

International Forum on Food Security Coordination

Food Security Coordination in Support of Human Security and the SDGs

*Rome, Italy
May 4-6, 2016*

BRIEF SUMMARY

The UN Rome-Based Agencies—the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)—develop and implement critical food security and humanitarian interventions at the global level. Each agency’s impact is magnified through effective collaboration and partnerships with corporations, NGOs, and national governments, play a growing role in scaling pilot projects and marshaling funds for urgently needed food system development. The **International Forum on Food Security Coordination** explored how to deepen coordination and better link existing initiatives, in the context of an ongoing global humanitarian crisis.

In an opening session, discussion focused on strategies for better aligning NGOs and the private sector with the work of the UN agencies, and the role of business in global food security. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not solely the responsibility of governments, but instead should be understood as a beacon for how NGOs, corporations, and the UN agencies align on food security. Beyond development aid, investment from the private sector and national governments will be critical in achieving SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

The food security community must now recognize that the private sector’s operating model is based on turning a profit, and that using this market model, corporations can play an important role in reaching small holder producers globally. Experts emphasized the importance of corporations integrating high-level agendas throughout their business operations and incentive structures. Both NGOs and the private sector can be engaged in the long term sustainable transformation of rural areas, including diversification of rural economies and improvements in quality of life through investment in infrastructure, access to good quality and affordable healthcare, education, water and sanitation. The majority of multinational companies now recognize the relevance of the SDGs, but are still looking to understand how to align with them; this is a critical and immediate opportunity for the food security community to engage the private sector.

It was made clear in the forum discussions that the importance of both political will and the private sector should not be underestimated. The pressure that climate change and the ongoing refugee crisis place on food security make it especially important that experts coherently explain to non-food security experts and decision makers the targets outlined in the SDGs, and how food and nutrition security are linked to climate adaptation, migration, employment, health, and economic development.

Additionally, a true partnership revolution is needed to transform and rigorously evaluate food security Public-Private Partnerships. Partnerships need to move from cumbersome, time-intensive, poorly structured collaborations to effective and better aligned tools for impact, with rigorous evaluation methods. Roundtable participants recommended that a new “science for partnerships” be developed, with strategically-aligned incentive structures.

The forum’s second session explored opportunities for mobilizing resources to achieve the SDGs through international coordination around finance. Taking into account the current levels of both internal and international migration and the combination of ongoing crises globally, public sector and ODA/RBA financing will not be adequate to meet SDG-2. Importantly, smallholder farmers should be recognized as

part of the private sector (*i.e.*, having assets, making investments and turning profits), and agriculture sector growth should be recognized as a business opportunity for investors and reinsurers. Financing mechanisms can be used to leverage technology and infrastructure to scale agriculture developments. Specific financing mechanisms to be considered include development bonds, social impact bonds, public expenditure combined with local investment, blended finance that combines commercial investment with development aid, and accelerator investments (*e.g.*, clean water investments that also address food security).

In a final session of the forum, participants focused in particular on the expected impact of climate change and migration on food security, and the role of international coordination in meeting this challenge. Global food security is threatened by increasing levels of volatility in financial, energy, and agriculture markets—what has come to be recognized as the “new normal”—whether caused by political conflict, climate change, national agriculture policies, or other intersecting variables. At the same time, rapidly increasing populations in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, particularly in areas resistant to family planning or women’s empowerment, are predicted to heighten migration as technology increases individual’s awareness of opportunities abroad.

It was noted that migration is both caused by crisis events like wars and natural disasters, and also by slowly developing trends like changing demographics and climate. Therefore, rather than only planning for strategies to address current migration and crisis events, decision makers across sectors should look for opportunities to improve standards of living where individuals currently live. These can include corporate approaches to managing labor standards within their supply chains and creating sustainable business models for agriculture within domestic markets. Government leaders should look to create stable legislative environments that encourage private sector investment, and support women in driving economic growth, by ensuring education opportunities and labor participation. While migration can provide the benefit of remittances flowing back to migrants’ countries of origin, significant concerns regarding international trafficking of women migrants must be addressed at a global level.

Forum participants agreed that food security must now be raised as a priority on the agenda of the upcoming 43rd G7 summit in Sicily, in May 2017. As Italy prepares to take over the chair position of the G7, food security can once again be prioritized within the global agenda (as it was during the l’Aquila Summit). Roundtable participants recommended that the role of food security in the overall SDG agenda be emphasized, given that some of the highest levels of population growth are expected to take place in regions dependent on agriculture that are also heavily food insecure.

The complexity of this challenge lies in the reciprocating compound effect that conflict, demographic upheaval, and climate change have on human security, food security, and migration (and vice versa), in the context of the now global responsibility to eliminate hunger, secure economic equality and civil rights for women, and provide environmentally sustainable development for all of the planet’s inhabitants.

This Forum built on the work of the Aspen Food Security Strategy Group, a high-level, non-partisan, and international dialogue series hosted by the Aspen Institute in 2013-2015 that explored long-term food security challenges. In its [final report](#), the Strategy Group recommended as one of six priority areas that international coordination of food security efforts be enhanced, including through systems for standardizing the development of Public-Private Partnerships.