

**THE FOOD CRISIS OF 2008:
IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF IFPRI'S
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AP	Associated Press
AFP	Agence France Presse
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Comprehensive Framework for Action
CGD	Center for Global Development
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CNN	Cable News Network
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	U.K. Department for International Development
DPA	German Press Agency
EC	European Commission
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
G8	Group of Eight (U.S., Canada, U.K., France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan)
GFRP	The World Bank's Global Food Crisis Response Program
HLTF	High-Level Task Force
ICTSD	International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development
IFAD	UN International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMPACT	IFPRI's International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade
IPC	International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council
ISFP	FAO's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices
ISNAR	International Service for National Agricultural Research
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPR	National Public Radio
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
Q&A	Questions and Answers
R&D	Research and Development
RENEWAL	Regional Network on AIDS, Livelihoods, and Food Security
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

U.K.	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
U.S.	United States
U.S.A	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper aims to document IFPRI's communications activities during the recent food crisis which peaked in mid-2008. IFPRI's communications activities during the food crisis were somewhat unusual for the Institute. The communications campaign included IFPRI's usual avenues, and built on IFPRI's existing place in the global food policy system, but was unusual in its concerted coordination across all divisions of the Institute, the relatively low number of publications and unusually high engagement with the media, as well as a high number of face-to-face presentations and meetings. All in all the campaign, which arose in response to the policy window that opened up in early and mid-2008, was considered particularly effective, and IFPRI earned the position as one of the "thought leaders" during the crisis.

Introduction

Section 1 briefly explains the background to the food crisis of 2008, and the methodological and conceptual framework for this paper. Material for the study was gathered through interviews, document and web review, and was guided by the tenets of Appreciative Inquiry. The conceptual framework for the study draws on "systems awareness," seeking to document IFPRI's communications during the food crisis while keeping the wider system in view. Thinking from a systems perspective makes it easier to see that change in the system occurs as a function of several parts that impact on each other, rather than as the direct result of any single action.

IFPRI Communications during the Food Crisis

At the end of 2007 and during the first half of 2008, IFPRI produced five key **publications** on the food crisis: a Food Policy Report and four Policy Briefs. One of the Policy Briefs—"High Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policy Actions"—was the outcome of a coordinated brainstorming process within IFPRI which drew on the expertise of all IFPRI's divisions, was co-authored by 12 senior IFPRI staff members, and contained a clearly laid out Action Plan for the crisis.

IFPRI Communications Division launched an extensive effort to make IFPRI messages on the food crisis easily available on **the web**. A Food Prices portal page was created on the IFPRI website. They also used blog posts on IFPRI's Blog World Hunger, a Facebook page, a LinkedIn site, and inserted pointers to IFPRI material on the food crisis from Wikipedia. They made sure that IFPRI material on food prices was available on Google Books and that it showed up in Google Scholar. They tracked IFPRI citations in the blogosphere. Later in the year the Communications Division also posted material on YouTube. Their effort to reach out so extensively via different internet-based channels reflects their strategy of using different media for different audiences.

From April–June 2008, IFPRI received a higher number of **media** hits on a single subject than the Institute had ever experienced before. IFPRI’s research on food prices was cited in a wide range of media outlets, from prominent international news sources—such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Cable News Network (CNN), the *Wall Street Journal*, *Le Monde*, *Der Spiegel*, *Times*, and *Newsweek*—to newspapers, websites, and radio shows all over the world. All in all, the IFPRI Communications Division registered media hits related to food prices from 61 countries for the period August 2007 to August 2008.

Another striking aspect of IFPRI’s communications campaign during the food crisis is the high number of **face-to-face events**. Most of the face-to-face engagement occurred between February and June, when IFPRI participated in between 10–20 face-to-face events on the food crisis every month. IFPRI hosted or co-hosted five seminars or conferences on the food crisis from February to June 2008. IFPRI Director General Joachim von Braun was invited to give the keynote address at three high-level United Nations (UN) conferences and seminars. IFPRI was also invited to present its research to, among others, U.S. Congressional committees, the European Commission, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the China Development Forum 2008. Again, there was geographical spread in IFPRI’s communications: IFPRI staff members gave presentations in 17 countries. IFPRI members of staff also invested both time and effort in organizing personal meetings on the food crisis with key policymakers and practitioners, including the President of IFAD, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC), and senior staff from the World Bank and from Nestle.

The Impact of IFPRI Communications: “Thought Leaders”

The first institution to enter into a formal conversation with IFPRI regarding the food crisis was **the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**, which invited IFPRI to be one of the partners for its Monitoring Unit on Food Prices and Market Intelligence, part of the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP). In February and March 2008, FAO invited IFPRI to attend three of the eight Expert Meetings that preceded the UN Food Summit in Rome in June 2008. At the Food Summit, Joachim von Braun was invited to speak at the Roundtable on high food prices.

The UN system created a **High-Level Task Force (HLTF)** on the Global Food Security Crisis in April 2008, which drew up a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) in July 2008. The CFA cited IFPRI research to back up its estimates of the funds needed, including investment in agriculture. IFPRI also contributed substantively to the conceptual thinking of the HLTF, and the CFA’s strategic recommendations mirror much of IFPRI’s proposed action plan. Later in the year, IFPRI’s Food Policy Report on monitoring and assessing the impacts of food crises was picked up by the HLTF. IFPRI has now been given a retainer contract by the HLTF to advise on this subject on a regular basis.

In relation to the **WFP**, Joachim von Braun interacted with Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of WFP, several times during 2008. After the crisis she was also one of the key actors who paid attention to IFPRI's research on physical and virtual grain reserves. Of the other UN agencies, IFPRI was most directly engaged with **Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)** and **IFAD**.

The World Bank set up the Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP) in May 2008. The World Bank's action plan echoes all of the points from IFPRI's action plan. The World Bank also drew on IFPRI's International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT) scenario projections for how biofuel production would affect food prices, and in a paper written for the Group of Eight (G8) Summit in Japan in July they recommend rethinking the approach to biofuels, citing IFPRI. In the same paper they use IFPRI's estimate that an additional \$14 billion needs to be invested in agriculture per year in order to reach Millennium Development Goal 1 (MDG1), and they also recommend increasing funding to global agricultural Research and Development (R&D) by doubling what the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) receives—in 2008 around \$450 million a year—over the next five years. At the G8 Summit in July 2008, World Bank President Robert Zoellick, together with the French government, put IFPRI's idea of virtual reserves on the agenda.

IFPRI usually works more closely with the World Bank than the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, but on the issue of virtual reserves, the Institute is now linking more formally to them in the event that IMF could be a partner working for such reserves (along with FAO and others).

From its location in Washington, D.C., IFPRI also contributed, along with other actors, to political decisions regarding the food crisis in the **United States (U.S.)**. IFPRI researchers gave four testimonies or briefings on the food crisis to Congress during the period May to July 2008. IFPRI was also part of the Task Force on the Global Food Crisis organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. The CSIS Task Force produced a report with five priority recommendations that repeated many of IFPRI's own recommendations.

At the **G8** Summit from July 7–9, 2008, in Hokkaido-Toyako, Japan, food security was a top priority. The G8 leaders expressed their commitment to tackling the food crisis. Again, some of IFPRI's key concerns were echoed. The G8 Summit issued a Statement on Food Security which emphasized the need for agricultural research and development, in particular stressing the importance of the CGIAR centers. It noted the importance of accelerating development of second-generation biofuels. It also mentioned the possibility of creating virtual grain reserves.

Following the publication of IFPRI's Food Policy Report of September 2008, "Global Food Crises: Monitoring and Assessing Impact to Inform Policy Responses," the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** provided funds for IFPRI to build on this work in order to develop a framework for understanding and monitoring food crises. The **European Commission (EC)** has now added funds to this project.

The work of IFPRI and the wider CGIAR system was also noted by the **U.K. Department for International Development (DFID)**, which earmarked \$800 million over five years for agricultural research, half of which is to be channeled through CGIAR.

Finally, it must be noted that IFPRI's communications efforts received official recognition in October 2008, when IFPRI was presented with the **COM+ Award** for its communication campaign during the food crisis.

Concluding Discussion

Section 4 concludes by reflecting on **the ultimate impacts** of IFPRI's communications campaign. The G8 and others are now channeling U.S.\$20 billion to agriculture and have set up the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative. And in September 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon co-hosted a meeting on food security in New York. These are two prominent examples of a new trend. Such global, large-impact events were not happening two years ago, before the peak of the food crisis. Now they are. Something seems to have shifted in the global food policy system—and IFPRI has been a part of that shift.

IFPRI was not an isolated actor during the food crisis, and cannot claim sole credit for any outcomes. But IFPRI staff understood their position within the food policy system well enough to position their communications efforts appropriately within this system, to reach trigger points, and to inform and influence other actors who in turn informed and influenced others. IFPRI contributed to ripple effects, and IFPRI research results and recommendations “percolated” through policy circles. It is impossible to separate out or measure this type of impact. But ultimately, the systemic shift toward greater attention and commitment to agriculture, which IFPRI was a part of, may benefit billions of people.

A few of the key **lessons learned** include:

- IFPRI “got in front of the wave.” The IFPRI Food Policy Report in December 2007 positioned IFPRI as a provider of relevant information on food prices at the start of the wave of global attention. IFPRI also published an Action Plan before most other actors, in May 2008.
- IFPRI did not produce many publications on the food crisis, but those that were produced were accessible and with clear policy recommendations. Material was also made available in other formats.
- IFPRI members of staff took the time to invest in media engagement on the food crisis, numerous face-to-face events, and meetings all over the world.
- IFPRI communications staff tried to exploit connections in their communications activities related to rising food prices. A cluster of communications activities were centered around the Policy Brief of May 2008 “High Food Prices: The What, Who and How of Proposed Policy Actions.”

- IFPRI drew on their existing research from across the Institute. IFPRI staff members from different divisions were brought together to produce the Action Plan.

IFPRI's position as a thought leader during the food crisis led to **international public goods**, including freely available research results on the reasons for and consequences of the food crisis. IFPRI put further policy options on the agenda and enriched United Nations (UN), World Bank, U.S., G8, and governmental policy debates by making them more informed. In particular, IFPRI contributed to the global debates on the need for targeted programs and social protection, the connection between food and biofuel policy, the effects of export bans and restrictions, market speculation and the role of grain reserves, and the role of agriculture in reducing poverty and hunger.

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This paper aims to document IFPRI's communications activities during the recent food crisis which peaked in mid-2008. Although the food crisis is in some ways still ongoing, global attention to the crisis peaked in mid-2008 and important international policy decisions were made then regarding how to respond.

IFPRI's communications activities during the food crisis were somewhat unusual for the Institute. The communications campaign included IFPRI's usual avenues, and built on IFPRI's existing place in the global food policy system, but was unusual in its concerted coordination across all divisions of the Institute, the relatively low number of publications and unusually high engagement with the media, as well as a high number of face-to-face presentations and meetings. All in all the campaign, which arose in response to the policy window that opened up in early and mid-2008, was considered particularly effective, and IFPRI earned the position as one of the "thought leaders" during the crisis (Sheeran 2009). The Institute contributed analysis of the background, causes and consequences of the food crisis, and policy recommendations and an action plan. The Institute also specifically drew a link between the crisis and the neglect of the agricultural sector over the past years, and demonstrated the importance of increased investment in agriculture as part of the resolution to the crisis.

