



High-Level Conference on World Food Security Bulletin

A Report of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security
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HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: 3-5 JUNE 2008

The High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy took place from 3-5 June 2008, at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy. The Conference brought together over 4,700 delegates from 183 countries, including 36 Heads of State and government, representatives of governments, UN agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and the media. The Conference was comprised of a High-Level Segment and a Committee of the Whole (COW).

In preparation for the Conference, a number of expert meetings and stakeholder consultations were convened from January to April 2008. In addition, 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, convened nine times during the subsequent three weeks, and produced a draft declaration containing some bracketed text, which was forwarded to the COW for review during the Conference. The Contact Group was reconvened by the COW and met again during the Conference.

The outcomes of the Conference include a Report of the High-Level Conference and a Declaration on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CLIMATE CHANGE, BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY EVENTS

WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: The World Food Summit took place from 13-17 November 1996 in Rome, Italy. It was held in response to the continued existence of widespread undernutrition and the growing concern about the capacity of agricultural production to meet future food needs. The 1996 Summit brought together close to 10,000 participants and resulted in the adoption of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action. The Rome Declaration sets forth seven commitments which lay the basis for achieving sustainable food security for all, while the Plan of Action spells out the relevant objectives and actions for the practical implementation of these commitments. The Summit also formulated the objective of achieving food security for all through an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing by half the number of undernourished people by 2015.

WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: FIVE YEARS LATER: This Summit took place in Rome, Italy, from 10-13 June 2002, and renewed the commitment made at the 1996 Summit. Delegates called on all States to reinforce their efforts and act as an international alliance against hunger.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“SUSTAINABLE BIOENERGY - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”:

This Conference, which took place on 12-13 October 2006, in Bonn, Germany, was co-hosted by the UN Foundation and the Forum on Environment and Development. The Conference aimed to explore opportunities for bioenergy, assess sustainability challenges and identify solutions for use of these renewable energy resources. Representatives from government, NGOs, business and research, along with representatives from the UN, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the FAO, the European Commission and the World Bank assessed the parameters for sustainable biomass and biofuels production. Participants highlighted the potential contribution of bioenergy to a sustainable energy future, called attention to the impact that trade regulations will have on this potential, and agreed on the need to develop common criteria for its development. The Conference also called for action from the private sector, donors and banks to ensure capacity building.

SIXTH MEETING OF THE GLOBAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY:

This meeting, which was held from 29 November - 1 December 2006, in Vienna, Austria, was organized around the theme “Africa is energizing itself,” and focused on topics such as sub-regional issues, biofuels, hydropower, the Clean Development Mechanism, and financing.

EU COUNCIL MEETING 2007: The European Union (EU) Council meeting, which took place on 8-9 March 2007 in Brussels, Belgium, concluded with the agreement by EU leaders on targets for 2020 to cut carbon dioxide emissions, boost renewable energy, and support biofuels. The deal commits EU countries to cutting emissions by 20% from 1990 levels by 2020, and to boosting renewable energy’s share of total energy use to 20% by the same date. In addition, a 10% minimum target on the use of biofuels in transport was agreed for 2020.

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FIRST FAO TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON

BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY: Specialists from around the world gathered from 16-18 April 2007 at the FAO's headquarters in Rome, Italy, 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 the FAO International Bioenergy Platform draw up a set of guidelines for governments and potential investors for dealing with the biofuels industry.

SOUTH AMERICAN ENERGY SUMMIT: This Summit took place on 16-17 April 2007 on Isla Margarita, Venezuela. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Suriname and Venezuela recognized the potential of biofuels for diversifying energy sources in the Margarita Declaration. They also agreed that energy integration should be used to promote social and economic development and poverty eradication, and established a South American Energy Council, charged with developing a proposal for a common South American energy strategy.

OAS 37TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY: The 37th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), which met in Panama City, Panama, from 3-5 June 2007, took as its theme "Energy for Sustainable Development." In his remarks to the opening session, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that adverse effects of climate change are already being felt in areas such as agriculture and food security, human health, energy, transport and industry, and stressed the need for partnerships to combat climate change. The foreign ministers of the Americas emphasized the role of energy in sustainable development of the region and in providing the conditions needed for a competitive economy.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIOFUELS: This high-level meeting, which convened on 5-6 July 2007, in Brussels, Belgium, launched discussions on the parameters of an international approach to biofuels, and how to reap their 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 environmental and development issues related to international trade in biofuels.

FIRST HIGH-LEVEL BIOFUELS SEMINAR IN AFRICA: The first High-Level Biofuels Seminar in Africa, which met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 July - 1 August 2007, developed an Action Plan for Biofuels Development in Africa. The Action Plan was annexed to the Addis Ababa Declaration on Sustainable Biofuels Development in Africa, which calls for, *inter alia*: developing enabling policy and regulatory frameworks; participating in global discussions regarding the sustainability of biofuels; formulating guiding principles on biofuels to enhance Africa's competitiveness; and minimizing the risks associated with biofuels development for small-scale producers. It further calls on development partners to enable North-South and South-South cooperation, urges public financing institutions to support biofuels projects, and proposes the establishment of a forum to promote access to biofuels information and knowledge.

