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A Reader
Resources on
ACP Food Security and the Global Economic Crisis¹

Compiled by Isolina Boto and Camilla La Peccerella (CTA)



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¹ This Reader is not intended to exhaustively cover the theme of ACP Food security and the Global Economic Crisis but to provide some background information and selected information resources. Most text of this Reader has been directly taken from the original documents or websites. For additional inputs, kindly contact Isolina Boto (boto@cta.int) or Camilla La Peccerella (lapeccerella@cta.int).

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Index

1. Food Security: an introduction	5
1.1 The definition of “Food Security”	
2. The challenges to food security	7
2.1 Food security current risks: the broad patterns	
2.2 The global economic crisis: a threat for the food-insecure and vulnerable	
2.3 Global land acquisitions: an emerging challenge for developing countries	
3. Undernourishment around the world: an assessment	10
3.1 Undernourishment estimates for 2008 and 2009	
3.1.1 Global overview	
3.1.2 ACP Regional overviews	
3.2 Hotspots and emergencies	
4. High Food prices and food security: poor households worst hit	16
5. Quantifying the food security impacts of the global economic crisis	19
5.1 The nutrition impact	
5.2 Non-food coping strategies: impacts on health and education	
6. Addressing food security risks: the need for a comprehensive approach	21
7. International action and responsibilities for combating hunger and foods insecurity	25
8. EU initiatives on food security	30
Selected resources available online (English and French)	33
Websites	39
Glossary	43
Acronyms	48

ACP Food Security and the Global Economic Crisis

1. Food Security: an introduction

Food security is a flexible concept as reflected in the many attempts at definition in research and policy usage. The continuing evolution of food security as an operational concept in public policy has reflected the wider recognition of the complexities of the technical and policy issues involved. The most recent careful redefinition of food security is that negotiated in the process of international consultation leading to the World Food Summit (WFS) in November 1996. The contrasting definitions of food security adopted in 1974 and 1996, along with those in official FAO and World Bank documents of the mid-1980s are set out below with each substantive change in definition underlined. A comparison of these definitions highlights the considerable reconstruction of official thinking on food security that has occurred over 25 years. These statements also provide signposts to the policy analyses, which have re-shaped our understanding of food security as a problem of international and national responsibility².

1.1 The definition of “Food Security”

In 1996, the World Food Summit defined food security as a situation which exists *‘when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life’*. This definition has been refined in the FAO State of Food Insecurity 2001: *“Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”*.

This widely accepted definition points to the following dimensions of food security:

Food availability: The availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports (including food aid).

Food access: Access by individuals to adequate resources (entitlements) for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. Entitlements are defined as the set of all commodity bundles over which a person can establish command given the legal, political, economic and social arrangements of the community in which they live (including traditional rights such as access to common resources).

Utilization: Utilization of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being where all physiological needs are met. This brings out the importance of non-food inputs in food security.

Stability: To be food secure, a population, household or individual must have access to adequate food at all times. They should not risk losing access to food as a consequence of sudden shocks (e.g. an economic or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g. seasonal food insecurity). The concept of stability can therefore refer to both the availability and access dimensions of food security.³

Changing Policy Concepts of Food Security

Concepts of food security have evolved in the last thirty years to reflect changes in official policy thinking. The term first originated in the mid-1970s, when the World Food Conference (1974)

² FAO, Trade reforms and food security. Conceptualizing the linkages, Chapter 2. Food security: concepts and measurement, 2003, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/005/y4671e/y4671e00.pdf>

³ FAO, Food Security, policy Brief n. 2, 2006, ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/ESA/policybriefs/pb_02.pdf

defined food security in terms of food supply - assuring the availability and price stability of basic foodstuffs at the international and national level: "Availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices". In 1983, FAO analysis focused on food access, leading to a definition based on the balance between the demand and supply side of the food security equation: "Ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need". The definition was revised to include the individual and household level, in addition to the regional and national level of aggregation, in food security analysis. In 1986, the highly influential World Bank Report on Poverty and Hunger focused on temporal dynamics of food insecurity. The report introduced the distinction between chronic food insecurity, associated with problems of continuing or structural poverty and low incomes, and transitory food insecurity, which involved periods of intensified pressure caused by natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict. This was complemented by Sen's theory of famine (1981) which highlighted the effect of personal entitlements on food access i.e. production, labour, trade and transfer based resources.

