

## CFS51

### X. Monitoring CFS policy recommendations on price volatility and on food security

**DATE:** 26 October 2023

**TIME:** 15.00-18.00 (exact time to be advised)

**LOCATION:** FAO Headquarters, Rome

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Statement by ISF Secretary General Michael Keller, Chair of the CFS Private Sector Mechanism, and the International Agri-food Network

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, and esteemed colleagues,

On behalf of the Private Sector Mechanism, let me thank you for the opportunity to speak at this timely and important event.

- The impact of price volatility on food security and nutrition has become alarmingly clear as international food prices at an all-time high before the war due to COVID, leading to the soaring food prices since the Ukraine war due to resulting food, fuel and fertilizer shortages.
- Valuable information provided by FAO has revealed there is no end in sight to rising prices, reducing food access and availability and thereby affecting nutrition, especially in low-income countries. Farmers are overwhelmingly over-represented in this group and subjected to variations in weather, crop failures and unexpected events, such as conflicts. Due to their share of food consumed in some regions of the Global South, smallholder agriculture should be strengthened by supporting the rate of technology adoption.
- The international community has become acutely aware of the impact of the war on the global agricultural market and the effects on global food security, due to the significant role that both the Russian Federation and Ukraine play as net exporters of agricultural products. This has exposed low-income countries to increased vulnerability to shocks and volatility leading to a hunger crisis.
- Within this context, with enormous challenges facing the agricultural sector, the private sector underlines the importance of trade and adherence to key principles that can combat food price volatility, including the suggested CFS actions to increase food production and availability; enhance resilience to shocks and actions to reduce volatility; and mitigate the negative impacts of volatility. Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and resilience requires the development of new varieties of rice, maize, wheat and other crops, to become more resilient to drought, heat, pests, diseases and soil problems.

- In alignment with these principles, the private sector has supported and joined initiatives to increase the exchange of information, including the participation of the Private Sector Mechanism in the Global Crisis Response Group established by the United Nations Secretary General to coordinate the global response to the worldwide impacts of the war in Ukraine on global food, energy and finance systems.

It is worth reminding that no country is fully independent in terms of food supply, nor is likely to become so.

- Similarly, in the seed industry, no country is fully independent when it comes to seed supply. Seed is a globally traded product. Producing seed involves many steps, from breeding new varieties to multiplying, testing, packaging, and sale. Each of these steps can take place in a different country.
- The impact of climate change will mean countries will continue to rely on neighbours and trade partners.
- From a seed perspective, here's what we can do to safeguard our future food supply:  
Make use of every tool possible (ensuring efficacy and safety) – **including CFS policy recommendations** and the many novel technologies now available to use but also local knowledge. We need to future-proof policies governing the latest plant breeding technologies to ensure that more plant scientists and researchers can access them and enable them to deliver innovation to farmers. At the same time, we need to incentivize innovation by protecting intellectual property.
- Streamline policies and regulations around seed movement. Trade barriers and protectionism do not help. Make a call for multilateralism and multi-stakeholder discussions on critical issues. CFS enshrines the positive, yet challenging aspects of multilateralism through its multistakeholder mechanisms.