

# ROSA Newsletter

## Views on current news

### The food crisis in the Horn of Africa: Rethinking global governance

The current food crisis in the Horn of Africa<sup>1</sup> is a consequence of a severe drought for the third year in a row—and the worst food crisis in the region in 60 years. Earlier this year, the FAO reported low harvests and an increase in fuel prices<sup>2</sup> that had impacted transport costs. The situation deteriorated very rapidly in the past three months. In this interview, Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the right to food, explains to us that protracted conflicts, the lack of preventive measures as well as the inaction of the international community now have disastrous consequences on people. Mr De Schutter presents his views on how to fight against this type of food crisis in the short and long terms.

#### **What are the direct and underlying causes of this food crisis?**

In the first semester of 2011, the food situation rapidly worsened. Livestock farmers are numerous in these regions and were particularly affected: cattle were sold at very low prices and/or herds were destroyed.

In Somalia, protracted conflicts and the absence since 1991 of a strong government controlling the entire country has heightened the crisis. In particular, the radical Islamic groups deny international humanitarian aid agencies access to people in southern Somalia. Over a few weeks, a very large number of people fled to refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia or to Mogadishu to receive international aid.

The food crisis is also the result of the lack of preventive measures. Droughts are frequent in the region. National governments and international relief and development agencies should have prepared for such extreme climate events by setting up anti-drought plans, identifying in advance measures to be taken and necessary resources. Yet, inaction then improvisation has ruled. Now, enormous amounts of money (USD 400 million to meet immediate needs, USD 1.9 billion over one year) must be found while the crisis has already reached its peak.

#### **In your opinion, what needs to be done in the short term to remedy the situation?**

The failure of the international community to act would result in major violations of the right to food. International law imposes on governments in a position to help where lives are at stake that they do so immediately. Concerted and urgent measures must be taken today to increase access to food, nutrition, clean water and health protection for these very vulnerable people.

Amongst other immediate actions, regional food reserves should be set up to enhance access to affordable stocks as soon as needs begin to rise. The G20 Ministers of Agriculture, meeting under French presidency, promised to set up such emergency food reserves during the June 22-23, 2011, meeting—a welcome initiative, but one that arrives very late. Too late.

<sup>1</sup> Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, southern Sudan (that has since obtained its independence), as well as several areas in Eastern Kenya and Uganda.

<sup>2</sup> In Ethiopia, fuel prices were 69% higher in June 2011 than in June 2010. Source: FAO.



In a report submitted to the Human Rights Council in March 2009, I suggested we seize the opportunity to reform the 1965 Food Aid Convention (FAC), which is now entering its final phase, and more bindingly define donor states' commitments. This proposal seems to be relevant today more than ever. The FAC is the only formal international treaty that aims to secure signatory governments' commitments with regard to food aid. Current food aid is often counter-cyclical: donors are more generous when prices are low due to significant harvests, thus when needs are lower. One option for reforming the system would be to commit developed countries to deliver a percentage of declared needs in developing countries, instead of food aid volumes.

**What long-term solutions need to be implemented to prevent these types of crises? How can populations' resilience be sustainably improved, in particular in the face of climate change?**

Climate change will increase the frequency of extreme climate events. Leaders and the

development community on the ground need to draw consequences from this fact.

I recommend that policies and massive investments in public goods be implemented to put agriculture on the right sustainability track and enhance the resilience of agriculture, food systems and communities to climate change (to both extreme events and long-term changes). This includes (i) investing in education and training, and dissemination of best practices; (ii) supporting research on resilient varieties and techniques; (iii) improving access to information for decision-making; (iv) supporting farmers to reduce their dependency on external inputs.

One should also avoid policies in the global South—supported by international development partners—that favor export agriculture and agribusiness to the detriment of small-holder farming. The food security and climate challenges will only be overcome if sustainable support is delivered to small-holder farming in developing countries.

