

Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security: Actors, missions and achievements*

“Creating the world in seven days, God had a key advantage: He worked alone. Whether a partnership of human institutions can create a new world order within seven years remains to be seen.” (Former UN Director General, Kofi Annan, 2008, Hunger Conference, Dublin)

The roots of the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS) lie in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) declared in September 2000, when the international community committed itself to halving the number of people who suffer from hunger by the year 2015. At that time, the figure stood at approximately 800 million; MDG 1 set the benchmark to reduce this number to 400 million within 15 years. It was an ambitious goal, as the number of hungry people had been more or less stagnant during the 1990s, having declined considerably over the preceding two decades. The MDG Declaration constituted a shift of focus back to global food security, a theme that had been largely neglected during the years when structural adjustment and market liberalisation were prominent items on the international development agenda.

The evolution of the right to food from being regarded as a general human right to becoming a specific instrument to promote international food security was an important complement to MDG 1 and was promoted especially by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, whose office was also established in 2000. The “Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”, adopted by the FAO council in 2004, spelt out the specific obligations of governments with regard to combating hunger and ensuring food and nutrition security as part of their constitutional duties.

Other important events which prepared the stage for GPAFS were the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and the subsequent Accra Agenda of 2008, initiated by the OECD. These formulated the principles of country leadership, donor alignment, donor harmonisation, results-based management and mutual accountability. Acknowledging that decades of donor-led aid programmes had failed to produce tangible results in most developing countries, the international community accepted that national strategies conceived and owned by the respective countries should be supported and followed. This was a decisive turn away from the hitherto prevailing ideology that a “one-size-fits-all” liberal market framework is sufficient to induce economic development worldwide and to resolve the poverty and hunger problem, as it were, “en passant”. Regional initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) emerged in 2001 and 2003, formulated by the countries concerned and supporting their self-determined process to achieve national food security through the promotion of agriculture.

Agriculture and rural development suffered most during the decades when structural adjustment was the leitmotif of development policies and the share of ODA earmarked for agriculture dropped from 18 percent (1979) to 3.4 percent (2006). Governments were forced to cut back their own spending on agricultural services, research and subsidies as a condition of further loans, reducing the share of government expenditure for agriculture in developing countries from 11.3 percent to 6.7 percent during the same period. This left the vast majority of the population in developing countries virtually unassisted in the most important activity comprising their livelihoods. In retrospect it is difficult to reconstruct the rationale of a policy which makes its own target group the deliberate victim of its economic credo.

The current food crisis triggered by the food price spike of 2007/2008 is a direct result of this policy. It took the hunger riots of that year, when prices of staple foods tripled in many

countries, and the rapid increase in undernourished people to more than 1 billion today to put agriculture and food security back into the spotlight. GPAFS is the reaction of the international community to this situation. It is to the credit of the UN system that it has spearheaded this policy correction.

What is GPAFS?

GPAFS is a global network consisting of governments, international organisations, civil society and industry. The process was launched at the Madrid Meeting on Food Security in January 2009, which was co-hosted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and the Spanish Prime Minister Rodriguez Zapatero in the immediate aftermath of the food price spike. Its main message was the importance of fostering investment in the spheres of farming and food, supporting smallholder farmers and setting up social security networks through the combined efforts of all stakeholders. At its centre was the newly created UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), which in 2008 had prepared a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA), a manifesto for the fight against global hunger. The numerous subsequent events and programmes, including the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) and the Food Summit 2009 in Rome, with its declaration of the Five Roman Principles, can all be understood as part of this process.

UN response to the global food security crisis

When food prices skyrocketed in 2007 and hunger revolts directed international attention to the shocking state of global food insecurity, the incoming UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, responded by establishing the HLTF. This brought together, under his personal chairmanship, the heads of 22 UN and Bretton Woods organisations that were addressing the ongoing crisis in one way or another. These organisations included, first and foremost, the three Rome based agencies Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP), with FAO's Director-General, Jacques Diouf, serving as Deputy Head of the HLTF, but also encompassed such diverse entities as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is important to keep in mind that the HLTF was created out of an acute crisis, one which had triggered a general sense of urgency and which called for immediate action, ruling out business as usual. It was this shared feeling that brought together 22 otherwise very independent organisations with different cultures, management structures and missions.

