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## **High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the administered account for its financial coordination mechanism**

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For: **Review**

## **Note to Executive Board Directors**

This document is submitted for the review of the Executive Board.

To make the best use of time available at Executive Board sessions, Directors are invited to contact the following focal point with any technical questions about this document before the session:

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## **Abbreviations and acronyms**

CEB	Chief Executives Board
CFA	Comprehensive Framework for Action
FCM	financial coordination mechanism
HLTF	High-Level Task Force
SSG	Senior Steering Group

# High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the administered account for its financial coordination mechanism

## I. Introduction

1. At the end of April 2008, concerned by the impact of dramatic rises in food prices and the threats posed to food security, the Chief Executives Board of the United Nations System established a **High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis**. The task force is chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General and brings together the heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes; departments of the United Nations Secretariat; the World Trade Organization; the World Bank; the International Monetary Fund; and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) serves as Vice Chair.
2. The purpose of the HLTF is to provide the leadership needed to ensure a fast, efficient and coordinated response by United Nations agencies and Bretton Wood institutions to the food crises in many countries across the globe. The HLTF presented its **Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA)** at the World Food Summit organized by FAO in June 2008. The CFA proposes a twin-track approach to addressing the food security crisis. *The first track* emphasizes the need for sufficient funding to meet the needs of those dependent on food assistance and safety nets to prevent the suffering caused by starvation and malnutrition.
3. *Track two* of the CFA stresses the importance of enabling smallholder farmers (especially women) to benefit from higher productivity, new technologies, opportunities for child care and better nutrition. Specifically, they need better access to land, credit, irrigation, seeds, fertilizers, fodder and other essential inputs, which calls for private sector engagement in all aspects of the food value chain. Farmers also need help to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This calls for functioning extension services, stronger producers' organizations, sustainable technologies and better integrated food production and marketing systems.
4. **The HLTF** operates through a Senior Steering Group (SSG), which is composed of the senior managers of all agencies belonging to the HLTF. The SSG reviews and discusses material in preparation for the HLTF meetings chaired by the Secretary-General, which take place every two to three months.
5. To ensure the efficient and effective operation of the HLTF and to support the collective work of HLTF member agencies at the country, regional and global level, it was decided during the HLTF meeting on 15 December 2008 that a light but effective coordination mechanism would be established: the **HLTF Coordination Mechanism**. This mechanism is composed of a principal hub in Rome hosted by IFAD, and hubs hosted by the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York (which focuses on support to the Secretary-General's Office) and the World Bank in Washington, D.C. Two HLTF member agencies (FAO and the World Bank) and bilateral donors (France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) have seconded seven staff members to the Rome and Geneva hubs to support the delivery of the work programme in 2009.
6. As part of its innovative working methods, the HLTF Coordination Mechanism has fostered a coordination network as a facility for multidirectional communication among different stakeholder groups and HLTF membership. The remit of network members is to work together as effectively as possible in the spirit and strategic direction of the CFA and HLTF, with a focus on listening and responding to

vulnerable groups and national authorities; linking up with regional bodies, civil society, farmers' organizations and private sector stakeholders; and encouraging collective action at the country, regional and global level.

## II. Programme of work 2009: progress to date

7. On 15 December 2008, the HLTF programme of work for 2009 was approved for the collective pursuit of the CFA. It focuses on the following functions:
  - (a) Monitoring the food security situation in-country and supporting stronger country-led responses. This will entail tracking and mapping progress within countries (including resource flows), and analyzing the situation (and identifying gaps) using the CFA as the analytical framework. Particular attention will be paid to the food and nutrition security situation and the effectiveness of overall support; outstanding needs and the options for responding to them; and new resources made available to countries to address agricultural production.
  - (b) Catalysing viable in-country partnerships that can better contribute towards achieving CFA objectives by ensuring inter-agency synergy at the country level within the context of (a) the first Millennium Development Goal, (b) the CFA and (c) the principles of the Accra Agenda for Action. Synergized engagement with private entities, civil society (including farmers' organizations), NGOs and professional associations.
  - (c) Building linkages with key stakeholders – the private sector, civil society (NGOs), regional bodies and member states (particularly major donors) – by contributing to the establishment of functional engagement, especially at the country level. The HLTF Coordination Mechanism and its network will work with the parties involved in establishing the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security.
  - (d) Supporting analysis and advocacy issues, including linking research with policy; and stocktaking and reporting with resource mobilization. Messaging and communications and (when necessary) support for high-level conferences to promote effective links between research and policy at the country level and to translate knowledge into policy. The HLTF Coordination Mechanism and Network will monitor resource flows and report regularly on CFA outcomes to inform decision making and feed into high-level conferences.
  - (e) Provide general back-up to the Secretary-General and the HLTF leaders in maintaining the issue of food security high on the international agenda and secure high-level political commitment.
8. **Progress to date.** During the first three month of 2009, the coordinator of the HLTF dedicated his attention to a wide range of activities. Upon the request of the Secretary-General, support was provided to the Government of Spain in the organization of the High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All that took place in Madrid on 26-27 January 2009. Several leaders of donor nations expressed their willingness to continue supporting the realization of the CFA objectives, either through multilateral agencies or by contributing to pooled funds managed by HLTF member organizations. Most importantly, leaders wanted to ensure that the resources are used in a coordinated, needs-responsive and effective way, especially to support smallholder agriculture in the short and the long run.
9. As a follow-up to the Madrid meeting, the Secretary-General asked the HLTF to propose options for scaling up coordinated financial assistance to support CFA objectives with respect to smallholder agriculture. The HLTF Secretariat and a sub-group of the HLTF elaborated a proposal to establish a financial coordination mechanism (FCM) to help poor small-scale farmers realize their food production potential and thereby improve the food security of their family, their community

and their country. In this way, the FCM would contribute to boosting food supply, fostering economic development and creating jobs in rural areas. On 23 March 2009, the Secretary-General chaired an HLTF meeting to discuss the FCM proposal. The Secretary-General requested IFAD to explore possibilities for opening an administered account to receive pooled funds from donors in support of new initiatives that address food security.<sup>1</sup> Decisions regarding the allocation of funds and supervision of their use will be managed by the HLTF.

