

THE UN SYSTEM RESPONSE TO THE WORLD FOOD SECURITY CRISIS (As of 31 July 2008)

The UN system has rapidly taken note of the seriousness of the challenges to world food security by the recent dramatic escalation of the food price crisis worldwide and recognized the need for Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) to address the crisis and its root causes.

The UN System has mobilized to provide a common response to the crisis that takes into account the comparative advantages of all stakeholders. To this end, and in implementation of the decision of the United Nations System Chief Executive Board at its meeting held in Bern, Switzerland, on 28 and 29 April 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General established a High Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis under his chairmanship, with FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf as Vice-Chairman, and bringing together the Heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, Funds and Programmes, Bretton Woods institutions and relevant parts of the UN Secretariat, in order to create a prioritized plan of action and coordinate its implementation. The CFA identifies both immediate and longer-term actions that need to begin now and operate in parallel to address the food crisis, to urgently meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations and to urgently build longer-term resilience and contribute to global food and nutrition security. The immediate actions set out how to help vulnerable people now, as both consumers and producers of food; while the longer-term actions are focused on addressing underlying, structural issues to help build resilience and contribute to sustainable improvements in global food security and poverty reduction within the context of the Millennium Development Goals.

While the UN system continues its efforts to galvanize the international community around a set of priority areas to address the food price challenge, work is already underway by UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the most severely impacted countries:

World Food Programme (WFP)

www.wfp.org

The Executive Board of WFP approved in June 2008 a new four-year strategic plan that will be critical to addressing soaring hunger needs due to the global food crisis. The strategic plan emphasizes life-saving emergency aid, such as the 3 million vulnerable served in Darfur with emergency food aid. But it also emphasizes prevention, local purchase of food, and using targeted cash and voucher programs when food is available locally but not accessible by the hungry.

The tools laid out in the plan include early warning systems and vulnerability analysis, as well as preparedness and disaster reduction/mitigation, while ensuring fast and effective emergency response in life-saving situations. Identifying the hungry poor, and the best set of interventions to assist them, is key as is helping communities understand and anticipate shocks, including those related to high food prices.

Tools to break the inter-generational cycle of chronic hunger – the inheritance of hunger from mother to child – are also a critical part of the plan. School meals and support to mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) programs will help address poor levels of education and health that hamper the physical and intellectual growth of individuals, and constrain the economic and social development of nations. Since its inception in 1962, WFP has been committed to promoting food and nutrition security.

WFP is also using its purchasing power to create a positive spill-over effect to bolster economic and market development, and to strengthen smallholder farming, local transport and communication networks. Last year, WFP used its cash resources to purchase US\$612 million of food in 69 developing countries.

WFP's special appeal for US\$755 million in additional funding to cover the high costs of food and fuel was met in the third week of May 08. WFP continues to raise funds needed for its overall budget of US\$6

billion (of which US\$2.9 billion has been received). WFP is also exploring the means to raise funds to address the needs arising from the 'new face of hunger' - millions of people pushed into poverty and hunger as a result of high food and fuel price.

Sixty-two countries wracked by high food prices have been allocated \$1.2 billion in funds to alleviate growing hunger. The lifeline extends to communities hit by weather disasters and to poor school children – the first to feel the brutal shocks of hunger.

WFP response includes:

- **Haiti:** A country where civil unrest has raged is being fast-tracked by WFP which is tripling the number of people receiving food, especially school children and 100,000 women head of households who cannot afford to buy enough food for their families, while also supporting food for work in urban areas.
- **Liberia:** WFP has extended school feeding for 200,000 primary aged children during the summer months and, along with the World Bank, is exploring the use of cash and food for job programmes targeting urban areas.
- **Afghanistan:** Amid widespread conflict and insecurity, alongside severe destitution, WFP is providing food assistance to an additional 2.5 million additional people – almost half are urban dwellers priced out of the wheat market.
- **Kenya:** After post election violence tore whole communities apart, WFP is maintaining commitments to support people who, in addition to high food prices, are affected by drought and unrest linked to food price protests. School feeding programmes that had been cut have been restored. A new operation will help displaced persons plus an increasing number of vulnerable people in arid regions.
- **Somalia:** WFP is doubling its assistance to reach more than 2.5 million people who face deepening drought in tandem with hyper-inflation and continued conflict on a scale similar to the crisis years of 1992-1993. This year high food prices is compounding the problem.
- **Cambodia:** School feeding will be restarted in Cambodia, providing meals to 450,000 children who were cut off in May because of high food prices.
- **Ethiopia:** High prices and drought are sweeping through the Horn of Africa, posing a severe threat to millions of pastoralists. Urgent food distributions across the country will help stem the growing crisis.
- **Burkina Faso:** WFP is reaching 63,000 additional mothers and children with critical food assistance.
- **Mozambique:** WFP is targeting \$7 million for social safety nets for school children, mothers, infants and toddlers, and HIV/AIDS patients.
- **Yemen:** An additional 300,000 school children are being reached with the help of the World Bank.
- **Senegal:** WFP is providing meals in school for 284,000 children during the lean season.
- **Guinea:** WFP is providing monthly food ration to 70,765 people who have been highly affected by high food prices in Upper and Middle Guinea and Forest Guinea during the lean season which runs from July through September.
- **Mauritania:** High food prices have exacerbated food shortages in the country leading WFP to double the number of people reached through general food distributions, food for work and the reinforcement

of village food reserves. Nearly 400,000 people are benefiting from this support while WFP and government consider additional cash and nutrition initiatives.

- **Burundi:** WFP will expand food distributions and extend school feeding programmes into urban areas; will establish food-for-work projects to improve livelihoods of former refugees.
- **Central African Republic:** A food safety net is being rolled out for 294,000 people (including conflict victims) made more vulnerable due to the high prices during the lean season.
- **Sierra Leone:** More than 200,000 children are being supported with a hot school meal plus another 200,000 people – including urban youth -- receive food.
- WFP, in cooperation with the World Bank, FAO, OCHA, UNICEF and, governments, is undertaking a detailed analysis to ensure that the most immediate needs are met in the nations and communities that need it most, with additional money from WFP's appeal.
- Based on analysis, consultations are underway with government and partners in country regarding additional priority projects targeting populations highly affected by high food prices in the above countries as well as in **Benin, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Pakistan and Tajikistan.**

World Bank (WB)

www.worldbank.org

The World Bank's call for a New Deal for Global Food Policy, launched in May 2008 in response to the food crisis, has been widely endorsed by its development partners. The Bank is now working in close collaboration with the UN agencies on a common strategy to confront the food crisis.

The Bank's response is articulated around four main pillars:

1- Policy advice. The Bank is engaged in policy dialogue with more than 40 countries to help them address the food crisis. The instruments used include: rapid country diagnostics, high-level dialogue and public communications, as well as in-depth analytical work. Bank staff is also assessing the food security and trade implications of the crisis at the regional level. Examples of recent Bank activities to support country policy interventions related to rising food prices include:

- **In Kazakhstan,** the World Bank held a workshop on food prices with the Prime Minister and the cabinet to assess better options for managing inflationary pressures and the agricultural response. In **Ukraine,** the Bank has contributed to policy reforms and the reversal of policy decisions that would have restricted global grain supply. In **Afghanistan,** a quick note has been delivered on short-run actions to support vulnerable groups, and long-run options to assure adequate supply. In **Indonesia** and the **Philippines,** the Bank is advising on options to expand cash transfers to the needy. In **Mozambique,** the Bank is working with an inter-ministerial team to identify best practices in subsidies and other interventions to cope with higher food prices.
- The Bank is equally active on a regional level. In Nicaragua, earlier in May, a team briefed a summit of fourteen **Latin American and Caribbean** nations' leaders on food price increases and regional impacts. In **East Asia,** the Bank is providing inputs to the regional dialogue, supporting regional initiatives in agricultural research and facilitating trade coordination.

