



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 25.1.2006
COM(2006) 21 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

A THEMATIC STRATEGY FOR FOOD SECURITY

Advancing the food security agenda to achieve the MDGs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Context	4
2.1.	Analysis of the theme	4
2.2.	Established policy framework	5
2.3.	Past experience/lessons learned	5
2.4.	Rationale for a thematic approach	6
3.	Thematic programme	7
3.1.	Scope (including geographical coverage)	7
3.2.	Programming principles	7
3.3.	Objectives	8
3.4.	Strategic priorities	9
3.5.	Strategic Priorities to support the delivery of international public goods and the financing of global programmes	9
3.5.1.	International Public Goods (IPGs)	9
3.5.2.	Global (and continental) programmes	9
3.5.3.	Advocacy and advancement of the global food security agenda.	10
3.6.	Address food insecurity in exceptional situations of transition and state fragility	10
3.7.	Promoting innovative policies and strategies	11
3.8.	Beneficiaries	11
3.9.	The implementing partners of the Thematic Programme	12
	ANNEXES	13

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1. INTRODUCTION

In an effort to rationalise and simplify the current legislative framework governing external actions of the Community, the European Commission has proposed a set of six new instruments under the Financial Perspectives 2007 to 2013. Three of the instruments (for humanitarian aid, for stability and for macro-financial assistance) are of a horizontal nature and will respond to particular needs and circumstances. The other three (for pre-accession assistance, for supporting the European neighbourhood and partnership policy and for development cooperation and economic cooperation) are designed to implement specific policies and have a defined geographical coverage. In future, these instruments will provide the basic legislative acts for Community expenditures in support of external cooperation programmes, including appropriate thematic programmes and will replace, inter alia, the existing thematic regulations.

One of the seven thematic programmes identified by the Commission¹ is the Thematic Programme on Food Security. Its legal bases will be the Development cooperation and Economic cooperation Instrument and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. According to the Commission Communication on the Instruments for External Assistance under the Future Financial Perspective 2007-2013 [COM(2004) 626], all food aid of a humanitarian nature will be included under the Humanitarian Aid Instrument rather than being dealt with under separate thematic funding.

According to these proposals, thematic programmes provide distinctive value added and comprise activities complementing geographical programmes, which continue to be the prime framework for Community cooperation with third countries.

The Commission has committed itself to engaging the European Parliament and the Council in a discussion of the scope, objectives and priorities of each thematic programme on the basis of formal communications to both Institutions. The result of this process will provide the policy guidelines for the subsequent stages of programming, notably the thematic strategy papers to be drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the above instruments.

¹ See Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on “External Actions through Thematic Programmes under the Future Financial Perspectives 2007–2013” - COM(2005) 324, 3.8.2005.

2. CONTEXT

2.1. Analysis of the theme

There is every justification for addressing food insecurity², which is enshrined in the first Millennium Development Goal (to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the number of people suffering from hunger). It is now estimated that 815 million people are ‘chronically’ food-insecure in the developing world, with a further 5-10% of the population at risk from ‘acute’ food insecurity driven by natural and man-made crises. Despite progress in reducing hunger at global level, the MDG 1 target remains elusive in Sub-Saharan Africa, where persistent food insecurity is compounded by recurrent political instability.

In Africa the linkages between food insecurity and conflict, poor governance and the HIV/AIDS pandemic raise profound challenges for national governments, donors and civil society alike. The adequacy of food intake is a major issue, as evidenced by the global scale of ‘hidden hunger’, i.e. a deficiency of vitamin and minerals in dietary requirements. A number of issues affect the adequacy of food intake, including intra-household distribution of food, mother-child feeding practices, food preparation and food quality and safety, water and sanitation. Food insecurity is typically exacerbated by environmental degradation, poor productive systems, badly functioning markets and limited human capacity and is compounded by inequalities, with social entitlements to food affected by gender, age and ethnicity. There is evidence that the overwhelming incidence of hunger is in rural areas, where insufficient economic and physical access to food prevails. However with growing urban poverty, food insecurity is also increasing in urban areas and cannot be overlooked.

Food insecurity, which is both a cause and a consequence of absolute poverty, is not sufficiently recognised either as a development objective or as an indicator of economic and social progress. It is often narrowly associated to short-term measures such as the delivery of food aid, or the increase of food supply, overlooking its multi-dimensional nature. As an objective it is not sufficiently integrated/mainstreamed in long-term national development strategies. On the positive side, the second generation of Poverty Reduction Strategies takes greater account of food security as national governments increasingly realise the importance of establishing national strategies and programmes.

In recent years, it has emerged that a key challenge in meeting food security objectives arises in situations of crisis, particularly those of a complex and protracted nature, and in the event of political instability and in countries in transition. The picture of global food insecurity points to a number of vulnerable and fragile states without neither the capacity nor the institutional framework in place to implement long-term strategies when faced with unfolding crises. In 2005, 43 countries were facing serious food shortages, 23 of them in Africa and others in Asia and Latin America. The scale and recurrence of the problem demands a new long-term structural approach to tackling the root causes of food insecurity.

