

Summary of UNGA Side Event
Co-organised by the OECD and Italy in the context of the
UN General Assembly's Special Event towards achieving the MDGs
24 September 2013



Shaping Coherent and Collective Action
in a post-2015 World:
How can Policy Coherence for Development Help
Improve Global Food Security?

Introduction

On Tuesday 24 September, representatives from governments, international organisations, private sector, civil society, advocacy groups and post-2015 alliances from different parts of the world shared views and experiences on how collective action and more coherent policies can lead to improvements in global food security. The purpose of this multi-stakeholder dialogue was to inform discussions in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda, particularly on the role that policy coherence for development (PCD) can play as a key policy tool for achieving food security.

A keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Lapo Pistelli, Italian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs for Development Cooperation. Panellists included: Mr. Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Development; Ms. Ann-Sofie Nilsson, Director-General for International Development Cooperation, Sweden; Mr. Fahad bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah, Executive Chairman of the Qatar National Food Security Programme (QNFSP); Ms. Winifred Byanyima, Executive Director of Oxfam International; and Ms. Janet Voûte, Vice President, Global Head of Public Affairs, Nestlé. The multi-stakeholder dialogue was moderated by Ms. Bettina Prato, Research Coordinator, Strategy and Knowledge Management Department, IFAD, in the absence of Mr. Erik Solheim, Chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, who missed the meeting due to unavoidable flight delays

Key messages emerging from the discussions

Panellists and different stakeholders participating in the Side Event:

- ***Emphasised that the challenge of achieving global food security and nutrition must remain a key priority for the new global development agenda.*** There is a consensus that eradicating hunger should be an imperative in the post-2015 framework and that tackling poverty is an essential prerequisite towards that aim.
- ***Underlined that more coherent policies and collective action will play a key role in improving food security, particularly in the context of a globalised and more interconnected world economy.*** This requires action at all levels (globally, EU, OECD, nationally) and by different actors (governments in advanced, emerging and developing countries as well as international organisations, private sector, and CSOs).
- ***Underlined the potential of policy coherence for development to look at both the negative impacts of policies as well as enabling factors that promote food security.*** The former may include: agricultural subsidies, trade restrictions, land “grabbing”, price volatility, climate change, consumption patterns and food waste. Actions to promote the necessary enabling conditions and potential synergies across key areas include: responsible public and private investment in support of sustainable agricultural productivity; research and technology; market information systems, job creation. PCD is a fundamental principle for development in a post 2015-framework.
- ***Called for overcoming “silos” on actions to improve food security and adopting more integrated and multi-sectoral approaches.*** There is a need for sound policies that support agricultural development generally, but it will be increasingly important to focus on the linkages and synergies between key areas, such as agriculture, environment, energy, trade, investment, science and technology, while also creating the conditions for more diversified economies with growth opportunities outside the agriculture sector. Harmonising economic, social and environmental policies will help to ensure food security in a broader context of sustainable development.
- ***Recognised that food security is a complex challenge that requires a multi-stakeholder engagement and shared responsibilities.*** Governments in all countries as well as other key stakeholders (international organisations, private sector, civil society organisations, producers and consumers) have an important role to play to establish the favourable conditions for improving global food security.

Identified areas for action

Panellists shared concrete areas where collective action at both the national and global levels will be crucial to achieve global food security and nutrition:

Minister Pistelli in his keynote speech emphasised a number of actions that in the near term could concretely help advance food security, such as:

- reducing trade-distorting agricultural subsidies in advanced, emerging and developing countries;
- promoting more sustainable biofuel policies that take into account food security;
- bringing the Doha Round to a positive conclusion and strengthen systems that improve market transparency;

- reducing or eliminating export restrictions, improving market infrastructure, fostering access to markets for smallholders and promoting innovative approaches to risk management;
- encouraging responsible investment in agriculture;
- promoting agricultural policies geared towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- defending agricultural biodiversity;
- strengthening research and education in agriculture; and
- strengthening mechanisms for international co-operation.

Mr Piebalgs emphasised that food security and sustainable agriculture feature prominently in the EU's new development policy – the “Agenda for Change”. On nutrition, the EU committed to contribute to reduce stunting in 7 million children by 2025 and pledged to devote € 3.5 billion by 2020 to achieve this goal. He recognised that development aid alone is not sufficient to effectively fight hunger. “We need to look at all the available options and PCD is one critical tool to improve global food security”. He underlined the need for establishing a coherent framework for food security and nutrition that facilitates coherent action, from policies at national and global levels, to support agriculture in developing countries with special focus on smallholders. “We must work in partnership. Achieving food and nutrition security could only happen if developing countries are also committed to this agenda”. Multilateral solutions in addition to a well-functioning multilateral trading system will be also crucial for improving food security. There is a need for highlighting the benefits of reforming agriculture policies. Policy coherence for development should be consistent over time and focus not only on the negative effects but also aim for positive outcomes: “It is not only about food security, but also about creating jobs”.

Ms Nilsson underlined the importance of putting in place functional institutions at the national level that can provide the conditions for a sound legal framework (transparent, accountable) for responsible private investment. She emphasised the need for fostering investment in global public goods such as education, infrastructure, and research. Women also need to have improved opportunities. Policy coherence for development cannot only be fostered at the national level; it requires a global approach as well as sound data and more research.

Mr Al-Attiya emphasised that water cannot be delinked from food security. Effective water management and sustainable food systems are a pre-requisite for food security. Trade liberalisation is important, but mechanisms are needed that prevent unilateral measures, such as export restrictions. Food security should be designed from a country perspective, taking into account the particular context as well as the conditions, capacities and needs at the country level. With as many as 60 countries and 2 billion people affected by food insecurity, pressures for migration are strong. Transparency and sound data is critical to find solutions. “Food security is not about agriculture”, it requires actions at all policy areas and by all ministries. There is a need for whole of government approaches and “new models for policy coordination”. Ensuring policy coherence for development requires building institutional and human resource capacities as well as investments.

Ms Byanyima underlined that there are two twin challenges: raising inequalities and food waste. She outlined a series of actions in different areas that are critical to advance global food security, such as: fostering investment in agriculture particularly in small food producers improving their access to markets; establishing strong regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible private investment; ensuring land rights and access to land and other critical resources; ensuring strict adherence to the standards agreed by all investors; removing biofuel subsidies and mandates, providing policy space for progressive taxation; and implementing policies that vindicate the right to food.

Ms Voûte emphasised that farmers are at the centre of multi-stakeholder initiatives. In her perspective business success requires attention to sustainability and farming communities (nutrition, energy, and

water). This is not a separate social issue. She underlined that food security requires a multi-stakeholder engagement and that public private partnerships based on transparency are an instrumental vehicle for this.

Concluding remarks

During the closing remarks, panellists emphasised the important role that policy coherence for development will play in making links across key sectors for achieving food security in the post-2015 framework. More inclusive dialogue is needed with all actors involved, and with civil society organisations playing a major role to ensure that governments and business act responsibly and that policies are coherent. For this, transparency and dialogue among stakeholders will be essential as will collective action. There is a need for developing the necessary institutional mechanisms at country level and define PCD sensitive targets to ensure progress.