

ROSA Newsletter

Views on current news

MDG Review Summit: An opportunity for scaling up action

The MDG Review Summit (20-22 September) will bring together world leaders to consider and discuss progress on the Millennium Development Goals. In this interview, Delphine Valette¹ from Save the Children UK highlights slow progress in poverty and hunger reduction, in particular for children. She calls for increased attention to the MDG 1 nutrition target and for coordinated and comprehensive actions on a global scale.

What progress have been made to-date and what gaps remain in achieving MDG 1?

Ten years after governments pledged to eradicate hunger, the number of hungry people is at a record high of more than 1 billion. World leaders have made a promise; that of reducing by half the proportion of children under five who are underweight. Very little progress has been made. One-fifth of children in developing countries remains underweight. The food and financial crises have worsened the nutritional status of millions, but even before prices went up, progress had been very slow with only a 5% decline in the prevalence of underweight children between 1990 and 2008. World leaders have not done enough and undernutrition remains a silent epidemic. There are several reasons for this neglect including weak political leadership and a lack of consensus on interventions. In 2008, Robert Zoellick called the hunger MDG the “forgotten MDG”. This is what the appalling situation we are facing today is all about. Nearly 200 million children suffer from stunting and one child dies of malnutrition related causes every 5 seconds. What are our world leaders waiting for? Estimates for the next few years are extremely alarming: sixteen million more children could be malnourished in 2020, and the rates of stunted children in half of the 20 worst affected countries could be higher by 40% in 2015.

What needs to be changed?

The MDG Review Summit must ensure that due attention is given to hunger and malnutrition. No more excuses: we know what is needed; that is packages of interventions which address the immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition.

Malnutrition is more than a simple availability issue; it is also about access to a nutritious diet and giving the poor the means to cope better with shocks. It is about recognizing the specific needs of pregnant and lactating women and children who require food rich in vitamins and nutrients. Finally, it is about addressing the critical role of women and recognising the impact of inadequate barriers against gender inequality and discrimination.

Stunting must also receive greater attention. Adding an indicator on child stunting for measuring progress on MDG 1 would be a positive step forward and help catalyse action.

Is the MDG Review summit an opportunity to build agreement on a global action plan to meet the MDGs?

A Joint Action Plan for women and children’s health is being developed and echoes the Summit’s strong focus on the health MDGs. This is a welcome development but should not lead to the marginalization of other MDGs, including MDG 1. A Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement has been developed and is widely endorsed by a wide range of development stakeholders, including UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, and high burden countries. This represents a unique opportunity for increased coordination, action and funding on nutrition. World leaders must pay attention and endorse the SUN Roadmap to be launched at the Summit. Now more than ever, they must commit to supporting its implementation at country level and using it to promote synergies and coordination across food security and health initiatives, including the reform of the Committee on World Food Security and the Secretary General’s Joint Action Plan.



¹ Policy & Advocacy Adviser - Hunger Reduction.

What will be your main actions around the MDG Review Summit?

We are part of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and we are working with David Nabarro, the UN Secretary General Special Representative on Food Security and Nutrition, the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and all the other stakeholders involved towards the

development of recommendations for stronger, more coordinated and comprehensive actions to address undernutrition, to be presented and endorsed at the Summit. We will also raise the attention on MDG 1 by publishing a joint letter developed with NGO partners in selected European countries, including the UK and Ireland.

Agenda

Past events

- **8th Policies against Hunger Conference, Berlin (Germany):** On June 9-11 2010, the 8th Conference on "Policies against Hunger took place in Berlin. It was devoted to the subject of "improving governance for food security and nutrition". The main objective was to consider the establishment of a discussion forum on governance, food security and nutrition. Specific recommendations were made, in particular for the first session of the reformed CSA. >>>
- **Meeting of regional information food security monitoring, Accra (Ghana):** This meeting were held on 21-23 June 2010. The main objectives were to assess the food situation at the beginning of the lean period and to evaluate the measures and actions taken by states and partners to alleviate lean-period effects in areas where communities are the most vulnerable, in particular in Niger and Chad. >>>
- **Project-launching workshop: "Improvement of livelihoods and natural resource management for food security in Sahel", Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso:** This workshop on 27th July 2010 aimed at presenting this project to national stakeholders and actors. The event also aimed at discussing synergies between this project and other existing projects and initiatives in this field. >>>

