

FOOD POLICY UPDATE

FROM ROME

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Food Policy Updates from Rome aims to provide an up-to-date information on the global food governance system and strategic activities of ActionAid.

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The Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

1. Members Appointed to the Coordination Committee of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM)

The document establishing the reformed CFS states that civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and its networks will be invited to autonomously establish a global mechanism for food security and nutrition which will function as a facilitating body for civil society consultation and participation in the CFS. This global mechanism, or the **Civil Society Mechanism (CSM)**, will also provide a space for dialogue between a wide range of civil society actors where different positions can be expressed and debated.

Through the CSM, civil society community will select their representatives in the CFS—i.e. four members of the Advisory Group and the 40 members of the Coordination Committee. As the governing body of the CSM, the Coordination Committee will represent 11 constituencies and 16 sub-regions. Although the selection process for the Coordination Committee is still ongoing, representatives from most constituencies have already been appointed.

For the list of appointed members: <http://bit.ly/fr7zFI>

2. NGO Constituency of the CSM

The NGO constituency is one of the 11 constituencies which form the Coordination Committee of the CSM. The role of the NGO constituency is to promote the broadest possible participation of NGOs directly involved with food security and nutrition issues in the CFS process at international, regional and national levels. In order to facilitate policy discussion and to support the two NGOs Coordination Committee members (Chris leather and Natalia Landivar), three focal points have been identified on specific items: ActionAid (Alberta Guerra) on Mapping Food Security Actions at Country Level, IATP (Sophia Murphy) on Price Volatility, FIAN (Flavio Valente and Daniel Gomez) on Global Strategic Framework (GSF) and Land Tenure & Agricultural Investments. The focal points had their first teleconference on 16 March to share initial ideas on how to organize their work. The first priority agreed upon was to find a way to take on board as many NGOs as possible, especially from the South, and to identify key representatives that can produce multiplier effects.

3. Discussion on Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment that Respects Rights, Livelihoods and Resources (RAI)

Following the request of the CFS to set up a more inclusive consultation process for the RAI—an initiative of the World Bank, the International Fund

for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)—the proposal presented by Belgium was discussed at the last joint Advisory Group and Bureau meeting on 16 March. The two-track approach proposed by Belgium consists of on one hand, an inclusive process in the CFS, and on the other, a test of the principles in pilot countries.

ActionAid, Oxfam and the International Planning Committee for Food Security (IPC), representing social movements, International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth (MIJARC) and Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA), agreed on [a joint position](#), supporting a process that will lead to the endorsement, by October 2012, of “principles on agricultural investment to help realize the Right to Food”, taking the current RAI principles as one input among others.

CSOs also raised concerns that the CFS did not endorse the RAI and therefore cannot support the commencement of pilot testing in countries. As a result, Belgium agreed to re-draft the proposal in accordance with the comments received and confirmed that activities that will be carried out by the 4 agencies (World Bank, IFAD, UNCTAD, FAO) will not be part of the CFS process.

4. Discussion on Food Price Volatility

Due to the continued rise in food prices over the past eight months, the CFS decided to keep food price as a standing item on the agenda. During the Joint Advisory/Bureau and Bureau meeting on 16 and 18 March, the FAO, the World Food Program (WFP) and the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) Secretariat provided updates on their analysis and various initiatives on food prices. They agreed that the current situation is one of continued uncertainty due to weather related events, recent fuel price hikes and their unpredictable impacts on economic growth. However, higher food prices are likely to remain a reality for some time given the overall low levels of global food stocks. The FAO reported that at least two good seasons of good harvest will be needed to restore global food stocks to normal levels.

- For the Chair's Summary of the Joint Advisory and Bureau meeting: <http://bit.ly/fElzn1>
- For the Chair's Summary of the Bureau meeting: <http://bit.ly/eISyZE>

Previously on 24 February, civil society presented recommendations to the CFS Bureau members for an intergovernmental plan of action, demanding the establishment of a working group to tackle the issue of food price volatility. As a result, the CFS Bureau decided to form a Food Price Volatility Task Team, composed of FAO, IFAD, WFP, the UN Secretary General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF) and other relevant participant organizations of the CFS, including CSOs.