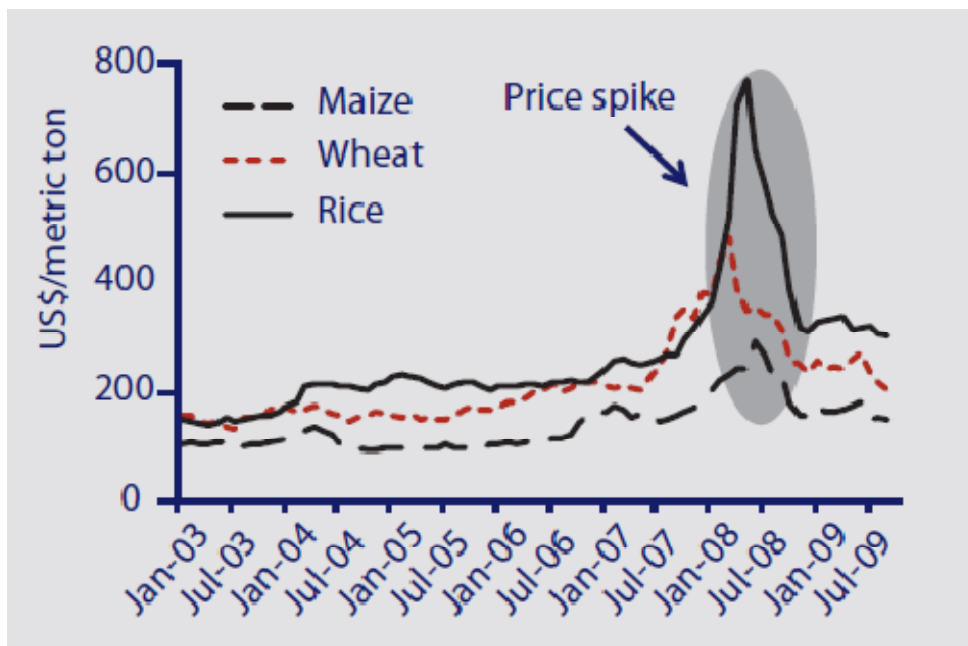
Background: The Food Crisis

In late 2007 and early 2008, global food prices rose sharply. Figure 1.1, taken from the IFPRI Annual Report Essay 2008–09 (von Braun 2009), shows the spike in maize, wheat, and rice prices in 2008. Early and mid-2008 marked the peak of global attention to this food crisis.

The global food crisis had a complex set of causes. Rising energy prices played their part, both in their direct effect on agricultural production and distribution, as well as more indirectly through leading to higher levels of subsidized biofuel production. Another set of reasons related to rising demand for food as a result of population growth, income growth, and urbanization—and rising demand for food contributed to a rising demand for livestock feed. Underinvestment in sustainable agricultural productivity growth, including relative neglect of agronomic research and development, and low investment in rural infrastructure and small-farmer inputs, contributed to the crisis. There were also climate and weather-related incidents that played a role, including drought in Australia, which affected grain production. As a response to the steeply rising prices, some countries put in place export restrictions and export bans, which exacerbated the global crisis. As IFPRI effectively demonstrated, the factors contributing to the crisis were multi-faceted. Some were unique, some cyclical, and some structural. As a result, the global response to the crisis needed to be equally multi-faceted and comprehensive (von Braun et al. 2008a).

The food crisis had a range of different effects on poor populations. Most countries in Africa are net importers of cereals, and thus poor populations in these countries were more likely to be adversely affected by a shortage or more expensive cereals. At the household level, the poor households that are net sellers of food benefit from higher prices, but there are few such households among poor and ultra poor populations. Most poor households are hit hard by surging or volatile food prices. Within households, this poses the highest risk for vulnerable groups, including children and pregnant and lactating women. Nutritional deficits for these groups have potentially irreversible consequences and increase the chance of future poverty for the children in question (von Braun et al. 2008a).

Figure 1.1—World grain prices, January 2003 to July 2009



Source: International commodity prices database of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2009.

Food prices dropped again in late 2008. While the crisis is in many ways still ongoing, in that countries are not fully prepared to respond to price volatility and potential new price spikes, global attention to the food crisis abated towards the end of 2008.

Methodology

This paper is a case study of IFPRI's communications during the food crisis. Material for the study was gathered through interviews (Annex 1), document, and web review.

Because the study explores a case that is considered a successful example of communications, the research process and discussion have been guided by the tenets of Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry is built on questions that draw out reflections on success: “Tell me a story, if you will, of a time when this team / organization / community has been at its best—when people were proud to be a part of it. What happened? What made it possible for this highpoint to occur? What would the system look like if that example of excellence was the norm?” (Acosta and Douthwaite 2005:1). Appreciative Inquiry dwells on strengths and best practices, rather than specific problems or lacks, and in this way seeks to build on an organization’s best resources.

Conceptual Framework: “Systems Awareness”

The conceptual framework for this study is taken from the article “Using ‘systems awareness’: A proposed mechanism for monitoring communications” (von Grebmer and Hovland 2009). The term “systems awareness” here refers to the awareness the communication efforts are situated within systems, be they organizational, informational, technological, social, cultural, economic, or political—or all of the above. The term is used to indicate its affinity to “systems thinking”—a catch-all concept that, broadly speaking, refers to the importance of seeing the part in relation to the whole. This is not a new philosophy or theory, but rather a heuristic device to facilitate reflection.

This case study seeks to document IFPRI’s communications during the food crisis while keeping the wider system in view. In this particular case, IFPRI’s communications efforts are positioned within several systems. First, there is the high-level political system that responded to the food crisis, including the UN system, the Bretton Woods institutions, transnational bodies such as the G8 and the European Commission, bilateral aid agencies, and national governments. These were the institutions and policymakers that IFPRI sought to reach. Secondly, IFPRI works within the institutional system of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), an organizational system of 15 research centers across the world, of which IFPRI is one. Third, it is important to bear in mind the informational system within which IFPRI communicates: the high-level policymakers whom IFPRI sought to reach gather information through several sources—including, for example, policy and background briefs, action plans, media reports and editorials, meetings, and personal contacts.

Thinking from a systems perspective makes it easier to see that change in the system occurs as a function of several parts that impact on each other, rather than as the direct result of any single action. The kind of systemic change that IFPRI seeks—advocating, for example, for greater investment in the agricultural sector—cannot be brought about by IFPRI acting on its own; and, if such change occurs, it would be naïve for IFPRI to claim sole credit. Rather, the type of trigger effect that might be brought about can be described as follows:

One organization might claim more limited credit for influencing three other organizations that it has specific relationships with, and these three might in turn trigger further changes in yet other institutions and structures. The first organization needs to understand and show how it fits into a larger process. It cannot claim credit for the whole

process, but it can claim credit for having understood its particular position within the system well enough to make the best use of its relationships, in order to effect wider change (von Grebmer and Hovland 2009:297; cf. Earl et al. 2001)

The same idea might be expressed in a single word: “percolation.” Carol Weiss (1977) uses this word to refer to the way research may circulate and gradually be filtered through various policy circles and networks. While specific research publications usually do not have a direct influence on policy, research agendas still have a powerful indirect effect through the way they introduce new concepts and shape discourses. Research results and examples may filter through large parts of the system even when they are no longer directly linked to a single researcher or research institution, and it is important for policy research organizations to understand this in order to be able to work most effectively within policy systems.

Von Grebmer and Hovland (2009:298) highlight four questions to keep in view when using systems awareness to monitor the communications of policy research organizations:

1. Where are the effective “trigger points” in the system? In other words, which points will have a ripple effect on other parts of the system? For example, are there certain institutions or events or processes that have a larger influence on the wider system than others?
2. Are there a number of trigger points at different levels of the system? When working towards systemic change, it may help to push at a number of different trigger points rather than just one. For example, communications staff might try to reach both key policymakers and key journalists, because these two groups of actors provide different trigger points.
3. Is the organization looking beyond the primary act of communication in order to reach these trigger points? This entails looking beyond one’s own dissemination and paying attention to uptake, demand for information, or two-way dialogues. For example, it is of little use to disseminate numerous policy briefs if there is no follow-up to monitor whether any of them have been read, or any mechanism to respond to outstanding issues or demands for further information.
4. Are synergies being exploited? For example, are there different streams of research that might be brought together for greater communications effect?

These questions will form the backdrop for the material on IFPRI’s communications that is presented in Sections 2 and 3. We will then return explicitly to these questions in the concluding discussion (Section 4).

2. IFPRI COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE FOOD CRISIS

This section begins with an overview of IFPRI's work on the food crisis which peaked around mid-2008. The communications channels that IFPRI used are then discussed in turn: publications, web presence, media engagement, and face-to-face events, including presentations, testimonies, and personal meetings. The impact of these communications efforts will be explored in Section 3.

An Overview of IFPRI's Work on the Food Crisis

The story of IFPRI's communications breakthrough during the food crisis begins most clearly in December 2007, which is where the narrative below picks up. However, this is not to say that IFPRI had been silent on the subject previously. IFPRI had been warning about a possible rise of food prices, and an IFPRI Research Fellow, Mark Cohen, outlined the nature of the topic in a Questions and Answers (Q&A) for the *Financial Times* in July 2007 (Financial Times 2007). This Q&A was later reproduced on both the Financial Time's portal page on the global food crisis, and its interactive page on high food prices.¹

In August 2007, IFPRI Director General Joachim von Braun presented the keynote address at the event "Biofuels, Energy, and Agriculture: Powering Towards or Away from Food Security?" (The Crawford Fund Annual Conference, Canberra, Australia). His keynote pointed to scenario analyses carried out with IFPRI's International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade and Water Simulation (IMPACT-WATER), which outlined two scenarios: Scenario 1, where biofuel production continued as planned; and Scenario 2, where biofuel production increased more drastically. IMPACT analysis showed that both scenarios would significantly increase food costs, Scenario 2 even more so than Scenario 1 (von Braun 2007a).

IFPRI's warning of higher food prices did gain some attention, with eight media hits specifically on food prices in August 2007 and nine in September. (These were registered by the Communications Division at IFPRI, which monitors a wide range of print and web media from across the world, as will be explained below.) However, it was not until December that a breakthrough occurred.

December 2007: Realising that this might be a policy window

From December 3–7, 2007, CGIAR held its Annual General Meeting in Beijing. Joachim von Braun was invited to present an address at the opening plenary (von Braun 2007b). He gave an overview of the world food situation and spoke about how much food prices had risen since 2000, the link to rising energy prices and increased production of biofuels, and the effects this might

¹ <http://www.ft.com/foodprices> and <http://media.ft.com/cms/s/2/f5bd920c-975b-11dc-9e08-0000779fd2ac.html?from=textlink>

have on poor households. He used the IMPACT scenario analysis again to show that continued or increased biofuel production would contribute to a significant rise in food prices. He briefly outlined five required policy actions: eliminate trade barriers; increased investment in rural infrastructure and market institutions in developing countries; investment in agricultural science and technology (e.g., through the CGIAR); expanded social protection; and inclusion of agriculture into the climate change agenda.

The media response was immediate, as the key messages from von Braun's address were picked up by CNN the very same evening. This signaled the start of a major breakthrough on the communications front. IFPRI Communications Division had spent the past few years building up long-standing relationships with a large group of journalists—by the end of 2007 more than 1,150 journalists subscribed to IFPRI's media listserve—and many of these now came to IFPRI to gather additional material on the food crisis, including journalists from the *Financial Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Guardian*. These were journalists who already knew and trusted IFPRI as a credible source of information. Several wire services also cited IFPRI, including Reuters, Associated Press (AP), Agence France Presse (AFP), and the German Press Agency (DPA). Once IFPRI's name had been cited a few times in prominent media outlets, several new journalists requested information from IFPRI too, and in the month of December 2007 IFPRI had 99 media hits related to food prices.

IFPRI staff realized that this was “a story that had legs”. They also recognized that this might genuinely be a policy window—i.e., a time when policymakers were more open than usual to considering new policy options. Von Braun's address to the CGIAR Annual General Meeting was adapted and published as an IFPRI Food Policy Report the same month (von Braun 2007c)(and was translated into Spanish and Chinese in mid-2008).

