

Information Note

Why is FAO organizing this High-Level Conference?

The overall purpose of the *High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy*, to be held in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008, is to address the pressing serious conditions facing global food security and agriculture in the worrying context of soaring food prices. The objective of this Summit is to assist countries and the international community in finding sustainable solutions by identifying the policies, strategies and programmes required to safeguard world food security. It is also expected to feed into broader inter-agency and intergovernmental processes.

World food security is facing new challenges. The current situation of soaring food prices and inflation worldwide requires urgent economic, social and environmental policy decisions, strong political will and firm commitment from the international community to prevent food crises. This new situation needs to be addressed immediately at the highest level to be able to overcome the new challenges and ensure in a sustainable way the food security of a rapidly growing population.

FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy. Its programme of work covers crops, livestock, nutrition, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, as well as water, land, natural resources and biodiversity. FAO is also chair of the UN-Water mechanism until December 2008.

FAO's Member Nations have strongly called for urgent initiatives to address these challenges, which are at the centre of its action and which will have a major impact on our ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

How is the HLC being prepared?

Preparation for the HLC started in November 2007, immediately following the approval of the Programme Work and Budget for 2008-09 by the FAO Conference. FAO is organizing the HLC in close collaboration with IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International on behalf of the CGIAR system as well as other UN agencies and organizations, and will tap the comparative strengths of many other partners in its preparation and follow-up.

The HLC is preceded by a series of expert meetings, with the objective to assemble state of the art scientific knowledge and to draw upon the experience of relevant networks. The expert meetings were attended by participants from different regions of the world. In addition, Stakeholder consultations were held with representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

What will be the outcome of the HLC?

The Secretariat will prepare relevant technical documents, on the basis of the preparatory documentation and work of the technical committees, and a Synthesis Document to guide the deliberations of the HLC. This Summit will deliver the following:

- Identification of the new challenges facing world food security: supply side, demand side, policies and market structure.
- A better understanding of the nexus between food security, climate change and bioenergy.
- Identification of a process for institutional action for the integration of food security safeguards into international climate-related and sustainable bioenergy agreements.
- Discussion and adoption of required policies, strategies and programmes for ensuring world food security, in particular measures to address soaring food prices.
- A Declaration on “World Food Security and required actions”.

How is the HLC being organized?

The High-Level Conference Secretariat is located in the office of the Assistant Director-General of the Natural Resources Management and Environment Department (ADG/NR). An *ad hoc* Interdepartmental Task Force involving over 130 professionals from all departments contributes to the preparatory process. A Steering Committee, composed of all ADGs and with participation from IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International, provides policy oversight for the preparatory process. The ADG/NR convenes the Steering Committee and leads the *ad hoc* Task Force.

Information on the High-Level Conference is posted on the website: www.fao.org/foodclimate.