



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

from: General Secretariat
to: Delegations

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Subject: Special report No 1/2012 "Effectiveness of European Union development aid for
food security in sub-Saharan Africa"
- Council Conclusions

At the meeting of 16 July 2012, the Council adopted the Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

Council Conclusions

on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report no. 1/2012

" Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa "

I. Introduction

1. The Council welcomes the Court of Auditors' special report No 1/2012 on the Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa¹.
2. The European Court of Auditors has assessed whether EU development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa is effective by analysing whether it is relevant to the countries' needs and priorities and whether EU interventions are effective. The audit focused on EU direct development support for three dimensions of food security, i.e. food availability, access to food and food utilisation (nutrition).
3. The Council appreciates the Court's recognition that EU development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa is mostly effective and makes an important contribution to achieving food security in a region of the world where 30 % of the population suffer from hunger.

II. General remarks

4. The CoA Report underlines that there is scope for significant improvement in several areas and makes five recommendations to the Commission and the EEAS, both in relation to the programming phase and implementation.

¹ Document 8423/12.

5. The Council acknowledges the fact that the Commission fully agrees with the CoA's recommendations and that it has recently taken a number of initiatives to address most of the questions raised in the CoA Report., notably in the following areas:
- systematic attention to food security in the next programming exercise;
 - consideration of nutrition through improved nutrition results in specific nutrition programmes and nutrition sensitive actions such as agricultural productivity support and social protection programmes; and
 - a more systematic application of its comprehensive approach to food security by building its response to disasters and overall livelihood resilience around improved food and nutrition security across humanitarian and development boundaries.

III. Specific remarks

6. The Council welcomes and agrees with the following recommendations expressed by the Court in its report and notes the Commission's replies:
- Recommendation 1, for the programming period after 2013, that the Commission and the EEAS should carry out a structured assessment of the food security situation in each country and systematically consider the potential scope for EU support in this area;
 - Recommendation 3, on giving adequate priority to nutrition when defining the cooperation strategy, identifying and designing interventions as well as using policy dialogue with partner governments. In this respect, the Council notes that the Commission has already taken steps to ensure that under-nutrition is addressed in EU external assistance through the 2010 EU Policy Framework to assist Developing Countries in addressing Food Security Challenges. The Council recalls its conclusions adopted at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 10 May 2010 and its invitation to the Commission to develop an implementation plan for this framework and notes that such a plan is currently under development. The Council calls on the Commission to ensure that tackling undernutrition is prioritised in this Plan;

- The Council furthermore recognises that the design and implementation of such programmes has been facilitated and improved through the creation of a specialist nutrition advisory service and the publication of a reference document on nutrition. The Council welcomes the Commissions' involvement in actions at political level such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative;
 - Recommendation 4, on setting out intervention objectives that are sufficiently precise and measurable through performance indicators. The Council notes the Commission will seek to maximise the impact by sharpening its targeting of beneficiaries, and by using improved methodologies and technologies to target and reach vulnerable groups;
 - Recommendation 5, on better supporting the financial sustainability of agriculture and social transfer programmes.
7. Under Recommendation 2, the Court recommends that consideration should be given to a new Financial Instrument. In this regard, the Council believes that the issue of food and nutrition security can best be addressed through a better coordination of existing Financial Instruments.
8. With the above in mind, the Council considers that the answers provided by the Commission are adequate.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

9. In addition to the Court's Recommendations, the Council is of the opinion that opportunities to improve food and nutrition security through increasing responsible and sustainable private sector investment and agricultural trade, should have been better reflected.

In order for private investment to deploy its development oriented potential, the Council is of the opinion that the implementation of respective agreed guidelines is necessary– e.g. the Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure. Moreover, the inclusive consultation process at the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) on Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments that enhance food security and nutrition (RAI) should be supported.

10. The Council invites the Commission and the EEAS to undertake assessments of the food security situation in each sub-Saharan partner country in co-ordination with Member States and other development partners; to be used in the context of the programming period 2014-2020. On the basis of these assessments, and with due consideration to complementary actions by Member States, the Council invites the Commission and the EEAS to systematically assess the potential for EU support.
11. The Council recommends that, in cases of urgency, adequate measures could be financed from relevant existing instruments with the aim of improving the country's response capacity to crises.
12. The Council also believes that the Commission could do more, and faster, to support Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) in a critical phase and, in so doing, could also deliver on its acknowledged need to do more for a “systematic and comprehensive approach to food security”.
13. The Council encourages the Commission to do more to mainstream improved nutrition outcomes in its programmes in nutrition-sensitive sectors, which aim to improve people’s health through better water, sanitation and hygiene, or through its agricultural and rural development funding and social protection programmes. In this context, the Council invites the Commission to consider presenting a Communication on nutrition.
14. Finally, the Council encourages the Commission and the EEAS to focus their programming and assistance on supporting sustainable national agriculture development and food and nutrition security programmes for the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in order to gradually enhance their resilience and reduce the region’s dependence on long-term food aid.