2- Expedited financial support. In May, the World Bank Board of Directors approved a Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP) – a rapid financing facility that is providing technical advice and access up to \$1.2 billion of financial support (including \$200 million of grant financing from the World Bank's own income) to countries affected by the food crisis. Building on the comparative advantage of the World Bank as a financial and policy-oriented institution, the overall aim of the GFRP is to minimize the threat posed

by high food prices and sharply rising agricultural production and marketing costs to the livelihoods of poor urban and rural residents in developing countries. Interventions complement the short-term emergency responses of WFP and other donors. The program is an umbrella facility offering access under fast-track procedures to International Development Association/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IDA/IBRD) grants, credits and loans for both investment and program instruments. In addition to country funding, the GFRP offers financial support for regional initiatives that are eligible for IDA financing. All Bank-member countries adversely affected by the food crises are eligible to participate in GFRP. However, access to the US\$200 million of grant funding, capped at \$10 million for each country, is targeted to the most fragile, poor and heavily-impacted countries and territories with little access to immediate funding.

- **Grants were approved** in May and June for **Djibouti** (\$5 million), **Haiti** (\$10 million), **Liberia** (\$10 million), **Tajikistan** (\$9 million) and **Yemen** (\$10 million). In July, the World Bank expects to approve grant support to **Togo, Sierra Leone, Niger, Guinea Bissau, Central African Republic, and Afghanistan**. Furthermore, a pipeline of further proposals based on need has been identified for additional grant support in July and August. Activities are already underway in **Haiti** where the grant is helping to scale up key safety net programs, support an accelerated supply response among the poorer farmers and develop an insurance mechanism to hedge against protracted food inflation. In **Djibouti**, the grant is helping to alleviate the fiscal costs from the removal of retail taxes on five basic food products and is supporting expanded safety net programs for school feeding, livestock feeding and mother-child support. Proposals for fast-track IDA funding under GFRP are moving forward for **Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Burkina Faso**, and are being developed under fast-track IBRD funding for **The Philippines**. These projects will support safety nets for the most vulnerable, micronutrients to fight malnutrition, rapid provision of seeds and fertilizer to small farmers, and will compensate for sharp reductions in fiscal revenues in some countries.
- **Creation of a Multi Donor Trust Fund.** In order to facilitate the involvement of a broad range of development partners in supporting country efforts to address the crisis, a Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) is being created. The MDTF could be used to support any of the components of the GFRP including improving access for small farms to seeds and fertilizers for the upcoming planting season. The MDTF will also facilitate policy and operational coordination among development partners and help ensure that support to countries is both comprehensive and country specific.
- **Acceleration of relevant projects in pipeline.** Beyond fast-tracking under expedited procedures of projects that fall directly under GFRP guidelines, there are numerous cases where regular projects are being accelerated under normal procedures to support longer-term country responses. For example, irrigation and agricultural research projects are being advanced in the Philippines and Indonesia.

3- Financial market insurance products. Subject to Board approval in June 2008, IBRD and IDA will offer index-based weather derivatives to help clients transfer the financial risk of severe weather events to financial markets. Following a severe weather event, clients would receive a payout from the Bank with the value based on an index, estimating the financial impact. The World Bank's participation would reduce the initial investment for market players to expand into developing countries and help build capacity in beneficiary countries for future hedges with the markets. For example, under a proposal that was approved by the Bank's Board in June, **Malawi** will be the first of several countries to use the World Bank as an intermediary to access weather derivatives. Should Malawi suffer a drought, it would be protected against a rise in the price of imported maize. In addition, the IFC, the World Bank Group member that promotes private sector development, is planning to support crop and livestock insurance for smallholders in developing countries.

4- Research to address critical knowledge gaps. Designing appropriate policies to respond to the food crisis requires a solid foundation of empirical knowledge at the global and country level. In some areas this knowledge exists, and can be drawn upon. In others, there are large knowledge gaps that need

to be urgently addressed. In June, the G8 Finance Ministers requested that the World Bank examine the impact of commodity price increases on development prospects. In collaboration with other agencies and institutions, the Bank is undertaking a comprehensive analytical program in six key areas:

- Global food markets and global food price developments
- Poverty, distributional and nutritional impacts of food price increases
- Fiscal and macroeconomic implications and responses
- Trade responses and impacts at country and global level
- Facilitating an agricultural supply response
- Using safety nets to dampen the social impact of the crisis

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

www.fao.org

As early as July last year FAO warned of the impending food price crisis, and in December it launched an initiative to boost food production in the immediate term. Known as the *Initiative on Soaring Food Prices* – it had simple but effective goals: distribute seeds, fertilizer, animal feed and other farming tools and supplies to smallholder farmers. This has to be done quickly before the next planting seasons so farmers get a better harvest this year and more food is available in the local markets.