RSB'S FIRST REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING: The Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels (RSB) held its first Regional Stakeholder Meeting on 17-18 October 2007, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The RSB is a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at developing standards for the sustainability of biofuels. By mid-2008, it aims to have draft

standards developed in conjunction with NGOs, companies, governments and intergovernmental groups worldwide. About 45 participants from industry, NGOs, governments, and academia discussed the RSB's draft sustainability principles and how they might apply in Latin America. Participants agreed that sharing of best practices, proper land-use planning, and economic incentives are all needed to ensure the sustainability of biofuel production. Participants also stressed the importance of finding ways to ensure small-scale farmers' participation in supply chains.

WORLD BANK AND IMF ANNUAL MEETING: The Development Committee, a joint ministerial committee of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), met on 21 October 2007 in Washington DC, US, during the annual meetings of the Bank and the IMF. Regarding clean energy and climate change, the Committee asked the Bank to increase its support for access to modern, cost-effective, clean energy, especially among the poorest and in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the Committee called for the development of a strategic framework for World Bank Group (WBG) engagement in climate change, including support for developing countries' efforts to adapt to climate change and to achieve low-carbon growth while reducing poverty.

RSB'S SECOND REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING: This event took place in Shanghai, China, on 13-14 November 2007. About 40 participants from industry, NGOs, governments and academia discussed the RSB's draft sustainability principles and how they might apply in East Asia. Participants contributed to the process of defining sustainability principles and criteria for biofuels, and introduced issues of specific relevance in the region, thereby enhancing applicability, feasibility and ultimate implementation of principles and criteria.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CLIMATE CHANGE: The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) organized an International Symposium on Climate Change from 22-24 November 2007. The symposium brought together experts from the 15 international agricultural research centers under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, as well as other scientists, to discuss the adaptation needs of several crops. Martin Parry, Co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, delivered a keynote address on "The Implications of Climate Change for Crop Yields, Global Food Supply and Risk of Hunger." Parry and William Dar, Director-General of ICRISAT and current Chair of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification's Committee on Science and Technology, emphasized the need to focus crop research on adaptation to environmental stress, such as rising temperatures and water scarcity.

DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE DAYS AT COP 13: This event, which convened in parallel to the Bali Climate Change Conference, took place from 8-9 December 2007. It provided a platform for individuals and organizations working on development, adaptation and climate change to exchange experiences, and discuss challenges and emerging ideas on how to reduce vulnerability to climate change. Sessions focused on disaster reduction and extreme events, cities, health, financing adaptation, food and agriculture, community-based adaptation and energy, and communication across sectors and timescales.

SECOND FAO TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY: This round of consultations took place in Rome, Italy on 5-6 February 2008, to peer review and finalize the Bioenergy and Food Security

framework that assesses the bioenergy development and food security nexus. Participants endorsed the comprehensive Bioenergy and Food Security analytical framework to assess impacts of different types of bioenergy on food security, and called for its rapid deployment at the national level. They also recognized that greenhouse gas balance assessments would be essential for countries wishing to export biofuels and called for an acceleration of efforts to harmonize methods to calculate these balances. Participants underlined the need for bioenergy development to be tailored 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.

WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE: Participants at the 4-6 March 2008 ministerial meeting in Washington DC, US, attended over 25 plenary and workshop sessions to discuss four themes: market adoption and finance; agriculture, forestry and rural development; State and local authorities; and research and development. By the close of the Conference, over 100 pledges had been submitted for the Washington International Action Program, a compilation of domestic and international commitments to accelerate the global uptake of renewable energy.

WBG AND IMF SPRING MEETINGS: The annual WBG and IMF Spring Meetings took place on 12-13 April 2008, in Washington DC, US. In the joint Development Committee, countries highlighted rising food and energy prices and their impact in developing countries. They welcomed the Bank President's call to the world community to combat hunger and malnutrition through a "New Deal for Global Food Policy," combining immediate assistance with medium- and long-term efforts to boost agricultural productivity in developing countries. Countries further recognized that access to energy remains central to development, and supported WBG goals of promoting clean technology and renewable energy deployment, technology transfer, and research and development. They acknowledged the work underway on the design, governance, and financing of the new Climate Investment Funds, including the Clean Technology Fund, and welcomed the ongoing consultative process for developing a client-oriented Strategic Framework on Climate Change and Development.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY IN AFRICA: This Conference, held in Dakar, Senegal, from 16-18 April 2008, focused on the theme "making renewable energy markets work for Africa: policies, industries and finance for scaling up." Participants developed a Plan of Action on Scaling Up Renewables in Africa, which was endorsed by ministers and other high-level officials in a "Dakar Declaration on Scaling Up Renewables in Africa." The Declaration agrees to an African target for governments, with support from development partners, to increase annual renewable energy investments to US\$10 billion between 2009-2014.

