

Committee on Agriculture

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON LDC AND NFIDC MEMBERS'
UTILIZATION OF WTO FLEXIBILITIES (G/AG/GEN/214)**

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT¹

Paragraph 8

"We reaffirm the importance of effective implementation and monitoring of the Marrakesh Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries. In this regard, we commit to having a dedicated work programme in the Committee on Agriculture to examine how this Decision could be made more effective and operational pursuant to Article 16 of the Agreement on Agriculture and to consider concerns raised by Members in their current and future submissions. The work programme shall consider the needs of LDCs and NFIDCs to increase their resilience in responding to acute food instability including by considering the best possible use of flexibilities to bolster their agricultural production and enhance their domestic food security as needed in an emergency."

Pursuant to Paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity², the Committee on Agriculture (CoA), at its 21-22 November 2022 meeting, established a work programme along with the thematic areas to be examined thereunder and working methods and future planning.³ The Committee also agreed to establish a Working Group for the conduct of thematic discussions under the work programme. At the first meeting of the Working Group on 7 December 2022, Members finalized a questionnaire on "food security needs and challenges of LDCs and NFIDCs and their utilization of WTO flexibilities" to guide and inform substantive discussions under the work programme.

The questionnaire in document G/AG/GEN/214 was circulated to all Members on 8 December 2022 requesting Members to submit their responses to the Secretariat by 3 February 2023. This note contains a summary of Members' responses to the questionnaire received by the Secretariat as of 3 April 2023. In the interest of brevity, the note does not reproduce the background and justifications provided by Members in their responses. The concerned Members will have the opportunity to share such background and justifications during discussions on this matter in the Working Group.

¹ This document has been prepared under the Secretariat's own responsibility and is without prejudice to the positions of Members or to their rights and obligations under the WTO. The document incorporates additional responses received after the circulation of previous version in RD/AG/103.

² WT/MIN(22)/28-WT/L/1139.

³ G/AG/35.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The questionnaire was distributed to Members on 8 December 2022. By 3 April 2023, a total of 29 responses had been received from: Argentina; Australia; Bangladesh; Brazil, Canada; Chile; China; Dominican Republic; Egypt; the European Union; Hong Kong, China; India; Japan; Korea, Republic of; the LDC Group; Mauritius; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Paraguay; the Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; Türkiye; the United Kingdom; and the United States of America. The questionnaire contained a total of seven questions; not all questions were answered by all respondents. A summary of Members' responses to the individual questions is presented below:

1.1 What are the needs of least-developed and net food-importing developing countries (LDCs and NFIDCs) to increase their resilience in responding to acute food instability?

1.2. A large majority of respondents to this question were LDCs and NFIDCs. **Enhancing agricultural production and productivity** and access to **open and predictable agricultural and input markets** were flagged by several respondents as the core needs of LDCs and NFIDCs to increase their resilience in responding to acute food instability. Advancing agricultural reform process to limit recourse to distorting domestic support and establishing fairer conditions of agricultural trade were considered to positively support both these core needs.

1.3. Availability of **finance** to facilitate agricultural investment and to access inputs, as well as the provision of technical assistance and capacity building to absorb **new agricultural technology**, including in response to climatic challenges, were highlighted by a few respondents as necessary to sustainably enhance agricultural production and productivity. Diversifying crop portfolio, improving water management systems, robust domestic supply chains and associated infrastructure (e.g. roads, storage capacity, distribution networks and markets), promoting private sector investment in agriculture, and enabling smallholder farmers' access to credit were emphasized to impart resilience to local food systems. It was also suggested that considering their inherent vulnerabilities, LDCs and NFIDCs should be considered for preferential terms for accessing agricultural inputs at reasonable prices as well as for access to international logistical and shipping infrastructure (e.g. containers), especially during a crisis. A few respondents also alluded to possible policy choices and measures (e.g. disaster response mechanisms, including social protection policies, public stockholding and maintenance of strategic stocks); these aspects related to policy options are captured in detail in responses to latter questions.

1.4. Reliability of international food markets to access food was emphasized by several respondents. They specifically flagged the negative impact of **export restrictions** of major exporting countries in limiting the ability of LDCs and NFIDCs to import food at affordable prices. This had become a significant challenge, especially considering the growing food consumption needs in LDCs and NFIDCs due to demographic changes and their excessive reliance on imports for meeting their domestic food needs (share of cereals in LDC food imports was almost three times the world average). Several respondents highlighted the importance of finance and financial support to enable normal levels of commercial imports, especially during acute food instability. The need for diversifying sources of food imports towards resilient and uninterrupted food supply and maintenance of early warning food security information system towards efficient and speedy crisis response were some other suggestions in Members' responses to question 1.