FAO has directed US\$17 million of its own funding and trust funds from the Spanish government to assist the most severely affected countries now, in the current planting season that normally ends in July, and in September/October, for dry season planting.

But FAO has appealed for US\$1.7 billion to support the urgent activities under its Initiative on Soaring Food Prices through the end of 2009. And the organization says that US\$ 30 billion per year is needed to invest in the massive task of re-invigorating smallholder agriculture on a global scale, to reverse decades of decline in investment in agricultural development.

Seed and fertilizer distributions have begun in **Burkina Faso**, **Senegal**, **Mauritania** and **Haiti**, and activities in **Timor-Leste** are due to begin in July. In **Mozambique**, where FAO projects will focus on improved methods of native cassava production and processing, the aim will be not only to boost local production but also to work to lend traditional cassava a newfound appeal. This is especially important in urban areas, where wheat and rice have become preferred, but which are subject to international price swings as imported foodstuffs. This too is due to begin in July.

Another part of the initiative is advising governments on policy measures in response to the crisis. The FAO Country Guidelines provides an overview of different policy responses to higher food prices, their possible effects, advantages and disadvantages.

As of 20 June, 89 countries have asked for FAO's assistance in addressing the issue of soaring food prices, and 49 of these have sent formal requests.

The Initiative on Soaring Food Prices Programme Document details all of the measures that will be covered in varying degrees depending on countries' requests. The programme's pillar actions include:

- policy analysis and assistance/advice;
- productive safety nets to increase access to inputs (seeds, fertilizers, tools, e.g.);
- rehabilitation of rural and agricultural infrastructure (irrigation, storage, e.g.);
- improvement of production systems;
- improvement of agricultural markets;
- reduction of crop losses (post-harvest);
- Disaster risk management
- coordination and technical assistance

On 9 July, FAO announced that it had approved a series of projects in 48 countries for a total value of US\$ 21 million to provide farmers with agricultural inputs as of this month for an expected duration of one year

With six countries already benefiting for a total amount of nearly US\$ 2.8 million (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Mauritania, Mozambique and Senegal), FAO's own funding under the Initiative on soaring food prices now covers **54 countries**.

The 48 new countries benefiting from FAO's drive are: **Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Eritrea, Grenada, Guinée, Guinée-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, DPR Korea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Nigeria, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadine, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Yemen, and Zambia.**

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

www.ifad.org

The President of IFAD, Lennart Båge, announced on 25 April 2008 that IFAD would make available up to US\$200 million from existing loans and grants to provide an immediate boost to agricultural production in the developing world, in the face of high food prices and low food stocks.

IFAD's initiative was reflected in the conclusions of the Berne meeting of the Executive Heads of the UN's specialized agencies, Funds and Programmes, and Bretton Woods institutions, on 28-29 April. That meeting agreed that there was a need for action to provide developing country farmers with the support required to ensure the next harvest. IFAD's initiative provides part of the answer to that need.

The initiative consists of redirecting from IFAD an amount of USD 200 million to support rapid access of smallholder to inputs (fertilizers, seed, plant protection) and related services, for them to prepare for the forthcoming cropping season as well as to establish a basis for sustained increases in production in subsequent seasons. The US\$200 million is distinct from emergency relief, food aid or social safety nets, but could accompany such aid measures provided by other partners. Some examples:

- **Cambodia:** Discussions are underway with the agriculture and finance ministries of Cambodia to reactivate the agriculture component of a loan in order to help the most vulnerable families in two provinces to respond the rising food prices.
- **Philippines:** Discussions are underway with Government for a new initiative to support input supply and distribution
- **Haiti:** IFAD is making available a total of US\$10-15 million for seed, fertiliser and related activities, to provide an immediate boost to agricultural production. The distribution of input for the summer 2008 would specifically target hill-side small-scale producers.
- **Nicaragua & Honduras:** US\$1.22 million for Nicaragua and US\$2.25 million for Honduras will provide for expanding small farmers' access to seeds, fertilizers and technical assistance. In addition the government of Nicaragua has prepared a note requesting the use of unallocated funds of the Technical Assistance Fund project for seed production for a total amount of USD 1 million. Nicaragua plays a key role in the supply of basic grains in Central America.