Within just three months the HLTF came up with the **Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA)**, a remarkable document which established a framework for addressing the immediate threats generated by the crisis and creating the necessary policy changes for the future. The CFA has since become the common ground not only for the HLTF members but more or less for the entire GPAFS process. It identifies declining investment in agriculture as the main driver behind the crisis and advocates a twin-track approach to re-establishing a stable food situation, namely:

- improving access to food and nutrition support and taking immediate steps to increase food availability, while simultaneously
- strengthening food and nutrition security in the longer run by addressing the underlying factors driving the food crisis.

Acknowledging the central role of smallholder farmers in most developing countries, the CFA puts them at the centre of the envisaged outcomes and proposes a range of measures to meet their immediate needs and build up their longer-term resilience. It calls for a substantial and sustained increase in investment in smallholder agriculture and rural development and, in doing so, contributes to the process of reorienting the development agenda, which began at the turn of the century.

With MDG 1 in acute danger of being missed and international attention now firmly focused on global hunger, the UN SG has made food security a top priority on his agenda. The HLTF, although never intended as a permanent structure, has intensified its activities. Assistant Secretary-General, David Nabarro, who had garnered respect as a Senior Advisor to WHO, was named first as HLTF Coordinator and later as the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition. He is supported by a team of experts from various organisations who serve as a secretariat, reaching out to other stakeholders and liaising with the countries living in food insecurity. He chairs the Senior Steering Group that prepares the bi-monthly meetings of the HLTF, speaks on behalf of the SG on food security issues, and is deeply involved in every aspect of the GPAFS process, including the Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) and the EU Food Facility.

One of the most visible UN events related to this issue was the FAO Food Summit in November 2009 in Rome, which attracted considerable media attention and brought together not only governments and stakeholders but also many NGOs and civil society representatives. While reiterating the central themes of the CFA, it also declared the Five Roman Principles to achieve food security, namely

- to support country-led processes,
- to pursue comprehensive approaches,
- to coordinate assistance programmes effectively,
- to give the UN a strong role in the process and
- to make more funds available for agriculture and food security.

The basic rules of the Paris Declaration and the CFA come together in these five principles to guide future programmes over the coming five years leading up to the crucial 2015 MDG threshold.

Another outcome of the summit was the reform of the **Committee on World Food Security** (CFS). Set up in the 1970s, this intergovernmental platform attached to the FAO has led a rather quiet life for most of its existence and was taken by surprise when the food crisis hit in 2007 and the GPAFS process gained momentum. Given its mandate "to serve as a forum in the United Nations System for review and follow-up of policies concerning world food security including production and physical and economic access to food", the CFS should be doing what the HLTF coordinator does. It is the intention of the reform that the CFS will gradually slip into that role.

A sister institution of the CFS is the **UN Standing Committee on Nutrition** (SCN) based at WHO in Geneva. Its mandate is to promote cooperation among UN agencies and partner organisations in support of community, national, regional, and international efforts to end malnutrition in all its forms. The SCN is an extended network of food and nutrition professionals which meets once a year at the SCN Annual Sessions. The SCN network is open to all and includes most of the major players in the field of international food and nutrition.

G8 response to the global food crisis

The G8 has addressed the global food crisis in the context of its ongoing work with Africa, which has been on the agenda of every G8 meeting since 2000 in Okinawa. African leaders were invited to attend the G8 meeting for the first time on that occasion, in an attempt to broaden the dialogue and follow up on development activities. The Genoa Plan of Action (2001), the Africa Action Plan (2002), the G8/Africa Plan (2003), the Gleneagles Communique (2005) and the Heiligendamm Process (2007) all stressed the importance of Africa, expressed a commitment to achieving the MDGs, gave assurances of support for

greater quality and effectiveness in development cooperation (Paris Declaration/Accra Agenda) and regional cooperation (NEPAD/CAADP), and highlighted the need for increased financial engagement by the G8. When the G8 found itself confronted with the global food crisis at Hokkaido in 2008, this was also the moment of acknowledgement that their previous endeavours had failed. At Hokkaido food security became a central issue with the G8 committing itself for the first time “to reverse the overall decline of aid and investment in the agricultural sector”. This was also a response to mounting pressure from the NGOs present at Hokkaido to reverse the harmful policies that had led to the food crisis.

