

## **THE UN SYSTEM RESPONSE TO THE WORLD FOOD SECURITY CRISIS (as of September 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 funds, agencies, and programmes and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the most severely impacted countries:

### **World Food Programme (WFP)**

#### **wfp.org**

The overall objective of WFP's global response is to help those most affected by high food prices have access to the food and nutritional support that they need to avert hunger and prevent malnutrition. The response, which is country-based and context-specific, draws on needs and vulnerability analyses and builds on existing experience and capacity. The response is based on a request for assistance from governments and supports national strategies and processes to respond. WFP plans are developed in close partnership and cooperation with other UN agencies and the World Bank, as well as with other international and non-governmental organizations. Participatory and community based-initiatives, particularly those involving women, children and marginalized and vulnerable groups, are fully supported.

In confronting the crisis, WFP is utilizing the full complement of programme tools outlined in its recently-approved Strategic Plan, including food, cash and voucher support. WFP is concerned not just with the amount of food people are able to access but also with the quality of that food. Through the Global Response to High Food Prices, WFP is enhancing the availability of nutritious food products, tailored to the needs of young children, mothers, and other particularly vulnerable groups by including new and improved commodities in its food rations and by promoting local production and purchase of nutritious food and food products.

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 2008. WFP continues to raise funds needed for its overall budget of US\$6 billion (of which US\$3.4 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 prices.

In August, WFP rolled out a \$214 million package directed at 16 hunger hotspots which includes projects specifically designed to mitigate the direct effects of higher prices on the population. In June, during the World Food Security conference in Rome, WFP announced a \$1.2 billion cash package for 62 countries hit by high food prices.

WFP's response in countries highly affected by the global high food and fuel price crisis includes:

- **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.
- **Djibouti:** The country imports almost 100 per cent of its food requirements and is drought-prone. WFP will provide a general monthly food ration to 140,500 targeted beneficiaries in urban and rural areas, and will give highly nutritious food to 5,500 young children at particular risk of malnutrition.
- **Ethiopia:** High prices and drought are sweeping through the Horn of Africa, posing a severe threat to millions of pastoralists. In Ethiopia, more than 10 million people are affected by drought in the southern, central, western and north-eastern parts of the country; more than 7 million people currently need WFP assistance.
- **Ghana:** WFP will partner with government to expand Ghana's flagship national school feeding programme using locally produced, nutritious food to reach 100,000 children. An additional 115,000 people will be reached through nutritional safety nets and cash transfers. With food price increases ranging from 70-114 percent, a significant portion of Ghanaian households in hard-hit areas are eating only one meal a day, and some are consuming poisonous, wild roots.
- **Guinea:** WFP will help 585,000 food insecure people by expanding school feeding to reach hungry families, including during the summer holiday period and Ramadan, while giving more help to malnourished children and women through health centers. High food prices have led to growing discontent among the Guinean population.
- **Haiti:** Civil unrest remains a serious concern in Haiti, where WFP has fast-tracked efforts to reach as many hungry people as possible. Building on an initial response following the April food riots, WFP is expanding nutritional, education and socio-economic safety nets in urban and rural areas, for 2.5 million people.
- **Liberia:** WFP plans to assist 220,000 people in direct support of the UN/Government joint programme on food security and nutrition. Scaled up activities focus primarily on Monrovia and immediate suburbs, incorporating school feeding, nutrition, cash- and food-for-work programmes. Liberia imports more than 70 percent of its food requirements, and the population has seen staple food prices rise by an estimated 30 percent.
- **Mauritania:** WFP will provide more food to 550,000 vulnerable people, including young children, while supporting efforts to establish and maintain village food reserves. Mauritania imports more than 70 percent of its overall food requirements; a recent food assessment concluded that high food prices prompted a 30 percent increase in the number of food insecure people.
- **Mozambique:** WFP will target 160,000 people through social safety nets for school children, mothers, infants and toddlers and HIV/AIDS patients. Local production of nutritionally-enhanced foods and cash/voucher-based programmes are also part of the assistance package. Increasing food and fuel prices threaten nutritional security and social stability.
- **Nepal:** A fragile peace agreement and continued reliance on neighbouring countries for essential commodities, including food and fuel, provide the backdrop to WFP efforts to assist an additional 1.3 million rural poor affected by rising food prices. Over 40 percent of Nepal's population is

undernourished, and almost one in two children is stunted. Acute malnutrition approaches 20 percent in some areas.

