



CHAIR'S SUMMARY

CFS JOINT BUREAU AND ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

16 March 2011 – 10.00 – 13.00 – WFP Auditorium

Agenda (see list of attendees below)

The following agenda was agreed:

1) Standing item on Price Volatility

Updates on:

- a) Latest market developments
- b) Sub-regional workshops
- c) Portal/Seminar

2) Update on the RAI process

3) Update on Civil Society Mechanism

4) Any other business

- a) Calendar of events – request for input
- b) Presentation by the Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)
- c) Agenda of 37th Session of CFS

Opening remarks:

The Chair expressed its appreciation to the World Food Programme for hosting the Joint Meeting of the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group. This was the first time that the meeting was held outside the FAO and goes to show real efforts in strengthening the joint Secretariat.

The Chair, on behalf of the Bureau and Advisory Group, also expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the government and people of Japan for the triple disasters that struck their country – a massive earthquake, followed by a deadly tsunami, and then the resulting nuclear accidents.

1. Standing item on Price Volatility

Updates on:

a) Latest market developments

Mr Abolreza Abbassian (FAO) and Mr George Rapsomanikis (FAO) made presentations on the situation of food price volatility focusing their attention in particular on the causes and impact of the current crisis and on CFS-related activities. Ms Valerie Guarnieri (WFP) then explained the steps being taken by WFP to respond to price volatility. These cover measures to ensure preparedness, including strengthening of government monitoring systems, thus complementing global price information with real time data on prices at the local level where the poorest face the greatest difficulty; ensuring access to purchases for humanitarian supplies; making effective regional food reserves to respond to shocks; and looking at how to strengthen existing safety nets in countries facing increased hunger and under nutrition. It was noted that some 40 countries had been identified for close monitoring to observe the impact of price volatility at the national and sub-national levels. Copies of these presentations will be posted on the CFS Working Space.

The Bureau and the Advisory Group were informed that the current situation is one of continued uncertainty due to weather related events, the recent fuel price hikes and the 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. At least two good seasons will be needed to restore global food stocks to normal levels. The Bureau and Advisory Group members were referred for further information to the the FAO Food Price Index, along with the supply/demand round-up, released the first Thursday of every month on the FAO World Food Situation Web Portal, which will be linked to the CFS Portal.

FAO informed the joint meeting on the price volatility paper which FAO will present during the meeting of the G20 Development Working Group (19-20 March 2011 in Paris) on behalf of the 9 agencies involved in the process. A first draft has been prepared including an analysis of the causes and the impact of food price volatility and a section containing policy recommendations. This last part aims to outline the different options available to reduce food price volatility, mitigate its negative impacts and increase resilience of agricultural sector to shocks. It was noted that several members of the HLPE Steering Committee were asked in a personal capacity to act as peer reviewers of the report. In response to the presentation, it was requested that the G20 report take into account the importance of increasing investments in agricultural research.

The Secretariat provided the names of the members of the Project Team appointed to prepare the HLPE report on Price Volatility and presented the steps that will be followed for its preparation. The Project Team for the study on Land Tenure will be appointed soon.

b) Sub-regional workshops

Mr Jacques De Graaf (FAO) provided background information regarding the series of sub-regional seminars that are taking place to support the design of immediate country-level response to the price crisis. The main objective of these seminars, organized by FAO in 13 regions and sub-regions, is to address macro and microeconomic processes involving national policy makers, to share lessons learned, and to discuss differences between the current situation and the food price crisis of 2007/08. The

outcomes of the seminars will contribute to update the FAO's "Guide for policy and programmatic actions at country level to address high food prices". During the first seminar, held in Bangkok, it was highlighted that high food prices affect particularly the poorest who spend a large portion of their income on food. Agreement was reached on the need to increase investment in agriculture. It was also agreed to pursue a twin-track approach comprising short term emergency responses such as safety nets combined with longer term investment such as in infrastructure and research.

c) Portal/Seminar

As requested by the Bureau on 25 February meeting, the Secretariat presented a prototype of the web portal on food price volatility that can be accessed from the CFS public website. Links are grouped into two themes: (i) Monitoring and (ii) Resources for Policy Makers. Standard search functionality allows further searches. In response to the request for links many suggestions were received. There is now a need for a process to determine the relevance and the order of the suggested links.

The Secretariat presented an update on the organization of the briefing on tools available from international organizations and actions undertaken at country-level to address food price volatility, as requested by the Bureau. Given the urgency of the situation, it was decided to convene the briefing on 9 May 2011. The possibility of webcasting will be considered to ensure wider access to the outcomes of the briefing. The participation of representatives of developing countries and CSO was encouraged.

2. Update on the RAI Principles

Hugo Verbist will submit a modified proposal for the process of consultation on the RAI Principles to the Bureau on 18 March taking into account comments from all stakeholders including the four agencies who drafted the Principles. The two-track approach suggested consists, on the one hand, of an inclusive, consultative process within CFS to further develop and broaden the ownership of principles for responsible agricultural investment, and, on the other, of efforts to test the practical application of the Principles at country level. The CFS-led consultative process should be informed by insights gained during country pilot testing. Consultations with countries subject to large-scale foreign investments in agriculture will also be important with regard to the relevance of sound agricultural investment principles for national food security. Activities under the "pilot country" track will be undertaken by the agencies themselves and, although the experiences from the pilot countries will be communicated to the CFS process in order to enrich its information base, this track is not part of the CFS process.

3. Update on Civil Society Mechanism

This agenda item was not discussed due to lack of time.

4. Any other business

This agenda item was not discussed due to lack of time.

CFS Bureau

CFS Chair: Mr Noel De Luna; Mr Riache Azzedine (Algeria); Ms Emily Collins (Australia); Mr Hugo Verbist (Belgium); Mr Renato Godinho (Brazil); Ms Fatma Saber (Egypt); Ms Ilean Rivera (Guatemala); Mr Katsumasa Miyachi (Japan); Mr Ibrahim Abu Atileh (Jordan); Mr Azhar Mohd Isa (Malaysia); Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov (Russian Federation); Ms Ertharin Cousin (USA); Mr Michael Michener (USA).

CFS Advisory Group

Mr Hafez Ghanem (FAO); Mr Jean-Philippe Audinet (IFAD); Mr Mouhamed El-Kouhene (WFP); Ms Valerie Guarnieri (WFP); Mr David Nabarro (UN HLTF Coordination); Ms Florence Lasbennes (UN HTLF Coordination); Ms Beatriz Gasco (IPC); Ms Alberta Guerra (Action Aid); Mr George Dixon Fernandez (Mijarc); Mr Kwesi Atta-Krah (Bioversity); Mr Keith Jones (IAFN).

Silent Observers

Ms Claudia Fumo (European Union); Mr Thomas Haussmann (Germany); Ms Carolin Putz (Germany); Ms Agnes Dus (Hungary); Ms Giorgia Spada (Italy); Ms Gemma Betsema (Netherlands); Ms Magdalena Kropiwnicka (Poland); Ms Marina Emiliani (San Marino); Mr Elias Guia (Spain).

CFS Secretariat

Mr Kostas Stamoulis; Mr Mark McGuire; Mr Ram Saravanamuttu; Ms Chiara Cirulli; Ms Cordelia Salter; Mr Julian Thomas; Ms Rossella Fanelli; Ms Amira Muammar; Mr Thomas Price; Mr Vincent Gitz; Mr Emilio Colonnelli; Mr David Hallam; Mr Abdolreza Abbassian; Mr Jacques De Graaf; Mr George Rapsomanikis.