



Opportunities for Concerted Action and Inter-Agency Coordination in order to Confront the Food Crisis¹

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Executive Summary

The current crisis will have a significant impact on the lives of millions of people all over the world and particularly in developing nation. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are no exception. According to preliminary estimates published by ECLAC, an increase of 15% in the price of food products will imply an increase of nearly 3% in poverty, which will affect more than 15 million people. Numerous international institutions including the International Agricultural Development Fund (IADF) are generating programs in response to the crisis. This year IADF announced that it would assign up to 200 million dollars in order to provide an immediate boost to agricultural production in developing nations affected by this emergency. Additional resources totaling 32 million dollars are being explored for countries in Central America and the Caribbean including Haiti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras. The short-term goal is to return capital to the most vulnerable poor farmers through the provision of seeds, fertilizers and fodder, the rehabilitation of small irrigation systems and reservoirs, and the provision of support for the fishing and traditional shell fishing sector.

The World Bank is generating a plan to create short and medium-term measures including social protection networks, increases in agricultural production, a better understanding of the impact of biofuels, and the adoption

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of commercial measures to reduce the subsidies and barriers that create distortions.

The IDB proposes that money transfers be made to the poor under certain conditions of investments in human capital in order to facilitate assistance for education and actions linked to health. This would allow poor households to maintain and/or improve their diet in spite of the changes that have occurred in relative prices.

The European Community (EC) is implementing a series of measures including the adjustment of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the suppression of regulations on land removal.

Following the meeting in Rome in June 2008, U.N. agencies are coordinating in order to respond to the requests for assistance made by the most affected countries in an agile manner through immediate support measures for production and agricultural commerce.