricultural production in Africa. It is by so doing that we will be able to see and gauge the quality of attention to agriculture from independence to date.

The colonial powers in Africa in their enlightened self-interest promoted, celebrated, and if you like venerated what it dubbed cash crops at the expense of food crops. That policy decision served as the precursor of our current problems with food in Africa. Implicit in that was a quiet but loudly effective message to farmers and others involved in agriculture in Africa that production of food crops will attract limited cash value. In effect, producing food crops meant negotiating your way into humdrum, drudgery and grinding poverty. Unfortunately, the post colonial state did not interrogate the underlying wisdom as it sought to increase its much vaunted and badly needed export revenue base, the main source of development financing. Predictably, government policies in immediate post-independence Africa were focused mainly on export commodities. For instance, production of cotton and groundnut was encouraged at the expense of production of grains and tuber for food. Consequently, production of food crops was left mainly to postage stamp size landholders and other subsistence farmers. In some rare instances, a sprinkling of medium size scale farmers joined in, while the commercial large scale farmers focused mainly on the so-called cash crops.

Africa thus unwittingly found itself saddled with a clearly retrogressive colonial legacy, which ought to have been repudiated with the vehemence of a religious leader when repudiating sinful conduct.

An outfall of this is also the fact that over the years, subsistence farming became the exclusive preserve of old men with little or no replacement or successor-generation. In truth and indeed, the drudging and the accompany poverty could not have inspired or encouraged them to bring their children into the profession. Like most human beings, they wanted a better and brighter future for their children. Farming and rural dwelling became a synonym for poverty, lack of means and hopelessness. The only place that provided any succour or hope was the urban area. Thus, the rural-urban migration moved apace as village life and farming was a sure passport to the hellish experience of poverty.

Most of these farmers age over time without replacement. It is no surprise that the effects of the current food production in Africa is biting, stinging and projections almost Malthusian. As we know, agriculture provides as much as almost 70% of jobs, most of which are in small-scale farming after all said and done, and no matter how we look at it. To this must be added the deleterious effects of such factors as bad governance, mis-governance, misguided land reform policies that drive commercial farmers out of production, uncontrolled population growth, soil fertility problems, inadequate application of research results, lack of investment in agriculture by the private sector, inconsistent agricultural policies, neglect of small-scale farmers, poor marketing, poor water management, poor rural development strategies, neglect of women in agriculture, poor funding of agricultural research, paucity of extension services, and lack of effective communication and coordination among key actors in the agricultural sector.

Currently most African countries allocate about 30% of annual budget to education, while much less than 10% is budgeted for promoting agricultural production, food security and nutrition whereas in the developed countries, agricultural development was predicated on loans attracting between 2% and 4% interest. Developed countries subsidize their farmers unlike in the developing nations. In Africa generally, if you get agricultural loan at 20% interest you are lucky. And to break even on such a high rate of interest you must be producing cocaine or something as illegal as that.

Poor and woefully deficient rural road networks also affect harvesting and transportation of farm produce to the market. A number of inappropriate policies have served to strangulate Africa's

agricultural progress. These include the failure to define the appropriate roles of government and the private sector, the resort to policies that emphasizes food imports, cheap urban food, heavy taxation of export crops, and most importantly, the lack of collective strategy by African government to learn from past mistakes and show adequate political will and commitment to successfully push through programmes of self-reliance and food security.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

My third point of departure is that the current crisis in food production should be seen from a Chinese perspective of the word crisis. The Chinese word for crisis has two characters, one character denoting danger and the other denoting opportunity. While we have over the years focused on the danger of the crisis, it is now time for us to begin to focus on the opportunities it carries in its belly.

In the first instance, I believe that the high food prices, properly managed, could become a growth factor. In the same vein, it also carries with it the key for reversing the phenomenon of rural-urban migration. Young Africans properly incentivized could be redirected into massive food crop farming. The challenge is to devise a practical, easy to deploy mechanism that could assist in realizing this twin objective with several multiplier effects.