- **occupied Palestinian territory:** WFP plans to assist an additional 120,000 people. More than two-thirds of household income in Gaza, and 56 percent in the West Bank, is now spent on food. Planned activities include vouchers for bread and cheese through local bakeries and grocery stores, as well as through expanded school feeding activities.
- **Pakistan:** Ten million additional Pakistanis are now believed to be vulnerable based on their reduced caloric intake. WFP's response will complement the government's cash transfer programmes by targeting the households most affected by high food prices. School feeding, carried out jointly with UNESCO, will be scaled up to reach 2.8 million people.
- **Senegal:** Within the context of Government's Social Emergency initiative, WFP will reach some 540,000 people through supplementary feeding, general food distributions, school feeding and food-for-work. School-based preventive feeding for children aged 6-24 months will also be piloted.
- **Somalia:** The country is in the grip of a deepening humanitarian disaster, struggling with drought, conflict, hyperinflation, high food and fuel prices, the weakness of the Somali shilling against the US dollar and a succession of poor harvests. WFP is gradually scaling up its distributions from more than a million a month to 2.4 million in December.
- **Tajikistan:** Prices of bread and vegetable oil in Tajikistan have more than doubled since August 2007, while the prices of most other basic foods have increased by more than 50 percent. In support of the national action plan, WFP is to assist an additional 1 million people -- families will get food packages to help them cope, and some cases survive.
- **Uganda:** Since the beginning of the year, prices of basic staple commodities have increased by about 50 percent. WFP, FAO and the Government of Uganda are combining efforts to cushion 159,000 subsistence farmers by helping them access to food, seeds and other tools they need, while also building roads and other market infrastructure.
- **Yemen:** Through general food distributions, WFP will target 867,000 people in districts where more than two-thirds of the population cannot meet their basic food requirements. In addition, WFP will mount nutritional support, in concert with UNICEF, to reach 145,000 malnourished children and mothers.

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.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency and the UN's frontline agency for hunger solutions. This year, WFP plans to feed 90 million people in 80 countries.

## **World Bank (WB)**

[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

The World Bank Group's New Deal on Global Food Policy has been endorsed by 150 countries. The New Deal embraces short, medium and long-term responses, including safety nets such as school feeding, food for work, and conditional cash transfers; increased agricultural production; a better understanding of the impact of biofuels; and action on the trade front to reduce distorting subsidies and trade barriers.

- Conducting rapid needs assessments for countries impacted by the crisis, including Burkina Faso, Burundi, Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Togo.
- Creating a new \$1.2 billion rapid financing facility—the [Global Food Response Program \(GFRP\)](#)—to speed assistance to the neediest countries. GFRP has approved and begun disbursing \$137 million in 16 countries to date: [Afghanistan](#) (\$8 million), Burundi (\$10 million), [Central African Republic](#) (\$7 million), [Djibouti](#) (\$5 million), [Haiti](#) (\$10 million), [Honduras](#) (\$10 million), [Kyrgyz](#) (\$10 million), [Liberia](#) (\$10 million), [Madagascar](#) (\$10 million), [Moldova](#) (\$7 million), [Niger](#) (\$7 million), [Rwanda](#) (\$10 million), [Sierra Leone](#) (\$7 million), [Somalia](#) (\$7 million), [Tajikistan](#) (\$9 million), and Yemen (\$10 million) to feed poor children and other vulnerable groups, or provide for nutritional supplements to pregnant women, lactating mothers, infants and small children. Two projects totaling \$15 million are pending approval. An additional \$429 million is being earmarked for programs in 13 countries.
- Providing \$200 million to Bangladesh in the coming months to help address the food crisis.
- Providing \$100 million to hard-hit Burkina Faso, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, and Niger to meet additional expenses of food imports and to buy seeds for the new season.
- Working on irrigation and water management in Ethiopia, fertilizer use in Malawi, market access for smallholders in Senegal, and crop diversification in Mali and Uganda.
- Boosting overall agricultural lending to \$6 billion over the next year.
- Launching risk management tools and crop insurance to protect poor countries and smallholders.
- Nearly doubling agricultural lending to Africa from \$450 million to \$800 million; and to Latin America from \$250 million to \$400 million.
- Supporting over \$1 billion in new projects in agriculture and rural development in South Asia.
- Doubling lending for social protection, nutrition and food security, and social risk mitigation to \$800 million over the next year.
- Urging major grain-producing countries to lift or refrain from bans on food exports.
- Working with other donors and agencies on the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development Program for agriculture development in sub-Saharan Africa.

## **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**

[www.fao.org](http://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 nearly US\$ 59 million to governments to assist the most severely affected countries in the current planting seasons, including an expansion of plantings in the dry season, so that local production sees an immediate increase. Of this, FAO has contributed more than US\$ 28 million in emergency Technical Cooperation Project funding to respond to the crisis, while donors such as Spain, the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom have made contributions.

