

The EU and Food Security

“A world where one billion people are hungry is not just a deep stain on our collective conscience. It is a growing threat to global security. If the financial crisis has taught us anything, it is that, if we ignore risks building up in the system, it is much harder to manage them....Like the fight against climate change, the fight against hunger cannot wait...”

— European Commission President José Manuel Barroso

Food may be the staff of life, but affordable access to food and good nutrition is a challenge in many parts of the world. Even in the United States, the number of Americans lacking dependable access to adequate food increased to 49 million in 2008, according to a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture report. However, this number pales in comparison with the more than one billion people globally who suffer from hunger, a situation exacerbated in recent years by rising food and fuel prices.



The devastation of two world wars helped define the importance the EU attached to food and nutrition in its earliest years. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)—one of the EU’s first “common” policies—was set up in 1962 to help guarantee a secure supply of food and to rebuild Europe’s agricultural sector.

What the EU accomplished on the European

continent is reflected in the Union’s development cooperation policy. In 2008, the EU and its 27 Member States provided almost 60 percent of global official development assistance to countries in need. The EU funds programs targeting hunger and improving food security, whether through emergency humanitarian assistance; aid available through the €1 billion Food Facility; the EU’s €2.7 billion commitment to the LAquila Initiative on Global Food Security; or through ongoing geographic and thematic programs designed to improve sustainable

standards of living for the EU’s development partners over the long-term.

The EU also offers preferential trade arrangements to developing countries—particularly the poorest—to help them help themselves by encouraging diversified economies, promoting food production for export that meets EU standards, and granting free or very liberal access for their agricultural products to the EU market.

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Securing the EU’s Food Supply: the Origins of the Common Agricultural Policy

As the European continent recovered from the devastation of two world wars, agriculture was crippled and food and good nutrition were in short supply. As a result, the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community (EEC)—the precursor to today’s EU—introduced the common agricultural policy (CAP).

CAP’s main objectives were to increase agricultural productivity and help farmers attain a fair standard of living; stabilize markets; and ensure a secure supply of affordable food. By providing farmers with incentives, CAP encouraged

increased production; however, its success resulted in unintended overproduction and surpluses, which distorted the market and raised environmental concerns.

Since the 1990s, CAP has moved away from supporting product prices to supporting producers’ income and rural development. Today’s CAP has been transformed into a multi-functional policy, supporting market oriented agricultural production throughout Europe, while also contributing to living and vibrant rural areas, and environmentally sustainable production.

Threats to Food Security

Dubbed a “global food crisis” by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the 2007 global surge in food prices vividly illustrated the thin line between eating enough and going hungry for many low-income populations. As a result of high food prices, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that the number of chronically hungry people in the world rose by 75 million in 2007 to reach 923 million.

A number of causes contributed to the jump in the cost of food: low levels of world cereal stocks; crop failures in some major exporting countries and export restrictions in others; increased demand for meat in East Asia; rapidly growing demand for agricultural commodities for biofuels; and rising energy and agro-chemical prices. Although such dramatic price

“It is less expensive to protect the planet now than to repair it later.”

— European Commission President José Manuel Barroso

A Threefold Balancing Act

- The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a powerful tool within the EU to safeguard food security, but it will also need to contribute to efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Globally, investment and research are needed to promote climate-friendly productivity increases. Barriers to efficient production in developing countries must be dismantled by improving infrastructure, knowledge, and access to inputs and credits.
- An effective multilateral framework for global trade is vital. Trade opportunities stimulate production; trade restrictions discourage it and lead to anxiety in the food market.



Credit: Giulio Napolitano, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

EU-FAO Cooperation

The EU is one of the FAO’s most steadfast partners in promoting sustainable rural development to improve the lives of the poor. The EU and the FAO work together to fight poverty at its root by partnering on the ground in developing countries, improving food security in emergencies, promoting research to foster food safety and quality, sharing information and know-how, and involving partners in policy-making.

hikes have now eased, prices still remain high in many developing countries despite record production. Worse, global food prices appear to be on the rise once again, with the December 2009 FAO Food Price Index registering four straight monthly price increases.

Balancing Food Security and Climate Change

According to FAO estimates, food production must increase by at least 70 percent to meet the growing demands of a world population expected to surpass 9 billion by 2050. Meeting that demand is further complicated by the world’s changing climate, which poses severe risks to food security and the agriculture sector.

Changing weather patterns can be expected to lead to increased temperatures and rainfall; severe droughts and flooding; shorter growing seasons; changes in ocean temperatures and fish stocks; heat stress on crops and animals; changes in disease patterns; and reduced crop yields.