From my experience, when there is the will, the means will be found. During the tenure of my administration as President of Nigeria, with well directed effort, Nigeria recorded a significant improvement in agricultural production between 1999 and 2006. In the four years 2003-2006 agriculture production grew by almost 7% per annum. What we called presidential initiatives within this period meant that all stakeholders in agricultural production, financing, research, marketing and export came together under one single umbrella to work for increased production, appropriate financing, dissemination of research products, research and effective marketing processing and storage of each product or commodity. This led to significant production in the following areas:

- Cassava Production and Export
- Rice Production and Processing
- Vegetable Oil Development
- Tree Crops Development
- Rubber Production
- Indigenous Tropical Fruits
- Cocoa Development Programme
- Programme of Doubling of Maize Production
- Livestock Development
- Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
- National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS) working in collaboration with South-South Cooperation (SSC) under the auspices of FAO
- Cotton Development
- Agricultural Credit Programme, limited to interest rate of 8%.

We worked in close collaboration with international organizations like FAO, IFAD, research organizations like International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and foundation like Rockefeller on fertilizer. Remarkable achievements were made through these initiatives. Some of which include,

Crop Production

- Maize: from 5.47 million mt in 1999 to 7.10 million mt in 2006, 38% increase.
- Millet: from 5.96 million mt in 1999 to 7.70 million mt in 2006, 29% increase.
- Sorghum: from 7.52 million mt in 1999 to 9.86 million mt in 2006, 31% increase.
- Rice: from 3.27 million mt in 1999 to 4.20 million mt in 2006, 28% increase.
- Cassava: from 32.69 million mt in 1999 to 49.00 million mt in 2006, 50% increase.
- Cowpea: from 2.20 million mt in 1999 to 3.04 million in 2006, 38% increase.
- Palm oil: from 0.89 million mt in 1999 to 1.29 million mt in 2006, 44% increase.
- Groundnut: from 2.89 million mt in 1999 to 3.82 million mt in 2006, 32% increase.
- Cocoa: from 0.17 million mt in 1999 to 0.41 million mt in 2006.

For the first time in Nigeria, we were able to sell grains and tuber food items to the World Food Programme to supply to other areas of need in Africa. We also maintain a modest grain reserve, which has been used to cushion the effect of current food crisis.

Africa's success at achieving food security is contingent upon our collective ability to initiate and execute programmes that aim at releasing innate energy of local farmers and at reversing rural-urban migration. The role of energy must be taken seriously, particularly renewable energy, which is a major factor in agricultural production and processing for the purpose of adding value. For us, it should not be making a choice between small, medium and large land holders but rather to encourage and help all of them in their special areas of need. Small holders need help for land preparation, inputs and labour-saving devices, micro-credit and market, medium land holder need help on land preparation and credit and large land holders or commercial farmer need help with credit at the right rate of interest.

The challenge before us is basically to institute a collective agenda for action towards boosting food production within an enabling environment that ensures its availability, affordability, sustainability and accessibility. Conversely, a range of measures must be adopted to enhance the access of African agricultural production to markets outside Africa. Private sector initiative must be induced and encouraged. This may have to involve product and infrastructural development.

What have I learned over the last thirty years or so both as a farmer and as Chief Executive of an African country that seemed to have paid inadequate attention at one time or the other to agriculture, food production, food security and nutrition?

The first and most vital lesson is that we can move from an inadequate producer to a profitable and surplus producer for internal self-sufficiency, and for export. No African country should be in food crisis if the mixture of policies, strategies and programmes are right. There is no African country that does not have comparative advantage for production of one or two commodities for internal consumption and/or for export.

Let us identify mistakes and mis-steps that need to be corrected. Our utilization of fertilizer is miserably negligible. Africa's utilization of fertilizer is less than 10% of Asia's and yet not that we embrace the non-organic farming. Our management of water is abysmally poor. Policies, strategies and programmes must be composite and comprehensive. For instance, a situation where you have Ministry of Agriculture separate from Ministry of Water Resources, both of which are separate from agricultural research and procurement and distribution of fertilizer and other inputs can surely not be the right situation to help agricultural production. Agricultural credit will yet be separately located elsewhere. It cannot be the way to help farmers to produce if they have to go to three or four or five ministries or departments to get all that they need for their production. The