Firstly, the Task Team set up a **Web Portal** with various food price related information and activities, which can be accessed from the [CFS public website](#). Secondly, the Task Team will organise a briefing **seminar on 9 May** to inform CFS Bureau representatives on action to address food price volatility, and provide options for country-level tools. Thirdly, the Task Team will start **formulating decisions and recommendations that may be considered at the 37th Session of the CFS**. To achieve better coherence among different initiatives, ActionAid requested the recommendations to be drawn from the HLPE report on price volatility, the G20 report and the outcomes of the FAO regional seminars (see below for further details).

5. The High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) Study on Food Price Volatility

The HLPE has commenced its study on food price volatility. According to the HLPE Secretariat, the members of the Project Team that have been appointed to prepare the first draft include: **Benoit Daviron** (Team Leader, France), **Sophia Murphy** (Canada), **Niama Nango Dembele** (Mali) and

Following an expert workshop, the report will be submitted to the HLPE Steering Committee in June for approval.

6. Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and Other Natural Resources (VGs)

The launch of the **Zero Draft of the VGs** is tentatively scheduled for **15 April** during the FAO Council. The Zero Draft will be posted for an open electronic consultation from 18 April to 15 May. The FAO Secretariat will take into account the comments received in preparing the First Draft, which will be communicated on 1 June to the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group responsible for the negotiation of the text.

Greg Myers, from USAID and chair of open-ended Working Group, in liaison with the CFS Chair and Bureau, will facilitate meetings of the open-ended Working Group to consider the Zero Draft, and to plan the CFS-led plenary review and the finalization of the First Draft on 25-27/28 July.

In addition, CSOs that have been involved in the two-year preparation process of the VGs have now [finalized their proposal](#) that will inform the FAO drafting process with the views of the civil society.



UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

1. Global Food Price Volatility

In order to support the design of immediate country-level response to soaring food prices, the FAO is running a cycle of seminars in 13 regions and sub-regions to share lessons learned from the 2007-2008 crisis and to develop policy actions to avoid a new food crisis. Aftab Alam Khan, ActionAid's Asia Food Rights Coordinator, attended the first seminar in Bangkok on 9-10 of March.

For the summary of discussions at the Bangkok seminar: <http://bit.ly/hfDtzb>

Almost all governments would arrange national consultations on food price issues as a follow up of this regional consultation; this is a great opportunity for ActionAid Country Programmes (CPs) and partners to share their experience and analysis.

Next FAO seminars are to be held in Nadi on 14-15 April 2011 for the Pacific Islands sub region, and in San Salvador on the 5 May for the Central America sub region.

For more info on FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) : <http://www.fao.org/isfp/isfp-home/en/>
Updates on the policy seminar schedule are available at: <http://www.fao.org/isfp/isfp-highlights/detail-highlights/en/item/51583/icode/>

World Food Day

The theme for the next World Food Day (16 Oct) will be: [“Food prices- From crisis to stability”](#)

New Publication

FAO has launched a new publication on food price volatility:
[“Safeguarding Food Security in Volatile Global Markets”](#)

2. FAO and OECD Policy Report for G20—“Price Volatility in Global Food and Agriculture Markets: Policy Responses”

Facilitated by FAO and OECD, and co-written by 7 international organisations including, FAO, WFP, IFAD, OECD, UNCTAD, the World Bank, and IFRRRI, the Policy Report will be discussed during the G20 Ministerial Meeting in June 2011, highlighting the causes of food price volatility and presenting global policy recommendations. The report, in its third draft has three main components:

- **How to reduce global food price volatility** – Recommendations will look at how to enhance accessibility and transparency of market information, transparency and regulation of futures markets, and harmonization of trade policies in times of crisis.
- **Mitigating its negative impacts** – Recommendations will include the establishment of strategic emergency food reserves, linked with early warning systems and safety nets, and market based approaches to managing risk at the country level.
- **Reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience of poor farmers** - Recommendations include increased investment in infrastructure, technology and extension services, and the need to improve policy coordination in times of crisis.

ActionAid is closely monitoring this report as one of the main G20 related activities.

3. FAO Technical Meeting on Mapping Actions for Food Security (MAfFS)

In response to Member Countries' requests, the FAO is currently developing the [web platform on Mapping Actions for Food Security \(MAfFS\)](#) to allow immediate and user-friendly access to information about food security actions and resource flows. The aim is to enable countries to better coordinate their responses to food insecurity at the country level. An initial group of countries (Afghanistan, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) has started using the web platform on a trial basis.

