



ECOSOC Briefing on Rising Food Prices
18 February 2011, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
ECOSOC Chamber (NLB)

Introduction

To promote a better understanding of the underlying complexities of rising food prices, a briefing of the Economic and Social Council will be held on 18 February 2011 from 10:00 – 12:00 p.m. The briefing will be done by representatives of the Food and Agricultural Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme and the Coordinator of the Secretary General's High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF). Among the issues to be discussed will be the impact and effects on agricultural production, food security and development and the UN system's response.

Background

The briefing is being organized against the background of rising and volatile food prices over the past several months. World food prices in January 2011 have surpassed their peak in 2008 and are at their highest level in real and nominal terms since FAO began measuring food prices in 1990. While the cause of rising prices is varied and different from the situation in 2008, the impacts are the same, especially on low-income food deficit countries – diminishing supplies in some countries, sharp inflation in others and an overall negative impact on economic growth and performance in all countries. It is also a major threat to food security.

The Council has had the issue of food security on its agenda since the World Food Summit in 1995. The report of the Director General of FAO on progress on the implementation of the World Food Summit Action will be discussed later this year at the Council's annual session to be held in Geneva as has been done on a quadriennial basis since the Summit. The Council held an informal meeting on food crises in Africa in October 2005 which was followed by a special event on the global food crisis in May 2008 with the participation of the President of the General Assembly and the Security Council. A Presidential Summary was issued at the end of the special event outlining short, medium and long-term measures that could be taken by key actors in the international community to address the crisis.

Speakers

FAO: Mr. Jamie Morrison, “Food price volatility: causes and policies”

IFAD: Ms. Bettina Prato, “Higher and more volatile prices - implications for smallholders and poor rural people”

WFP: Mr. Paul Larsen "Short-term responses and actions to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable people”

HLTF: Dr. David Nabarro, “Coordinated UN system action on food prices”

Resources

Statement of the President of the Economic and Social Council on the occasion of the special meeting of the Council on the global food crisis

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/2008/66

Commodity Market Review 2009-2010

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1545e/i1545e00.pdf>

The 2007-2008 Food Price Swing: Impact and Policies in Eastern and Southern Africa

http://www.fao.org/es/esc/foodpriceswing/papers/Publication_The%202007-2008%20food%20price%20swing.pdf

Food Outlook Nov 2010

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al969e/al969e00.pdf>

FAO Economic and Social Department Policy Brief no 9

http://www.fao.org/economic/es-policybriefs/briefs-detail/en/?no_cache=1&uid=42926

Committee on Commodity Problems Document 10/4, Management of wide international commodity price movements – national and international experiences and policy responses

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/018/K7785E.pdf>

The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2009. High food prices and the food crisis – experiences and lessons learned

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0854e/i0854e00.htm>

Responding to the food crisis: Synthesis of medium-term measures

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ISFP/SR_Web.pdf