² Food Security can be defined as a condition where 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” Rom Declaration of World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action. FAO, 1996.

2.2. Established policy framework

The EC Food Security policy established in 1996 under Council Regulation (EC) No 1292/96 continues to direct Commission action in the fight against hunger. The policy has evolved from the simple delivery of food aid to support for broad-based food security strategies at the national, regional and global level where food aid is untied and is an instrument limited to emergencies.

The EC is a leading international donor in Food Security (€4.9 billion have been allocated from the FS-BL since 1996, i.e. an annual average of €500 million) its aid responding to different phases of transition in: i) crisis/post-crisis countries; ii) countries suffering from chronic food insecurity; and iii) economies in transition. The EC is also actively engaged in the international policy debate, for example on trade and food aid (WTO, Food Aid Convention, FAO Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal) and is a leading donor in agricultural research both at global (Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research-CGIAR) and regional (in particular in Africa) and national levels.

The EC policy stresses the central role of nationally owned and developed poverty reduction strategies to achieve long-term food security and the need to target hunger as the earliest priority in the fight against poverty. It also recognises that food security can be very fragile, and even a transitory crisis can trigger chronic food problems, as assets are quickly depleted and livelihoods undermined.

In 2004 an external evaluation confirmed the validity of the EC's strategic framework for food security, which therefore also applies to this Thematic Programme: it states that food security can only be achieved by simultaneously addressing the availability of food, the access to food, the quality of nutrition and the prevention of food crises.

Within the broader development policy framework, following on from the 2000 Development Policy Statement Food Security continues to remain a priority in "The European Consensus for Development" [COM(2005) 311] adopted by the Commission in July 2005 and endorsed by the Council in November 2005.

The EU Strategy for Africa [COM(2005) 489], recently approved by the Commission and the Council, restates the importance of addressing food security on that continent as part of pro-poor growth and agricultural development and it also emphasises the importance of agricultural research.

In the transition from emergency (humanitarian phase) to development, EC aid is conceived within a broad economic, social and political context defined in the EC Communication on "Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development"³ (LRRD) as: *"Rehabilitation programmes which gradually take over the relief/emergency aid to stabilise the economic and social situation and to facilitate the transition towards a medium and long term development strategy"*.

2.3. Past experience/lessons learned

Beyond confirming the validity of the EC policy, the recent external evaluation of the EC Food Security Policy and Budget Line (2004) also stressed its distinct added value in

³ COM(2001) 153.

comparison with other donors for its focus on LRRD, multi-actor partnership and a combination of different implementation instruments. The evaluation also identified the following areas for improvement which are addressed under the Thematic Programme:

- LRRD: a more systemic approach to LRRD could help to respond more effectively to the dynamic and multidimensional nature of food insecurity.
- Poverty focus: better integration of food security as a priority area in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and EC Country Strategy Papers.
- Policy/strategy development: greater dialogue and support for governments in order to establish long-term policy dialogue on food security.
- Policy coherence: greater coherence at national level by integrating food security in EC Country (and Regional) Strategy Papers (CSPs).

2.4. Rationale for a thematic approach

The EC strategy envisages the integration of food security objectives within long-term and broad-based poverty reduction policies and strategies. Both the geographic and thematic programmes are instrumental to meeting those objectives.

Geographical programmes will be the standard instrument for implementing the EC's Food Security policy world-wide, wherever a working cooperation framework with the government is in place and operational. Future country allocations of geographical instruments' resources will take due account of the level of national food security. In food-insecure countries the Thematic Programme may support policy development to ensure that a strategic approach to food security is enshrined in national poverty reduction strategies.

In countries in crisis where humanitarian assistance is required to save/protect lives, aid will be provided by way of the Humanitarian Aid Instrument. In coordination with the Commission departments concerned, the Thematic Programme will be used where required in such situations at the end of the emergency aid to facilitate recovery and rehabilitation and reduce vulnerability through a specific focus on food security.

In the context of transition, a number of different scenarios justify thematic, rather than geographical, aid. These can be grouped into three broad categories:

- Situations and countries in which it might be difficult to agree on Food Security actions with partner governments owing to alternative priorities. For example, food insecurity may be concentrated in particular areas (out of state control) or among particular groups (Internally Displaced People).
- Countries in which cooperation has been suspended or no cooperation framework (CSP) is in place. The absence of a functioning state means an increased role for civil society and multilateral organisations to intervene effectively (e.g. Somalia).
- "Forgotten crises" in which cooperation with national governments may be difficult to establish through geographical instruments.

On the basis of the above, the rationale of the new Thematic Programme will be to ensure:

(i) policy coherence and continuity of operations across the LRRD process, (ii) complementarity between different geographical levels of intervention by addressing global/continental issues and promoting innovative approaches, and iv) coordination, harmonisation and alignment with development partners on the food security agenda.

3. THEMATIC PROGRAMME

3.1. Scope (including geographical coverage)

As per the “External Actions through Thematic Programmes under the Future Financial Perspectives 2007-2013” [COM(2005) 324], the Commission envisages a thematic programme that could “i) support the delivery of international public goods contributing directly to food security and the financing of global programmes, ii) address food insecurity in countries or regions where either governments are not in place, or not in control of parts of a country, or no country strategic framework is operational and iii) promote innovative policies and strategies in the field of food security”.