The widely accepted 1996 World Food Summit definition reinforces the multidimensional nature of food security and includes food access, availability, food use and stability. It has enabled policy responses focused on the promotion and recovery of livelihood options. Initially made popular by some academics, livelihood approaches are now fundamental to international organizations' development programmes. They are increasingly applied in emergency contexts and include the concepts of vulnerability, risk coping and risk management. In short, as the link between food security, starvation and crop failure becomes a thing of the past, the analysis of food insecurity as a social and political construct has emerged. More recently, the ethical and human rights dimension of food security has come into focus. The Right to Food is not a new concept, and was first recognized in the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

In 1996, the formal adoption of the Right to Adequate Food marked a milestone achievement by World Food Summit delegates. It pointed the way towards the possibility of a rights based approach to food security. Currently over 40 countries have the right to food enshrined in their constitution and FAO estimates that the right to food could be judicial in some 54 countries. In 2004, a set of voluntary guidelines supporting the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security were elaborated by an Intergovernmental Working Group under the auspices of the FAO Council.⁴

The international community has accepted these increasingly broad statements of common goals and implied responsibilities. But its practical response has been to focus on narrower, simpler objectives around which to organize international and national public action. The declared primary objective in international development policy discourse is increasingly the reduction and elimination of poverty. The 1996 WFS exemplified this direction of policy by making the primary objective of international action on food security halving of the number of hungry or undernourished people by 2015.

Essentially, food security can be described as a phenomenon relating to individuals. It is the nutritional status of the individual household member that is the ultimate focus, and the risk of that adequate status not being achieved or becoming undermined. The latter risk describes the vulnerability of individuals in this context. As the definitions reviewed above imply, vulnerability may occur both as a chronic and transitory phenomenon⁵.

The right to food

In 2008, the right to adequate food was recognized as a fundamental component of a sustainable solution to the world food-security crisis caused by high food prices. The reasons are twofold. On the one hand, the crisis disproportionately affected those who were already vulnerable, typically

⁴ FAO, Food Security, policy Brief n. 2, 2006, ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/ESA/policybriefs/pb_02.pdf

⁵ FAO, Trade reforms and food security. Conceptualizing the linkages, 2003, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/005/y4671e/y4671e00.pdf>

people who spend large proportions of their income on food. On the other hand, there was wide recognition that, when it came to responding to the crisis, the “business-as-usual” approach would not work. Traditional approaches, which dealt with the technical dimensions of food insecurity in terms of both their emergency and structural aspects, needed to be complemented with an additional dimension focusing on the promotion of the right to adequate food and the reform of both global and national food-security governance.

The right to food was also central to the January 2009 High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, held in Madrid. In his closing remarks to the conference, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pleaded for inclusion of the right to food “as a basis for analysis, action and accountability” in promoting food security.

The right to food is, first of all, a basic human right enshrined in international law. It is the right of every person to have continuous access to the resources necessary to produce, earn or purchase enough food not only to prevent hunger, but also to ensure health and well-being. The right to food provides a coherent framework within which to address critical governance dimensions of the fight against hunger and gives voice to a wide array of relevant groups and individuals. It establishes principles that govern decision⁶

2. The challenges to food security

2.1 Food security current risks: the broad patterns

It has long been recognized that the poor face many risks, but is food security in particular becoming more risky than it has been in the past?