agricultural production, food security, and nutrition policies, strategies and programmes must all be inclusive of land preparation, availability of seeds, timely procurement and distribution of fertilizer and other inputs, availability of credit at reasonable interest rate, simple mechanization and labour-saving devices, motorable farm-to-market roads, processing and storage facilities. If any of these is missing or not available where and when it should be, it can mean the difference between success and failure. Agricultural production is time and season-bound. Unlike industry where you can shut your factory when the raw material is not available and reopen when raw materials are available, if any essential input or item is not available in time in agricultural production the season is lost and the farmer has lost a year. There is need for overall coordination at the highest governmental level because of the need for sustained coordination, harmonisation and direction.

The second lesson is that most African countries have what they need to succeed in agricultural production, food security and nutrition. The technology they need is basic and available. Where needed, there are international organizations and friends of Africa that are willing to lend a helping hand if genuine desire for help is required. That was the experience of Nigeria when I was in government.

The third lesson is that most African countries prefer to go for easy or soft option of food importation. It is suicidal. Why should any African country pride itself because of importing its staple food? It is unreasonable. God created us to be able to produce what we will eat where we are created to be by God. It is illogical to grow groundnuts for export to import rice for food.

Let me reiterate again that agricultural production, food security and nutrition must be taken as a “life and death” affair and be given the attention at the highest level of government that it deserves in Africa.

The increased agricultural production required to feed the world and to provide adequate raw materials for new energy resource of bio-fuel should be seen as an opportunity. The increased prices may not be a totally bad thing after all. Price incentives must be made to benefit African farmers significantly without middlemen or government marketing boards that cream off the benefit from the farmers. Farmers too want to enjoy the good things of life and to live reasonably well with their families. They need to look after the education of their children, the health of their family, shelter over their heads and mobility within their community. They need wholesome water supply and electricity.

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude by recalling the Chinese understanding of crisis. The inadequate global agricultural production and the attendant impact are both a challenge and an opportunity. A challenge, because of the suffering of the poor who cannot afford the soaring prices of food and are dragged daily into the dungeon of extreme poverty; we must have pro-poor programmes that will work and be an effective opportunity because humanity is confronted with the need to review the age long traditional norms guiding agricultural production and products marketing. This in terms of food security is the issue of affordability and accessibility. Each community and each nation will have to device appropriate policies and programmes to deal with their peculiar situation. Some 300 years ago, African farmers using basic farm implements, hoes and cutlasses, provided food but for a few millions of people. Unfortunately, however, 300 years on, our farmers still rely to a large extent on the same basic implements though Africa’s population has increased over a million fold. We must device relevant and appropriate technology and sustainable policies and programmes to make farming attractive to the young, in addition to the price incentive.

Nothing succeeds like success. We must provide models and examples for the young to follow. Going into agricultural production, food security and nutrition should not be regarded by the young as taking an oath of poverty. They must see that there is reward in it for them both here and hereafter.

This conference therefore provides a timely opportunity to take stock, and to discuss and tackle headlong the challenges of enhancing agricultural production globally but particularly in Africa.

We must come up with adequate strategies, programmes and an appropriate action plan to combat poverty in the developing economies such as Africa especially as we are approaching the 2015 MDGs poverty reduction target date. Agricultural production, food security and nutrition properly handled should reduce poverty, deal with the issue of maternal and infant mortality and create wealth particularly for the rural dwellers. AU and Regional Economic Communities must be challenged to implement previously adopted programmes and the new ones that may emerge from this 34th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

We must avoid boom and burst approach and inconsistency in our agricultural policies, strategies and programmes. Let us use this opportunity to move up and move forward. A young person going into agricultural production and who becomes disappointed and frustrated will prevent at least five others from going in. Young people often express apprehension in going into farming for two main reasons: inconsistency of government policy and the vagaries of weather and market. I always encourage young people to come into agricultural production and I assure them that if government policies and programmes are right and sustained and God's rains fall in due season, without plague or pests a young person's effort in agriculture can be satisfying and rewarding. With this embraced in Africa, we should be able to say good-bye to food crisis in Africa, substantially alleviate poverty but be ready to tolerate modest high prices of food for farmers to continue to produce. It is up to individual governments to decide who pays those modest high prices.