The coverage of the Programme varies according to the component:

- The first is a global component, and as such it focuses primarily on the continental, inter-regional and regional levels with a particular focus on Africa and anywhere else where there may be deteriorated food security situations.
- The second component of the Programme will be implemented primarily at national and local level, to complement the geographical instrument where necessary.
- The third component supports innovative policies, strategies and approaches irrespective of geographical level, which could be global, regional, national or local.

3.2. Programming principles

The Thematic Programme will be programmed:

- Respecting the principle of **subsidiarity**: excluding long-term structural aid which is to be funded through the geographical programmes (programmed through CSPs/RSPs) and supporting transitional interventions in line with the rationale set out in section 2.4. The Programme may support innovative regional, national and local level projects of a pilot nature aimed at testing new approaches and instruments.
- With sufficient **flexibility** to respond to a rapidly changing environment, as in the case of post-crises addressed under component 2. This may require adapting the timeframe of aid, the financing procedures, the type of tools and the implementing partners.
- Supporting **ownership** and the role and priorities of regional and continental organisations where relevant to food security, in complementarity with other partners and instruments.
- Fostering a **participatory approach**, by reinforcing partnership with civil society organisations particularly from developing countries through organised networks and professional associations, by means of a strategic dialogue.

- Promoting **coherence** at internal and external level by: (i) synchronising the programming with the CSPs/RSPs programming cycle; (ii) co-operating closely with other Commission departments to develop and implement LRRD country strategies and the phasing-in/phasing out of the Thematic Programme; (iii) ensuring policy and operational consistency between food aid actions undertaken in the context of humanitarian assistance in the food security agenda (iv) involving at the earliest possible stage EU MS, to promote the advancement of the EU agenda on food security; v) fostering external coherence and **complementarity** in line with the OECD Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. In this respect the TP will take advantage of UN agencies' and other international organisations' expertise to advance the international food security agenda and deliver international public goods.
- Targeting **the most vulnerable** and food-insecure areas and groups, based on food security assessments and coordination with other stakeholders.
- Ensuring the **sustainability** of the actions supported, including their impact on local and regional society, economy and environment
- Four-year (2007-2010) and, subsequently, three-year (2011-2013) Thematic Strategy Papers (programming documents) will be decided by the Commission following the Comitology procedures.
- On the basis of this multi-annual programming, the Commission shall produce annual action programmes, which establish priority actions to be supported, specific objectives, anticipated results as well as indicative amounts.
- The programme shall be implemented in accordance with the 2000 Reform of the Management of External Assistance, which foresees, inter alia, deconcentration of management responsibilities to the delegations where appropriate.
- As for the mid-term review, an external evaluation of the operations during the first three-year period (2007-2009) will be carried out to provide input to the preparations for the second Thematic Strategy Paper (2011-2013). The reports will be transmitted to and discussed with Member States and the European Parliament.

3.3. Objectives

In line with the new EU Development Policy Statement, the overall objective of the Thematic Programme is to advance the food security agenda and contribute to achieving the first MDG on hunger.

The Programme's specific objective is to improve the impact of the EC Food Security policy, particularly on the most vulnerable, through a consistent set of priorities and actions which complement national programmes and improve their coherence.

3.4. Strategic priorities⁴

A range of strategic priorities have been identified following extensive internal and external consultation. The final identification of priority aid will be based on detailed assessments of needs, carried out in cooperation with departments concerned in both at headquarters and in the delegations.

3.5. Strategic Priorities to support the delivery of international public goods and the financing of global programmes

3.5.1. *International Public Goods (IPGs)*⁵

- Pro-poor and demand driven research and technological innovation, primarily in agriculture (including livestock, forestry and fisheries/aquaculture) with an explicit focus on food security. The support package would include downstream dissemination and strengthening of capacities of regional/national research institutions
- Support for the use and dissemination of **satellite imagery** and data
- **Capacity** development and training
- Scientific and technological North-South and South-South **networking, twinning**.

3.5.2. *Global (and continental) programmes*

Global programmes are a means of developing common approaches across regions in specific areas relevant to food security. Priorities include:

- **Food security information and early warning systems**, livelihood monitoring. Global programmes will develop, test, standardize and disseminate methodology and tools, and support capacity and institutional development at regional and national level.
- **Food Security Strategies**. Support through a global programme for governments willing to develop food security strategies and plans, particularly where food security is not selected as a priority area for assistance. The Thematic Programme will not fund national food security programmes which will have to be supported through the geographical instruments.
- **Support for continental and regional FS programmes**, in fields of specific relevance to food security, such as agriculture, agricultural trade and sustainable management of natural resources including forestry and fisheries. Global/continental and regional programmes will focus on the areas of priority, comparative advantage and value added of the regional/continental organisation and will complement where relevant support from geographical instruments.

⁴ Details on the strategic priorities are provided in Annex 1.

