



Food Assistance
Convention

Food Assistance Committee Comité de l'assistance alimentaire

22 May 2015

PRESS RELEASE

5th Session of the Food Assistance Committee London, 22 May 2015

The Food Assistance Committee (FAC) convened for its 5th formal Session on 22 May 2015 at the Secretariat of the International Grains Council in London, under the Chairpersonship of Dr. Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director, Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), representing the European Union.

The meeting was attended by Parties of the Convention, namely, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Finland, Japan, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America. Additionally, representatives from Brazil, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the Trans-Atlantic Dialogue on Food Assistance (TAFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and World Vision were present as observers.

The Committee reviewed the global situation regarding hunger and malnutrition and current food emergencies against the backdrop of recent developments in world markets for grains, rice and oilseeds. Members also provided information on responses to food emergencies, planned operations and policy developments, with particular emphasis on activities in the Middle East, including Syria, Nepal, as well as measures aimed at dealing with the impact of the Ebola virus in West Africa. Members also discussed future thematic and operational challenges and priorities. Mr. Tim Waites then briefed members on the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers. Members and observers also discussed the importance of assessing each humanitarian situation carefully to ensure that vulnerable populations receive the most appropriate assistance. Concerning other agenda items, there were discussions on progress with annual reporting for 2014, while the Committee received an update on efforts to reach out to potential new members. In this light, the latest developments with respect to the FAC member and public websites were also presented.

The Committee confirmed the appointment of Mr Manuel Sánchez-Montero, Head of Humanitarian Action Office, Agency for International Development Cooperation, Spain, as Vice-Chairperson for 2015. The process for selection of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for 2016 was outlined. Expressions of interest for these positions will be formally solicited by the Chair before the summer.

The formal Session was preceded on 21 May by a seminar entitled "*Food Assistance, Gender and Accountability*," which sought to underscore the importance of gender issues in response to emergencies and the provision of food assistance. There were presentations from the following panellists: Ms Patricia Colbert, Senior Gender Advisor, WFP; Ms Eliana Irato, Global Gender Expert, ECHO, European Union; Mr Thabani Maphosa, Vice President, Food Assistance, World Vision International; Ms Yasmin Haque, Deputy Director of Emergency Operations, UNICEF; Mr Matthew Nims, Deputy Director, and Ms Danielle Mutone-Smith, Policy Team Leader, Office of Food for Peace, U.S. Agency for International Development; and Ms Jenny Hill, Deputy Director, Food Assistance and Nutrition Unit, Foreign Affairs Trade and Development Canada. The seminar was moderated by Mr. Alexander Karavaytsev, Senior Economic Adviser, Trade Delegation of the Russian Federation in the United Kingdom.

Members and observers had a lively exchange on how the incorporation of gender issues enhances the quality and effectiveness of food assistance. There was widespread recognition and acceptance of the links between food assistance, gender and accountability. This exchange demonstrated how the FAC plays a key role in improving how we respond to emergencies and the provision of humanitarian assistance through cooperation and the exchange of information on current activities.

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