## Agenda

### Past events

- **Brussels Development Briefing on “Nutrition security in ACP countries”** (15 June, Brussels): CTA and IFPRI co-organised this development briefing on nutrition which was attended by 200 policy-makers. Videos of presentations and debates can be watched on the Briefings' website. [>>>](#)
- **Action Against Hunger's “Zero Hunger” series launch in Houses of Parliament, UK** (28 June, London): In partnership with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development, the Zero Hunger series was launched in the Houses of Parliament (UK) on the 28th June 2011 with a roundtable discussion. Minutes of the meeting are available. [>>>](#)

- **Intergovernmental negotiations on the Voluntary Guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests (12-15 July, Rome)**: These negotiations were open to civil society and private sector participants and were attended by seventy countries, twenty civil society participants and one private sector organization. The final text of the Voluntary Guidelines will be submitted for the consideration of the 37th session of the CFS in October 2011. [>>>](#)

## Forthcoming events

- **7-8 September :** L'Aquila Food Security Initiative Meeting – Dakar (Senegal)
- **12-13 September:** Roundtable on monitoring food security, to review methods used to estimate the number of hungry – Rome (Italy) >>>
- **4 October:** European Parliament public hearing on “Food Security in developing countries. The challenge of feeding people” – Brussels (Belgium)
- **4-6 October:** McGill Conference on Global food security – Montreal (Canada)
- **17-20 October:** 37th session of the FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) - Rome (Italy)
- **3-4 November:** G20 Summit – Cannes (France)
- **24-25 November:** Expert roundtable on agrofuels convened by Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food – Brussels (Belgium)
- **28 November-9 December:** The 17th United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 17) - Durban (South Africa)
- **3 December:** Agriculture and Rural Development Day at COP17 – Durban (South Africa)
- **17-19 January 2012:** International scientific symposium on food and nutrition security information. From valid measurement to effective decision-making – Rome (Italy) >>>

For further information: [Upcoming events](#)

## EC's latest news

- **EC training “Acting in transition”:** EuropeAid organised this training seminar in Brussels from 18 to 20 July 2011. It was addressed to EC/EU staff working in transition situations. Around twenty people attended the seminar, from headquarters (EuropeAid and ECHO), delegations and ECHO offices in five countries (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Sri Lanka and Yemen). Three main objectives were given for the training: (i) provide participants with better understanding of the EC/EU policies, regulations and administrative modalities relating to transition situations; (ii) present the main objectives of and methodology developed for the design of a joint humanitarian-development framework (JHDF); and, (iii) facilitate the exchange of experiences and learn from case studies and good practices. All presentations are available on ROSA's website. A synthesis of key points from the training will be shortly on-line. >>>
- **Addressing undernutrition in EC external assistance:** For those who are less familiar with the Reference Document format, it is a practical document that provides guidance on what is undernutrition (scope, impact) and what we can do to strengthen nutrition impact within key sectors. Beside definitions and key data on undernutrition, you will find a series of easy-to-use tools ranging from country case studies to selected indicators and template terms of reference for an evaluation, etc. A specific online version and paper copies will be available by the end of September. The document will be translated in French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. The last English version (September 2011) is available on ROSA's website. >>>

## New online documents

### ➤ Nutritional and food situation

**OECD-FAO agricultural outlook 2011-2020 – June 2011:** This report assesses agricultural market trends and prospects for production, consumption, trade, stocks, and prices of featured commodities, including biofuels. This year's edition includes a special section on price volatility and price transmission from world to domestic markets, analysing the evidence of and changes in price volatility over the longer term. This Outlook maintains the view expressed in recent editions that agricultural commodity prices in real terms are likely to remain on a higher plateau during the next ten years compared to the previous decade. >>>

### ➤ Nutrition

**Maximising the nutritional impact of food security and livelihoods interventions. A manual for field workers, ACF – 2011**

This manual aims to provide practical guidance in order to maximise the nutritional impact of food security & livelihoods interventions. The approach promoted in the manual is the systematic use of a “nutrition lens” at each step of the project cycle and a close collaboration between sectors. The manual first outlines the basics of undernutrition, and explains the inter-linkages and synergies between food security & livelihoods, and nutrition. Then the manual provides simple and practical guidance on how to adopt and promote nutrition-sensitive practices and interventions. >>>