- **Yemen:** Within the parameters of the existing loan agreement, the Dhamar project will be accelerated in order to finance enhanced distribution of improved seeds and fertiliser in small starter packages.
- **Ghana:** A fast track pilot initiative is being implemented to improve the effectiveness of public-private partnerships (PPP) in maize, soybean and cassava value chains. This initiative has attracted approximately US\$ 2 million additional funding from the private sector. The Ghana program is also supporting the diversification of food value chains (e.g. to increase vegetable production) and recruitment of a food security officer to support the program at the field level.
- **Benin:** following a request from the government of Benin in January 2008, a specific food security sub-programme has been integrated into the umbrella programme PADER (Rural Development Support Programme), including seed multiplication, with a view to stimulating production in time for the 2008 production season.
- **Mauritania:** IFAD projects/programmes in Mauritania are supporting increased agricultural production for poor a total investment of US\$57 million particularly through the purchase and distribution of seeds, agricultural inputs and the establishment of cereal banks. A value chain development program for Poverty Reduction is being prepared focusing on agricultural and livestock sub-sectors, including financing for agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and seed of some US\$ 5-10m.
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** Through the National Rice Program, IFAD is helping to implement an emergency intervention plan for 2008-09, to produce more rice, by bolstering farmers' access to seeds (seed multiplication and dissemination), fertilizer and other inputs
- **Sierra Leone:** IFAD is working to boost rice production through the National Rice Program to bolster farmers' access to seeds, fertilizer and other inputs and so reduce vulnerability and improve households' food security in the Kono and Kailahun districts.
- In the context of FAO's initiative in **Sierra Leone** on soaring food prices, it was agreed with GOSL, FAO and WFP to develop a joint emergency program to increase rice production for 2008-2009. An agreement will be prepared and signed between JPCU and FAO to take the lead in the implementation of IFAD's programme.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** Through support to the IFAD-financed PRODER and PRODER-Sud projects, IFAD is supporting extension services, capacity building, distribution of planting materials and seeds, and market access through feeder road rehabilitation.
- **Gabon:** Through the Agricultural and Rural development Project, IFAD is supporting increased capacity for rice seed multiplication, storage and distribution.
- **Cape Verde:** IFAD is upscaling support for social protection among the poorest people, support for nutrition and improved production through drip irrigation through the national PLPR.
- **The Gambia:** The Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project is supporting seed multiplication of NERICA rice.
- **Kenya:** With IFAD support the Government of Kenya has signed an agreement with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Equity Bank, establishing a credit window of US\$50 million for smallholder farmer credits, especially for input procurement to stimulate agricultural production
- **Mozambique:** An agreement will be signed between the Government of Mozambique and AGRA, as part of an IFAD supported programme, to boost the capacity of input supply businesses.

At the regional level, IFAD is working with Sasakawa 2000 to scale up millet and sorghum value chains and continues to work with IITA on the development and dissemination of new cowpea technologies for poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

www.imf.org

The IMF has recently concluded the most comprehensive study so far of the macroeconomic consequences of the food and fuel crisis, based on analysis of the policy responses of 146 low and middle-income countries. The study provides a first broad assessment of the impact of the surge in food and fuel prices on the balance of payments, budgets, prices, and poverty. It reviews countries' macroeconomic policy responses to date and also discusses Fund advice for managing the price increases.

The study finds that the impact of surging food and fuel prices is felt globally but is most acute for import-dependent poor and middle-income countries confronted by balance of payments problems, higher inflation, and worsening poverty. Analyzing the macroeconomic policy challenges arising from the price surges, the study argues that many governments will have to adjust policies in response to the price shock while the international community will need to do its share to address this global problem. The study was discussed by the IMF's Executive Board on June 27 and made available to the public on July 1, 2008.

