

Code of Conduct for Food Aid

A. Introduction

1) Recognizing that food insecurity remains a crucial problem for a large part of the world population and that the World Food Summit agreed on a plan of action, which aims to tackle problems of world food insecurity.

2) Recognising the potential role of food aid, including financial aid for the import of foodstuffs (foreign currency facility) in the fight against hunger and that any food aid operation requires not only prior analysis of the appropriateness of the instrument and an analysis of the food insecurity problems at all levels, including the household level, but also identifying clearly the food insecure people who should benefit from the aid.

3) Recognizing that food aid distributed free of charge, or the counterpart funds resulting from its sale, can be a tool to improve food security but that it is a specific resource, the programming and management of which requires special attention.

4) Recognizing that better coordination among donors is essential to improve the effectiveness of food aid operations and to strengthen their qualitative aspects.

5) Recognizing that donors have agreed, in the context of the GATT Uruguay round declaration on measures concerning possible negative effects of the reform programme on least-developed and net food-importing developing countries, to review the level of food aid commitments and their form.

Donors agree to respect the principles set out in this Code of Conduct when implementing their food aid programmes.

B. Objectives of the Code of Conduct

1) to ensure that food aid is used to enhance food security in developing countries.

2) to promote and strengthen the coherence of policies, improve complementarity between food aid and other instruments, and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of food aid operations.

3) to improve coordination between food aid donors.

C. Basic principles of the Code of Conduct

1) Food aid should be used only if it is the most effective and appropriate tool; based on an objective evaluation of needs.

2) Food aid should be used as a tool aiming at enhancing food security in the partner country.

- 3) In order to increase the impact of food aid operations on long term food security, consideration will be given, if justifiable, to providing food aid in the form of local and triangular purchase operations, in order to support local production and to strengthen regional and local markets.
- 4) Given that the commitment of the partner government to the preparation and implementation of a food security strategy (at all levels) is a key element in the programming of food aid operations, full support should be given by donors to efforts by governments to prepare and implement such strategies, including, where appropriate strengthening the capacity and competence of partner governments to prepare and implement food security strategies.
- 5) Donors will endeavour to ensure that food aid policies are consistent with policies in other sectors such as agriculture and trade. Donors will in particular endeavour to implement in such sectors policies which are not prejudicial to the objectives and principles of this Code of Conduct.
- 6) Food aid for free distribution should be targeted on vulnerable groups and that distribution should be timed so as not to interfere with local harvests.
- 7) Emergency food aid should respond to identified needs and be targeted on the people in need for assistance, with the aim of maintaining, and strengthening as much as possible the structures which can serve as a basis for long-term food security. In emergency situations, food aid should respect the principle of linking emergency aid and long-term development and should respect basic humanitarian principles.
- 8) Food aid should be used in such a way as to avoid harmful effects on local production and marketing structures.
- 9) Consideration should be given to reinforcing food aid by other means (financial aid, technical assistance, etc.) in order to strengthen its capacity to enhance food security and to increase the capacity of government and civil society to develop and implement food security strategies at all levels.
- 10) In developing and implementing their food aid programmes, donors should make use, wherever possible, of information and competencies available within the international and non governmental organisations active in the field of the food aid .
- 11) Particular attention should be given to the participation of women in the decision-making process and in the implementation of food aid operations, as a way of strengthening household level food security.
- 12) The sale of food aid should be carried out, as far as possible, through the private sector and should be based, on market studies. In targeting counterpart funds, priority should be given to projects aiming to improve the food security of partners.
- 13) Food aid should respect local food habits and the nutritional needs of the partners and products provided should meet international quality standards.

14) In planning food aid operations, due account will be taken of the potential bottlenecks at the levels of transport, processing and storage as well as of the timing of local harvests, in order not to compete with local production and markets.

15) Food Aid should be provided on a grant basis.

16) Donors will strive to support partner government efforts to implement food aid programmes in a manner consistent with the basic principles set out herein.

D. Donor Coordination under the Code of Conduct:

Donors agree:

1) to systematically exchange information on their policies and programmes and the results of evaluations and to work for coherence of their food aid programmes with food security strategies at regional, national, local and household levels;

2) to improve consultation with each other at the time of the identification of food aid needs and to strive to develop a common approach to needs analysis; within the framework of strengthening food security in partner countries;

3) to meet regularly at the level of each partner country, with all partners concerned, to ensure monitoring of the coordination of food aid programmes aid operations;

4) to identify priority countries and regions under their food aid programmes, to ensure transparency as to their priorities, policies and programmes by providing information for other donors and to consult with each other on the possibilities for the establishment of common action plans for priority countries, if possible, and appropriate, on a multiannual basis;

5) to coordinate the implementation of their operations, while seeking complementarity, and establishing a coordinated timetable for the delivery of food aid. They will seek to make optimum use of logistics capacity and of commercial networks;

6) to undertake, as far as possible, joint evaluations of food aid programmes based on agreed international principles;

7) to coordinate their policies with regard to the international organisations active in the field of the food aid in order to strengthen the coherence of food aid operations;

8) to carry out evaluations of their food aid programmes and operations taking into consideration the implementation of the principles of the Code of Conduct;

9) to review the implementation of this Code of Conduct during regular meetings of the Food Aid Committee;

10) to meet, at the request of one of the parties, or in the event of a disagreement as to the application of the Code of Conduct, to meet whenever a country or a region is in crisis and major food aid operations are envisaged;

11) to take account of the recommendations and conclusions reached by consensus, resulting from meetings of donors in cases of disagreement as to the application of the Code of Conduct;

12) to evaluate regularly the implementation of the Code of Conduct and its impact on the effectiveness of food aid operations.