

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, this number stood at approximately 800 million and 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 after having declined considerably over the two preceding decades. The MDG Declaration constituted a shift of focus back to global food security, a theme that had been largely neglected during the era when structural adjustment was the dominant ideology and a “one-size-fits-all” liberal market framework was thought to be sufficient to induce economic development worldwide and solve the poverty and hunger problem almost “en passant”.

Agriculture and rural development had suffered most during the years when structural adjustment was the leit-

motif of development policies and the share of Official Development Assistance (ODA) directed to 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 budget 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 without assistance in the most important livelihood activity. In retrospect, it is difficult to reconstruct the rationale of a policy which made 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 the direct result of this policy. It took the hunger riots of that year, when prices for staple food tripled in many countries, and the rapid increase of undernourished people to more than 1 billion today to put agriculture and food security back into the spotlight.

■ What is GPAFS?

The Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security 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. Its main mission was to foster investment in the spheres of farming and food, to support small-holder farmers, and to set 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). The numerous subsequent events and programmes, such as the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) and the Food Summit 2009 in Rome, can all be understood as part of this process.

■ UN response to the global food security crisis

When food prices skyrocketed in 2007 and food riots directed international attention to the shocking state

* The present article is the shortened version of a piece that can be found at www.rural21.com. The original contains a wealth of further information.

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

Dr Claus Auer**

Formerly High Level Task Force country coordination team
Rome, Italy
claus.auer@diplo.de



Photo: picture-alliance/dpa

High food prices have led to hunger riots in many countries in 2008 – as here in Haiti.

of global food insecurity, the incoming UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon responded by establishing the HLTF, uniting under his personal chairmanship the heads of 22 UN and Bretton Woods organisations which were dealing in one way or another with the ongoing crisis. These were 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 born out of an acute crisis that had created a universal sense of urgency, called for immediate action, and ruled out business as usual. It was this 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 remark-

able document which set out a framework to address the immediate threats of the crisis and embark upon necessary policy changes for the future. The CFA has since become the common ground not only of the High Level Task Force members but more or less the whole Global Partnership process. It identifies declining investment in agriculture as the main driver of the crisis and advocates a twin track approach to re-establishing a stable food situation by

- 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 different measures to meet their immediate needs and build up their longer-term resilience.

With MDG 1 in acute danger of being missed and international attention now firmly focused on global hunger, the UN Secretary General made food security a top priority of his agenda; at the same

time the HLTF, although never intended as a permanent structure, intensified its activities. Assistant Secretary General David Nabarro was named as the first 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 collectively serve as a secretariat, reaching out to other stakeholders and sustaining links with the countries living in food insecurity. He chairs the Senior Steering Group, which prepares the bimonthly meetings of the HLTF, and is deeply involved in every aspect of the GPAFS process.

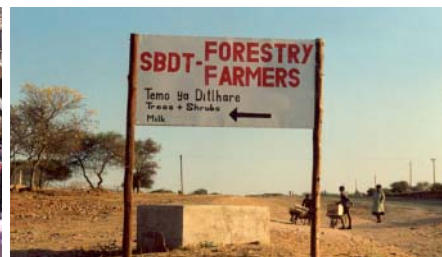
One of the most visible UN events related to this process was the FAO Food Summit in November 2009 in Rome. While once more reiterating the central theses of the CFA, it also declared the Five Roman Principles to achieve food security, namely

- 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.

Another outcome of the summit was the reform of the **Committee on World Food Security** (CFS). Created in the 1970s, this intergovernmental platform within the FAO led a rather quiet life for most of its existence and was taken by surprise when the food crisis struck 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

Zukunft gestalten.

Nah dran.



Der Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst (DED) ist der führende europäische Personaldienst für internationale Zusammenarbeit. Wir arbeiten derzeit in 48 Ländern mit dem Ziel, die Lebensbedingungen der Menschen vor Ort dauerhaft zu verbessern.

