



Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the U.N. General Assembly on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food: Concept Note

**Trusteeship Council Chamber
06 April 2009
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

1. Background

The world has experienced during the past year a dramatic increase in food prices on the international markets. During the first three months of 2008, international nominal prices of all major food commodities reached their highest levels in nearly 50 years while prices in real terms were the highest in nearly 30 years, and social unrest developed in over forty countries as a result. The number of hungry has dramatically increased in 2007-8: approximately 970 million people are hungry today in the world, which compares with 848 million in 2003-5. And this number very probably will not diminish as a result of lower prices in the immediate future, especially since a return to lower prices means that one of the most vulnerable categories – small-scale farmers, who constitute 50 percent of the hungry – will be even further marginalized and, for some, forced to abandon farming.

For many families particularly in developing countries, the sharp increases we have witnessed made food unaffordable, leading them to cut back on expenses in education or health, to switch to less varied diets, or to have fewer meals. But the crisis reaches much further, and it is much deeper, than the question of prices alone would suggest. The crisis illustrated the unsustainability of a global food system which may be good at producing large amounts of food, but which is neither socially nor environmentally sustainable: while the incomes of smallscale farmers in developing countries are below subsistence levels, often leaving them no other option but to leave their fields and seek employment in cities, the current methods of agricultural production deplete soils, produce large amounts of greenhouse gases, and use vast quantities of water, threatening food security in the long term, and making the repetition of crises such as the one we've seen unavoidable if we do not act decisively.

As a result of the global food crisis, governments have made the improvement of the global agricultural and food systems a priority on the international agenda, and the international agencies have taken a number of initiatives in order to assist their efforts at national level.

In an attempt to devise a unified response to the global food crisis, the decision was taken at the 28-29 April 2008 Bern meeting of the Chief Executives Board of the United Nations system (CEB) to establish a High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on Food Security, chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General. The HLTF includes the

relevant UN agencies, funds, and programmes, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation, and the International Monetary Fund. The HLTF held its first meeting on 12 May 2008. In July 2008, it adopted a 'Comprehensive Framework for Action' (CFA) representing the consensus view of the agencies involved about how the immediate short-term needs should be met, and about the longer-term global strategy to ensure food security. Within that framework, the HLTF is now assisting governments in identifying ways to improve their resilience in face of prices of agricultural commodities which will remain high in the next few years, and which, especially due to the impact of climate change on agricultural production, shall be more volatile than in the past.

A number of high-level intergovernmental events also took place in 2008. These included a special session of the Human Rights Council – the first one ever to be dedicated to a thematic (i.e., non country-specific) issue, and the first one ever on a social right, which took place on 22 May. The Economic and Social Council also devoted a special meeting to the issue on 22-23 May. The General Assembly held two informal meetings on the global food crisis on 29 May and 18 June and a plenary meeting on the global food and energy crises on 18 July. The Third Committee of the General Assembly held an inter-active dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Prof. Olivier De Schutter, on 27 October, in which the rights-based approach to the global food crisis was debated. Subsequently, in December 2008, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the right to food (A/63/430/Add.2), which inter alia re-called the human rights obligations of States in the context of the worsening food crisis. Prior to that, on 3-5 June, a High-Level Conference on World Food Security was convened in Rome, under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation on Food and Agriculture (FAO).

The Special Rapporteur on the right to food presented a report to the Human Rights Council on the global food crisis on 10 September, following the request expressed by the Council at the special session it devoted to the issue (A/HRC/9/23, 8 September 2008). The report is premised on the idea that the crisis is the result of insufficient incomes for those affected, imbalances of power in the food production and distribution chain, and disempowerment of the poor and marginalized segments of society. It argues that these factors can be addressed by solutions guided by the recognition of the human right to adequate food, and that solutions aimed only at increasing the volumes of food produced will not be sustainable if such factors are not dealt with. The message of the report was, in sum that food insecurity is not a technical problem, but that it is political in nature. The concluding recommendations reflect this conviction.

A number of governments expressed support for these recommendations and share the analysis presented in the report. At the same time, as a result of the financial crisis, and of the declining prices of agricultural primary commodities on the international markets, the resolution of the international community to tackle the structural factors behind the food crisis may be weaker now than back in June 2008. However, to simply return to business as usual would be a serious mistake with potentially far-reaching consequences.

The report cited above therefore emphasizes that the solution is not simply to boost production and thus to lower prices: it is to reduce the gap between the farm-gate prices and the prices paid by the consumer; and it is to combat the volatility of prices on both international and domestic markets, by appropriate government regulation of prices. The consequences of continuing volatility will be devastating. Governments need to act decisively on this issue. A failure to do so would not only mean that the number of victims of the violation of the right to food will remain at their unacceptably high levels, but also that we will not be shielded from future shocks.

The debate on what needs to be achieved at national and international level shall continue throughout 2009. On 26-27 January 2009, the Spanish Government and the UN Secretary-General convened a High-Level Conference, following upon the Rome Summit of 3-5 June 2008, in order to assess the follow-up given to the commitments made in Rome, and in order to launch the discussions on a new Global Partnership on Agriculture and Food to the realization of the right to food. The Madrid Summit re-affirmed the primary responsibility of States in the realization of the right to food; acknowledged the special problems faced by vulnerable groups, such as women and children to access adequate food, and encouraged States to seek inspiration from the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security ("Voluntary Guidelines"). At the September 2009 session of the Human Rights Council, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food shall present a follow-up report to his initial report on the global food crisis, in which he will review the initiatives adopted at national and international level to respond to the challenge posed by the global food crisis.

2. The purpose of the interactive thematic dialogue on the global food crisis and the right to food

In light of the above, the President of the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly is convening a High-Level Panel on the global food crisis and the right to food on 06 April 2009 not only to place again the global food crisis and the need to address its structural causes at the top of the international political agenda, but also to guide the initiatives developing at international level, in order to ensure that they do more than increase volumes of production – that they effectively serve to combat hunger.

Indeed, there is a consensus on the need to take decisive action, in order to establish an agri-food system which is able to respond to increasing demand. But how this should be achieved remains contested. The efforts described above, particularly the establishment of a new global architecture for agriculture and food, should be grounded in the human right to adequate food, as recognized in international law, in order to ensure that they are guided towards meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and the disempowered.

In 1996, the World Food Summit convened in Rome, requesting that the right to food be given a more concrete and operational content. In 2004, the 187 Member States of the General Council of the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO) adopted the Voluntary Guidelines. Between those two dates, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted its General Comment No. 12 on the right to food ; and the Commission on Human Rights established the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

That period was one during which the normative content of the right to food was clarified. The recent crisis illustrates the need to move to concrete implementation. This is urgent. Unless the right to food is placed at the very centre of the efforts of the international community to address the structural causes which have led to the global food crisis, we will repeat the same mistakes. We will produce more out of fear of producing too little. But we will forget to ask the decisive questions which, because of their political nature, governments all too often do not want to hear : Whose incomes will rise as a result of production increasing? Will the poorest be able to afford the food which is available on the markets? Are safety nets in place, shielding the poorest from the impacts of high prices? Are stabilizing measures in place, insuring farmers against too low prices? Are initiatives being taken to narrow the gap between farmgate prices and prices paid by the consumers, which has so significantly increased over the last few years? Do victims of violations of the right to food have remedies to challenge the actions of governments and their omissions, which cause such violations? Is food being produced in environmentally sustainable ways?

The right to food obliges us to face these questions and answer them, because the primary obligation of governments is to inform themselves about the situation: to map food insecurity and vulnerability, to identify the obstacles to the full realization of the right to food, and to work towards removing these obstacles. And recognizing the right to food allows courts, or other independent bodies such as national human rights institutions, to monitor the behavior of governments, and call upon them to justify their policy choices, the impact of which on the realization of the right to food should be systematically assessed. Producing enough food is of course essential, and population growth, shifting diets, climate change, and increased competition between crops for food, feed and fuel, all challenge our ability, in the future, to meeting the growing demands of the planet. But that is only part of the equation. It is also essential that all have access – economic access in particular – to the food which is available. According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. It is not about being fed. It is about being guaranteed the right to feed oneself, which requires not only that food is available, but also that each household either has the means to produce its own food, or has a sufficient purchasing power to buy the food which it needs.

3. The composition of the panels for the Interactive Thematic Dialogue

In order to provide the members of the General Assembly with a complete and well-informed overview of the complex challenges we are facing in the current situation, the interactive thematic dialogue on the global food crisis and the right to food would include high-level experts from different disciplinary fields, including economics, agronomics and agro-ecology, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Prof. Olivier De Shutter. The composition of the panels and a detailed programme will be communicated to Member States in the coming week.

The questions the experts would be invited to address are the following:

- What are the main causes of the violation of the right to food on a large scale in a world in which wealth is abundant?
- Which initiatives should the international community take in order to achieve the First Millenium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and in order to put an end to the violations of the right to food? Specifically, how should the international environment be shaped in order to attain this objective?
- Is the current organisation of the food production and distribution system equipped to meet the challenge of food insecurity in the future, considering in particular the impact climate change on our ability to produce food? In which direction should agricultural production develop in order to feed the planet, taking into account the increasing demand for agricultural commodities?
- Is the global governance of the food production and distribution system satisfactory in order to combat hunger effectively? If not, which changes should be recommended?

This Concept Note was prepared by:

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Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the U.N. General Assembly on The Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food

Trusteeship Council Chamber
UN Headquarters, New York
6 April 2009

OPENING SESSION: 10:00 -10:30 AM

Introductory remarks by **H.E. Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann**,
President of the United Nations General Assembly

Opening remarks by **Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra** USG and High
Representative of the LDS (OHRLLS).

Keynote speech by **Dr. Olivier de Schutter**, UN Special Rapporteur on
the Right to Food

PANEL I: **Policy choices and the right to food in the context of the global food crisis** 10.30 AM– 1:00 PM

Moderator: **Br. David Andrews**, Senior Advisor to the PGA on Food
Policy and Sustainable Development

Dr. Olivier De Schutter *Joins panels for discussion/questions from
public

Mr. Sanjay Reddy, Assistant professor of economics at Barnard College,
Columbia University; member of the editorial advisory boards of
Development, Ethics and International Affairs and the European Journal
of Development Research

Mr. Daniel De La Torre Ugarte, Professor of Agricultural Economics at
the University of Tennessee; Associate Director of the Agricultural Policy
Analysis Center

Mr. James P. McGovern, Vice Chairman of the House Rules Committee,
U.S. House of Representatives, Chair of the House Hunger Caucus

Ms. Deborah Saidy, Director of the UN World Food Programme (WFP)
Liaison Office in New York

Q & A

LUNCH BREAK *Panelists are invited to lunch offered by the PGA with selected Member States.*
1:00 - 2:45 PM

PANEL II: ANSWERING TO THE POOR: RIGHT TO FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE MODELS OF AGRICULTURE
3:00 - 4:30 PM

Moderator: **Ms. Barbara Ekwall**, Senior Officer of Agricultural Development Economic Division, FAO Headquarters - Rome

Mr. Henri Saragih, Peasant's Union of Indonesia, member of the International Board of *Via Campesina*

Ms. Molly Anderson, Senior Wallace Fellow at the Wallace Center at Winrock International; and coordinating lead author for the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)

Dr. Judi Wakhungu, Executive Director of the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Nairobi, International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)

Mr. Miguel Altieri, Professor of AgroEcology at UC Berkley, Advisor to the FAO - Globally Indigenous Agricultural Heritage Systems

Q & A

CLOSING SESSION

5.45 – 6.00pm:

Closing remarks by **H.E. Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann**, President of the United Nations General Assembly

Acknowledgements: The President of the U.N. General Assembly is grateful to the U.N. partners: UNHCHR, IFAD and WFP for designating rapporteurs to assist this Office in preparing a Summary of the day's proceedings of this Interactive Thematic Dialogue.

6 April 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
at the General Assembly Interactive Thematic Dialogue on the Global Food Crisis
and the Right to Food**

Excellencies,
High Representative of the Least Developed States,
Colleague and friend, Special Rapporteur Olivier de Schutter,
Representatives of the Rome agencies and of the United Nations System,
Brothers and Sisters All,

I am very pleased to open this informal dialogue of the General Assembly on the global food crisis. Today's discussion will bring to our Membership not only a diversity of views, but also of disciplines and knowledge. It is most appropriate that the General Assembly avail itself of various sources of knowledge and expertise, for indeed, the crisis we are examining in depth today, the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food, is not independent or separate from the converging crises that are confronting us as an international community: climate change, the financial and economic crisis, the energy crisis, and the food crisis. Rather these crises converge, interact, fuel and aggravate each other.

To better grasp the magnitude, complexity and interrelationships of the World Food Crisis we will need to apply multiple tools. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Professor Olivier de Schutter, and my senior advisor for food policy and sustainable development, David Andrews, with assistance from the Rome agencies, have brought together a pool of qualified and outstanding speakers. They will analyze and discuss policy options for responding to the food crisis drawing upon four key instruments or dimensions: international law, emerging human rights law, the ethical and moral dilemmas, and science and technology. Together, these tools will afford us all a more comprehensive analysis, one that I am certain can contribute to the better formulation of solutions.

But I am particularly happy to be joined today by knowledge holders that bring to bear the concerns, worldviews and knowledge that all too often are underrepresented in our international policy forums. And here I am referring to our Third World scientists, our agroecologists, and our small-scale family farmers, and to our indigenous brothers and sisters. You are stakeholders and we are glad to welcome you here in this body, and learn together, through a dialogue of wisdoms. Not only do you constitute 50 per cent of the world's food producers, you also constitute a large percentage of the world's hungry.