ESCAP 2008 ANNUAL MEETING: The annual meeting of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) took place from 24-30 April 2008, in Bangkok, Thailand. Approximately 50 countries agreed to share experiences in developing renewable energy technologies and to "rapidly disseminate such technologies to developing countries."

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING BETWEEN UN AGENCY 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 IMF, the World Food Programme, the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the WTO, developed an action plan for discussion at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security.

GLOBAL RENEWABLE ENERGY FORUM: This Forum took place from 18-21 May 2008, in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, and was jointly organized by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Brazilian Ministry of Mines and Energy, Eletrobras and Itaipu Binacional. The Forum brought together over 1,000 participants from more than 50 countries, and created a platform for dialogue on strengthening interregional bonds and setting up joint actions to reduce poverty and enhance energy security through the use of renewable energy. UNIDO and some participating countries and institutions developed bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding.

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.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

After an opening plenary, a High-Level Segment convened from Tuesday until Thursday midday to hear statements from Heads of State and government, heads of delegation, special guests, representatives of Civil Society organizations and NGOs, and the private sector. The COW met Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday and Thursday to review and adopt the draft declaration. It also held four roundtables, on High Food Prices, Climate Change and Food Security, Transboundary Pests and Diseases, and Bioenergy and Food Security. On Tuesday, the COW decided to re-convene the Informal Open-Ended Contact Group to review the draft declaration. The COW then considered text forwarded by the Contact Group on Thursday. A closing plenary was held Thursday afternoon to adopt the report of the Conference and the Declaration. This report includes a summary of these statements and discussions in chronological order, as well as a summary of the Declaration.

OPENING PLENARY

On Tuesday morning, Jacques Diouf, FAO Director-General, chaired an opening plenary session. Giorgio Napolitano, President of Italy, stated that the food crisis threatens progress achieved so far toward achieving the



Giorgio Napolitano, President of Italy

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and suggested that developed countries critically review their past policies. He stressed the need to look beyond the current emergency and focus on improving long-term agricultural production. He stated that market mechanisms alone will not be enough to overcome the crisis and called for policies and actions set within, and implemented through, the UN.

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, noted that although the food crisis could undo work done toward building democracies, it also presents a historic opportunity to revisit past policies and revitalize agriculture. He outlined some of the recommendations formulated by the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, urged participants to act in partnership, and called for a greater level of international consensus on biofuels.

In a message delivered by Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State of the Holy See, Pope Benedict XVI identified the right to food as an ethical issue, and asked participants to consider the dignity of all people. He called hunger and malnutrition “unacceptable” in a world that has sufficient production levels, and pointed to structural barriers to securing adequate food supplies.

Diouf noted the meeting had become a “*de facto* summit,” in light of the food crisis. Expressing frustration that adequate funding had not been provided for programmes that would have assured world food security, he called for innovative solutions and urged delegates to engage in non-partisan discussion.

Gianni Alemanno, Mayor of Rome, deplored the fact that the MDGs are unlikely to be reached.

Delegates elected Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of Italy, as Chair of the High-Level Conference; Denis Sassou N’Gusso (the Congo), Masatoshi Wakabayashi (Japan), Iztok Jarc (Slovenia), Leonel Fernández (Dominican Republic), Amin Abaza (Egypt), Mark Keenum (US), and Jim Anderton (New Zealand) as Vice-Chairs; and Leonel Fernández (Dominican Republic) as Rapporteur.

Delegates then adopted the Agenda and Timetable and established the COW and other Arrangements (HLC/08/2 and HLC/08/INF/9-Rev.1).

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Editor’s Note: for text and audio coverage of speakers, visit: <http://www.fao.org/foodclimate/conference/statements/>

The High-Level Segment met throughout the day and in the evening on Tuesday and Wednesday, and again on Thursday morning.

On Tuesday, the following Heads of State and government addressed the High-Level Segment: Muhammad Hosni Mubarak, Egypt; Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil; Yasuo Fukuda, Japan; Danilo Türk, Slovenia; Isaias Afwerki, Eritrea; Cristina Fernández



Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General



Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France

de Kirchner, Argentina; Mahinda Rajapaksa, Sri Lanka; Nicolas Sarkozy, France; José Luiz Rodríguez Zapatero, Spain; Ismaël Omar Guelleh, Djibouti; Stjepan Mesić, Croatia; Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Islamic Republic of Iran; Marc Ravalomanana, Madagascar; Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe; Bamir Topi, Albania; Abdoulaye Wade, Senegal; James Alix Michel, Seychelles; Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh

Abdallahi, Mauritania; Hifikepunye Pohamba, Namibia; Boni Yayi, Benin; Amani Abeid Karume, representing Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, Tanzania; Mohamed Ghannouchi, Tunisia; Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Fiji; Ali Mohammed Mujawar, Yemen; Guillaume Kigbafory Soro, Côte d’Ivoire; Denzil L. Douglas, Saint Kitts and Nevis; Jim Marurai, Cook Islands; and Youssouf Saleh Abbas, Chad.