Several global risks that can potentially have severe impacts on the food security of the poor have recently increased and are likely to increase further in the long term. These include:

- The risk of high and volatile food prices, which limit poor people’s food consumption, diet quality, and spending on health and general welfare, is likely to increase in the future. According to IFPRI global scenario analyses, food prices are not likely to fall to their 2000–03 levels in the next decade and price volatility is increasing⁷.
- Financial and economic shocks, which lead to job loss, expensive and scarce credit, and decreased demand for agricultural commodities, are also likely to persist in some parts of the developing world.
- The impacts of climate change, including an increase in the incidence of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods and a decrease in yields in developing countries, will further exacerbate food insecurity. These impacts will be severe because the majority of the poor depend on agriculture as a source of food and income⁸.
- The risks of epidemic outbreaks, human disease, and crop and livestock disease are likely to increase and spread faster with urbanization, globalization, and climate change.

These complex global food and health system risks can assume a variety of patterns, and can become catastrophic “perfect storms.” In addition, societal and political risks—such as food riots, destabilization of governments, and domestic and transborder conflicts—can also result from these food system risks⁹.

⁶ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

⁷ IFPRI, High Food Prices: The What, Who, and How of Proposed Policy Actions, policy Brief, May 2008 <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/foodpricespolicyaction.pdf>

⁸ For more details see: IPCC, Food, fibre and forest products. In Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2007, <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-chapter5.pdf> and IFPRI, Climate change: Impact on agriculture and costs of adaptation, Food policy report, 2009, <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/pr21.pdf>

⁹ IFPRI, Food-Security Risks Must Be Comprehensively Addressed. Annual Report Essay 2008–2009 <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ar08e.pdf>

2.2 The global economic crisis: a threat for the food-insecure and vulnerable

In late 2008, as international food and fuel prices continued to fall, there was some optimism that the developing countries might be decoupled from the crisis and recession that had started in the advanced economies. This proved to be a false hope, however, and major international organizations quickly revised their 2009–10 economic growth projections sharply downward for all parts of the world, including the developing countries.

The current crisis is different from past crises: while developing countries have been hit by many crises in the past, the current economic turmoil is different in at least three important aspects. First, the crisis is affecting large parts of the world simultaneously, and, as such, traditional coping mechanisms at national and subnational levels are likely to be less effective than they were in the past. Previous crises that affected the developing countries tended to be confined to individual countries or several countries in a particular region. Under such circumstances, these countries tended to rely on large exchange-rate depreciations to help them adjust to macroeconomic shocks, while remittances (money sent home from family members working in other areas or countries) represented an important coping mechanism, especially for poorer households. During the 2009 crisis, however, many countries have seen a substantial decline in remittance inflows. The scope for real exchange-rate depreciation is also more limited in a global crisis, as it is not possible for the currencies of all developing countries to depreciate against one another; some must appreciate while others depreciate. This situation has left developing countries with less room to adjust to the rapidly changing economic conditions.

The second key difference is that the current economic crisis emerged immediately following the food and fuel crisis of 2006–08. While food commodity prices in world markets declined substantially in the wake of the financial crisis, they remained high by recent historical standards. Also, food prices in domestic markets came down more slowly, partly because the US dollar, in which most imports are priced, continued to appreciate for some time, but also, more importantly, because of lags in price transmission from world markets to domestic markets. At the end of 2008, domestic prices for staple foods remained, on average, 17 percent higher in real terms than two years earlier. This represented a considerable reduction in the effective purchasing power of poor consumers, who spend a substantial share of their income (often 40 percent) on staple foods. Further, even if domestic food prices eventually return to previous levels, months of unusually high food and fuel prices have stretched the coping mechanisms of many poor families to the brink as they have been forced to draw down their assets (financial, physical or human) in attempts – not always successful – to avoid large declines in consumption.

As shown in *The FAO State of Food Insecurity in the World 2008*, higher food prices hurt most the poorest of the poor, especially the landless poor and female-headed households in both urban and rural areas. Higher food and fuel prices forced families to choose which type of asset to sell first, and which family member (mother, child or key labourer) should pay the price in terms of reduced health care, education or food consumption. Such decisions are especially difficult given the large share that food represents in the budgets of the poor and their limited access to credit markets. Whatever choices were made would have diminished already limited assets, thus reducing the ability of the most vulnerable populations to deal with another crisis so soon after the earlier one. Higher food prices and reduced incomes and employment mean that, even though aggregate world food availability was relatively good in 2008 and 2009, access by the poor to that food has been adversely affected.