The 2008 G8 summit in Hokkaido/Japan coincided with the peak in the world food price spike and the publication of the CFA, which called for a twin-track approach in order to meet immediate needs and build resilience among the increasing number of hungry people. The subsequent Madrid Meeting on Food Security in January 2009 saw the birth of GPAFS, which was conceived as an open platform to unite all stakeholders engaged in food security. Most prominently it brought together the UN, which co-hosted and masterminded the event, and the G8, which had to make good on its continued promises of increased financial input to fight the crisis. The efforts of these two were spearheaded by the EU, which had just unveiled its 1 billion euro food facility – so far the most tangible result of the whole process. It is intended to bridge the gap between emergency response and long term development by providing agricultural production inputs (seeds, fertilisers, pesticides) and will end in December 2011.

The Madrid summit also provided an arena for the first appearance of the new Obama administration, which promised to make food security the top item on its development policy agenda and, by doing so, to reverse decades of a quite different policy.

The 2009 G8 summit in Aquila made food security one of its central themes and created the **L’Aquila Food Security Initiative** (AFSI). In its joint statement on Global Food Security, the G8 once more reiterated what had by now become a mantra, namely, to increase aid to agriculture and food security, empower smallholder farmers, support country-led plans, promote better coordination, and support GPAFS.

Most highly publicised was the financial commitment made by the G8 to invest 20 billion US dollars (USD) during a period of three years for AFSI purposes, an amount which later became rather less definite as it proved difficult to trace which one of the G8 members considered what part of this amount to be relevant for the purpose. Eventually it turned out that only a small proportion of these funds was actually fresh money.

Nevertheless, during its Summit in Pittsburgh in September 2009 the G20 called on the World Bank Group to create a trust fund for this money which was to be used to scale up agricultural assistance to low income countries, a call to which the Bank responded by creating the **Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme** (GAFSP). GAFSP was set up in April 2010 with commitments of USD 900 million pledged by the USA, Canada, Spain, South Korea and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

With the G8 chair now held by Canada and GPAFS firmly established under UN leadership, the latest summit at Muskoka/Canada focused on other development topics, namely, maternal and child health. This may also be due to the fact that global food prices have stabilised lately and that food security has not been in the media as much during the last few months. This can always change very rapidly, of course, as the underlying problems of global food insecurity are far from resolved.

Other stakeholders

The most important stakeholders in GPAFS are obviously the **hungry people** themselves. They count more than one billion today and their numbers are increasing steadily. They typically live in a poor rural environment with agriculture as their main livelihood and source of income. They have little access to basic services such as health care, education, markets

and services, and have received scant national and international attention for decades. They are generally organised within traditional structures, as there are few genuine farmers' unions or authentic national NGOs to give them a clear voice. Consequently they are usually treated as victims and as objects of a crisis, rather than as subjects who are capable of solving their own problems and should be supported in doing so. The lack of effective influence exerted by the rural poor on the decisions affecting their immediate living conditions lies at the heart of the aberrations of most development efforts to date.

The primary responsibility for achieving food security and guaranteeing the right to food lies with **national governments**, many of which have enshrined this right in their constitution. This responsibility includes the duty to provide the requisite services (extension, veterinary), infrastructure, market access and safety nets (grain reserves, social transfers). Unfortunately many governments, often following advice given by donors, have reduced public investment in these vital areas of food security over a prolonged period and now find themselves with crippled institutions that are difficult to rebuild. This is particularly true for agricultural extension services: in many cases, staff have not been replaced for many years, and some agricultural training and research institutes have been closed altogether.