In conclusion, my private and public experience in agricultural production has confirmed my conviction that any realistic and bold ambition or objective set by an individual or a group of people can be achieved with singleness of purpose, determination and undiverted political will. It can be done and for us in Africa, it must be done.

Thank you for your attention and God bless.

APPENDIX G

LIST OF PRESENTERS UNDER AGENDA ITEM II.B
“PRESENTATION ON RECENT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS TO DEAL WITH
RISING FOOD PRICES AND FOOD SECURITY”

- Mr D. Nabarro, Deputy Coordinator, High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis on the Status of the United Nations Comprehensive Framework for Action (UNCFA) initiatives;
- Ms Valérie Guarnieri, Director, Programme Design and Support Division (WFP);
- Mr W. Betink, Programme and Management Department(IFAD);
- Mr J.M. Sumpsi, Assistant Director General, FAO-TC, on FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices;
- Mr A. Müller, Assistant Director General, FAO-NR, on Outcomes of the High Level Conference on World Food Security;
- Mr Shunichi Inoue, Assistant Director, Economic Security Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan), on Outcome of the G8 meeting in Japan;
- Mme Florence Lasbennes, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, France, on Status of Exchanges on the Establishment of a Global Partnership for Food and Agriculture.

APPENDIX H

SUMMARIES OF SPECIAL EVENT AND SIDE EVENTS

CFS Special Event

Informal Multi-stakeholder Forum:

High Prices and Food Security: Issues and Policy Responses

17 October 2008

The Special Event was held to enable a wide spectrum of stakeholders to discuss their views on measures already taken to strengthen the benefits and attenuate the threats of high food prices on national and household level food security. Discussion was animated by a moderator and led by three panellists representing NGOs/civil society, research and the private sector. The discussion focussed on seven issues. The key points, which emerged from the debate, are highlighted below.

1. How to reverse declining agricultural production?

- Many countries have the potential to meet their food needs and beyond; they need recovery rather than rescue plans.
- Strong leadership and political will is needed to provide clear direction and policies born from dialogue between governments and civil society, and based on reliable information and monitoring systems.
- Greater investment in agriculture, particularly in research and extension is required because agriculture is knowledge-intensive and solutions are often location-specific.
- Small holder producers, especially women, should be empowered to improve their production through reliable and efficient input and output markets.
- Private sector should provide producers and consumers with better products at competitive prices.
- Mechanisms are needed to mitigate the costs of excessive market or climatic risks.
- Strengthening and further development of state and market institutions, according to country needs, was thought to be critical.
- Regional market integration can reduce such risk by facilitating and augmenting trade.

2. Food reserves

- Many of the victims of the current food price crisis are urban dwellers who were not protected by the international market.
- By reducing price peaks and troughs, national-and in some cases regional-strategic reserves can help regulate markets. But, they can become difficult and costly to manage.
- It is important to reduce storage losses at all levels; accessible and appropriate technologies exist that can help at the farm level.
- Countries should be free to design their own food security policies.

3. *Price of energy*

- Energy prices contribute significantly to food prices through, for example, high production, processing and transport costs.
- Fertilizer prices increased significantly because fertilizer production is energy intensive and is a bulky product hence expensive to transport.
- Furthermore, the fertilizer market is very tight, with long lead times between increased demand and supply.
- Integrated approaches including organic and mineral sources are required to restore and maintain soil fertility.

4. *Biofuels*

- More information on the benefits and costs of biofuels is required to justify their use and to design sound biofuel policies.
- The ethics of biofuel production should be considered, especially when food crops are used, and when biofuel production requires scarce water and nutrient reserves essential for food crop production.

5. *Changing dietary habits*

- Vegetable and especially meat-rich diets boosted by population growth and rising affluence, drives demand and prices of a few cereals and oil crops.
- This could be countered by greater attention to diverse calorie sources such as tubers, cassava, plantains and vegetable oils.
- Food diversification also serves to balance nutrition particularly important for infants and for urban populations with limited access to rural products.
- Given the fast changing length and complexity of the food chain among a wide range of producers and consumers, better understanding of the dynamics of the food chain is needed to determine how best to meet the needs of consumer groups with different purchasing power.
- Nutrition education including food quality is fundamental to improve and to change dietary habits.
- The cost of hunger and malnutrition to households and to countries justifies paying more attention to this issue which often requires multidisciplinary solutions.
- Urban land can be used to help feed urban inhabitants.

