

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: July 2008 to June 2009

Collaboration with other UN Agencies in support of NEPAD and African Union Regional Consultation Mechanism (RCM)

FAO is the convener of the Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development Cluster (AFSRD) that includes a number of UN Agencies and International Financial Institutions (IFIs), notably, the World Bank (WB) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The major achievements in this regard include: (i) participation in the technical meeting convened by UNECA in September 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to review a consultant report on the functioning of the Regional Consultation Mechanism; (ii) preparation of a discussion paper, at the request of UNECA, on “the Initiative on High Food Prices (IHFP) as a framework for inter- and intra-cluster cooperation” in delivering a robust and coordinated support to NEPAD and the African Union agriculture and food security programmes; (iii) participation in the 9th meeting of the RCM, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2008 and presentation of the discussion paper; and (iv) follow-up with cluster members on formulating a joint action plan to strengthen the existing cooperation with other UN agencies and financial institutions around the IHFP.

The RCM is designed, *inter alia*, to provide an effective framework for enhancing cooperation among the UN agencies and IFIs. However, its membership does not include bilateral and multilateral donors, farmers’ organizations, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar institutions, etc. On the other hand, the African Union and the NEPAD Secretariat have instituted the CAADP Partnership Platform, which normally meets twice a year, and with much wider partnership. Under the circumstances, the value added of RCM has been somewhat limited.

NEPAD/AU Food Security Workshop

FAO in collaboration with WFP, IFAD, WB, AfDB and other bilateral and multilateral donors supported the NEPAD Secretariat and African Union in organizing a four-day workshop with the objective of assisting 18 African countries to identify soaring food price induced needs, and propose practical solutions to the crisis. The workshop was attended by 160 participants representing countries, over 30 development partners, NGOs, farmer associations and research institutions as well as Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The workshop was an important milestone in identifying a coordinated agriculture and food and nutrition security responses, in short, medium and long term within the framework and principles of CAADP.

Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA)

Within the framework of the UN CFA adopted in response to the global food price escalation, FAO continued to collaborate with the Rome-based UN agencies, UNICEF, WB, AfDB and a number of other bilateral agencies, in the fight against global food insecurity with particular focus on Africa; the most affected region. During the reporting period, country multi-

disciplinary and multi-partner assessment missions have been undertaken to formulate short-, medium- and long-term interventions to mitigate the immediate effects of high food prices and achieve sustainable food security and agriculture development in the most affected countries.

High Level Conference

The Conference was organized in Rome in June 2008 by FAO in collaboration with WFP and IFAD. Although it had a global dimension, it was particularly significant to Africa as most of the affected countries are found in this continent. It therefore made significant contribution to promoting the CAADP agenda and mobilizing resources for its implementation. The Conference attracted wide media coverage, and was attended by Heads of States, Ministers and Representatives of 181 countries and the European Community. Beyond the wider publicity, however, the Conference will be credited more for succeeding in generating financial resources and agreement in purpose and action by both LIFDCs and development partners.

Despite not being a pledging conference, bilateral and multilateral donors as well as international and regional financial institutions announced commitments of about US\$11 billion to assist national governments in implementing programmes to mitigate the impact of soaring food prices. This figure is in addition to the US\$14.1 billion pledged before and after the Conference, thus bringing the total to slightly over US\$25 billion. Africa is expected to be one of the main beneficiaries, provided the AU, NEPAD, RECs and their partners come up with robust strategies and programmes to access these resources and tackle the symptoms as well as the root causes of poverty and food insecurity in the continent.

Support in the context of TICAD –IV

FAO in collaboration with IFAD, WFP and WB played a significant role in the preparatory process of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-IV), which was held in Yokohama in May 2008. This resulted in ensuring that CAADP was featured high in the Conference's agenda. The partners also organized a successful side event on 29 May under the title "Facing the Challenges and Opportunities of High Food Prices". It was chaired by the President of Tanzania, in his capacity as the current Chairperson of the African Union, co-chaired by H.E. J. Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union, and with the Presidents of WB and IFAD, the Executive Director of WFP and the FAO Regional Representative for Africa as the panellists.

