



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOENERGY ROME, ITALY, 3-5 JUNE 2008

The High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy opened on 3 June and will continue until 5 June at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy. The Conference will comprise a High-Level Segment and a Committee of the Whole. In preparation for the Conference, a number of expert meetings and stakeholder consultations were convened from January to April 2008, at the same venue. A Synthesis Document emerged from these meetings and consultations, which pulls together identified response options, as well as a number of technical documents. This Bulletin summarizes this preparatory process, as well as other relevant international meetings.

PREPARATORY PROCESS

EXPERT MEETINGS: Climate Change and Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture: This expert meeting, which took place from 13-14 February 2008, aimed to identify key issues relating to climate change and biodiversity, and contribute to developing a policy on climate change adaptation with regard to biodiversity for food and agriculture. Participants agreed on a number of suggestions for future action on: developing the knowledge base to monitor biodiversity trends and associated risks; inter-sectorial cooperation and integrated planning; building adaptive capacity through biodiversity management in farming systems; and developing climate change informed plans and policies for genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Bioenergy Policy, Markets and Trade, and Food Security; and Global Perspectives on Food and Fuel Security: These two expert meetings, which were held jointly from 18-20 February 2008, aimed to take stock of global bioenergy policies and their nature and rationale. Participants focused on the current situation and future prospects for biofuels, and identified priority action areas to address the impacts of climate change and biofuel production on food security. They identified the potential opportunities that biofuel production presents for agricultural and rural development, which they summarized in a set of twelve key messages. These messages include the need for:

- further analysis of the impacts of current biofuel policies;
- integration and coherence of policies between national and global levels and between public and private sectors;
- a common methodology for life-cycle analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
- internationally agreed standards for addressing the global environmental impacts of bioenergy production;
- guidelines on the estimation and reporting of GHGs, World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, and avoidance of trade barriers;

- policies for linking food and biofuel production;
- expansion of the knowledge base regarding issues of certification, compliance and the cost of their application;
- considering biofuels in the context of the total energy mix; and
- the integration of local, regional or international policies that affect the agricultural sector and the rural economy.

Climate-Related Transboundary Pests and Diseases, Including Relevant Aquatic Species: This expert meeting, which took place from 25-27 February 2008, reviewed existing knowledge on the linkages between climate change and changes in plant and animal pest and disease risks, and related human health and food security. Participants recognized the need for a better assessment of climate change impacts on animal and plant pests and diseases, and the spread of invasive alien aquatic species. They outlined requirements for capacity building, as well as priorities for national, regional and international action.

Climate Change, Water and Food Security: This expert meeting, which took place from 26-28 February 2008, reviewed scenarios for the impact of climate change on the global hydrologic regime and possible impacts on water management for food production. Participants identified the need to: alleviate resource scarcity; maintain production capacity; mainstream adaptation; address knowledge gaps and capacity needs; and enable financial mechanisms.

Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management: This expert meeting, which took place from 28-29 February 2008, considered the cross-sectorial linkages between climate change and disaster risk reduction and management, with a particular focus on implications for agriculture and food security. The meeting concentrated on those aspects of climate change related to the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme climate events such as droughts, floods, windstorms and wildfires. Participants identified a series of priorities for action, namely: systematic national and local risk assessment; integration of risk mitigation and climate change adaptation in climate sensitive sectors; improved use of climate information; enhanced people-centered early warning systems and rapid alert mechanisms to trigger early action; strengthened preparedness for effective response; and increased resources and political commitment for vulnerability reduction.

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: This expert meeting, which took place from 5-7 March 2008, reviewed various mitigation and gender-sensitive adaptation options and implementation strategies that have significant potential to maintain or enhance food security in a sustainable and economically viable manner. Participants agreed on options for decision makers for a number of topics, including carbon sequestration in agriculture and forestry, climate-related capacities in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and policy development and financial instruments.

Climate Change and Fisheries and Aquaculture: This expert meeting, which took place from 5-7 March 2008, reviewed the impact of climate change on fisheries

and aquaculture, and examined options for climate change mitigation. Participants agreed on options for policy makers on: development of a knowledge base; policy, legal and implementation frameworks at all levels; technical and organizational structures for capacity building; and inclusion of food security concerns in existing and new financial mechanisms.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS: Civil Society Consultation: This consultation took place on 15-16 February 2008, in connection with the Farmers' Forum organized by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on 11-12 February 2008. It was attended by 91 participants from 66 organizations representing farmers' organizations, environmental and development non-governmental organizations (NGOs), indigenous peoples' organizations, human rights-based organizations, women's organizations, international NGO networks and academic institutions. Participants identified several areas that require further analysis and monitoring, and made recommendations regarding the development of biofuel sustainability standards, gender responsive climate strategies and alternative food security paradigms. Stakeholders argued that biofuels should be evaluated within overall energy options and called for a shift towards alternative, more sustainable, energy sources.