Ministers from the following countries also addressed the High-Level Segment: China; US; India; UK; Russian Federation; and Germany. The Vice-President of Cuba and the Deputy President of South Africa spoke. Delegates heard statements from representatives from: the African Union; the League of Arab States; the FAO; the World Health Organization; the UN Conference on Trade and Development; the Alliance Executive of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Centers; and the WTO.

On Wednesday, the following Heads of State and government addressed the High-Level Segment: Denis Sassou N’Gusso, the Congo; Leonel Fernández, the Dominican Republic; João Vieira, Guinea Bissau; Gabriel Ntisezerana, Burundi; María Gloria Penayo de Duarte, Paraguay; Absalom Themba Dlamini, Swaziland; Abbas El Fassi, Morocco; and Pakalitha Mosisili, Lesotho. The Vice-Prime Minister of Turkmenistan and the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand also spoke.

Ministers, Ambassadors, or representatives from the following countries also addressed the High-Level Segment: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, the Gambia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Libya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the US, Uruguay, Viet Nam, and Zambia.



José Ramón Machado Ventura, Vice President of Cuba



Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, President of Argentina

Representatives from the following institutions also spoke: the African Development Bank; the Commonwealth of Nations; the European Commission; the European Parliament; and the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights.

On Thursday, Ministers and Ambassadors from the following countries addressed the High-Level Segment: Bolivia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Malta, Niger, Poland, Turkey, and Venezuela.

Representatives from the following Civil Society organizations and NGOs, and the private sector spoke: BP Biofuels; the Indigenous Environmental Network; the International Federation of Agricultural Producers Group on Grains and Oilseeds; the Indigenous Environmental Network; and La Via Campesina.

Representatives from the following institutions also spoke: the Arab Magreb Union; the Common Fund for Commodities; the European Community; the Islamic Development Bank; the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

Speakers widely acknowledged the timeliness of the High-Level Conference and the urgency of the food crisis. Many recognized that its causes are multiple and highlighted the interlinkages between food, energy and climate change. Among the causes mentioned were: increasing fuel and transportation costs; the rising prices of oil and agricultural inputs; competition for agricultural land between biofuels and food production; and the impacts of climate change. Speakers also highlighted the devaluation of currencies, market speculation, changing consumption patterns, and population growth.

A number of speakers, including Argentina, Cuba and Venezuela, highlighted market speculation as one of the main causes of the crisis. The European Parliament stated that this speculation had been more harmful than biofuels production. Various speakers, such as the Congo, Croatia, Namibia, Thailand, and Tunisia, identified links between the food and energy crises.

There was wide agreement that this crisis is one of food production, as well as of food distribution and access, and speakers called for international solidarity and strong political will. The US Alliance to End Hunger added that a lack of political will has hindered efforts to end hunger, and called for an analysis of the politics of the current crisis. A number of speakers, including Ghana and the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, called for concrete actions.

Numerous speakers, including the African Union, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Chad, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, the EU, Ireland, La Via Campesina, Malta, Namibia, Tunisia, the UK and Yemen, made reference to the lack of progress in realizing past international commitments to fight hunger, as well as to the threat posed by the current crisis to achieving the MDGs.

Several noted that the crisis presents opportunities, with the African Development Bank, Fiji, Hungary, Madagascar and the UK highlighting the potential for rising food prices to increase the contribution of the agricultural sector to economic growth. Norway and El Salvador suggested that the crisis could catalyze investment in improving agriculture. Angola, the Dominican Republic and Ukraine noted that the food crisis creates an opportunity for developing countries with large agricultural potential. Turkey stated that market traders should not seek economic gain from the crisis.

A number of speakers, including the Dominican Republic, Ghana, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, and Turkey, warned that the food crisis could lead to civil unrest. Morocco

and the UN High Commission on Human Rights noted that conflict could exacerbate the crisis. Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti and Mauritania highlighted the threat posed to peace by soaring food prices.

The right to food was mentioned on various occasions, including by the High Commission for Human Rights, the Indigenous Environmental Network, Morocco, Switzerland, UNEP and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

The vulnerability of certain groups was emphasized. Germany, Namibia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Spain and the World Health Organization emphasized the vulnerability of children and small-scale farmers to the food crisis, while Fiji, the Seychelles and others noted the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to climate change impacts. A number of speakers referred to women, with Iceland and New Zealand calling for greater emphasis on the role of women in development. Eritrea noted that those most affected by the food crisis are those who have already been deprived of other basic needs.

Ongoing efforts, including the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, were highlighted as positive steps in tackling the food crisis.

Numerous speakers drew attention to the linkages between climate change and the food crisis and some detailed the impacts of climate change in their country. Several, including Oman, suggested carrying out further research on these links. Climate change negotiations were highlighted, as Chile, Denmark, Italy and Norway called for a successful outcome of the Poznań and Copenhagen climate conferences. Various developing countries urged a focus on adaptation, with Swaziland noting the need to upgrade agricultural research to include climate change adaptation.

