

FOOD ASSISTANCE CONVENTION

FAC messaging points

Relevance of the FAC

The proliferation of serious and large-scale crises occurring simultaneously¹ confirms the relevance of the FAC. Combined with an ever-widening gap between needs and available humanitarian funding, the incentive to develop innovative solutions is more pressing than ever. International financial commitments certainly have their part to play - they are a visible and tangible demonstration of a minimum response by the donor community and one against which members are held publicly accountable. This predictable and certain response is an important signal to our partners (UN, NGOs and others) and to those affected by crises that the international community stands with them in times of need.

Humanitarian assistance should be seen as a multi-faceted response to human misery and suffering that results from conflicts and disaster and as a first step to reinvigorating local business and agriculture and to helping people rebuild their lives and livelihoods. The forum provided by the FAC encourages members to develop and implement innovative solutions to better respond to the real needs of affected people and to share these experiences. As humanitarian actors, we need to consistently ensure that we provide the most appropriate and effective solution to the different needs of crisis-affected women, men, girls and boys, and the FAC has a key role to play in promoting best practices and in shaping policies.

The FAC is the latest in a long series of such multilateral cooperation instruments in operation since 1967, and was preceded by the Food Aid Convention 1999. The FAC expands the traditional focus of previous Food Aid Conventions that were focused exclusively on commitments of in-kind food aid for direct consumption. The new Convention includes a broader toolbox of eligible activities and food assistance products, including cash and vouchers and products intended for protecting livelihoods, a greater focus on nutrition, as well as a commitment to improved transparency and accountability.

Benefits of being a FAC member

The Food Assistance Committee is a donor community of governments which seeks to improve information sharing on food assistance:

- ***Access to information on all FAC members' food assistance commitments (annual narrative and financial reports).***

The FAC is the only international convention sharing information on donor financial commitments and programmes, e.g. through international organisations such as the WFP and unilaterally. Under the Food Assistance Convention, members provide annual quantitative and qualitative information on the implementation of their commitments.

The annual report lists the contributions provided in total value or quantity as well as the countries that benefited from the assistance and the eligible products or activities that were funded. In cases of in-kind contributions, twinning or similar cases, the report includes acquisition costs and provides the associated costs of delivery as a percentage of total contributions. It also includes the names of the partners implementing the food

¹ [Food Security Information Network \(FSIN\): Global Report on Food Crises 2019](#)

assistance projects, and categorises contributions by modality and activity in addition to highlighting the percentage of the assistance provided in fully grant form. Furthermore, the report includes other information relevant to the principles and objectives of the Convention, e.g. information on eligible vulnerable populations assisted.

- ***Working group on coordinated responses. Any member may request a coordination meeting***

The purpose of the Working Group is to find a way to work collectively to make sure that information-sharing takes place in real time, thereby informing how members respond to crises. Any FAC member may convene a conference call. Under Chatham House rules, the Group will informally gather information from all FAC members on their planned response to a crisis; identify and report to members on gaps in the humanitarian response, whether in terms of geographical coverage, pipeline breaks or type of response.

- ***Platform for dialogue with non-governmental organisations to share practices.***

The formal FAC sessions are open to non-members by invitation. This is the direct and best way of interacting with major IGO's and NGO's, to share knowledge and best practices relating to food assistance.

- ***Regular joint-field missions to assess the effectiveness of food assistance practices:***

Beyond dialogue with international organisations, the FAC organises a biannual joint field mission to an area in need to assess the efficiency of the food assistance provided and get feedback on their coordinated responses to the crises. The last mission was to Uganda in June 2018 and raised questions on the best way to develop cash and vouchers in crises areas.

- ***Seminar to develop common reflexion and elaborate common guidelines.***

The seminar provides an open forum discussion for FAC members to discuss the most efficient and effective means of delivery of food assistance. Recognizing the changing landscape of emergencies and other assistance needs, FAC members have prioritized the consideration of new modalities for food assistance aimed at reducing associated costs, while ensuring that the most in need are reached. In 2018, members and international organisations (FAO, WFP, ACF) discussed how to better coordinate aid in neglected areas in emergency crises.

- ***Public Communication tools for members on their activities***

FAC members may upload their latest Food Assistance policies relating to policy guidelines, nutrition, cash and vouchers, resilience and gender & age sensitive aid on the FAC public website. The FAC also participates in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) side-events.

Cost efficiency:

The International Grains Council (IGC) has been designated as the Secretariat of the FAC, to assist the FAC Chairman with his/her tasks and to facilitate the FAC meetings;

The Chairman is appointed annually and represents the FAC at all external meetings and conferences, chairs all the FAC meetings and is responsible for compiling the annual report;

IGC provides its expertise on grains, oilseeds and rice markets monitoring to anticipate potential impacts on food assistance.

Parties to the Convention

The FAC entered into force on January 1, 2013, and is comprised of 16 member Parties: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, European Union (EU), Finland, France, Japan, Korea (Rep. of.), Luxembourg, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States of America.

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