⁵ As defined by the International Task Force on Global Public Goods: International public goods address issues that: i) are important to the international community, ii) cannot, or will not, be adequately addressed by individual countries acting alone, and therefore iii) are addressed collectively on a multilateral basis, by both developed and developing countries.

- **Networking of senior policy experts**, providing a forum and a training opportunity for policy/strategy formulation and implementation. **Networking of civil society organisations, farmers' associations and trade unions**, (both South-South and North-South), to foster the global food security agenda.

3.5.3. *Advocacy and advancement of the global food security agenda.*

The Commission will continue to address key food security issues in the international debate and foster harmonisation and alignment with developing partners and donors. Particularly important will be a stronger alliance with civil society organisations.

3.6. **Address food insecurity in exceptional situations of transition and state fragility**

The new “EU Consensus on Development” clearly states that, where food security is concerned, “particular attention will be paid to transition situations”. There is a strong commitment to “paying greater attention to poorer countries, difficult partnerships and fragile and failed states”⁶, recognising that 30% of the poorest, and food-insecure, people live in fragile states.

In target countries, the programme will provide an instrument to ensure, during a transition period, the follow-up of activities financed under the humanitarian instrument before the phasing-in of long-term food security activities under geographical development programmes. In this transition period, the Programme will ensure that food security is properly and timely addressed. The Programme will:

- **establish LRRD country strategies** with a specific focus on food security. Work at the Commission level will be steered by a standing LRRD inter-service working group within the Commission that will review the rolling programme and oversee implementation. LRRD requires flexibility and fast resource allocation;
- **improve phasing-in and phasing-out** by: (i) supporting Food Security information (see component 1); (ii) developing innovative approaches (see component 3); (iii) improving criteria for phasing-in and phasing-out and introducing them as of the planning of the relief phase, on a case by case basis (iv) promoting strong coordination; and (v) raising awareness of and developing methodologies for the LRRD approach.

Furthermore, in the event of a food crisis involving several countries in a region a regional response is required to complement national actions (e.g. on early warning systems, regional food markets, etc.). In such an event resources may not be available in the Regional Indicative Programme and the FS TP could, if required, bridge the gap between the emergency and the development response.

In devising concrete actions for this component, the Programme will prioritise, inter alia, the following:

- **On targeting (who):** vulnerability assessment will focus on the most affected communities and vulnerable groups (see details on beneficiaries in section 3.8).

⁶ This concept covers difficult partnerships and crisis/post-crisis situations.

- **On interventions (what):** the Programme will focus on: (i) crucial investments to protect, maintain and recover productive and social assets vital for food security to allow economic integration and long-term rehabilitation, and (ii) addressing vulnerability to shocks and strengthening people's resilience through support for crisis prevention and management;
- **On tools and approaches (how):** in line with the EC FS policy, operations will be financed primarily with cash to stimulate local production and markets. In the absence of functional markets and alternative options, implementing partners may use cash allocations to purchase and distribute food. Working together with local authorities and communities will be of paramount importance to identifying the most appropriate forms of assistance. Maximum coordination and harmonisation with other donors will be ensured.
- **On partners (with whom):** prime partners will be international and local NGOs, local authorities whenever possible and UN agencies where appropriate.

3.7. Promoting innovative policies and strategies

In order to keep pace with evolving food security challenges at the local, national and regional levels, the Thematic Programme may support the development and testing of innovative, sustainable and locally owned policies, strategies and approaches, as well as dissemination of best practices in the field of food security.

Typical areas of intervention would include: agriculture and natural resources management; food security and rural/local development (including urban/peri-urban issues); sustainable management of and access to natural resources including forestry and fisheries; nutrition, demographic and labour issues, migrations; food security and health/education (etc.).

By focusing on innovation the Programme will: promote and complement actions of civil society stakeholders; provide assistance that builds on people's coping capacities and their innovative solutions; support methodological work and actions aimed at reducing vulnerability; allow policy-makers to research and plan for new food security challenges; enhance the potential for replication of innovations and their South-South dissemination.

3.8. Beneficiaries

Being as a key instrument to fulfilling food security objectives, the Programme aims to reduce food insecurity worldwide and therefore will concern a **broad range of beneficiaries**. All three components of the Programme will be designed and implemented with the ultimate aim of improving the livelihoods and food security of the rural and urban poor especially among the most disadvantaged groups.

In this context, particularly in component 2, food security aid, will target beneficiaries belonging to two broad disadvantaged groups: i) those who are not self-reliant and need temporary support to sustain their livelihoods (e.g. through safety nets), and ii) those who need temporary support to graduate from absolute poverty and engage in productive activities. Priority will be broadly given to the following groups: children under the age of 5; communities with members suffering from HIV/AIDS or other chronic illnesses; war affected communities and groups and Internally Displaced People; women, particularly female heads of household; food-insecure pastoralists, small farmers and fisher folk; landless and farm labourers, urban ultra-poor.

A broad range of **intermediate beneficiaries** will be also targeted by the Programme through capacity building, including staff from national and regional administrations, governmental and non governmental institutions, private sector institutions, etc.

