

## **Food Security**

### **Panel Discussion**

**Monday 4 October 2004**

**(1500-1600)**

**Conference Room XIX, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

### **Broad Objective**

The aim of the panel discussion, which will be chaired by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the High Commissioner for Refugees, is to build on the already strong alliance between WFP and UNHCR, supported by Member States, and to make it even stronger in promoting the food security for those of concern to both agencies, especially refugees, internally displaced and returnees. Food security is understood as access of all peoples at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life (FAO/WHO (1992) International Conference on Nutrition).

In pursuing food security for these vulnerable categories, both agencies are contributing to the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and, in doing this, by using the capacity of women as “agents of change”, they are also promoting gender equality and empowering women. Both agencies are committed to providing food aid in a way that is as developmental in nature as possible.

Promoting food security is a multi-faceted undertaking. It is proposed that the focus of the panel discussion should be how to enhance international solidarity by Member States in supporting the work of both agencies in addressing the food security needs of those who are of common concern to them.

### **Specific Objectives**

The primary form of international solidarity is to support the countries offering asylum and hospitality to the refugees and to assist these countries discharge their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In terms of food security, this solidarity takes various forms:

- Ensuring that sufficient food is made available in a timely, uninterrupted manner to populations of concern through WFP’s regular food aid. The notion of greater food security implies that the donor base should be diversified and broadened. UNHCR calls on the members of its Executive Committee to support the work of WFP, through donations in cash and in kind.
- Mitigating the impact of refugees on hosting areas, and on the communities to which the refugees return, by focusing appropriate development assistance to promote greater self-reliance and food security, particularly through labour-intensive work programmes.
- Encouraging host governments to maintain a flexible asylum policy and mechanisms whereby areas hosting refugees have enough space to enable them to access cultivable and arable lands. This will certainly improve the refugees’ food security through crop production and productivity on a sustainable basis, thereby allowing them to achieve a degree of self-reliance.

Member States are invited to explore these and related issues both in the panel discussion and in their interventions in the General Debate.