The study highlights that the Fund's support for countries facing food and fuel price shocks is taking place on a number of fronts:

Policy advice in the context of surveillance: IMF country teams are helping assess the macroeconomic impact of recent shocks. Based on country-specific diagnoses, teams are offering policy advice—including through program reviews and Article IV reports—on issues related to fiscal space, monetary policy and exchange rates, and trade policies.

Technical assistance: In introducing policy responses such as tax and tariff changes or transfer programs to mitigate the impact of high food and fuel prices on the poor, issues related to their appropriate design and implementation are often important considerations. The Fund stands ready to assist countries address these challenges in its areas of expertise.

Financial support: The IMF is prepared to quickly disburse funds to countries facing balance of payments gaps, while recognizing that grants from other development partners may be better suited for some countries. The Fund is delivering its financial support through a variety of instruments, to reflect country-specific needs.

The IMF has already provided additional financial assistance to a number of low-income countries through the concessional Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). As of the end of June 2008, augmentations have been granted for **Benin, Burkina Faso, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Mali, Cameroon and Niger.**

In July 2008, the IMF Executive Board agreed to provide additional financial assistance under the PGRF to **Madagascar, Guinea, Albania, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Afghanistan, Grenada, Malawi, and Moldova.**

The IMF is also streamlining the Exogenous Shocks Facility to make it more useful to its members, and stands ready to provide support for middle-income countries through Stand-By Arrangements.

World Health Organization (WHO)

http://www.who.int/food_crisis

The World Health Organization is finalizing a broad plan of action to respond to the myriad health and nutrition aspects and challenges caused by the global food crisis in the immediate period, as well as the medium and long-terms.

WHO's global response will address the multiple health considerations linked to the global food crisis, as well as help Member States assess the health and nutritional effects of the crisis on populations. WHO will also help design and implement measures to alleviate the impact of the crisis among most vulnerable groups, and work in cooperation with partners to achieve this, including UNICEF, WFP, FAO, IFPRI, MSF, Save the Children, Oxfam, Action Contre la Faim.

Rising food prices will impact on the ability of the poorest households to access basic health services, since a large proportion of their health care is paid for from out-of pocket-expenditures. In the absence of social protection mechanisms for health and nutrition, the combined effect of spiralling food prices and lack of health care may be catastrophic for poor households.

The food crisis will also have an impact on a range of diseases, including tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria. People living with HIV/AIDS will face increased challenges because of the reduced access to nutritious, balanced diet and less resources for health care. There will be a higher threat of infectious diseases, including more severe cases of diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory illnesses among children. Poor nutrition during the first two years of life can have multiple life-long consequences and investment in good nutrition should be mainly targeted to the very young.

WHO is paying special attention to the need to ensure not only food security, but nutritional security as well.

WHO's fundamental considerations in confronting the global food crisis:

- Underscore the human dimension.
- Monitor its impact on nutrition, health and poverty, plus its effect on the health- and nutrition-related MDGs.
- Provide sound information and analyses to ensure the most vulnerable groups are targeted.
- Provide health and nutrition inputs to develop and/or scale up food aid, combined with social protection activities to shield the most vulnerable groups.
- Link programme responses to the food crisis to long-term food and nutrition policies.
- Prevent further loss of progress by strengthening health and nutrition responses. This requires a concerted effort to channel national and international efforts, strengthen social safety nets, and monitor the health and nutritional status of vulnerable populations.

Key WHO activities in countries include:

- Helping countries assess their health and nutritional situation, including micronutrient status
- Strengthening surveillance systems to monitor the health and nutritional status of the most vulnerable and helping assess population movements due to hunger.
- Leading studies to evaluate the direct impact of rapid food price changes on health and nutritional status. This can help identify population sub-groups with special needs, plus guide further monitoring and intervention.