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. This is the minimum of short term support necessary. But 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 three decades of decline in investment in agricultural development.

As of the end of August, 79 countries have made formal requests for assistance to FAO. Distribution of inputs, mainly seed and fertilizers, are ongoing or due to launch this season in 65 countries. Twenty-four countries have requested technical assistance, in the form of support missions or studies. In total, 78 countries have activities already ongoing or soon to be launched under the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices.

The following is a summary list of activities under the ISFP in individual countries:

- Afghanistan: 125 MT of wheat seed currently being distributed, to benefit 2500 families (17,500 people)
- Armenia: 700 MT of wheat seed to be procured and distributed, delays due to Georgia unrest. Will benefit 4660 vulnerable farmers and their families
- Bangladesh: distributions ongoing of: 11.25 MT of rice seed, 2.25 MT of maize seed, 7.5 MT of pulses and 4.448 MT of vegetable seeds. Urea fertilizer is also being supplied. Distributions to benefit 140,000 marginal farming families.
- Burkina Faso: distribution of 86.9 MT of seed (millet, sorghum and cowpea) complete.
- Cambodia: 56 MT of rice seed being distributed, along with 70 MT DAP fertilizer and 70 MT of urea. To benefit 2800 poor farming families in Takeo Province.
- Côte d'Ivoire: 45 MT of lowland rice seed being distributed, as well as NPK fertilizer and urea to 3600 farming families.
- Central African Republic: planned input support from FAO to begin in December. This will include farming tools, some 20 MT of maize, groundnut, rice seed and cassava cuttings. To benefit 8600 farming families or 43,000 people.
- DR Congo: 150 MT of rice seed being distributed as well as tools/equipment and fertilizers to 10,000 farming families.
- Eritrea: planned distribution of 360 MT of potato seed in October/November to 1400 farming families
- Guinea Bissau: 58 MT of rice seed being distributed. 10 MT of cowpea seed, 30 MT of groundnut seed and sweet potato and cassava cuttings, as well as fertilizer and pest/fungus treatments to be distributed. Garden vegetable kits to support single women and their families. Veterinary medicines to be provided for livestock.
- Haiti: distribution completed of 10 MT of maize seed, 26.4 MT of cowpea seeds 9.85 MT of tomato seed and 9.85 MT of carrot seed.
- Kyrgyzstan: 25 MT of winter wheat seed to be distributed
- Mauritania: 55.4 MT of cowpea and nearly 100 MT of sorghum seed distributed and planted.
- Mongolia: procurement planned for tools, potato and vegetable seeds for 2009 planting.
- Mozambique: cassava cuttings already distributed and beans currently being supplied. In October/November, trainings planned on improved cassava processing and diversified uses.
- Nepal: 127 MT of wheat seed and 6.75 MT of vegetable seed currently being distributed.
- Pakistan: 250 MT of wheat seed to be procured and distributed, as well as DAP fertilizer and urea
- Rwanda: 320 MT of bean seed, 50 MT of wheat and 52 MT of maize seeds currently being distributed.
- Senegal: distribution completed for 109 MT of okra, 57.4 MT of vegetable, 20 MT of sorghum seed, as well as rice, millet and cowpea seeds, as well as fertilizers.
- Suriname: planned distribution of 42 MT of rice and vegetable seed
- Sri Lanka: planned distribution of 615 MT of rice seed.
- Swaziland: provision of seed, small livestock and other farming inputs via Input Trade Fairs voucher system due to begin by the end of September.

- Timor Leste: distribution maize seed complete. Training of local blacksmiths in metal silo construction scheduled for October. Rice seed to be distributed through the end of 2008.
- Yemen: 100 MT of sorghum and maize seed ongoing. 460 MT of wheat seed scheduled for the end of 2008.

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 part of the support to countries in formulating national strategies and policies, FAO also takes part in missions with other UN agencies at country level. These also often involve donors and international organizations and financing institutions, as well as NGOs.

Missions have been fielded to 26 countries. The countries are: Ethiopia, Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Cambodia, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Tajikistan, Myanmar, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Philippines, Pakistan, Madagascar, Somalia, Gambia, Nepal, Zambia and Lesotho.

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

The FAO's medium and long term strategy documents are to be completed by the end of September.