Private Sector Consultation: This consultation was held from 27-28 March 2008, under the umbrella of the Rome 2007 Initiative, a public-private sector working group initiated in 2007 by FAO, IFAD, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Mechanism. Participants included several private sector companies and representatives from these Rome-based agencies. Three working groups discussed policy options, recommendations and the potential of public-private sector partnerships in response to the food security challenges posed by climate change and bioenergy. The topics covered were agriculture and agribusinesses, the financial sector and technology transfer, and energy needs. Focusing on identifying opportunities to use existing and emerging climate change finance mechanisms, each group identified: policy options for national, regional and international action in the context of the post-2012 negotiations; areas of common work; proposals for cooperation and partnerships; and possibilities for further areas of collaboration among the private sector and UN agencies and institutions.

THE SYNTHESIS DOCUMENT: The Synthesis Document, *World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy (HLC/08/INF/5)*, reviews the current state of knowledge regarding major challenges facing the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, including: changing vulnerabilities in the food system; impacts on food supply and demand; commodity prices; nutrition and food safety; and the stability of the food supply system. Participants at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security will review the strategies, policies and programmes proposed in that Document, with a view to identifying relevant recommendations for the Report of the High-Level Conference.

DRAFT DECLARATION: An Informal Open-Ended Contact Group was established to prepare a draft declaration for adoption by the High-Level Conference. The Group first met on 9 May 2008 and convened nine times during the subsequent three weeks. The Group produced a draft declaration containing some bracketed text, which will be reviewed by the Committee of the Whole during the Conference (HLC/08/3).

OTHER RELEVANT MEETINGS

FIRST FAO TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY: Specialists from around the world gathered at FAO's headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 16-18 April 2007 to discuss bioenergy production and the related opportunities and risks for food security and

the environment. Participants agreed that governments can use bioenergy as a positive force for rural development, if environmental and food security concerns are taken into account. The meeting recommended that FAO's International Bioenergy Platform draw up a set of guidelines for governments and potential investors to use in dealing with the biofuels industry.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIOFUELS: This high-level meeting, which convened on 5-6 July 2007, in Brussels, Belgium, launched discussion on the development of an international approach to biofuels and how to reap potential benefits while ensuring sustainable development and avoiding new risks. Speakers, including Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, addressed the development of international trade in biofuels, and related environmental and development issues.

SECOND FAO TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY: This round of consultations took place in Rome, Italy on 5-6 February 2008, with the aim of peer reviewing and finalizing the Bioenergy and Food Security (BEFS) framework that assesses the bioenergy development and food security nexus. Participants endorsed the comprehensive BEFS analytical framework to assess the impacts of different types of bioenergy on food security and called for its rapid deployment at the national level. They also recognized that GHG balance assessments would be essential for countries wishing to export biofuels and that the harmonization of calculation methods should be accelerated. Meeting outcomes underline the need to tailor bioenergy development to country-specific conditions, agricultural systems, cropping traditions, local knowledge and rural livelihoods. The experts requested that the outcomes of the consultation be brought to the attention of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security.

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING BETWEEN UN AGENCIES HEADS AND UN SECRETARY-GENERAL: During the semi-annual meeting of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with UN agency heads on 28-29 April 2008, Ban announced plans to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the global food crisis. A task force coordinated by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes and UN System Avian and Human Influenza Coordinator David Nabarro was created. The task force, which is chaired by Ban and includes the heads of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the WFP, FAO, IFAD, and the WTO, has developed an action plan for discussion at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security.

CSD-16: The 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16) was held from 5-16 May 2008 in New York, US, to review the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. Participants highlighted the connections between the session's thematic agenda and both the current food crisis and climate change. CSD-16 identified key drivers of food prices, including land degradation, high energy costs, climate change, poor harvests, speculation in agricultural commodities, inequitable terms of trade, decline of investments in agricultural development, and increased production of biofuels from food crops.

ECOSOC'S SPECIAL MEETING ON THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS: The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held a Special Meeting on the Global Food Crisis from 20-22 May 2008 at UN Headquarters in New York, US. Participants agreed on short-term priorities, including immediate actions by donors and governments to allow farmers to meet production demands. They also identified medium- and long-term measures to tackle the food crisis, including a re-examination of the amount of official development aid dedicated to agriculture.