



Assembly
Item 2

A/121/2-P.3
22 September 2009

**CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE REQUESTS FOR THE
INCLUSION OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM IN THE ASSEMBLY AGENDA**

**Request for the inclusion of an emergency item
in the agenda of the 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
submitted by the delegation of Australia**

On 21 September 2009, the Secretary General received from the delegation of Australia, a request for the inclusion in the agenda of the 121st Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"Parliamentary action to ensure global food security".

Delegates to the 121st Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request (Annex I), as well as an explanatory memorandum (Annex II) and a draft resolution (Annex III) in support thereof.

The 121st Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of Australia, on Monday, 19 October 2009.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the Union may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a major event of international concern on which it appears necessary for the IPU to express its opinion. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted;
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted;
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject;
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL BY THE
SECRETARY OF THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRALIA**

Canberra, 21 September 2009

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

The Australian delegation wishes to propose the inclusion of the following emergency item in the agenda of the 121st IPU Assembly, to be held in Geneva in October 2009:

"Parliamentary action to ensure global food security".

Please find attached an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution on the item.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Neil BESSELL
Secretary of the delegation of Australia

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO ENSURE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of Australia

KEY ISSUES

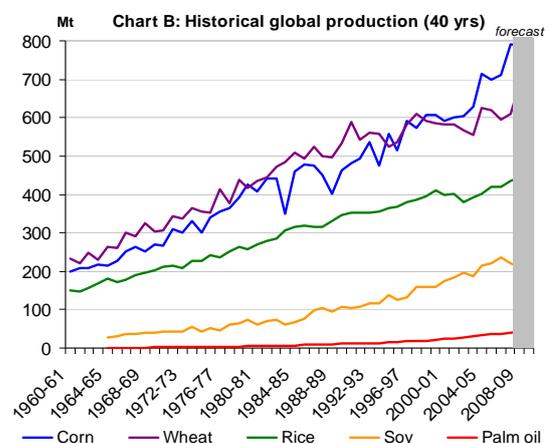
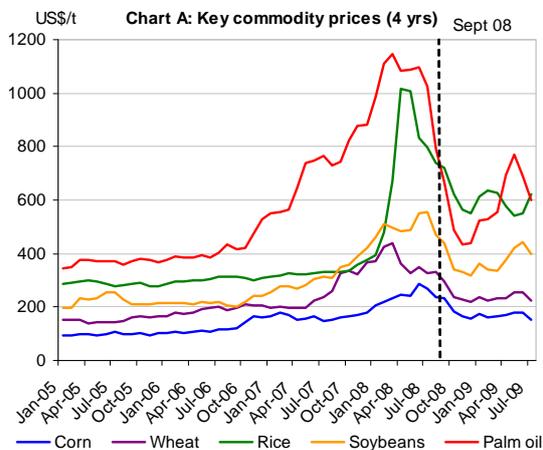
- In 2008, high food prices drove millions of people into poverty, increased malnutrition and triggered civil unrest in some countries.
- The global economic crisis has compounded the problem, by reducing incomes and the investment needed for development.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has estimated that in 2009 the number of people who do not have access to adequate nutrition will exceed 1 billion.
- Addressing food security requires meaningful partnerships between nation states and multilateral agencies, such as the United Nations, FAO, multilateral development banks and other stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

1. World food prices

World prices of major agricultural commodities rose significantly in 2007 and in the first half of 2008. This forced millions of poor and vulnerable people to cut back their consumption of food and expenditure on other items such as education, clothing and health care. Prices peaked between April and July 2008 before starting to fall. However, prices remain relatively high and forecasters – including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), FAO and the World Bank – expect food prices to average well above their pre-2006 levels over the next 10 years.

The onset of the global economic crisis has exacerbated the food security crisis. Already vulnerable due to the price rises, developing countries have seen incomes and employment opportunities fall, further reducing the capacity of people to access sufficient food.



2. International response to the global food security crisis

United Nations High-Level Task Force

The United Nations has taken the lead in coordinating international action on food security by establishing, in early 2008, a High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, chaired by its Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, co-chaired by the Director-General of FAO and including the heads of the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and relevant UN bodies. The Task Force released a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) in July 2008 to provide countries with a menu of policy options to respond to the crisis.

FAO and the World Summit on Food Security

FAO is the leading UN agency on food and agriculture issues and was among the first entities to alert the international community to the impact on food security of high food and fuel prices in 2007. In June 2008, FAO convened a High-Level Conference on World Food Security, which endorsed the then draft Comprehensive Framework of Action. In October 2009, FAO will host a High-Level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World in 2050, and in November 2009 will convene a World Summit on Food Security.

Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS)

In July 2008, the G8 leaders endorsed a proposal for a GPAFS to implement the CFA. Most countries have endorsed this proposal and are discussing how best to implement it.

G8 L'Aquila Outreach Session on Global Food Security

In July 2009, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi hosted the leaders of 40 States and international organizations at a G8 Summit side event on global food security in L'Aquila, Italy. The leaders agreed to a US\$ 20 billion target over three years for increased investment in food security. They also pledged to advance by the end of 2009 the GPAFS and issued a statement largely reflecting five principles for improving food security:

- Work in partnership to support country-led food security plans;
- Take a comprehensive approach to address the full range of issues that affect hunger and food security;
- Effectively coordinate assistance at the national, regional and global levels to support country-led plans;
- Encourage a strong role for multilateral institutions; and
- Promote a sustained commitment of financial resources.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

IFAD is a development bank and specialized UN agency. Through the provision of low-interest loans and grants, IFAD works with the rural poor, governments, donors, non-governmental organizations and other partners to increase the rural poor's access to financial services, markets, technology, land and other natural resources.