Many speakers differentiated between the immediate and the medium- and long-term measures needed to tackle the food crisis. On emergency measures, immediate action to ensure productive harvests in the next two years was recommended. Various developed countries, including Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Poland, and the UK, highlighted increases in food aid and international assistance for cooperation, as well as willingness to meet emergency needs by releasing food from government stockpiles. Some international donors, including the Islamic Development Bank, announced pledges to help tackle the food crisis.

Many identified financial resources as part of the long-term solution to the crisis, with the Dominican Republic highlighting the insufficiency of current funding levels. The African Development Bank also called for greater investment from the private sector. Calls were made for continued and increased financial support from Bretton Woods institutions and UN agencies by Pakistan, and from industrialized countries by the Congo, El Salvador, and Malaysia. Kenya, Lesotho and Nigeria mentioned the need for increased access to affordable credit. The Islamic Development Bank, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal and others made additional pledges to help tackle the food crisis.

There was also a general call for increased investment in agriculture, with enhanced agricultural productivity highlighted as a key medium- to long-term measure, especially in developing countries. Some speakers elaborated on what the increased investment in agriculture should entail. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food urged a focus on small-scale farmers. Hungary underscored the need for investment in professionally-designed projects for sustainable development. UNEP called for investment in seeds, tools, farm

equipment, forests, and natural pollinators. The Indigenous Environmental Network urged adaptation and mitigation funds for low-carbon small-scale agriculture. Haiti stressed the need for research and technology to diversify food products for the benefit of all. Italy underlined that infrastructure development is a necessary step toward combating hunger.

Other proposals included establishing seed banks, a global mechanism to create a buffer against fluctuations in food production, and an early warning system for food shortages. Speaker also called for the establishment of an international expert panel on agriculture, an investment facility for the promotion of climate change adaptation and mitigation projects in the agricultural sector with the support of the Rome-based institutions, and an international framework to support national right-to-food strategies.

International coordination and cooperation was identified as central in addressing the food crisis. Australia, Bangladesh, Denmark, Norway, the United Arab Emirates and others welcomed the creation of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. Some speakers formulated suggestions as to how it should pursue its work. Australia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland, supported further reform of the FAO, and various speakers, including Hungary, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Luxembourg, the UNCCD and the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid said it should take a leading role in the fight against hunger. The work of other agencies was noted, including praise for the World Food Programme (WFP) by Kenya, and reference to long-term forecasts from FAO, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the World Bank by Greece. China, the League of Arab States, Namibia, Australia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan, New Zealand and Finland encouraged greater inter-agency cooperation. Italy stressed the potential role of the Group of Eight in addressing the crisis.

There was a general call for the successful completion of the WTO Doha Round of negotiations. Underlining the role of export restrictions in the current food crisis, Albania, Cuba, New Zealand, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Swaziland, the WTO and others called for their elimination. Burundi, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Luxembourg, Pakistan, Sao Tome and Principe and Switzerland called for the elimination of farm subsidies in developed countries, which were identified as contributing factors to the food crisis by the UN High Commission on Human Rights. The European Community stated that its common agricultural policy is part of the solution to the crisis. Many, including Angola, Iceland, Madagascar, Tunisia, Ukraine and the UK, highlighted the need of developing countries and small-scale farmers to access international markets. The International Seed Federation called for a reduction of taxes on feed, fertilizers and foodstuffs. Kenya noted that developing countries often export food products in raw form, thus fetching low prices.

There was considerable divergence in the opinions expressed on biofuels. Many developing countries cautioned against use of agricultural land for fuel production until hunger has been eradicated. Belize and Iceland opposed biofuels and promoted the development of other forms of renewable energy. Germany, the League of Arab States and the US argued that "balanced" biofuel production is possible, important to employment and welfare, and necessary in the face of global energy scarcity. Numerous speakers, including Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Australia and Luxembourg supported the sustainable production of biofuels. The EC, Italy and Denmark supported the use of genetically

modified organisms for biofuels production, with the necessary precautions. Second-generation biofuels were highlighted by many as the solution to the crisis. Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Arab Emirates urged research into this type of biofuel. The Common Fund for Commodities and Kenya said the production of non-food items for biofuels on arid land would contribute to sustainable development. China and Malta identified the need to further study the impacts of biofuel production on food prices. The International Federation of Agricultural Producers emphasized that biofuels should not be the preserve of wealthy developed countries. The Indigenous Environmental Network recommended against corporate production of biofuels for export. Turkey, Norway, Switzerland, Algeria and BP Biofuels supported the development of international guidelines on acceptable biofuels. Mexico and Saudi Arabia called for the elimination of subsidies for bioenergy, and with Malaysia, Oman and Uruguay, highlighted the linkages between biofuels production and the food crisis.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

On Wednesday, the COW held four roundtable discussions, which are summarized below.