**Zero Hunger Series: Transforming evidence-based success into effective change, ACF - 2011**

This series identifies six key success factors as creating an “enabling environment” which should facilitate a reduction in rates of childhood undernutrition: i) strong political will; ii) civil society participation and ownership; iii) multi-sectoral approaches; iv) multi-phase approaches; v) institutional coordination; and vi) continuity of sustainable financial investment

Phase 1 of the ACD Zero Hunger series reviews the experience of five case study countries which represent success stories in the reduction of undernutrition rates from 1995-2010 and tries to find out why and how these countries have been particularly successful. Phase 2 looks at one

country - Niger - and examines the extent to which the six factors are relevant there. Phase 3 highlights the relevance and potential of regional institutions and mechanisms to reduce hunger and malnutrition in West Africa. >>>

### ➤ Other thematic areas

**Identification of vulnerable people in urban environments: Assessment of sustainable livelihoods and urban vulnerabilities, ACF-February 2011**

This methodological guide is designed for use by field practitioners, and was conceived in response to increasing food crises and problems in identifying vulnerable groups in urban areas. These guidelines combine information on methodology as well as several tools of analysis. This guide cannot comprehensively address the diversity of urban contexts and humanitarian situations. >>>

**Safeguarding food security in volatile global markets, A. Prakash, FAO – 2011**

This book contributes to the debate on the causes, consequences, and challenges of food price volatility. Food security and vulnerability are placed at centre stage. Part one of the book defines the problem and asks why volatility matters. Part two reviews past policy responses during episodes of turmoil. Part three examines the role of information and expectations by investors in destabilizing the price system. Part four argues the need for a new policy dialogue. The report then makes a series of recommendations regarding the most pressing issues to address at the international and national levels. >>>

**Price volatility in food and agricultural markets: Policy responses, Inter-agency report - June 2011**

The report was requested by G20 leaders at their summit meeting in November 2010 and submitted to the French Presidency of the G20 on 2 June 2011. It is an inter-agency report which develops options on how to better mitigate and manage the risks associated with the price volatility of food and other agriculture commodities. >>>

***Price volatility and food security, The High Level Panel of Experts, Committee on World Food Security - July 2011***

This report is the final version of a study on price volatility prepared by the HLPN for the 37th session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). It first offers three explanations for recent price behaviour in international food markets: excessive price volatility, recurrent food crises, and an emerging scarcity of resources. Then the report presents options to contain price volatility at the international level. It explains the linkages between high price volatility and food insecurity. Finally, it discusses political options to limit food price volatility at the national level, and concludes on the role of the CFS in the global governance of food security. >>>

➤ **External links**

***Inter-réseaux Développement Rural's special bulletin on producers' organisations - July 2011***

This bulletin includes numerous references in French and English on markets and value chains, production and services, producer organizations and governance, tools for sharing experiences, and agricultural policy issues. This bulletin can be downloaded from Inter-réseaux's website. **Available in French only.**

[http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/Bulletin de veille special or ganisations paysannes no4\\_30 juin 2011.pdf](http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/Bulletin_de_veille_special_or_ganisations_paysannes_no4_30_juin_2011.pdf)

***Global forum on food security and nutrition:*** This forum is an e-consultation on the theme "Social protection for food security". The objective is to set the track for the High Level Panel of Experts work on social protection: how can we decrease vulnerability through social and productive safety nets? Comments on the scope of the HLPE work can be shared on the forum: <http://km.fao.org/fsn/discussions/social-protection/en/>

You could send your contribution to: [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org).

***ACF-Latin America Information Bulletin N. 6:*** In this bulletin, ACF-Latin America presents the state of its interventions in the region. **Available in Spanish**

<http://www.accioncontraelhambre.org/centroamerica/media/publicaciones/72-edicion-vi.pdf>

***This bulletin was written by the GRET team in charge of animating ROSA. The network is an initiative of EuropeAid.***

***The points expressed do not reflect the official position of the European Commission.***