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Addressing the hunger-poverty nexus: what policy coherence means for the 2030 Agenda.

HLPF side event – 12 July 2017, 18:15-19:30, Conference Room 6

Summary

Globally achieving food security and nutrition today and for future generations in the context of sustainable development requires integrated policy making across multiple policy areas. The 2030 Agenda recommends this be done by promoting policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD – SDG 17:14). The event presented here offered new insights into how this is done in practice by presenting research on policy coherence systems at the generic level; thematic research on policy coherence for food security in Tanzania and Burkina Faso, and concrete international policy instruments to guide country efforts towards inclusive and integrated national policies.

The event took place at the United Nations' headquarters in New York, during the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017, following the first three days of thematic reviews of progress on Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5. It was proposed jointly by the ministries of foreign affairs of the **Netherlands**, **Switzerland** and **Finland**, together with the **European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)** and the **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**. It was attended by over 70 participants including numerous representatives of governments, UN and international organisations, and civil society.

H.E Annika Lindblom, Secretary General of the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, moderated the presentations and ensuing debate. Opened with a short [video](#) on policy coherence within the 2030 Agenda, the session consisted in three short presentations followed by a lively discussion. The panellists were **H.E. Ambassador Amira Gornass**, Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and Permanent Representative of the Sudan to FAO; **Dr. James Mackie**, Head of Learning & Quality Support at the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), and **Dr. Fabien Tondel**, Policy Officer in ECDPM's Economic Transformation for Sustainable Development Programme.

1. **H.E Annika Lindblom** introduced the panel and the issue of policy coherence. Finland has had a national commission on sustainable development for 24 years now, and throughout 10 successive governments this structure has promoted policy coherence at the national level. Indicators are under elaboration to report about progress towards the SDGs and policy coherence in particular, especially in a range of priority areas such as food security but also taxation – as exemplified by the recent adoption of an Action Programme on Tax and Development 2016–2019.

2. **Dr. Fabien Tondel** presented the results of recent [research](#) on policy coherence for agricultural development and food security in Burkina Faso and Tanzania. Populations in these two countries remain prone to food insecurity due in large part to rural poverty, underdeveloped agro-food markets and value chains, and the lack of safety nets. Although efforts to improve agricultural

policies and programmes are producing results and have gained momentum, the effectiveness of public policies has been hampered by a lack of public sector coordination across policies areas supporting the development of competitive and inclusive value chains, from agricultural production to the processing, distribution and consumption of nutritious and safe food products. Development and trade partners could also do more to accompany these countries in implementing integrated policies for rural development, agro-food value chain development and nutrition security. This would include improving the effectiveness of trade agreements and trade facilitation for the development of local value chains and informal enterprises in the agro-food sector, helping to rationalise policy frameworks and development programmes, and breaking traditional sectorial boundaries.

3. **Dr. James Mackie** offered a generic approach to policy coherence. He showed how ECDPM's [research](#) on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD, a systemic issue within the 2030 Agenda's SDG 17:14) builds on already existing European efforts – Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which for over two decades attempt to bring different national policies in coherence with the goals of development as understood within the Millennium Development Goals. He noted that achieving the indivisible SDGs will require a multi-directional attention to coherence in all sectorial policies, which can emerge from a range of multi-sectoral and whole-of-government approaches, as well as on acquired experience in mainstreaming specific issues (for instance, gender, or human rights) within each sector. He outlined the features of a "PCSD system" with various complementary tools working in conjunction: multi-stakeholder engagement mechanisms, political champions maintaining a high level of commitment and leadership, internal government structures such as committees, impact monitoring including comprehensive and multisectorial monitoring, and finally transparency and accountability mechanisms.
4. **H.E Ambassador Amira Gornass** presented the intergovernmental and multistakeholder Committee on World Food Security (CFS)'s inclusive processes and resulting multistectorial policy instruments to promote food security and nutrition in the context of Sustainable Development, and guide countries' efforts towards greater national policy integration to achieve the SDGs. She stated that while the right to adequate food in the context of national food security is a human right, it is highly dependent on factors that are global in nature such as trade, climate change, and price volatility, which cannot be tackled without a global focus and the participation and expertise of a variety of actors. She referred to the joint activities of CFS, supported by the Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) and an independant High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. She stressed that the CFS was reformed exactly to ensure a coherent approach through greater coordination and policy convergence, and that its products are elements of a policy coherence system whose adoption is particularly promising for instance in Latin America.
5. **Selected stakeholders** provided a first round of questions and comments. A representative of the Netherlands stressed the importance of not losing sight of the impact of policies on developing countries (not losing the PCD angle while promoting PCSD), and of promoting specific action plans in thematic areas where policy coherence is crucial (taxation, gender equality, access to medicine, and so forth). He also underlined the importance for coherence of initiatives at the regional and continental level such as CAADP. A representative of the Swiss Development Cooperation agency also stressed the importance of addressing a particular attention to the specific interests of developing countries, before adding that Switzerland has committed to reforming its agriculture and food policy to make it more coherent with international development objectives by 2022. A representative of IFAD (also speaking in the name of FAO and WFP) drew policy makers' attention

