

Recommendations for an implementation plan of the EU Food Security Policy Framework

September 2012

Responding to some of the most severe global food price crises from 2007 onwards, in May 2010 the European Union adopted a new EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges.¹ The European Commission and its Member States pledged to contribute to achieving MDG1 by addressing four broad and related dimensions of food security: 1) Improving smallholder resilience and rural livelihoods, 2) Supporting effective governance, 3) Supporting regional agriculture and food security policies, and 4) Strengthening assistance mechanisms for vulnerable population groups.

Despite the adoption of the policy framework in 2010, implementation has been lagging. Apart from some major initiatives by the Commission, such as the rapid response Food Facility of 1 billion Euros launched in 2008, there has been no clear follow up on the plan to step up coordinated European action on food security for over two years. In autumn 2012, the Commission is set to belatedly publish an Implementation Plan with clear recommendations for aid programmes supported by EU Member States and the Commission in the field of food security.

To make sure that the Implementation Plan - despite the severe delays – is still able to make a difference in addressing the worsening global food and nutrition security situation, CONCORD strongly calls on the EU Council to give the highest political importance to joined up action on food security policies and interventions in the coming months and years, and to commit as soon as possible at the highest levels to the joint implementation of the EU Food Security Policy Framework.

CONCORD strongly endorsed the EU Food Security Policy Framework, and believes that full implementation of all elements of the policy will make a significant contribution to building a more food secure world for all.² Building on the Food Security Policy Framework, the Council Conclusions on food security of May 2010,³ the European Parliament Resolution on Food security of September 2011⁴ and the EU Court Auditors Special Report on the Effectiveness of EU Development Aid for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa,⁵ CONCORD has the following recommendations for the Implementation Plan:

¹ European Commission, *An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges*. COM(2010)127. Brussels, EC, 2010, ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_PDF_COM_2010_0127_EN.PDF

² Reaction of the European Food Security group (EFSG) of CONCORD to the EC communication “An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges” (April 2010), available on request. See also CONCORD’s contribution to the consultation on FSPF (Jan 2010): www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/0_internetdocumentsENG/4_Publications/3_CONCORDs_positions_and_studies/Positions2_010/EFSG-Joint-Contribution_IP-towards-a-EU-policy-framework_Jan10.pdf

³ Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions on an EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges*. Brussels, 2010, www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/114357.pdf

⁴ European Parliament, *European Parliament resolution of 27 September 2011 on an EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges*. P7_TA(2011)0410. Brussels, 2011, www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0410+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

⁵ European Court of Auditors, *Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa*. Luxembourg, ECA, 2012, eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/13300745.PDF

1. Support a rights-based approach to food and nutrition security and ensure Policy Coherence for Development

A rights-based approach is the conceptual framework for human development processes that are based on international human rights standards and directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It identifies rights holders and their entitlements and corresponding duty-bearers and their obligations. As a result, a rights-based approach requires donors to ensure that the programmes they support: are targeted towards those who are suffering or are vulnerable to suffering from hunger; help to empower them and their organisations in the policy and policy implementation processes; and enables them to monitor and evaluate the actions of their government and to claim their rights. Such an approach also requires enabling human rights duty bearers, i.e. the country's governance institutions, to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

The EU should follow the human-rights based approach (including the extraterritorial obligations of Member States) in its support to all elements of food and nutrition security, and commit to concrete actions to make this approach operative. Dedicated support should be provided to human rights institutions and ombudspersons, as well as to international bodies such as the FAO Right to Food Unit and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. In addition, local civil society organisations need to be supported to monitor governments' activities, to raise awareness about the right to food and to report violations of the right to food. The EU should continue to support countries in designing national right to food strategies and programmes which fully incorporate the right to adequate, safe and nutritious food. So far globally 22 countries have developed legislation on the right to food and set up national human rights bodies to monitor State compliance with human rights obligations.

If the EU is serious about achieving food and nutrition security in developing countries, in addition to aid-funded programmes, the EU must effectively deliver on its own commitments regarding Policy Coherence for Development. Indeed, people's food security and nutritional outcomes in developing countries are affected by various EU internal and external policies including agriculture, trade, investment, climate change, energy. Despite widely documented evidence of some negative indirect consequences of EU policies and actions in developing countries⁶, insufficient efforts have been made to ensure compliance with the EU Treaty obligation that requires that any policies likely to affect developing countries take into consideration development objectives. CONCORD urges the EU to set up, as part of the Implementation Plan, a formal mechanism for receiving complaints, lodged by citizens, producer associations or civil society organisations (CSOs) in developing countries and in Europe, regarding the harmful deployment of EU policies which cause or threaten to cause serious difficulties to food and nutrition security and rural livelihoods in developing countries. The mechanism should allow formal investigation on these cases leading to corrective actions of the relevant policies, where necessary.