Forthcoming events

- **2-6 August:** International climate change talks (13th session of the AWD-KP and 11th session of the AWG-LCA) – Bonn (Germany)
- **20-22 September:** Millennium development goals Summit (MDG) – New York (USA)
- **11-14 October:** 36th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) – Rome (Italy)
- **19-21 October:** 3rd McGill Conference on Global Food Security – Montreal (Canada)
- **29 November – 4 December:** 2010 World Social Security Forum – Cape Town (South Africa)

- **29 November-10 December:** Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP-16) - Cancun (Mexico)
- **December 2010:** 26th Food Crisis Prevention Network Meeting – Accra (Ghana)

For further information: [Upcoming events](#)

EC's latest news

EC Seminars/Training

- **Sector approaches seminar (15-18 June, Brussels):** Discussions focused on the following issues: i) key concepts and definition of a sector approach, ii) characteristics and challenges in agriculture, rural development, and the environment and natural resource management. The seminar also addressed the multi- or infra-sectoral aspects of relevant themes. It highlighted the crucial role of actors and their capacities, and showed ways of taking the private sector and non-state actors into consideration as well as the importance of coordination. Those issues were addressed via concrete cases. >>>
- **Agriculture and rural development seminar: "hot issues" (12-14 July, Brussels):** This seminar gathered about thirty participants from EC delegations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as external and EC speakers. The seminar allowed for: lively debates on current hot topics, many discussions and a sharing of experiences. Participants discussed on new topics for the 2011 seminar (land, micro-finance, decentralisation and territorial development). They suggested that issues already been discussed should be addressed more deeply (e.g. farmers' organisations). >>>

New online documents

➤ Nutrition

Investing in children's nutrition: the economic benefits, Save the Children - April 2010

This Policy Brief is a reminder of the consequences of child malnutrition, which is the first cause of child mortality and prevents those who live to reach their full potential where they become adults. The economic costs of child malnutrition and its impacts on the long run, which are transmitted from generation to generation, are also presented in the document: high cost of child mortality, compromised school achievement, severe impact on their adult life in terms of productivity loss, income, health problems, and impact on economic growth. As such, investing in children nutrition leads to significant economic benefits, on both the short and the long run, by contributing in particular to an increased cost-effectiveness of investments in health and education. >>>

Taking action for survival, growth and development, White paper, ACF - May 2010

This White Paper focuses on acute malnutrition. It recommends to local, national and international actors to adopt a pragmatic approach, drawing on already existing solutions. The objective is to increase current efforts towards identifying and analysing the causes of acute malnutrition as well as determine priorities for action in each affected geographical zone and develop international plans to cure and prevent malnutrition. In particular, the document suggests that interventions that reduce malnutrition in areas that are the most affected should be developed via available and already used methods. Actions should be taken that prevent the situation from getting worse and address the fundamental causes of acute malnutrition. >>>

2008 External evaluation of Oportunidades: Ten years of interventions in rural areas (1997-2007), Executive synthesis – 2008

The Human Development Programme *Oportunidades* is a large scale initiative that provided incentives to low-income people for investing in the human capital of their children. This report presents a qualitative, quantitative, impact and process evaluation of the Programme, with a particular emphasis on the shortcomings and the results after 10 years of intervention and the gender and ethnic differences in the use of *Oportunidades* among beneficiaries. It consists of 4 volumes, drafted by a multidisciplinary team of experts. Only Volume 1 and more significantly 2 directly address nutrition. >>>

➤ Food security indicators

Preventing food crises in Sahel: Using indicators based on market prices, C. Araujo Bonjean, S. Brunelin, C. Simonet – June 2010

From three country case-studies (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger), this report aims at defining early-warning indicators based on market prices to complement existing indicators in national and regional mechanisms to prevent food crisis in Sahel. Indicators that are based on prices (Market Information Systems - MIS) have the advantage to draw on information that is available over a long period of time and for a large sample of products and markets, with high frequency, that can be easily and rapidly mobilised. Such data is more reliable and does not require significant data analysis capacity. >>>

➤ Social transfers

Social transfers: stimulating household-level growth, CPRC - January 2010

This Policy Brief presents in two pages how social transfers can contribute to the fight against poverty. Indeed, social transfers encourage consumption and generate economics growth at household level in poor communities. Experience shows that social transfers channel investment in human capital and productive assets. They can also increase the efficiency of households' resource allocation by reducing vulnerability. However, the Policy Brief reminds the reader that social-transfer program design is crucial so that it may generate economic growth: transfers must be regular and reliable, channelled in a way that is adequate to the local context and complemented by interventions aimed at accumulation and preservation of assets. >>>

Targeting of social transfers: A review for DFID, R. Slater and J. Farrington, ODI – September 2009

This report focuses on the targeting of social transfer programmes in low-income countries with low implementation capacity. It examines the costs, effectiveness and efficiency of social transfers as a tool for alleviating material poverty.