Für die Beratung und Koordinierung von Projekten für **Erneuerbare Energien** und **Energieeffizienz**, für die Koordination der Entwicklungsmaßnahmen im Bereich **ländliche Wirtschafts- und Gemeindeentwicklung in Afghanistan** und für die **Bodenkonservierung in Botsuana** suchen wir erfahrene und kompetente Fachkräfte:

Projektmanager/in für erneuerbare Energien Afghanistan – PP-Nr: 10374

Ihre Aufgaben:

- Koordination der Aktivitäten zur regenerativen Energieversorgung von Dörfern im Nordosten Afghanistan in enger Zusammenarbeit mit den afghanischen Partnern, der Privatwirtschaft und Partnern der deutschen Entwicklungshilfe
- Bewirtschaftung der Projektmittel, Rechenschaftslegung und Budgetplanung
- Politikberatung für den Aufbau staatlicher Kapazitäten in der ländlichen Energieversorgung

Ihr Profil:

Für diese Aufgabe bringen Sie mehrjährige Berufserfahrung als Fachberater/in für erneuerbare Energien und ggf. Energieeffizienz mit. Sie verfügen über Erfahrung mit Planungs-, Monitorings- und Evaluationsverfahren, die Sie möglichst in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit erworben haben. Praxiserprobte Managementkompetenzen sowie die Fähigkeit zu strategischem Handeln, Kenntnisse des Fundraisings und gute Englischkenntnisse zeichnen Sie aus.

Koordinator/in für ländliche Entwicklung, Wirtschafts- und Gemeindeentwicklung in Afghanistan – PP-Nr: 10078

Ihre Aufgaben:

- Entwicklung, Fortschreibung und wirkungsorientierte Steuerung von Entwicklungsmaßnahmen
- Strategische Vernetzung mit afghanischen, deutschen und internationalen Akteuren
- Sicherung der Qualitätsstandards des DED
- Regionale Vertretung des DED und administrative Betreuung der DED-Fachkräfte im Norden Afghanistans

Ihr Profil:

Neben einem passenden Studium in Sozial-, Regional-, Agrar- oder Wirtschaftswissenschaften haben Sie fundierte Erfahrungen mit wirkungsorientierten Planungs-, Monitorings- und Evaluationsverfahren sowie Arbeits- und Berufserfahrung in Entwicklungsländern gesammelt. Sie verfügen über gute Englischkenntnisse und Kenntnisse in Administration und Finanzverwaltung. Teamfähigkeit und Erfahrung in non-direktiver Personalführung runden Ihr Profil ab.

Berater/in für Bodenkonservierung und GIS in Gaborone / Botsuana – PP-NR: 10674

Ihre Aufgaben:

- Unterstützung des Departments for Forestry & Range Resources bei der Erarbeitung einer Strategie zur Bodenkonservierung
- Kartieren der degradierten Landflächen mittels GIS
- Qualifizierung und Unterstützung der Mitarbeiter zur Durchführung von Bodenkonservierungsmaßnahmen
- Entwicklung von Ausbildungsmodulen für Bodenkonservierung und für die systematische Erfassung der Daten zur Bodenerosion

Ihr Profil:

Für diese interessante Herausforderung bringen Sie ein zur Aufgabe passendes Studium als Agraringenieur/in oder Geograph/in mit Spezialisierung im Bereich Bodenkonservierung mit. Sie haben bereits praktische Erfahrung in der Bodenkonservierung und Bodenkunde gesammelt. Außerdem sind Sie erfahren in der Anwendung von GIS und in der Fernerkundung zur Kartierung von Bodenflächen. Erfahrungen in der Aus- und Weiterbildung und gute Englischkenntnisse runden Ihr Profil ab.