3.9. The implementing partners of the Thematic Programme

The Programme is intended to work with a range of different public and non-state actors. In particular, aid in situations of state failure will rely on local stakeholders' assessments, priorities and own initiatives.

The EC is taking concrete steps to promote strategic partnerships with **UN and multilateral agencies** in areas which make coherent contributions to EC food security programmes. Strategic partnerships also support the work of the EC in the international policy dialogue on food security.

The role of civil society organisations as partners will be of primary importance in all components: as strategic allies in advocacy, as prime partners in the design and implementation of aid in situations of transition and instability, and as promoters of innovation. The programme will support the capacity of Northern and Southern NGOs to engage in the policy dialogue on food security. The Programme will foster cooperation between NGOs and other non-state actors, and the private and public sector. The role of professional associations, trade unions and private institutions will be actively promoted.

Depending on the specific situations, **public stakeholders** could also be partners of the programme. **Local authorities** play an important role in fragile states and situations of post-crisis. Continental, regional and national institutions might be associated with global programmes for the delivery of global public goods, such as research and innovation. There could also be scope for involving public stakeholders in the promotion of innovative food security policies and strategies.

ANNEX

ANNEX 1 – PROGRAMME’S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, BENEFICIARIES AND PARTNERS

1. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC GOODS AND THE FINANCING OF GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

1.1. International Public Goods (IPGs)⁷

- Pro-poor and demand-driven **research and technological innovation**, primarily in agriculture (including livestock, forestry, fisheries/aquaculture) and sustainable management of natural resources, with an explicit focus on food security. International public institutions should be eligible for funding, including in partnership with the private sector. The support package would include downstream dissemination of information and technology as well as best practices and strengthening of capacities of regional/national research institutions. Research themes would include: sustainable agricultural productivity, efficient use of water resources, animal health, nutrition (so-called hidden hunger) market and trade (e.g. dynamics of local and regional markets and prices, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards, knowledge dissemination). Research should also contribute to a better understanding of the root causes of food insecurity (social, anthropological, environmental and economic aspects).
- Support for the use and dissemination of **satellite imagery and data**, not only for crop monitoring and early warning systems, but also for food security systems, e.g. including such dimensions as land use and management.
- **Capacity development and training**, such as **distance learning** tools, to expand the reach of research and know-how in remote areas.
- **Networking**: Partnerships with EU research initiatives that are relevant for food security and complementary to those funded by existing programmes (such as the 6th and 7th Research Framework Programmes). North-South and South-South **Scientific and technological networking** of scientists, students, experts, institutes (including twinning) to promote sharing of experiences and foster initiatives on an inter-regional, continental and global scale.

1.2. Global (and continental) programmes

Global programmes are a means of developing common approaches across regions in specific areas relevant to food security. Priorities include:

- **Food security information and early warning systems, livelihood monitoring.** Global programmes will develop, test, standardise and disseminate methodology and tools, and support capacity and institutional development at regional and national level, ensuring consistency and coherence between systems at different levels. Emphasis will be on

⁷ As defined by the International Task Force on Global Public Goods: International public goods address issues that: i) are important to the international community, ii) cannot, or will not, be adequately addressed by individual countries acting alone, and therefore iii) are addressed collectively on a multilateral basis, by both developed and developing countries.

methodologies designed to ensure that the information is made available and is accessible by all. The funding of national systems will however be provided by geographical instruments or governments or other donors. Such programmes will help to harmonise and align donors' approaches, in particular EU Member States. Their implementation will rely both on specialised organisations including UN agencies and on a large platform of expert NGOs and international institutions. The Programme will be instrumental in coordinating and aligning food security information methodologies and systems currently supported by different EC instruments, e.g. in LRRD situations.

- **Food Security Strategies.** Support through a global programme will be provided to governments willing to develop food security strategies and plans, where food security is not selected as a priority area for assistance and in collaboration with international organisations. The Thematic Programme will not fund national food security programmes, which will have to be supported by way of the geographical instruments.
- **Networking of senior policy experts,** providing a forum and at the same time a training opportunity for policy formulation and implementation.
- **Networking of civil society organisations,** to improve their access to information, facilitate sharing of experiences and best practices, and strengthen their advocacy capacity, in particular of women and disadvantaged groups. South-South and North-South networks will be supported. Farmers' associations and trade unions (agricultural labourers) will also be eligible for support, including in twining/collaboration with EU organisations.
- **Support for continental and regional FS programmes,** in fields of specific relevance to food security, such as agriculture, sustainable management of natural resources and agricultural trade in support of regional organisations' priorities. Other themes of relevance could include: commodity chains, diversification within and from agriculture, markets (including capital and labour), access to land and water, HIV-AIDS. Global/continental programmes will focus on the areas of comparative advantage and value added of the regional/continental organisation with a demonstrable impact downstream.