This high-level gathering of economists, agroecologists, human rights specialists and other experts builds on the longstanding concerns of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies regarding these issues. I think we all recognize the seriousness and the persistence of the food crisis that continues to unfold around the world and the need to keep it high on the international agenda.

Today we will attempt to find answers to difficult questions. Why do we continue to tolerate hunger and malnutrition now affecting a billion people in a world of abundance? What international policies are needed to assure the right to food? How can we change agricultural production to meet the challenge of food security in the future? Beyond the needed increases in food productions, how can we guarantee universal, sustained access to food – a problem that is more serious as millions more are tipped into abject poverty each day.

We build on the excellent analysis and reports of a range of UN bodies – the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and other agencies and funds as well as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and the high-level initiatives on food security organized by the Secretary-General. We also have received scientific guidance from the International Assessment of Agriculture Science and Technology in Development (IAASTD) and other intergovernmental bodies. All of them tell us that we face an ongoing and deepening crisis that requires the establishment of a new global architecture for agriculture and food.

The United Nations has assumed a central role in addressing the pervasive challenges of food insecurity and access to food. We must support the call to strengthen our global response by relying on tools specifically based on the recognition of the right to food as a human right, specified in international law. This requires inclusive policies that recognize the needs and enable the participation of all sectors of society.

I agree with the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, that we have a unique opportunity to profoundly reorient our food policies which currently leave a billion people on the verge of starvation. The ongoing food crisis is a symptom of a broader breakdown of selfish models of governance and production that have failed us and betrayed the trust of people around the world. These models are unsustainable and we must find alternatives both internationally and locally. It is also important to see the food crisis as directly linked to our financial crisis, the energy crisis and the overarching problems associated with climate change.

With the global downturn it is even more urgent to promote a rights-based approach to food policy. This will also address the needs of the billion small-scale farmers around the world, many of whom, astonishingly, do not have enough to eat. It will address the rights and needs of impoverished consumers – especially women and children -- as well who face hunger in the midst of abundance.

Without innovative and broad changes in our food policies, we will see hunger once again spread across the world like a medieval plague. The shameful reality is that, despite the fact that we have the knowledge, the financial and technological means to prevent it, half of the human population subsists at levels of malnutrition and poverty completely incompatible with their inherent dignity and rights. This is not only shameful—it is, to use religious terminology -- down right sinful, as I have often pointed out.

There is evidence that the dominant global and industrial food system has entered a process of decline. The meltdown of our financial markets and the growing calls for the overhaul of the deeply flawed Bretton Woods institutions have also initiated a process of dramatic change in the international financial architecture. We can only hope that the days of the dominance by the monoculture of industrialized food corporations are numbered as well.

UNEP, for example, recently released a report indicating that organic, small-scale farming can deliver the increased yields that were thought to be the preserve of industrial farming, without the environmental and social damage caused by industrial agriculture. Other reports point to the ecological damage and extraordinary costs related to meat production. The International Assessment of Agriculture Science and Technology in Development released its exhaustive report last year, reflecting the work of many United Nations offices, which emphasized that current methods of food production are no longer sustainable. It argued that we must change from industrial to agro-ecological methods.

Again, we are at a moment of dramatic change, perhaps a turning point. The voices for change are multiplying and, as old systems collapse in exhaustion, finally are being heard. It is time for a new politics of food, one that starts from the bottom up, not the top down. We need to have an approach to food production that is multi-functional, that has a concern for the poor and their right to food; a concern for the earth and its right to life; a concern for communities and their right to self-governance, what is referred to as food sovereignty.

At the United Nations, I have made democratization of the Organization my number one priority. So too, in food politics, I would advocate food democracy. We can move our food provisioning away from dominance by a few very large corporations to the control of people-oriented food systems that respect communities and their right to food sovereignty, and localized and regionalized food systems at the local and regional levels.

There is a growing awareness that we must face up to the fact that the “haves” of this world must change their way of life and the patterns of consumption that show little or no regard for the disastrous impact of their lifestyle on the wellbeing of their neighbors, our brothers and sisters, and our shared home, the planet Earth. We can learn from those who are moving in the direction of a new food politics, toward food democracy. We have to move ahead in this direction. With the looming calamity of global warming, we cannot hesitate to take action.

People are calling for an end to this culture of indifference to the welfare of others. We are seeing how these economic policies have accelerated global warming and the plunder of natural resources. We see the madness of converting crops into fuel to sustain gluttonous energy appetites. To perpetuate this culture is to continue to betray our most sacred values and principles and lead us to the most terrible consequences for people and our fragile planet.

Solutions proposed within the existing economic crisis are worsening the problems. In fact, the climatic crisis obeys the same logic as the food, energy and financial crises: the logic of policies based on short-term profits and speculation for maximum accumulation of wealth. These crises cannot be fixed one by one by technology alone. They require cross-cutting, global solutions.

Most of us here today are convinced that the confluence of crises we face do not have to provoke wider human tragedy. But we must overcome the moral mediocrity that keeps us from making the heroic sacrifices that the magnitude of the problems requires. We must address the underlying patterns of consumptions that are clearly unsustainable. We must reinforce the fundamental right to food. Realism, if not our conscience, should tell us that all humanity is in the same boat and that we will all sink or sail together. I am sure that our panel discussions today will move us in the right direction.

Thank you.

6 April 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the General Assembly Interactive Thematic Dialogue on the Global
Food Crisis and the Right to Food**

Excellencies,
Representatives of the United Nations System,
Representatives of Civil Society,
Brothers and Sisters All,

As we come to the close of this Thematic Dialogue on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food, I want to thank all of the panelists and moderators and especially the Delegates who participated so constructively in this timely exchange. I am grateful to Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Least Developed Countries, for highlighting the importance of this issue for the most vulnerable populations affected by the ongoing challenges of assuring access to adequate food supplies.

And I thank Olivier de Schutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, for his arguments that reminded us of the logic and the moral imperative of addressing food security from rights-based perspective.

To achieve long-term solutions to the intractable but unjustifiable problems of hunger and the lack of access to food due to poverty, we must dramatically change our production models and consumption patterns. This is a profound but inescapable challenge.

Both expert panels made it clear that we must move quickly away from monoculture and return to polyculture of food production; that we must challenge the shortsightedness of producing food for cattle and cars; that we can and must end the harm that profit-driven production is doing to the quality of our food and our very lives; and we must tap the enormous potential that resides with the efficiencies and synergies of small-scale food producers, often in stark contrast to agro-industrial production.

This meeting has demonstrated once again that the Assembly, the UN system and partners from the private sector, civil society and academia can come together to identify problems and explore solutions that reflect the concerns of all Member States. This is, of course, the role of the General Assembly mandated by the United Nations Charter.

But what is most striking about today's presentations is the wealth and diversity of views of our panelists. We have heard compelling arguments based in the solid science of the International

Assessment of Agriculture Science and Technology in Development and the practical experience of our Rome-based members of the United Nations system.

We have heard from the experts and practitioners of non-governmental organizations from around the world, including the invaluable perspectives of representatives of our indigenous peoples. This is the scope of knowledge and depth of concern that will help us to reset our collective compass in the direction of true and sustainable food security for all.

One week ago we gathered in this same chamber to discuss the international financial and monetary crisis and its impact on development with the world's leading economists, trade and labor specialists. A few days later, leaders of the world's most developed economies met in London to address the challenges of the world's economic crisis.

Glaringly absent in the G20 discussions was the global food crisis, not to mention the right to food. As compelling as the economic crisis is, the food crisis strikes the most vulnerable of all our societies in the most immediate and uncompromising manner. The hungry cannot wait till tomorrow. This is a discussion that must be high on the international agenda and you have contributed to making this possible.

I must say a few words regarding food as a fundamental human right. There are numerous reasons to support a rights-based approach to the food crisis. Guaranteeing the right to food turns the world's hungry, recipients of our food aid, into 'rights-holders'. This constitutes a radical shift in our current paradigm.

Rather than speak for the world's hungry or on their behalf, we as an international community must join our voices with theirs and speak in defense of their rights. This will, no doubt, bring into question a series of complex issues, many of which have no single or easy answers. They bring into play the role of non-food agriculture, subsidies and unjust trade regimes. If we are serious in our intent, these difficult and often contentious issues will be part of discussion.

The right to food forms part of United Nations law. As such, UN international organizations, including its financial organizations, have an obligation to take into account as part of their decision-making process, the likely impact policy options will have on the right to food.

I am convinced we must break the tendency to examine the crisis from a single perspective. I urge us all to take into account international legal obligations, emerging human rights law, the ethical and moral dilemmas intrinsic in choosing policy options, and how emerging knowledge and technologies can be used to assist developing countries and their peoples to better meet their fundamental right to food.

Let us look ahead. The UN calendar contains a series of processes and dates of great relevance to many of the issues raised here today. The Commission on Sustainable Development will meet next month to discuss agricultural policy, water, desertification and other relevant themes; in June this body will discuss the international financial and monetary crisis and its impact on development; later in the year

we will examine progress on the Millennium Development Goals; towards the end of year there is likely to be a Summit on the Food Crisis, and finally, the important negotiations on Climate Change.

I urge all Member States when examining food, trade and agricultural policy issues in this array of forums, to give serious consideration and discussion, and to bring to bear in your analysis and responses, a rights-based approach, one grounded in the right to food. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, numerous General Assembly resolutions and other legal instruments recognize the right to adequate and nutritious food.

In closing, I would like to thank my senior advisor for food policy and sustainable development, Brother David Andrews, for working with our larger community to bring together this pool of qualified and outstanding speakers. Let us continue this dialogue and press at every level for the changes that will have such a profound impact on all of us and our dear Planet.

Thank you.

Check against delivery



**Statement by Mr. Olivier De Schutter
Special Rapporteur on the right to food**

**Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the U.N. General Assembly on
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**6 April 2009
New York**



[Mr./ Ms.] Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

At last, the idea is gaining ground that the right to food, as an enforceable human right, should be at the centre of our efforts to reform the global food system – a system which the ‘global food crisis’ of 2007-2008 has shown to be fragile particularly in the face of shocks such as a peak in the prices of oil, a sudden shift in demand, or speculative behavior on the commodities markets.

The United Nations Organisation on Food and Agriculture (FAO) now considers adding governance and the right to food as a third track in their efforts to combat hunger, in addition to providing emergency help in times of crisis and to promoting investment in agriculture. The right to food was also central to the High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, convened in Madrid on 26-27 January 2009 by Prime Minister Zapatero and Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. In his closing remarks to this conference, which sought to assess the progress made seven months after the High-Level Conference on World Food Security held in Rome on 3-5 June 2008, the Secretary General pleaded for inclusion of the right to food in the work of the High-Level Task Force on the global food crisis, ‘as a basis for analysis, action and accountability’.

At its core, this reference to the right to food means that in order to effectively combat hunger and malnutrition, producing more or increasing aid will not suffice. It is equally important to ensure that those who are hungry or malnourished are identified, that they are specifically targeted by support agricultural and social schemes, and that no individual in need is left out. It is equally important that – as recommended by the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to food, which the 187 Member States of the General Council of the FAO have agreed to – States put in place national strategies mapping the groups which are most vulnerable, clearly allocating responsibilities across different branches of government, setting benchmarks and imposing timeframes, and empowering independent institutions, including courts, in order to enhance accountability.

Any hungry person is a person whose right to food has been violated. At least 20 States in the world today, including Brazil, India and South Africa, or more recently Ecuador (in 2008) and Bolivia (in 2009), recognize the right to food in their constitutions. A growing number of States also have adopted a framework law which protects the right to food. In April 2005, with the passing of a Food Security and Nutrition Law, Guatemala became the first country in Latin America to include such a law in its domestic legal system. In Brazil, the Federal Organic Law on Food and Nutritional Security (LOSAN) implements the national system of Food and Nutrition Security (SISAN), which brings together a number of policies aimed at combating hunger, including policies designed to support family agriculture, to improve access to food and water for those in need (for instance through a low-income restaurant programme, food banks, community kitchens, or cisterns), to feed children in schools, or to improve storage of food in rural areas. In Indonesia, the Food Law (7/1996) recognizes the right to adequate food for all, covers food security and food safety, and allocates institutional responsibility. In July 2008, Venezuela adopted the Organic Law on Food Security and Food Sovereignty, Article 8 of which recognizes the right to food. In addition a number of other countries, like Mozambique and Honduras, are in the process of elaborating and adopting legislation on the right to food.

These developments are not merely of symbolic value. Instead, they operate the shift from the proposition that ‘we need to have policies that achieve food security’ to the proposition that ‘each individual must be granted a remedy if his/her right to food is violated’. On 25 September 2008, following the example set a few years ago by the Indian Supreme Court, the Supreme Court of Nepal issued an interim order according to which the Government of Nepal had to supply immediately food to 12 food-short districts. This would not have been possible had the Interim Constitution not included a reference to the right to food. Guaranteeing the right to food turns beneficiaries of relief schemes into rights-holders, and those implementing public programmes into duty-bearers. Both the legitimacy

and the effectiveness of public programmes to tackle hunger are improved as a result.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

We should resist the temptation to reduce the 'third track' to improved governance – or to the removal of institutional obstacles to the implementation of strategies to achieve food security which would risk failing, for instance, because of corruption or because of an inability of the central government to monitor the implementation of such strategies at local level. This would be a serious mistake for two reasons.