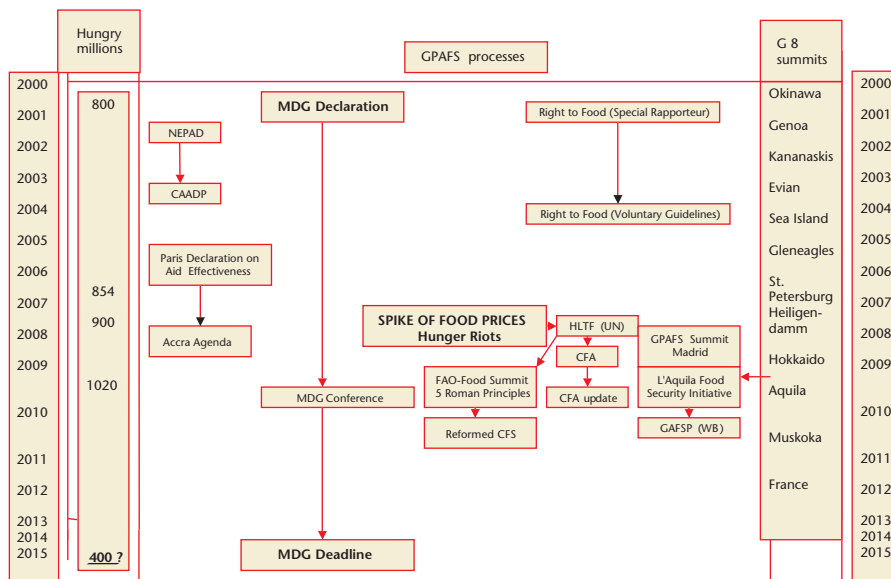
Angebot des DED

Wir bieten Ihnen eine Mitarbeit in einer innovativen, weltweit tätigen entwicklungspolitischen Institution. Ihre Kompetenzen sind in einem interdisziplinären Team vor Ort gefragt. Der DED bietet ein umfangreiches Leistungspaket. Dazu gehört auch die intensive fachliche und methodische Vorbereitung. Die detaillierten Stellenbeschreibungen finden Sie unter www.ded.de/stellenmarkt. Bitte bewerben Sie sich Online mit Angabe der entsprechenden PP-Nr. und der Kzf. So45.

Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst gGmbH
Bewerbersauswahl | Tulpenfeld 7 | 53113 Bonn
www.ded.de | Kzf. So45

ded
Deutscher
Entwicklungsdienst

World hunger and the international community's response



the reform that the CFS will gradually slip into that role.

■ G8 response to the global food crisis

The 2008 G8 summit in Hokkaido/Japan coincided with the peak of the world food price spike and with the publication of the CFA, which called for a twin track approach to meet the immediate needs of the increasing number of hungry people and to build their resilience. Food security then became a central issue and the G8 committed itself for the first time “to reverse the overall decline of aid and investment in the agricultural sector.” The subsequent Madrid Meeting on Food Security in January 2009 saw the birth of the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security 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 frequent promises to increase financial input to fight the crisis. They were spearheaded by the EU which had just unveiled its 1 billion euro food facility, the most tangible result of the whole process to

date. This fund was meant 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 2009 G8 summit in L’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 by now had become a mantra, namely to increase aid for agriculture and food security, empower smallholder farmers, support country led plans, promote better coordination, and support GPAFS.

What attracted most attention was the financial commitment by the G8 to invest 20 billion US dollars (USD) during a period of three years for AFSI purposes, an amount which later became less fixed, 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 this amount was actually fresh money.

Nevertheless, during their Summit in Pittsburgh in September 2009 the

G20 called on the World Bank Group to create a trust fund for this money, to be used to scale up agricultural assistance to low income countries. The Bank reacted to this request by creating the **Global Agriculture and Food Security Program** (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 spotlight over the last few months. This may change very rapidly, of course, as the underlying problems of global food insecurity are far from solved.

■ Other stakeholders

The prime responsibility to achieve food security and to guarantee the Right to Food of their population lies with national governments, many of which have enshrined this right in their constitution. This responsibility includes the provision of the necessary services (extension, veterinary), infrastructure, market access and safety nets (grain reserves, social transfers). Unfortunately many governments – often on the advice of 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, which have not replaced staff for many years and have even closed agricultural training and research institutes 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) – see article on pages 17–20.

Donors, which include the G8 and the UN, play the most active and vocal role in GPAFS. With the MDG finishing line of 2015 coming closer and very little to show to taxpayers 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 individual countries and seek to fulfil their commitments by pledging ever increasing amounts of budget aid. These funds are either placed at the free disposal of national governments or they are earmarked for specific programmes, in some cases accounting for 50 percent of a nation's budget. They also support national governments with technical assistance to build 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 forms to apply 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 bureaucratic burden placed by donors on developing countries which often diverts their limited capacity for leadership.

Most donors working on food security are gathered informally in the **Global Donor Platform for Rural Development** created in 2003. They share a common conviction about the key role of agriculture and rural development to attain the MDGs and use the platform for discussions, information exchange and opinion formation. The platform is not a decision making entity and works mainly through its internet site in addition to its annual meetings.