6. *Speculation*

- Agricultural markets are likely to become increasingly unstable due to climate change and price volatility.
- This will encourage speculation, which is likely to occur at three levels; producers and their organisations; long term commodity markets; and increased pressure on marginal land and scarce water resources.
- Mechanisms to provide signals to market operators which would allow sound speculation but discourage unhealthy/excessive speculation are needed.
- Speculation affects both producers and consumers.
- While speculation has always existed, it would be useful to understand better the dynamics of food price speculation in the long term relative to other factors beyond the agricultural sector.

7. *Export restrictions*

- Export restrictions are usually designed to protect national consumers from excessively high prices.
- However, as in the case of fertilizer, they can lead to higher world prices resulting in higher production costs hence increased food prices for consumers in importing countries.

CFS Side Event

UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)

Impact of High Food Prices on Nutrition

14 October 2008

After introductory remarks by the Chair and the SCN representative, three panellists introduced the following complementary perspectives on the topic:

- The rapid increase in international prices of basic food commodities is having an impact on food consumption, in particular that of the most vulnerable households (poor net-food purchasers, particularly in urban areas). One primary coping mechanism is decreased consumption of quality food, thereby aggravating micro-nutrient deficiencies and affecting primarily women of child-bearing age and children under two. Even in the absence of protein-energy malnutrition, both short term and long-term effects on health and physical and mental development are to be expected, leading in turn to impaired economic development.
- Food and agriculture policies worldwide have led to increased dependence on imported foods, and in particular grains, and have too often been limited to ensuring caloric intake, thereby increasing vulnerability of food systems and diet imbalance. A better use of local food sources can provide a healthier, cheaper and more sustainable alternative, through increased production and consumption of micro-nutrient rich, and usually fresh, foods.
- The comprehensive response to high food prices should adopt a rights-based approach and in particular seek to operationalize the right to food. Civil society has a major role to play in both short term response and promotion of more appropriate policies and programmes. The lack of awareness of vulnerable populations about their fundamental rights prevents them from influencing policies that have an impact on their livelihoods.

The following issues and recommendations were brought up during the ensuing debate:

- It is essential to understand the coping mechanisms of vulnerable households with a view to protect dietary intake (in particular of women of child-bearing age and children under two) and promote sustainable responses. This is crucial to develop locally appropriate responses but also to bring vulnerable people and local institutions into the process, thereby constituting a basis for a rights-based approach.
- Priority should be given to promoting more resilient food systems. Improved use of local foods in India has proven an effective way to address micro-nutrient deficiencies (such as iron). Sustainable management of biodiversity is important for healthy diets, income generation and local development.
- While the causes and mechanisms of food crisis can vary widely, household responses and coping mechanisms follow very similar patterns. Lessons learned and recommendations made could therefore be applied in a broader context.

- Efforts are needed to raise awareness about the impact of high food prices on nutrition to better prevent impacts on health and economic development.
- Local capacity should be built to empower vulnerable people and to ensure accountability of institutions at all levels. The right to food has a key role to promote both empowerment and accountability. FAO's work to assist Member States to implement the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food should be pursued.
- Present food and agriculture policies are based on a commodity-based, value-chain model. This should be complemented by an integrated local development approach that combines availability of a variety of locally produced foods at different times of the year, supply of local markets, appropriate consumer information, and sustainable management of natural resources. Such an approach would help reduce transport costs and improve access to fresh foods.
- Research, education and training on production and consumption of traditional and indigenous foods is essential to diversify diets, protect biodiversity and strengthen cultures and social cohesion.
- A comprehensive response to the food crisis should include the systematic integration of sectoral interventions such as food aid, health, agriculture, education and social affairs at local level. In order to be coherent and sustainable, it should articulate local and global policies and actions, and ensure synergies to protect and promote nutrition.
- Inter-institutional mechanisms and initiatives such the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and the REACH: Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative, which bring together UN agencies, governments, NGOs and civil society can add value to this process.