First, it devalues the notion of the right to food as a human right. The right to food means that victims must have a right to recourse mechanisms ; that governments must be held accountable if they adopt policies which violate that right ; and that courts are empowered to protect this right. It is not about good governance. It is about empowerment and accountability. It is about participation of those directly affected in the design and implementation of the policies that affect them.

Second, in the current efforts to address the global food crisis, the right to food should not be simply a 'third track' supplementing the two other tracks. Instead, it should constitute an overarching principle : it should guide our efforts, whether these relate to short-term support measures (the first track) or to rural development and support to agriculture (the second track). In responding to the global food crisis, it is easy to move from the symptom – prices which have suddenly peaked – to the cure – produce more, and remove as soon as possible all supply-side constraints –. Once we define the objective, namely the realization of the right to food, we must ask a very different set of questions : will the measures we adopt to boost production benefit those who are food insecure, or will they simply mean a return to low prices, which will only further discourage smallscale farmers and marginalize them further ? are these measures addressing the needs of all those who are in a situation of food insecurity and vulnerability ? will these measures reduce, or instead increase, the dualization of the farming sector ?

The Comprehensive Framework for Action, the result of the cooperation of the UN executive agencies, working with the World Bank and the World Trade Organization under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, is in many ways a remarkable document, listing a wide range of policy options which States are invited to explore in order to achieve improved food security. Yet, it could be built upon – and I believe, further improved – by using the right to food as a tool for analysis, as suggested by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.

Such an analysis would start by exactly who the vulnerable are, and why they are food insecure. These one billion hungry people belong to three main categories: first, smallscale farmers and other self-employed food producers such as pastoralists, fisherfolk and persons living from the products of the forest (60% of the hungry) ; second, landless agricultural workers (20% of the hungry); and third, the urban poor (the remaining 20%). A rights-based approach to the global food crisis would require that we pay equal attention to all these categories, and that we ensure that their entitlements are adequately protected. Since hunger is not the result of too little food being produced, but rather of marginalization and disempowerment of the poorest, who lack the purchasing power they need to procure the food that is available, guaranteeing such a protection should be a top priority.

The first vulnerable group, smallholder farmers, is made up of approximately 500 million households (over 2 billion individuals). Reinvestment in agriculture has been on all lips since the food price crisis. But it is the need to protect their livelihoods that should inform our approaches to supporting agricultural production. Fifty-eight governments have approved the conclusions reached in April 2008 by the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). This review notes that 'Technologies such as high-yielding crop varieties, agrochemicals and mechanization have primarily benefited the better resourced groups in society and transnational corporations, rather than the most vulnerable ones. To ensure that technology supports development and sustainability goals strong policy and institutional arrangements are needed (...)'.

The first Green Revolution – as developed in Latin America after 1943 and as launched in the 1960s in South Asia – was very successful in improving yields. This however sometimes came at a high social and environmental cost, and the productivity gains themselves were not always sustainable in the longer term. I am encouraged that much care is being taken to avoid repeating the mistakes of the first Green revolution, and the IAASTD conclusions are an indication of this new awareness. At the same time, less attention has been paid until very recently to the comparison between Green revolution concepts and alternative models of agricultural development. Failing to consider the diversity of models that can be supported could lead to miss great opportunities. As stated by the Windhoek High-level Meeting “African agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution” (Namibia, 9-10 February 2009) : ‘Governments, in cooperation with the research community and with support from the international donor community, should undertake rigorous comparative assessments of alternative agricultural models and cropping systems’. This should be seen as complementing the 2003 Maputo Declaration target of raising the share of national budgets devoted to agriculture and rural development to at least 10%. Indeed, the progressive realization of the right to food is not merely an issue of raising budgetary allocation for agricultural development. It also requires that Governments opt for the orientations more conducive to the realization of the right to food, by carefully balancing the existing options against one another.

An analytical framework grounded in the right to food can guide such choices. Greater attention should be paid in the future to public policies which may significantly increase yields, thus increasing the incomes of farmers, without further dualizing the farming system, and without contributing further to soil depletion. In Tanzania, the western provinces of Shinyanga and Tabora, were used to be named “The Desert of Tanzania” by President Julius Nyerere. Yet, starting in the late 1980s, the use of agroforestry techniques and participatory processes allowed some 350,000 hectares of land to be rehabilitated. The agroforestry system (Ngitili) led to an increase in incomes of USD500 to each household every year, a large sum in rural Tanzania. The increased use of trees in agroforestry schemes thus improved farmers’ access to food and the resilience of farming systems, especially important in the context of climate change. In Malawi, in 2005, some 100,000 smallholders benefitted to some degree from the use of fertilizer trees. Where maize is intercropped with a nitrogen-fixing tree, an average 3.7 tonnes a hectare can be produced – compared to just 1.1 tonne on plots without such trees ; yields could further reach 5 tonnes with small additions of mineral fertilizer. This successful experience led in 2007 the Government to launch Malawi’s Agroforestry Food Security Programme, funded by Irish Aid, and targeting over 42,000 farming households. This programme now benefits around 1.3 million of the poorest people in Malawi whose ability to produce food has increased with a minimal investment of financial resources.

Similar examples exist for the many other types of sustainable agricultural practices that are commonly referred to as agroecological farming approaches. The UNEP, the FAO and UNCTAD as well as other agencies have all recently published reports that demonstrate how these models should and could be scaled up. In many cases, they are less costly and more sustainable, less risky and more productive than fertilizers. Moreover, the relationships between these agroecological approaches and the human right to food have been established. First, these sustainable farming approaches are adapted to the complex environments where some of the most vulnerable groups live. Secondly, the management processes that lead to them are most often participatory processes, which involve the affected vulnerable groups in order to guarantee sustainable results, a strategy consistent with a rights-based approach. Third, these techniques improve the resilience of farming systems to climate change and to peak oil – two developments which, as we know, will directly impact those who are already most vulnerable today.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The right to food should not only guide strategies at national level which are empowering, improve accountability, and ensure adequate targeting of public policies, including agricultural policies. It also should help us establish an international framework which enables such national efforts to realize the right to food. As we all know, the current multilateral trading system is heavily skewed in favor of a

small group of countries, and is in urgent need of reform. In agriculture, in particular, trade-distorting measures – obstacles to market access for developing countries, domestic support schemes for OECD countries' farmers, and export subsidies – have led many governments and most development agencies to neglect agriculture. The world is now paying the price for this neglect.

Yet, simply removing the existing distortions will not suffice. I have recently returned from a mission to Benin, a country in which 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture, and where the main export crop is cotton. The difficulties smallholders in Benin face result from insufficient storage facilities ; poor access to markets, due to a lack of infrastructures ; insufficient rural extension services ; almost no access to credit ; and, for many, insecure rights on the land they cultivate. These farmers are far less competitive than OECD producers before Doha ; they will remain so after Doha. A country such as Benin must be allowed to protect itself from import surges, which in the past had damaging impacts on the viability of agriculture and the agro-food sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, and which will continue to have damaging impacts in the future if countries, such as Benin, cannot shield their farmers from international trade competition. Benin, like many other countries of the region, has for too long been encouraged to sacrifice its long-term interest in building a robust and diversified agricultural sector able to feed its population, for its short-term interest in specializing in cotton production, in a context in which it could procure low-priced food on the international markets.

The Government of Benin has now shifted its efforts in order to diversify agriculture. Will this be sufficient ? Benin has a population of 8.5 million, the regional integration in the CEDEAO and in the UEMOA is making slow progress, and in the industrial sector, other countries have achieved economies of scale in specific lines of production before Benin was able to achieve this. It is therefore likely that, as a result of the emerging international division of labor, Benin will have no choice but to remain locked into the production of raw commodities from agriculture, and will have to buy from abroad the manufactured products it needs. We all know that such a strategy enables a country neither to capture a fair share of added value in the food chain, nor to create a sufficient number of jobs. Yet, both are necessary for any State aiming to realize the right to food for urban poor, firstly through the development of robust social protection schemes, and secondly, through the building of an industrial sector that provides job opportunities with decent wages. In other words, if the current trading system is not reformed, trade will remain asymmetrical and work against the long-term interests of countries such as Benin ; the terms of trade will continue to fall ; and dependency on foreign aid will persist.

This, I believe, is not acceptable. Individuals and peoples have a right to development. Agriculture itself can only flourish if, in the same country, workers in the urban centres can receive high wages in the secondary or the tertiary sector – not only to absorb workforce, but also to constitute a market for the agricultural products on a national and regional basis. The 1.2 billion slumdwellers are among the worst affected by high prices of food, since they buy all the food they consume, and their situation will only be addressed by coherent long-term development policies. The right to food, in its international dimension, should lead us to recognize this basic fact : without development – and locking countries into agriculture only runs against development –, countries will be subjected to a new form of colonialism some refer to as 'welfare colonialism', in which they are aided to produce for the global markets, but in which they are not allowed to imitate the paths others have followed towards industrialization.

Finally, it must be reminded that, today, trade is mostly done not between States, but between transnational corporations. If our collective aim is a trading system that works for development, including the human right to food, the role of these actors also must be considered. The expansion of global supply chains only shall work in favor of human development if this does not pressure States to lower their social and environmental standards in order to become 'competitive States', attractive to foreign investors and buyers. All too often, at the end of supply chains, agricultural workers do not receive wages enabling them their right to adequate food. The ILO estimates that the waged work force in agriculture is made up of 700 million women and men producing the food we eat but who are often unable to afford it. The vicious circle created by the current globalized competition must consequently urgently be addressed both at the global level and the national level. We should ask

ourselves, for instance, how the relevant ILO conventions could be better implemented in the rural areas – which all too often labor inspectorates are unable to monitor effectively – and how those working on farms, often in the informal sector, can be guaranteed a living wage, and adequate health and safety conditions of employment.

Distinguished delegates,

It is very likely that in November 2009, a Summit on world food security will be convened in Rome. The stakes are considerable, and so are the hopes raised. We should not measure its success by the amounts of funds committed to supporting agriculture. Although aid is hugely important in the current context, the massive violations of the right to food are not caused by the lack of aid. They are caused, at their root, by a system which is unfair both to developing countries, which for too many years have been hurt by an inequitable international economic system, and to smallscale farmers in these countries, forgotten from public policies, and unable to secure remunerative prices from their crops even when they manage to move beyond subsistence farming. Yet, I am hopeful that things will change significantly in the next few months. Bold and innovative proposals have emerged in the public debate. The November Rome Summit should examine these proposals carefully. It should go beyond aid, and address explicitly a number of questions which, we now have learned the hard way, we cannot ignore further :

- First, how can States be supported in the design and implementation of national strategies for the realization of the right to food, including through the adoption of framework laws ensuring accountability of governments to those whose rights are violated ?
- Second, which assessment can be made of different models of agricultural development, as regards their impact on the right to food ?
- Third, how can trade be redesigned in order to ensure that it will serve development, as a condition for the full realization of the right to food ?
- Fourth, how can the situation of agricultural workers be improved, particularly as regards their right to a living wage and social protection ?
- Fifth, which incentives or regulations are needed to ensure that transnational agri-food companies contribute to the development of the countries they source their supplies from, and to the realization of the right to food?

The daily and massive denial of the right to food has its source, not in an insufficient quantity of food produced, but in a system of production whose limits have now become clear. The temptation of return to business as usual is as strong today as it has been when, in the past, we have been confronted to similar crises. This means more food, and lower prices ; but it also means unsustainable inequalities both between and within countries, with the impoverished countryside providing cheap food to the cities, and massive rural exodus as a result. That temptation must be resisted. Instead, a new system should be put in place, building on the ruins of the old. I look forward to working with all governments and other stakeholders to that end.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

STATEMENT

by

Dr. Mihajlo Sužnjević

**Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to
the United Nations**

**On the occasion of General Assembly thematic dialogue on Global Food Crisis
and the Right to Food**

New York
April 06. 2009

Thematic Dialogue on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food

New York, 6 April 2009

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to commend the President of the General Assembly for convening this Thematic Dialogue in a timely manner. We hope that this and similar initiatives will contribute greatly to achieving the solution to the global food crisis.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports and welcomes all initiatives undertaken by the United Nations, Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon and the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann in order to reach a unified response to the global food crisis.

The crisis has shown that the current global food system is unsustainable, effecting not only prices of food but also creating deeper problems. Some of the causes include climate change, natural disasters, macroeconomic factors, etc. In the same time, peaceful and stable political, social and economic environment is the essential basis for the countries to eradicate poverty and create food security. We are witnessing the alarming and increasing number of hungry today in the world, and it is urgent to address the issue of food crisis and its causes, both on international and national levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Bosnia and Herzegovina recognizes the right to food as a human right. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also one of the cosponsors of the General Assembly's Resolution: 'The right to food'.

All human rights are universal, indivisible, but in the same time interrelated, which means that they must be treated globally, in a fair and equal manner.