Some poor developing countries could suffer disproportionately from the impacts of climate change because temperatures and precipitation are often already close to the tipping points beyond which crops fail or animals die, despite having contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). For example, Africa is responsible for a mere 4 percent of global GHG emissions, but the potential impact of climate change on the African continent could be devastating.



Helping Developing Countries Adapt to Climate Change

Many potential adaptation measures are drawn from existing good practices that promote sustainable development, and from the expertise and advice the EU gives to its own farmers: shifting crop rotation to optimize the use of available water; adjusting sowing dates according to temperature and rainfall patterns; planting crop varieties better suited to new weather conditions; and creating wind-breaks on arable land to reduce water and soil run-off.

Through its Action Plan on Climate Change and Development, the EU will ensure that climate change is incorporated into all aspects of its development cooperation policy; it will support adaptation and mitigation efforts in developing countries and help develop administrative capacity in vulnerable nations.

In 2007 the EU launched the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), to strengthen political dialogue and cooperation on climate change with the most vulnerable and poorest developing countries. GCCA helps integrate climate change adaptation measures into developing countries' policies by supporting capacity-building programs, improving their knowledge of the impacts of climate change, effectively integrating climate change vulnerability into development plans and budgets, and identifying and preparing GCCA activities in particular sectors, especially agriculture and water. Implementation of improved farming practices, for example, includes promoting sustainable land management, land tenure, soil erosion and flood control, water management in coastal communities, and hazard mapping.

The EU is also committed to contribute substantially to the costs of climate change adaptation and mitigation in developing countries. By 2020, this could require some \$100 billion annually, which would need to be met through a combination of domestic finance (developing countries themselves), the international carbon market (trading/purchasing emission allowances), and international public finance from developed countries.

International public support to jump-start the response to climate change over the next three years is critical. At the December 2009 climate talks in

Copenhagen, the EU committed itself to contributing €7.2 billion (\$10 billion) of a total \$30 billion fast-start financing in 2010-2012 and to an equitable share of long-term funding to help poorer nations deal with global warming.

Farming is not only affected by climate change, but also contributes an estimated 14 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with close to 70 percent of this amount coming from the developing countries. There is considerable potential for GHG mitigation in the agriculture sector and a combination of incentives and monitoring procedures could lead to win-win scenarios that reduce net emissions and support sustainable development objectives for the poor.

Biofuels

As part of its commitment to counter climate change, the EU has established a 20 percent renewable energy target in its own energy mix by 2020, and a 10 percent target for renewable resources in its transport fuel by 2020. However, biofuel production competes for land with food production, with a potential negative impact on food availability.

Better integration of food and energy production can reduce the competition for available land, as can the development of second-generation biofuels produced from grasses and other biomass. The EU aims to ensure that the expanded use of biofuels is limited to sustainable biofuels, which generate a clear and net GHG saving and have no negative net impact on biodiversity and land use.



Trading Up the Food Chain



“With regard to food security, trade is part of the solution, not the problem. A smoothly functioning global food market can help to iron out local variations in supply... and it can also hand real economic opportunities to developing countries.”

— European Commission |

Trade and aid are the twin pillars of EU development policy, with trade acting as a catalyst for economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries. Free trade is a vital part of the EU development strategy that has already lifted hundreds of millions of people in the developing world out of poverty.

The EU is the world’s biggest exporter of agricultural products—primarily high-quality farm products and processed agricultural goods. The EU is also the leading importer of agricultural products globally and from developing countries, importing mostly basic agricultural commodities.

The agricultural sector plays a crucial and often dominant role in many developing economies, which is why the EU grants extensive market access to developing countries for their agricultural exports to the EU. The Everything but Arms (EBA) initiative allows duty-free, quota-free access to the EU market for all products, except arms and ammunition, from the world’s 49 poorest nations. Countries from the African, Pacific, and Caribbean regions that have signed Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) also benefit from free access for their agricultural products to the EU.

Through its preferential trade policy and its Aid for Trade (AfT) program, the EU ensures that developing countries can benefit from access to European markets and an increasingly open global economy.

AfT helps developing countries take advantage of trade opportunities by helping improve technical facilities in ports, assisting exporters in meeting EU health and safety standards, and supporting entrepreneurialism at every level.

The EU is a strong advocate of pro-development measures in the World Trade Organization’s current round of global trade negotiations, known as the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). The EU believes that further liberalization of trade in agricultural products is an important contribution to sustainable economic growth.