It was the African Union (AU) which responded to this dangerous situation in 2001 with the creation of the **New Partnership for Africa's Development** (NEPAD) and, more specifically, in 2003 with the **Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme** (CAADP). CAADP provides a regional framework focusing on improving food security and nutrition and increasing incomes in Africa's largely farming based economies. It aims to do this by raising agricultural productivity by at least 6 percent per year and increasing public investment in agriculture to 10 percent of national budgets. With the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda, national governments are now back in the driving seat with regard to their food security policies. CAADP supports them in this by providing a framework of procedures and benchmarks. It also provides public advocacy, generates the necessary international attention, and thus gives national governments a unified voice in the GPAFS process.

The success of this policy depends, of course, on national governments operating effectively. In order to do so, they need to be democratically legitimised and function according to the rules of good governance.

Donors, including the G8 and the UN, play the most active and vocal roles in GPAFS. With the MDG finishing line of 2015 getting closer and very little to show to tax payers for the many billions of euros spent on development, they are in a hurry to produce results. Since Paris and Accra, they have conceded policy leadership to the individual countries and are living up to their commitments by allocating an ever increasing proportion of budget aid which is either at the free disposal of national governments or else is earmarked for specific programmes. In some cases this amount accounts for 50 percent of national budgets. Donors are also supporting national governments with technical assistance in building capacity, often in order to comply with their own rules and procedures. A particularly striking example in this respect is the **"Global Mechanism"**, a UN institution created in the context of the Convention to Combat Desertification which "works with country Parties ... to enhance their capacities to engage in the planning and programming of development, thereby positioning sustainable land management politically and strategically and influencing financial resource allocations". In other words, a team of UN experts helps national governments to fill out the application forms for funds from various international institutions which are too complicated for ordinary civil servants to understand. This may be an extreme example, but it highlights a new burden of bureaucracy which donors have put on developing countries, often diverting their already limited capacity for leadership.

Most donors working on food security are informally gathered under the auspices of the **Global Donor Platform for Rural Development**, created in 2003. They share a common conviction about the central role of agriculture and rural development in achieving the MDGs and use the platform for debate, information exchange and opinion forming. The platform is not a decision-making entity; apart from its yearly meetings, it works mainly through its internet site.

The GPAFS ensemble is completed by the numerous **international NGOs** engaged in work on food security. These are motivated by a host of ideals and incentives. The large NGOs among them, such as Oxfam, CARE and World Vision, often command large networks of posts in food insecure countries, giving them a direct link to the hungry population. They use this to advocate on the latter's behalf and compensate to a certain degree for the lack of authentic voices in the GPAFS process. Unfortunately they are often bound by their special concerns to one particular aspect of food insecurity, e.g. nutrition or maternal health, and fall short of representing the whole picture.

Results achieved and the way ahead – a critical assessment

As pointed out above, GPAFS is part of a broader process that began around the turn of the century and reoriented the international development agenda towards more results-based outcomes, namely the MDGs. This process gradually turned away from predominantly donor-led policies towards the principle of country leadership and placed greater emphasis on the basic needs of the rural population, which still constitutes the majority in most developing countries. When the food crisis hit in 2007 as a result of the long period of neglect of agriculture and food security, GPAFS accelerated this process and put it at the centre of public attention. The trend had already been reversed before that point, however: for example, the proportion of ODA going to agriculture rose from its all time low of 3.4 percent in 2006 to a still meagre 5.5 percent in 2007. With significant funds coming from the EU Food Security Facility, GAFSP and AFSI, this share has certainly risen in the past few years and will continue to do so. Regional frameworks such as CAADP, with their focus on agriculture, further support this trend and represent an attempt to put it on a sustainable footing. It is the main merit of GPAFS to have contributed to this change of policy.

In the future, GPAFS and the HLTF, which is still at its heart, will continue to keep public attention focused on global food insecurity and bring the different stakeholders together. One such exercise is the revision of the CFA, which was originally conceived as a UN rapid response to an acute crisis and is now evolving into a manifesto of all stakeholders on how to address food insecurity in general. One interesting question is whether the reformed CFS will eventually prove equal to its task of pushing forward the international food security agenda and, in doing so, replace the HLTF and its coordinator in the GPAFS process. On the one hand this would be a welcome development, because it would shift responsibility for this crucial aspect of international policy back into the realm of the three Rome-based organisations FAO, IFAD and WFP and replace a structure which was always intended to be provisional. On the other hand it is difficult to see how even a revitalised CFS will cope with GPAFS in an efficient manner, as it doesn't enjoy the direct authority of the UN Secretary General, as his Special Representative David Nabarro does, and is a much more unwieldy institution than the HLTF coordination team. The rivalry between the various organisations in the UN system and their different missions and interests will add to that difficulty.