Hunger is a violation of human dignity and it is a fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

In that context, this can only mean that food crisis affects us all and that all member countries should contribute in finding the right and sustainable solution to solve the global food crisis.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

BRAZIL

Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the UN General Assembly on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food

New York, 6 April 2009

Ambassador Piragibe Tarragô,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

Speaking Notes

- I congratulate the President of the General Assembly for the timely holding of this thematic dialogue. It is particularly important in light of the risk that the financial crisis takes precedence over the urgent and chronic issue of food security.
- The Brazilian geographer Josué de Castro stated that the scourge of hunger was rather political in nature. Today 1 billion people worldwide do not have enough food to lead a normal, active life. At the same time, current global food output would be sufficient to feed the world population.
- This enduring food gap derives from a combination of inadequate distribution of land, insufficient assistance to small farmers and delivery to markets. Policies should aim at correcting these inequalities, improving the production and distribution chains.
- A rights-based approach is key to eradicating hunger and poverty.
- Brazil apply the Right to Food Guidelines, which have played a central role in Brazil's national system on food and nutritional security. They are crucial for helping governments to bridge the policy and implementation gap.
- The right to development is a key element of this debate. In order to fulfill their right to food, people must improve their livelihoods and have the means to feed themselves.
- Three-quarters of those facing hunger live in rural areas. Half are farming families. The eradication of hunger would necessarily involve policies and measures designed to improve rural development. Increasing the income of the poor is crucial to solving the problem of access to food.
- National policies can only be effective in an international environment that is conducive to eradicating poverty and hunger.
- The increase in rural income in developing countries is stifled by an unfair trade practices and policies, as expressed in huge amounts of farm subsidies in developed countries. These subsidies are an obstacle to increase production in developing countries, especially hampering the ability of small producers to compete in world markets. They were also one of the main factors that contributed to the hike in food prices last year. The eradication of hunger would require increased production in developing countries, for which elimination of farm subsidies in developed economies is a absolute requirement.

- Other measures are as urgent to revitalize agricultural production in developing countries. They include: increased investments in rural infrastructure, such as public storage and transport facilities; establishment of insurance schemes for household farmers; improved access to appropriate technology and increased capacities in the rural sector in developing countries; and donation of seeds, fertilizers and other supplies.
- Policies should focus on household agriculture and smallholder farmers as a step for empowerment of the rural poor, while also recognizing the particularly important role of women in fighting hunger and poverty.
- Last year's price hikes in food products put the spotlight on these structural impediments to eradicating hunger. Besides farm subsidies in rich countries and gaps in infrastructure, the speculation in commodities markets and the huge volatility in oil prices played a crucial part in triggering the crisis. They could still pose a threat if not adequately addressed.
- There is an undeniable link between the price of oil and the cost of food: historical correlation shows that peaks in food prices have matched with peaks in oil prices. In developed countries, the price of oil corresponds to 27% cost of agricultural output; in developing countries, this figure is 46%.

(Biofuels)

- Biofuels have, by and large, a positive impact on food security. They provide alternative energy input and lower the impact of oil price on food prices. They play an important part in generating income and jobs in rural areas. They are also a decisive instrument in the fight against global warming.
- The Brazilian example demonstrates that the production and use of biofuels can be done in a sustainable manner, improving rural development and food security. The growth in output of ethanol, for instance, has gone hand-in-hand with the growth in agricultural production.
 - In the last 5 years, productivity in agricultural sector rose 15%; the production of ethanol doubled while expanding the cultivated area by only 7%. Merely 1% of the arable land in Brazil is destined for biofuel production.
 - Between 1975 and 2005, replacing gasoline with ethanol has led to accumulated savings of US\$ 60.7 billion in hard currencies. Today, ethanol sector accounts for 1.3% GDP. It has provided 500.000 direct and 1.5 million indirect jobs. Since 1975, ethanol use has avoided emission of 800 million tonnes of CO₂.
- In some countries, biofuels cannot be feasible because of lack of adequate land or climate conditions. But over 100 countries have biofuel potential. Biofuels could play a major role in the economic and social development of poor countries, particularly in Africa.
- To contribute to a balanced debate on biofuels, Brazil hosted in November 2008 an International Conference on Biofuels. Government officials, scientists and representatives of civil society from all interested countries took part in an open and

fruitful debate on the challenges and opportunities we have ahead of us. A summary of the discussions was made available to Member States in December 2008.

- Biofuels have been incorrectly pointed out as responsible for rising food prices and a threat to food security. They cannot be singled out as one of the main causes of the food crisis.
- There is no causal link between biofuels and the increase in food prices. Today, the price of commodities has fallen while the production and use of biofuels have continued to increase. When sustainably produced, biofuel crops do not compete with foodcrops for land, nor do they divert food from the table to the car tanks.

(UN system)

- All efforts are welcome in finding solutions to the scourge of hunger. At the international level, governance should be firmly rooted in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization and associated funds and programmes - the so-called "Roman agencies"
- FAO should be strengthened as the leading body for the international response to food security and rural development. We should not duplicate efforts. Brazil is strongly committed to the FAO reform process, including the implementation of the "Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal".
- In the Declaration of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security, our leaders pledged to embrace food security as a matter of permanent national policy and set out key immediate, short, medium and long-term measures in order to eliminate hunger and to secure food for all, present and future generations.
- We should keep the momentum for implementing the pledges made at the Rome Conference. FAO's Committee on World Food Security has a clear mandate in promoting food security and is the universal forum for this matter. The Committee should be strengthened as the high-level forum of the UN system for implementation of activities aimed at food security. Brazil welcomes, in this sense, the establishment of the high-level group of experts on food security under FAO.
- The Global Partnership recently launched in the Madrid Conference this January has an important role in garnering political support for the FAO's Committee on Food Security.

(National policies)

- Brazil's policies are based on a rights-based approach. The following are examples of key initiatives:
 - The "Zero Hunger" (Fome Zero) programme and the Food Purchase Programme (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos) both ensure market access for household farmers and provide direct distribution of food to people facing food insecurity. Through direct government purchases of food products, household farmers have a 40-60% real increase in income. 100,000 families participate as farmers; 15 million Brazilians receive food acquired through this programme. After a period relying on

government purchases, household farmers integrate themselves to the market: 70% of food consumed in Brazil is produced by household farmers.

- The "Bolsa Família" is the largest conditional cash transfer program ever implemented in Brazil. It supports more than 11 million families. From 1990 until 2005, 4.7 million persons have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty; the percentage of people living with less than \$1 dollar a day has fallen from 8.8% to 4.2%. Brazil has already achieved MDG-1.

- The programme in support of household agriculture (PRONAF), which extends loans, technical assistance and farm and emergency insurance schemes to over 500,000 families.

- The National School Feeding Programme (PNAE), which provides in-school meals for 35 million students every school day.

(International cooperation)

- Food security is also a key area of Brazil's international cooperation:

- With Haiti, Brazil has set up a Strategic Programme in the areas of Agriculture and Food Security 2008-2010, to provide food aid and to assist the rehabilitation of local agriculture.

- Brazil has partnered with Central American countries under the Strategic Programme of Cooperation (SICA) in the areas of rural development and eradicating rural poverty in the region.

- The Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 Initiative, launched by President Lula and President Berger of Guatemala in 2005, is on track to meeting its three main objectives: establish an institutional framework for legislation that ensures the right to food; eradicate chronic child malnutrition; and establish regional monitoring centers for levels of malnutrition.

- In the most recent regional declaration on the matter, at the Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development (Bahia, December 2008), leaders have committed themselves to, inter alia, incorporate a human rights perspective to national strategies for food and nutritional security with broad social participation, particularly from the most vulnerable sectors.

- Brazil is willing to sharing its experience in tropical agriculture technologies with other developing countries, particularly in Africa. It has partnered with West African institutions for agriculture research for many years and, since 2005, a branch of its main national agriculture research agency, EMBRAPA has been assisting West African countries to develop suitable crops for the region.

**Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the U.N. General Assembly
on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food – April 6th, 2009**

Intervention of the Canadian Delegation

While food commodity prices have fallen by nearly 35 percent from their peak in summer 2008, prices remain high compared to pre-food crisis levels. The number of undernourished persons is approaching 1 billion, roughly 15 percent of humanity.

Vulnerable countries must now cope with an economic crisis on top of the hardship caused by hunger.

The global credit crunch could discourage new investment in agricultural infrastructure, may weaken the capacity of net food importers to ensure on-going food supply and can put at risk donors' commitments to food aid and agriculture assistance.

This is why Canada takes food security very seriously. We have provided over \$300 million in food assistance programming in 2008-2009. We ranked as the fourth largest contributor to the World Food Programme in 2008. And Canada fully untied its food assistance in April 2008 to make our contribution more effective and foster local development in partner countries.

Canada believes that trade in agricultural goods is an important component in the range of solutions to address food security. As such, we remain committed to trade liberalization.

As a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Canada is also committed to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living.

In keeping with their obligations, all states can contribute to global food security by fulfilling their primary responsibility to promote and protect the right to adequate food within their own populations, and by fostering a supportive international enabling environment.

We look forward ^{to today's} ~~at this day~~ of Interactive Thematic Dialogue ^{ing} ~~to~~ strengthen the consensus that States came to when agreeing on the language contained in the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

Questions – Panel I

Q1 (to an economist, either Mr. Reddy or Mr. De La Torre). Food insecurity is a complex issue and an array of factors influence both the availability of stocks and volatility of prices, which in turn greatly influence the consumer, as well as the producer. The September report from the Special Rapporteur recommended measures such as "appropriate government regulations of prices". Canada has been concerned about such suggestions. Considering that experience has shown that price controls often adversely affect supply, which hurts not only the producer but also the consumer, what are views on the issue?

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Stacy...



INDIA
भारत

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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. M.S. PURI
ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF INDIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

DURING THE

**INTERACTIVE THEMATIC DIALOGUE ON THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS
AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD**

AT THE

**63RD SESSION OF THE
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

NEW YORK

APRIL 6, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

We associate ourselves with the intervention on behalf of the G-77.

Food security is critical for developing countries. It is also the key to achieving the right to food.

Increasing world population and the fact that in large parts of the globe even basic nutrition needs remain unmet, require a focus on both increase in food production and its access.

The current global financial and economic crisis poses additional challenges in achieving food security in developing countries. However, the global crisis should not be an excuse to dilute ODA and other commitments. Measures to address the crisis must not worsen the situation either.

Agricultural production and productive capacity must be enhanced, particularly in developing countries. This is especially important to ensure their food security.

And, food aid must not discourage local food production. Nor should there be attempts to encourage major reliance on imports in the case of such a basic need as food.

High agricultural subsidies in developed countries have steadily undermined the agricultural productive capacity of developing countries, and distorted global agricultural trade. These must be significantly reduced if not eliminated.

Food security has also been affected by increasing use of food crops such as corn and soybean for producing biofuels in some developed countries with agricultural surpluses. It is important to ensure that this trend is effectively checked and better alternatives to produce bio fuels are developed for retaining the primacy of the food crops for food purpose.

Volatility in food prices, as witnessed in the spike of last year, does not help either the farmer or the consumer. Therefore, the structural problems at the root of such volatility need to be addressed.

We must not also ignore the fact that agriculture is a livelihood issue for millions of poor farmers and their dependents in developing countries. In many countries, these constitute the vast majority of the populations. Rural and agricultural investments must be enhanced.

Climate change is exacerbating agricultural situation in developing countries. To cope with its adverse impact on food production, developing countries will be required to invest ever more on introduction of climate-resistant varieties and drought management of crops at the very least. These vastly increased investments add ever more to their already existing development challenges.

An appropriate policy framework to conserve genetic biodiversity particularly in the developing countries is essential for ensuring food security on sustainable basis. As far as India is concerned, a National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture is a key component of our National Action Plan on Climate Change.

Technology can be a key transformation agent in food production and we should be willing to look at what science can make available. The CGIAR and other international research organizations have played an important role in the past in promoting food security. There is no reason why they or other similar institutions in the public domain should not be harnessed again for securing food for all.

Regional initiatives, like food banks, have potential for immediate impact. In our region, at the New Delhi Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation [SAARC] in 2007, a SAARC Food Bank was set up to manage emergencies caused by natural and manmade calamities and food shortages, and to supplement national efforts to provide food security.

Mr. Chairman,

In our efforts to achieve the MDGs, the incidence of poverty in India declined from 36% in 1993-94 to 27.5% in 2004-05. We are also making determined efforts on the question of reducing the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

We are also cognizant of significant challenges that we face in the area of nutrition, especially child nutrition. Even today, 46% of children below three years of age are severely underweight, while a large proportion women and children is anaemic.

India has been feeding 17% of the world's population on less than 5% of the world's water and 3% of its arable land. Over a period of time, major efforts have been made to increase agricultural output, and ensure food security and self-sufficiency.

As a result of such efforts, in the year 2008-09, foodgrain production in India reached a record level of 231 million tonnes. This year too, we are expecting the same level of production. As you know, India is the world's second largest producer of both wheat and rice.

India has taken a strategic initiative for augmenting production of food crops. The National Food Security Mission aims at achieving 20 million tonnes of additional foodgrain production by targeting high potential, but low productivity, regions in the country.

Being well aware of the need for growth in both agriculture and the rural sector, especially inclusive growth, increased public investment, along with policy reforms for leveraging private sector participation, in the agriculture sector are being undertaken by the Government of India.

Other major measures include large-scale action to build rural infrastructure, waive bank loans to small and marginal farmers, provide minimum guaranteed rural employment in a big way and enhance access to rural credit.

Moreover, to ensure remunerative returns to farmers, the minimum support price for various foodgrains, which is set by the Government, has been increased for incentivising farmers to produce more food grains and for improving the terms of trade for farm sector.

While agriculture supports about 58 % of our population, it contributes only about 17% of our GDP- thus, an average farmer earns much less as compared to the National per capita income.

This fact is well recognized by us and the National Policy for Farmers formulated in 2007 lays a special emphasis on improving income of the farmers not only through improvement in crop yield levels but providing them a reasonable opportunity for employment in the non-farm sector. Already an Action Plan has been drawn up by us in this regard.