January–March 2008: Keeping some momentum

Over the following months (January–March 2008) IFPRI managed to keep some momentum on this issue, though media attention slowed down again. The Director General, in particular, continued to give sustained attention to the topic in presentations and meetings that he attended, and the senior management team in IFPRI held a series of meetings to coordinate research and communications efforts on the topic. This was where the communications campaign was planned. However, even the senior management team did not expect it to reach the proportions that it did. What was clear was that high-level global policymakers were already—or would soon be—searching for appropriate responses on this issue, and that IFPRI was poised to make a contribution. IFPRI's key policy messages were not yet laid out in a unified action plan, but they were fairly consistent, and revolved around trade barriers, biofuel policies, assistance to small farmers, social protection, and increased investment in agricultural R&D (e.g., through the CGIAR). Nevertheless the direct communication was mostly carried out by the Director General and had not evolved into a full-fledged institutional effort yet.

April–July 2008: In high gear—Responding and interacting

From April–July 2008, global attention to the food crisis peaked. High-level global institutions were moving to respond to the crisis. WFP had begun a systematic emergency response, and FAO had already set up the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) in December 2007, and the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis was created in April 2008. In May, the World Bank set up the Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP). A UN Food Summit was held in Rome in June, and in July the UN High-Level Task Force presented their Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA). The same month food security was made a priority item at the G8 Summit in Japan. (These developments will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.)

During these high-energy months of April–July 2008, IFPRI pulled together in a remarkable institutional effort to respond to the unexpectedly high level of media and public policy attention that had arisen. The Institute contributed to policy discussions through several channels: publications, web presence, media engagement, and face-to-face presentations and meetings, including Congress and Senate testimonies. These communication channels will be presented, in turn, in the remainder of this section. Their impact will be discussed in Section 4.

August–December 2008: Looking forward

IFPRI went further than just communicating on the food crisis. After the peak of global attention in April–July 2008, IFPRI produced analyses of the shortcomings that had led to the crisis, and suggested what might be learned from this and how it could be avoided in the future. They also addressed the fact that the global response to the food crisis had been characterized by a certain lack of coordination and transparency, as governments often did not know who was doing what, or what other governments were doing. In late 2008, IFPRI particularly addressed issues of monitoring and transparency.

Publications

After the Food Policy Report of December 2007, no further major IFPRI publications were produced on the food crisis from January to March 2008, but a couple of shorter articles were written for *Rural 21* (von Braun 2008b) and for IFPRI's own newsletter, *IFPRI Forum* (Fritschel 2008). The high-priority global policy actions called for in the newsletter were: (i) Eliminate agricultural trade barriers and halt biofuel subsidies; (ii) Expand development assistance to agriculture, rural services, and science and technology; and (iii) Expand food-related development aid, including social protection, child nutrition, and food aid where needed. The article also urged national governments in developing countries to increase investment in agriculture, rural infrastructure, and market access for small farmers, and to expand social protection (rural and urban) for the poorest.

IFPRI's senior management team discussed the rising food prices at a series of meetings in order to coordinate the Institute's research and communications on this issue. The topic was unusual in that it required an immediate, short-term response as well as longer-term attention (usually, IFPRI

research topics may be treated over a longer time period, say three to five years). The short-term response was made possible by a higher degree of coordination across the Institute than usual.

The Institute published the first Policy Brief of 2008 in April, “Rising Food Prices: What Should Be Done?” (von Braun 2008c). This was translated into French, German, Spanish, and Chinese. The second Policy Brief followed in May, “High Food Prices: The What, Who and How of Proposed Policy Actions” (von Braun et al. 2008a). This was the outcome of a coordinated brainstorming process within IFPRI which drew on the expertise of all IFPRI’s divisions, was co-authored by 12 senior IFPRI staff members, and contained a clearly laid out action plan for the crisis. This Policy Brief was also translated into French, German, Spanish, and Chinese. The action plan was presented in two sets of actions, both of which should be addressed immediately:

The emergency package

- (1) Expand emergency responses and humanitarian assistance to food-insecure people and people threatening government legitimacy;
- (2) Eliminate agricultural export bans and export restrictions;
- (3) Undertake fast-impact food production programs in key areas; and
- (4) Change biofuel policies.

The resilience package

- (5) Calm markets with the use of market-oriented regulation of speculation, shared public grain stocks, strengthened food-import financing, and reliable food aid;
- (6) Invest in social protection;
- (7) Scale up investments for sustained agricultural growth; and
- (8) Complete the Doha Round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations.

The Policy Brief and its action plan were discussed at a policy seminar held at IFPRI on May 28.²

Two further Policy Briefs related to the food crisis were produced in June, “Investing in Agriculture to Overcome the World Food Crisis and Reduce Poverty and Hunger” (Fan and Rosegrant 2008) and “Physical and Virtual Global Food Reserves to Protect the Poor and Prevent Market Failure” (von Braun and Torero 2008).

Fan and Rosegrant’s paper argues that sound government spending can be one of the most direct and effective means of promoting agricultural growth, which in turn is a key driver of reducing poverty and hunger. They present ranges of estimates of the costs needed in order to achieve MDG1 (to halve the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day and to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015). They conclude that the global incremental public investment required—the additional amount necessary to meet MDG1—would be U.S.\$14 billion for all developing countries.

² <http://www.ifpri.org/event/high-food-prices>

Von Braun and Torero’s paper addresses one of the causes of the food crisis, namely the malfunctioning of world grain markets. They review the traditional approach of building up a physical, globally managed grain reserve, including its disadvantages, and propose that a minimum physical grain reserve should be maintained in addition to a virtual reserve and intervention mechanism to calm markets under speculative situations, backed up by a financial fund. They urged the G8+5 to consider this option in their meeting in July 2008.

In sum, by the end of July 2008, IFPRI only had five publications directly related to the food crisis: the Food Policy Report of December 2007; and the four Policy Briefs produced in April, May, and June 2008. In addition, two newsletter articles had been written—one in March (Fritschel 2008) and one in July (Young 2008). It was quite unusual for the Institute to be so heavily involved in a policy debate with so few publications. The research results contained in these publications, however, were subject to a more high-intensity dissemination process than usual, leading to considerable communication and interaction, as will be shown below. The *impact* of these publications will be discussed in Section 4. For now, let us briefly review their *uptake*, i.e. to what extent they were noticed and picked up.

Overall the most noticed publication—in terms of web statistics—was the Food Policy Report of December 2007 (von Braun 2007c). By the end of August 2008, the report had 18,601 HTML page views and 14,269 PDF hits. This must be added to the CGIAR Annual General Meeting address that the report is based on, which had 9,787 HTML page views and 3,347 PDF hits. The Chinese and Spanish translations (done by June 2008) had 735 and 1,230 PDF hits respectively. Altogether this adds up to 28,388 HTML page views and 19,581 PDF hits by the end of August 2008. By comparison, another of IFPRI’s flagship publications, the Global Hunger Index report of October 2007 (Wiesmann et al. 2007), had 7,807 HTML page views and 3,742 PDF hits (for both English and German versions) by the end of August 2008.

The Food Policy Report of December 2007 was made available on Google Books. By the time the current paper was written (November 2009), it had been cited 143 times on Google Scholar—a very high number of citations for an IFPRI publication. This is as widely cited as the World Bank’s “A Note on Rising Food Prices” (Mitchell 2008), which currently has 142 citations on Google Scholar (while the World Bank’s paper on the food crisis written ahead of the G8 Summit in July 2008, “Double Jeopardy,” has currently been cited 65 times [World Bank 2008c]).

Equivalent statistics for other IFPRI publications on the food crisis are given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1—Uptake statistics for IFPRI publications on the food crisis

(All HTML page views, PDF hits, and Google Scholar citations are counted up to the end of November 2009.)

Publication	HTML Page views	PDF hits	Google Scholar citations
“The World Food Situation: New Driving Forces and Required Actions,” by Joachim von Braun, <i>IFPRI Food Policy Report</i> , December 2007	English: 30,585	English: 25,380	143
	Spanish: 2,461	Spanish: 4,370	
	Chinese: 201	Chinese: 2,818	
	Total: 33,247	Total: 32,568	

Publication	HTML Page views	PDF hits	Google Scholar citations
“What Goes Down Must Come Up: Global Food Prices Reach New Heights,” by Heidi Fritschel, <i>IFPRI Forum newsletter</i> , March 2008	10,271	5,079	0
“Rising Food Prices: What Should Be Done?” by Joachim von Braun, <i>IFPRI Policy Brief 1</i> , April 2008	English: 36,256 French: 2,057 Spanish: 4,828 German: 3,796 Chinese: 112 Total: 47,049	English: 13,497 French: 2,556 Spanish: 3,362 German: 2,573 Chinese: 2,121 Total: 24,109	31
“High Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policy Actions,” by Joachim von Braun et al., <i>IFPRI Policy Brief 1A</i> , May 2008	English (until end of August 2008): 10,137	English: 17,169 French: 3,394 Spanish: 2,593 German: 3,371 Chinese: 2,586 Total: 29,113	40
“Investing in Agriculture to Overcome the World Food Crisis and Reduce Poverty and Hunger,” by Shenggen Fan and Mark W. Rosegrant, <i>IFPRI Policy Brief 3</i> , June 2008	English: 6,231	English: 3,875 Spanish: 998 Total: 4,873	5
“Physical and Virtual Global Food Reserves to Protect the Poor and Prevent Market Failure,” by Joachim von Braun and Maximo Torero, <i>IFPRI Policy Brief 4</i> , June 2008	4,919	2,950	20
“Speculation and World Food Markets,” by John E. Young, <i>IFPRI Forum newsletter</i> , July 2008	6,815	2,490	3
“Food Prices and the AIDS Response: How They Are Linked, and What Can Be Done,” by Stuart Gillespie, <i>Regional Network on AIDS, Livelihoods, and Food Security (RENEWAL) Brief 1</i> , August 2008	---	3,198	2
”Responding to the Global Food Crisis – Three Perspectives,” by Joachim von Braun, Josette Sheeran, and Namanga Ngongi, <i>Annual Report Essays 2007–2008</i> , September 2008	6,449	4,903	6
“Global Food Crises: Monitoring and Assessing Impact to Inform Policy Responses,” by Todd Benson et al., <i>IFPRI Food Policy Report</i> , September 2008	5,225	60,203	11

Publication	HTML Page views	PDF hits	Google Scholar citations
“Global Food Crises: Monitoring and Assessing Impact to Inform Policy Responses,” by Todd Benson et al., <i>IFPRI Issue Brief 55</i> , October 2008	English: 4,058 Spanish: 1,499 Total: 5,557	English: 3,203 Spanish: 509 Total: 3,712	0
“Helping Women Respond to the Global Food Price Crisis,” by Agnes Quisumbing et al., <i>IFPRI Policy Brief 7</i> , October 2008	3,390	2,280	7
“Food and Financial Crises: Implications for Agriculture and the Poor,” by Joachim von Braun, <i>IFPRI Food Policy Report</i> , December 2008	AGM version: 4,596 Food Policy Report: 7,960 Total: 12,556	AGM version: 3,353 Food Policy Report: 5,181 Total: 8,534	20
Agricultural Economics: Special issue on the world food crisis, November 2008, with four articles by IFPRI researchers (the first two were also published as <i>IFPRI Discussion Papers</i> , December 2008):			
-- “Anatomy of a Crisis: The Causes and Consequences of Surging Food Prices,” by Derek Headey and Shenggen Fan (also published as <i>IFPRI Discussion Paper 831</i> , December 2008)	Discussion Paper: 660	Discussion Paper: 1,812	Journal article: 26
-- “Higher Fuel and Food Prices: Impacts and Responses for Mozambique,” by Channing Arndt, et al (also published as <i>IFPRI Discussion Paper 836</i> , December 2008)	Discussion Paper: 467	Discussion Paper: 1,319	Journal article: 12
-- “Impacts in Uganda of Rising Global Food Prices: The Role of Diversified Staples and Limited Price Transmission,” by Todd Benson et al.	---	---	Journal article: 2
-- “Toward a Green Revolution in Africa: What Would It Achieve, and What Would It Require?” by Xinshen Diao et al.	---	---	Journal article: 5

In addition to IFPRI publications, IFPRI also placed a few short, reader-friendly articles on the food crisis in other magazines and briefs, including in *Rural 21* (von Braun 2008b, 2008d), *Bridges / Puentes* (von Braun 2008e), *Parliamentary Brief* (von Braun 2008f), and the *Bulletin of the Fridays of the Commission*—of the African Union Commission (Asenso-Okyere 2008).

