

## **Sixth Meeting of the High-Level Task Force of the Global Food Security Crisis 15 December 2008**

The High Level Task Force (HLTF) held its sixth meeting on 15 December in New York under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General stressed the compounding and detrimental impact of the current multiple crises (food, fuel and financial) – increasing the vulnerability of poor people. He noted the potential contribution of the HLTF's Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) to concerted action to improve food security. However, while action underway is on the right track, he emphasized that efforts need to be intensified and sustained.

Under the first agenda item, HLTF members reviewed developments since the last meeting of the HLTF on 18 September 2008.

The Secretary-General noted that the Spanish Government has taken the initiative to organize an event that takes stock of progress following the High Level Conference on Food Security in June 2008 in Rome. Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero, has asked the Secretary-General to co-chair the Spanish High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All in Madrid on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Government Ministers, heads of regional and international organizations, and representatives of civil society, private sector entities and research organizations, will be invited. The Secretary-General expressed his hope that the meeting will help all stakeholders to focus and intensify actions, especially within countries, to mobilize additional resources and to work together in an effective way.

The Secretary-General stated that he welcomes the initiative by the G8, under the Japanese presidency, to initiate the development of a global partnership on Agriculture and Food Security. He and other members of the Task Force also emphasized the importance of involving a wider range of stakeholders in the partnership.

Further, the Secretary-General announced that he has agreed that Mr. John Holmes, Coordinator of the HLTF, will hand over his Coordinator function to Dr. David Nabarro as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. He thanked Mr. Holmes for his hard and effective work as Coordinator.

Mr. Holmes and Dr. Nabarro briefed on further developments. They stressed that the food crisis continues and is in danger of becoming a neglected crisis. Its character has changed from a crisis caused by the impact of food price rises on vulnerable communities to one that results from dysfunctional food systems and food insecurity. There have been substantive achievements in meeting immediate needs during 2008. However, the number of hungry people is on the increase. Additional resources will be needed to achieve immediate outcomes in 2009, as well as to address longer term food system challenges. They noted with concern that the overall resource situation remains quite disappointing.

The members of the HLTF then proceeded to discuss the future direction of the Task Force under the second agenda item.

Members stressed the added value of the HLTF for concerted action, and expressed the need for continued functioning of the HLTF throughout 2009. They agreed on a set of principles for joint work by HLTF members, specific products to be delivered through a coordinated effort and key facilitating actions. These will be discussed in more detail by the HLTF members before finalization and publication.

HLTF members also agreed on proposed organizational matters, and Dr. Nabarro was asked to proceed with establishing a small Coordination Secretariat, consisting of about ten people, located in Rome (central hub), Geneva, New York and Washington. The main means for joint working will be through the HLTF coordination network to be made up of specified staff from within HLTF member organizations, national authorities, regional bodies, NGOs, private entities, and research institutes.

The Secretary-General proposed that the next HLTF meeting be held in February 2009.

A statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General was issued following the Sixth Meeting of the HLTF, and is available under the following link:

<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=3615>