Moreover, to combat undernourishment, India operates the world's largest targeted Public Distribution System, as well as world's largest nutritional intervention programmes, 'Mid-day meal' programme for the school children and Integrated Child Development Scheme for pre school children, lactating and expectant mothers.

Mr. Chairman,

Clearly, food security is a global challenge. We must promote global cooperation, and a full implementation of the global partnership for development, so that the objectives of food security and food for all can be achieved.

Thank you.



KAZAKHSTAN

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Statement
by Ms.Aida Alzhanova, Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Kazakhstan
at the Thematic dialogue on the Global food crisis and the right for food
of the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly
6 April 2009, New York

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank the President of General Assembly for conveying this important meeting to discuss solutions to mitigate consequences of global food crisis exacerbating by financial and energy ones.

We share the view that the current food crisis has been brought about by a number of closely interrelated factors such as food prices, vigorous population growth, biofuel production, and climate change. As the causes of the crises are numerous and intertwined, dealing with them requires a holistic and coherent approach.

The right for food is one that clearly addressed in MDG 1 and in order secure this right the Member States should demonstrate political will and flexibility for bringing about a new trade regime, the one that would strengthen food security by promoting food production and investments in agricultural sector of the developing economies.

It is also important to ensure effective work of the international financial institutions in supporting food related programmes, including increased investments to rural and agriculture development programmes to sustain food supply at national and regional levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Being a part of the world economy, Kazakhstan is also hit by negative consequences of global crisis. The Government is implementing necessary measures to meet the internal demand for staple foodstuffs and to curb the price increase. Funds are being allocated to create a reserve of the basic food

commodities and some regulatory measures in the areas of customs and tariffs are being taken. A draft law on food security is being developed.

Kazakhstan is already among the **world's top-eight grain producing** countries, and the **number-one exporter of flour** that is been provided to 39 countries. Although, grain prices have fallen from their peak, they have not dropped as far as prices for oil, and as long as people continue to eat and populations continue to grow, the **demand for grain is certain**.

In order to expand grain plantation and the yield per unit area, Kazakh local governments granted 180 million U.S. dollars from the state budget to develop agriculture and increase subsidies for planting crops.

To ensure this year's harvest, the government is allocating **\$1bn US dollars** from the National Development Fund to KazAgro Holding for **investment projects** that include building an agricultural machinery assembly plant, and constructing greenhouses, vegetable storage facilities and poultry farms.

As the President Mr.Nursultan Nazarbayev has vowed in his recent Annual address to the people of Kazakhstan, controlling of the soaring food prices and maintaining national food security are the **top priorities** for the government. National Agricultural Ministry has mapped out series of concrete measures to further strengthen the supervision and control of food. It monitors and verifies the stockpile and circulation of grain, penalizes the hoarders and those who create artificial shortages of food.

To secure the right of children for food, pupils of 1st to 4th grades in 70% of all national schools receive hot meals, quality of which is controlled by the National Academy of Nutrition and local health authorities.

Mr.Chairman,

We believe that the main factor in achieving development goals, including elimination of hunger is the political will of leaders of the States to implement recommendations adopted in different global forums in the past, as well as proactive assistance of international and regional organizations, including the United Nations to developing world.

Thank you for your attention.



SECRETARÍA PRO-TÉMPORE
MÉXICO
2008-2010

**INTERVENCIÓN DE LA EMBAJADORA SOCORRO ROVIROSA
REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE ALTERNA DE MÉXICO
ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS**

A NOMBRE DEL GRUPO DE RÍO

**SEXAGÉSIMO TERCER PERÍODO DE SESIONES
DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL**

“CRISIS MUNDIAL DE ALIMENTOS Y EL DERECHO A LA ALIMENTACIÓN”

ABRIL 6, 2009

(cotejar contra lectura)

Intervención de la Delegación de México en su calidad de Secretario Pro-Témpore del Grupo de Río en el Debate Temático, sobre la “Crisis Mundial de Alimentos y el derecho a la Alimentación”

Nueva York, 6 de abril de 2009

Sr. Presidente de la Asamblea General
Señoras y Señores

Tengo el honor de hacer uso de la palabra a nombre de los países que conforman el Grupo de Río para congratularnos por la oportuna realización de este debate temático. Nos parece que los objetivos del mismo son acordes con la urgencia de la situación que hoy enfrentamos, en la que se mezclan diferentes retos que incluyen la profunda crisis económica y financiera, así como el acceso a los alimentos y las consecuencias que dichos retos conllevan para el ejercicio de los derechos humanos.

El tema de la seguridad alimentaria, y particularmente la crisis provocada la volatilidad en el precio de los alimentos, preocupa seriamente a los países miembros del Grupo de Río, especialmente por los desafíos que plantea en materia de desarrollo, así como para el ejercicio del derecho a la alimentación.

Nos parece que la actual crisis pone en entredicho las ganancias en términos de bienestar de la población, particularmente de los sectores menos favorecidos de nuestras sociedades. Lo que plantea un desafío mayor para alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio y otros compromisos en materia de desarrollo internacionalmente acordados.

En ese sentido, los países del Grupo de Río estamos convencidos de la necesidad de adoptar medidas concretas e inmediatas para asegurar la consecución de la seguridad alimentaria, en particular en aquellas poblaciones más afectadas por la volatilidad de los precios de los alimentos.

Por ello desde hace varios años los países del Grupo de Río hemos adoptado programas especiales para la seguridad alimentaria y de transferencias condicionadas que han permitido significativos avances. Asimismo, participan activamente en la Iniciativa América Latina y Caribe Sin Hambre.

Seguimos convencidos que, en el mediano y largo plazo, una respuesta duradera a la crisis actual requiere acciones coordinadas de la comunidad internacional, con miras al fortalecimiento de las capacidades agrícolas y del desarrollo rural, para poder satisfacer la creciente demanda de alimentos.

Señor Presidente,

La FAO ha desempeñado un papel central para impulsar los esfuerzos de la Comunidad Internacional a favor de la seguridad alimentaria y de la realización efectiva del derecho a la alimentación. La Declaración de Roma sobre la Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial y la Declaración de la Conferencia de seguimiento en 2002 son un marco de referencia fundamental para combatir el hambre y la desnutrición que lamentablemente afectan a más de 860 millones de personas en todo el mundo.

Es por ello que los países del Grupo de Río respaldamos los esfuerzos tendientes a fortalecer el Consejo de Seguridad Alimentaria de la FAO.

En este sentido, reconocemos la importancia de las discusiones e iniciativas que han tenido lugar en diferentes ámbitos, como la iniciativa del Secretario General en el sentido de crear un Grupo de Trabajo de Alto Nivel sobre el tema de la Crisis Mundial de Alimentos. *De igual manera, tomamos nota de la Reunión de Alto Nivel sobre Seguridad Alimentaria para Todos, celebrada el 26 y 27 de enero de 2009 en Madrid, España y de su proceso de seguimiento.*

Igualmente, reafirmamos nuestra convicción de que el derecho a la alimentación es un derecho humano fundamental, y por ello nos congratulamos por la celebración de una sesión especial sobre el tema del derecho a la alimentación por parte del Consejo de Derechos Humanos.

Asimismo, deseamos recalcar la aprobación en diciembre pasado de la Resolución titulada "Desarrollo Agrícola y Seguridad Alimentaria" Chile, Egipto e Indonesia que contempla un informe del Secretario General sobre "Desarrollo Agrícola y Seguridad Alimentaria" que incluirá los esfuerzos nacionales, regionales e internacionales en torno a esta materia y que busca colocar el tema de la seguridad alimentaria como una parte permanente y prominente de la agenda global de desarrollo.

Señor Presidente,

En este contexto, los países del Grupo consideramos esencial subrayar los siguientes elementos:

En materia de comercio, ante la situación actual es especialmente necesario hacer un enfático llamado para la conclusión exitosa de la Ronda de Doha en el presente año y de esta forma, poner término a todos los subsidios agrícolas que distorsionan los mercados y que afectan de manera principal a los países en desarrollo. La liberalización del comercio agrícola, el acceso y la transferencia de tecnología así como el desarrollo de la investigación resultan imprescindibles para el aumento de la producción mundial de alimentos y para hacer posible su

llegada a quienes más los necesitan. De esa manera, los países productores eficientes tendrán las garantías necesarias para realizar inversiones que aseguren una expansión considerable de la producción mundial y la oferta exportable

De la misma manera, y en pleno respeto a la soberanía nacional y sin detrimento de la capacidad de cada país para decidir su propia estrategia de desarrollo, así como las medidas más convenientes para proteger a su población, consideramos que deben evitarse las medidas nacionales que puedan llevar a afectar los mercados internacionales de alimentos.

Los países del Grupo consideran importante impulsar la cooperación internacional en materia de investigación científica, a fin de asegurar la producción de biocombustibles de manera sustentable, garantizando el acceso de la población a alimentos a precios accesibles.

En el marco de los derechos humanos, deseamos resaltar la aprobación sin votación de las resoluciones tituladas "*El impacto negativo del empeoramiento de la crisis alimentaria mundial, sobre la realización del derecho a la alimentación para todos*" y "*Seguimiento de la séptima sesión extraordinaria del Consejo de Derechos Humanos (CoDH) consagrada al impacto negativo del empeoramiento de la crisis mundial alimentaria en la realización del derecho a la alimentación de todas las personas*", presentadas por Cuba en el Consejo de Derechos Humanos (el 22 de mayo y el 18 de septiembre de 2008). Con dichas resoluciones se da seguimiento al tema de la crisis alimentaria desde la perspectiva de los derechos humanos ante la grave situación de la crisis alimentaria mundial, y reitera el llamamiento a los Estados para que cumplan sus obligaciones a nivel nacional e internacional y garanticen el derecho a la alimentación, entre otras cosas.

Muchas gracias,

Panel discussion on the realization of the right to food

Mr Moderator,

Last summer, at the General Assembly Meeting on the food and energy crisis, the Secretary General reminded us that every day, nearly 10,000 children were dying from causes related to malnutrition and at least eight hundred million people were going to sleep hungry every night. This is clearly a moral outrage.

The underlying causes of increasing food prices are mostly long-term in nature. Yet, the most dramatic effects are immediate and hit the most vulnerable. We welcome a panel, which create space for a discussion on the right to food and the consequences for the most affected people.

Norway believes that long-term responses to these challenges should be based on national processes. The governments themselves must be given a chance to plan and implement their own policies. The task of the UN and international stakeholders should be the role of supporters.

Mr Moderator,

We welcome increased focus on the right to food, and the inclusion of this principle as a third pillar of the international community's response to the food crisis (the other pillars: short term action and action to address structural issues).

It is imperative that the right to food is understood as a necessary approach in tackling the international food crisis that we have witnessed;

The Right to food is important in a development cooperation context, because the approach is redefining the relationship between donor and partner. Food-related aid should make sure that the partner is placed in the driver's seat;

In this regard, let me point out that Norwegian contributions to the WFP, UNICEF and our partner NGOs in the field on hunger and malnutrition, like Norwegian Red Cross, as well as the pledged Norwegian contribution to EU operation Atalanta which includes naval escort for WFP ships to Somalia, are important contributions to the realization of the Right to Food.

Bilateral donors like Norway are, however, not able to promote the right to food agenda without major contributions from the FAO. Consequently, it is imperative that FAO has adequate resources and a organizational set-up to play this important role.

Mr Moderator

We support the efforts to strengthen the international architecture for food security and agriculture. We believe we should do so by building on existing structures. The Rome based agencies should be a cornerstone. We encourage increased cooperation, based on each agency's comparative strengths. We strongly support the ongoing reform process in FAO.

We also support the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in order to enable it to live up to its mandate.

Mr Moderator,

The Voluntary Guidelines for the Right to food was developed in an FAO framework. It is, however, limited to what the FAO can accomplish at country level. It is therefore of great importance that other parts of the UN system make use of the voluntary Guidelines;

Likewise, we encourage all states to make use of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food

Finally, we would like the High-level Task Force (HLTF) on the Food Security to play a more proactive role in informing the different constituencies on the joint UN response to the food crisis – as foreseen in the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA).

I thank you, Mr Moderator

Forslag fra Paul Larsen, Ikke klarert hjemmefra:

- Last year when the food crisis hit, more than 30 nations imposed food export restrictions to protect their own food supplies. (Stater har rett til dette iht WTO, selv om det selvsagt er uheldig.) This not only contributed to price rises and tighter market conditions; it also meant that WFP and other agencies were hindered in their efforts to move humanitarian food purchased locally in these countries to people in urgent need of food assistance in other countries in the region. We saw this in West Africa, East Africa, Afghanistan, to name a few. WFP had to negotiate exemptions case by case or find other suppliers from outside the region and further away, thus increasing cost and response time, and creating concerns in regions that emergency food would not be available as fast as needed. WFP - which purchased food locally for a record 1.1 billion USD in developing nations last year, boosting local and smallholder agriculture - has asked us to help them call on nations to commit in principle to exempt humanitarian food from any export restrictions, and to give advance notice if nations impose such restrictions. Several nations still retain restrictive measures, and there is a real risk that new export restrictions may be imposed if market supply conditions tighten again. We understand that member nations in principle have no problem with making humanitarian exemptions for food - humanitarian food is only 1 per cent of total food exports - and WFP has had positive reactions from all countries contacted, so it would be good if we could find a way to embed this in a document, Mr President, thus making a concrete and important contribution to the right to food access for vulnerable people in crisis situations.