The GPAFS community is additionally made up of the numerous **international NGOs** which engage in food security and are driven by a range of motivations and incentives. Large NGOs such as Oxfam, CARE and World Vision often command extended networks including many positions in food insecure countries, which gives them a direct link to the hungry population. They use this to advocate on the latter's behalf and to a certain degree compen-

sate for the lack of authentic voices in the GPAFS process. Unfortunately they are often bound by their work remit to one particular aspect of food insecurity, e.g. nutrition or maternal health, which can prevent them from representing the whole picture.

■ Results achieved and the way ahead – a critical assessment

The Global Partnership is part of a larger process that started around the turn of the century and reoriented the international development agenda to more results-based outcomes, namely the MDGs. This process turned away from a predominantly donor led approach to 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 in agriculture and food security, GPAFS accelerated this process and placed it at the centre of public attention. A reversal of the previous trend had already been achieved prior to that: for example, the share of Official Development Assistance – ODA – going to agriculture rose from an all-time low of 3.4 percent in 2006 to a still

Protest action by the NGO Oxfam in July 2009 in Rome: The G8 member states should provide more funds to combat hunger.

Photo: laif



meagre 5.5 percent in 2007. This share has certainly risen in the past few years and will continue to do so. It is the main merit of GPAFS to have contributed to that change of policy.

In the future, GPAFS and the HLTF, which is still at the heart of the process, are set to keep public attention focused on global food insecurity and to bring the different stakeholders together. One part of this involves the revision of the Comprehensive Framework for Action, which was originally conceived as a UN rapid response mechanism to an acute crisis and is now evolving into a manifesto for all stakeholders in terms of how to address food insecurity in general. An interesting question will be whether the reformed CFS will eventually become 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.

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 biodiversity work in the opposite direction and constantly threaten any progress made. Political decisions made in rich countries, such as the export subsidies provided by the EU and the US for their farmers, also impede agricultural development in the poor world.

■ Structural shortcomings

Just as significant as these external drivers are the continuing structural shortcomings with regard to steering development processes efficiently towards targeting the rural poor. It was these shortcomings that led to the deplorable state of global food insecurity in the first place, and they have rarely been addressed in earnest. It is striking that so far no public debate of note has evolved on 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 centre 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 in a top-down manner, with a very heterogeneous group of "experts", consisting of national and international bureaucrats, professionals, academics and philanthropists, firmly in command. This group of usually well paid and highly educated people numbering a few hundred thousand defines the discourse on how

things are to be done without answering in any regulated way to either the taxpayers in rich countries who provide the money or to the rural people in the poor world for whom it is destined. Although largely of good will and with a responsible attitude, these individuals lack any common denominator, and their alignment to different institutions, governments and interests makes their actions erratic and largely detached from the real problems of the hungry poor. As they participate in a never-ending series of self-referential summits, conferences and workshops, they produce a continuous flow of development fads with which a large part of the world's population unfortunately has to live and as a result of which many tragically die.

The obvious alternative to this unsatisfactory situation would be a policy that empowers the rural poor and gives them the means to secure their livelihoods on their own. Fortunately, there are positive examples where this has been achieved. One such case is Malawi, which managed to evolve from being a chronic food aid recipient in 2005 to being 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 every smallholder and subsistence farmer in the country. 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 focused on rural development. It is worth noting that this Input Subsidy Programme was implemented 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."

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag umreißt die Entstehungsgeschichte der Welternährungskrise, die in dem dramatischen Anstieg der globalen Nahrungsmittelpreise 2007/2008 und den damit einhergehenden Hungerrevolten ihren bisherigen Höhepunkt hatte. Er beschreibt die Reaktion der internationalen Gemeinschaft, die sich zu einer „Globalen Partnerschaft für Landwirtschaft und Ernährungssicherheit“ zusammengefunden hat, und gibt eine kritische Einschätzung, inwieweit diese dazu beitragen kann, die Zahl der derzeit über 1 Milliarde Hungernden zu vermindern.

Resumen

El artículo esboza los hechos que dieron lugar a la generación de la crisis alimentaria mundial, que alcanzó su punto más crítico hasta ahora con el dramático aumento de los precios mundiales de los alimentos en 2007/2008 y las consiguientes protestas motivadas por el hambre. Describe la reacción de la comunidad internacional, que se ha congregado en una "Alianza global para la Agricultura, Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición", y ofrece una evaluación crítica sobre el posible alcance de los aportes de esta última para reducir la cifra de más de mil millones de personas que padecen hambre.