1.2 What are the challenges which LDCs and NFIDCs face in the utilization of flexibilities⁴ under the WTO agriculture rules to bolster their agricultural production and enhance their domestic food security as needed in an emergency?

1.5. Most respondents to this question were LDCs and NFIDCs. Some respondents argued that existing flexibilities within the WTO framework of agriculture rules were neither appropriate nor effective in enabling LDCs and NFIDCs to satisfactorily address their food security challenges. They flagged cases where **i)** access to flexibilities depended on the goodwill of donors, **ii)** reduction commitment flexibilities had already been incorporated in the results of the Uruguay Round and hence were not actual flexibilities anymore, **iii)** TRQ-related flexibilities had been granted to LDCs

⁴ Please refer to G/AG/W/227.

and NFIDCs when they rarely implemented TRQs, and **iv**) flexibilities existed for the provision of export subsidies whereas the major challenge during the crisis had been how to procure/import food.

1.6. Differential Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS) entitlements, insufficient *de minimis* level (10%) which got further eroded by the calculation requirement to use fixed external reference prices based on 1986-88 prices, including for public stockholding (PSH) programmes for food security, AMS accounting of support under PSH programmes in developing countries entailing stock acquisition at administered prices, and strict conditions in the use of Article 6.2 support (e.g. targeting low-income or resource-poor producers only) was also underlined in the responses. Some respondents alluded to the lack of technical/legal knowledge or fiscal resources in utilizing flexibilities for agricultural subsidization. Absence of any flexibility for NFIDCs under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) was also pointed out.

1.3 What are your suggestions for the best possible use of flexibilities to bolster LDCs and NFIDCs' agricultural production and enhance their domestic food security as needed in an emergency?

1.7. On the issue of WTO flexibilities, several responses drew attention to the comprehensive note by the Secretariat in G/AG/W/227 on this theme. Some responding Members referred to an important linkage between their responses to questions 3 and responses that would be provided by Members, in particularly LDCs and NFIDCs, to questions 1 and 2. It was noted that the question of the 'best possible use of flexibilities' would depend on local circumstances and the nature of emergencies encountered, and Members could consider developing detailed methodologies and objective criteria for a fuller assessment of this issue. One respondent recalled that these rules and associated flexibilities were mostly adapted to medium to long term objectives rather than emergency actions in the event of food security crisis. Another respondent highlighted the need to recognize the importance of special and differential treatment (S&DT) for NFIDCs to enable their access to require policy choices in the domain of agriculture.

1.8. Several respondents underlined that **open, predictable, diversified and market-oriented international agricultural trade** was an important element of an integrated approach to deal with domestic food security challenges and create resilient food systems. It was also highlighted that domestic food security challenges were often multidimensional where a range of options needed to be deployed to enhance domestic food security taking into account the domestic circumstances in individual countries. Some respondents had discouraged unjustified use of restrictive measures which could undermine food security of other Members. Similarly, distortions caused by higher level of subsidization in other Members could have detrimental effect on the economies and food security of developing countries, including LDCs and NFIDCs.

1.9. Several responses referred to the importance of investing in **agricultural research and innovation, rural infrastructure and extension network** to address current and emerging agricultural and food security challenges. Some of them also referred to the Green Box framework which exempted expenditures for research and other public agricultural investments under general services from any monetary ceiling. The need to ensure reliable sources of food supplies during emergencies was frequently echoed in the responses. International food aid, social protection schemes, national stockpiles, international or regional stock-sharing arrangements figured among possible food emergency toolbox of actions.

1.10. Members had called attention to the following issues and possible actions in their responses⁵:

- a. There was a need for improved **transparency** on **i**) the utilization by LDCs and NFIDCs of current WTO flexibilities, especially under the domestic support and export competition pillars, **ii**) how current WTO rules constrained policy actions by LDCs and NFIDCs to bolster domestic production and enhance domestic food security in an emergency, **iii**) donor Members' actions (e.g. international food aid, export finance) in favour of LDCs and NFIDCs, and **iv**) modalities for LDCs and NFIDCs to make '*requests for the provision of technical and financial assistance*' as alluded to in paragraph 3 of the [Marrakesh Decision](#) in order for those requests to receive due consideration.

⁵ Some elements of Members' responses to Q3 have been summarized and included against Q4 to avoid duplication.