Scepticism is in order when asking whether GPAFS will eventually create a food secure world and achieve MDG 1 in 2015. Persistent global mega-trends such as population growth and climate change with their consequences of soil erosion, water scarcity, desertification and diminishing bio-diversity are working in the opposite direction and pose a constant menace to any progress made. In addition, political decisions made in rich countries, such as EU and US export subsidies for their farmers, which have persisted for decades despite repeated promises to the contrary, are impeding agricultural development in the poor world.

Structural shortcomings

Just as important as these external drivers is the continuing structural problem of how to steer development processes in a rational way towards targeting the rural poor. It was this deficit that led to the deplorable state of global food insecurity in the first place, and it has rarely been addressed in earnest. It is striking that so far no notable public discussion has developed around the question of responsibility for the long period of neglect of agriculture that led to the food crisis with its deadly consequences for millions of people. As in many dysfunctional social systems, lack of accountability is at the core of the problem of a consistently failing development policy, and GPAFS is not likely to change this.

Now, as before, policy decisions in the development business continue to be made through a top-down process involving a very heterogeneous group of “experts” consisting of national and international bureaucrats, professionals, academics and philanthropists who are firmly in command. This group of generally well-paid and highly educated people numbering in their 100,000s determines the discourse on how things are to be done without being answerable in any formal way to either the tax payers in the rich countries who come up with the money or to the rural people in the poor world for whom it is destined. Although they are generally well-meaning and responsible as individuals, the absence of a common denominator coupled with their alignment to different institutions, governments and interests makes them erratic in their actions and largely detached from the real problems of the hungry poor. Participating in a never ending sequence of self-referential summits, conferences and workshops, they produce a continuous series of development fads which a large part of the world’s population unfortunately has to live with – and to die for.

The obvious alternative to this unsatisfactory situation would be a policy that empowers the rural poor and gives them the means to manage their livelihoods on their own. Fortunately there are positive examples where this has been achieved. One such case is Malawi, which has managed to evolve from a chronic food aid recipient in 2005 to a food secure and even grain exporting country in 2009. The recipe was a simple nationwide subsidy programme for agricultural inputs which made hybrid maize seed and fertiliser available to virtually all smallholder and subsistence farmers. Malawi nearly tripled its national grain production during this short period and erased the concern of hunger from the minds of its citizens. Malawi spends 14 percent of its national budget on agriculture and continues to build on the success of this policy directed towards rural development. It is noteworthy that this Input Subsidy Program was executed as a national initiative against the advice and without the support of the donor community, which called it simplistic, unsustainable and market distorting. This brings to mind Mark Twain’s aphorism: “If you want to drain a swamp, you should not ask the frogs for advice.”

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** The opinions contained in this article are those of the author personally, who takes sole responsibility for them.*

Box 1: The Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA)

The CFA puts forward two sets of actions aimed at promoting a comprehensive response to the global food crisis. Both require urgent attention. The first set focuses on meeting the immediate needs of vulnerable populations. The second set builds resilience and contributes to global food and nutrition security. In order to support these two sets of actions, the CFA also proposes strengthening coordination, assessment, monitoring, and surveillance systems. These actions are neither exhaustive nor exclusive. They are intended to guide assessments and strategies developed at the country level and to support international coordination efforts.

To meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations, the CFA proposes four key outcomes to be advanced through a range of different actions: 1) emergency food assistance, nutrition interventions and safety nets to be enhanced and made more accessible; 2) smallholder farmer food production to be boosted; 3) trade and tax policies to be adjusted; and 4) macroeconomic implications to be managed. Each outcome has a range of actions from which to choose.

