

The French Republic

Positions for the Food and Agriculture Organization

I. Developing and Examining Local, Regional, and Global Strategies to Reduce Food Price Volatility

The French Republic recognizes that the rise in food prices over the last decade poses a threat to global food security, especially in developing states. Even before the recent rise in food prices, over 800 million people were malnourished. France is very concerned that the current global economic crisis—and associated stress on food supplies—could drive another 100 million people into poverty and hunger. Recalling Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Goal One set forth by the Millennium Development Goals, and the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, France is committed to taking necessary action to ensure food prices remain stable for the sustainability of the international community. The French Republic supports A/RES/64/184, particularly with respect to accelerating the progress of the Millennium Development Goals, and A/RES/66/220 that stresses the need for development aid to focus on agriculture. The French Republic also supports A/C.2/65/L.61 which specifies that Member States must prioritize the right to food and food security in local, state, and regional developmental policies.

France has partnered with other G20 Member States to create an Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture. This Action Plan specifically targets many of the causes of price volatility in the food sector and suggests sustainable solutions to cope with food insecurity. France has also participated in L'Aquila Summit, the 2009 World Food Summit in Rome, and various G20 Summits in an attempt to improve agricultural policies at both global and state levels. These collaborative efforts are essential to move beyond mere commitments into concrete action to effectively deal with issues such as the prevention of food price volatility.

France strongly supports L'Aquila Food Security Initiative, which aims to not only reform the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), but also to implement the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition. In order to feed an estimated world population of 9 billion by the year 2050, worldwide agricultural production will have to increase by more than 70%, and France is committed to increasing its domestic agricultural production. France is also working towards facilitating increased global trade and markets in the agricultural sector as well as working to integrate women into the agricultural sector as part of L'Aquila Food Security Initiative.

In accordance with A/RES/66/188, France reaffirms the need for a better understanding of the underlying causes of food price volatility to keep prices stable in the future. France also calls on the global community to join in supporting A/65/253, which allows for the implementation of L'Aquila Food Security Initiative and outlines the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security. France supports statement A/66/348 specifying the need for coherent policy actions at the state, regional, and international levels regarding food price volatility. The French Republic strongly encourages all Member States to work together to not only ensure stable food prices, but also increase global food production—steps essential to meet both the benchmarks established in the Millennium Development Goals and to leave a sustainable world for future generations.

II. Advancing Capacity Development in Information Systems: Increasing Accessibility to Food and Nutrition Data

The French Republic recognizes the importance of information accessibility, particularly with respect to data concerning food and nutrition since accurate information can be a crucial component in food security. Recalling the World Food Summit of 2009 and the Food and Agriculture Organization -World Food Programme Joint Strategy on Information Systems for Food and Nutrition Security (FAO-WFP), France is committed to paving the way for global accessibility to high quality food and nutrition data. France strongly supports A/65/253 which places Millennium Development Goal One (Ending Poverty and Hunger) at the top of its agenda.

Building on the principles of the Paris Declaration, the FAO-WFP provides a wide range of data related to food and nutrition gathered at the state, regional, and global levels. These data cover such elements as climate change, urban malnutrition, and gender-specific indicators. The data collected are placed in the Information Systems for Food and Nutrition Security (ISFNS). The ISFNS provides support for Member States to develop an organizational response to known and emerging threats to food security, and to improve channels of communication for the global community. Within ISFNS, FAO has many initiatives tailored to the specific needs of differing states,

such as the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS), Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAM), and Country Statistical Information System for Food and Agriculture (CountrySTAT). France advises Member States to take full advantage of these initiatives and systems. FAO also has initiatives aimed at global perspectives, including The State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI), Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). By utilizing these data in a systematic manner, action can be taken at the first sign of a food crisis. As additional data are collected—and the implementation of various strategies based on these indicators are improved—future crises can be averted. France is also honored to be a part of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), hosted by this committee, and its report “Price Volatility in Food and Agricultural Markets: Policy Responses.” AMIS disseminates market and agricultural policy information, as well as a Rapid Response Forum, which allows for discussion among decision-making groups on common strategies and policy coordination.

France supports A/67/86, which advocates the creation of a global strategic framework that will inform the global citizenry of the causes of food volatility and also allow Member States to take proactive steps to ensure that future food crises do not occur. Such a program would be modeled after the Global Forum on Agricultural Research as specified in A/66/304, which advocates global research partnerships pertaining to food and nutrition data. If all Member States support these various information systems initiatives related to food and nutrition data, food security may be increased and Millennium Development Goals One, Three, Four, Five, Seven and Eight will be dramatically improved. France strongly urges Member States to follow its lead in support of such programs that gather food and nutrition data, which will better inform the global community on how to prevent future food volatility.

III. Examining and Addressing the Impact of Food Insecurity on Gender Relations

The French Republic recognizes the definition of food security set forth by the World Food Summit of 1996 stating that 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 for an active and healthy life. Today, women farmers cultivate more than half of the food produced globally. At the same time, however, persistent gender inequality throughout many societies serves to exacerbate food insecurity and malnutrition of women and girls. In order to combat these difficulties, France remains committed to A/RES/64/159, which reaffirms the right to food for all individuals and acknowledges that almost twice as many women as men suffer from malnutrition. France is committed to raising global awareness regarding the significant role that women play in the global agricultural sector, and wishes to draw attention to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establishes that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her health and well-being, including food; Millennium Development Goals One, Three, Five, Seven and Eight; the World Food Summit of 2009; and the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger. Working from such strong foundations, France is confident that the international community is on its way to making progress in these vital areas.

France understands the importance of all farmers and the beneficial contributions that both genders can make in helping reduce food insecurity. The Republic of France supports A/RES/65/220, which reaffirms the right to food and understands that unless changes are made at the local, national, regional, and global levels the numbers of malnourished will continue to rise. France advocates A/RES/50/104 and reaffirms the importance of women in combating poverty through not only their work in the home, but also in the community, workplace, and all aspects of society.

France supports E/2010/49 and A/65/253 which gives women access to economic resources, in particular land, labor, energy sources, technologies and financial services which are crucial to promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector. The Gender and Food Security Report by the World Bank states that while women supply most agricultural labor and manage the produce that they grow, they often do not own or fully control the land they use. France urges Member States to support the report’s proposal of legal reform and projects like The Lowlands Agricultural Development Projects in The Gambia that help women obtain secure land rights. If given access to these resources, France believes that women could more fully contribute to food and agricultural production.

France fully supports A/66/304 that calls for adjustments in institutions which help to redefine the role of women within society, particularly with respect to sustainable development and agriculture. France supports L’Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) which emphasizes the importance of including women farmers in community, domestic, regional and international trade markets as well as increasing their access to microfinance which would help women yield higher incomes. The Republic of France strongly urges all Member States to support the actions outlined in E/2010/49, A/65/253, and the AFSI so that women farmers receive the resources and empowerment they need to help the global community meet the Millennium Development Goals and reduce food insecurity.