

**SPECIAL FORUM
ON REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF
WFS PLAN OF ACTION**

FAO, ROME, 30-31 OCTOBER 2006



AD HOC GROUP OF INGOs
Representatives to FAO
residing in Rome

REPORT

BY THE AHG/INGOS REPRESENTATIVES TO FAO RESIDING IN ROME

INTRODUCTION

The AHG/INGOs is composed of representatives of 30 INGOs having official status with FAO. The Group was established by the INGOs representatives to FAO in 1979 and officially recognized by FAO Secretariat. It plays an active role in maintaining contacts between the INGOs represented and FAO, exchanging information, improving and stimulating cooperation at international, regional and national levels. Membership to the AHG is open to representatives residing in Rome, and Italy, of any INGO with official status with FAO. The Group meets once a month in FAO/HQ in Rome.

The AHG has been responsible since its beginning of organizing in cooperation with the FAO Secretariat the official meetings of INGOs held during the sessions of the FAO Conference every two years. On these occasions, subjects of interest to the INGOs are discussed and the results and recommendations reported directly to the Member Governments attending the Conference. Since 1997, the IPC has joined the AHG in this responsibility.

ACTIVITIES OF AHG IN SUPPORT OF WFS PLAN OF ACTION

The AHG participated in the WFS, 1996, and in the WFS: *fyI*, 2002. It supported the Declaration and Plan of Action, and the 2002. Summit, with official statements. In both occasions the Group assisted in the preparation of the NGO/CSO Fora and participated in their development. A first report on implementation was prepared and distributed at the 2002 WFS: *fyI*. That report is here updated.

In accordance with its role as liaison network between FAO and the INGOs represented, the Group has helped to inform and disseminate the decisions and results of the WFS, and to stimulate action towards the implementation of the Plan of Action. Details on individual INGOs activities are reported under the related sites, see Box 1.

In cooperation with the Geneva NGO Working Group on Nutrition, the Group produced and distributed, three times/year, a newsletter "Call to Action", devoted to food, nutrition and agriculture, which drew attention to problems highlighted by FAO member Governments and to the need for NGOs contribution to combating hunger in the world.

In line with the Commitments of the Plan of Action and with the INGOs interests, the following subjects were given special attention:

"Women in development", including participation in FAO initiatives, such as the annual "Rural Women Day" both at FAO/HQ and at national levels;

"Nutrition, agriculture and rural development", through the above mentioned Newsletter "Call to Action", and support to nutrition projects at national levels;
"Water supply problems", a subject of continuous interest, first discussed at the INGOs meeting at the 1997 FAO Conference;
"Right to Food", through support and participation in preparation of the guidelines;
"Assistance to orphan and vulnerable children in Tanzania" through training in agriculture and entrepreneurship: see "Energy for life" project, attachment 2.

In following up on WFS: *fyI*, the Group has supported the IAAH, participating in the FAO WG and in the activities developed for its launching. Individual INGOs members of the Group have joined the Alliance and are active with national Alliances in various countries.

AHG PROGRAMME 2006-2007

Goals:

1. Arranging meetings with FAO officials on specific issues.
2. Preparing the AHG for all the most important FAO meetings (council, conference, committees), every time presenting statements which are shared by all the INGOs.
3. Promoting the coordination among the different INGOs headquarters in order to be present and active at the FAO Regional Conferences.
4. Playing an active role in the IAAH development process.
5. Making every INGOs cooperate with each other in specific plans, which have to be carried out with the FAO.
6. Promoting the image of the AHG with the FAO, IFAD, WFP and IPGRI.
7. Being constantly present at the NGO/CSO International Planning Committee(IPC).
8. Playing an active part in preparing the Special Forum 2006.

1. Arranging meetings with FAO officials on specific issues.

We are going to arrange thematic meetings in order to advance the understanding of particular thematic areas and keep up to date about the related FAO developments. These meetings will aim at picking out specific opportunities of cooperating between every INGOs and the FAO.

These specific issues are:

- Rural development
- The role of women
- Biodiversity
- The right to food – Food sovereignty
- Nutrition - Food

2. Preparing the AHG for the official FAO meetings (council, conference, committees), presenting joint AHG statements as required.