To build resilience and contribute to global food and nutrition security in the longer term, four additional critical outcomes are put forward:

- 1) social protection systems to be expanded;
- 2) smallholder farmer-led food availability growth to be sustained;
- 3) international food markets to be improved; and
- 4) international biofuel consensus to be developed.

In the CFA, the HLTF calls on developing countries to allocate additional budgetary resources for social protection systems and to increase the share of agriculture in their public expenditure. Recognising developed countries' intention to increase their Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.7 percent of Gross National Product, and emphasising the need for additional financial resources to improve food security on a sustainable basis, the HLTF urges donor countries to double ODA for food assistance, other types of nutritional support and safety net programmes, and to increase the percentage of ODA to be invested in food and agricultural development from the current 3 percent to 10 percent within five years (and beyond if needed) in order to reverse the historic under-investment in agriculture.

For more information on the CFA visit <http://www.un-foodsecurity.org>

Box 2: The Committee on Global Food Security (CFS)

The CFS was established in 1974 as an intergovernmental body to serve as a forum in the UN system for review and follow-up of policies concerning world food security, including food production and physical and economic access to food. During 2009 the CFS underwent reform to make it more effective by including a wider group of stakeholders and increasing its ability to promote policies that reduce food insecurity. The vision of the reformed CFS is to act as an inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders so that they can work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. Using a phased approach the CFS shall

- coordinate a global approach to food security
- promote policy convergence
- support and advise countries and regions
- coordinate at national and regional levels
- promote accountability and share best practices
- develop a global strategic framework for food security and nutrition.

The Bureau is the executive arm of the CFS. It is made up of a Chairperson and twelve member countries. The Advisory group is made up of representatives from the five different categories of CFS participants. These are:

- UN agencies and other UN bodies;
- civil society and non-governmental organisations;
- international agricultural research institutions;
- international and regional financial institutions;
- private sector associations and philanthropic foundations.

The CFS has a permanent Secretariat located at FAO Rome to support the Plenary, the Bureau and Advisory Group, and a High Level Panel of Experts from a variety of food security and nutrition-related fields.

For more information on the CFS visit: www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/wfsfinal_en.asp

Box 3: The UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)

The SCN is a forum in which UN agencies, bilateral partners and NGOs/CSOs come together to exchange information and discuss issues related to nutrition. It is an extended network of food and nutrition professionals that meets once a year at the SCN Annual Sessions. It is governed by a Chair, currently Alexander Müller (Assistant Director-General, FAO) who is the tenth Chair of the SCN and heads the SCN Steering Committee. Created some thirty years ago, SCN has been through various organisational changes and since 2000 has been run by a Steering Committee with representation from each of the constituencies, under the guidance of the Chair. At the hub of the SCN network is the SCN Secretariat, which is hosted by WHO in Geneva and core funded by the UN agencies. The SCN is not in itself an implementing agency. It is a forum in which the relevant UN agencies come together to harmonise their nutrition policies and programmes, coordinate activities and promote joint action, in partnership and common cause with representatives from national governments and NGOs.

The mandate of the SCN is to promote cooperation among UN agencies and partner organisations in support of community, national, regional, and international efforts to end malnutrition in all its forms in this generation. The SCN Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2006-2010 outlines five key activity areas: advocacy, communication and partnership building; assessment, monitoring and evaluation; development of integrated approaches; mainstreaming human rights; and identifying key scientific and operational gaps. As part of its advocacy and communication mandate, the SCN produces and disseminates a series of publications, including SCN News, Reports on the World Nutrition Situation and Nutrition Policy Papers.

For more information on the UNSCN visit: <http://www.unscn.org/en/home/>

Box 4: The High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF)

The HLTF was established by the UN Chief Executive Board in April 2008 to ensure that the UN system's work is coherent, coordinated and effective. It is a decision making body bringing together the heads of 22 different UN system agencies, funds, programmes and financial institutions. It is chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General with the Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as Vice-Chair.