Web Presence

When it was clear that rising food prices attracted considerable media and policy attention, IFPRI Communications Division launched an extensive effort to make IFPRI messages on the topic easily available on the web. First, a Food Prices portal page was created on the IFPRI website towards the end of March 2008.³ The portal page was given a direct link from the IFPRI home page, and was featured in the New@ifpri email newsletter. The portal page contains links to relevant IFPRI publications and relevant media coverage. The Policy Brief “High Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policy Actions” (von Braun et al. 2008a) is prominently featured. The action plan from this Policy Brief was turned into a slide show (using SlideShare) with one slide for each proposed action, using simple language and images. The slide show was posted at the top of the portal page and could be downloaded by others. With the featured Policy Brief and the slide show at the top of the portal page, IFPRI’s key messages were readily available in two accessible formats to anyone who visited the page.

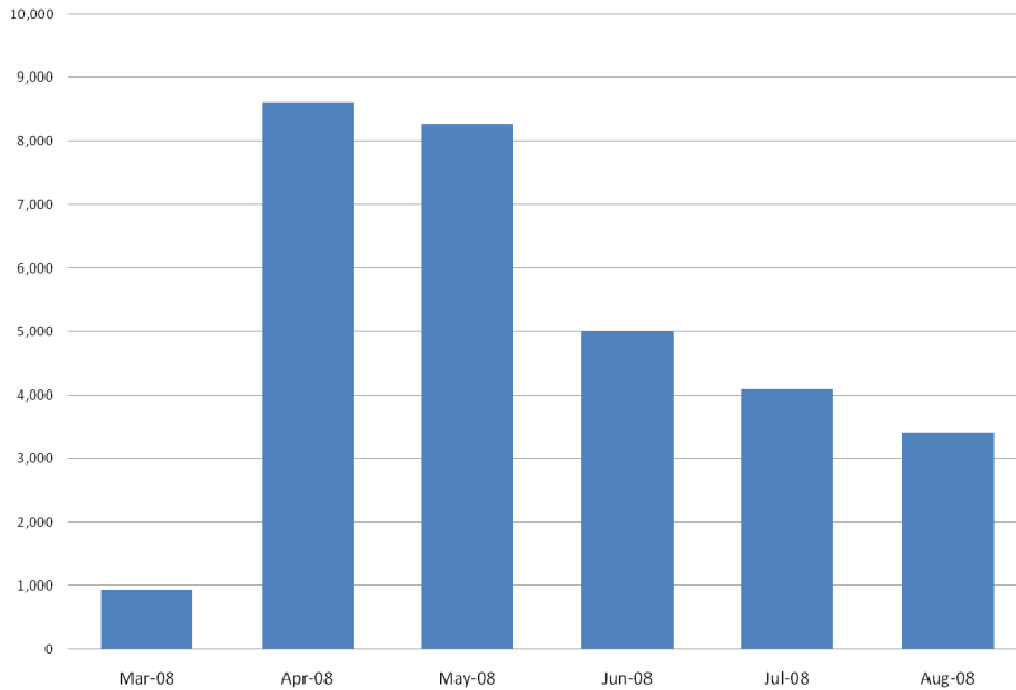
By the end of August 2008, the IFPRI Communications Division had registered 19 linkages to the portal page from other sites. During the first five months (late March–August 2008), the page was visited 30,659 times (see Figure 2.1)—a high number for an IFPRI portal page; during the next four months (September–December 2008), it was visited 12,357 times. Most of the hits came from North America and Europe, which is usual for IFPRI webpages, but interestingly the Food Prices portal page also received a higher number of hits than usual from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, especially India.

There were also 10 posts on food prices on IFPRI’s Blog World Hunger (www.ifpri.org/blog), and IFPRI-RSS subscribers increased during the food prices postings on the website and blog. Comments were enabled both on the blog and on the publication pages, and altogether 73 comments were made on the blog posts and publication pages related to the food crisis. The publication with the highest number of comments was Policy Brief 1, “Rising Food Prices: What Should Be Done?”.

IFPRI Communications Division created a Facebook page, a LinkedIn site, and inserted pointers to IFPRI material on the food crisis from Wikipedia. They made sure that IFPRI material on food prices was available on Google Books and that it showed up in Google Scholar, so that anybody searching for relevant information through Google would be able to locate IFPRI material. They tracked the number of times IFPRI research on food prices was cited in the blogosphere (through Google blog search). April, May, and June 2008 had the highest number of blog posts containing IFPRI and “food prices” (April: 71, May: 66, June: 78; see Figure 2.2). Later in the year the Communications Division also posted material on YouTube, including eight video clips from the Food Prices seminar that was held at IFPRI in May 2008, and Joachim von Braun’s Senate testimony on the food crisis from June 2008. By December 2009, the Food Prices seminar clips had 366, 67 and 56 views (the three clips of Joachim von Braun’s presentation), 158 views (Mark Rosegrant’s presentation), 158 views (Maximo Torero’s presentation), 126 views (John

³ <http://www.ifpri.org/book-776/ourwork/researcharea/food-prices>

Figure 2.1—Monthly visits to the IFPRI food prices page

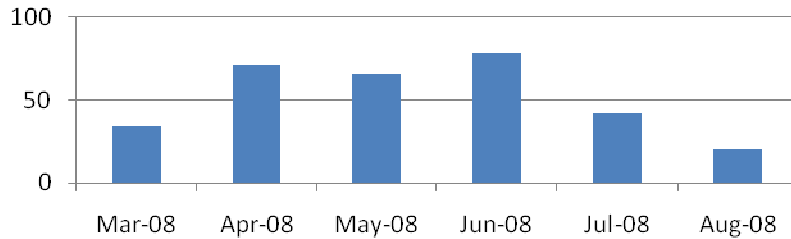


Hoddinott’s presentation), and 280 and 81 views for the two clips from the Q&A afterwards.

Joachim von Braun’s Senate testimony had 589 views by December 2009.

The effort to reach out so extensively via different internet-based channels reflects the Communications Division’s strategy of using different media for different audiences: while publications in PDF format are traditionally used to reach the baby boomers, social media may more easily catch the eye of generations X and Y.

Figure 2.2—Blog posts containing IFPRI and “food prices”



Media Engagement

IFPRI communications staff monitor a wide range of influential media outlets from around the world, typically two to three in the 50 most populous countries, as well as important international media such as the BBC, the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, and wire services such as Reuters and AP. In addition, communications staff record all media requests that they receive, and any other instances of IFPRI being cited in the media that is brought to their attention.

After the media breakthrough that IFPRI experienced in December 2007, with 99 registered media citations of IFPRI research, media hits on food prices slowed down again at the start of 2008. The IFPRI Communications Division registered three media citations on IFPRI's research on food prices in January, and six in February. Then in March a wave started to form, with 40 media hits, and this wave peaked rapidly with 155 registered media hits on food prices in April. This was a higher number of media hits on a single subject in a single month than IFPRI had ever experienced before. IFPRI's media staff had to put away all other work and focus solely on responding to journalists' requests for information and interviews on the food crisis—something which had not happened with any subject previously.

IFPRI Communications Division already had established relationships with a number of journalists; and, at the beginning of 2008, over 1,150 journalists subscribed to IFPRI's media listserve. They were sent regular updates on IFPRI's research related to the food crisis. IFPRI researchers with relevant knowledge were asked to be available for interviews and background briefings for the media, and schedules of availability were rapidly drawn up. Researchers from different divisions within IFPRI were called on, and all-in-all the rising food prices led to a greater degree of coordination within IFPRI than is usual around a single issue. In addition to drawing on different divisions, IFPRI media staff were often able to refer Spanish-speaking media to Spanish-speaking IFPRI researchers, French-speaking media to French-speaking researchers, and so on.

The high level of media engagement left IFPRI in the most exposed position the Institute has ever been in, and in response to this the most exposed roles were taken by the Director General and senior researchers. The level of exposure could potentially have led to mishaps and negative repercussions for the Institute, but in fact IFPRI was only affected positively by its participation in numerous interviews, newspaper reports, radio shows, TV features, and so on. Because of the rapid escalation of media interest, there was little time to arrange formal media training for the researchers or to agree in advance on how to address every question. However, a few processes had already been set in motion that provided sufficient basis to be able to handle the high amount of media interest and the level of IFPRI exposure that this led to.

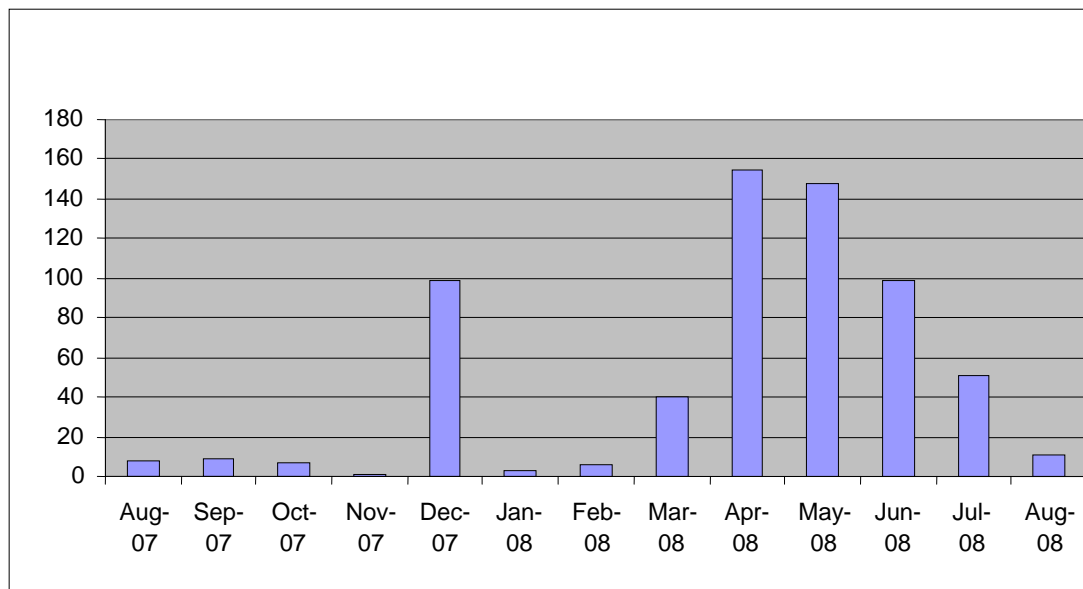
First, after Joachim von Braun's address in December 2007, which had been released as a Food Policy Report, a couple of IFPRI's key messages had already been agreed on, namely that rising food prices needed to be taken seriously as a long-term trend with long-term drivers, including increased demand for food, feed, and fuel, and that in large part this was made worse by the recent neglect of the agricultural sector. Second, new research material on the food crisis was shared among IFPRI researchers, the Director General sent around emails about it, and there was

a concerted collaborative effort among senior IFPRI staff to produce Policy Brief 1A in May 2008 (von Braun et al. 2008a), which included IFPRI’s proposed action plan. The action plan was also presented and discussed at a policy seminar at IFPRI in May 2008. This type of collaboration meant that, although there is no singular “IFPRI position” on any given topic, all IFPRI researchers who were interviewed were able to discuss the reasons for the food crisis as well as refer to clear policy recommendations when speaking with the media.

In the media, IFPRI researchers argued for the double-pronged approach of the action plan which would both address emergency needs and build long-term resiliency. They underlined the need for social protection, as well as the need to end export restrictions. They often raised a red flag about the increased production of biofuels, drawing on the IMPACT projections—a message that served to counteract the strong biofuels lobby in the U.S. and Europe. They also emphasized the connection between the food crisis and the recent neglect of investment in agriculture, including a relative neglect of agricultural research and development. (It is important to note that in this respect they were not arguing for more funds for the kind of research the IFPRI carries out, but rather for the need for more agronomic research, i.e. research on yield improvement, drought resistance, etc., which is carried out by other CGIAR centers as well as national and private research institutes.)

