



Food Aid Committee
Comité de l'aide alimentaire
Comité de Ayuda Alimentaria

PressRelease

17 December 2009

PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of the Food Aid Committee, London, 9 December 2009

The Food Aid Committee held its 101st Session on 9 December 2009 under the chairmanship of Ms Sharon Murphy, Deputy Head of Division, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Ireland.

The Committee exchanged information on current and planned food assistance operations by donors, several of them in response to emergencies, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. A report from the observer from the World Food Programme highlighted its current projections of food assistance needs for 2010, the bulk of the requirements to be focused on Southern, Eastern, and Central Africa. In particular, considerable support from the international community was required to address the complex needs of 6.4m. people in Sudan and to provide essential support to 2.8m. beneficiaries in Somalia, including vulnerable children, pregnant and lactating women, HIV/AIDS-affected persons and school children.

Members reviewed the global food situation, noting that while the overall supply and demand position was better than projected a year earlier, markets remained volatile. Although international grains prices were mostly back to levels before the 2007-08 surge, local market prices in several food deficit developing countries remained very high. Moreover, rice export prices in Asia had recently moved sharply higher.

The Committee noted recent changes to members' food security policies and strategies, as well as noting the outcomes of the November World Summit on Food Security, the reform of the Committee on World Food Security and, earlier this year, the "L'Aquila" Food Security Initiative. The observer of the World Trade Organisation updated the Committee on the current state-of-play of the Doha Round negotiations (the Draft Modalities for Agriculture contain prospective disciplines on international food aid). The WTO Committee on Agriculture had recently conducted its annual monitoring of the Decision on Net Food-Importing Developing Countries, the purpose of which is to deal with the possible consequences of the reform programme in agricultural trade initiated by the WTO during the Uruguay Round, including provisions in the area of food aid.

Members received a summary report on their food aid operations in 2008/09, the full details of which will be placed on the FAC website. These had totalled 7.8m. tons, significantly more than previously estimated and exceeding the 2007/08 total of 7.1m.

In informal discussions prior to the Session, members had reviewed in depth the effectiveness of the current Food Aid Convention and the possible aims of a new convention. It was agreed that these discussions had been extremely fruitful and that the process should be accelerated in the months prior to the next Session in June 2010, when the Committee is due to decide on further extending the FAC. An additional informal meeting of members will be held in February 2010.

Note for editors: Under the Food Aid Convention, 1999, donors pledge to provide annually specified minimum amounts or values of food aid to developing countries in the form of grains and other food products. The objective of the Convention is to contribute to world food security and to improve the ability of the international community to respond to emergency food situations and other food needs of developing countries, ensuring that food aid is directed to the alleviation of poverty and hunger of the most vulnerable groups.

The Food Aid Convention is administered by the International Grains Council (IGC), whose Secretariat services the Food Aid Committee. For more background information on the role and activities of the Food Aid Committee and full details of FAC operations in recent years, please see the FAC website at www.foodaidconvention.org, or contact the IGC Secretariat.

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