- b. **Technical assistance events and workshops** should be regularly organized by the Secretariat with a view to enhancing the knowledge and awareness of LDCs and NFIDCs about existing WTO flexibilities and other generally applicable WTO rules (e.g. Green Box general services to enhance productivity and resilience) towards greater practical application of these rules and flexibilities.
- c. LDCs and NFIDCs should have flexibility (e.g. waiver) in the application of **intellectual property (IP)** provisions in relation to agricultural technologies, climate-resistant seeds and other agro-chemical products.
- d. Work programme under Paragraph 8 should **undertake an examination** of **i)** the impact of existing disciplines on export subsidies, export restrictions, procurement and sale of public food stocks maintained for food security purposes, utilisation of emergency food stocks, and emergency food aid on food security of LDCs and NFIDCs, **ii)** international food financing mechanism in the event of price spike, **iii)** potential for food production across borders under international land-sharing arrangements, **iv)** the role of input subsidies in bolstering sustainable agriculture production in developing countries, and **v)** assessing the impact of food aid on the short-term and long-term food security of LDCs and NFIDCs. Improved data collection of global food shipments may assist in this task.

1.11. Responding Members' suggestions on how the food security of LDCs and NFIDCs could be enhanced further included the need to contain food waste, enabling diversification of food supply sources to be able to import from different countries to reduce vulnerability to external shocks, exploring ways to strengthen domestic markets to improve producers' access to markets towards their improved productivity and resilience and limiting food losses, establishing balance between domestic productions of food and cash crops, promoting crop diversification, establishing support and market regulatory mechanisms to address concerns of small farmers, and providing duty free and quota free market access to exports by LDCs and NFIDCs. Some of these elements were further elaborated in Members' responses to question 4.

1.12. Contrasting positions were manifest in Members' responses on the **scope** of the work programme in relation to WTO rules.

- a. Some considered these rules to have been written long ago in an era of surplus production and declining prices, and hence not appropriate for the current environment of soaring prices, price volatility and supply chain disruptions. The work programme should therefore not be limited to the existing rules and should rather explore the need for additional mechanisms to deal with emergency situations and overcome any shortcomings in the existing rules. Suggestions made included granting additional flexibilities to LDCs and NFIDCs, including in respect of existing disciplines (product-specific AMS and PSH programmes), levelling the domestic support playing field by eliminating AMS above *de minimis*;
- b. Some others highlighted the numerous existing WTO rules and flexibilities available to LDCs and NFIDCs, notably under the domestic support and export competition pillars of the AoA as well under the Ministerial Decisions on LDCs and NFIDCs in 1994, on general services at Bali and on export competition at Nairobi. These Members also considered that any discussion on additional flexibilities fell outside the domain of the Committee on Agriculture. In respect of rules and flexibilities to NFIDCs under the export competition pillar, one responding Member alluded to the need for review of the current NFIDC list and advocated a graduation mechanism to exclude a Member from the list when its trade status has changed.

1.4 How can Members support LDCs and NFIDCs to increase their resilience in responding to acute food instability, and what are the challenges they face in doing so?

1.13. Some respondents provided specific examples of their international agricultural cooperation and assistance programmes to support LDCs and NFIDCs, including through engagement with international organizations (IOs) and *via* the private sector in recipient countries. References are also made to respondents' NF notifications to the Committee.

1.14. Members' suggestions to support LDCs and NFIDCs 'to increase their resilience in responding to acute food instability' broadly fell in the following categories:

- a. **Timely provision of food assistance** to needy LDCs and NFIDCs, consistent with the relevant provisions of the Nairobi Decision on export competition, to augment their domestic food supply during food shortages and emergency was flagged by several respondents. Respondents preferred cash transfers to avoid trade distortions and support local production and resilience; they favoured local or regional food procurement in case of in-kind food assistance. Enhanced transparency of international food aid transactions, including monetization, were also highlighted by some. One respondent alluded to the need of transparency of import regulations by recipient countries applicable to international food aid for a timely delivery of food assistance in an emergency.
- b. **Technical and financial assistance, capacity building and transfer of technology** could play a critical role in enhancing domestic food security and long-term resilience of LDCs and NFIDCs especially in respect of **i)** collaborative research, sharing of national best practices in the domain of agricultural production and associated technologies (e.g. integrated pest management, crop rotation, no-till farming, fallowing), including on the efficacy of different types of agricultural investments on farmers' resilience and productivity taking into account local conditions in the recipients LDCs and NFIDCs; **ii)** technical and financial assistance to improve agricultural productivity and infrastructure, access to inputs and agricultural equipment, development of early-warning systems, storage and supply-chain infrastructure to contain food losses, and establishing regulatory infrastructure (e.g. food safety and animal health-related SPS frameworks by enabling producers' access to digital tools and technology); **iii)** training of farmers and transfer of low-cost but modern technology, including in respect of climatic change adaptation and mitigation, high yielding seeds and livestock breeds; and **iv)** assistance to promote diversification of production and production of nutritious local products entailing financial prudence and sound environmental practices. Respondents also considered that technical and financial assistance by donor Members and international organizations should be in grant form or on concessional terms to avoid future debt and imposing a burden on their balance of payments.
- c. **Application of WTO rules** was another theme underlined by several respondents under this question. Specific suggestions focused on an efficient and transparent application of existing rules and also reforming and improving flexibilities in these rules. The suggestions included **i)** strengthening of disciplines in the domain of food export restrictions; **ii)** avoidance of the imposition of export restrictions and prohibitions during food security shocks considering the susceptibility of LDCs and NFIDCs to such price shocks, or seeking ways to limit the exposure of such measures on LDCs and NFIDCs, for example, by relying on export quotas rather than outright prohibitions, and committing to transparent implementation of such measures; **iii)** exemption of food destined for LDCs and NFIDCs from the application of export restrictions by Members particularly during acute food instability; **iv)** operationalization of the S&DT provisions in the Nairobi Decision on export competition, on repayment terms of export finance transactions in favour of LDCs and NFIDCs, or exempting such export finance from export competition rules altogether; **v)** waiver from the Nairobi Decision on export competition to allow LDCs and NFIDCs to finance normal level of imports; **vi)** ability of LDCs and NFIDCs to implement an effective and operational SSM, and provide price support, including under PSH programmes; **vii)** enabling government to government (G2G) provision of food from public stocks to needy countries in times of crisis; **viii)** facilitating access of LDCs and NFIDCs to import financing and related import credits/guarantees; and **ix)** exempting support to producers in LDCs and NFIDCs for the purchase of technology to enhance productivity from any monetary limitation.
- d. **Mainstreaming trade** in LDC and NFIDC Members' strategy for food security resilience was also underlined by some respondents. The MC12 Declaration on Food Insecurity underscored that fair and market orientated agri-food trade, including for critical inputs, played a vital role in improving global food security'. The importance of Members' adherence to WTO rules and open markets was highlighted, in the absence of which LDCs and NFIDCs might suffer disproportionately from the negative impact of increased volatility and less reliable access to food. A few respondents suggested that LDCs and NFIDCs

should maintain open markets by lowering tariffs, other import barriers, and trade costs, especially during a food emergency, to enable them to replenish domestic food supply efficiently; open markets also allowed countries to adopt a diversified import strategy. Some respondents called for supporting LDC and NFIDC exports by reducing trade barriers against them, providing technical assistance to these countries to help comply with food safety and quality regulations to access new lucrative markets, enabling informed participation of LDCs and NFIDCs in the negotiations for agricultural reform. It was also suggested that trade measures implemented to address food security should be trade-facilitating rather than restrictive in nature and should not negatively impact the food security of other Members. One respondent sought to discourage the imposition of economic measures on agricultural products, inputs, logistics, and finance to enable flow of international food supply at minimum cost.

- e. **Gender-balance assessment:** Considering that women were disproportionately affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, a gender-based assessment of support or other mechanism was proposed to increase resilience. There was also a suggestion to enhance women's participation in the agriculture sector.

1.15. As regards the latter part of the question dealing with possible 'challenges', respondents highlighted the following:

- a. Several respondents alluded to the lack of policy space and financial resources in LDCs and NFIDCs to invest in the development of agricultural sector and their inability to finance import demand due to balance of payments (BoP) constraints.
- b. Few respondents referred to the link between high level of agricultural support and the associated environmental harm or nutritional inefficiency and human health implications, including for long-term food security interests of LDCs and NFIDCs.
- c. Concentration of power in big transnational corporations in the agri-food sector and associated competition policy-related domestic pressures were highlighted as among important challenges to be looked at.
- d. One respondent flagged the issue of fiscal pressure on official development assistance (ODA), increasing frequency and severity of food security shocks, and lack of timely information on the situation and needs of LDCs and NFIDCs.
- e. Other specific challenges noted in the responses included i) the regulatory regime in several Members prohibited the planting or importation of genetically modified (GM) products which compromised their ability to replenish food supplies or adopt relevant technology, and ii) limited uptake by LDCs of a duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) scheme maintained by one respondent.

