

## **Eighth Meeting of the High-Level Task Force of the Global Food Security Crisis**

### **23 March 2009**

The High Level Task Force (HLTF) held its eighth meeting on 23 March in New York under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General.

Under the first agenda item, HLTF members provided updates on current issues, including **prospects for the food security and hunger situation in 2009, and challenges with responding to the needs of hungry populations**. The Secretary-General opened the discussion by stressing that the negative impacts of the financial and economic crisis are being felt worldwide, and are expected to multiply over the next months. More people are becoming vulnerable with an increasing risk of hunger. In advance of the G20 Meeting in April, he is stressing the importance of helping people in developing countries to build resilience to these impacts. HLTF Members expressed concern about the effects of decreasing trade, foreign direct investments and remittances for communities in developing countries. They warned that the food crisis might be falling off the radar screen, as some politicians seem to believe that the food and fuel crisis was last year, and the economic and financial crisis this year. The two are in fact interrelated and require equal attention. Prices continue to be at high levels in many places, and remain highly volatile. HLTF members emphasized that investments in smallholder agriculture will create jobs and help people to sustain their livelihoods. However, concern was expressed about the lack of resources: If there is no political understanding of the severity of the situation, funding will not be forthcoming. All agreed that increased advocacy is required to mobilize the necessary funds. This will also require that the HLTF works in coherence, as Mr. Nabarro highlighted.

HLTF members then discussed the second agenda item on **Mobilizing and coordinating assistance for smallholder agriculture**. The Secretary-General noted that the HLTF had discussed the need for better coordinated financial assistance in response to national food insecurity at its last meeting. He had asked a sub-group of the HLTF to work on this, and suggested reviewing their recommendations. Mr. Nabarro reported that the HLTF sub-group met three times for the development of a proposal. Concerns raised within the sub-group were that the coordination of financial assistance could a) result in at least one new layer of bureaucracy, (b) undermine the ability of recipient governments to coordinate external assistance themselves through in-country processes with the support of in-country UN and World Bank teams, and (c) require a system of governance involving the participation of donors, recipient countries and civil society, which might prove complex and slow down the conduct of operations. Several HLTF members expressed the wish to have greater certainty on substantial new funds available, as the availability of funds is a condition for the creation of the financial coordination mechanism. HLTF members expressed support for the process, and agreed that further work should be done on the proposal. IFAD offered to play a proactive role in the mechanism. The Secretary-General welcomed IFAD's offer and requested that work on the mechanism continue, with a view to increase efficiency and transparency. He also requested Mr. Nabarro to continue, on his behalf, to speak with donors and mobilize resources before the G20 meeting. He will himself also continue to advocate for funding for food security.

Under the third agenda item **‘Review of progress with the HLTF Programme of Work’** Mr. Nabarro reported that the HLTF Coordination Secretariat is operating from the principal hub in Rome (hosted by IFAD) and additional offices in Geneva and New York. Country coordination work has started with 30 countries, in close collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators. Such work including tracking information, monitoring and reporting will contribute to the forthcoming report to the General Assembly on Food Security, as requested by the GA Resolution on Agriculture and Food Security. Efforts are also being made for building partnerships at country level. He mentioned the importance of NGOs as useful backers when asking support from donors.

The Secretary-General proposed that the next meeting of the HLTF be held in April or May.