It is increasingly necessary to play an active role and express ourselves as AHG. Individual INGOs are of course free to intervene at FAO official meetings and to discuss directly with the FAO staff on matters of their concern. But it is important to prepare and present statements on shared points of view. This applies also to the cooperation with the IPC.

In order to achieve this aim, the topics of the AHG monthly meetings will be closely related to the dates and the subjects on the agenda of the different FAO institutional meetings.

3. Promoting the coordination among the different INGOs headquarters in order to be present and active at the FAO Regional Conferences.

The FAO Regional Conferences represent a fundamental occasion for checking and planning on the field. It is important that the INGOs, that have a cooperation status with the FAO, try to attend these meetings.

It is necessary to set up a system of communication which enables to share information on the participation of the INGOs of the AHG to the FAO Regional Conferences.

4. Playing an active role in the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) development process.

The initiative of the IAAH was approved at the WFS: *fy/* in 2002. In its development, it is more and more assuming the form of a great mobilization which brings together governments, the private sector and the NGOs, who are together in the effort to produce positive actions to fight against hunger and poverty.

The AHG has taken part in the development process of the IAAH (website, membership, strategy paper, etc.), being involved in the FAO Working Group .

The AHG intends to continue playing an active role in order to make the INGOs' point of view always taken into account in the IAAH development process. In this intention, the AHG hopes that the IAAH Working Group can give itself a permanent advisory and monitoring structure.

The AHG is committing itself to stimulate a larger involvement of INGOs in the IAAH. The AHG thinks that the development and action of every single national alliance, which represent the innovative push that leads the IAAH to positive results, are extremely important.

5. Making every INGOs cooperate with each other in specific plans, which have to be carried out with the FAO.

The AHG is the place where members INGOs can have opportunities of mutual confrontation and bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

For this purpose, specific projects will be planned where cooperation among members will be considered possible at national levels.

An example is given in attachment 1.

6. Promoting the image of the AHG with the FAO, IFAD, WFP and IPGRI.

For this purpose an official logo has been developed, and steps taken to establish an AHG website, which will be a useful instrument for exchanging information rapidly and continuously.

7. Being constantly present at the International Planning Committee.

The AHG is a member of the IPC. This presence has to result in a continuous debate about common topics and about the NGO's role in the dialogue with the FAO and lead to an effective collaboration. Selecting common points of view makes both of them stronger and more forceful in their action. Specific meetings with the IPC's representatives will be arranged to debate and coordinate our joint participation and interventions at FAO events.

8. Playing an active part in preparing and participating in the Special Forum 2006.

The involvement and the attendance at the Special Forum 2006 are AHG's overriding goals, which will be central at all the preparatory meetings. It is an historical event which has a strategic importance for the achievement of the first of the Millennium Development Goals. The AHG and its members will have to be adequate in order to have a real influence on it.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As done in previous reports, the AHG wishes to reaffirm the view that, in the fight against hunger, malnutrition and poverty, member governments have the major responsibility: it is their task to prepare and implement the national food security plans of action along the lines of the WFS Plan. As INGOs, we would like again to remind governments of their commitment to involve NGOs at national levels in their plans: to inform them, to obtain their views, to seek their support and contributions on policy and practical matters, and follow their recommendations as required.

The obstacles and challenges to food security were and still are poverty, illiteracy, conflicts of various origin, low priority and too little attention given to rural development, the role of and support to women in public activities and political life, the provision of free and safe water supply, and food safety. These views, based on direct experience of the INGOs members of the AHG, were reported in all statements made at FAO meetings and included in official documents, with the understanding and hope, that they would be taken into account at national levels by responsible governments. Since the situation is apparently not improving, more efforts are required by all concerned, and NGOs are prepared to do their part, provided there is encouragement to their participation at both national and international levels.