The result of the side event includes its contribution to the: (i) recognition of agriculture as the priority sector in the fight against hunger and poverty; (ii) endorsement of CAADP as a framework for cooperation in Africa's agriculture development; (iii) pledge by the Japanese Government to increase its food aid and agricultural development assistances to Africa in the context of CAADP; and (iv) launching of the "Alliance for African Green Revolution (AGRA)" to double rice production within the coming ten years.

Other international initiatives

FAO also collaborated with partners in support of the CAADP agenda. These include collaboration with AGRA, the MDG Africa Working Group: thematic group on agriculture and food security, and the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, chaired by the Secretary-General with the FAO Director-General as vice chair. FAO also participated in the

Afro-Arab workshop that was held in Saudi Arabia, in November 2008, to discuss Afro-Arab cooperation in the context of the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices and CAADP.

The effects and concrete outcome of the above cooperation are yet to be demonstrated. However, their significance in terms of advocacy work and as a conduit for channelling development assistance from the private sector such as the Gate Foundation is becoming quite evident.

Institutional support to NEPAD

FAO continued as one of the key partners of the African Union and the NEPAD Secretariat in the food and agriculture sector. FAO provided technical assistance to strengthen the NEPAD Secretariat and the African Union. This included secondment of two advisers: a senior policy advisor who has been with the Secretariat since 2004, a Value Chain and Agro-industry Expert and short-term national consultants. The main objective of the assistance is ensuring effective implementation of the CAADP agenda through preparation of background documents, convening of implementation-related discussion fora, formulation of relevant documents for mobilizing funding, supporting the RECs, and improving coordination with the Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union (AU) Commission.

FAO also provided technical support in monitoring countries' compliance with the Maputo commitment to allocate ten percent of national budgets to agriculture by 2008. In this context, FAO supported the organization of a workshop to discuss a budget tracking report and deliberate on the way forward.

FAO has also assisted the African Union to finalize the study and Action Plan on the establishment of an African Common Market for Basic Food Products, taking into account the observations and recommendations of the workshop that was held in January 2008, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and attended by participants of the AU, ECA, RECs, WFP, Farmers Union and Civil Society.

Following the endorsement of the ASBP by the AU Heads of State and Government in January 2007, FAO has been assisting the AU in preparing the ground work for its operationalization. In October 2008, the two agreed on a set of activities that include the development of an institutional framework involving the AU, RECs, Regional Research and Development Organizations and international Centres. In addition, it was agreed to organize a donor meeting to mobilize funding. These key activities are expected to be implemented during the first quarter of this year.

Advocacy work in support of the CAADP agenda

FAO continued its efforts to mobilize financial and political support to CAADP through participation in, and organization of, high-level meetings and publication of brochures and information notes. The first line of FAO advocacy work is targeted at reaching out to the countries themselves. In this respect, FAO continued monitoring mainstreaming CAADP in National Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks. Furthermore, FAO advocated and succeeded for CAADP to feature high in the agenda of international and regional meetings such as the TICAD-IV (May 2008), "The High-Level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy" (3-5 June 2008), the 25th FAO Regional Conference for Africa (16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya) and the AU Summit in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

The second line of FAO advocacy work is targeted at the donor community and the international financial institutions to increase allocation to agriculture development in their funding portfolio for effective CAADP implementation. In this regard, FAO assisted the NEPAD Secretariat to prepare background documents for a meeting, in the first quarter of 2009, of AU, NEPAD, AfDB, ECA and FAO to discuss agricultural funding.

The third focus of FAO advocacy work is directed at ensuring CAADP remains the overarching framework for international support to agricultural development in Africa to which all other initiatives should be subordinated.

Although it is difficult to assess the credit that specifically goes to FAO advocacy role, the Organization can safely claim it has made some contribution in mobilizing political and financial support to CAADP and Africa's food and agriculture sector in general. It continued to engage national governments through its country offices, and bilateral and multilateral donors through organizing meetings, workshops and high level conferences with the view to prioritizing agriculture in the national and continental development agenda. In this regard, FAO efforts combined with efforts of other partners have brought agriculture back in the development agenda.