1.16. Finally, a few respondents alluded to the work of international organizations on the subject and recognized the important contributions these organizations could make to the discussions of the Working Group, while at the same time avoiding duplication of work being carried with the Committee on Agriculture.

1.5 Have you been able to regularly examine the NF notifications in order to get additional details and clarifications on the actions notified within the framework of the [Marrakesh Decision](#) under the Committee's review process? What steps could be implemented to assist LDC and NFIDC Members in the review of NF notifications?

1.17. Most LDCs and NFIDC respondents expressed their inability to regularly examine NF notifications primarily due to resource constraints. Respondents among donor Members referred to their NF notifications and notification practices. Some respondents expressed concern over the lack of timely NF notifications by donor Members. The following steps were suggested in Members' responses to enable an improved review of NF notifications by LDCs and NFIDCs:

- a. **Streamlining of notification requirements:** Presentation of information on international food aid, which was potentially included under three distinct notification

formats, namely the NF:1, ES:1 and ES:3, and the export competition questionnaire (ECQ), should be streamlined and duplication avoided. Ongoing discussions in the CoA on the streamlining of existing export competition notification and transparency requirements might be a possible avenue for achieving this suggested objective. It should also be ensured that transparency requirements were not burdensome for LDCs and NFIDCs to implement.

- b. **Harmonized notification practices:** To facilitate review of NF notifications, there should be a harmonization of donor Members' NF notification practices in respect of the reporting of international food aid, and technical and financial assistance by breaking this information down by recipient countries.
- c. **Technical assistance by the Secretariat:** The Secretariat, possibly assisted by donor Members, should regularly undertake technical assistance activities, information sessions and workshops in all three WTO official languages to assist LDCs and NFIDCs in the review of information contained in Members' NF notifications and their responses to the ECQ. An explanation of the NF format and the type of information and the level of details expected in Members' notifications might also be useful. The Secretariat could produce regular reports on international food aid amounts granted by donor Members along with the share of that food aid in recipient country's total imports, consumption, and food needs. The Secretariat could also maintain a database on the relevant notified information.

1.18. One respondent expressed concerns over the continuing provision of in-kind food aid instead of less trade-distorting cash-based assistance, while another suggested that improved transparency alone might not necessarily improve food security. One Member alluded to the role of the Secretariat annual NF background note released in the G/AG/W/42/ series in assisting LDCs and NFIDCs in the examination of NF notifications. A suggestion was also made to include in that background note a summary of contributions by observer international organizations with regard to their technical and financial assistance activities in favour of LDCs and NFIDCs.

1.6 What is your appreciation of the existing transparency and information-sharing processes on Members' reporting of their actions in respect of the mechanisms provided under paragraph 3 of the Marrakesh Decision (international food aid, its terms and conditions, technical and financial assistance)? What further improvements could be considered in these existing mechanisms and processes, including for NF notifications and export competition transparency?

1.19. Several respondents noted the importance of transparency in guaranteeing an effective implementation of Members' commitments; they expressed concerns over the lack of, inaccurate, partial or delayed, notifications to the CoA. Improved data collection and analysis in respect of mechanisms under paragraph 3 of the Marrakesh Decision was emphasized by one respondent. Another respondent raised the question of impractical deadlines (e.g. 90 days) to submit an NF notification. The following were the main elements in Members' responses to question 6 in addition to what was already mentioned above under the previous questions:

- a. **Transparency of international food aid** cuts across several Members' responses. In addition to the elements included above on the streamlining of the formats and addressing the current duplication in the transparency requirements, respondents emphasized **i)** the need for data on the effectiveness of food aid, **ii)** presentation of food aid data by recipients, **iii)** additional details by donors on the choice of instruments (in-kind vs cash) and modalities (bilateral vs multilateral channels) of international food aid delivery, **iv)** collaboration with the WFP information systems to assess trends in global food aid deliveries, and **v)** enhanced communication and coordination among relevant stakeholders and organizations.
- b. Fulsome reply to the **Export competition questionnaire (ECQ)** was referred to by several respondent as a possible tool to enhance transparency in favour of LDCs and NFIDCs, including in respect of international food aid. Specific suggestions in this regard included: **i)** enhanced participation of the Membership in submitting detailed and timely replies to the ECQ with support and technical assistance by the Secretariat, and **ii)** detailed

information on trade finance (export credits, credit insurance) and its terms, including repayment period, provided for exports destined for LDCs and NFIDCs.

