

# FOOD POLICY UPDATE

## FROM ROME

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**Food Policy Updates from Rome** aims to provide an up-to-date information on the global food governance system and strategic activities of ActionAid.

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## The Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

### 1. Discussion on Food Price Volatility

Global food prices increased for the eighth consecutive month in February, according to the FAO Food Price Index. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has requested its High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) to investigate the causes and consequences of food price volatility, and make recommendations on appropriate and coherent policies, actions, tools and institutions to manage the risks linked to excessive price volatility in agriculture.

ActionAid and other civil society organizations (CSOs) [endorsed a letter](#) to the CFS demanding a plan of action to avoid and mitigate the negative impacts of price volatility. The letter requested the formation of a working group which includes developing countries most affected by volatility, and an advisory group which includes civil society experts. The FAO Director General and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food sent a [similar letter](#) asking the CFS to take the lead in tackling the issue of food price volatility.

ActionAid has also developed an '[Action Guide on 2011 Food Price Crisis](#)' and a [food price policy briefing](#) aimed at providing guidance and support to country programmes (CPs) for their programming and advocacy work.

### 2. Open Electronic Consultations

#### **Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)**

The CFS launched an online consultation on the principles and the structure of the GSF. The GSF is intended to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders. The working group, chaired by Brazil, agreed that the GSF could not be a binding instrument due to the necessary flexibility of its approach, but that its endorsement by the CFS would nonetheless reflect a commitment of Member Countries and other stakeholders to its goals. The zero draft of the GSF is expected in May and will be submitted for a broader consultation in June. For minutes of the Working Group meeting: <http://bit.ly/e6gM6q>

#### **HLPE Studies on Price Volatility and on Land Tenure**

The HLPE launched two online consultations on food price volatility and land tenure in order to gather comments and views of the civil society. ActionAid sent its [submission](#) asking the HLPE to look at all causes of food price volatility, and to examine the factors responsible for price movements at *domestic level* that are also contributing to international volatility. We called for immediate responses, including the need to support food grain reserves at local and regional level. The HLPE studies are due around 25 April. For the summary of the HLPE consultation on price volatility: <http://bit.ly/fU33nl>; and on land tenure: <http://bit.ly/eVvcff>

### 3. Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and Other Natural Resources (VGs)

Following the conclusions of the regional consultations with civil society held over 2010, the drafting of the VGs has begun. From 18 April to 16 May, a zero draft will be submitted for the review of FAO Member Countries, the HLPE and the VGs Advisory Group. An electronic consultation on the draft will be organized during the same time period. Interested organizations and individuals are invited to review and comment on this document. Alberta will be consolidating ActionAid's comments on the draft. Please [email](#) her to get involved.

Useful Link:

<http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/>

### 4. Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment that Respects Rights, Livelihoods and Resource (RAI)

The RAI initiated by the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), has been criticized for not being consultative enough in its drafting process. With little to no consultation with various stakeholders, the legitimacy and ownership of the RAI principles have been very weak. This led to the CFS [proposal](#) for a more inclusive and participatory process so that a wide range of views can inform decision making. In the proposal, Belgium proposed a roadmap for the consultation process, in which the RAI will be endorsed/adopted/agreed at the CFS Plenary Session in 2012.

The proposal is now in the hands of Member States who are expected to comment and agree. However, social movements and farmers' associations are very sceptical of the concept of RAI, as they believe that regulations to mitigate the effects of land acquisitions on poor communities are not enough. Instead, they are calling for the total ban of land grabs in the name of right to food.

### 5. Mapping Food Security Actions at Country Level

The CFS mapping task-team is continuing its work on developing a tool to provide national governments and other users with an improved capacity to make better informed decisions about how best to design and allocate resources for national and regional food security actions. 'Mapping' in this context essentially means profiling current actions at country level (i.e. policies, strategies, programme, projects, legislations, investments and plans), linking them with domestic and international resource flows, and identifying the correspondence between actions and changes in indicators such as the food security status of target populations. The task-team is currently reviewing the already-existing tools and applications, taken both from country experiences and academic research, and is expected to present its findings at the CFS Technical Consultative Workshop on 23-25 May. As member of the task-team, Alberta (representing ActionAid and IFSN) is supporting the mapping exercise and channelling the perspectives of the civil society into the process.

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## International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

### Land Portal

The Land Portal is about to be launched and its Steering Committee has now been set-up. Currently the Steering Committee is composed of ActionAid, L'Association pour la Gouvernance de la Terre,

de l'Eau et des Ressources Naturelles (AGTER), the International Alliance on Land Tenure and Administration (IALTA), the Instituto de Estudios del Hambre (IEH), IFAD and the International Land Coalition (ILC). ActionAid proposed to launch the new portal during its Right to Food Community Meeting around August. The Land Portal will provide a space for sharing information on land management in different countries and for improving the coordination among those working on land issues. ActionAid staff are highly encouraged to subscribe to the portal and contribute contents (e.g. reports and case studies) once it goes online. For the latest minutes of the Steering Committee meeting: <http://bit.ly/dLxSNE>

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## UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

### 1. Focus on Women Farmers

On 2 February, ActionAid had a meeting with the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) at the FAO, in which many opportunities for future collaborations were identified. ActionAid and FAO agreed to support each other in producing and exchanging knowledge, policy and evidence on local level programmes, new priorities and trends in women and agriculture. Moreover, FAO agreed to support ActionAid in its advocacy work around women's rights.