2. Support small-scale food producers by strengthening their resource rights, supporting agro-ecological approaches and improving their access to local and regional markets

To improve food security it is essential to support to small-scale producers, especially women, who are responsible for providing most of the food consumed in developing countries yet often constitute the most resource poor and make up the majority of those suffering from food insecurity. This is rightly acknowledged in the 2010 EU Food Security Policy Framework. Therefore donors need to give considerable support to this group of smallholder farmers.

⁶ CONCORD *Spotlight reports on PCD* 2009 and 2011, www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/0_internetdocumentsENG/5_Press/1_Press_releases/00pressreleases2009/CONCORD_PCD-Spotlight-report_light.pdf and www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/0_internetdocumentsENG/4_Publications/3_CONCORDs_positions_and_studies/Positions2011/Spotlight-on-EU-Policy-Coherence-for-Development-2011.pdf

Proper support could help them not only to increase their productivity but also to capture more of the value added along the food chain by organising collectively to process and market their products. It could also help to build local, national and regional food markets, reducing dependence on food imports. Improving the access of small scale food producers to local and regional markets should therefore be a key objective of the EU. This would require assisting governments in creating an enabling environment that supports the access of small-scale food producers to local markets (especially growing urban centres that rely often on food imports). Supporting producers' access to new and alternative markets strengthens their position in negotiating the terms of agreements with private entities⁷.

In addition, there is substantial evidence⁸ to support the case for increased investment in, and adoption of, agro-ecological approaches to agricultural production. This evidence is both in terms of productivity and of environmental sustainability, but it has not received enough support from donors. Agro-ecological practices increase the resilience of communities and address threats related to climate change, scarce water and energy availability and soil erosion. Applying local inputs and indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices in agricultural systems, can increase biodiversity and improve sustainability. Agro-ecology is also well suited to poor smallholder farmers as it is not dependent on cost-intensive external inputs, while being knowledge intensive.⁹

The EU implementation plan should set out how the EU will prioritise investments in agricultural research and extension systems which promote agro-ecological production methods, outline the support that will be given to small scale producers to organise and to link with diversified, local, regional and international markets, and invest in the physical and institutional infrastructure to support small-scale producers to engage with markets on terms that are beneficial to them.

3. Ensure a nutrition sensitive approach to interventions that impact on food security, boost community resilience and focus on Disaster Risk Reduction

The impact of under-nutrition on mortality, on the physical and cognitive development of children particularly during the first 1,000 days of a child's life from conception to age two, and on a country's development potential continues to be acutely felt by millions of individuals, communities and countries. Yet cost effective, proven solutions exist. Proper nutrition reduces the burden on health care systems, increases school performance and allows citizens to reach their full potential. It is a critical link in the chain of human well-being and national economic prosperity and security. There has been growing recognition of the scale of the problem of stunting for children under five (1 in 3 children in the developing world is stunted) including the adoption of the global target to reduce stunting by 40% by 2025 made at the 2012 World Health Assembly, the Zero Hunger Challenge of the UN, and the recent commitment made by Commissioner Piebalgs at the Global Hunger Event in London for the EU to support partner countries in reducing the number of stunted children by at least 7 million children, i.e. reaching at least 10% of the global target. We are looking to the EU to step up its integration of nutrition within its support to relevant sectors including food security, agriculture, health, and social protection¹⁰ and to include nutrition outcomes, particularly for women and children, as a key measure of progress.

