Whither the Future Food Aid Convention?

Edward Clay
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“Food aid to food assistance: Shifts in policy and practice over the last decade.”

Full paper available at:
Is the FAC working?

• A free standing treaty under the IGC that included Commitments in 1999 included some 5.4 million tonnes of wheat equivalent (MTWE) with EU cash funding of €130 million.

• Donors only report ex-post what they contribute and there is no other monitoring or assessment or peer review.

• The supervisory Committee meets twice yearly to discuss the Convention and hear from others e.g. FAO and WTO what is going on in the world.

• This is what we know:
Total Food Aid in GE and Contributions to FAC in WE

[Graph showing data from Dec-94 to Dec-08]
Where we are now?

- Signatories to the 1999 Convention (Australia, Canada, EU, Japan, Norway, Switzerland and the USA plus Argentina) began ‘informal discussions’ in Dec 2009.
- The G8 Development Ministers state in April 2010 that they “believe in a Food Aid Convention (FAC) for the 21st Century that focuses on providing appropriate and effective food assistance to vulnerable populations. Ministers agreed to do further work.”
- Food Aid Committee agree to extend FAC until June 2011 pending negotiations.
Issues for negotiation

• Minimal or more radical revision? What is implied by radical revision to the renegotiated FAC?
• The objective(s) of a *Food Assistance Convention*?
• How should the Convention be better integrated into the global aid and food security architecture?
• What should count as commitments and how should these be measured?
• How will commitments be monitored and assessed?
• Should the membership of the Convention be expanded by including additional ‘donors’?
Objectives

• A risk transfer arrangement to ensure minimum levels of .. Food Assistance? or Humanitarian Food Assistance in a volatile global economy?
• Indirectly providing predictable funding to operational agencies – WFP, NGOs?
• Providing compensation to LI-FD countries adjusting to trade liberalisation?
• Something more?
The Future FAC: a personal view

• A voluntary OECD agreement with a code of conduct, transparent monitoring and peer review.
• A risk transfer arrangement to ensure minimum levels of humanitarian food assistance.
• A new collective funding commitment to a measurable outcome – for example enabling at least 20 million crisis-affected people to meet their food needs.
• Individual commitments can be in physical or financial terms, but guaranteed against price, currency and donor budgetary volatility.
• Other funders (e.g. G20 members) may join this “DAC Plus” agreement supervised by a new committee/WG.
What will it require?

• Imagination, lateral thinking and a genuine commitment to succeed.

• This can only happen if reaching a new agreement becomes a collective priority, and so the initiative moves up from official level discussions at the IGC to a Ministerial or G8-G20 level.

• Thank you!