It is very important to note that the new edition of the [State of Food and Agriculture \(SOFA\)](#), the annual flagship report of the FAO which was released on 8 March, focuses on the role of women in agriculture. It shows how tackling gender inequalities in the farming sector can boost food production and reduce world hunger. On International Women's Day (8 Mar), ActionAid participated at a roundtable hosted by the FAO, IFAD and World Food Programme (WFP) to discuss the issues raised in SOFA.

### 2. Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP)

In response to the current rise in food prices, FAO, in partnership with stakeholders, will run a series of seminars in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East to help governments make informed decisions on how to respond to high food prices. The objective of the seminars is to exchange experiences from the last food price crisis in 2007/08 and to become better acquainted with the various policy measures mapped out in FAO's newly updated [Guide for Policy and Programmatic Actions at Country Level to Address High Food Prices](#). The two-day regional seminars will be held from March through June. The first seminar will take place in Bangkok on 9-10 March.

For more info on the ISFP: <http://www.fao.org/isfp/isfp-home/en/>

Updates on the policy seminar schedule are available at: <http://www.fao.org/isfp/isfp-highlights/detail-highlights/en/item/51583/icode/>

### 3. Meeting with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter

On 18 February, ActionAid met with the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to discuss future plans and to identify opportunities for future collaboration. ActionAid and the Special Rapporteur will organise joint actions on the eve of the G20 Agricultural Ministers meeting in June, in order to advocate for concrete actions to tackle food price volatility, to push for food stocks and to limit speculation on commodities. The Special Rapporteur recently launched his new report, [Agroecology and the Right to Food](#), at the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva on 8 March. He informed ActionAid that his second report will be on nutrition and hidden hunger while his third will focus on gender and the right to food.

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## CONCORD European Food Security Group (EFSG), Brussels

### I. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Reform, European Union (EU) Policy Framework and the CFS

The EFSG of CONCORD is continuing to work on the CAP reform, the EU Policy Framework and the CFS. Regarding the CAP reform, EuropeAid Development and Cooperation Directorate-General (DG DEVCO) is preparing a study about the impact of the CAP on selected developing countries; the study should be ready early March and the EFSG is planning a quick response on this. Concerning the EU policy framework on addressing agriculture and food security challenges, the EFSG proposed an informal meeting with Philip Mikos of DG DEVCO to discuss EU's support on agroecological agriculture, right to food, nutrition and civil society participation in the global governance of food. Regarding the CFS, the group decided to work on the four topics that will be discussed at next CFS Plenary meeting in October: Price volatility, land tenure, GSF and mapping. ActionAid will lead the work on the GSF and feed the consolidated contribution of the EFSG into the CFS.

### 2. EU Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) Strategy Paper 2011-2013

The [2011-2013 strategy for the EU FSTP](#), which allocates EU financial resources on food security sectors, is now available. The total financial allocation for the 2011-2013 period is €749 million, of which €33 million has been allocated for financing activities that benefit European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI; see Box 1) countries.

The total funds have been allocated according to the following 3 core objectives:

- Research, technology transfer and innovation to enhance food security (€260 m)
- Strengthened governance approaches for food security (€170 m)
- Addressing food security for the poor and vulnerable in fragile situations (300 m)

The EFSG is working to guarantee coherence among spending choices and priorities set in the EU Policy Framework.

#### Box 1. European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

ENP stands for [European Neighbourhood Policy](#), while ENPI is short for [European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument](#). The ENP is a broad political strategy which has as the ambitious objective of strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of Europe's neighbourhood in order to avoid any dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its direct neighbours. The ENPI is the financial instrument which supports the ENP through concrete assistance actions.

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### News on International Food Security Network (IFSN)

The website of the REDSAN-PALOP (Regional Civil Society Network for Food Security in the Portuguese Speaking African Countries) is now available, both in Portuguese and English: <http://www.redsan-palop.org/ing/index.htm>

## Upcoming Events

### MARCH

- **The 3rd European Rural Development Forum: “Future agriculture and rural development to fight against hunger”** - Organised by the European commission, the Government of Spain and the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development  
29 Mar–1 April, Palencia, Spain  
For more information: <http://www.ruralforum.info/menu-1-en.php>
- **Agricultural Seminar: The CAP Towards 2020—Market Regulation and Farm Structures Policy** - Organised by Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires (CSA)  
31 Mar–1 April, Brussels, Belgium  
For more information: <http://agriculture.wallonie.be/BG/110331BxICAPPprogrammeEN.doc>

### APRIL

- **International Academic Conference on ‘Global Land Grabbing’** - Co-organised and hosted by the Future Agricultures Consortium in partnership with the Journal of Peasant Studies and the Land Deal Politics Initiative (LDPI)  
6-8 April, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Brighton, UK
- **141<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Council**  
11-15 April, FAO, Rome, Italy
- **Global food and Agriculture: Policy Options in Response to Increased Volatility** - Organised by Wilton Park  
13 April, West Sussex, UK  
For more information: <http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/en/conferences/policy-programmes/global-economy/?view=Conference&id=553300282>

### MAY

- **International Conference on Climate Change, Agri-Food, Fisheries, and Ecosystems (ICCAFF): “Reinventing Research, Innovation, and Policy Agendas for an Environmentally and Socially-Balanced Growth”**  
19-21 May, Hotel Palais des Roses, Agadir, Morocco

### JUNE

- **Association of Southeast Asian Nations—Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (ASEAN—SEAFDEC) Conference: “Fish for the People 2020: Adaptation to a Changing Environment”**  
13-17 June, Sofitel Centara Grand Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
- **37<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference**  
25 June–2 July, FAO, Rome, Italy

### OCTOBER

- **Family Farming International Congress: Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth** - Organised by World Rural Forum  
5-7 October, Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain  
For more information: <http://www.ruralforum.net>



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