(I tillegg boer dere nevne at norske bidrag til WFP, Unicef og de NGOs vi samarbeider naert med i felten mot hunger and malnutrition, som NRC, samt evt norske bidrag til naval escorts for Wfp food shipments to Somalia, er viktige bidrag til aa realisere the Right to Food.)



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF
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STATEMENT

BY

**AMBASSADOR BASO SANGQU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

AT THE

**INTERACTIVE THEMATIC DIALOGUE ON THE
GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD**

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK
6 APRIL 2009**

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Mr President

South Africa, on behalf on the Africa Group welcomes the informal thematic debate on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food as part of an important international effort to engage stakeholders on emerging global trends to raise awareness and to ensure a stronger commitment from all in addressing these challenges.

The Africa Group is particularly supportive of adding the concept of the “right to food” as a human right to the debate, which as we all know, was already agreed to by Head of State and Government during the World Food Summit in 1996 and reaffirmed as “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.”

Mr President,

During the 9th Session of the Human Rights Council it was agreed that Member States, through international cooperation and assistance, take all necessary measures to ensure the realisation of the right to food as an essential human rights objective, and to consider reviewing any policy or measure which could have a negative impact on the realisation of the right to food. It was also agreed that the international community should provide, through a coordinated response and upon request, support to national and regional efforts by providing the necessary assistance for increasing food production, particularly through agricultural development assistance, transfer of technology, as well as food crop rehabilitation assistance and food aid with special focus on the gender-sensitive dimension.

The current global financial and food crises have presented many challenges and obstacles towards the practical enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, specifically the right to food. There is therefore a need to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights enjoy the same standing as civil and political rights within the international human rights norms and standards.

Mr President,

The catastrophic effect of the financial crisis has furthermore exacerbated efforts aimed at mitigating the negative effect of the global food crisis. In this regard, we remain concerned about the impact of the crises on the world’s poorest, including the vulnerable groups.

It is well known that high food prices are posing serious challenges to many African countries, creating a new type of emergency which threatens the stability and security of these countries.

Africa has recognized the importance of having a plan to deal with the challenges of food security and the development of an agricultural policy that could reduce poverty and hunger. The African Union adopted at Heads of State level the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) in 2003, as a framework for the restoration of agriculture growth, food security and rural development in Africa,

with the primary focus of agricultural development that eliminates hunger, reduces poverty and food insecurity, opening the way for export expansion.

Nevertheless, Africa still faces a challenge to attract sufficient international funding to ensure the successful implementation and execution of this programme. International assistance could contribute to allow Africa to progress on its own green revolution, ensuring the reduction of poverty, stability and the promotion of sustainable development and progress. Financial support to CAADP and other regional initiatives is therefore essential to ensure food security.

Multilateral and bilateral development partners must assist Africa through the provision of financial and technical support to assist African countries to increase their food and agricultural production and productivity.

We need to ensure that a new global partnership for agriculture and food security is formed to address these global challenges. It would be critical to ensure that this partnership does not simply seek to only boost supply by promoting technology-driven recipes, but also to empower those who are hungry and malnourished and whose livelihoods may be threatened specifically the traditional small holder farmers and vulnerable groups such as women and the disabled. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, malnutrition and hunger – twice as many girls as boys are likely to die due to malnutrition and twice as many women as men are likely to be affected by malnutrition.

Of critical importance to Africa is the elimination of trade distorting barriers in agriculture products coupled with elimination in overall trade-distorting subsidies, particularly in developed countries, this will have a positive impact on food production and investment in agriculture in many developing countries, particularly in Africa.

In this regard, the successful conclusion of the WTO Doha Development Round for the realization of a rules-based, fair, equitable and free international trade particularly in food and agriculture commodities is an indispensable part of a long term solution.

Mr President

We, as members of the international community, must continue to work together to achieve the goals we have set ourselves. In this regard, there is a need for a global partnership that tackles the issue of food security within a more comprehensive manner, in particular in the context of the right to food.

In conclusion it is our hope that any concrete effort to be undertaken at the level of this Assembly on the realisation of the right to food be comprehensive, sustainable and aimed at contributing towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, specifically MDG 1, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

I thank you.



**Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China delivered by
Ambassador Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem Mohamad,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan to the United
Nations and Chairman of the Group of 77**

**The General Assembly Thematic Debate on:
"THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD"**

New York, 6 April 2009

Mr. President,

The G77 and China expresses its appreciation to you for convening this debate on the global food crisis and the right to food.

We deem it very important that the United Nations has remained seized with this critical issue. The G77 and China believes that eradication of hunger and the attainment of food security and the right to food are global imperatives.

Mr. President,

According to a recent FAO report, the total number of undernourished people in the world reached 963 million in 2008. And in spite of the volatility in food prices, the number of the world's hungry is still higher than they were in 2002, leaving the poor still unable to purchase food.

Steps to eradicate hunger and promote the right to food have yet to be translated into concrete action to help those most impacted by the crisis, and concerns still remain over the situation of the rural and urban poor, landless or small-scale farmers and households headed by women.

Any successful strategy to defeat hunger should therefore involve stronger institutions with better accountability, stability of the global markets, enhanced market access for agricultural products from developing countries, sustainable investments in agricultural production and research, and targeted support to the advancement of the agricultural sector in developing countries, including small-scale farmers and the poor.

Mr. President,

The current financial crisis and global economic slowdown have placed additional constraints on the ability of developing countries, especially the poor, to gain access to food. Overcoming this challenge will require:

- Addressing the global food crisis, which is caused by multiple interlinked factors, including subsidies and protectionist policies of developed countries. This requires a coordinated international response.
- Actions by both national governments and the international community, including donor, are required in the short, medium- and long-term, to meet household and global food security needs, the world's most vulnerable populations and countries especially in developing countries.
- Revival of agriculture in developing countries is a key to eradicating poverty and achieving food security, through coordinated short, medium and long term measures at the national and international levels.
- The international community should support national, regional food initiatives to stabilize prices and serve as emergency stock.

Actions taken by both governments and the international community must aim at minimizing risks and mitigating the effects of food prices volatility on the most vulnerable. In this regard, we must ensure that:

- i. International assistance to support policies aimed at strengthening social safety nets in developing countries, particularly in least developed countries to deal with the adverse impacts of food crisis.
 - ii. In the short- to medium-term, national and international efforts should be made to ensure that international emergency food assistance is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible to the most vulnerable people particularly in developing countries.
 - iii. The international community to support capacity building activities in developing countries in the design and implementation of social protection policies and programs.
 - iv. Enhance the capacity of regional and sub regional organizations to effectively contribute to the strategies to cope with volatile food prices and natural disasters in agriculture sector.
 - v. Synergize all efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to strengthen immediate humanitarian and development assistance with those of the multilateral organizations.
- Stronger assessment, monitoring and surveillance system are needed to prevent the recurrence of crisis. Early warning system on food security should be enhanced through:
 - Strengthening the capacity of developing countries to monitor and evaluate the supply and demand needs of food at national level.

- Developing a better food security information system to monitor and report on the status of national, regional and global food supply, demand, and prices, and that can act as an early warning system for global food insecurity.
- Establishing better coordination of information system to facilitate a comprehensive analysis and response to the global food crisis.
- Strengthening the role of United Nations System to monitor and evaluate agriculture commodities supply and demand at the global level.

In this regard, we:

- Recognize the important role of relevant international bodies and organizations, including Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme, on agricultural development and food security.
- See the need to improve the distribution of and the access to food in developing countries, through sustainable agriculture and rural development actions to boost food production, which depends on increased and sustained investment in the agriculture sector by government, donors and private investors.
- Urge developed countries to scale up financial support, technology transfer and technical assistance for the establishment of agricultural systems and sustainable agriculture practices, and combat the adverse impact of climate change through meeting their commitments under the UNFCCC.
- Achieving an early conclusion of the Doha Round in order to provide for rules-based, fair and free international trade particularly in food and agriculture commodities, as an indispensable part of a long term solution.
- Eliminating barriers to trade in agriculture products coupled with elimination of overall trade-distorting subsidies by developed countries, as one of the means to increase food production and investment in agriculture in many developing countries.

I thank you

10 de mayo de 2009

Nuestro país se une a la iniciativa promovida por el Grupo de los 77 y China y el Movimiento de Países no Alineados (MIPNA) para convocar a una Asamblea General del Grupo de los 77 y China y el MIPNA sobre el tema "El Derecho a la Alimentación y el Acceso a la Tierra y los Recursos Acuáticos para el Mejoramiento de la Seguridad Alimentaria y la Nutrición".

En el marco de la iniciativa se convocará a un diálogo temático interactivo sobre el tema "El Derecho a la Alimentación y el Acceso a la Tierra y los Recursos Acuáticos para el Mejoramiento de la Seguridad Alimentaria y la Nutrición".

INTERVENCIÓN DE URUGUAY

ASAMBLEA GENERAL

« DIALOGO TEMATICO INTERACTIVO SOBRE LA CRISIS ALIMENTICIA GLOBAL Y EL DERECHO A LA ALIMENTACIÓN »

Siempre la ONU ha sido el foro más importante para el diálogo multilateral de comercio y desarrollo. El comercio mundial es un pilar fundamental para asegurar una producción mundial suficiente que sea adecuada para las necesidades de las personas en todas las partes del mundo. Dicho diálogo participativo a los niveles nacionales, regionales y mundial es esencial para el desarrollo humano y la seguridad alimentaria.

Nueva York, 6 de Abril de 2009

En los últimos años hemos visto un crecimiento de la producción de alimentos y de la oferta de alimentos en el mundo. Sin embargo, el acceso a los alimentos sigue siendo un desafío para muchas personas en todo el mundo. El acceso a los alimentos es un derecho humano básico y es esencial para la vida y la salud. El acceso a los alimentos es un derecho humano básico y es esencial para la vida y la salud.

Para Uruguay los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible y de desarrollo

humanos están relacionados y se refuerzan mutuamente. En este sentido, entendemos que la pobreza continúa siendo la violación de derechos humanos más seria y extendida en el mundo, que niega a millones de individuos el goce pleno de todos los derechos humanos y fomenta los abusos y la discriminación. La pobreza implica en si misma una violación múltiple y simultánea de los derechos económicos y sociales. Por ello se vuelve imperioso asegurar a los países en desarrollo el acceso a mercados abiertos y no proteccionistas para que no sean los más pobres quienes enfrenten las peores consecuencias de éstas crisis.

Por más esfuerzos que se realicen en el área de los derechos civiles y políticos, no habrá plena vigencia de los derechos humanos si no se pueden crear las circunstancias que aseguren un desarrollo humano sostenible, con equidad y justicia social. Resulta intolerable que todos los años millones de niños mueran a causa de enfermedades relacionadas con el hambre antes de cumplir los 5 años y que haya en el mundo cerca de mil millones de personas desnutridas. Nos preocupa especialmente cómo las mujeres y las niñas se ven desproporcionadamente afectadas por el hambre, la inseguridad alimentaria y la pobreza, lo que hace imprescindible incrementar los esfuerzos tendientes a eliminar la desigualdad entre los géneros y todas las formas de discriminación.

Nuestro país ha adoptado una serie de medidas tendientes a mitigar los impactos negativos de esta crisis alimentaria entre las que cabe desatacar el Plan Nacional de Alimentación, por el que se introdujo una nueva modalidad de transferencia alimenticia a través de una tarjeta magnética, la preservación del Instituto Nacional de Alimentación (INDA), con el sistema tradicional de canasta de alimentos, la promoción de acuerdos voluntarios con empresarios de diferentes cadenas de producción y comercialización, para la contención o reducción de precios de productos básicos de la dieta alimenticia y la creación de la Comisión Interinstitucional para la Seguridad Alimentaria con el objetivo de proceder a la revisión y adecuación de la normativa vigente, y la redacción de un marco normativo con la creación de un organismo rector en la temática de la seguridad alimentaria.

Señor Presidente,

Quisiéramos destacar la importancia que reviste para el Uruguay, el acceso y la transferencia de tecnología como elementos indispensables para el aumento de la producción mundial de alimentos. En ese marco consideramos necesaria una efectiva cooperación internacional para lograr una nueva generación de tecnologías que permita la intensificación de la producción agrícola de manera sostenible económica y socialmente. Del mismo modo, es esencial el desarrollo de investigación para evitar que continúe disminuyendo la disponibilidad de agua dulce y recursos del suelo, para la producción de alimentos en el futuro.

Sr. Presidente,

Por último quisiera señalar que nuestro país respalda, las iniciativas y discusiones que han tenido lugar en diversos ámbitos, tales como la creación del Grupo de Trabajo de Alto Nivel sobre la Crisis Mundial de Alimentos, la reciente Reunión de Alto Nivel sobre Seguridad Alimentaria para todos celebrada en Madrid para dar seguimiento al Plan de Acción Global liderado por el Secretario General de Naciones Unidas, así como la celebración de una Sesión Especial del Consejo de Derechos Humanos dedicada al Derecho a la alimentación.

Señor Presidente,

Sin atacar los problemas estructurales no habrá soluciones duraderas. En este sentido, la liberalización del comercio agrícola, el acceso y la transferencia de tecnología así como el desarrollo de la investigación resultan imprescindibles para el aumento de la producción mundial de alimentos y para hacer posible su llegada a quienes más los necesitan.

Muchas gracias.

U.S.