⁷ Olivier De Schutter, "The Right to Food", Report presented at the 66th UN General Assembly [A/66/262], 11 August 2011, www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/srrtf_contractfarming_a-66-262.pdf

⁸ International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, *Agriculture at a crossroads: global report*, www.agassessment.org/) and Olivier De Schutter, "Agroecology and the Right to Food" Report presented at the 16th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council [A/HRC/16/49], 8 March 2011, www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20110308_a-hrc-16-49_agroecology_en.pdf

⁹ Olivier De Schutter, "Agroecology and the Right to Food" Report presented at the 16th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council [A/HRC/16/49], 8 March 2011, www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20110308_a-hrc-16-49_agroecology_en.pdf

¹⁰ A recent Court of Auditors report found that the Commission should do more to put adequate emphasis on nutrition and should encourage countries to set up appropriate nutrition policies and programmes. 'Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa', Special Report n1, 2012. eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/13300745.pdf

The EUs food security strategies and programmes need to pay special attention to Disaster Risk Reduction and community resilience. The crises in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel demonstrate the historic lack of support to smallholders and pastoralists in these regions. The Conclusions of the High Level Meeting in response to the crisis in the Sahel on 18 June 2012 prioritise investments in resilience. Resilience measures could include establishing local and national reserves, social transfers and regional food security strategies. Resilience also requires early warning systems, more flexible funding mechanisms and better linkages between humanitarian and development interventions.

Ministries of planning or agriculture need to consider the impacts of climate change, reduced water availability and increased numbers of extreme weather events. Disaster Risk Reduction should be mainstreamed in planning activities at country level (be it urban planning or design of rural infrastructure) and should be effectively implemented with improved targeting, monitoring and assessment. In its political dialogue with national governments, the European Union should encourage governments to ensure the whole national agricultural strategy is climate resilient, and ensure that additional support is provided to help countries climate-proof their national strategies.

4. Provide support for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, in the Context of National Food Security

When poor rural people lose their access to natural resources such as land, water and grazing, they frequently have no alternative opportunity to earn an income. In addition, farming is the cultural basis of many rural communities and has multiple functions. Women in particular face enormous challenges to secure their resource rights. Focusing on small-scale production requires protecting small-scale food producers' access to, and control over, natural resources and land, water and grazing areas for pastoralists, and fishing grounds for artisanal fisherfolk in line with the principles set by the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests. This would also require, in some cases, changes in European regulations; for example, a reduction of fishing licenses for international vessels and control of their activities, which could be through the EU Common Fisheries Policy.

The EU should provide in the Implementation Plan concrete actions to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines by incorporating the Voluntary Guidelines' principles in any development programme or policy and by allocating adequate funding into the Implementation Facility currently under discussion by donors, States, Agencies and civil society.

The Voluntary Guidelines clearly set out the extraterritorial responsibilities of States regarding respect for human rights by their business enterprises. Non-State actors, including business enterprises, are also called on to respect human rights and to assess any actual or potential impacts on human rights and legitimate tenure rights in which they may be involved. These provisions should be enacted both by the EU and Member States and by European companies. In addition, the EU should provide financial and technical support to developing countries which request support to implement the Voluntary Guidelines, building on existing regional initiatives such as the African Land Policy Guidelines, in order to improve their tenure systems.

In particular, the EU should support the participatory methodology specified in the Voluntary Guidelines by supporting the creation of national multi-actor platforms, ensuring specific support for women and their farmer organisations, and should finance implementation projects that have been agreed upon in these frameworks.

5. Mainstream gender in food security interventions and target activities specifically to benefit rural women

Women smallholders comprise the majority of the agricultural labour force of developing countries. Despite this, the specific challenges they face often do not receive requisite consideration and attention in agricultural policies, programmes and budget allocations, whether supported by governments or donors. Women face the added burden of juggling multiple responsibilities and systematic prejudice in relation to resource rights and political representation. For example, women make up only between 5 and 25% of landholders, with on average smaller and lower quality plots (FAO 2011), and they receive 5-10% less rural credit than men; they also have less access to inputs, equipment and markets (FAO, 2011).

The EU Food Security Policy Framework's recognition of the importance of the need to support women farmers and to specifically invest in them is welcomed. The implementation plan should follow this through and adequately reflect this by aiming to increase the share of agricultural assistance to women farmers and by ensuring investment focuses on sectors, crops and activities in which women have an active role. Targeted interventions that meet the needs of women (including pregnant women) must be put in place. These include supporting women's collective actions and efforts for self-organisation, providing training for women on agricultural or marketing practices, facilitating the access of women to land, micro-credit, extension services and inputs such as seed and fertilizer, developing appropriate employment schemes where women are remunerated equally to men, and promoting their participation in decision making and their leadership within organisations and institutions.

Women's work in agriculture is often not counted, measured or valued due to a lack of gender disaggregated data in addition to the lack of valuation of women's activities. It is essential to collect gender-disaggregated data and also important to develop tools such as gender-sensitive methods for analysing data or monitoring and measuring projects, and gender budgeting. This must be supported by the EU.