HIGH FOOD PRICES: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: This roundtable (HLC/08/INF/1) was co-chaired by Ed Schafer, US Secretary of Agriculture, and Mahamane Moussa, Minister of Agricultural Development, Niger. Panel presentations and discussions focused on responses to the high prices, and addressed the need for immediate humanitarian responses, sustainability in food and biofuel production, the development of alternative energy supplies, and international trade reform. Participants also called for policies linking water, energy and food, good governance, and streamlined and accessible funding mechanisms. Regarding agricultural policies, they called for a focus on small-scale farmers, and country-driven and country-owned solutions.



Co-Chair Ed Schafer, US Secretary of Agriculture

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY: This roundtable (HLC/08/INF/2), co-chaired by Muzahem Al Muheisen, Minister for Agriculture, Jordan, and Erik Solheim, Minister for International Development, Norway, examined climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, impacts of climate change on food access, and economic growth and the potential role of public-private partnerships. Suggestions for adaptation strategies included breeding drought-resistant crops, developing irrigation strategies and infrastructure, and reducing poverty. Participants discussed: policies to promote food self-sufficiency and empower small-scale farmers; sustainable forest and water resource management; land degradation; the expansion of the Clean Development Mechanism; and the development of insurance mechanisms.



Co-Chair Erik Solheim, Minister for International Development, Norway

TRANSBOUNDARY PESTS AND DISEASES: This roundtable (HLC/08/INF/7) was co-chaired by Sharad Pawar, Union Minister for Agriculture and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, India, and Jim Anderton, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, New Zealand. In this session, calls were heard for a global platform to address transboundary animal diseases, early detection and warning systems and rapid response mechanisms. Participants identified the need for: cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses of potential measures to tackle the food crisis; the incorporation of farmers' knowledge into these measures; capacity building; and a focus on biodiversity protection. Science-based policies and the incorporation of traditional knowledge into decision making to control pests and diseases were also advocated.

BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY: This roundtable (HLC/08/INF/3), with Co-Chairs Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands, and Guillermo Salazar, Minister of Agricultural Development, Panama, reflected disagreements regarding the development and production of biofuels. The suggestion by one panelist that even second-generation biofuels will displace food crops was met with opposition, with some participants highlighting strategies to both encourage biofuels, and secure food supplies and environmental protection. Suggestions were made concerning the development of sustainability criteria and systematic research and development efforts. Participants were asked to consider inequitable energy consumption patterns, with some advocating a more cautious approach to biofuels.



Co-Chair Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands

A summary of these roundtables is available at: <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/wfs/html/yimbvol150num3e.html>

DECLARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL

CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: On Tuesday, the COW met to discuss the draft declaration of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, as prepared by the Informal Open-Ended Contact Group. COW Chair Denis Sassou N'Guesso emphasized the high expectations of the whole world regarding the current process. The debate started out with some substantive discussion, with one delegate raising concerns about naming only a few of the causes of high food prices, and asking for more general language to be used. However, procedural issues dominated the session, and led to the re-convening of the Contact Group to continue negotiating the text.

On Wednesday, the Contact Group continued discussion of the draft, with the ensuing text re-submitted to the COW by Contact Group Co-Chairs Ibrahim Abu Atileh (Jordan) and David Hegwood (US) in an evening session. Delegates discussed at length whether to adopt the draft declaration *en bloc*, so as not to reopen the debate. Most delegates seemed to prefer this option, but one regional group could not agree with the latest version of the text. Substantive debate centered on whether to include references to: "restrictive" measures that could increase the volatility of international prices; initiatives under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); unilateral actions in breach of international law



Participants during Wednesday's COW session

that threaten food security; and the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. No consensus was reached on these issues, and the session was suspended.

On Thursday morning, delegates resumed their discussion but could not reach agreement, despite an additional suspension for consultations in regional groups. COW Chair Sassou N'Guesso convened a closed meeting with the heads of these groups in an attempt to reach consensus. In the meantime delegates engaged in informal consultations.

The COW reconvened, after a four-hour recess, to adopt the COW report and approve the draft declaration. Rapporteur Salvador Jiménez presented his draft report (HLC/08/REP). The COW adopted it with the minor additions of references to side events that had been held and to the draft Comprehensive Framework for Action. Delegates then refocused on the draft declaration, which was to be appended to the COW report.

As positions remained entrenched, the Congo and Zambia lamented the indecisiveness of the COW, noting the urgency of world hunger.

The representatives of the EU, Africa, Asia, the Near East, North America and the Southwest Pacific, as well as several other delegates, supported adopting the Declaration *en bloc*. They noted that continued negotiations on the text would stall further progress.

Argentina and Cuba condemned the lack of an objective analysis of the causes of the food crisis, with Argentina stating that "when one starts out on the basis of a mistaken diagnosis, then no appropriate remedy can be found." They identified the true causes of hunger as, *inter alia*: distorted agricultural policies and trade barriers; high subsidies to production and export; unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in the North; and "sinister strategies" of using grains as fuel. Venezuela regretted that the proposed reference to the UNFCCC was not included in the draft, calling it the only legally-binding instrument that reflects the genuine commitment of powerful countries to addressing the issues of climate change and bioenergy.

