

CONTRIBUTION OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME TO
THE EIGHTH COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

United Nations World Food Programme(WFP)

A. IMPACT OF HIGH FOOD PRICES AND
THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS ON MIGRATION

1. High food prices

Food prices, which had been increasing slowly since 2001, soared in 2007 and 2008. They subsequently fell in the second half of 2008, but remain high and volatile, particularly at the local level in developing countries. The combined effects of the financial crisis and the continuing high food prices mean that people eat less and eat less well. Vulnerable populations switch to cheaper foods that fill their stomachs and ease their hunger, but which are less nutritious. People, especially young children, who fail to consume the correct nutrients and vitamins, are more prone to illness, learn less, have lower productivity, and thus less prospects for their futures.

As a result, the number of undernourished people is expected to exceed one billion people in 2009. Even more striking is that two billion people suffered from micronutrient deficiencies before the current crisis. This number most likely increased as well.

In 2008, the World Food Programme (WFP) conducted about 40 assessments on the impact of high food prices on food consumption. The WFP found widespread evidence of reductions in the quality and quantity of food consumed (Sanogo, 2009) and some evidence of increased migration and school dropouts or sale of economic assets, for example in Bangladesh, Lesotho, Liberia, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Yemen.

2. The global economic and financial crisis

Remittances were one of the major channels —together with trade and capital flows— through which the global economic and financial crisis was transmitted from developed to developing countries. In early 2009, the WFP developed an Economic Shock and Hunger Index (ESHI) to better understand which countries are likely to become more vulnerable to food insecurity due to the global financial and economic crisis. The ESHI analysis considered key financial and economic factors as well as food security indicators to understand the hunger implications of 126 low-and middle-income countries. Remittances as a percentage of GDP was one of 12 variables included in the analysis.

again in various assessments undertaken to determine the impact of high food prices and the global economic and financial crisis. Several assessments recommended strengthening the monitoring systems in order to capture changes in migration and remittance flows and their impact on food security. The WFP continues to pay particular attention to migration and remittance flows in its analysis, assessments and monitoring systems.

In 2008, the WFP published a study on migration in Nepal titled *Passage to India: Migration as a Coping Strategy in Times of Crisis in Nepal*. The study, partly based on a survey, documents various aspects of migration in Nepal, including who, why and how people migrate, the size, channels and use of remittances, the risks, the role of migration in coping strategies and the relation with food security and employment. The study found that 64 percent of the very poor and 62 percent of the poor said that they would migrate after a shock. Moreover, many claimed that they would not migrate if they had sufficient access to food or were guaranteed full employment for three months.

C. CURRENT AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

In 2008, the WFP provided food assistance to 1.9 million refugees, 9.5 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and 0.9 million returnees. Partnerships, collaboration and cooperation are critical in its activities. The WFP collaborated in 2008 with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 54 different projects in 43 countries and with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on 19 projects in 18 countries.

The WFP continued to mainstream protection into field programming through research and analysis as inputs to project formulation and design, developing guidance, checklists, tools

NOTE

¹ See <http://www.wfp.org/stories/financial-crisis-pushes-poor-families-deeper-into-hunger> and <http://www.wfp.org/food-security/reports/search?enaType=> (accessed 31 April 2010).

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