The EU is pursuing specific food-related priorities for the DDA:

- **Agriculture Sector.** The EU is committed to reforming farm subsidy programs throughout the developed world in line with the EU’s wide-ranging 2003 CAP reforms. The EU has offered to cut farm tariffs by 60 percent, reduce trade distorting farm subsidies by 80 percent, and eliminate farm export subsidies completely. The EU also seeks new market access opportunities for its own processed agricultural exports.
- **Geographic Indications.** The EU wants to advance the protection of geographical indications through the Doha Round to globally safeguard the legal identity of products such as Parma Ham and Roquefort cheese that are closely linked to a particular locale and production tradition.

Success Stories: Trade Working for Development

Dominican Republic. An EU program helped four local bakeries form a “Collective Efficiency Group” to benefit from economies of scale. Equipment was relocated to a single bakery, allowing the bakers to boost production, reduce costs, and venture into new markets. The group subsequently made a successful bid to supply airlines at the nearby airport with bread and sponge cake for long-haul flights to Europe. After meeting the airlines’ exacting quality standards, this cooperative now supplies Air France, Iberia, and American Airlines, and has doubled its combined working capital, sales, and profits.

Madagascar. More than a decade of EU support to develop the lychee trade has helped enhance product quality to meet the EU’s high food safety standards. Technical assistance, access to quality plants, and specific support to help exporters meet commercial norms and standards has resulted in the tripling of exports to the



EU in ten years. Thirty producer cooperatives are on track to achieve commercial certification and gain access to a new market segment for extra high-quality products.

Ukraine. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Ukraine’s traditional food producers are adapting slowly to the new economic landscape and need technical advice and assistance on markets, food quality, safety, traceability, and logistics. The EU’s Agrilogistics project has helped improve logistical services and marketing channels for small and medium-sized agricultural producers. Supply channels for vegetables have been established through selected supermarkets; deliveries of tomatoes, onions, and cucumbers have been organized to a local cannery; links have been set up with a distribution center for beetroot, pickles, and other vegetables; and the supply chain has been organized for a grain collective.

Feeding the Hungry

Helping the Neediest Help Themselves

The European Union strongly supports the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, and notably the first MDG, which aims to eradicate poverty and hunger.

An immediate target is the halving of the proportion of people suffering from hunger between 1990 and 2015. However, escalating and volatile food prices worldwide are jeopardizing progress toward this goal, because the poorest populations are the most adversely affected by increasing food prices. The number of people suffering from hunger and poverty now exceeds 1 billion—one-sixth of the world's population—according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

In the medium term, the EU's €2.7 billion contribution to the 2009 G8 L'Aquila Initiative on Global Food Security demonstrates its commitment to tackling world hunger through development assistance concentrated on food security, agriculture, and rural development. Emergency aid and other urgent measures, such as the EU's Food Facility, which channels an extra €1 billion to stimulate food production in developing countries, address immediate food shortages for those facing hunger and malnutrition.

The EU's Food Facility provides a rapid response to problems caused by soaring food prices in developing countries. The funding, which targets 50 developing countries over a three-year period, bridges the gap between emergency aid and medium- to long-term development aid and encourages food producers to increase supply; deal directly with the impact of volatile food prices on local populations; and increase the productive capacity and governance of the agriculture sector.

The Food Facility supports three types of activities:

- Improving access to agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers) and services (vets and advisors);
- Increasing agricultural production through such small-scale measures as microcredit, rural infrastructure; and training and support for professional groups in the agricultural sector;
- Instituting social safety net measures for vulnerable populations (e.g. creating employment opportunities in labor-intensive public works projects, such as roads, irrigation projects).

The Food Facility channels funding through UN agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Program, the World Bank, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

It is already delivering tangible results and helping small-scale farmers in developing countries boost their agricultural production. Since its launch in December 2008, the Food Facility is estimated to have reached more than 33 million people through its initial ongoing projects.



Credit: Walter Astrada, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Food Facility Funding

In **Zimbabwe**, thanks to joint EU-FAO efforts, 26,000 tons of seeds and fertilizers have been distributed to up to 15 percent of the country's communal farmers. With good seasonal rains, timely implementation, and effective coordination, this support allows 176,000 vulnerable, small-scale farmers to almost double their traditional food production.

According to UN estimates, 46 million Pakistanis—28 percent of the population—have joined the ranks of the hungry. The EU and FAO partnered to distribute quality seed and fertilizer to almost 100,000 farmers in rural **Pakistan** hit hard by the 2008 food price hikes.