- c. **Data automation and reliance on digital tools** were mentioned by several respondents, including by reference to the newly launched ECQ-AGIMS module. They advocated technological and digital improvements in the notification processes as well as in the dissemination of notified information (e.g. trends in food aid). The need for a simpler and standardized language in the formats and in the notified information for enhanced clarity were emphasized.

1.20. One respondent expressed the view that the existing implementation and transparency gap in respect of the Marrakesh NF Decision originated in the lack of political will among Members, and their insistence on establishing a link between LDC and NFIDC Members' food security challenges to the implementation of the agriculture reform process under the AoA. Simultaneously, another respondent flagged that the Marrakesh Decision might not be an appropriate context to anchor food security collaboration when, unlike the core concerns expressed about agricultural reforms and potentially declining support levels at the time of the adoption of the Decision in 1994, agricultural support has lately been growing whereas the global commitment on furthering reforms has been dwindling.

1.21. One respondent noted that transparency issues should be discussed and negotiated under the Special Session of the CoA. The question of enhanced transparency of export restrictions, raised earlier by several Members in response to question 4, was mentioned by another respondent considering the critical role these measures could pose for access to food.

1.7 What possible steps and practical mechanisms could be considered to foster cooperation with international organizations and to benefit from their actions in respect of the mechanisms provided under the [Marrakesh Decision](#)?

1.22. Several respondents welcomed and encouraged the continued collaboration in the CoA with several international organizations, especially those who had observer status in the Committee. Members in their responses appreciated the detailed contributions by international organizations to the CoA and requested the Secretariat to consider ways to enhance dissemination of those reports, possibly by compiling individual contributions into a single document. Specific references were also made to other existing mechanisms of cooperation and coordination, including the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and Joint Statements on food security developments by the Heads of Agencies. Specific suggestions by respondents on fostering cooperation with international organizations, within respective mandates, broadly fell in the following four categories:

- a. **Market monitoring** to enhance transparency in respect of production, prices, stocks and trade to better inform government's policy response was pointed as an important avenue for enhanced collaboration with international organizations (IOs). Referring to various sources of data and initiatives (e.g. AMIS, FAO's hand-in-Hand initiative), there was a suggestion for the IOs to consider developing a single platform where food security-related statistics of relevance to LDCs and NFIDCs was hosted. LDCs and NFIDCs could be involved in the process and asked to express their data needs in designing such a global food security platform.
- b. **Financing in the event of price shocks** figured in several responses as a target of collaboration with IOs. Respondents referred to paragraph 5 of the Marrakesh Decision concerning short-term difficulties faced by LDCs and NFIDCs in financing normal levels of commercial imports of basic foodstuffs. Respondents also advocated accommodating flexible terms and conditions of financing for LDCs and NFIDCs during crisis. One respondent requested a summary of funds and financial resources made available by international financial institutions, which LDCs and NFIDCs could draw upon, to finance normal levels of commercial imports. Another proposed coordination with international or regional financial institutions to set up a special agricultural fund to improve agricultural productive capacities.
- c. **Capacity building via policy guidance and knowledge sharing** in the domain of food security and newer challenges like climate change was another area that the respondents

highlighted. Specifically in the context of the ongoing paragraph 8 work programme, several respondents encouraged the relevant IOs to contribute to the CoA discussions on the agreed thematic areas in G/AG/35 possibly by organizing specific workshops in the WTO. IOs were also invited to share information with the CoA on their technical assistance activities in the domain of food security. One respondent expressed the need for consistency between the policy advice by IOs and the rule-making process under the WTO. Closer policy and research collaboration with international organizations was also emphasized; specific suggestions in this regard included engagement with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and with the FAO in the implementation of International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Possible support and assistance by international organizations to countries in developing national agriculture development plans was also mentioned by one respondent. There was also a suggestion for the WTO Secretariat to explore the possibility of organizing regular joint seminars with international organizations and academia on food security and enhanced preparedness to deal with future food security crises.

- d. **Coordinated rapid response in times of crisis** has been flagged by several respondents as another area of collaboration with IOs. These organizations should also develop tools for early warning of food insecurity to enable timely preparation and adequate responses. Specific suggestions in Members' responses included coordination between IOs on food aid and establishment of partnership with the private sector and other stake holders to maintain global emergency food stocks. A suggestion was also made to explore ways to increase international funding for food procurement through multilateral institutions.
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