



**Thematic Group  
on Rural Development  
and Food Security**  
Established: 1997

**MEMBERSHIP**

**UN:** FAO; ILO; UNDP; UNFPA;  
UNICEF; WFP; WHO

**Government:** Ministry of Food  
and Agriculture; Ministry of  
Planning; Ministry of Health

**Past activities:** Preparation of  
a paper for UN community in  
Pakistan: 'Improving  
Preparedness and Response  
to Emergencies, Early  
Warning and Emergency  
Mechanisms'.



# Pakistan



IFAD/G. BIZZARRI

## Producing a common UN statement on food security

Food insecurity is a persistent fact of life in Pakistan. Indeed it has been estimated that 42 million people in the country lack adequate income to purchase the food they need to lead an active and healthy life. Coupled with this, there is a widespread incidence of malnutrition: in 1998, the number of malnourished children in the country stood at around 8 million.

But what are the dimensions of food insecurity? How can development partners work together to fight it? These are the key questions at the core of the activities of the Thematic Group on Rural Development and Food Security in Pakistan which focuses on the multidimensions of food security: assessing and analysing its status, and recommending initiatives and interventions to achieve it.

Formed in 1997, the Group has addressed food security through various means, from assessing the nutritional status of vulnerable populations to improving preparedness and response to emergencies; and ensuring the sustainability of resources for food security. The Group has done this largely by forming task forces to focus on key issues and to build consensus for joint action.

In 2000, a culmination of much of the Group's past work was synthesized in one single information product: *United Nations Statement on Food Security in Pakistan*. This joint UN statement – the first of its kind in the country – was endorsed by all of the UN agencies in Pakistan and launched at a press conference at the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) on the occasion of World Food Day on 16 October 2000.

The statement provides views and analyses on food security issues by the UN system in Pakistan with a focus on policy and strategic

**// All agencies of the UN System in Pakistan adhere to this document and view it as their common platform concerning food security.**

'UNITED NATIONS STATEMENT ON FOOD SECURITY IN PAKISTAN', 2000





## United Nations Statement on Food Security in Pakistan

### A framework for action: what the United Nations can do

**Support** the Government in policy formulation and preparation of action plans to incorporate strategic options, related to:

- sustainable and efficient utilization of natural resources;
- stabilization of input and output prices, and timely availability of quality inputs;
- promotion/development of small enterprises;
- equity for food distribution, inter- and intra-regional and within family members;
- support of requirements for sustainable food security, i.e. removing policy distortions, provision of rural infrastructure, institutional reforms, marketing and credit policy (support to institutionalized micro-credit);
- promotion of research and development on food security;
- addressing impact of globalization and WTO agreements.

**Provide** technical assistance and demonstration in the implementation of programmes on food security with regard to:

- sustainable use of natural resources;
- proper application of physical inputs including balanced use of fertilizers and pesticides/insecticides;

- enhancement of food production of smallholders;
- diversification of on-farm and off-farm income generation;
- promotion of income generation activities in urban and pre-urban settings;
- improvement of post-harvest practices and technology;
- development and dissemination of appropriate and cost-effective technologies;
- monitoring of environmental impact of the use of various agricultural practices.

**Offer** human resources development to build capacity related to:

- sustainable use of natural resources;
- nutritional food production and food quality standards;
- cost benefit aspects of food production;
- appropriate technologies and infrastructure application;
- re-alignment of available R&D expertise;
- re-vitalization of extension services;
- disaster mitigation.

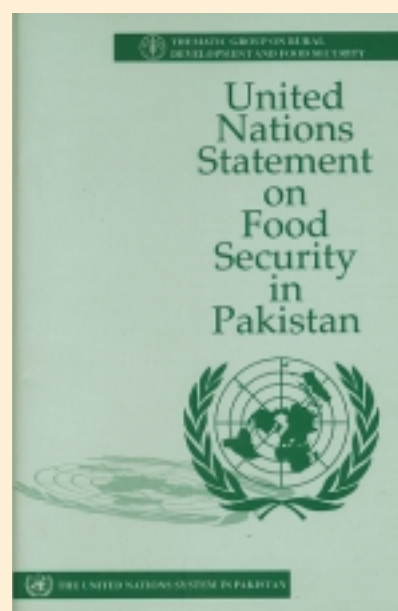
**Promote** public awareness and advocacy with regard to:

- importance of food security at

household, local and national levels;

- awareness of nutritional aspects of food and good health;
- awareness of people's rights to food security, 'Food for All';
- awareness of enhanced role of women in food security;
- promotion of equal opportunity and access to food;
- depletion and degradation of natural resources.

**Facilitate** coordination of ongoing and future international aid in the context of food security.



FAO



## World Food Day

World Food Day is observed every year on 16 October – the anniversary of the founding of FAO on 16 October 1945 – to promote broader public awareness of the problem of global hunger and malnutrition. It also aims to encourage governments, donors and NGOs to make greater efforts in food production and improved agricultural practices; to assist and encourage the transfer of appropriate food technologies to the developing world; to highlight success stories in the fight against hunger to foster global solidarity; to encourage rural populations to participate in the the planning and implementation of sustainable rural development programmes; and to promote technical cooperation and the sharing of knowledge and skills between developing countries. Celebrations marking World Food Day take place in more than 150 countries and vary from exhibitions and essay contests to agricultural fairs and on-farm demonstrations.

options. As such it represents a blueprint for both decision-makers and planners.

Preparation of the statement involved eight months of intensive Group consultations which pooled the combined expertise, experience and skills of Group members, other UN counterpart agencies (UNDCP, UNESCO, UNHCR and UNIDO), and representatives from the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL), the Ministry of Planning and Development and Health and Nutrition. Despite being composed solely of UN members at present, the Group has succeeded in networking widely with national stakeholders for maximum impact.

As a result, the paper provides an authoritative stance on food security, placing it in its socio-economic and political context, and consistent with WFS commitments. It reports on the economic and agricultural performance in Pakistan, presents an overview of the status of food security and lists current Government initiatives to achieve it. This is followed by the envisaged policy and strategic options for the three dimensions of food security (adequate food supply, access to food and equitable food distribution) and an identification of the functions and roles that multilateral financial organizations and, in particular, the UN can play in achieving food security in Pakistan.

The Group's initiative of preparing a UN statement on food security provides a valuable template for UN and development partners not only in Pakistan, but also in other developing countries in the same and other regions.

Feedback on this document from the UN and local donor community in Pakistan has already been positive: it will form part of a proposed series of UN sectoral statements in country. While a UN Common Statement on Gender has been produced, similar statements on poverty alleviation and tourism are now in the pipeline.