The **GOAL** of the HLTF is to ensure that all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

The **PURPOSE** of the entities represented within the HLTF is to work and support the outcomes of the CFA at community, country, regional and global level. This purpose is realised by assisting national authorities in their efforts to ensure that:

- those in need benefit from safety nets, including cash transfers and food assistance, in ways that reflect best practice and are adequately funded, in order to prevent adverse consequences of hunger, including malnutrition;
- governments have the fiscal leeway to implement policies that benefit the poor and avoid imposing export bans – especially for food destined for the most vulnerable;
- smallholder farmers are able to access the fertilizers and seeds they need for the planting season and to sell their products at a fair price through accessible markets;
- underlying structural problems in food systems are tackled through strategic and long term investment in improved agricultural productivity, in ways that involve community groups and the private sector.

The HLTF meets every two months and whenever urgent situations require its attention.

The Senior Steering Group facilitates the work of the High Level Task Force for Global Food Security and serves as a technical working group. The SSG provides the Task Force with substantive analysis and advice and brings together senior level representatives from the 22 agencies that are part of the HLTF. It meets once a month and whenever specific situations require its attention. In July 2008, it completed the Comprehensive Framework for Action in consultation with concerned stakeholders.

In January 2009, the Secretary-General designated David Nabarro as Coordinator of the High Level Task Force for the Global Food Security Crisis. The Coordinator chairs the Senior Steering Group and assists the HLTF as it pursues its programme of work. He reports to the UN Secretary-General and serves as his representative on food security and nutrition issues.

A small HLTF coordination team (up to 10 staff seconded from HLTF agencies and governments) supports the HLTF Coordinator. The team is located in Rome (main hub), New York and Geneva and its role is to help ensure that existing coordination mechanisms function as intended, with specific focus on the country level.

Box 5: The five Roman principles declared at the World Food Summit 2009

Principle 1: Invest in country-owned plans, aimed at channelling resources to well-designed and results-based programmes and partnerships.

Principle 2: Foster strategic coordination at national, regional and global levels to improve governance, promote better allocation of resources, avoid duplication of efforts and identify response gaps.

Principle 3: Strive for a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security that consists of: 1) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable and 2) medium and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty, including through the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food.

Principle 4: Ensure a strong role for the multilateral system by sustained improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, coordination and effectiveness of multilateral institutions.

Principle 5: Ensure sustained and substantial commitment by all partners to investment in agriculture and food security and nutrition, with provision of necessary resources in a timely and reliable fashion, aimed at multi-year plans and programmes.

Box 6: The L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI)

At the 2009 meeting of the G8 in L'Aquila, world leaders committed 20 billion US dollars over three years for sustainable agriculture development and safety nets for vulnerable populations. The effort was endorsed by 27 countries and 15 international organisations. It is a substantial recognition of the urgent need for decisive action to free humanity from hunger and poverty. The main document is the "L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security".

Box 7: The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP)

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) is a multilateral mechanism set up by the World Bank to assist in the implementation of pledges made by the G8 at L'Aquila in July 2009. The objective of this new mechanism is to address the underfunding of country and regional agriculture and food security strategic investment plans that are already being developed by countries in consultation with donors and other stakeholders at the country level, thereby making aid a more predictable factor in contributing to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 to cut hunger and poverty by half by 2015. Broad categories of activities, investments and interventions aimed at improving rural incomes and food security through agriculture under GAFSP include: raising agricultural productivity; linking farmers to markets; reducing risk and vulnerability; improving non-farm rural livelihoods; technical assistance, institution building, and capacity development.

For more information on GAFSP visit: <http://www.worldbank.org>

Box 8: The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development is a network of 34 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financing institutions, intergovernmental organisations and development agencies which share the common vision that agriculture and rural development are central to poverty reduction as well as the conviction that sustainable and efficient development requires a coordinated global approach. Created in 2003 — following years of relative decline in public investment in the sector — the Platform is committed to increasing and improving the quality of development assistance in agriculture and rural development. The Platform provides a forum in which members and partners come together to build consensus around critical or emerging issues and to formulate joint approaches. The Platform adds value to the individual efforts of its members by facilitating an exchange of development know-how. These processes of sharing expertise coalesce into a robust knowledge base which the Platform is then able to use, for example, in its joint advocacy work.

For more information visit: <http://www.donorplatform.org>