10. The HLTF Coordination hub based in Rome, which started to operate in March 2009, has intensified its work at the country level. It engages with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), supports resident coordinators and World Bank country directors (and other in-country and regional focal points for coordination) and offers backing for food security work within United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, poverty reduction strategies and other country-owned plans and programmes related to food security.
11. The HLTF and its member agencies have worked together in support of the 62 countries most in need of technical and financial assistance to address their food security situation. Of these, some 35 countries have been prioritized for coordinated efforts to realize the CFA's goals. To address the coordination challenges faced by the HLTF, the coordination hub in Rome has initiated regular dialogue with in-country staff in nine countries and engaged with actors at the regional level.
12. Both the production of the CFA and the continued commitment of the HLTF have contributed to increased synergy among member agencies. However, the quality of coordination is uneven: many countries have food security theme groups, but several resident coordinators are finding it difficult to secure agreement among country team members and ensure coordinated support for national food security efforts. Further efforts are also needed in encouraging the international financial institutions and the United Nations agencies to work together on this issue.
13. The HLTF's first year of operations was characterized by intense activity across all the agencies involved. The approach spelled out in the CFA appears to be appreciated, but it needs greater dissemination. In most countries, the options are limited with respect to planning engagement by civil society, producer organizations and businesses in policy dialogue. National authorities yearn for the United Nations system and its partners to work in synergy in their countries on food security issues. Funding remains an issue for all stakeholders involved in the response to food insecurity. The capacity to absorb this funding must also be addressed, and technical assistance is critical in this regard.
14. There is a major and continuing need for intensified action during 2009 and 2010 both as a response to the immediate needs of food-insecure populations and as a stimulus for increased investment in agriculture. The HLTF must continue to work with national and regional partners to address longer-term structural and policy issues to (a) avert a worsening of the crisis and (b) meet future food security needs (exacerbated by climate change).
15. During the G-8 Summit in L'Aquila, the heads of states of 26 nations presented and signed up to a Joint Statement on Global Food Security.<sup>2</sup> It expressed support "to act with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food security". The statement expressed support for the HLTF's endeavours to strengthen global and local governance for food security as a key to defeating hunger and malnutrition and to promoting sustainable rural development.

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<sup>1</sup> The Secretary-General subsequently sent a follow-up letter (dated 23 April 2009) regarding the possibility of setting up an FCM account to be administered by IFAD.

<sup>2</sup> The joint statement (dated 10 July 2009) marked the conclusion of the final session of the G-8 Summit that took place in L'Aquila, Italy from 8-10 July 2009.

16. An SSG meeting was held on 16 July 2009 to discuss the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, and to review the implications for the HLTF work programme. All HLTF member agencies expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the summit, concluding that the integrated capacity of the HLTF would be crucial for effective collective action in support of the L'Aquila Joint Initiative on Food Security. It was agreed at the Steering Group meeting that a one-day retreat would be held in September to discuss a range of strategic issues including stocktaking of the work of the CFA and the HLTF, the implications of the L'Aquila Joint Initiative for the work programme of the HLTF and the role of the coordinator and team.

### **III. IFAD engagement with the high-level task force**

17. IFAD's President and Senior Management have been active members of the HLTF and its SSG since the HLTF's establishment in April 2008. IFAD seconded a staff member (in April 2008) to the multi-agency team that elaborated the CFA.
18. Under the coordination of the HLTF coordinator, since July 2008, Programme Management Department staff, particularly the country programme managers, have been actively involved in elaborating and presenting proposals for financing to the European Commission's Food Facility. As a result, in March 2009, the Commission approved grant financing for project proposals in four countries (Burundi, Madagascar and Mozambique and the Philippines) for a total amount of €30 million.
19. IFAD has housed the Rome hub of the HLTF Secretariat since 1 March 2009. At present seven staff members have been seconded from the World Bank, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, FAO, the World Food Programme and the Governments of France, Germany and Italy. In the initial months, work focused on collaboration with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, identifying priority countries where the Secretariat can support coordinated efforts in response to the food crisis. In addition, work has begun on setting up a monitoring and tracking system at the country level to generate data and monitor progress on addressing the food security situation.
20. IFAD provided a grant of US\$250,000 to support the delivery of the work programme in 2009, and intends to second a staff member to join the Rome hub of the coordination mechanism.
21. On 23 March 2009, the Secretary-General chaired a meeting of the HLTF meeting to discuss the proposal for an FCM to support smallholder agriculture and the options for handling pooled grant funds from donors and disbursing resources to eligible recipients upon instruction from the HLTF. In a letter from the Secretary-General to the President, dated 29 April 2009, IFAD was requested to explore options for setting up a bank account for the FCM. IFAD's President responded positively to the request but signalled the concerns expressed by various Board members during the Executive Board session on 30 April 2009.
22. At a HLTF meeting chaired by the Secretary-General on 25 June 2009, IFAD's President informed the HLTF that while opening an account could be easily accomplished by IFAD within two weeks, the HLTF would first need to resolve outstanding issues related to the governance and functioning of such a new financial mechanism and, ensure complementarity with mechanisms that respond to the food security crisis in developing countries around the globe.



