

## **Panel Discussion on Agriculture Development and Food Security**

### **New Cooperation for Global Food Security**

**9 October 2009**

**UN Headquarters New York**

#### **Concept Note**

Pursuant to resolution A/RES/63/235, the Second Committee will hold a debate on “Agriculture Development and Food Security,” as part of its agenda during the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. IFAD, FAO, and WFP, in collaboration with UN-DESA will sponsor a panel discussion on 9 October 2009, to complement the Second Committee’s debate.

Global attention to agricultural development and food security has been renewed as a result of several factors:

- 1) **The world has entered a new era of global food and nutrition insecurity.** According to FAO, an additional 100 million people will suffer from hunger in 2009 bringing the total to 1,017 million hungry people, the highest number ever recorded. More than 2 billion people suffered from micronutrient deficiencies, even before the food prices increased and the global economic and financial crisis erupted. Poverty and hunger cannot be reduced without investing in agriculture and nutrition. Smallholder farmers, men and women, have a central role to play in achieving food and nutrition security and pro-poor agricultural and economic growth. Agricultural development needs to be complemented by food and nutrition assistance.
- 2) **Agriculture, food and nutrition security play a vital role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).** Agriculture is the world’s major source of food and the sector provides employment, income and livelihoods for the majority of the world’s poor people. The achievement of the MDGs, in particular the goals and targets related to poverty and hunger, education and child mortality are closely related to agricultural development and food security. There is a pressing need to implement actions to minimize the impact of the food crisis on sustainable development and on achievement of the MDGs. Secure access to nutritious food and to natural and productive resources (land, water, technology, markets) is central to the achievement of the MDGs. Women play a particularly important role in food production and household food security and need to be recognized and supported as critical actors and allies in achieving the MDGs.
- 3)

since climate change is likely to increase the level of uncertainty regarding food production and food access. As a result, by 2020 almost 50 million additional people may be at greater risk of hunger as a direct consequence of climate change. Higher productivity requires increasing investments in agriculture, adapting farming methods, strengthening social protection, including risk management instruments, improving rural and rural-to-urban infrastructure, use of natural resources, as well as more skilled and better trained farmers with special attention to women as the main agricultural producers in many countries.

The Second Committee debate is being held against the backdrop of a series of high-level international talks that have served to heighten awareness of the present and projected global food security situation, provided forums for building consensus about a global response, and a platform for announcing financial commitments to support food assistance and to increase agricultural productivity. The growing convergence on the necessity to re-focus development policy, practice and resources towards the challenge of global food security focuses primarily on *what* needs to be done. To accelerate action, agreement must now focus more deeply on *how* the global response is to be effected.

The purpose of the panel discussion is to provide intellectual input and thematic guidance for the Second Committee debate on agriculture development and food security (scheduled for 22 October 2009) by focusing on two distinct trends that are both promising and critical for the understanding of how to improve global food security in the short, medium and long term and how to achieve the MDGs and poverty and hunger reduction goals beyond 2015.

- **The importance of international cooperation for global food security:** International cooperation is a critical element for global food security. Many developed countries have recently announced commitments for a reinvigorated engagement and increased investments in agricultural development and food security. Moreover, South-South cooperation focusing on agricultural development and food and nutrition security is becoming a powerful source of funding and results in economic