

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE  
77<sup>TH</sup> WORKING GROUP MEETING

**Proposal for the Creation of a Global Food Security Cluster**

7-9 July 2010

IFRC Auditorium, Geneva

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## **I Background**

The cluster approach is a key component of the 2005 Humanitarian Response review and ongoing reform initiative for improved efficiency, increased predictability and higher accountability in international responses to humanitarian emergencies. FAO and WFP have been fully engaged in the reform process since the onset. FAO is the global cluster lead for agriculture and at the country level, FAO, WFP and partners, are currently co-leading more than 15 food security clusters. At the country level, the decisions to establish food security clusters reflect the heightened recognition being given to food security in humanitarian situations.

In recognition of the value of effective global support to country level clusters, FAO and WFP agreed to initiate a consultative process to explore options for the possible establishment of a co-led global Food Security Cluster (GFSC). This commitment was announced on 4 February 2010 at the IASC Principals meeting. It was emphasized at the meeting that the consultations with a broad range of stakeholders would assess the need for and how best to bring together food and agriculture issues into a single humanitarian food security mechanism.

FAO and WFP have undertaken wide consultations with IASC members and other key partners and stakeholders, including international NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, other cluster lead agencies, other UN organizations and donor governments. Throughout this process, broad support has been expressed on the need to establish a global Food Security Cluster and the vital role it can play in supporting country-level food security clusters. For these reasons, FAO and WFP now propose to move forward with the establishment of a co-led global cluster that will reinforce and complement existing global clusters and country coordination mechanisms.

## **II Rationale and Aim**

There is now broad convergence amongst practitioners and stakeholders at the global and country levels for strengthened coordination of humanitarian food security responses in crisis situations. For example, the 2008 NGO-led Food Security Forum called for the establishment of a global food security coordination mechanism as one element in addressing gaps in the current humanitarian response. More recently, the Cluster Approach Evaluation Phase II recommended that a co-led global Food Security Cluster be established “integrating food aid, agricultural issues and other livelihood interventions and address related institutional and policy issues at the political level”.

The global Food Security Cluster will support country-level clusters and strengthen their capacity to plan and implement proportionate, appropriate and timely food security responses in humanitarian crisis situations. In particular, strengthened food security clusters at the country level will help ensure that food assistance and agricultural livelihood-based programmes are linked as part of a coordinated response that gives food security a stronger position in country-level planning and execution.

FAO and WFP are committed to ensuring effective leadership of the global Food Security Cluster. The cluster leads will be accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) for ensuring system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies, where food security has been severely disrupted, with greater predictability and more effective inter-agency responses. Upon the establishment of a global Food Security Cluster, it is proposed that the FAO-led global Agriculture Cluster will be merged into the new global cluster.

The proposed global Food Security Cluster will be consistent with humanitarian reform processes. It will also follow IASC guiding principles and generic terms of reference for existing global clusters, and enhance country coordination arrangements through improved partnerships between national governments, UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and international NGOs.

The cluster will improve food security responses in humanitarian situations through the provision of more predictable, coherent, joined-up support to country-level clusters. Where gaps exist, the cluster will facilitate the development of common standards, tools and guidance to support emergency food security strategies and implementation plans at the country level. Learning from the experiences of other clusters, wide consultation with food security partners and informed by an on-line practitioner survey, the global cluster will provide predictable support to country-level food security clusters with regard to surge support, information management, capacity building, and resource mobilisation and advocacy.

The GFSC will maintain strong working relationships with other clusters, including the Nutrition, through the development of agreed working principles, and Early Recovery clusters, in order to ensure maximum complementarity and synergy and effective inter-cluster coordination. These relationships will aim to establish collaborative working procedures, enhance the impact of respective cluster response programmes and ensure the systematic exchange of information and advice to guide their work. In addition, the global cluster will ensure that cross cutting issues such as gender, HIV/AIDs and environment are addressed in cluster programmatic planning and implementation.

### **III Proposal to Create a Global Food Security Cluster**

It is proposed that the IASC Working Group endorse the creation of a FAO/WFP co-led global Food Security Cluster and request that the Emergency Relief Coordinator seek the approval of the IASC Principals.

Once this approval is received, FAO and WFP will undertake the following next steps:

- FAO and WFP to establish a global Food Security Cluster cell at WFP Headquarters in Rome led by an experienced, dedicated Team Leader proposed by FAO and jointly agreed with WFP. Cluster partners will be invited to second staff to the cell.
- Develop a work plan for the cluster roll-out and set actionable objectives.

## **IV Proposed Action**

***The IASC Working Group:***

1. Reviews and endorses the above proposal and recommend the IASC Principals to endorse the creation of a FAO/WFP co-led global Food Security Cluster.

Prepared by: FAO and WFP, June 2010