*CHECK AGAINST
DELIVERY

**Building Blocks
USUN Intervention
General Assembly Thematic Dialogue on
The Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food**

- The global financial crisis has the potential to have a major impact on world food security.
- This crisis is likely to push millions of people into extreme poverty. According to the World Bank, an additional 50 million people will be trapped in extreme poverty this year because of lost economic growth. And as the global financial crisis deepens, those who were already hard-hit by the spike in world food prices last year are facing additional challenges today.
- We do not believe that an abstract discussion human rights vs. human needs is a productive way to address the very real problem of hunger and food insecurity. We prefer to focus on concrete actions to meet these challenges.
- We have all committed ourselves to the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of those who suffer from hunger by 2015. Achieving that goal requires each of us to take action now, even as we struggle with economic challenges within our own borders.
- The United States and this Administration is taking significant actions to address these issues.
- First, as President Obama announced at the G20 meeting, he has asked the United States Congress for **\$448 million in immediate assistance to vulnerable populations that are most affected by the global financial crisis.**
- These resources will be used to provide temporary safety nets for vulnerable populations, technical assistance to support governments working to restore and sustain broad-based economic growth, and loans and loan guarantees to private financial institutions to spur private lending and investment.
- Second, President Obama announced that he will ask Congress to **double U.S. financial support for agricultural development in poor countries, to more than \$1 billion in 2010.**

- We urge our development partners to join us in investing in agricultural development to help the world's struggling subsistence farmers become part of a supply chain that will provide them with reliable sources of income. Reversing the decline of aid and investment in agricultural in developing countries is an important step for stimulating economic growth in rural areas.
- The United States supports the efforts of the United Nations system and the World Bank to facilitate multi-lateral coordination to provide assistance for farmers and the rural poor. **A portion of the additional resources President Obama has requested are designed to support multilateral efforts.**
- Ensuring long-term food security requires more than just additional resources. It requires a comprehensive approach to food security to ensure those resources actually make a difference – an approach that will target the many barriers to a stable food supply. The President has asked Secretary Clinton and the leadership of USAID to develop a comprehensive Food Security Initiative to be launched later this year.
- Addressing food security must be a collaborative effort. That is why we intend to both rely on our existing bilateral programs and strongly support the multilateral institutions that are playing – and must continue to play – a critical role in this effort.
- No single country has the expertise and resources to combat hunger alone. At the recently concluded G20 meeting, President Obama called on our partners in the developing world, our fellow donors, and experts around the world to help develop a comprehensive food security plan based on the following principles:
 - *Flexibility*: The strategy must respond to the unique needs of individual countries.
 - *Country-Driven*: Recipient countries must be responsible for identifying their needs and proposing appropriate strategies, including policy and institutional reforms.

- *Partnerships*: We must strengthen the broad network of relationships between recipients, donors, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. And we must continue to support the work of the UN High-Level Task Force to forge a Global Partnership on Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS) to provide a more coordinated and comprehensive response to global food insecurity
- *Agriculture*: The strategy must include efforts to make agriculture more productive and more efficient, focusing on all elements of the agriculture value chain.
- *Information and technology*: We must engage and support those who are leading the way in the research and development of new crops and new farming methods.
- *Comprehensive*: Food security requires much more than higher agricultural production – it requires higher and more stable incomes for the poor and near poor in all sectors; it requires investments in water and health care that directly affect family nutrition; and it requires caring for the chronically vulnerable populations that experience hunger and malnutrition on a daily basis.



World Food
Programme

**Joint Statement of the Rome-Based Agencies
UN World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Food and
Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International
Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

**on the occasion of the Interactive Thematic Dialogue
of the U.N. General Assembly on the Global Food Crisis
and the Right to Food New York, 6 April 2009**

**by Pedro Medrano, Director, UN World Food
Programme Bureau for Latin America and the
Caribbean**

1. Introduction

We are gathered here to discuss the right to food in the context of the current global crisis. Let us also use the current crisis to draw attention to the underlying chronic 'crisis' of hunger and poverty that has been with us for decades.

Hunger is a human rights issue. Never before has this linkage been so strongly recognized as in the context of the global food crisis that started in 2007 with the soaring food

and energy prices and continues today as a result of the financial crisis and economic slow-down. Starting with the Human Right Council in May 2008, the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in June 2008, the Madrid High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All in January 2009, and this Interactive Thematic Dialogue today, all these events painfully remind us that we are failing to meet our commitment to ensure freedom from hunger. We are challenged to take significant and sustainable actions that certainly demand a review and a further improvement of the way we work on this crucial issue.

2. The food crisis: Background and Outlook

The global food crisis indeed requires additional efforts, as soaring food prices have pushed over 75 million people into chronic hunger in 2007 alone. According to FAO's estimates, the financial crisis has further deteriorated the situation and dragged an additional 40 million people into hunger in 2008, thus bringing the total number close to one billion people, or one in six persons.

Food prices remain volatile and may spike again as droughts and floods and climate-related events affect harvests. In addition, the current economic crisis risks exacerbating other problems, such as the lack of access to land, credit, employment and migration. It has already reduced remittances and is likely to reduce investments and other capital flows, including development aid. There have been some encouraging signs from recent events, such as the G-20 Conference in London, where the disproportionate impact of the economic crisis on the vulnerable in the poorest countries was acknowledged and collective responsibility to mitigate the social impact of the crisis was recognized.

The global food crisis is not a new crisis, but the sudden worsening of a structural crisis that even before the food price surge has prevented over 850 million women, men and

children from having access to adequate food necessary for an active and healthy life.

3. The Right to Food, the Food Crisis and the Economic Slow-down

The present food crisis is a human rights issue for two reasons. First, the crisis disproportionately affects those people who already are already vulnerable, typically those who spend large proportions of their income on purchasing food or those who lose their livelihoods as jobs and income opportunities vanish due to the economic and financial crisis. Secondly, there is wide recognition that the crisis cannot not be tackled only with medicines from the past. Traditional approaches have dealt with the technical dimensions of food security in both emergency and development contexts. They now need to be complemented with a third dimension that focuses on the promotion of the right to adequate food and good governance, including the strengthening of institutions. As stated by the UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-Moon at the Madrid High-Level Meeting in January 2009:

“We must continue to meet urgent hunger and humanitarian needs by providing food and nutrition assistance and safety nets, while focusing on improving food production and smallholder agriculture. This is the twin-track approach taken in the Comprehensive Framework for Action. We should be ready to add a third track – the right to food – as a basis for analysis, action and accountability.”

Indeed, the right to food perspective, building on the practical recommendations contained in the Right to Food Guidelines (Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security), brings a new dimension to the traditional approach to hunger reduction, both in the

emergency and development contexts. By focusing on the **most vulnerable**, the human rights-based approach ensures that targeted action will benefit the food insecure **without discrimination**. By promoting **accountability, transparency and the rule of law**, including recourse mechanisms, it improves the efficiency of public action. Finally, **empowering** the poor and promoting **participation** ensures that the hungry have voice and that they become part of the solution and agents of their own development. Most importantly, a human rights-based approach clearly establishes the primary duty of states to guarantee the realization of the right to food.

The right to food is the right of every person – woman, man and child - to feed himself or herself in dignity, to have continuous access to the resources that are necessary to produce, earn or purchase enough nutritious food not only to prevent hunger, but also to ensure health and well-being. It is the primary responsibility of states to guarantee that the right to food, as well as other human rights, are respected, protected, fulfilled and promoted in accordance with the obligations they accepted when ratifying the relevant international human rights instruments.

The hunger and poverty that result when the right to food is not realized are inhuman and cannot be tolerated.

4. What are the Agencies Doing in Response to the Food Crisis?

The establishment of the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the development of the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) were important steps in the direction of a more coordinated and bold process to address this global challenge. The three Rome-based agencies re-affirm their commitment to contribute to that process. The inclusion of the right to food into the CFA is a significant development towards ensuring that policies,

programs and resources are geared towards guaranteeing this most fundamental human right. One of the key priorities identified in the CFA is in the area of global financial and food security in order to strengthen programmes to feed the hungry and expand support to farmers in developing countries.

The Rome-based Agencies are also promoting ways to create opportunities for the hungry to improve their livelihoods, including, support to smallholder agriculture in a way which will increase the productivity of small farmers in a sustainable manner, raise their income and promote rural development. The world's 500 million small holder farmers can produce much more food if they receive the support they need to do so. Often that means support for women farmers given that about 70% of women in low-income food-defecit countries are employed in the agricultural sector.

In addition to the work of the High-level Task Force and the establishment of the CFA, there has also been positive progress and general support for the establishment of the Global Partnership on Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition as called for by various fora. This includes support for the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The CFS provides a forum in the United Nations system, which examines issues affecting the world food situation, monitors stakeholder actions and proposes steps to promote the goal of world food security. It is open to all FAO Members and involves representatives of other international agencies, NGOs, civil society and the private sector. It is envisaged that a reformed CFS, in conjunction with the impetus provided by the CFA and the High-Level Task Force, could play an important role in the Global Partnership to better address global food security issues in a more integrated and coordinated manner.

Currently, the High-level Task Force is finding ways to address food insecurity within the context of the financial and economic crisis. One main issue is to ensure sufficient and sustained financial backing to be able to provide an adequate response to the immediate needs of the world's hungry people. Another issue is to increase financial support for improving smallholder agricultural production and marketing to promote resilience and strengthen the capacity of producer organizations and cooperatives through both government action and through local-level public-private partnerships.

In 2008, **WFP**, thanks to extraordinary support from Member States, was able to ramp up its activities to provide essential food assistance to just over 100 million beneficiaries. WFP added, within an eight month period, 30 million newly vulnerable persons to the ranks of those it was reaching. Out of historic record donations of US \$5 billion, a total of \$920 million was allocated in response to high food prices, for both ongoing operations affected by the crisis and new projects which supported 23 million people in 24 countries. WFP is presently deploying targeted food assistance measures across the globe in response to assessed deteriorations in food security conditions. These measures include ramped up food assistance to urban areas where food is unaffordable and there is risk of further discontent; extended school feeding to children also during school holidays and using schools as platforms to provide take-home rations to vulnerable families; provision of supplementary rations of nutritious food to malnourished children and women; and cash and voucher programmes to enable people to access food through the market. Through the Purchase for Progress initiative (P4P), WFP is integrating its purchasing power in developing countries with supply-side contributions of other actors (including FAO and IFAD) to connect low-income farmers to markets, and thereby improve their incentives to pursue productivity-enhancing practices.

It should be noted that last year when the food crisis hit, more than 30 countries imposed food export restrictions to protect their own food supplies. This not only contributed to price rises and tighter market conditions, it also meant that WFP and other agencies were hindered in their efforts to move humanitarian food purchased locally in these countries to people in urgent need of food assistance in other countries in the region. WFP had to negotiate exemptions on a case by case basis or find other supplies from outside the region, thereby increasing costs and response time. WFP has been and remains on the frontlines in calling for food-exporting countries to continue to exempt humanitarian food assistance from export restrictions, taking into account that humanitarian food is only one percent of total food exports.

Prior to the development of the CFA, **FAO** launched the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (IFSP) in December 2007. This initiative is currently engaged in 96 countries, mostly supporting smallholder food production by supplying improved seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs for different planting seasons. In 2008, the initiative reached more than 400 000 smallholder farmers and their families – benefiting approximately two million people. FAO has also been requested to provide technical assistance in undertaking reviews and analysis, including coordinating and participating in assessment missions towards the development of country action plans for the short, medium and long term, supported within the framework of the European Union's EUR 1 billion Facility Fund as well as US\$36 million through FAO's own funding. FAO has also significantly scaled up its monitoring activities through its Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), including monitoring food prices and the impact of prices on food security and vulnerable populations at the global, regional and country level. The next phase of the IFSP will

be integrated more directly in support of implementation of the CFA.

As an immediate response to the food crisis in 2008, **IFAD** made available approximately 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. This helped poor farmers to access essential inputs such as seeds and fertilisers, to allow them to prepare for the next cropping season as well as to establish a basis for sustained increases in production in subsequent seasons. In addition, fast-track initiatives including public-private partnerships were developed to boost food production. In 2008 IFAD approved over US\$600 million in loans and grants to finance investment projects to enhance smallholder farmers' productivity. This was supported by US\$327.5 million in co-financing. IFAD-financed projects target poor farmers including women and enable them to unleash their potential through better access to technology, markets (for inputs and produce) and financial services. Projects include approaches and mechanisms that empower small-scale farmers and their organizations and enable them to participate in policy dialogue with governments and other partners. The 8th Replenishment has provided a strong basis for increasing IFAD's programme of work. The unprecedented 67 per cent increase over the precedent replenishment will allow IFAD to considerably expand its programme of work during the period 2010-2012 – up to US\$3 billion, with co-financing expected to bring total investments to US\$7.5 billion.

Access to adequate food requires that we not only produce more food, but that people have access – economic access in particular – to the nutrition that is available. Such access does not require major scientific breakthroughs. It is achievable, as has been demonstrated in many countries. It

is now a matter of political will, of policy choices that ensure sustainable food production and guarantee access to safe and nutritious food to every human being, without discrimination.

5. Conclusions

Ladies and Gentlemen

There is no doubt that poverty causes hunger, but chronic hunger is also one of the primary underlying causes of poverty. Hunger and malnutrition have a negative impact on health, education and productivity, which reduces potential economic growth. The economic cost of hunger is estimated to be hundreds of billions of dollars a year.

Mainstreaming the right to food into the response to the global food crisis will not be enough. Today, more than ever before, the international community is challenged to tackle the structural factors behind the food crisis and to put the well-being of every human being at the centre of its preoccupations. Concrete activities to implement the right to food and principles of good governance need to be undertaken in the areas of advocacy and training, information and assessment, legislation and accountability, strategy and coordination, as well as benchmarks and monitoring. Any food security strategy needs to take into account women's roles in contributing towards household food security, and must bring benefits to women farmers and agricultural producers. The world has the means to achieve the realization of the right to food, it also has the tools, some of which are displayed outside this room. What is needed is resolve, political will and concrete action.

