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# The Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis

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## Madrid meeting to build toward a global partnership on food and agriculture, 26-27 January

### UN Secretary-General Ban, Prime Minister Zapatero, agency heads, national ministers and experts plan for "Food Security for All"

(MADRID, 23 January) Major players in the global campaign to meet emergency and nutritional food needs, reinvigorate agricultural systems and increase investment in agriculture will convene at a ministerial-level meeting on "Food Security for All," chaired by UN Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** and Spanish Prime Minister **Rodriguez Zapatero**.

On the agenda will be talks on a way forward for the elimination of hunger and on a comprehensive framework that links food security, agriculture, nutrition, social protection, markets and trade. There will also be discussion on a broader and deeper partnership to galvanize political momentum on food issues and on the need for funds to improve food and nutrition security and to promote smallholder agriculture in the world's poorest communities.

The number of the undernourished in the world rose in 2008 to 963 million, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), undercutting progress on the first Millennium Development Goal of eradicating hunger and poverty.

UN officials and representatives of international agencies belonging to the High-level Task Force on Global Food Security Crisis will be at the 26-27 January meeting, which opens with technical discussions and concludes with a ministerial session. Expected to attend are FAO Director-General and Task Force vice-chairman **Jacques Diouf**; International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) President **Lennart Båge**; World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director **Josette Sheeran**; UNICEF Executive Director **Ann Veneman**, UN Conference on Trade and Development chief **Supachai Panikpadi**, Managing Director of the World Bank Group **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**, and UN food task force coordinator **David Nabarro**.

The High-level Meeting of Food Security for All is hosted and organized by the Spanish Government. It follows through on the June 2008 "food summit" in Rome. In the 5 June Rome Declaration, 181 States and the European Community pledged to alleviate the suffering caused by the soaring food prices, stimulate agricultural development, food and small holder farmer production and address obstacles to food access and adequate nutrition.

As part of the UN response to the ongoing crisis in global food security, the WFP plans to feed 100 million people in 77 countries. As well as delivering emergency food assistance and supporting safety nets such as school feeding, WFP will be expanding the use of highly nutritious food products to address malnutrition among young children. Through last year, the FAO delivered about US\$600 million in short and longer term technical assistance as well as inputs such as seeds, tools, equipment, fertilizers, animal vaccines and feeds in over 80 countries. FAO started 2009 with a field programme budget of about US\$1 billion for short and longer term assistance and anticipates that this year its emergency and rehabilitation assistance may reach US\$500 million.

IFAD's experience shows that in some developing countries, smallholder farmers have seized the opportunities created by the food crisis to boost food production with support from their government, civil society and development

partners. The IFAD Board approved in 2008, a reallocation of existing funds through ongoing projects to farm inputs, of up to US\$ 200 million, based on government demand, to allow smallholder farmers to rapidly access inputs and related services. The 2009 programme of work is expected to be over \$700 million in new commitments.

The World Bank has already paid out about half a billion dollars to 30 countries from its \$1.2 billion food crisis fund. About 60 per cent of the funds were for seeds and fertilizers for farmers for the new season. This year, another \$700 million is in the pipeline for rapid delivery. Overall this year, the Bank expects to approve nearly \$4 billion in new agriculture and social safety net projects to help the hungry.

**For information on the meeting,** see <http://www.ransa2009.org>.; on the High-Level Task Force, see <http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce>.

**For video material:** An advancer with food-related b-roll is due to become available on the UNifeed website (<http://www.un.org/unifeed>) for download in broadcast-quality PAL and NTSC by 25 January

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