1.3. Advocacy and advancement of the global food security agenda

The Commission will continue to advocate for and address key food security issues in the international debate and foster harmonisation and alignment with developing partners and donors. Particularly important will be a stronger alliance with civil society organisations. Key issues include: (i) the role of food aid in food security (so as to foster a greater international consensus on food aid policies); needs assessments (currently overly food aid-biased); (ii) Poverty Reduction Strategies, pro-poor growth and food security; (iii) trade (international and regional trade have a strong impact on food security); (iv) governance (food security is heavily affected by governance failures); (v) the right to food (as reflected in the Voluntary Guidelines to which the EU subscribes).

2. ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS OF TRANSITION AND STATE FRAGILITY

The new "EU Consensus on Development" clearly states that, where food security is concerned, "particular attention will be paid to transition situations". There is a strong commitment to "paying greater attention to poorer countries, difficult partnerships and fragile

and failed states”⁸, recognising that 30% of the poorest, and food-insecure, people live in fragile states.

The Thematic Programme focuses on the dynamic nature of food insecurity: the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development is rarely a linear one as, due to the high vulnerability of the extreme poor, even a small shock can have a serious adverse effect on their survival capabilities. Failure to address such vulnerability leads to the repeated mobilisation of emergency support when humanitarian conditions deteriorate. Hence, the overriding priority of Food Security support in transition countries will be to address vulnerability to prevent any regression back into crisis by promoting resilience and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

In the case of transition from emergency to development, EC aid is conceived within a broad economic, social and political context, defined in the EC Communication on “Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development”⁹ as:

“Rehabilitation programmes which gradually take over the relief/emergency aid to stabilise the economic and social situation and to facilitate the transition towards a medium and long term development strategy”.

This definition recognises a gap or “grey zone” between humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development. Implementation of the LRRD concept has been rather disappointing so far, particularly because of the nature of the humanitarian and development instruments, and the timing and forms of their application.

Of particular concern is the food security policy response in situations of protracted crises. It is now estimated that 50 million people worldwide live in an area affected by protracted crises lasting for five years or more (e.g. Sudan). The term applies most often where vulnerability is associated with violent conflict or political instability. Moreover, in more recent times, it has been linked to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has a disastrous impact on economies already weakened by governance failure and periodic economic and natural shocks.

In the context of transition, a number of different scenarios justify thematic, rather than geographical, assistance. These may be grouped into three broad categories:

- Situations and countries in which it may be difficult to agree on Food Security actions with partner governments owing to alternative priorities. For example, food insecurity may be concentrated in particular areas (out of state control) or among particular groups (Internally Displaced People).
- Countries in which cooperation has been suspended or no cooperation framework (CSP) is in place. The absence of a functioning state means an increased role for civil society and multilateral organisations to intervene effectively (e.g. Somalia).
- “Forgotten crises” in which cooperation with national governments may be difficult to establish through geographical instruments.

⁸ This concept covers difficult partnerships and crisis/post-crisis situations.

⁹ COM(2001) 153.

In all cases EC aid responds to the needs of the most vulnerable and acts as an entry point for more systematic policy dialogue and longer-term cooperation arrangements.

In target countries, the programme will provide an instrument to ensure, during a transition period, the follow-up of activities financed under the humanitarian instrument before the phasing-in of long-term food security activities under geographical development programmes. In this transition period, the Programme will ensure that food security is properly and timely addressed.

Similarly, in the event of a food crisis involving several countries in a region (e.g. as in 2005 in Western Africa), a regional response is required to complement national actions (e.g. on early warning systems, regional food markets, etc.). In such an event, resources may not be available in the Regional Indicative Programme and the FS TP could, if required, bridge the gap between the emergency and the development response.

The need to devise effective criteria for phasing-in and phasing-out different instruments raises the question of how to assess short-term needs (life saving situation) and longer-term needs (life protecting) and identify the right stakeholders. In situations of state failure, the role of local stakeholders, their communities and organisations as partners becomes even more essential.

To respond to the above challenges in exceptional situations, the Programme will:

- **establish LRRD country strategies**, with a specific focus on food security. Work at the Commission level will be steered by a standing LRRD Commission inter-service working group who will review the rolling programme and oversee implementation. LRRD requires flexibility and fast resource allocation. This may mean adapting the timeframe of aid, the financing procedures, the choice of instruments, beneficiaries and implementing partners.
- **Improve phasing-in and phasing-out** by: (i) supporting Food Security information (see component 1); (ii) adopting innovative approaches (see component 3) such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IFSPC) tool developed by the Somalia Food Security Assessment Unit; (iii) working jointly with the Humanitarian Aid Instrument in order to improve criteria and introduce them as of the planning of the relief phase, on a case by case basis; (iv) promoting effective coordination among international organisations, national and local governments, civil society and beneficiaries; and (v) raising awareness of the LRRD approach.

As indicated earlier, a tough challenge in addressing food insecurity is how to overcome crises in countries marked by conflict and political instability where phases of transition do not follow the linear LRRD approach but often overlap. Examples of countries in protracted¹⁰

¹⁰ Protracted crises can be defined as ‘situations in which large sections of the population face acute threats to life and livelihoods over an extended period, with the state and other governance institutions failing to provide adequate levels of protection or support’. The term has been applied most often where vulnerability is associated with violent conflict or political instability. Moreover, it has been linked to the impact of the HIV/Aids pandemic, which has a disastrous impact on economies already weakened by governance failure and periodic economic and natural shocks.

and complex crisis¹¹ include DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Somalia, Sudan, West Bank and Gaza.