The media engagement continued in high gear from April until June, as IFPRI Communications Division registered a further 148 media hits in May and 99 in June, and then started to slow down in July (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3—Media citations of IFPRI research on food prices



From April to July 2008, IFPRI's research on food prices was cited in a wide range of media outlets, from prominent international news sources—such as the BBC, CNN, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Le Monde*, *Der Spiegel*, *Times*, and *Newsweek*—to newspapers, websites, and radio shows all over the world—such as Today's Zaman in Turkey, Aftenposten in Norway, El Universal in Venezuela, Pagina 12 in Argentina, Newstalk 93FM in Jamaica, Business Times in Malaysia, the Bangkok Post in Thailand, Business Day in Nigeria, and LeFaso in Burkina Faso, to name just a few. All-in-all the IFPRI Communications Division registered media hits related to food prices from 61 countries for the period August 2007–August 2008: U.S.A, Canada, Jamaica, Solomon Islands, Trinidad, Honduras, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, El Salvador, Colombia, Guyana, Cuba, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Spain, France, Sweden, Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Scotland, Austria, the Netherlands, U.K., Italy, Czech Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, Somalia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Angola, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malaysia, Bangladesh, China, Azerbaijan, the Philippines, India, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand, and Micronesia.

IFPRI was also cited in a couple of prominent series on the food crisis, one by the *Washington Post* and another by National Public Radio (NPR), which generated more interest in IFPRI research.

A small sample of all the media articles that cited IFPRI research on food prices is given in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2—A sample of media articles that cited IFPRI research on food prices

Outlet	Date	Headline	Country
Financial Times	01-Apr-08	Struggle to keep food supplies at home	International
New York Times	01-Apr-08	Food Prices Rise, Farmers Respond	International
Daily Star	05-Apr-08	Rising food prices: Is there a solution on the horizon?	Bangladesh
BBC World Service	06-Apr-08	The cost of food	International
Agencia Latinoamericana de Informacion	07-Apr-08	El aumento de los alimentos y la baja del dólar	Latin America
Die Welt (Germany)	11-Apr-08	Warum Lebensmittel für viele zu teuer sind	Germany
China Worker	11-Apr-08	China Economy-Signs of Bubble Burst	China
National Public Radio	14-Apr-08	Aid Groups Target Poor Nations as Food Prices Soar	U.S.A
Economist	17-Apr-08	The new face of hunger	International
Xinhua News Agency	19-Apr-08	Asia public feels the shortage of rice	China
Washington Post	20-Apr-08	A Worsening Food Crisis	U.S.A
Christian Science Monitor	21-Apr-08	Can the earth provide enough food for 9 billion people?	U.S.A

Outlet	Date	Headline	Country
East African	21-Apr-08	Season of more food, income to Siaya farmers	East Africa
CNN	22-Apr-08	UN expert: Food crisis 'a silent tsunami'	U.S.A
Der Spiegel	23-Apr-08	Can Genetic Crops Stop the Food Crisis?	Germany
Agence France-Presse	30-Apr-08	'Biofuels frenzy' fuels global food crisis: experts	International
Le Monde Diplomatique	01-May-08	The demand for grain won't stop growing	International
Nature	01-May-08	Food crisis spurs research spending	International
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	02-May-08	World food crisis no longer theory, but reality	Australia
Manila Standard Today	02-May-08	Unintended consequences	Philippines
Wall Street Journal Asia	05-May-08	Solving Asia's Food Crisis	International
Chicago Tribune	05-May-08	Ethanol not a real solution	U.S.A
Der Standard	09-May-08	Preisschock als Chance	Germany
New York Times	09-May-08	High Prices for Staple Foods Dip, but Volatile Markets Persist	International
Nigerian Tribune	14-May-08	The politics of rising food prices in Africa	International
Economic Times	16-May-08	Investments in agri sector would reduce hunger threat: IFPRI	India
Voice of America	16-May-08	Market Forces Impact World Food Prices	International
China Daily	19-May-08	Crop Caution	China
Newsweek	19-May-08	How to Feed the World	U.S.A
Time Magazine	19-May-08	Why the World Can't Afford Food	U.S.A
Financial Express	19-May-08	IFPRI moots steps to curb global price rise	India
Bangkok Post	20-May-08	Energy crop zoning proposed	Thailand
Reuters	29-May-08	Immediate, long-run fixes needed in food crisis--IFPRI	International
PanAfrican News Agency	03-Jun-08	Think tank wants global food crisis solved as Agric ministers meet	Africa
BBC News	03-Jun-08	Pressure mounting for action on food	International
Business Day	04-Jun-08	Ban calls for urgent action to end food crisis	South Africa
Australian Broadcasting Company	04-Jun-08	Australia urged to do part in global food crisis	Australia
Al Jazeera	04-Jun-08		International
The Guardian	04-Jun-08	Fuel for people first	U.K.
The Economist	05-Jun-08	Only a few green shoots	International

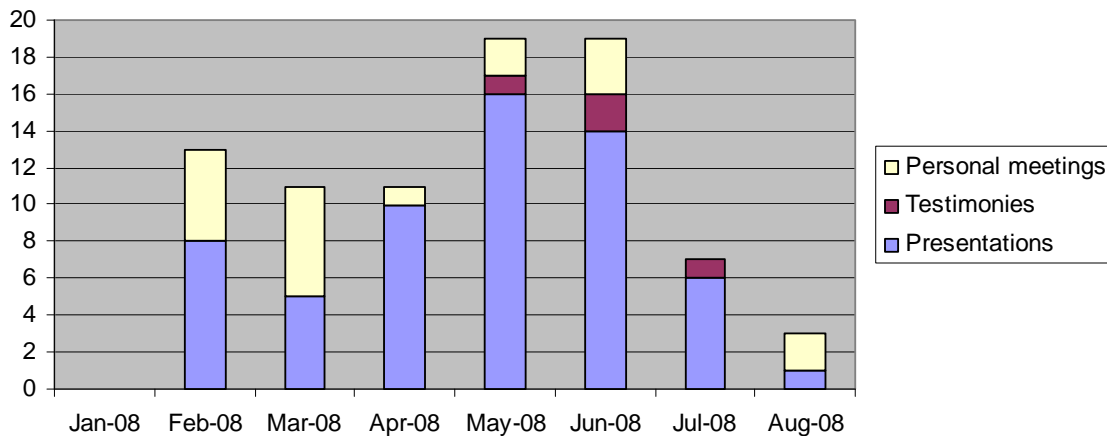
Outlet	Date	Headline	Country
Independent	06-Jun-08	UN food summit ends in failure as delegates fudge final declaration	U.K.
Rediff	11-Jun-08	India biggest hoarder, food crisis to worsen	India
Bloomberg News	19-Jun-08	Free Trade in Food Is 'On the Ropes' Amid Shortages, Price Rise	International
Times of London	26-Jun-08	We can feed the world: look at all the space	U.K.
Globe and Mail	27-Jun-08	Ripe for profit	Canada
New York Times	30-Jun-08	Backgrounder: Food Prices	International
EU Observer	30-Jun-08	European Union (EU) biofuels target 'probably a mistake,' France says	Europe
IRIN News	2-Jul-08	GLOBAL: Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) call for more funds, investment in agriculture	International
Associated Press	2-Jul-08	Countries urged to lift food export bans	International

Interestingly, the significant increase in media engagement that IFPRI experienced because of the food crisis has led to a higher level of media interest in IFPRI research in general. In 2007, the IFPRI Communications Division registered between 500–600 media hits altogether. In 2008, this was doubled, with around 1,200 media hits, around half of which were related to food prices. In 2009, however, the level of media hits has remained high, and at the time of writing (November 2009), the IFPRI Communications Division estimates that they will come close to the same number of media hits in 2009 as in 2008.

Face-to-face Events

A striking aspect of IFPRI's communications campaign during the food crisis is the high number of face-to-face events. IFPRI members of staff gave presentations on the food crisis at a range of meetings, gave four testimonies on Capitol Hill, and held a number of personal meetings with high-level policymakers (in addition to the many meetings that were held with journalists, reporters, news editors, and editorial writers). Most of the face-to-face engagement occurred between February and June, when IFPRI participated in between 10–20 face-to-face events on the food crisis every month (see Figure 2.4). Again, a significant degree of coordination across different divisions within IFPRI made this possible, and IFPRI researchers often shared notes and powerpoint slides with each other on this topic.

Figure 2.4—IFPRI involvement in face-to-face events on food prices



Note: “Personal meetings” does not include the numerous meetings IFPRI staff had with journalists and news editors.

Most of IFPRI’s face-to-face engagement was in the form of presentations on rising food prices at seminars, workshops, panel discussions, etc. IFPRI organized two seminars on the food crisis at IFPRI in February and May, co-hosted a seminar with the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and IPC in May in Washington, D.C. (“Taking Stock of the Doha Round Agricultural Negotiations: Where Are We and What Does It Really Mean for the U.S.?”), hosted a conference in May in Brussels (“Agriculture, Development and the Poor: Challenges, Stakes and Opportunities”), and co-organized a seminar with IFAD and the World Bank in June in Washington, D.C. (“Helping Women Respond to the Global Food Crisis”).

Joachim von Braun was invited to give the keynote address at the UN Conference “The Right to Food” in April, the WFP’s Hunger Seminar the same month, and the Special Meeting on the Global Food Crisis convened by ECOSOC in May. He was also asked to speak at the roundtable on high food prices at the UN Food Summit in June in Rome.

IFPRI was invited to present its research to, among others, the European Commission, the IFAD Board of Trustees, IFAD staff, World Bank staff, Asian Development Bank staff, the Board of Directors of Population Action International, and African ambassadors in Washington, D.C. IFPRI staff members were invited to give presentations at numerous seminars, workshops, and events, including a Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) seminar on high food prices, a workshop on a sustainable adaptation strategy for agriculture organized by the Danish Ministry of Agriculture, the China Development Forum 2008, a roundtable on food security and rising prices hosted by the Foreign Service Institute and the Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. State Department, a panel discussion on biofuels and the global food economy organized by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (in Addis Ababa), the USAID Democracy and Governance Partners Conference, an NGO Briefing in Washington, D.C., and the Center for Global Development (CGD) and Inter-American Dialogue Event in Washington, D.C. Research centers and universities that invited IFPRI to speak included the Center for European Policy

Studies in Brussels, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in New Delhi, George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and Centro de Estudios de las Finanzas Públicas in Mexico City.

Again, there was geographical spread in IFPRI’s communications: in addition to Washington, D.C. and New York, IFPRI staff members gave presentations in Urbana-Champaign, Boston, and San Diego in the U.S.; Texcoco in Mexico; Brussels, Geneva, Frankfurt, Rome, Barcelona, Copenhagen, and Oxford in Europe; Kampala, Addis Ababa, Lusaka, and Rabat in Africa, as well as Beijing, New Delhi, Manila, and Canberra (Australia). Some of the regional spread was achieved through travel by the Director General and other researchers, and some of it was achieved thanks to IFPRI’s geographically dispersed organizational structure.