Freedom from hunger is a fundamental goal of the mandate of the three Rome-based agencies FAO, IFAD and WFP. In the context of its reform, FAO recently established support

to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food at national level as one of its organizational results. We are all three committed to support the integration of human rights into our work. We also stand ready to play our part in assisting countries to achieve food security and to meet their obligations regarding the right to adequate food.

To conclude, let me remind you that we will not be able to fight hunger if we are not ready to give voice to those whom we are here to serve.

I thank you very much for your attention.

**Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the
U.N. General Assembly on the Global
Food Crisis and the Right to Food: A
Case Study of the International
Assessment of Agricultural Science &
Technology for Development (IAASTD)
Sub-Saharan Africa Report**

Judi Wakhungu
ED, African Centre for Technology Studies
Co-Chair, IAASTD

New York
April 6, 2009



IAASTD

International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development

Presentation Outline

- International Assessment of Agricultural Science & Technology for Development (IAASTD)
- Highlights of Key IAASTD Messages
- The Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) Context
- Options for Decision-makers



International Assessment of Agricultural Sciences & Technology for Development (IAASTD): What is it?

Assessment of the impacts of AKST on the following development goals: PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

- Reducing Hunger & Poverty
- Improving Rural Livelihoods
- Improving Nutrition & Human Health
- Facilitating Environmentally, Socially, Equitable & Economically Sustainable Development



The IAASTD - A Unique Process

- IGO Process with multi-stakeholder Bureau comprising governments & CSO
- Co-Sponsors: FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, World Bank & WHO
- Multi-thematic focus
- Multi-spatial: Global & five sub-Global assessments
- Multi-temporal: historical-to-2050
- 400 experts. Peer review by governments & experts
- Approved by 58 governments



The IAASTD - A Unique Process

- IAASTD builds on and adds value to a number of recent assessments relevant to food security & the agricultural sector
- *FAO –State of Food Insecurity;*
- *Inter-Academy Council Report: Potential of African Agriculture;*
- *UNEP Fourth Global Environmental Outlook;*
- *UN Millennium Project Task Force on Hunger;*
- *WB World Development Report: Agriculture for Development etc*
- But the IAASTD has focused specifically on the future role of AKST, the multifunctionality of agriculture, and the institutional dimension.



Highlights of IAASTD Key Messages₁

- Agricultural knowledge science & technology (AKST) has contributed to substantial increases in agricultural production over time, contributing to food security.
- But people have benefited unevenly from these yields in part b/c of different organizational capacities, socio-cultural factors, & institutional & policy environments.
- Emphasis on increasing yields & productivity has in some cases had negative consequences on environmental sustainability.



Highlights of IAASTD Key Messages₂

- The environmental shortcomings of agricultural practice associated with poor socio-economic conditions create a vicious cycle in which poor farmers increase environmental degradation.
- Significant pro-poor progress requires creating opportunities for innovation & entrepreneurship which target resource poor farmers.
- Projections based on a continuation of current policies & practices indicate that global demographic changes & changing patterns of income distribution over the next 50 years will lead to different patterns of food consumption & increased demand for food.



Future Challenges

- Demand for food will double within the next 25-50 years, mainly in developing countries
- We need sustained growth in the agricultural sector
 - to feed the world
 - to enhance rural livelihoods
 - to stimulate economic growth
- Meet food safety standards

In an environmentally and socially sustainable manner

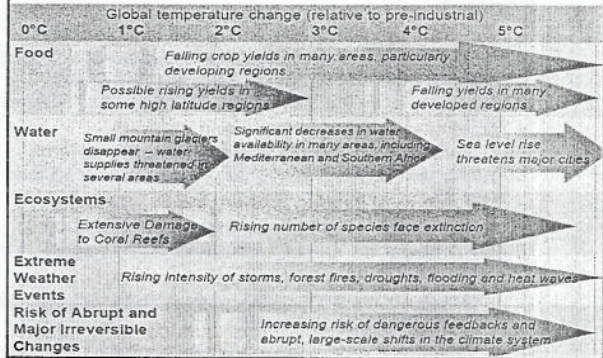


With Continuing Limitations

- Less labor
- Less water
- Less arable land
- Increasing land policy conflicts
- Loss of biodiversity: genetic, species and ecosystem
- Increasing levels of pollution
- Changing climate



Projected Impacts of Climate Change

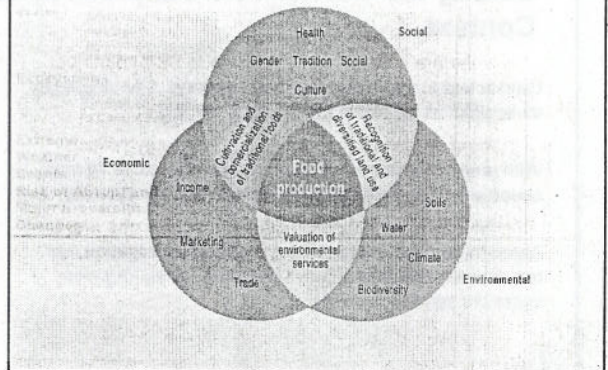


Highlights of IAASTD Key Messages₃

- Agriculture operates within complex systems & is multifunctional in its nature. A multifunctional approach to implementing AKST will enhance its impact on hunger & poverty, improving human nutrition & livelihoods.
- Achieving sustainability & development goals will involve creating space for diverse voices & a multiplicity of scientifically well-founded options.
- But innovative institutional arrangements are crucial.



The inescapable interconnectedness of agriculture's different roles and functions



Setting the Scene: Sub-Saharan Africa Context

- Sub-Saharan Africa has one of the world's fastest growing populations, but the growth rate of food production has not kept pace. This has led to a food deficit.
- Agriculture is the dominant land use with permanent pasture accounting for 35%, & crop-land only 8%.
- The nature of farming is changing in SSA – the farm population is aging & rural-to urban migration of males is high.
- Women grow 80% of the staple foods, but men are the primary decision makers.
- The social & economic consequences of hunger & malnutrition are widely felt across all sectors.



Setting the Scene: Sub-Saharan Africa Context

- Improving the productivity & the economic returns of agriculture has immediate effects on hunger & poverty.
- But rapid depletion of natural resources & declining soil fertility threatens the livelihoods of the disenfranchised.
- SSA is the most vulnerable region in the world to climate change.
- Yet the poor who have the least capacity to adapt, are the most vulnerable to climate change.



Setting the Scene: Sub-Saharan Africa Context

Land & water are considered by numerous SSA countries as key factors to improving the food security.

With growing demand for water resources, many African countries will experience water stress & water scarcity.

Appropriate laws, institutions & market mechanisms are required for agricultural technologies such as irrigation, improved seed, & fertilizer.



SSA AKST: generation, adaptation, adoption, & effectiveness

- Agriculture's contribution to economic development, & to achieving sustainable development goals is undermined by many factors:-
- External funding for agricultural research is higher than national investments.
- Current investment funds in agricultural education are inadequate to provide a cadre of national experts.
- Diseases affect the availability of labour.
- Poor infrastructure for transportation, irrigation, processing, & ICT impede the effectiveness of AKST

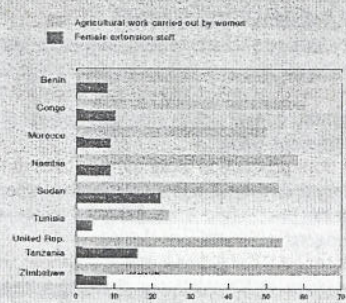


SSA AKST: generation, adaptation, adoption, & effectiveness

- Many technologies already exist but there is need for appropriate & complementary integration of local & traditional knowledge with formal AKST.
- The effectiveness of AKST is also compromised by lack of institutional coordination.
- The laws are inadequate, & market mechanisms for advancing agricultural technologies & food security are lacking.
- In formal AKST women are marginalized.



The percentage of agricultural work carried out by women compared with the percentage of female extension staff in selected African countries



A major challenge: The small scale farmer

- Pro-poor progress requires:
- Understanding the diversified farming systems in SSA
- Presenting a basket of options to allow farmers the flexibility of choosing site-specific options
 - creating opportunities for innovation & entrepreneurship which targets this group
 - Increased public research and extension investment
- Small scale farm sustainability – poses difficult policy choices:-



Immediate/Short Term

Options for Decision Makers

- Increase AKST focus on drylands, fisheries, mountain & coastal ecosystems, orphan crops, crop-livestock systems, & climate change impacts.
- Increase national public investment & regional co-operation in AKST.
- Build rural safety nets & non-farm rural employment.
- Enhance basic sciences, technological & institutional changes to address water & land problems.



Medium/Long Term

Options for decision-makers

Improve public-private-CSO involvement in AKST with accountability for social & environmental outcomes.

- Develop macro-level policy changes to enable AKST linkages with development goals.
- Shift focus from production technologies to understanding & enhancing the production & adapting to environmental climate change impacts.
- Build & reform AKST skill base (basic sciences, social, political & legal knowledge) & innovation capacities of rural communities & consumers.



Options for decision-makers

- Think beyond linear approaches of formal science.
- Pay more attention to integrated solutions, spatial heterogeneity, tradeoffs, livelihood & environment outcomes – rather than over-emphasizing productivity issues.
- Targeted investments in AKST can yield enormous benefits –integrated planning among agriculture, health, fisheries, livestock.
 - Improve connections among education, research, & extension -moving to problem-based learning.
- Increase functional literacy among rural communities to increase likelihood of achieving food security & sustainable development goals.



Conclusion

- Strategic focus on the small-holder farmers is key to achieving future sustained growth & enhancing food security in SSA
- IAASTD -focus AKST to achieve specific development goals & livelihood & environment outcomes rather than productivity
- IAASTD -Think beyond linear approaches of formal science by paying more attention to integrated solutions
 - – improve synergies – shifting to more localized multifunctional approaches.



Thank You!



IAASTD

International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 March 2009

Excellency,

In keeping with the priorities of the sixty-third session outlined in my inaugural address, and in partnership with specialized agencies and organizations, I am convening an informal General Assembly thematic dialogue on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food on Monday, 6 April of this year in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

While global food prices have fallen from their highs of early last year, the food crisis is far from over. As we know, hundreds of millions of people continue to slide into poverty and hunger; and we as an international community must not let the global financial crisis and the drop in food prices eclipse the urgent need to address the structural causes of the food crisis and world hunger.

The one day dialogue will be organized into two separate, but interrelated panels, comprised of experts from various disciplinary fields, including economics, agronomics and agro-ecology, and human rights. The panels will provide Member States a unique opportunity to hear key voices and engage a range of actors from the north and south involved in agricultural and food issues, including small-farmers and scientists.

Particular attention will be given to the work of the UN Special Rapporteur to strengthen the global response to world food crisis by developing tools specifically based on the recognition of the right to food as a human right, recognized in international law. Today there is an emerging consensus among key stakeholders that a rights-based approach to the food crisis offers a much needed perspective to the international discussion.

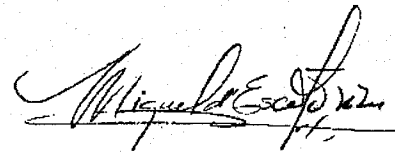
All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations
New York

In his concluding remarks to the High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All in January of this year, the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon stated: 'We must continue to meet urgent hunger and humanitarian needs by providing food and nutrition assistance and safety nets, while focusing on improving food production and smallholder agriculture. This is the twin-track approach taken in the Comprehensive Framework for Action. We should be ready to add a third track—the right to food—as a basis for analysis, action and accountability.'

I believe such an approach will offer new insights not only in identifying those who are most vulnerable, but also to identify practical ways to introduce and operationalize the right to food at the international, regional and national levels.

Please find attached a Concept Note for the interactive thematic dialogue. This note was prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur Professor Olivier de Schutter at my request. A more detailed programme and information on the panelists will be submitted shortly.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of the highest consideration and esteem.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann', written over a horizontal line.

Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 April 2009

Excellency,

In follow up to my earlier letter of 26 March, I have the honour of submitting for your Excellency's information a brief description of the format and panels for the upcoming "Interactive Thematic Dialogue on the Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food" to be held here at United Nations headquarters in the Trusteeship Council Chamber on Monday, 6 April 2009.

The various panels will afford a unique opportunity to Members States to engage diverse actors and stakeholders in an open, collaborative and constructive dialogue. By bringing together an array of practitioners and specialists, delegations will have access to newly emerging trends and knowledge, grounded in comparative research in science and technology, emerging human rights law, and real life application in a variety of contexts and settings.

I am confident that the day's proceedings will prove instrumental in moving forward consideration by the General Assembly of key issues relating to the global food crisis, food aid, and agricultural policy discussions. Moreover, I hope the day's proceedings will contribute to a broader shared understanding of the added value that a rights-based approach, one that is grounded in the human right to adequate food, can offer to Member States and the international community in the formulation of viable and strategic responses to the food crisis and the eradication of world hunger in our lifetime.

Lastly, I wish to emphasize the open and interactive character of the day's proceedings. Delegations are kindly asked to refrain from reading prepared statements and invited to engage the speakers and fellow colleagues. Member States that wish to submit in writing prepared statements for distribution are welcome to do so. The views expressed in the prepared statements will be reflected in the final summary and the complete text will be posted on the President's website.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration and esteem.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York