Furthermore, in the event of a food crisis involving several countries in a region a regional response is required to complement national actions (e.g. on early warning systems, regional food markets, etc.). In such an event resources may not be available in the Regional Indicative Programme and the FS TP could, if required, bridge the gap between the emergency and the development response.

In devising concrete action for this component, the Programme will prioritise, inter alia, the following:

- **On targeting (who):** vulnerability assessment will focus on the most affected communities and vulnerable groups with lower resilience to shocks, and will be careful to avoid any discrimination that might lead to conflict (see details in chapter 5 on beneficiaries).
- **On aid (what):** very often the relief approach is protracted by the delivery of unconditional transfers of food aid and handouts, while protection and recovery of productive and social assets vital for food security is neglected. Investments are crucial to allow economic integration and longer-term recovery. Concrete examples of aid are: the rehabilitation of local infrastructure combined with productive and social safety nets, improved availability/access to agricultural inputs, non-agricultural income generating activities, etc., addressing vulnerability to shocks and strengthening people's resilience through support for crisis prevention and management.
- **On tools and approaches (how):** in line with the EC FS policy, operations will be financed primarily with cash to stimulate local production and markets. In the absence of functional markets and alternative options, implementing partners may use cash allocations to purchase and distribute food. The time frame of the rehabilitation programmes will have to allow for a gradual consolidation of livelihoods and institutions so as to restart the normal development processes. In this context predictability of support is important. Working together with local authorities and communities will be of paramount importance to identifying the most appropriate types of assistance. The Programme will support by every possible means coordination and harmonisation with other donors' intervention.
- **On partners (with whom):** prime partners will be international and local NGOs, local authorities whenever possible and UN agencies where appropriate.

3. PROMOTING INNOVATIVE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

In order to keep pace with evolving food security challenges at local, national and regional levels, the Thematic Programme may support the development and testing of innovative sustainable and locally owned policies, strategies, and approaches, as well as dissemination of

¹¹ An increasing number of emergencies are related to conflict and have come to be known as "complex emergencies". The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) defines a "complex" emergency as: "a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme". (Source FAO (2004), FAO's Emergency Activities: Technical Handbook Series).

best practices in the field of food security. The areas below have been identified by the Commission as possible fields for intervention; this list is not exhaustive and may be reviewed as needs and situations require.

- Pro-poor growth-orientated agriculture, fisheries/aquaculture and forestry with an emphasis on low-cost, locally owned, sustainable solutions
- Prevention and preparedness strategies to avert food crises or mitigate its effects
- Food security and rural/local development (decentralisation, rural-urban linkages, local development and area-based management are priority areas in the new EU policy statement). Stimulation of the local private sector
- Sustainable management of and access to natural resources (land, water and energy), impact of the degradation of natural resources on household and national food security
- Urban and peri-urban food security, landless food-insecure and income diversification through non-agricultural activities
- Nutrition and the neglected issue of “hidden hunger” (micronutrient deficiencies have an enormous impact on the lives of mothers and children in particular)
- Demographic, labour issues and migration
- Relations between key social issues and food security (safety nets, the HIV-AIDS pandemic, sanitation, the role of education in fostering food security, etc.)
- Gender equity, minorities and ethnic groups usually targeted as extreme poor and food-vulnerable.

Through its focus on innovation the Thematic Programme will:

- promote and complement actions of civil society stakeholders, who are leading players in developing effective aid which has the potential to link relief, rehabilitation and development;
- promote aid that builds on people’s coping capacities, their innovative solutions and supports methodological work and action aimed at reducing vulnerability;
- strengthen the capacity of the Community to engage in effective policy dialogue with developing partners and donors;
- allow policy-makers to research and plan for new food security challenges that might arise in the medium to long term;
- enhance the potential for replication and upscaling of innovations and their South-South dissemination.

4. BENEFICIARIES

Being a key instrument to fulfilling food security objectives, the Programme aims to reduce food insecurity worldwide and therefore will concern a **broad range of beneficiaries**. All three components of the Programme will be designed and implemented with the ultimate aim of improving the livelihoods and food security of the rural and urban poor, especially among the most disadvantaged groups.

In this context, particularly in component 2, food security aid will target beneficiaries belonging to two broad disadvantaged groups: i) those who are not self-reliant and need temporary support (e.g. safety nets), and ii) those who need temporary support to graduate from absolute poverty and engage in productive activities. Priority will be broadly given to the following groups:

- ***Children under the age of 5:*** In 2005, despite abundant global food supplies, at least 150 million children under five were suffering from various forms of malnutrition. The results of childhood malnutrition leave a legacy of underweight children, stunted growth, susceptibility to infections, as well as other physical and cognitive disabilities.
- ***Communities with members suffering from HIV/AIDs or other chronic illnesses:*** HIV/AIDS and other illnesses such as malaria and tuberculosis inflict a heavy burden of care on families, thereby triggering food insecurity. There is often a household trade-off between food and health care provision, as households deplete a limited asset base and exhaust social networks of 'kin and community' to provide care. When the most productive worker dies a household often experiences a food gap.
- ***War-affected communities and Internally Displaced People:*** Aid must target war-affected populations and provide assistance to internally displaced populations, who are often the casualties in a protracted crisis. It must aim at food self-reliance of affected populations.
- ***Women:*** The prevalence of food insecurity particularly applies to women, who, despite their multiple roles as food producers, household managers, care givers and income generators, continue to be the most vulnerable to food insecurity. This prioritisation complements the support of programmes focusing on children under the age of five.
- ***Food-insecure pastoralists, small farmers and fisher folk:*** Aid must support these three groups, who are often the extremely poor and most dependent on a limited asset base.

Landless and farm labourers, urban ultra-poor: These categories are often neglected, but demographic pressure, combined with inadequate and inequitable economic growth, in both Asia and certain African regions, drives increasing numbers of poor out of agriculture.

The Programme will target a broad range of **intermediate beneficiaries** by way of capacity building, including staff from national and regional administrations, governmental and non-governmental institutions, and private sector institutions, etc.

5. IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS OF THE THEMATIC PROGRAMME

The Programme is intended to work with a range of different public and non-state actors, at global, national and local level. In particular, aid in situations of state failure will rely on local stakeholders' assessments, priorities and own initiatives.

The EC is taking concrete steps to promote strategic partnerships with **UN and multilateral agencies** in areas which make coherent contributions to EC food security programmes. Strategic partnerships also support the work of the EC in policy dialogue in the international food security arena. Strategic partnerships provide a means of building upon the respective comparative advantages in specific areas, whilst also reinforcing the 'added value' of a consistent approach amongst donors. Recently, the Commission has signed memoranda of understanding with the FAO and WFP. Other UN agencies do relevant work in terms of food security, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, IFAD, UNRWA, for example. The CGIAR group is a prime partner of the Commission as far as agricultural research is concerned.

The role of civil society organisations as Programme partners will be of primary importance in all components of the programme, as strategic allies in advocacy, as prime partners in the design and provision of aid in situations of transition and instability and as promoters of innovation. The programme will support the capacity of Northern and Southern NGOs to engage in policy dialogue on food security. The Programme will foster cooperation between NGOs and other non-state actors, and the private and public sector. The role of professional associations, trade unions and private institutions will be actively promoted.

Depending on the specific situations, **public stakeholders** could also be partners of the programme. **Local authorities** play an important role in fragile states and situations of post-crisis. **Continental, regional and national institutions** might be associated with global programmes for the delivery of global public goods, such as research and innovation. There could also be scope for involving public stakeholders in the promotion of innovative food security policies and strategies.

ANNEX II - PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

In a spirit of consultation and dialogue, as enshrined in the Commission Communication COM(2002) 704, the drafting of the Food Security Thematic Programme involved the participation of both Commission departments and a wide range of stakeholders and civil society organisations.

Using an issues paper for the purposes of the consultation process was chosen in order to facilitate a truly participatory consultation process. First of all, the paper was prepared on the back of literature made available by specialised agencies in food security, informal discussions and a critical review by the Commission departments concerned. The issues paper was sent to 50 Delegations in countries where food insecurity prevails. It was circulated to policy departments of specialised agencies, such as IFPRI (CGIAR), FAO and WFP, as well as, informally, to EU Member States. The paper was published on the Europa website for general public information. It was also discussed at meetings with two NGO networks, the EU Food Security Group of CONCORD and the International Food Security Network, which facilitates the work of local NGOs in 12 food-insecure countries.

Feedback from the consultation, which was generally very positive on the pertinence and substance of the Thematic Programme, provided interesting material for the drafting of the Communication.

In particular, Delegations underlined the need to ensure flexibility and rapid procedures for the implementation of the Programme, together with greater coordination/synergy among the different cooperation instruments, be they geographical or thematic (other budget lines) and particularly relief.

Specialised agencies provided valuable inputs both on policy and methodological issues, according to their main areas of competence. FAO highlighted the importance of continued investment to develop capacities and food security information systems while applying a strategy combining short and long-term approaches. WFP focused on the second component of the Thematic Programme, situations of transition, and elaborated on the phasing-in/phasing-out of relief and the need for a good mix of assistance for long-term recovery and development, supporting community building and local authorities. IFPRI underlined the need for a broad approach to food security by investing in rural development and agriculture, without neglecting urban food security, particularly in capacities and technology.

EU Member States stressed the need for an integrated approach to food security as part of poverty reduction and pro-poor growth, and underlined the importance of good governance and decentralisation/local development. They emphasised the importance of not neglecting poor urban dwellers, the landless and the private sector as a partner.

Civil society organisations warned against procedures that might make the Programme rigid and slow to implement, while NGOs stressed the importance of their role not only as implementing partners, but particularly in advocacy and policy-making. The need for increased NGO/South-South and North-South cooperation was also highlighted. NGOs provided a number of concrete and interesting inputs for the future programming of the new thematic instrument.