Table 2.3—A sample of IFPRI presentations on rising food prices

Date	Person	Event	Location
2/12/2008	Joachim von Braun	Chaired the IFPRI panel discussion “Rising Food Prices: Implications and Consequences.” Panelists were Jonathan Dworken, Acting Director, Office for Food for Peace, USAID; Daniel Gustafson, Director, FAO; and Charlotte Hebebrand, Chief Executive, IPC	Washington, D.C.
2/21/2008	Mark Rosegrant	Keynote presentation “Implications of Rising Food Prices for Agricultural and Rural Development Issues” at the Annual Meeting of the Sustainable Development Network, World Bank	Washington, D.C.
2/28/2008	Joachim von Braun	Keynote presentation “Agriculture: The Fuel for Sustainable Economic Development” at the 2008 Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD) Capitol Hill Forum and Riley Memorial Lecture	Washington, D.C.
3/22/2008	Joachim von Braun	Presented “Supply and Demand of Agricultural Products and Inflation: How to Address the Acute and Long-Run Problems” at the China Development Forum 2008 “China towards 2020: Development Goals and Policy Options,” hosted by the China Development Research Foundation	Beijing, China
4/2008	Joachim von Braun	Keynote speaker at the WFP’s Hunger Seminar “Rising Food Prices: Dimension, Causes, Impact, and Responses”	Rome, Italy
4/10/2008	Ashok Gulati	Participated in a televised panel discussion on the food crisis with Akhilesh Singh, Sompal Shastri, and Sharad Joshi, Members of Parliament, Government of India	New Delhi, India
4/23/08	Joachim von Braun	Keynote address at the UN conference “The Right to Food: How Can the UN Respond to the Global	New York

Date	Person	Event	Location
		Food Crisis?"	
4/25/2008	Mark Rosegrant	Presented "Implications of Rising Food Prices for Agricultural and Rural Development Policy" at the Asian Development Bank	Manila, Philippines
5/06/2008	Joachim von Braun Rajul Pandya-Lorch	Presentation on rising food prices at a meeting organized by Krishna Kumar, Senior Social Scientist, Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance, U.S. State Department	Washington, D.C.
5/08/2008	Nicholas Minot	Presentation "Rising Food Prices and Food Security in Ghana and Benin" at the USAID workshop "Rising Prices and Food Security in West Africa"	Washington, D.C.
5/20/08	Joachim von Braun	Keynote address at the "Special Meeting on the Global Food Crisis" convened by ECOSOC at the UN Headquarters in New York, chaired by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the UN Security Council	New York
6/03/08 – 6/04/08	Joachim von Braun	Participated in the "High-Level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy," held at FAO, and served as a speaker on the roundtable "High Food Prices: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions"	Rome, Italy
6/06/08	Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere	Presented "The World Food Crisis: Origins, Impacts and Remedies for African Countries" at an African Union Commission series	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
6/13/08	Marc Cohen	Presented "The Global Food Crisis and Food Insecurity: A Governance Challenge" at the USAID Democracy and Governance Partners Conference	Washington, D.C.
6/17/08	John Hoddinott	Presented "Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policy Actions" to IFAD board meeting at the National Press Club	Washington, D.C.
6/19/2008	Joachim von Braun	Presented comments at the "Das Blaue Sofa" event on rising food prices, attended by high-profile members of Europe's business and media communities	Frankfurt, Germany
7/02/08	Joachim von Braun	Presented "High and Unstable Food Prices: Challenges for the United Nations and G8" at the Center for European Policy Studies	Brussels, Belgium
7/03/08	Joachim von Braun	Presented "Who Will Feed the World? Towards Diverse, Sustainable Forms of Agriculture as Drivers of Development" at a conference organized at the initiative of France in partnership with the European Commission and European Parliament	Brussels, Belgium

Date	Person	Event	Location
7/10/2008	Ashok Gulati	Participated in the discussion “Global Food Crisis” at the World Bank, New Delhi, with several civil society organizations	New Delhi, India
7/22/2008	Joachim von Braun	Attended a thematic lunch on the “Global Food System in Crisis” at the residence of John Bruton, EU’s Ambassador to the U.S.	Washington, D.C.

Of special note are four testimonies and briefings that IFPRI was invited to give on Capitol Hill:

- “Biofuels and Grain Prices: Impacts and Policy Responses,” testimony by Mark W. Rosegrant (Director, Environment and Production Technology Division, IFPRI) to the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, May 7, 2008
- “Implications of the Food Crisis for Long-Term Agricultural Development,” briefing by Nicholas Minot to the U.S. House Hunger Caucus, June 5, 2008
- “Biofuels, International Food Prices, and the Poor,” testimony by Joachim von Braun to the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, June 12, 2008
- “The Food Crisis and its Implications for Agricultural Development,” testimony by Nicholas Minot (Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI) to the U.S. House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on Specialty Crops, Rural Development, and Foreign Agriculture, July 16, 2008

In Mark Rosegrant’s testimony, he showed that the increased biofuel demand during the period 2000–2007 is estimated to have accounted for 30 percent of the increase in weighted average grain prices, with the largest impact on maize prices (39 percent). He also showed that grain prices would drop if there were a freeze on crop-based biofuel production at current levels, and even more so if there were a moratorium on such production. He pointed out, however, that in the long term it is even more critical to increase agricultural productivity growth, and that the U.S. can plan a role by increasing in agricultural R&D, for example by supporting the CGIAR network. In Joachim von Braun’s testimony he referred to Rosegrant’s work, and suggested that a comprehensive policy framework is needed to ensure that biofuel production contributes to energy security, is environmentally sustainable, and complements pro-poor policies. The policy framework must include science and technology policy, markets and trade policy, and an insurance and social-protection policy for the food-insecure poor.

Finally, IFPRI members of staff invested both time and effort in organizing personal meetings on the food crisis with key policymakers and practitioners. Many of the people they met were high-level actors, and personal meetings gave IFPRI the chance to present and discuss recommendations to these actors in the form of a dialogue. Table 2.4 gives a sample of personal meetings that were held.

Table 2.4—A sample of IFPRI personal meetings addressing rising food prices

Date	Person	Event	Location
2/19/2008	Joachim von Braun Mark Rosegrant	Met with Lennart Båge, President, IFAD	Rome, Italy
2/20/2008	Joachim von Braun	Met with Josette Sheeran, Executive Director, WFP , senior WFP staff, and leading experts on rising food prices	Rome, Italy
2/28/2008	Joachim von Braun Maximo Torero Rajul Pandya-Lorch	Met with Charlotte Hebebrand, President and CEO, International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Council ; Carl Hausmann, President and CEO, Bunge North America ; and Thomas J. Erickson, Vice President, Government and Industry Affairs, Bunge North America	Washington, D.C.
3/4/2008	Joachim von Braun John Hoddinott Mark Rosegrant Nicholas Minot Ousmane Badiane Rajul Pandya-Lorch Shenggen Fan	Met with Juergen Voegele, Director, Agriculture and Rural Development, Sustainable Development Network, World Bank	Washington, D.C.
3/11/2008	Betina Dimaranan David Orden Joachim von Braun Klaus von Grebmer Siwa Msangi Stacy Roberts Suresh Babu Teunis van Rheenen	Met with Wijnand Marchal, First Secretary, Economics Department, Dutch Embassy ; and Tjalling Dijkstra, Senior Trade Policy Adviser, International Markets Division, Sustainable Economic Development Department, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Washington, D.C.
3/17/2008	Joachim von Braun	Met with Peter Carstensen, German Prime Minister , and other world leaders	Schleswig, Germany
3/31/2008	Klaus von Grebmer Maximo Torero Rajul Pandya-Lorch	Met with Hans Johr, Corporate Head of Agriculture, Nestle	Washington, D.C.
4/30/2008	Mark Rosegrant	Met with Robert McMullan, Australian Permanent Secretary for International Development . The meeting was organized by Denis Blight, Executive Director, Crawford Fund .	Canberra, Australia
5/21/2008	Rajul Pandya-Lorch	Met with Robin Roizman, Majority Staff	Washington,

Date	Person	Event	Location
		Member, U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs , and Mark Gage, Republican Senior Policy Advisor and Director, European Affairs .	D.C.
6/05/2008	Joachim von Braun Maximo Torero Rajul Pandya-Lorch Shenggen Fan	Met with Carl Bildt, Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs ; and Martina Ränk, Political Adviser; Jonas Hafstrom, Ambassador; Karin Olofsdotter, Chief of Staff; and Erika Ferrer, Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy of Sweden	Washington, D.C.
6/06/2008	Ashok Gulati	Met with Holly Higgins, Minister-Counselor, Agricultural Affairs, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) ; and Maurice House, Special Assistant to the Agriculture Secretary	New Delhi, India
8/14/2008	Ashok Gulati Joachim von Braun	Met with Sharad Pawar, Union Minister for Agriculture and Consumer Affairs; P.K. Mishra, Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperation; and Mahendra Dev, Chairman, Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices, Government of India	New Delhi, India

As the Food Crisis “Abated”

Although the food crisis in many ways continued into 2009 (and beyond), global attention to the crisis diminished after mid-2008, and IFPRI turned to an assessment of how to better monitor signs of potential food crises in the future and how to improve the global response in order to assure food security. From August to December 2008, food prices still remained a concern for IFPRI researchers and communications staff, but it was no longer the most high-priority work item. A more traditional IFPRI working mode took over, with the production of more publications, including academic journal articles, and relatively fewer media engagements and face-to-face events.

In September 2008, IFPRI’s Annual Report 2007–2008 featured three opening essays that assessed the global response to the food crisis and discussed how the response should be taken forward. The three essays were written by Joachim von Braun, Josette Sheeran (Executive Director of WFP), and Namanga Ngongi (President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa). The full essays were published as a booklet (von Braun, Sheeran, and Ngongi 2008).

IFPRI followed up this focus on assessment with a Food Policy Report in September 2008 “Global Food Crises: Monitoring and Assessing Impact to Inform Policy Responses” (Benson et

al. 2008a). In order to expand its communication potential, the Food Policy Report was also produced as an Issue Brief in October (Benson et al. 2008b). The five authors of the Food Policy Report and Issue Brief were drawn from across IFPRI (representing the Development Strategy and Governance Division; the Markets, Trade, and Institutions Division; the Environment and Production Technology Division; and the Director General). They show how deficiencies in information and analysis lead to over- and under-reactions as policymakers search for responses to increased variability in global food prices, and argue that the information base must be improved and made accessible, especially to policymakers and opinion leaders in the South.

In October 2008, Joachim von Braun was invited to chair an IMF-World Bank seminar on “The Food Crisis: What Happened and What Should Be Done?”⁴

In addition to the programmatic publications on monitoring and assessing, IFPRI also drew together a number of people from across the institute in order to produce the Issue Brief “International Agricultural Research for Food Security, Poverty Reduction, and the Environment: What to Expect from Scaling Up CGIAR Investments and ‘Best Bet’ Programs” (von Braun et al. 2008b). This was also released as a Booklet. In it the authors argue that the CGIAR has the potential to carry out a strong set of research programs that could benefit billions of people, but that further funds are needed to make progress on this.

In November 2008, a themed issue of the academic journal *Agricultural Economics* was published on the world food crisis. This themed issue was brought out relatively quickly for an academic journal, and contained four articles written by IFPRI researchers (Headey and Fan 2008a; Arndt et al. 2008; Benson, Mugarura, and Wanda 2008; Diao et al. 2008). For IFPRI, it was important to be able to use this communication channel to reach academic audiences, and to maintain the trust that several stakeholders place in the quality of IFPRI’s research. An IFPRI Discussion Paper was also published in tandem with the special journal issue (Headey and Fan 2008b).

Other IFPRI publications on the food crisis were a RENEWAL Brief on food prices and the AIDS response (Gillespie 2008), an IFPRI Policy Brief on helping women respond to the crisis (Quisumbing et al. 2008), and another IFPRI Food Policy Report based on Joachim von Braun’s address to the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, in December 2008 “Food and Financial Crises: Implications for Agriculture and the Poor” (von Braun 2008k). In addition, shorter articles were published in other outlets, including in *EuroChoices* (von Braun 2008h), *Food Ethics* (von Braun 2008i), *Nature* (von Braun 2008j), and *CAB Reviews* (Asenso-Okyere and Babu 2008).

⁴ The video can be viewed on the IMF website (<http://www.imf.org/external/mmedia/view.asp?eventID=1280>)

3. THE IMPACT OF IFPRI COMMUNICATIONS: “THOUGHT LEADERS”

In March 2009, Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of WFP, gave the keynote address at DFID’s Annual Conference in London (Sheeran 2009). Her address was entitled “One year on from the food crisis,” and in it she summed up some of the global response, including WFP’s own work which helped more than 80 nations and was estimated to have reached 100 million people in need. She also mentioned other institutions that had carried out large-scale aid programs, including Oxfam, Concern, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Caritas, and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Then she took a moment to thank another group whom she called “the thought leaders”: “I must also commend the thought leaders from Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Simon Maxell, IFPRI and Joachim von Braun, Lawrence Haddad, the Secretary-General’s High Level Task Force including FAO, IFAD, and others.”