6. Robustly and transparently assess the involvement of the private sector, ensure coherence with CFS guidelines and support positive investment in local private companies and producer organisations

Fiscal constraints in most European countries are providing Northern governments with renewed rationale for focusing on private investors to make up the gap left by stagnating or reducing aid in developing countries. The 'New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition' launched by the G8 earlier this year is an example of this approach in the field of food security. It is important to stress that the bulk of investment in agriculture is already undertaken by farmers themselves, their cooperatives and other rural enterprises. Donors, including the EU, and governments should prioritise investment in human and technical resources to improve operations of these small-scale food producers and cooperatives, assisting them in achieving the necessary scale to access local and regional markets and improve their living conditions. Efforts to attract foreign private investment should not lead to the bypassing or displacement of small scale food producers.¹¹ Although private investments may play a role in contributing to the development of the agricultural sector and rural development, benefits from private investments can be reaped only if adequate conditions are laid out to ensure transparency and participation.

Due to weak governance, flawed land tenure systems and lack of transparency in many developing countries, currently a number of investments are resulting in violations of human rights, land grabbing or intensive, unsustainable use of natural resources with substantial negative impacts on the rights and livelihoods of rural communities, indigenous peoples, small-

¹¹ High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, *Land tenure and international investments in agriculture*. Rome: CFS, 2011, p10 §14, www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE-Land-tenure-and-international-investments-in-agriculture-2011.pdf

scale food producers and women. The EU should ensure that the public-private partnerships they seek to promote, prioritise local companies and producer organisations and guarantee Policy Coherence for Development in their attempts to attract foreign investors, particularly when European companies are involved. European States should comply with their extraterritorial obligations in the area of economic, social and cultural rights as outlined in the ETO Principles which were adopted in Maastricht in September 2011¹².

The EU should support the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) process to develop clear guidance for agricultural investments which foster food security and nutrition, support small holder farmers and contribute to the progressive realisation of the right to food. Once adopted, they will need to be transposed in legislation and policies in developing countries, which also should be supported by the European Union.

In addition, increased exchange of information should be encouraged on alternative ways of structuring agricultural investments that are pro-poor and that do not involve large-scale land acquisitions. These include a wide range of more collaborative arrangements between large-scale investors and local small-scale farmers and communities, such as diverse types of contract farming schemes, joint-ventures, management contracts and new supply chain relationships. Research has shown that whether small-scale food producers benefit from such arrangements depends often on the detailed arrangement of the scheme, with the negotiating power of producers being key to determining the terms and outcomes of business models¹³. Power to negotiate depends on modes of organisation (importantly, the representativeness and effectiveness of community-based organisations) and the asset base on which negotiating positions are predicated, including secure land rights, access to information and political credibility.

7. Set the standard for donor coordination in the field of food security

CONCORD believes the Implementation Plan is an opportunity to improve donor coordination and aid effectiveness of the European Union. This requires setting out clear, measurable and time-bound commitments by Member States, as well as shared roles and responsibilities. EU aid should be aligned with national and regional food security and nutrition strategies, such as CAADP, which are operating in line with the priorities of the EU Policy Framework, while ensuring that civil society organisations in developing countries are supported to help shape and influence these. Quantitative and qualitative information on aid to agriculture, food security and nutrition interventions should be transparent and made publicly available.

Process and outcome indicators should be incorporated in the Implementation Plan to improve accountability. A regular review, twice a year, of results achieved among Member States, and an ongoing exchange of views should be organised between development, agricultural and nutrition experts both at a central EU level and in-country. The regular review should highlight whether all priorities of the food security policy are being addressed, and make sure that countries in need of support receive appropriate assistance, and should do using a set of clear development-related indicators such as progress reports on the MDGs or other sources.

¹² The ETO Principles codify existing international law and guidance to determine the obligations of the EU and its Member States so as to prevent human rights violations and are available at: www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/file?uuid=d8b54017-d54e-4515-8847-0bc439dbf5ee&owner=bdf7683-80b5-4222-9540-09e8ce89e8cf

¹³ Vermeulen, S. and Cotula, L., *Making the most of agricultural investment: a survey of business models that provide opportunities for smallholders*. London/Rome/Bern: IIED/FAO/IFAD/SDC, 2010, www.ifad.org/pub/land/agri_investment.pdf