to the socio-economic benefits across a range of sectors of working with small-scale (often informal) food value chain actors, and pointed out a number of remaining barriers for smallholder agriculture to successfully integrate the SDGs, such as gender inequalities, the lack of decent jobs for youth, the rural infrastructure gap, and territorial unbalances between urban and rural spaces; because the 2030 Agenda will be achieved at the country level first and foremost he stressed the importance of nationally-owned and context-specific responses supported by the entire UN Development System, and called for accelerated efforts by UN organisations to use CFS policy guidelines for the design of country strategies.

6. **The audience** was then invited to engage in a discussion with panellists. The Deputy Director-General of FAO pointed out that policy coherence (for agricultural development and food security in Africa particularly) could be undermined by gaps between different governance levels and different policy frameworks with different time horizons. A Kenyan farm representative stressed the importance of international community mobilisation to help domestic actors in establishing favourable national policies. A representative from UNSCN made the point that the momentum is particularly favourable to advocate for policy coherence in favour of nutrition, in the context of the UNGA 2016-2025 Decade of Action on nutrition, calling for nutrition-sensitive policies and actions across a range of sectors, and encouraging governments to publicise commitments. Other discussions covered the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP); the role of parliaments and knowledge systems (especially impact assessments) in policy coherence mechanisms; and the importance of adopting issue-based approaches in areas where progress on policy coherence is politically feasible.
7. In **concluding words**, panellists and the moderator showed that policy coherence will be a critical factor of the 2030 Agenda's successful implementation. Research and practical thematic policy tools exist to support the design of coherent national and international policy frameworks such as the outcomes of ECDPM's thematic research, or crosscutting CFS policy instruments. It is now a matter of implementing them, which requires the mobilisation of national stakeholders with the support of international organisations such as the UN Development system.

Annex 1: Picture gallery



Annex 2: Programme

Organisers: Governments of Finland, Netherlands and Switzerland, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

1. Start – opening remarks from Moderator Annika Lindblom
2. What does “policy coherence” mean for food security and nutrition?
 - Lessons learned from country experiences: ECDPM case studies on policy coherence for agricultural development and food security: Tanzania and Burkina Faso by Fabien Tondel
 - A research perspective: Lessons learned on promoting PCD and tools for PCSD by James Mackie
 - A successful approach to policy coherence for food security and nutrition in the context of the 2030 Agenda: the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) process and policy instruments by Ambassador Amira Gornass
3. Discussion
 - Initial round of comments from the floor by sponsors: Netherlands & Switzerland, and the UN Rome based agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP)
 - Q&A
4. Closing remarks by panel members and Moderator Annika Lindblom

Annex 3 : Background information on CFS and ECDPM

The **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. The Committee reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to FAO Conference. Using a multi-stakeholder, inclusive approach, CFS develops and endorses policy recommendations and guidance on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics. These are developed starting from scientific and evidence-based reports produced by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) and/or through work supported technically by The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP) and representatives of the CFS Advisory Group. CFS holds an annual Plenary session every October in FAO, Rome.

The **European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)** is an independent ‘think and do tank’ based in Maastricht and Brussels, and working on international cooperation and development policy in Europe and Africa since 1986. Its 70 staff members from over 25 countries worldwide provide research, advice and practical support to policymakers, advisors and practitioners in Europe, Africa and beyond – in order to make policies work for sustainable and inclusive global development. Its main areas of work include EU external affairs, peace and security, African institutions, migration, food security, economic transformation and economic diplomacy.

The [event page on ECDPM’s website](#) contains additional materials including the short video on policy coherence within the 2030 Agenda screened during the event.