

Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on global food security crisis

Update – May 20 2008

In late April 2008, the Executive Heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, Funds and Programmes and Bretton Woods Institutions agreed to establish a Task Force on the Global Food Crisis under the leadership of the Secretary-General.

The primary aim of the Task Force is to promote a comprehensive and unified response to the global food security crisis in support of governments and affected populations.

In the first High-Level Task Force meeting on May 12, it was agreed that a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) be developed. This framework will include a range of immediate and longer-term policies and actions required to meet the challenges posed by the food security crisis.

The purpose of the framework is to bring coherence to ongoing and future actions taking place both internationally and at a country level. The CFA is also expected to provide initial guidance in support of national governments, UN and World Bank country teams and to encourage partnership at the country level.

It is hoped that the broad elements of the framework will be available in time for the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome in early June. The Secretary-General is expected to give a keynote speech at the Rome Conference in June, and outline the main elements of the Framework.

The drafting of the document has already begun. It will focus first on immediate actions and policies in the following areas:

- immediate food assistance
- social protection
- boosts to agricultural supply
- guidance and support on trade restrictions and taxation
- finance and balance of payments

Extensive consultations with governments are already underway and the ECOSOC Special Session on the Global Food Crisis on 20 May provided a first opportunity for Member States to exchange views on the issue. Following Rome, the document will continue to be developed and may be completed ahead of the G8 meeting in Japan. The Secretary General also hopes to provide a more detailed brief on the work of the High Level Task Force at the Fall session of the General Assembly.

In the meantime, UN country teams worldwide are being provided with further guidance to ensure a coherent approach to the food security crisis. In addition to reviewing and adapting their programmes in light of the crisis, many UN Country Teams and implementing partners have been working closely with governments to avert disruptions to food stocks in the immediate term, while also exploring longer-term options, such as economic measures and social protection initiatives, to mitigate the impact of rising food prices on the most vulnerable.