BOX 1: list of INGOs members of AHG

Associated Country Women of the World - www.acww.org.uk
 Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development - www.angoc.ngo.ph
 Caritas Internationalis - www.caritas.org
 European Association of Agricultural Economists - www.eaae.org
 Federation Internationale des Femmes des carrières juridiques - www.federacionjuristas.org
 International Catholic Rural Association - www.icra-agrimissio.org
 International JACQUES MARITAIN Institute - www.maritain.org
 International Alliance of Women - www.tiaw.org
 International Association of Agricultural Economist – www.iaae.org
 International Movements of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth – www.mijarc.org
 International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage - www.icid.org
 International Confederation of Free Trade – www.icftu.org
 International Cooperative Alliance – www.coop.org
 International Council of Catholic Men - www.unum-omnes.com
 International Council of Women - www.icw-cif.org
 International Federation of Agricultural Producers – www.ifap.org
 International Federation For Home Economics - www.ifhe.org
 International Federation of Business and Professional Women - www.bpwintl.com
 International Union of Families Organization,
 International Union of Latin Notaries,
 Lions Clubs International - www.lionsclubs.org
 Rotary International – www.rotary.org
 Soroptimist International – www.soroptimist.org
 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - www.wilpf.int.ch
 World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts – www.wagggg.org
 World Confederation of Labour - www.cmt-wcl.org
 World Conference of Religions for Peace – www.wcrp.org
 World Federation of Trade Union - www.wftucentral.org
 World Organization of the Scout Movement – www.scout.org
 World Union of Catholic Women's Organization – www.wucwo.org

ATTACHMENT N. 1

Committee on World Food Security (CFS) - Roma,⁶October/November 2006

Special Forum on Review of Implementation of World Food Summit Plan of Action

Statement by Mr. Paolo Rozera - WOSM, Coordinator of Ad Hoc Group/INGOs

Mr. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I represent at FAO in Rome the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), and I take the floor on behalf of my Organization, but also as Coordinator of the AHG/INGOs representatives to FAO in Rome. This group, which comprises representatives, based in Rome, of over 30 international NGOs, is now well known for its long association and cooperation with FAO on subjects of common interest. The Group participated actively in the WFS, in the WFS: *fyI*, and in the related NGO/CSO Fora. A first report on action taken by its members for the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action was prepared and distributed by the AHG at the WFS: *fyI* in 2002. This report has been updated for the Special Forum and is distributed here today. I wish here to emphasize a few points included in that report, while encouraging all concerned to read the details directly from the text.

AHG members informed their respective HQs of the Commitments of the Plan of Action, stimulating them to help implement it at regional and national levels within their specific fields of interest. A newsletter "Call to Action" was produced in cooperation with the Geneva INGOs Working Group on Nutrition to disseminate information on the various issues and problems highlighted by FAO member governments and on the need to combat hunger in the world.

Special attention was given, for example, to supporting participation of women in development processes, and education of girls and boys for family and public life. Water supply, nutrition, food, agriculture and rural development were among the subjects discussed and on which the attention of our HQs was focussed for further international and field action. The "right to food" is another item on which we are concentrating since the launching of the Voluntary Guidelines. Last but not least the participation in the IAAH - International Alliance Against Hunger, launched by FAO, WFP, FAD and IPGRI after WFS: *fyI*. AHG is member of the Rome IAAH Working Group and individual members have joined the Alliance being active at national levels.

Our report to the Special Forum includes the AHG programme 2006/2007, on which I wish to draw your attention, since we are open to any suggestion, advice and proposals for better cooperation. Please note that an AHG website is now open for contacts. Now allow me, Mr. Chairperson, a few comments on the documents prepared by FAO for the CFS, particularly CFS:2006/3 and its Supplements. I will limit my comments to situations of developing countries which are those most in need of attention and support.

While we appreciate the efforts made to collect and provide information on action taken for the implementation of the WFS Plan, it is disappointing that only a small number of governments have reported to the CFS; and that no mention is made apparently in those reports to any cooperation with and involvement of local NGOs and "actors of civil

society" as specifically indicated in each Commitment of the Plan approved and undersigned by governments in 1996. We wonder whether this is due to lack of interest - by whom? governments? local NGO's? Lack of information and difficulty of communication; or simply forgetfulness. (Incidentally, we regret that at international level, even the NGO/CSOs efforts through the AHG and the IPC are not acknowledged in the FAO official reports, in spite of the close cordial and continuous cooperation existing at central and international level.)