Her term is an apt summary of IFPRI’s contribution to the global response to the food crisis: the Institute was a prominent “thought leader,” helping to shape high-level response programs.

The UN system

The first institution to enter into a formal conversation with IFPRI regarding the food crisis was **FAO**. FAO created its Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) in December 2007 to help small producers raise their output and earn more. ISFP launched activities on the ground in several countries, assisted governments in preparing appropriate strategies to respond to the crisis, promoted the creation of national committees on soaring food prices, and set up a Monitoring Unit on Food Prices and Market Intelligence. This unit was established in partnership with the World Bank, IFAD, WFP, and IFPRI. Its aim was to improve knowledge at global, regional, national, and local levels. FAO’s portal page on the world food situation links to IFPRI as one of the organization’s partners.⁵

IFPRI’s collaboration with FAO continued in February and March 2008, when IFPRI was invited to attend three of the eight Expert Meetings that preceded the UN Food Summit in Rome in June 2008. In preparation for the Food Summit, FAO organized eight Expert Meetings, with around 20–30 experts in each meeting, along with FAO staff, in order to produce technical background documents and options for decision makers. IFPRI staff contributed to the Expert Meeting on Bioenergy Policy, Markets and Trade and Food Security, and Global Perspectives on Fuel and Food Security (February 18–20, 2008); the Expert Meeting on Climate Change, Water and Food Security (February 26–28, 2008); and the Expert Meeting on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (March 5–7, 2008).

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/en/>

FAO hosted the UN High-Level Conference on World Food Security from June 3–5, 2008, in Rome. Forums and roundtables were held during the three days of events. The Roundtables addressed (1) High food prices: causes, consequences and solutions; (2) Climate change and food security; (3) Transboundary pests and diseases; and (4) Bioenergy and food security. Joachim von Braun was invited to speak at the Roundtable on high food prices.

The UN system then created a **UN High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis** in April 2008, chaired by Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General. FAO contributed significantly to its work, and FAO Director General, Jacques Diouf, served as Vice-Chair. The HLTF drew up a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) in July 2008 (HLTF 2008). This was a global strategy designed to provide emergency relief as well as address longer-term sustainable food security. The CFA cited IFPRI research to back up its estimates of the funds needed and the breakdown of these funds into what was needed to meet immediate requirements and what was needed to build longer-term resiliency, including investment in agriculture. IFPRI's Policy Brief 1 "Rising Food Prices: What Should be Done?" (von Braun 2008c) and Policy Brief 3 "Investing in Agriculture to Overcome the World Food Crisis and Reduce Poverty and Hunger" (Fan and Rosegrant 2008) were cited explicitly.

IFPRI also contributed substantively to the conceptual thinking of the HLTF. IFPRI had designated a few researchers to be the primary points of contact for the HLTF team, and IFPRI sent relevant materials to them and met with them personally to discuss policy options. The CFA's strategic recommendations mirror much of IFPRI's proposed action plan. The CFA presents two sets of actions to promote a comprehensive response to the food crisis, both of which require urgent attention. The first set focuses on meeting the immediate needs of vulnerable populations. The second set builds resilience and contributes to global food and nutrition security. This mirrors IFPRI's action plan, which set out an "emergency package" and a "resilience package," both of which should be invested in immediately. The CFA's specific recommendations under each set of actions also reflect many of IFPRI's concerns:

To meet immediate needs:

- (1) emergency food assistance, nutrition interventions and safety nets to be enhanced and made more accessible;
- (2) smallholder farmer food production to be boosted;
- (3) trade and tax policies to be adjusted; and
- (4) macroeconomic implications to be managed.

To build resilience and contribute to food security in the longer-term:

- (1) social protection systems to be expanded;
- (2) smallholder farmer-led food availability growth to be sustained;
- (3) international food markets to be improved; and
- (4) international biofuel consensus to be developed.

Like IFPRI's action plan, the CFA addresses emergency assistance, trade and tax policies, macroeconomic regulation of markets, social protection, sustainable agricultural growth, and biofuel policies.

Later in the year, IFPRI's Food Policy Report on monitoring and assessing the impacts of food crises (Benson et al. 2008a) was picked up by the HLTF. IFPRI has now been given a retainer contract by the HLTF to advise on this subject on a regular basis.

In relation to the **WFP**, Joachim von Braun interacted with Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of WFP, several times during 2008. As noted above, she later referred to IFPRI as one of the "thought leaders" during this time (Sheeran 2009). After the peak of the crisis, she wrote one of the three Annual Report essays for IFPRI that assessed the global response (von Braun, Sheeran, and Ngongi 2008). After the crisis she was also one of the key actors who paid attention to IFPRI's research on physical and virtual grain reserves (von Braun and Torero 2008, 2009). Here as in many other cases IFPRI's research and recommendations formed one piece of a larger puzzle, as Sheeran referred to calls by IFPRI as well as Chatham House, FAO, and nations themselves for a pre-positioning of actual or virtual stocks (Sheeran 2009).

Of the other UN agencies, IFPRI was most directly engaged with ECOSOC and IFAD. As noted in the previous section, Joachim von Braun was invited to give the keynote address at **ECOSOC's** Special Meeting on the Global Food Crisis in May 2008, and the Issues Note prepared before this meeting recommends investing in diffusion of knowledge on sustainable agricultural practices through forming partnerships with the CGIAR research centers (ECOSOC 2008). The ECOSOC web pages on the Global Food Crisis⁶ include a link to IFPRI and to the IFPRI Food Policy Report of December 2007 (von Braun 2007c), where IFPRI is the only non-UN or non-Bretton Woods institution to be highlighted.

IFAD's portal page on rising food prices⁷ likewise links to IFPRI research, namely IFPRI's Policy Brief on helping women respond to the food crisis (Quisumbing et al. 2008), and the resources page on rising food prices⁸ has three further links to IFPRI: the IFPRI food prices portal page, IFPRI Policy Brief 1A "High Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policy Actions" (von Braun et al. 2008a), and the three Annual Report essays on the food crisis (von Braun, Sheeran, and Ngongi 2008). As noted in the previous section, Joachim von Braun met with Lennart Båge, President of IFAD, in February 2008.

The Bretton Woods Institutions

World Bank staff working on agriculture already knew of and valued IFPRI's line of thinking, as they had worked closely with them on the World Development Report 2008 "Agriculture for Development" (World Bank 2007). "Agriculture for Development" lists in its acknowledgements that the core World Bank team was assisted by one current and one former IFPRI senior researcher who "drafted parts of the report" and that the core team was "assisted as well by" two other IFPRI senior researchers. "Extensive and excellent advice was received from" five current or former IFPRI senior researchers. The full document contains 49 references to IFPRI research

⁶ <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/GlobalFoodCrisis/documentation.shtml>

⁷ <http://www.ifad.org/operations/food/>

⁸ <http://www.ifad.org/operations/food/resources.htm>

findings. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the World Bank drew up its framework document in response to the food crisis, IFPRI was mentioned specifically.

The World Bank set up the Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP) in May 2008. The GFRP was articulated in coordination with the UN HLTF, and through this the Bank supported the implementation of the CFA. In June 2008, a framework document was drawn up for the GFRP (World Bank 2008b), in which the World Bank outlined what partner organizations were doing. In the list of organizations they specifically mentioned CGIAR and IFPRI, as the only research center to be named. After outlining IFPRI's relevant research areas, the report adds that "IFPRI also runs an award-winning public outreach operation that has considerable impact on food policy thinking in developing countries and among donors" (World Bank 2008b: Annex 2).

The World Bank's action plan, as laid out in "Double Jeopardy" and on their web portal page for the food crisis,⁹ shares many of the points from IFPRI's action plan, which had been published just over a month earlier (von Braun et al. 2008a). The World Bank has a 10-point plan:

- (1) World Food Programme
 - Fully fund the World Food Programme's emergency needs
 - Support its drive to buy food aid locally
 - Ensure the unhampered movement of humanitarian assistance
- (2) Social Protection
 - Support safety nets, such as distributing food in schools or offering food for work, to quickly help those in severe distress.
- (3) Seeds and Fertilizer
 - Get seeds and fertilizer for the coming planting season to farmers in poor countries. The key is not just financing, but fast delivery systems.
- (4) Agricultural Research
 - Double spending on agricultural research and development to \$800 million over the next five years through CGIAR.
- (5) Agribusiness
 - Invest more in agribusiness to tap into the private sector's ability to work across the value chain.
- (6) Risk Management
 - Develop innovative risk management tools and crop insurance to protect poor farmers and help build food security

⁹ <http://www.worldbank.org/foodcrisis/>

- (7) Biofuels
 - Ease subsidies, mandates, and tariffs on biofuels derived from corn and oilseeds. Policymakers should consider “safety valves” that ease these policies when prices are high. The choice does not have to be food or fuel.
- (8) Export Bans
 - Remove export bans that have led to even higher world prices. Twenty-eight countries have imposed such controls. Removing these bans could have a dramatic effect. Increase Japanese and Chinese rice exports and donations.
- (9) Trade
 - Conclude the Doha WTO trade deal to remove agricultural subsidies and tariffs and create a more efficient and fair global food trade. The need for multilateral rules has never been stronger.
- (10) Stocks
 - Explore institutional options to monitor and share information on national stocks and global prices and determinants. Explore agreement among the G8 and key developing countries to hold virtual “global goods” stocks, perhaps for humanitarian purposes.

The World Bank’s action plan echoes all of IFPRI’s action points, which in short hand were: (1) Support emergency assistance; (2) Eliminate agricultural export bans; (3) Undertake fast-impact food production programs in key areas; (4) Change biofuel policies; (5) Calm markets, e.g. through shared public grain stocks; (6) Invest in social protection; (7) Scale up investments for sustained agricultural growth; and (8) Complete the Doha Round negotiations. The World Bank’s action plan also mirrors IFPRI’s suggestion that virtual food reserves should be set up in addition to physical stocks (von Braun and Torero 2008).

The World Bank drew on IFPRI’s IMPACT scenario projections for how biofuel production would affect food prices in a background note on rising food prices in April 2008 (World Bank 2008a), and in “Double Jeopardy,” a paper written for the G8 Summit in Japan in July (World Bank 2008c), they recommend rethinking the approach to biofuels, and include IFPRI among the analysts who agree that biofuels have had a substantial impact on food prices (in addition to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], IMF, and World Bank). In the same paper they use IFPRI’s estimate that an additional \$14 billion needs to be invested in agriculture per year in order to reach MDG1 (they cite Fan and Rosegrant 2008), and they also recommend increasing funding to global agricultural R&D by doubling what CGIAR receives—in 2008 around \$450 million a year—over the next five years.

After IFPRI had published the Policy Brief on virtual reserves (von Braun and Torero 2008), they sent a memo to World Bank President Robert Zoellick and had several meetings with Bank staff on this topic. At the G8 Summit in July 2008, Zoellick, together with the French government, put the idea of virtual reserves on the agenda.

IFPRI usually works more closely with the World Bank than the **IMF**, but on the issue of virtual reserves, the Institute is now linking more formally to them in the event that IMF could be a partner working for such reserves (along with FAO and others).

The U.S. and the G8

From its location in Washington, D.C., IFPRI also contributed, along with other actors, to political decisions regarding the food crisis in the U.S. and the G8.

As noted in the previous section, IFPRI researchers gave four testimonies or briefings on the food crisis to **Congress** during the period May–July 2008. IFPRI was also part of the Task Force on the Global Food Crisis organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. The CSIS Task Force was launched in May 2008, co-chaired by Senator Robert P. Casey (D-PA) and Senator Richard G. Lugar (R-IN), and included two IFPRI representatives: Rajul Pandya-Lorch, IFPRI Chief of Staff, and Marc J. Cohen, Research Fellow. The task force was charged with identifying, by late July 2008, a feasible but bold plan of action that the Bush administration, the presidential campaigns, Congress, and the next administration could embrace on a bipartisan basis.

