

POLICY ROUNDTABLE: BIOFUELS AND FOOD SECURITY

The Committee

Welcomes the work of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Biofuels and Food Security and the relevant report.

Recalls the outcomes of the Committee's deliberations on 'Food Price Volatility' in October 2011, in particular CFS 37 Final report paragraph 50 i).

Highlights that energy and food security are linked and acknowledges the challenge of achieving both food security and energy security, considering the four dimensions of food security (availability, access, stability and utilization).

Takes note of the various drivers of biofuel development including energy security, climate change mitigation, export markets development, and rural development.

Recognises that biofuel development encompasses both opportunities and risks in economic, social and environmental aspects, depending on context and practices.

Underscores that food security and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security should be priority concerns for all the relevant stakeholders in biofuel development, which should not compromise food security, and should especially consider women and smallholders due to their high level of importance in achieving food security, while considering varied national contexts.

Acknowledges that

- The links between biofuels and food security are multiple and complex and can occur in different ways at different geographic levels (local, national, regional, global) and time scales. Therefore, their assessment should be multi-faceted and contextualised, and an integrated, evidence-based, gender-sensitive and environmentally-sound approach is required in biofuel policy-making and investments;
- Production and consumption of biofuels, amongst many other factors, influence international agricultural commodity prices. The interaction between biofuels, food prices and supply responses is dynamic and complex, and requires a distinction between short-term and long-term impacts;
- In some cases, current biofuel production creates competition between biofuel crops and food crops. Significant guidance exists and is further needed to ensure that biofuels policies are coherent with food security to minimize the risks and maximize the opportunities of biofuels in relation to food security. This includes, the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF), the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in The Context of National Food Security (VGGT), the Voluntary Guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, The Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) Sustainability Indicators for Bioenergy and FAO Bioenergy and Food Security (BEFS) Approach.

Stresses the importance of concerted international and national actions to encourage that biofuel development and policies are in line with the objective to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and

malnutrition, and contributes to sustainable rural development, including respecting legitimate land tenure rights, and poverty reduction, bearing in mind varied national contexts.

Encourages governments to seek coordination of their respective food security and energy security strategies, giving due consideration to the sustainable management of natural resources.

Recommends the following action points, their development and implementation, by the appropriate stakeholders.

1. Actions towards enhanced policy coherence for food security and biofuels

- a. Governments, FAO, AMIS, GBEP, IFPRI and other international organizations are encouraged to regularly share with CFS the results of their work on biofuels-food security linkages.
- b. Governments, FAO, and all other relevant stakeholders are encouraged to promote and facilitate exchange of information and cooperation on biofuels and food security links. This includes analysis, assessments and projections as well as providing transparent information on assumptions, methods, tools and gender-disaggregated data.
- c. Governments and other stakeholders are encouraged to implement policies and investments for the production of biofuels and food in accordance with national development strategies and multilateral agreements applicable to food security. Special attention should also be given to the situation of vulnerable groups and small scale food producers.
- d. Governments and other appropriate stakeholders are encouraged to review biofuels policies - where applicable and if necessary - according to balanced science-based assessments of the opportunities and risks they may present for food security, and so that biofuels can be produced according to the three pillars of sustainable development.
- e. FAO is invited to inform CFS of the progress made in building capacities in member states with respect to biofuel policies in coherence with food security and initiatives on biofuel policies at multiple levels. This would be based on existing works and material e.g. the GBEP sustainable bioenergy indicators, the FAO BEFS Approach; as well as the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure/VGGT, which governments and all stakeholders are encouraged to promote, make use of and to support their implementation.
- f. FAO, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and in consultation with member states as appropriate, is invited to propose a programme of work aimed at strengthening the capacity of interested countries and operators to assess their situation with regards to biofuels, taking into account food security concerns at global, regional and national levels, legitimate land tenure rights, to manage the related risks and opportunities, and to monitor impacts. This could take advantage of the GBEP capacity building programme.

2. Actions to promote Research and Development (R&D) on biofuels and food security

- a. Food security, smallholder and gender concerns should be integrated as appropriate in the design, monitoring and evaluation of R&D on biofuels. R&D is important in improving the efficiency of biofuels regarding both resources and processes, and in exploring new technologies including biofuels of the second and third generations. Research partners are encouraged to devise solutions adapted to the needs of all stakeholders, especially those in least-developed countries and of women and smallholders who are most in need of access to modern energy services.
- b. International cooperation (including south-south cooperation), and public sector, and public-private partnerships have an important role to play in supporting these research topics. It is important to ensure that lessons learned from these partnerships are reflected in future cooperation.

- c. R&D, as appropriate, should strengthen capabilities to adapt biofuel production and processing units so that they can modulate their supply chain between food, feed and energy

3. Actions with regard to linkages between energy and food security

- a. Stakeholders are encouraged to support more energy and other resource use efficiency, increased use of sources of renewable energy and improved access to sustainable energy services, including among others in agrifood chains, according to each country's specificities.
- b. Governments and operators should support the participation of farmers, in particular smallholders and women, in food-energy security programmes (including on biofuel production and consumption), as appropriate on the basis of fair and equitable conditions
- c. CFS encourages public and private sectors to support the integration of sustainable biofuel production into agricultural and forestry policies, according to each country's specificities