The EU and the UN's World Food Program teamed up on a project in **Bangladesh** to improve the food security of vulnerable agricultural households by generating employment opportunities in the rehabilitation and construction of irrigation schemes,

and the construction of seed beds and access roads. Concrete results are evident after just six months: 43,000 additional people have access to fish; 60,000 live in areas now protected from salt water intrusion; 26,000 have access to markets; 7,000 children can reach school during the flood season; 4,000 square meters of land around homesteads have been created for vegetable cultivation; and more than 8,000 people no longer fear that floods will wash away their home.

In **Mali**, the EU and UNICEF work together to promote better nutrition nationwide. The project supports awareness-raising at every level, but targets 30,000 severely malnourished children and helps counsel their family members on how to prevent acute malnutrition on a long-term basis. The project strives to ensure that appropriate nutrition strategies are incorporated in national, sectoral, and local development plans.

Contributing to Sustainable Food Security around the World

Most people living in rural areas in the developing world rely on agriculture for income, employment, and food. It also provides raw materials for industry and exports. EU assistance promotes agricultural practices and technologies that are environmentally sustainable, raise rural income, and improve access to productive assets (labor, land, and capital) and essential services.



Geographical instruments fund the EU's bilateral and regional agreements—the European Development Fund (ACP), the Development Cooperation Instrument (Latin America, Asia, South Africa), and the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (Eastern Europe and Mediterranean countries).

The EU is arguably the world's leading contributor to global food security, through its €1 billion Food Facility, its €2.7 billion commitment for food security at the 2009 G8 meeting, and its long-standing geographical and thematic development cooperation programs that focus on poverty reduction and addressing the essential needs, including nutrition, of a population.

For decades, the EU has also maintained generous preferential aid and trade relationships benefiting developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP). Additional bilateral and regional agreements grant similar levels of access and assistance to Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

The EU supports governments in promoting open business environments that enable market mechanisms to function properly. EU assistance helps raise incomes and reduce producer vulnerability by linking producers with competitive markets, developing regional support services, supporting diversification strategies, and strengthening linkages between rural businesses and local, national, and export markets.

The EU works with beneficiary countries to develop the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS), which not only protects the health of humans, plants, and animals, but makes products more competitive on the world market. European aid is also used to boost livestock production and to promote regional and international cooperation on animal disease and trade issues.

The EU also supports agricultural research and measures that enable farmers to profit from new knowledge. Key research areas include increasing productivity through genetic improvement and better management practices; soil and water conservation; and the protection of biodiversity.

The Food Security Thematic Program (FSTP)

The EU's FSTP helps improve food security for the poorest and most vulnerable and contributes to achieving the MDG on poverty and hunger by addressing the structural causes of food insecurity, beginning with agriculture.

The €925 million budget (2007–2010) focuses on six strategic priorities:

- Supporting research, innovation, and information dissemination relevant to food security, especially capacity building and scientific and technological cooperation.
- Linking information to decision-making to enhance response strategies.
- Exploiting the potential of continental and regional approaches, especially in Africa and Latin America.
- Responding to food insecurity in fragile and bankrupt states and regions in exceptional transitional situations.
- Promoting innovative approaches.
- Advancing the food security program and its harmonization with development partners, civil society, and donors.



Helping Others Help Themselves

EU-Funded Capacity-Building Programs

The EU helps raise standards of living throughout the developing world by sharing knowledge and expertise, providing budget support for recipient governments to mainstream the fight against hunger and malnutrition in their own policies, and making sure that food production meets international standards.

Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF). This six-year-old program has provided training for EU and non-EU officials responsible for the proper application of EU rules related to food, feed, plant health, and animal health and welfare. In April 2009 the EU launched a new initiative to help developing countries in Africa improve their food safety systems for the benefit of both their populations and economies. Promoting compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures not only benefits health, but is also key to bilateral trade.

The European Commission and the African Union Commission are jointly coordinating €10 million worth of capacity-building activities that target the public and private sectors involved with SPS systems at national, regional, and continental levels. The main objectives are to support food safety through the transfer of technical expertise and policy advice on food safety and quality, and to ensure that agro-food products are compatible with international SPS standards to reduce food-borne disease.

Burma/ Myanmar. The government's ban on opium cultivation resulted in acute food shortages for ethnic groups who were forcibly relocated, losing the resources and land that had enabled them to provide for themselves. An EU-supported project helped build capacity in the areas of adult literacy, agriculture, animal husbandry, and other income-generating activities. As a result, relocated families in 22 villages were able to secure their own food and livelihoods over the long term.

