

Seventh Meeting of the High-Level Task Force of the Global Food Security Crisis 20 February 2009

The High Level Task Force (HLTF) held its seventh meeting on 20 February in New York under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General.

In his **opening remarks**, the Secretary-General stressed that the Global Food Security Crisis has been subject of much debate – recently in Madrid, in Davos and also at the African Union meeting in Addis Ababa –, and was still the ‘talk of our days’. Ms. Sheeran from WFP reflected on the deepening nature of the food security and economic crisis and its potential impact on increasing numbers of people adversely affected by declines in remittances and increasing unemployment. Mr. Bage from IFAD stressed that the current situation demands a flexible and responsive approach but also highlighted the importance of a longer-term approach to food security, and the role of agriculture in the ‘inclusive global growth agenda’ currently discussed. Ms. Okonjo-Iweala from the World Bank spoke of the potential for investment in agriculture as a key element of the economic stimulus for developing countries. She suggested that the G20 April meeting is an opportunity to focus on food security that should not be missed. It is anticipated that high food prices will once again be faced during 2009, Mr. Sumpsi from FAO reported. He emphasized the need for rapid reaction to country requests for financial support in order to respond to the needs of planting seasons in 2009.

Under the first agenda item on the **outcomes of and follow-up to the Madrid High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All**, the Secretary-General stressed that the determination and energy of Prime Minister Zapatero and his Government has given new political momentum to food security, which is an encouraging sign amid the economic crisis.

Mr. Nabarro, Coordinator of the HLTF, summarized three main outcomes of the Madrid Meeting:

- Consensus that the way forward needs to link activities to reduce hunger, improve food and nutrition security, broaden social protection, improve agricultural production and stimulate trade in a fair way – as envisaged in the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA);
- Agreement on the need to mobilize additional resources for food security in poor countries, and to coordinate their use in a better way;
- Consensus on the value of partnerships to promote food security that are broad-based and inclusive, involving civil society, the private sector at national, regional and global levels.

HLTF members proceeded to discuss the **coordination of financial assistance for food security and advocacy for mobilizing resources** under the second agenda item.

Given the agreement on the need to mobilize additional resources for food security in poor countries, and to coordinate their use in a better way, the Secretary-General proposed that a sub-group of the HLTF urgently develops a plan for better coordination of financing and mobilizing financial resources. The sub-group should also consider how funds received by the HLTF should be handled, using existing institutions and mechanisms.

Members of the HLTF supported the proposal of a sub-group. Several emphasized that existing institutions and structures should be used, including established in-country processes like the Consolidated Humanitarian Appeals Process and the UN Development Assistance Framework. It was noted that the mechanism should also consider how to ensure accountability and close monitoring of results. Mr. Nabarro indicated that he will follow up and proceed with the rapid establishment of a sub-group to work on a proposal for better financial coordination.

Under the third agenda item, HLTF members discussed follow-up to another outcome from the Madrid Meeting - **facilitating partnerships to promote food security**. The Secretary-General noted that the political momentum in Madrid led to a consensus on the value of a broad range of stakeholders participating in the efforts to realize the outcomes of the CFA at different levels. It was highlighted that the concept of a Global Partnership was developed by member states, and that efforts to establishing it are led by member states. As indicated already in Madrid, the Secretary-General said that he would like the HLTF to support member states as they take this important work forward.

The HLTF endorsed the **HLTF Programme of Work for 2009** which had been finalized by the Senior Steering Group, under the fourth agenda item of the meeting. Progress against the set of goals indicated in the programme should be reviewed in each HLTF meeting. The HLTF Programme of Work is available on the HLTF website:

http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce/Documentation/HLTF_Programme_of_Work_2009.pdf

Before closing, the Secretary-General noted that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed interest for her Office to become a member of the HLTF. Given that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is a member of the UN Chief Executives Board, and that the right to food has an important role in the work of the HLTF, the HLTF agreed that OHCHR become a member of the HLTF.

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