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

Comprehensive Framework for Action Summary

The Comprehensive Framework for Action was developed by the UN Secretary-General's High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. The starting point for this food action plan is Millennium Development Goal 1: to Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger.

The first objective is to improve access to food and nutrition support and increase food availability, by meeting the immediate needs of vulnerable populations.

To realize this objective the following actions must be taken with a view to the achievement of immediate results:

- A. Enhancing and improving access to emergency food assistance, nutrition interventions and safety nets: through ensuring that emergency needs are fully met, protecting the basic consumption needs of poor people, scaling up nutritional support and management of under-nutrition; promoting school feeding; adjusting pensions and other social protection programmes; allowing free-flow of food assistance; exempting food purchases for humanitarian purposes from export restrictions; exploring options for reserves of humanitarian food;
- B. Boosting smallholder farmer food production: through providing productivity-enhancing safety nets to poor smallholder farmers by supplying critical inputs such as locally adapted quality seeds, fertilizer, small irrigation pumps and veterinary medicines and services, rehabilitating both rural and agricultural infrastructure; reducing post-harvest crop losses and improving village-level stocks; linking small-scale farmers to markets by reducing constraints to domestic trade throughout the food chain; improving animal health services;
- C. Adjusting trade and tax policies: through immediately reviewing trade and taxation policy options and their likely impacts on poor consumers and farmers, as well as implications for government revenues, international food markets and commitment to enhanced international trade; using strategic grain reserves to stabilize prices; avoiding generalized food subsidies which have high fiscal costs and divert public resources away from support to the poor; (in food exporting countries) minimizing the use of export restrictions or restrictions on the use of stocks to support humanitarian need and international trade in periods of significant market turmoil; (in food deficit and importing countries) reducing import tariffs and other restrictions on food commodities and agricultural inputs; improving the efficiency of trade facilitation; temporarily reduce VAT and other taxes and critical agricultural inputs where these represent a significant proportion of retail prices;
- D. Managing Macroeconomic Implications: through holding down core inflation and inflation expectations; assessing the impact of higher net food imports on the balance of payments; mobilizing external support to finance additional food imports; ensuring adequate levels of foreign exchange reserves; assessing and costing

all fiscal measures taken in response to the food security crisis.

The second objective is to address the underlying factors driving the food crisis, by building longer-term resilience and contributing to global food and nutrition security.

To realize this objective the following actions must be phased in with a view to achieving durable results:

E. Expanding social protection systems: through strengthening capacity to design and implement social protection policies and programmes; moving towards more efficient programmes as the mechanisms for beneficiary selection and the toolbox for effective programme delivery are fine-tuned; identifying alternatives to unconditional assistance through linkages to other social sector programmes using a combination of food and cash inputs; and improving the quality and diversity of foods channeled through nutrition interventions to highly vulnerable groups;

F. Sustaining improvements in smallholder food production: through improving the enabling policy framework by reviewing current macroeconomic, budget, trade and sectoral policy impacts on incentives for smallholder production and development of input and output markets that serve smallholders; stimulating both public and private investment in agriculture; ensuring secure access to and better management of natural resources (including land, water and biodiversity); investing in agricultural research on food crops, animal protection and inland fisheries; improving rural infrastructure such as roads, irrigation and electrification; ensuring sustained access to competitive, transparent and private sector-led markets for food produce and quality inputs focusing on key food commodity chains and their stakeholders; supporting development of producer organizations; and strengthening access of smallholders and other food chain actors to financial and risk management instruments to increase farm level investments, boost productivity and enhance assets;

G. Improving international food markets: through reducing agricultural trade distortions, in particular subsidies and market restrictions, in higher income countries; rapidly completing the Doha round of negotiations to provide an enhanced set of agreed rules for a more transparent and fair international trading system taking into account the food and livelihood security and rural development needs of developing countries; implementing aid for trade so that developing countries can better benefit from international trade in food products; strengthening analysis and oversight of food commodity and futures markets to limit price volatility; build capacity for international financial markets to better meet the needs of lower income countries; support development of regional or global mechanisms for improving emergency access to food through stock sharing;

H. Developing an international biofuel consensus: through preparing a common reference framework for sustainable biofuel development and enforcement mechanisms; developing biofuel guidelines and safeguarding measures that minimize adverse impacts on global food security and the environment; re-assessing biofuel targets, subsidies and tariffs, facilitating private investments in biofuel production in developing countries to diversify energy sources and reduce market volatility with appropriate safeguards for vulnerable groups; promoting research and development, knowledge exchange and capacity building.

The High-Level Task Force encourages actions to ensure that there is adequate information and monitoring capacity to support the realization of these objectives and the twin-track approach that they imply. This requires the strengthening of global information and monitoring systems through better coordination of information systems; conduct of comprehensive assessments and monitoring in selected vulnerable countries; analyzing the impact of increased food prices; conducting health and nutritional assessments and setting up a nutritional surveillance system; analyzing policy options for easing pressure on food prices and identifying programmatic approaches for channeling immediate assistance; and through reviewing contingency plans and strengthening early warning systems.