Ethiopia. The EU has contributed €700,000 to preserve farm resources and improve food security for vulnerable rural families in Ethiopia. Through improvements to the community water supply, natural resource conservation, and agricultural development, 70 percent of beneficiaries now have access to safe water, progress has been made in land management, agricultural diversification and farming intensity. Mechanisms are being developed to address

such key issues as soil erosion and access to seeds and animal fodder.

Mongolia. The severe political and economic upheaval in the early 1990s led to growing urban and rural poverty and problems in the availability and quality of food. To tackle the food security issue, the EU partnered with *Action contre la faim* (Action against Hunger) to provide substantial funding to help set up an integrated strategy.

Food distribution was organized each winter, and the most vulnerable households participated in cash for work (CFW) activities, which enabled 11,706 beneficiaries to earn enough money to cover their basic needs. In suburban areas, gardeners' networks were created, and in rural areas, herders' communities were supported with fodder production and animal shelters. These herders and gardeners produced sufficient crops and fodder to enable them to increase their food stocks for winter, diversify their food intake, and divert additional earnings from food to education.

Philippines. The EU-supported Small Projects Facility has helped farmers adopt organic agriculture, increasing their export potential for shipping to European markets. The use of organic fertilizers and diversified farming methods has led to a fivefold increase in orders for muscovado—unrefined brown sugar—from local and foreign markets. Beneficiary farmers are experiencing improved living conditions and can now meet their own basic needs.



“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

— UN Food and Agriculture Organization



Providing a Lifeline in Emergencies

On the Web

- **European Commission-Agriculture**
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm
- **European Commission-EuropeAid**
<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/food-security>
- **European Commission-Development**
http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/ruraldev/food_intro_en.cfm
- **ECHO**
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

Food and adequate nutrition are vital concerns in any humanitarian crisis. Food aid is an indispensable emergency relief instrument that can ensure adequate nourishment and restore food security quickly. The EU is one of the world's major donors of humanitarian food aid, typically in the form of cash and direct funding for the local purchase of food, which benefits both local recipients and local farmers.

Responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by rising food prices, the EU doubled its emergency food assistance in 2008, reaching more than 25 million people. Sudan, the Palestinian Territories, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya are the five leading beneficiaries of EU food aid.

To provide appropriate and adequate food aid and short-term food security for vulnerable populations in countries facing food crises, the EU supports

projects which distribute essential rations to populations in distress, including refugees, residents of affected areas, and host populations; assist with nutritional recovery through therapeutic treatment and supplementary feeding; support initial efforts by helping to finance the transport of and access to food aid; and restore basic livelihoods and improve resilience of vulnerable groups to future shocks.

Based on the humanitarian principles of non-discrimination and impartiality, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) offers assistance and provides emergency assistance and relief directly to victims of natural disasters and armed conflict at a level comparable to that provided by the United States. Since 1992, ECHO has funded humanitarian aid in more than 85 countries, with grants worth more than €700 million per year.

ECHO in Action

Burundi. ECHO provides €2.4 million to support "seed fairs" that take place as the planting season approaches. Each farmer is given a free packet of seeds, a hoe, and vouchers for 10,000 Burundian francs (€6.29), which they can exchange for seeds or fertilizer. During a single one-day fair, roughly 11 tons of different seed varieties were for sale. Such seed fairs generate money for the local economy and give the poorest farmers the chance to break out from the cycle of poverty.

Chechnya. Although the guns are silent and food lines are shorter, many Chechens still struggle to survive, and many households survive on small-scale farming.

Traditionally, vegetable crops were often cultivated in greenhouses, but most of the infrastructure was destroyed in the fighting. With financial support from ECHO, 200 targeted families, particularly female heads of households, are receiving construction training to be able to build their own greenhouses. They are also given seeds and fertilizers and introduced to agricultural and marketing techniques. Eventually, they will be able to grow

and harvest crops during the cold season and profit from peak market prices.

Haiti. An estimated 3 million Haitians suffer from deteriorating food security exacerbated by the impact of recurrent tropical storms and hurricanes in 2008 and high food and transport prices. Twenty-three percent of this population suffers from chronic malnutrition and 4.5 percent from acute malnutrition.

The European Commission allocated €6 million to provide relief to approximately 1 million people, with aid focused on food security, nutrition, and public health measures to improve nutrition (clean water, sanitation, and hygiene).

Malawi. The Malawi Ministry of Health & Population administers 90 nutritional rehabilitation units (NRUs) throughout the country to provide for the under-nourished and malnourished. ECHO provides food for them all, plus additional training and support for 35 NRUs where malnutrition is most severe.

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