The World Bank

The World Bank has shown considerable leadership in developing a rapid and coordinated response to higher global food prices to help mitigate the impacts on the poor in developing countries. In April 2008, World Bank President Zoellick set out the New Deal for Global Food Policy to catalyse global action across several areas, including trade, biofuels and investment. The

"New Deal" is a 10-point plan which prioritizes immediate action on safety nets, seeds and fertilisers, spending on research and a reduction of trade barriers through the WTO's Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The World Bank is establishing a Vulnerability Financing Facility (VFF) to streamline support to protect the poor and vulnerable in times of global and systemic shocks. The VFF will bring under one umbrella the existing Global Food Crisis Response Programme and a new Rapid Social Response Programme.

3. Response to the global food security crisis

Responses to the global food security crisis need to address both the short-term impacts of the food price increases and longer-term actions to address the root causes of food insecurity in developing countries.

Short-term impacts can be addressed by:

- Monetary support for the World Food Programme.
- Monetary support to increase food production globally, and in particular areas of need.
- The removal of export restrictions on food and agricultural products.

Longer-term impacts can be addressed by:

- Improving the availability of food through increased agricultural productivity, as well as improving the accessibility of food, by increasing the ability of poor people to purchase it.

These goals can be achieved by:

1. Increasing support for, and engagement with, effective food research and development institutes;
2. Improving rural livelihoods and increasing resilience by promoting enterprise development, improving the functioning of agricultural markets, enhancing regulatory environments across the agricultural and fisheries sectors and facilitating access to infrastructure, land, extension services and finance;
3. Building community resilience by supporting the establishment and improvement of social protection programmes that reduce the vulnerability of the poor to price shocks, and by increasing the access of the poor to insurance and credit facilities;
4. Reform of international agricultural markets by successfully concluding the WTO Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations as soon as possible. This would be the most effective collective measure the international community could take in the short term to stimulate increased output by developing country farmers and boost global food trade flows.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO ENSURE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of AUSTRALIA

The 121st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Recalling* that under Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food...",
- (2) *Further recalling* Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), in which the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger is recognized,
- (3) *Taking note* of the resolution adopted by the 96th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Beijing (China) on 20 September 1996 on "Policies and strategies to ensure the right to food in this time of globalization of the economy and trade liberalization",
- (4) *Taking note* of the 1996 Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, which pledged to reduce the proportion of undernourished people to half their 1996 level by no later than 2015,
- (5) *Noting* that under Millennium Development Goal 1, Target 3 aims to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger,
- (6) *Welcoming* the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of the UN High-Level Taskforce on the Global Food Security Crisis and the Task Force's Comprehensive Framework for Action released in July 2008,
- (7) *Noting also* the June 2008 Declaration of the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security, which urged increased global efforts to address the challenge of global food security through both short-term emergency assistance and longer term measures to increase agricultural production and liberalize agricultural and food trade,
- (8) *Welcoming* the G8 Statement on Global Food Security, adopted at the G8 Outreach Session on Food Security in L'Aquila, Italy, in July 2009, in which the leaders of 40 countries and international organizations agreed to act with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food security, and to set a goal of mobilizing US\$ 20 billion over three years through a coordinated, comprehensive strategy focused on sustainable agricultural development,
- (9) *Deeply concerned* that despite the progress made by the international community in recent years towards eradicating hunger, the number of malnourished people in the world has increased to more than 1 billion,
- (10) *Concerned* that the global economic crisis is leading to increased poverty and further reducing the food security of the poor, particularly in developing countries,

(11) *Concerned* that while food prices have fallen from their recent peaks, they remain volatile and are expected to remain relatively high over the next 10 years,

(12) *Concerned* that the international community's capacity to respond to growing food demand is also constrained by increasing urbanization, water scarcity, the decline in investment in agricultural research and development, distortions in global food markets, increasing energy prices, environmental degradation and climate change,

(13) *Recognizing* that food security and poverty are fundamentally interrelated and must be addressed within a broad framework that encompasses social concerns and economic growth,

(14) *Also recognizing* the negative effects that distortionary agricultural policies have on agricultural production, investment, trade, and food security,

(15) *Acknowledging* the importance of open trade flows and efficient markets in promoting economic growth and food security,

(16) *Also acknowledging* the importance of sustainable development and real progress in tackling environmental challenges such as the increase in greenhouse gas emissions to achieving global food security,

(17) *Believing* that the fulfilment of the right to food requires the adoption of economic, environmental and social policies aimed at increasing both the availability and accessibility of food,

1. *Calls on* parliaments to take urgent and decisive action to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people facing hunger by 2015;
2. *Stresses* the critical need for increased investment in rural development in developing countries to improve food security;
3. *Urges* donor countries to honour their commitments to mobilize additional resources to help achieve global food security;
4. *Stresses* the need for greater coordination between parliaments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and farmers' associations in their efforts to improve global food security;
5. *Recognizes* the important role of the private sector in the development of modern and efficient agricultural and food systems;
6. *Calls for* the implementation of national and regional agricultural strategies to improve food security through country-led coordination processes, as called for in the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the UN High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security;
7. *Encourages* parliaments to expand national social protection systems in order to shield the poor in developing countries from future food price rises and crises;

8. *Urges* parliaments to take, in conjunction with actions to improve global food security, adaptation and mitigation measures in relation to climate change as well as measures to strengthen the sustainable management of water, land, soil and other natural resources, including the protection of biodiversity;
9. *Calls on* nations to show renewed commitment to an ambitious and balanced outcome to the WTO Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, and to conclude the negotiations by the end of 2010;
10. *Urges* governments to refrain from erecting new barriers to trade and investment;
11. *Encourages* world leaders to agree on effective measures to tackle food security at the forthcoming World Summit on Food Security.