Food Assistance Committee
Comité de l'assistance alimentaire

17 November 2015

PRESS RELEASE

6th Session of the Food Assistance Committee
London, 17 November 2015

The Food Assistance Committee (FAC) convened for its 6th formal Session on 17 November 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, France, Greece, India, Kazakhstan, Portugal, South Africa, Turkey, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Trans-Atlantic Dialogue on Food Assistance (TAFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) were present as observers.

The FAC encourages the participation of observer states with a view to their becoming members in the future.

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, including the impact of El Niño. Members also provided information on responses to food emergencies, planned operations and policy developments, with particular emphasis on activities in the Middle East, including the Syria regional crises, the alarming food security situation in Yemen and South Sudan as well as measures aimed at dealing with the impact of El Niño. Members also discussed future thematic and operational challenges and priorities. Concerning other agenda items, there were discussions on the planning for the 2015 Annual Report, while the Committee received an update on efforts to reach out to potential new members. Furthermore, Members were invited to confirm their minimum annual commitments by 15 December 2015. The new FAC public website was presented to Members by the Secretariat and launched.

With regard to the appointment of officers for 2016, Mr. Matthew Nims of the US has been appointed as Chair and Mr. Mikhail Maslov of Russia has been appointed as Vice Chair of the FAC for 2016.

Ms. Florika Fink-Hooijer, as outgoing Chairperson, expressed her full support for a smooth handover of this responsibility to her successors and, in closing her chairpersonship, she evoked some of the outcomes over the past year, including the finalisation and use of the revamped annual reporting templates, the redesign and launch of the website and the issuance of the joint Statement by the FAC for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). Despite good support from a number of Members, the joint field mission did not materialise this year. The incoming Chair has expressed interest in pursuing the possibility of a FAC field mission, possibly in 2016.

The formal Session was preceded on 16 November by a seminar entitled "*World Humanitarian Summit*," which sought to underscore the key role of the FAC in emphasizing the importance of the food assistance perspective in the WHS process leading to Istanbul through the issuing of a joint FAC Statement on the World Humanitarian Summit. The content of the Statement was discussed in more detail during the Seminar, informed by presentations from the following panellists: Mr Robert Smith, Head of Geneva Office, World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat; Mr Yoshinobu Nagamine, ICRC Head of Unit, External Resources Division in Geneva; and Ms Degan Ali, Executive Director, ADESO.

The FAC plays a key international role in improving the coordination of the global response to emergencies and the provision of humanitarian assistance through cooperation and information exchange on ongoing activities. To this end agreement was reached on a joint statement to be submitted to the World Humanitarian Summit.

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