

## Conference Statement

### HORN OF AFRICA MULTI-COUNTRY CONSULTATION ON FOOD SECURITY NAIROBI, KENYA, 25-26 JUNE 2007

Representatives of six governments in the Horn of Africa region (Djibouti, Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda), the African Union, regional bodies, United Nations agencies, the international donor community, international financial institutions, non-governmental organisations and research institutions met in Nairobi on 25-26 June 2007, with a view to refocus the collective attention on food security in the region. Over 70 million people in the Horn of Africa - around 45% of the total population - continue to live in abject poverty and face vulnerability to recurrent droughts and floods. There have been severe emergencies in the region during four of the past six years alone. The participants gathered in Nairobi for the multi-country consultations under the common realisation that this situation is inequitable and unsustainable, it is incompatible with the Millennium Development Goals, and as such unacceptable.

On this background, the United Nations initiated multi-stakeholder consultations on the issue of food security in the six countries in January 2007. This process was led jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and promoted by the UN Secretary-General's Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik. The work undertaken in the six countries laid the ground for the multi-country consultation meeting in Nairobi. The main objectives of these consultations were to bring countries and partners together to learn from each other's experiences and to identify concrete steps that need to be taken to address food insecurity in the region. Special thanks go to the Government of Kenya for hosting the meeting, and for its constructive and active engagement in this consultative process.

The country reports prepared in the six countries identify opportunities for strengthened partnerships to address food insecurity in the Horn of Africa in a number of areas, most of which can be summarized under six main themes: 1) pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods; 2) environmental challenges; 3) the important role of women in recovery and re-building livelihoods, including education for girls; 4) livelihoods diversification and income generating activities for the food insecure; 5) risk management and crisis response; and 6) institutional strengthening and community-focused capacity building.

The consultation reviewed the country reports, discussed key challenges and opportunities to address better the food security needs in the Horn of Africa, and agreed on next steps on the way forward for translation of the objectives of the consultation into concrete action. The consultation resulted in broad consensus on the following key points:

**Generating momentum for food security:** There is a need to generate comprehensive momentum in support of concrete measures to enhance food security in the Horn of Africa, for the benefit of the most vulnerable populations in the respective countries, which remain victims of chronic droughts and floods without achieving development;

**Actions speak louder than words:** While food security requires a multi-disciplinary approach and progress on several fronts (including population growth control, environmental protection and conflict management), the country reports clearly show that there are a considerable number of successful programmes already being carried out in the Horn of Africa. If these are scaled up to reach more people, they could significantly improve food security in the region and reduce vulnerability to future shocks caused by disasters and environmental degradation, including climate change. Identified interventions and policies should not be postponed in search of the perfect plans or circumstances in the Horn of Africa, but rather be pursued and scaled-up to the extent feasible building on what works, in a pragmatic and realistic manner, with the provisions for refinement during implementation. It is important for early action that a conducive environment for the delivery of assistance is in place;

**Strengthening partnerships in each country:** National priorities are the basis for further action. Comprehensive partnership, programming and resource mobilization strategies to address food insecurity and vulnerability in the Horn of Africa should be developed, primarily at the country level and reflecting specific national priorities and needs, however, there are also important regional linkages to be addressed;

**National and international advocacy:** A platform for advocacy and concerted efforts at national level to achieve food security is the first step, and in order to translate the potential that exists into concrete action, it is vital to secure a substantial increase in resources devoted to this task – from governments, donors, and the communities themselves. It is recognized that the situation in Somalia requires special attention and support;

**Improved UN coherence and synergies:** The United Nations system can provide an overarching framework for enhanced international support for food security in the Horn of Africa, by continuing to develop a more coherent programme in support of medium- and longer term measures and assessment tools (including risk assessment and nutritional indicators), as requested by governments. These efforts should build on relevant experiences, such as coordination in the humanitarian field, consistent with and advancing the wider UN reform agenda, including reinforcing the synergies between the Rome-based UN agencies, as a concrete example of Delivering as One;

**Financing of transitional investments for marginalised groups:** In order to be effective, the partnerships must be practical and action-oriented, and require significant financial resources for ‘transitional’ investments targeting the most vulnerable populations, which often receive humanitarian assistance, without achieving lasting development, nor medium- or longer term assistance. Financing of transitional investments, including where relevant social protection measures, should come both from the countries themselves in accordance with the Maputo Declaration and from the international partners in accordance with the Millennium Declaration and other relevant resolutions;

**Access to markets for marginalised groups:** Economic growth alone is not sufficient to make vulnerable populations food secure. The most marginalised groups, such as resource-poor farmers and pastoralists, will benefit from access to markets (roads etc) in order to transcend chronic dependency on aid. This will also benefit from a range of natural resource management measures, and a comprehensive livelihood approach. Moreover, predictable access to and proper incentives related to land and water resources, will stimulate local investment and development over time.

## **Conclusions**

Based on this broad consensus the multi-country consultation meeting decided on the following next steps for further action:

1. Endorsed a generalized road map for scaling up priority interventions, including the indicated timeframes, to be adapted appropriately to each country.
2. Agreed that governments, supported by the UN Country Teams led by the Resident Coordinators and with the particular contributions of the FAO and the WFP, should develop over the next 6-12 months the specifics of the road map for each of the six countries involved in these consultations.
3. Further agreed that in the national level road maps, governments should identify priority programme areas for scaling up, specific resources (both from domestic and external sources) in order to ensure implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation to measure results. Donors are encouraged to fill in the resource gaps, and to provide rapid support for the transitional investments for marginalized groups.
4. Agreed that advocacy at the international level is necessary in support of resource mobilization for the national level road maps, and the meeting encouraged the Rome-based UN agencies to promote this effort, in consultation with governments.
5. Invited donors and international financial institutions, regional bodies, NGOs and research institutions – to support the government-led development and implementation of the national level road maps.
6. The participants welcomed the invitation by the delegation of Uganda to host a follow-up meeting under the multi-country consultation format in 2008 in order to continue to share experiences, review progress made on the road map and to take the necessary action-oriented decisions that point to a sustainable and food secure future in the Horn of Africa. Future meetings should also give due attention to regional and cross-border aspects of food insecurity, as well as the needs of the poor in urban areas.

It is the collective view of the participants in the multi-country consultations that, with sufficient commitment from all stakeholders, the national road maps to be developed over the next year can result in comprehensive partnership strategies for reducing food insecurity and vulnerability in the region that are both practical and fundable. We remain hopeful that such strategies, if clearly articulated, will receive the financial and political support needed to have a major impact on hunger and poverty in the region.