Having analysed in detail the FAO reports, we are encouraged to notice that attention was given by reporting governments to some issues of special importance in fighting poverty and hunger, such as gender equality and the role of women in development, Commitment 1; nutrition, food safety, safe water supply, healthy life styles, Commitment 2; on resources, Commitment 6. Limited attention is reported by governments on participatory development policies and practices, Commitment 3, a subject pursued actively by the AHG over the years with FAO, both at secretariat level and at official meetings (conference, council, technical committees). Again this requires active involvement of local civil society and NGOs in the countries, which appears to be neglected,-or not reported- by those responsible for implementation of national plans. Few countries have reported on mechanisms for monitoring, Commitment 7, with the only laudable exception of Cambodia, where NGOs are mentioned as collaborating agents.

To conclude: the information available shows that now, at midterm, the international community is far from reaching the, still modest, goal of reducing by half the number of undernourished people established in 1996. As representatives of INGOs deeply concerned with the issues under discussion, the AHG has tried in the above analysis to underline at least a few weaknesses existing in the efforts to reach the goal. We of course recognize that governments have the full responsibility of implementing the Commitments of the Plan of Action, but that responsibility includes the involvement of civil society at all levels, which does not appear to have been applied in all countries. It is clear that more efforts are required by all concerned. INGOs are prepared to do their part, provided there is encouragement to their participation at both national and international levels. We wonder also whether developing countries need more assistance in implementing their plans, and in preparing them where they do not yet exist. I wish finally to mention a proposal made in year 2000 to the UN by one of our members, the International Federation for Home Economics, and repeated recently, namely the designation of an International Year of Food Security. The proposal may be worth of support by the international community, if it may encourage initiatives towards reaching the goal.

ATTACHMENT N. 2

Energy for life: a programme for imparting ⁸entrepreneurial skills to orphans and vulnerable children in junior farmer field and life schools (JFFLS) in TANZANIA

The "ad Hoc Group" of the INGO's in partnership with FAO has launched the energy for life programme aimed at imparting entrepreneurial skills to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools' (JFFLS) initiative in Tanzania. Initially four NGO's members of the "ad Hoc Group" will contribute namely: Lions Clubs International, Rotary International, World Organization of Scout Movement and Religions for Peace. It is foreseen that additional NGO's having a representation in Tanzania will be offered to join in the common effort.

The objectives of the JFFLS are:

1. To enhance OVC's knowledge and skills in agriculture and entrepreneurship
2. To strengthen the capacity of local institutions to respond to OVCs needs

Typically the programme benefits children of whom most are orphaned or made vulnerable by the AIDS epidemic. Early assessment of the programme - already successfully in place in other countries - has shown that it has a great potential and can be easily up-scaled to reach critical mass of children in need.

Children participating in Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools are chosen based orphan hood socio-economic status (living in deprived homes). The selection criterion is based on the needs of the child. The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools is designed to complement rather than compete with formal schooling. While the programme has proved a good vehicle for imparting crucial farming and life skills to children, it has become apparent that provision of food is crucial for attendance at JFFLS. Food plays a crucial role in the success of the JFFLS program by acting as a powerful incentive for orphans and vulnerable children to attend and have enough energy to participate. The most innovative aspect of the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools is the way children are encouraged to develop as people: weekly theatre sessions and discussion groups help the children tackle difficult but potentially life-saving issues like HIV / AIDS prevention and gender equality, under the careful guidance of teachers. These sessions empower girls and boys and encourage them to work together towards a healthy and productive future.

The support being requested from Lions Clubs International, Rotary International, World Organization of Scout Movement and Religions for Peace, would be used by FAO to develop the Entrepreneurship Skills component of the JFFLS initiative. Over the years, the JFFLS initiative has developed training materials in agricultural and life skills. Less has been done on entrepreneurial skills. FAO wishes to use the support of the NGO's to fill this important gap in JFFLS curriculum.

In particular the resources shall be used to develop a training programme on entrepreneurial skills using Solar Energy as the entry point. Such training programme would include skills in installing solar panels, maintenance, marketing/sale, and after sales services. The duration of this project shall be initially for two-years (September 2006 - September 2008)