Several Latin American countries said they would not block consensus in adopting the Declaration, with Venezuela regretting that "an opportunity was lost" to combat the "structural problem" of hunger. These countries requested, and delegates agreed, that their statements be appended to the final Conference report. Delegates finally approved, by acclamation, the draft declaration: without the proposed deletion of reference to "restrictive" measures; without reference to the



On Thursday, the COW reconvened at 6:45 to adopt its report. The EU, however, asked for suspension of the meeting as some of its member countries were still deliberating the draft declaration.

UNFCCC or unilateral actions in breach of international law; and including a reference to the Mauritius Strategy on SIDS. Chair Sassou N'Guesso formally adjourned the meeting of the COW.

Final Declaration: The Declaration of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy (HLC/08/REP/Add1) contains five introductory paragraphs, and three sections outlining priorities and proposed activities for: immediate and short-term measures; medium- and long-term measures; and monitoring and review. The Declaration also contains a concluding paragraph.

In the introductory paragraphs, the High-Level Conference on World Food Security reaffirms the conclusions of the 1996 World Food Summit and the objective, confirmed by the World Food Summit: Five Years Later, of achieving food security for all, with an immediate view to reducing by half the number of undernourished people by no later than 2015, and reaffirms the commitment to achieving the MDGs. The Declaration outlines the purposes of the High-Level Conference, stating that the international community needs to take urgent and coordinated action to combat the negative impacts of soaring food prices on the world's most vulnerable countries and populations.

On immediate and short-term measures, the Declaration states that the global food situation calls for a strong commitment from governments as well as from all other stakeholders. It calls upon donors and the UN System to increase their assistance to developing countries, and outlines two main short-term priorities: responding urgently to requests for assistance from affected countries; and immediately supporting agricultural production and trade. Regarding the priority to increase assistance, the Declaration states that:

- relevant UN agencies should be assured the resources to expand and enhance their food assistance and support programmes to address hunger and malnutrition;
- appropriate regional organizations should enhance their cooperation;
- all efforts by governments and NGOs should be synergized with those of multilateral organizations to deal with the continuum from urgent to long-term assistance;
- national and international efforts should be made to ensure that international emergency food assistance is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible to populations in stress; and
- to facilitate adjustment to higher food prices, donors and international financial institutions should provide balance of payments support and/or budget support to food-importing, low-income countries. The relevant international institutions are called upon to simplify the eligibility procedures for existing financial mechanisms to support agriculture and environment.

Regarding the priority to support agricultural production and trade, the Declaration states that:

- all relevant organizations and cooperating countries should be prepared to assist countries to put in place revised policies and measures to help farmers, particularly small-scale producers, increase production and integrate with local, regional and international markets;
- South-South cooperation must be encouraged;
- development partners are invited to participate in international and regional activities, for instance by giving farmers in low-income, food-deficit countries access to appropriate locally-adapted seeds, fertilizers, animal feeds and other inputs, as well as technical assistance, to increase production;

- development partners are called upon to undertake initiatives to moderate unusual fluctuations in food prices;
- WTO members reaffirm their commitment to the rapid and successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda and reiterate their willingness to reach comprehensive and ambitious results that would be conducive to developing countries;
- implementing an aid for trade package should provide a valuable complement to the Doha Development Agenda; and
- participants to the High-Level Conference will strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all, and reaffirm the need to minimize the use of restrictive measures that could increase the volatility of international prices.

On medium- and long-term measures, the Declaration states that the current crisis has highlighted the vulnerability of the world's food systems to shocks, and that it is vital to combine medium- and long-term measures. The following measures are identified:

- a people-centered policy framework supportive of the poor and of livelihoods in developing countries, and increased investment in agriculture;
- increased resilience of food production systems to challenges posed by climate change, with a focus on maintaining biodiversity for sustaining future production performance;
- the prioritization by governments of the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors, to enable smallholder farmers and fishers, including indigenous people, particularly in vulnerable areas, to benefit from financial mechanisms and investment flows to support climate change adaptation, mitigation, and technology development, transfer and dissemination;
- increased investment in science and technology for food and agriculture and the establishment of supportive policies and governance structures in accordance with the Monterrey Consensus;
- continued efforts toward liberalizing international trade in agriculture by reducing trade barriers and market-distorting policies;
- addressing the challenges and opportunities posed by biofuels and fostering a coherent, effective and results-oriented international dialogue on biofuels; and
- in-depth studies to ensure that production and use of biofuels is in accordance with the three pillars of sustainable development and takes into account the need to achieve and maintain global food security.

This section also reaffirms the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of SIDS and calls for its implementation in the context of the challenges of climate change and food security.

On monitoring and review, the Declaration:

- requests FAO, in close partnership with WFP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant international organizations, including those participating in the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and in collaboration with governments, civil society and the private sector, to monitor and analyze world food security and develop strategies to improve it; and
- stresses the importance of the effective and efficient use of the resources of the UN system, and other relevant international organizations.