- Supporting a long-term needs assessments process to identify vulnerable groups so countries can develop social protection activities addressing nutritional needs and reinforcing access to basic health services.
- Providing support to countries in strengthening and implementing integrated national nutrition policies to improve the supply and access to safe, nutritious food; in strengthening social protection policies and in designing; and implementing plans and projects addressing health and nutritional impacts in most vulnerable groups.
- Supporting scale up of effective nutrition action, including managing moderate and severe malnutrition, promoting exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding practices; improving access to specific micronutrient supplements, implementing school feeding and specific mother-child nutrition programmes, delivering primary healthcare services, promoting food hygiene and a safe food supply.
- Strengthening basic healthcare services to ensure healthcare and immunization programmes for children and pregnant women are not jeopardized. WHO will help promote free or very low-cost health services among severely affected groups.
- Helping countries to mobilize resources through the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and other funding mechanisms
- Supporting the inclusion of health and nutrition components associated to the global food crisis in the 2009 CAP through the 2008 mid-year review, plus the formulation of new projects for 2009.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

www.undp.org

For UNDP, the sense of urgency to meet the eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015 -- especially the first goal of eradicating global poverty and hunger -- is heightened by the recent and dramatic spike in food prices and its attendant consequences which threaten to undo many of the recent gains made on this front.

In its role as Coordinator of UN development activities on the ground, UNDP is working with governments, the World Bank and other UN specialized agencies -- the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme, primarily -- to provide humanitarian and policy support to the countries hit hardest by rising food prices.

On the humanitarian front, through its network of country offices, UNDP is working with UN Country Teams in Cambodia, Liberia and other nations, to address immediate- and longer-term food security needs, including by contributing to the design of targeted safety nets to respond to the crisis, such as food-for-work initiatives, school-feeding programmes and cash transfers to vulnerable groups. In addition, in some countries like Burkina Faso, UNDP is providing additional funding for vulnerability assessments. UNDP is also raising funds for the short-term food security needs of highly vulnerable countries like Niger. In Asia and the Pacific, UNDP's Regional Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka has teamed up with FAO and other partners to launch a year-long campaign to push a seven-point agenda to eliminate hunger in the region <http://hunger.undprcc.lk/insideap/>. In Africa, UNDP and the World Bank have agreed to support countries to conduct rapid needs assessments and related activities to enable them to access the Bank's Global Food Crisis Response Programme (GFCRP). Several African countries are among the first 20 nations to have made their funding requests to the GFCRP.

On the policy front, UNDP is addressing the need for medium- to longer-term policy measures that tackle food security by helping governments prepare appropriate actions and strategies to expand agricultural production and productivity as part of national development processes, policies and programmes.

UNDP is working to ensure that its response to the current food crisis is coherent, harmonized and builds on the experiences of its country and regional offices around the world. Instrumental to this effort are policy briefs and e-discussions on relevant network sites that UNDP hosts. UNDP is also currently crafting a diagnostic paper on the food crisis, which will have three main components:

- **A stock-taking of the current situation** that identifies issues contributing to the food crisis, taking into account topics such as agricultural productivity, increasing demand for food crops, climate shocks and biofuels, as well as transmission mechanisms such as international trade and financial markets;
- **A regional analysis and collection of country case studies**, which look at specific issues relating to the crisis across regions and highlight policy responses so far. Where the data allows, this section will also examine the impact of these responses. The country case studies will consider, for example, different demographics, market trends, food production and distribution issues and cases of social unrest caused by the crisis.
- **A reference for policy design and action**, providing UNDP Country Offices and Regional Centres with policy options and an assessment of what has worked at the global, regional and national levels. This will enable them to offer more coherent and effective advice and support to their developing country partners.

This paper will be the first step in a more intensive policy research agenda which is expected to boost UNDP's ability to both provide sound policy advice and enable UN Resident Coordinators at country level to more effectively respond to issues of food and nutritional security.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

www.unctad.org

One of UNCTAD's main objectives is to help developing countries – and especially the LDCs – enhance their food security, nurture a sustainable agricultural sector and increase productive capacity and trade in agricultural products, including food. Its activities focus on practical measures, research, and advice in devising the right trade and development strategies and policies and in promoting international cooperation and solidarity towards the MDGs.

