

The Key Principles of Action on Food Security Crises for Exporters and Importers

In the face of a food security and nutrition crisis, actions and measures taken by participants in food-related markets, including food exporting and importing countries and private sector, can have significant impact on how the crisis would unfold. In order to avoid exacerbating food security and nutrition crises and to maintain regular and affordable access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food and agricultural products, market participants are expected to share and respect the following principles, building on existing international rules and initiatives, while acknowledging WTO's work program under paragraph 8 of "Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity" adopted at MC 12.

1) Maintaining an Open and Flowing Market

We recognize the importance of maintaining open and uninterrupted agricultural and food trade to avoid unnecessarily exacerbating a food security crisis. We also recognize the importance of functioning supply chains including logistics to this end as well as local markets. Therefore,

- Prohibiting or restricting exports of grains, other commodities, and fertilizers in a manner inconsistent with WTO rules should not be allowed, including unjustified export restrictions for political purposes.
- Adverse impacts on populations under a humanitarian crisis in vulnerable countries should be avoided even when adopting emergency measures in line with WTO rules.
- Adequate supply, circulation and delivery of grains, other agricultural commodities, and inputs including fertilizers should be maintained to avoid their disruptions in the face of an emergency.
- The provision of humanitarian food assistance should remain uninterrupted, and the WTO Ministerial Decision on WFP Food Purchases Exemption from Export Prohibitions or Restrictions should be fully implemented.
- Cooperation on trade facilitation of grains and other agricultural commodities should be promoted and visibility and information availability of supply chain logistics should be enhanced, for example, through the enhancement of electronic exchanges of necessary certificates and the establishment of IGC dashboard to visualize real-time grain trade flows.

2) Enhancing Predictability and Mitigating Volatility

Enhanced predictability can better inform the decisions on actions and measures taken by exporting countries, importing countries, the private sector and other stakeholders amid a food security and nutrition crisis. We recognize the need to enhance predictability to mitigate excessive market volatility in the event of any food crisis caused or escalated by price hikes related to market insecurity due to prospects of supply disruptions, crop failures, pandemics, geopolitical conflict or other circumstances. Therefore,

- International organizations' and governments' efforts to improve early warning, monitoring and information dissemination on food security and nutrition should be further strengthened. Innovative technologies should be properly utilized in those efforts.
- Secure and reliable maritime transportation routes should be maintained in securing stable supply of grains and other commodities that are important for food security and nutrition.
- Speculative measures such as excessive buying up or holding back of food commodities and rapid and large-scale expansion of stockpiles should be eschewed to avoid price inflation and market disruption, and consequently exacerbate food security crises. In this regard, information sharing between producing and importing countries about such policies and potential trade disruptions should help to refrain from these practices.

3) Improving Market Transparency

We recognize the importance of improving market transparency for grains and other agricultural commodities including agricultural inputs such as fertilizers to prevent the risk of food security and nutrition crises. Therefore, while reaffirming efforts and policies made by the existing adequate initiatives related to food security,

- International efforts to enhance market transparency should be further promoted including through strengthening the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and providing necessary and timely information on supply and demand.
- Transparency on data of grains and other agricultural commodities throughout their supply chains should be enhanced, and related agricultural and logistic data should furthermore be made publicly available.
- Communication and information sharing among relevant stakeholders including governments, the international organizations, the private sector and the civil society, regarding their responses to food security and nutrition crises should be strengthened, including through the Rapid Response Forum provided by AMIS.

4) Ensuring the resilience and sustainability of the global agriculture and food system

- Beyond the contribution of trade to global food security and nutrition, producing and importing countries recognized the need to improve the productivity and sustainability of the local, regional, and international food production system while adapting and mitigating climate change in agriculture and food systems, as well as halting and reversing biodiversity loss and land degradation.
- Developing and adopting innovative approaches and products as well as using traditional and indigenous knowledge to enhance agriculture and food systems remain one of the drivers to respond to these challenges in an inclusive manner.

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