In the concluding paragraph, delegates firmly resolve to use all means to alleviate the suffering caused by the current crisis, to stimulate food production and to increase investment in

agriculture. They further commit to addressing obstacles to food access and to using the planet's resources sustainably, for present and future generations.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Thursday evening, Vice-Chair Denis Sassou N'Guesso chaired the closing plenary. After his invitation, delegates adopted *en bloc* and by acclamation the report (HLC/08/REP) and the Declaration of the High-Level Conference (HLC/08/REP/Add1).

FAO Director General Diouf praised delegates' hard work on reaching a difficult compromise. He said that they had achieved the desired results, highlighting the high attendance to the Conference and the reconfirmation of the commitment to the MDGs. He noted that delegates had not only looked at urgent problems but also analyzed the underlying structural problems of the food crisis. He noted the significant pledges received from the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, France, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Spain, Venezuela, the UK and the US.

Vice-Chair Sassou N'Guesso congratulated Diouf on successfully mobilizing decision makers and experts from



L-R: Jacques Diouf, FAO Director-General and COW Chair Denis Soussa N'Guesso

around the world and expressed hope that the pledges received so far will encourage others. He stressed the need for flexible and accessible financing and innovative mechanisms that can lead to an

agricultural revolution.

The US congratulated countries on adopting the Declaration, noting that it will support expanded food production, progress toward trade liberalization, and investments in science and technology. He welcomed the recognition of issues on the challenges and opportunities of biofuels, and said the US is committed to their sustainable production and use. Ecuador congratulated those who had "worked behind the scenes."

Vice-Chair Sassou N'Guesso congratulated delegates, noted their spirit of friendship, and closed the Conference at 9:37 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

G8 ENERGY MINISTERS' MEETING: This meeting of the eight leading industrialized nations' (G8) energy ministers will take place in Aomori City, Japan, from 7-8 June 2008. The meeting will convene in preparation for the 2008 G8 Summit, to be held 7-9 July 2008 in Hokkaido, Japan. For more information, contact: Mr. Masunaga, Energy Ministers Meeting 2008 Office, Japanese Agency for Natural Resources and Energy; tel: +81-3-3580-4608; fax: +81-3-3580-8575; internet: <http://www.enecho.meti.go.jp/english/080602.htm>

G8 SUMMIT: This summit of the eight leading industrialized nations (G8) will convene in Hokkaido, Japan, from 7-9 July 2008. For more information, contact: Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tel: +81- 3-3580-3311; internet: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2008/info/index.html>

TENTH WORLD RENEWABLE ENERGY

CONGRESS: This Congress will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, UK, from 19-25 July 2008. For more information,

contact: A. Sayigh, World Renewable Energy Congress/ Network; tel: +44-1273-625-643; fax: +44-1273-625-768; e-mail: asayigh@netcomuk.co.uk; internet: <http://www.wrenuk.co.uk/wrecx.html>

ECOSOC SUBSTANTIVE SESSION: The 2008 substantive session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene at UN Headquarters in New York, US, from 30 June - 24 July 2008. The session will include a High-Level Segment (30 June - 3 July), which will involve the Development Cooperation Forum and Annual Ministerial Review; the Dialogue with Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions (7 July); the Coordination Segment (7-9 July); the Operational Activities Segment (10-14 July); the Humanitarian Affairs Segment (15-17 July); and the General Segment (18-24 July). For more information, contact: Jennifer DeLaurentis, Secretary of ECOSOC, Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management, ECOSOC Affairs Branch; tel: +1-212-963-4640; fax: +1-212-963-5935; internet: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/>

HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON THE MILLENNIUM

DEVELOPMENT GOALS: The UN Secretary-General and the President of the UN General Assembly are organizing a High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on 25 September 2008, at UN Headquarters in New York, US. The Summit seeks to be the central political development event of the year, setting the tone for the Doha Financing for Development Conference in late 2008. It aims to mobilize world leaders, including Heads of State, major business leaders, civil society and religious leaders, the heads of foundations, and other stakeholders, to agree on the practical steps needed to achieve the MDGs. The central objective of the Summit is to gather commitments for concrete initiatives from all participants that will translate their promise to support the MDGs into action on the ground. For more information, contact: UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service; tel: +1-212-963-3125; fax: +1-212-963-8712; e-mail: ngls@un.org; internet: <http://www.un-ngls.org/>

UNCCD CRIC-7 AND CST-9: The seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-7) will convene from 3-14 November 2008, in Istanbul, Turkey. The ninth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST-9) shall be held in conjunction with this session of the CRIC. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815 2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

2008 EU PRESIDENCY RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY FORUM: This forum will take place from 17-22 November 2008, in Paris, France. The event will provide a major platform for discussion of the European Renewable Energy Directive. For more information, contact: Sophie Liberatore; tel: +32-2-546-19-33; fax: +32-2-546-19-34; e-mail: sophie.liberatore@ec.europa.eu; internet: <http://www.erec.org/nc/calendar-of-events/>

FOURTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL: These meetings are scheduled to take place in Poznań, Poland, from 1-12 December 2008, and will coincide with the 29th meetings of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2008