In terms of practical measures, UNCTAD offers assistance in:

- Attracting domestic and foreign investment, and increased ODA, in agriculture, especially in infrastructure, irrigation, extension services, and R&D
- Developing sustainable agricultural practices, and identifying suitable market niches for organic agricultural and biotrade products
- Meeting the standards and obtaining the certification required for export of agricultural products, especially to developed-country markets, as well as identifying and promoting actions to remove non-tariff barriers
- Setting up systems to provide farmers with the market information they need to manage their production and obtain the best prices for their produce
- Setting up food import procurement systems that will reduce the considerable transaction costs involved in importing food and agricultural inputs
- Developing and mobilizing support for new financial instruments and other tools (such as regional commodity exchanges, warehouse receipt finance, and value chain financing)

mechanisms, including producer-consumer cooperation schemes) to manage and mitigate risk, reduce transaction costs, and increase the availability of and access to food

- Facilitating smallholder farmers' access to credit for buying vital inputs like seeds and fertilizer, increasing production and providing them with better training and knowledge
- Facilitating trade, including by modernizing and streamlining customs procedures and improving transport logistics

In terms of policy advice, UNCTAD helps developing countries to:

- Design national agriculture commodity development policies based on a proactive long-term strategy for developing the agricultural commodity sector
- Devise comprehensive commodity sector strategies, including for food commodities, competition policies, investment policies, and legal and regulatory frameworks that will motivate sustainable agricultural production and trade and increase farmers' earnings
- Access appropriate technology, promoting South-South cooperation
- Build their capacities to participate in agriculture negotiations under the Doha Round of trade talks
- Assess the viability of their biofuels potential and minimize the trade-offs with food security

Recent UNCTAD publications on the food crisis and related issues include:

- [Addressing the global food crisis: Key trade, investment and commodity policies in ensuring sustainable food security and alleviating poverty](#)
- [Tackling the global food crisis](#)
- [UNCTAD's position on biofuels policies and the global food crisis](#)
- [The changing face of commodities in the twenty-first century](#)
- [Developing productive capacities in least developed countries](#)
- [Biofuels: an option for a less carbon-intensive economy](#)

United Nations Organization

www.un.org

The UN Secretary-General set aside a reserve of \$100 million from *existing* funds of the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), a humanitarian fund managed by OCHA on behalf of the wider humanitarian community, to respond to the most immediate life-saving activities in sectors directly linked to the effects of this crisis, namely food, food security and agriculture, health, and nutrition, for priority countries.

To date, US\$70 million has already been allocated to food crisis projects.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

<http://www.un.org/esa/desa/>

DESA conducts cross-sectoral analysis on the current food crisis, and provides substantive support to intergovernmental meetings on this issue. Recent meetings include the Commission on Sustainable Development (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm>) and the Economic and Social Council's special meeting on the Food Crisis (<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/GlobalFoodCrisis/index.shtml>). This issue is also expected to feature in the MDG High-level Event on 25 September and the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development on 29 November to 2 December 2008.

Related products from DESA include:

- *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2008 Mid-year Update*, Box on “Challenges of soaring food prices and inflation for developing countries” (E.08.II.C.2)
- *World Economic and Social Survey 2008*, focusing on Economic Insecurity, Box on “The Macroeconomics of Food Security” (E/2008/50/Rev.1/ST/ESA/314).
- Policy Brief on “Agricultural Investment and the Food Crisis”, September 2008
- Paper on biofuels in Africa: “Africa’s next challenge or long awaited development opportunity?” September 2008
- *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009* will include a focus on the Food Crisis.
- “Realizing the Millennium Development Goals through socially inclusive macroeconomic policies”, Development Account Project, Biennium 2008-9, <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/0607H.html>
- “Implications of macroeconomic policy, external shocks and social protection systems for poverty, inequality and social vulnerability in Latin America and the Caribbean”, Development Account Project, <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/projects/0607H.html>
- “Social and environmental footprint analysis of biofuels in Africa, Brazil and India: lessons learned”, Spring 2009
- Committee on Development Policy will focus in its eleventh session on climate change adaptation measures and contingency financing issues, including responses relevant to the food crisis, April 2009
- *World Economic and Social Survey 2009* will focus on Climate Change and Development, including implications for food security.
- Trends in Sustainable Development 2008-09: Agriculture, Rural Development, Land, Desertification and Drought:
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/trends2008/index.htm>
- Trends in Sustainable Development: Africa
http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/trends_africa2008/index.htm