The CSIS Task Force produced a report (CSIS 2008) with five priority recommendations that repeated many of IFPRI's own recommendations: (1) Modernize emergency assistance, including social safety nets; (2) Make rural development and agricultural productivity U.S. foreign policy priorities; (3) Revise the U.S. approach to biofuels; (4) Focus U.S. trade policy on promoting developing-country agriculture; and (5) Strengthen U.S. organizational capacities. Further points in particular mirrored IFPRI's concerns. For example, under point 2, the report recommended, among other things, supporting the doubling of agricultural programming by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and IFAD in the least-developed countries, and opening a dialogue with the Chinese, Indian, and Brazilian governments to coordinate efforts at promoting agricultural development in Africa. Under point 4, they included a recommendation to press urgently for a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round, and to ease export bans and restrictions that had contributed to higher food prices.

At the **G8** Summit from July 7–9, 2008 in Hokkaido-Toyako, Japan, food security was a top priority. The G8 leaders expressed their commitment to tackling the food crisis. Again, some of IFPRI's key concerns were echoed. The G8 Summit issued a Statement on Food Security which emphasized the need for agricultural research and development, in particular stressing the importance of the CGIAR centers. It noted the importance of accelerating development of second-generation biofuels. It also mentioned the possibility of creating virtual grain reserves—an idea that IFPRI had only published the previous month (von Braun and Torero 2008).

Joachim von Braun responded to the G8 Summit statement (von Braun 2008g), commending their attention to food security, global markets and increased production, second-generation biofuels, investment in the agricultural sector, and the global governance architecture of agriculture and food security. However, he stressed the need to act more decisively on social protection and

nutrition for the poorest, to consider freezing biofuel production at current levels, to commit funds and improve global mechanisms for coordinating greater investment in agriculture, and to link the food security agenda to the climate change agenda.

In 2009, both the U.S. and G8's commitment to food security was taken a step further. At the G8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, from July 8–10, 2009, the G8 leaders and other international organizations signed a Joint Declaration on Global Food Security and launched the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative. The G8 leaders pledged \$20 billion for agricultural development. Two months later, on September 26, 2009, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton co-hosted the meeting "Partnering for Food Security: Moving Forward" in New York, with leaders from more than 130 countries attending. The purpose was to broaden support for the principles and commitment agreed to at the G8 Summit in Italy and to move the food security agenda forward. The meeting proposal again mentioned the importance of supporting the CGIAR centers.

In September 2009, the G20 asked the World Bank to help establish a special multilateral trust fund to support the Initiative, together with interested donors and organizations. Further discussions took place at the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2009.

Others

Following the publication of IFPRI's Food Policy Report of September 2008 "Global Food Crises: Monitoring and Assessing Impact to Inform Policy Responses" (Benson et al. 2008a), the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** provided funds for IFPRI to build on this work in order to develop a framework for understanding and monitoring food crises, including understanding how food crises impact on the lives of people in the South, and what information is needed to assess such impacts. The project provided a website with data on food prices, tools for analysts to understand food price trends, and tools to gauge the consequences of these trends. The **European Commission (EC)** has now added funds to this project and it has been expanded from its original brief.

The work of IFPRI and the wider CGIAR system was also noted by the **U.K. Department for International Development (DFID)**. During the peak of the food crisis, DFID worked to bring together a coordinated international response and launched a \$900 million aid package (DFID 2009). The package included \$60 million for the WFP and \$800 million over five years for agricultural research, half of which is to be channeled through CGIAR.

Finally, it must be noted that IFPRI's communications efforts received official recognition in October 2008, when IFPRI was presented with the **COM+ Award** for its communication campaign during the food crisis. The award was presented at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress in Barcelona on October 7, 2008, by the COM+ Alliance, a partnership of international organizations committed to using communications to further a vision of sustainable development. The Alliance consists of 19

founding and associate partners, including the BBC World Service Trust, the Reuters Foundation, CGIAR, the World Bank, and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The nomination for IFPRI stated: “The extensive dissemination has informed and influenced the global policy debate. Many of the recommendations of organizations like the World Bank, IMF, WFP, and FAO echo those of IFPRI, especially those related to humanitarian assistance, agricultural production, export bans, speculation, and biofuels policy. IFPRI has also demonstrated the connections between the current crisis and the underinvestment in agriculture over recent decades. In doing so, this communications effort has helped to renew commitment to agricultural development.”

4. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The Ultimate Impacts

The G8 and others are channeling U.S.\$20 billion to agriculture and have set up the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative. The G20 has asked the World Bank to help establish a multilateral trust fund to support the initiative. In September 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon co-hosted a meeting on food security in New York. These are two prominent examples of a new trend. Such global, large-impact events were not happening two years ago, before the peak of the food crisis. Now they are. Something seems to have shifted in the global food policy system—and IFPRI has been a part of that shift.

This is a prime example of the “systems awareness” that was presented in the introduction. IFPRI was not an isolated actor during the food crisis, and cannot claim sole credit for any outcomes. But IFPRI staff understood their position within the food policy system well enough to position their communications efforts appropriately within this system, to reach trigger points, and to inform and influence other actors who in turn informed and influenced others. IFPRI contributed to ripple effects, and IFPRI research results and recommendations “percolated” through policy circles. It is impossible to separate out or measure this type of impact. But ultimately, the systemic shift toward greater attention and commitment to agriculture, which IFPRI was a part of, may benefit billions of people.

Lessons Learned: “Systems Awareness”

Let us revisit the questions posed in the Introduction:

1. Where are the effective “trigger points” in the system?
 - IFPRI’s contact with FAO, WFP, the UN HLTF, and the World Bank touched on important trigger points; these are high-level institutions that were in the midst of shaping the global response to the crisis. IFPRI was able to capitalize on established relationships with these institutions, but they also pursued new avenues of collaboration and sought out personal meetings.
 - IFPRI “got in front of the wave,” as one member of staff put it. The IFPRI Food Policy Report in December 2007 positioned IFPRI as a provider of relevant information on food prices at the start of the wave of global attention, and this allowed the Institute to capture some of the early media coverage. IFPRI also published an Action Plan before most other actors, in May 2008, which meant that their Action Plan was taken into consideration when others drew up their own plans.

- The publications that IFPRI produced during the crisis build-up were short, reader-friendly, had a clean and attractive layout, and included policy recommendations. Policy Brief 1A (von Braun et al. 2008a) showed a clearly-laid out Action Plan on the first page.
 - While IFPRI's first publications on the food crisis were short and reader-friendly, they built on high-quality research that IFPRI had been pursuing for years (such as the IMPACT model). IFPRI drew on the Institute's credibility as a provider of robust research as food prices were rising, at a time when few other actors were able to offer solid data on the food crisis.
 - Strategically, IFPRI realized that the rising food prices presented a policy window—i.e., a time when policymakers were looking for new options. IFPRI chose to use this opportunity to consistently show how the food crisis was related to a relative neglect of the agricultural sector over the past years, and that any long-term resolution would need to address this neglect. On a related note, IFPRI did not just promote themselves, but rather promoted the work that the combined CGIAR system can do when it comes to agricultural research and development. This proved to be a tangible point that policymakers could easily relate to.
2. Are there a number of trigger points at different levels of the system?
- In addition to engaging with high-level policymakers, IFPRI members of staff took the time to invest in media engagement on the food crisis, even though this required a lot of logistical organization (following up requests for information, scheduling interviews, etc.) and meant laying aside all other work during the peak of the crisis.
 - IFPRI members of staff also took the time to participate in numerous face-to-face events on the food crisis. The Director General in particular took the time to hold many presentations and conversations on the topic.
 - IFPRI consciously aimed for a geographical spread. Their messages were picked up not just in the U.S.A, but also in other parts of the world, particularly in the EU, India, and China. Key publications were translated into French, German, Spanish, and Chinese. Joachim von Braun attended several events in the EU and one in China. There was a notable level of media interest in IFPRI research from European, Indian, and Chinese media outlets.
 - The use of social media allowed IFPRI to be visible to people searching for information on the web.
3. Is the organization looking beyond dissemination in order to reach these trigger points?
- Interestingly, IFPRI produced a lower number of publications related to this campaign than usual, especially leading up to the “peak” of the crisis. By the end of May 2008, IFPRI only had three formal publications directly on the food crisis: a Food Policy Report and two Policy Briefs (von Braun 2007c, 2008c, von Braun et al.

2008a). In June, two more Policy Briefs were produced (Fan and Rosegrant 2008, von Braun and Torero 2008).

- The overall focus was on contributing to policy debates through engaging in ongoing discussions. Important fora included media interviews, presentations, panel discussions, roundtables, and other meetings and face-to-face events.

4. Are synergies being exploited?

- IFPRI communications staff tried to exploit connections in their communications activities related to rising food prices. A cluster of communications activities were centered around the Policy Brief of May 2008 “High Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policy Actions” (von Braun et al. 2008a). First there was a valuable internal communication process within IFPRI related to drafting the brief, and after its publication IFPRI hosted a policy seminar on it that led to further discussion. Several subsequent media interviews, presentations, and personal meetings drew on the ideas and recommendations that were put forward in the brief. This helped to ground a general understanding that the causes of the food crisis were multifaceted, and that several policy actions were necessary to alleviate it.
- The food crisis saw an interesting synergy between agriculture, energy, trade, and security research streams. IFPRI was able to bring these together, for example, in their research on biofuel.
- IFPRI drew on their existing research from across the Institute. IFPRI staff members from different divisions were brought together to produce the Action Plan. The global scenario analyses that were used were based on the International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade (IMPACT), directed by Mark Rosegrant.
- IFPRI presented a united key message. The authors of Policy Brief 1A, which presented the Action Plan, represented most of the senior researchers at IFPRI: the Director General; the Chief of Staff and Head of the 2020 Vision Initiative; the Director, Deputy Director, and a Senior Research Fellow in the Food Consumption and Nutrition Division; the Director of the Development Strategy and Governance Division; the Director of the Environment and Production Technology Division; the Director of the Markets, Trade, and Institutions Division; the Director of IFPRI in Asia; the Director of the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR); the Coordinator for Partnerships and Impact Assessment; and the Director of Communications.

Identifying the International Public Goods

IFPRI’s position as a thought leader during the food crisis led to international public goods, including freely available research results on the reasons for and consequences of the food crisis. IFPRI put further policy options on the agenda and enriched UN, World Bank, U.S., G8, and

governmental policy debates by making them more informed. In particular, IFPRI contributed to the global debates on the role of agriculture in reducing poverty and hunger, the need for targeted programs and social protection, the connection between food and biofuel policy, the effects of export bans and restrictions, and market speculation and the role of grain reserves. IFPRI members of staff took the time to make numerous presentations and attend meetings on the food crisis, contributing to a richer policy process among the high-level international institutions. Finally, IFPRI members of staff also took the time to relay information and research results to the media, making media reports on the food crisis more well-informed and contributing to making the problematic issues surrounding the food crisis accessible for the broader public.

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ANNEX 1: INTERVIEWS

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29. **The Food Crisis of 2008: Impact Assessment of IFPRI's communications Strategy**, by Ingeborg Hovland (*December 2009*)
28. **Impact Evaluation of Research by the International Food Policy Research Institute on Agricultural Liberalization, Developing Countries, and the WTO's Doha Negotiations**, by Joanna Hewitt (*September 2008*)
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25. **Impact Assessment of Food Policy Research: A Stocktaking Workshop – Synthesis Report**, by Jock Anderson, Maria Soledad Bos, and Marc J. Cohen (*December 2005*)
24. **Regional Policy Networks: IFPRI's Experience with Decentralization**, by Robert Paarlberg (*April 2005*)
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