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Продовольственная и
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
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y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

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Proposed World Summit on Food Security in 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides information on the reasons and objectives for the proposal to convene a World Summit of Heads of State and Government on Food Security in 2009. It also covers the preparatory process that would lead to the Summit, the organizational arrangements foreseen and the financial aspects. Detailed specifications would be developed following a decision by the Council. Management underlines that the Summit would build on the work of the High-Level Conference on How to Feed the World in 2050 and that most of the documents would be prepared in advance using expert group meetings on subjects covered by normal work activities of the Organization, in cooperation with partners. The Summit would be financed by extra-budgetary resources, in full compliance with the financial regulations and with no negative impact on the Organization's regular programme of work.

Action Required

For decision.

Contact

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I. Introduction

1. In his statement to the Thirty-fifth (Special) Session of the FAO Conference, the Director-General proposed the convening of World Summit of Heads of State and Government on Food Security in 2009, with the aim to reach a broad consensus for the total eradication of hunger from the planet. The idea was initially launched by the Director-General at the World Food Day celebration in New York on 23 October 2008 in the presence of the UN Secretary-General and President Clinton, when a meeting of the G20 leaders was already called in November 2008 in Washington and another was being convened for April 2009 in London to discuss financial and economic issues. The proposal was subsequently submitted to Heads of State and Government of Member Nations for their consideration.

2. The Conference requested the Secretariat to provide relevant information and prepare any required studies for review and discussion with the membership on the proposals contained in the Director-General's statement, including a possible summit on food security in 2009. A document providing preliminary information on the proposed Summit was prepared for the 126th Session of the Finance Committee (11-15 May 2009).

3. The Finance Committee noted the preliminary information given on the organizational and financial aspects of the proposed World Summit of Heads of State and Government on Food Security in 2009 and welcomed the document provided by the Secretariat describing FAO's objectives of the proposed Summit. The Committee was assured that incremental funding for the Summit in November 2009 would be entirely financed from extra-budgetary sources, in full compliance with the Financial Regulations, and with no negative impact on the Programme of Work.

4. The initiative has received the support of the Kings and Heads of State and Government of the League of Arab States at their Economic and Social Development Summit held on 19 and 20 January 2009 in Kuwait City and of the African Union at the 12th Ordinary Session of their Assembly, which took place from 1 to 3 February 2009 in Addis Ababa. It was also supported by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at the 20th Inter-Sessional Meeting of their Conference which was held in Belize City on 12-13 March 2009, by the Heads of State and Government of the Central American Integration System (SICA) at their special meeting held in Managua, Nicaragua, on 25 March 2009, and by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at their Ministerial Meeting that took place in Havana on 29 and 30 April 2009. Also the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture lent their support to the proposed Summit at their Eighth Meeting convened in Alofi, Niue, from 20 to 22 May 2009. In addition, as of 27 May 2009, other 6 countries from Latin America, 9 countries from Asia and the Pacific and 12 countries from Europe have officially expressed their support to the Summit proposal.

II. Why a World Food Summit in 2009?

5. The global food insecurity situation has worsened and continues to represent a serious threat for humanity. Mainly because of soaring food prices, the number of people suffering from hunger has increased by 75 million in 2007, and is estimated to have risen by a further 40 million in 2008, bringing the total number to 963 million. The current financial crisis and economic slowdown are aggravating the situation, by affecting jobs and deepening poverty. Preliminary results of work conducted by FAO show that the number of hungry people could increase by another 100 million in 2009. This could have serious implications for world peace and security as was witnessed in 2007-2008 with riots in 22 countries in different regions of the world, political stability threatened and global inflation increasing.

6. The objectives of the Summit would be as follows:

- To eradicate hunger from the Earth by 2025. Since the World Food Summit in 1996 and the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, two important events took place. In 2004, the FAO Council adopted the Voluntary Guidelines to support the realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and, in November 2006, the XVI Iberoamerican Summit of Heads of State and Government in Montevideo, Uruguay, adopted the initiative “*Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger by 2025*”. This initiative was endorsed by the Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development held in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, in December 2008.

Achieving this objective would facilitate the implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines and the doubling of world food production to ensure sufficient food supplies to feed a world population that will reach 9 billion by 2050.

- To put in place a more coherent and effective system of governance of world food security, with:
 - a scientific and technical basis for decisions;
 - an inclusive partnership with Government, Civil Society Organizations, Farmers’ Organizations, NGOs and the Private Sector;
 - a high-level intergovernmental process of decision making.
- To agree on rules and mechanisms for farmers in both developed and developing countries to earn an income comparable to those of secondary and tertiary sector workers in their respective countries through support to agriculture that does not create market distortions.
- To mobilize USD 30 billion per year for public and private sector investments in rural infrastructures and to ensure access to modern inputs to boost food production and productivity in the developing world, particularly in low-income and food-deficit countries, but also to guarantee food safety and quality. It is essential that the share of agriculture in official development assistance (ODA) be reversed and allocations to the sector in the lending portfolios of International Financial Institutions and regional development banks be boosted.
- Adopt a mechanism for early reaction for food crises, on the model of the early warning system which worked very well in 2007 and the existing systems for natural disaster and conflict crises. While there are bilateral, regional and multilateral mechanisms to deal with natural disasters and conflicts, there is no such mechanism for food crises.

III. Preparatory process

7. The proposed World Summit on Food Security would build on the work of the High-Level Conference (HLC) on “How to Feed the World in 2050”, which was approved by the Conference in 2007. This conference was initially programmed for 2008 but was subsequently reported to 2009, thus giving more time for technical preparation. Most of the technical documents would be prepared in advance as part of the preparation for the 2050 HLC and also using expert group meetings on subjects covered by normal activities of the Organization, in cooperation with partners and in relation to other ongoing processes.

8. The expert group meetings include:
- a) Public financing for agriculture and food security: with OECD.
 - b) Non-distortionary support to agriculture: with UNCTAD, OECD and WTO.
 - c) Private investment in agriculture: with IFAD, UNCTAD and the World Bank.

- d) Agriculture and climate change: with IPCC, the World Bank , IFAD and the CG system.
 - e) Transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases: with WHO and OIE.
 - f) Food quality and safety: with WHO.
9. Basic documents for the Summit would be prepared for negotiations by regional groups of Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives to FAO in consultation with their capitals, with the goal of arriving at a consensus before the Summit.

IV. Organizational arrangements

10. The Summit is proposed to be held on 15, 16 and 17 November 2009, back-to-back with the 36th Session of the Conference.
11. As in the summits of 1996 and 2002, in addition to the meeting of Heads of State and Government, it is proposed to organize special events in the days preceding the Summit with: (i) NGOs, CSOs and Farmers' Organizations; (ii) the Private Sector; and (iii) national parliaments (inter-parliamentary meeting).
12. Five thematic roundtables would be held during the Summit as parallel events. These would be as follows: (i) Financial and economic crisis and food security (including ODA, Foreign direct investment, and speculation in agricultural markets); (ii) Global governance of food security; (iii) Agriculture and the Copenhagen conference on climate change; (iv) Support measures for farmers; and (v) Early Reaction Fund for food security.

V. Financial aspects

13. Drawing on past experience, the budget for the proposed Summit is estimated to be in the range of 1.5 to 2.5 million US dollars, depending on the final format to be agreed upon. The Summit would be financed entirely from extra-budgetary resources, in full compliance with the Financial Regulations and with no negative impact on the regular work programme of the Organization.