The main purpose of the technical meeting held in Rome on 22-24 March was to get [first hand feedback from direct users](#) and to provide a forum to discuss technical issues for the implementation and further development of the MAfFS system. ActionAid attended the meeting as a member of the CFS Mapping Task Team and requested that sex disaggregated data be introduced. Consequently, a gender search ability has been included in the improvements requested to developers so as to allow the extraction of gender sensitive data and reports.

This work will feed into the CFS activity of developing a mapping tool for countries and will be discussed at the next technical workshop in Rome on 23-25 May.

4. Election of the FAO Director General

Six candidates are currently running for the Director General post at the FAO. The candidates, all nominated by their countries, are **Franz Fischler** (Austria), **José Graziano da Silva** (Brazil), **Indroyono Soesilo** (Indonesia), **Mohammad Saeid Noori Naeini** (Iran), **Abdul Latif Rashid** (Iraq) and **Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé** (Spain). The election of the new Director-General will take place in a secret ballot at the beginning of the 37th FAO Conference in Rome, Italy in June by the organisation's 191 Member Nations. The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) prepared the following set of questions to address to the candidates: <http://bit.ly/fr6OG0>

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Land Portal

The Land Portal will first be launched during the Third European Forum on Rural Development, which will take place in Palencia, Spain, from 29 March to 1 April 2011. A second and third launches are being organized during the annual World Bank Land Conference in Washington DC in April and during the International Land Coalition Assembly of Members in Albania in May.

United Nations High Level Task Force for the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF)

ActionAid attended the teleconference convened by HLTF Coordinator, David Nabarro, to exchange views and concerns on significant events on food and nutrition security. David Nabarro provided updates on food security situation in light of recent increase in food commodity prices, and stressed the need for increased investments in smallholder agriculture to support resilient production and reducing farmers' risks, and expanded and improved safety nets that enable vulnerable people to access nutritious food and other basic needs. For minutes of this teleconference: <http://bit.ly/ejii4e>

CONCORD European Food Security Group (EFSG), Brussels

On 17 March, CONCORD Director, Olivier Consolo, met with **Franz Fischler** who is running for the Director-General post of the FAO. Fischler shared his views on the role of the FAO and the engagement of the civil society, highlighting how the FAO need to be less headquarter-oriented and closer to the fields and better result-oriented. He also recognized that NGOs/CSOs play an intermediary role between stakeholders in the field and multilateral and international institutions. For the summary of discussions: <http://bit.ly/dlWfTf>

Upcoming Events

APRIL

- **International Academic Conference on 'Global Land Grabbing'** - Co-organised and hosted by the Future Agricultures Consortium in partnership with the Journal of Peasant Studies and the Land Deal Politics Initiative (LDPI)
6-8 April, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Brighton, UK
- **141th Session of the FAO Council**
11-15 April, FAO, Rome, Italy
- **Global food and Agriculture: Policy Options in Response to Increased Volatility** - Organised by Wilton Park
13 April, West Sussex, UK
For more information: <http://bit.ly/eqSEUS>

- **International Dakar Agricultural Forum: “Regulation of Agricultural Markets and World Governance”** - Organised by the Government of Senegal in collaboration with MOMAGRI Think-tank (Mouvement pour une Organisation Mondiale de l’Agriculture)
18-19 April, Méridien President Hotel, Dakar, Senegal
- **NEPAD-OECD 5th Ministerial Conference—“Accelerating Reform in Africa: Mobilising investment in infrastructure and agriculture”**
26-27 April, Méridien President Hotel, Dakar, Senegal

MAY

- **International Conference on Climate Change, Agri-Food, Fisheries, and Ecosystems (ICCAFF): “Reinventing Research, Innovation, and Policy Agendas for an Environmentally and Socially-Balanced Growth”**
19-21 May, Hotel Palais des Roses, Agadir, Morocco

JUNE

- **Association of Southeast Asian Nations—Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (ASEAN—SEAFDEC) Conference: “Fish for the People 2020: Adaptation to a Changing Environment”**
13-17 June, Sofitel Centara Grand Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
- **G20 Agricultural Ministers Meeting**
22-23 June, Paris, France
- **37th Session of the FAO Conference**
25 June–2 July, FAO, Rome, Italy

OCTOBER

- **Family Farming International Congress: Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth**
- Organised by World Rural Forum
5-7 October, Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain
For more information: <http://www.ruralforum.net>



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