CFS Side Event

“How rural producers should address the ongoing food crisis”

15 October 2008

The objective of the side event was to present and discuss producer organizations' analysis in addressing the soaring food prices crisis and to share some lessons learned regarding sustainable agriculture and food production policies. Representatives of a wide variety of rural producers from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe were invited to share their views around three questions, namely:

- Does the current food crisis mean greater risks or greater opportunities for rural producers?
- What are the key priority actions to be taken by rural producers? and
- What kind of partnerships and support do producers expect from UN agencies such as FAO, and from governments, in order to address the food crisis and ensure sustainable agricultural and rural development?

Key points which emerged from the debate are summarized below:

- Participants stressed that food shortages present risks for both the urban poor, who depend on food imports, and for indigenous people who do not have access to land.
- The high volatility of food prices and higher costs of agricultural inputs is a major risk for farmers.
- Opportunities identified included that agriculture is back on the international agenda and attracting public attention; this presents a new opportunity to promote locally produced food and local purchases which reduces transportation costs.
- Changes being experienced by the sector present a major opportunity to reform agricultural institutions to better match community needs.
- Immediate actions should include food supply to vulnerable groups, where possible, through locally purchased food items thus supporting local farming and creating important links between rural and urban areas.
- Short-term actions include boosting food production by using local seeds and traditional agricultural techniques such as organic farming which would reduce the application of costly mineral fertilizers and of pesticides.
- Medium and long-term actions could vary depending on the stage of development of producers, agro-climatic conditions, and the availability of resources. These actions include; efficient use of inputs and technologies and sharing agricultural research results; access to land and natural resources, especially for women farmers and indigenous people; improving rural infrastructure; access to credit for poor farmers; training and capacity building for rural communities, and improved access to local and regional markets.
- A rights based approach to food production which includes the participation of producers at all levels, including policy formulation, was emphasized.
- Most participants considered that the knowledge and expertise of UN agencies, as well as the political will of governments, are key factors in addressing the issues ahead.

CFS Side Event

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

15 October 2008

The side event was organized in response to requests from member countries to learn about recent initiatives calling for **a global partnership and high-level expert group on food and agriculture**. The objective of the event was to provide an informal forum for preliminary exchange of views on these issues, including the role of, and implications for, the three Rome Based Agencies (RBAs). Following opening remarks by FAO Director-General and H.E. Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, several speakers provided an overview on various aspects of a global partnership and high-level expert group on food and agriculture. In his remarks, H.E. Mr. Obasanjo outlined the three pillars of a global partnership (coordination among various actors, platform of experts, and global financing facility) and highlighted the important role of the RBAs in such a global effort.

The key issues arising from the discussions were:

- The food security crisis caused by high food prices made this an opportune time to establish a global partnership which would *inter alia* respond to the current crisis and avoid the occurrence of new ones.
- The establishment of a global partnership represents an important step towards coherent international actions. Such a partnership should ensure that the “twin-track” approach to fight hunger is implemented in a functional manner.
- A global partnership should be based on existing structures, such as the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) and the Committee on World Food Security, and the creation of new ones should be avoided.
- The comparative advantages of the RBAs in leading a global partnership on food security and agriculture should be utilized. Their knowledge, expertise, field presence, existing mechanisms and neutral forums can be used to provide an impartial synthesis of scientific knowledge to decision-makers dealing with food security issues.
- FAO’s partnerships with other institutions (such as OECD) regarding the analysis of the food security crisis is an example of how an experts panel can bring knowledge together.
- A global partnership could further the role of the UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, and operationalize the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA). The secretariat of the global partnership should be in Rome, which is the “capital of agriculture and food”.
- The process of establishing a global partnership should be inclusive: NGOs and CSOs and local farmers’ organisations should be included. Regional organisations should also participate and existing initiatives and programmes (such as CAADP) should be considered.
- Thus far, the honouring of pledges to help countries face the food security crisis have been weak; more assistance should be provided to countries as well as through the RBAs.