## **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

[www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)

The President of IFAD, Lennart Båge, announced on 25 April 2008 readiness to allocate up to US\$200 million from existing loans and grants, as well as supplementary funding, to provide an immediate boost to agricultural production in the countries in which it finances projects, and which were negatively affected by food price increases. As of September, approximately \$50 million had been committed. IFAD projects currently in development that have direct impact on food production total more than \$200 million. Additional co-financing needs of some \$50 million have also been identified.

The money is being used to support increased production by smallholder, family farmers. This includes credit for purchase of agricultural inputs, seed distribution, and seed multiplication by farmers' organizations. Farmers are being assisted to increase staple food production including basic grains and dairy products. Support is also being provided to improve land fertility and sustainable land and water management.

Some examples:

Cambodia: discussions are taking place with ministries of agriculture and finance to extend the completion and closing dates of ongoing projects (IFAD financing just over US\$ 35 million) in seven provinces of Cambodia in order to help the most vulnerable families respond to rising food prices. Expansion of existing components is also being considered, for which additional financing of about US\$ 4 million is being sought

Philippines: Discussions are underway with Government for a new initiative to support input supply; processing and marketing; and irrigators' association, all related to rice production. Other potential partners include the Asian Development Bank, FAO and WFP; IFAD has allocated about US\$ 16 million for this initiative.

Haiti: IFAD is reallocating funds available in the ongoing the Food Crops Intensification Project and Productive Initiatives Support Programme in Rural Areas, for the next three planting seasons, starting with the winter 2008 season. The project areas will be expanded to cover the entire national territory. Activities include distribution of seed and support to seed multiplication by farmer's organisations. IFAD has committed US\$ 37 million for these two projects; the reallocation is expected to amount to US\$ 10 million.

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. In Nicaragua, the supplementary financing will allow the project to reach 1 200 additional family farmers and in Honduras, IFAD supplementary loan for the Project for Enhancing the Rural Economic Competitiveness of Yoro will enable the project to assist an additional 1 700 farm families to increase their grain, .milk and vegetable production

Yemen: the implementation of the ongoing Dhamar Participatory Rural Development Project is being accelerated to finance enhanced distribution of improved seeds and fertilizers in small starter packages and access to credit for the 2008/2009 season. Additional co-financing of about US\$ 1.5 million is being

Ghana: A small grant (US\$ 200 000) was approved for a pilot initiative to improve the effectiveness of public-private partnerships (PPP) for grains and oilseeds development. Co-financing of about US\$ 2 million has already been committed from local private sector operators. Additional co-financing would be used to expand the partnerships

- 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. IFAD has already committed about US\$ 10 million for this project; the process of reallocating funds to the food security sub-programme is underway
- 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. Co-financing of US\$ 3 million is being sought to complement the IFAD financing of about US\$ 14 million.

- 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: about US\$ 2.5 million of the proceeds of the IFAD financing (total about US\$ 24 million) for the Smallholder Horticulture Marketing Programme is proposed to be used as a credit guarantee to establish a credit window of US\$50 million with Equity Bank. The credit window would be for smallholder farmer credits, especially for input procurement to stimulate agricultural production. The partnership is with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, Government of Kenya and Equity Bank. Additional co-financing could be used to expand the credit scheme if this pilot is successful. The current financing agreement is being amended accordingly.

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](http://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 PRGF 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](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](http://www.undp.org)

As coordinator of UN development activities on the ground, UNDP is working with governments and other UN and international agencies to help developing country governments respond to the global food crisis. This includes addressing the need for medium- to longer-term policy measures that tackle food security by assisting governments prepare comprehensive strategies to expand sustainable agricultural production and productivity as part of national development processes; helping to design effective, sustainable safety nets for the vulnerable; crafting knowledge products aimed at clarifying issues and policy options to foster informed decision-making and country ownership; conducting in-depth analysis for better understanding of the impact of the crisis at regional and country levels; and mobilizing resources to meet the needs.

For example, in Kenya, UNDP is helping large populations in drought-prone areas and contributing to the government's efforts to develop a strategy for its arid and semi arid lands, while in Liberia, UNDP is supporting the Joint Programme on Food Security. As part of FAO's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices, UNDP is also providing advice on food markets and trade regulatory frameworks as well as supporting investment programmes for agricultural development in Pakistan, and in Paraguay, it is supporting the new government efforts to implement a safety net programme providing cash to poor families in exchange for poverty-reducing actions -- such as sending children to school, visiting health centres, etc. -- which started last year with about 20,000 households and to expand its coverage ten-fold.

In partnership with FAO, UNDP in Asia and the Pacific launched a year-long anti-hunger campaign to build constituency for policy reform in the region.

## **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

[www.unctad.org](http://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](http://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\$92 million has 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](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/trends_africa2008/index.htm)