The document highlights the difference between the population for whom the project is designed and the population that the project actually reaches in its implementation. The political context of programme design is also of primary importance and implies different perceptions of how to implement social transfers. Similarly, there are necessary trade-offs to be made in the design and implementation which generate varying results, particularly in terms of inclusion and

exclusion of individuals. However, decision-makers often use incomplete and unreliable data. Therefore, they are not in a position to make informed decisions. In order for targeting to be more cost-effective, the information base needs to be strengthened and tools for estimating the cost and benefits of various measures in different contexts should be developed. >>>

Social transfers, DFID summary report, M. Davies, DFID - July 2009

This report is a summary of the evaluation of DFID's social-transfer programmes. In terms of recommendations, the report argues that DFID should clarify its objectives, some of which are incompatible (promotion of its own vision versus national project ownership). Moreover, there should be more quantitative impact assessments carried out. Finally, there is a need for overcoming the debate of "dependence" of communities towards those schemes. >>>

➤ **Other thematic areas**

Land grabbing

'Land grabbing' by foreign investors in developing countries: Risks and opportunities, J. Von Braun and R. Meinzen-Dick, IFPRI – April 2009

This Policy Brief relates to the increasing number of large-scale land grabbing in developing countries, through agricultural investments from foreign private companies mostly. Increased foreign investment may potentially be beneficial in those poor, rural areas if they allow for infrastructure to be built and people's livelihoods to be developed. Nevertheless, this investment should not lead to the exclusion of local communities and non sustainable land use. In that case, there would be major risks.

An enabling environment should be created so that negotiated and equitable contracts are established. All available institutional mechanisms (not just national) should be used. International law should be adapted and met; new policies should be adopted at the national level. Civil society, local communities and the media should also be strongly involved. >>>

Land grab or development opportunity? Agricultural investment and international land deals in Africa, IIED, FAO, IFAD – 2009

This report presents the main trends and determinants of land grabbing, the contractual arrangements that support it, the terms and conditions of land acquisition, and implications in terms of access to land for local communities. The document is focused on large-scale land acquisitions located in Sub-Saharan Africa. It makes recommendations for policymakers, foreign investors, rural organisations, and international organisations. >>>

Millennium Development Goals

The 2010 MDG Report, UN – June 2010

This report reviews the progress made and the short-falls remaining on the road towards meeting the MDG in 2015. It is published a few weeks before the MDG Review Summit in September. On a negative note, the report shows the unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability of governments. It is clear that improvements in the lives of the poor have been unacceptably slow, and some hard-won gains are being eroded by the climate, food and economic crises. On a positive note, however, it shows that progress has been made (children's schooling in primary education, fight against VID/AIDS and malaria, interventions for children's health, access to drinking water). The Goals are achievable when nationally owned development strategies, policies and programmes are supported by international development partners. For each Goal, the report makes a detailed review and analysis of indicators and statistics. >>>

Halving hunger: Meeting the first millennium goal for Development through business as unusual, IFPRI - 2010

Achieving the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the amount of people suffering from hunger and poverty in the world by 2015 seems to be increasingly compromised. Yet, this report argues that this goal can still be met if a new approach is adopted. This new approach differs from what is currently done and is based on 5 cornerstones:

- Invest in 2 major sectors: agriculture and social protection
- Involve new actors
- Adopt a bottom-up approach that is country-lead
- Design policies based on experiences and experiments
- Control carefully decision makers' financial commitments. >>>

*This bulletin was written by the GRET team in charge of animating ROSA. The network is an initiative of EuropeAid (Unit E6 – Natural Resources in collaboration with Unit G4 – Training and Knowledge Management).
The points expressed do not reflect the official position of the European Commission.*