The third factor that differentiates this crisis from those of the past is that developing countries have become more integrated, both financially and commercially, into the world economy than they were 20 years ago. As a consequence, they are more exposed to changes in international markets¹⁰.

¹⁰ FAO, *Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned*, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

2.3 Global land acquisitions: an emerging challenge for developing countries

Other than the rapid demographic growth in many developing countries and increasing urbanization process, the recent food and economic crises are also increasing pressure on land for agricultural production. Over the past 3-4 years, private investors and governments have shown a growing interest in the acquisition or long-term lease of large portions of arable land in countries, mostly in the developing world¹¹. Although estimates are difficult to verify, recent evidence published by IFPRI and Grain suggests significant levels of activity and upward trends over the past five years in foreign investors acquiring large tracts of arable land in developing countries¹². According to IFPRI in four sub-Saharan African countries alone (Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali), land allocations to foreign investors since 2004 amounted to over 1.4 million hectares of land; this excludes allocations below 1,000 hectares¹³. The land which has been highest in demand is the land which is close to water resources and therefore can be irrigated at a relatively low cost in infrastructures, and the land which is closest to markets and from which the produce can be exported easily¹⁴. This land is not intended to produce crops to sell on the world market or to feed the local population, but rather to meet domestic food and biofuel demand in the country that acquired the land. Many of these countries face significant freshwater shortages (for agricultural production) and have large populations relative to available arable land¹⁵. Similarly, given the current global financial crisis, commodity traders, agri-food corporations and private investors increasingly see investment in developing farmland as an important new source of revenue.

While this phenomenon is not entirely new, it has accelerated since the global food crisis, because the markets for agricultural commodities were seen to be increasingly unstable and volatile, and therefore less reliable for net-food-importing countries, particularly following the decision by a number of large food exporting countries to ban exports or to raise export levies during the Spring of 2008. As a result, resource-poor but cash-rich countries have turned to large-scale acquisitions or rent of land in order to achieve food security. This has also led private investors, including large investment funds, to acquire land for merely speculative motives, because of the conviction that the price of arable land will continue to raise in the future¹⁶.

¹¹ De Schutter - Special Rapporteur of the UN on the right to food, Large-scale land acquisitions and leases: A set of core principles and measures to address the human rights challenge, 11 June 2009
<http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/otherdocuments/22-srftflarge-scalelandacquisitions-hrprinciples-9.6.09-2.pdf>

¹² Joachim von Braun and Ruth Meinzen-Dick, "Land Grabbing" by Foreign Investors in Developing Countries ; Risks and Opportunities, IFPRI Policy Brief n. 13, April 2009,
<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/bp013all.pdf> and Grain, Seized! The 2008 land grab for food and financial security, Grain Briefing, October 2008, http://www.grain.org/briefings_files/landgrab-2008-en.pdf

¹³ Joachim von Braun and Ruth Meinzen-Dick, "Land Grabbing" by Foreign Investors in Developing Countries, cit., <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/bp013all.pdf>

¹⁴ De Schutter - Special Rapporteur of the UN on the right to food, Large-scale land acquisitions and leases: A set of core principles and measures to address the human rights challenge, 11 June 2009
<http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/otherdocuments/22-srftflarge-scalelandacquisitions-hrprinciples-9.6.09-2.pdf>

¹⁵ UNCTAD, The Least Developed Countries Report 2009, The State and Development Governance,
http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/lcd2009_en.pdf

¹⁶ De Schutter - Special Rapporteur of the UN on the right to food, Large-scale land acquisitions and leases: A set of core principles and measures to address the human rights challenge, 11 June 2009
<http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/otherdocuments/22-srftflarge-scalelandacquisitions-hrprinciples-9.6.09-2.pdf>

These pressures combined with increasing distrust in the functioning of regional and global markets due to the price crisis, have renewed attention to foreign direct investment in agriculture. Most developing countries are net food importers, and the land concessions increasingly granted to foreign countries and/or investors may exacerbate food insecurity, create conflict, and undermine ongoing efforts at improved land governance through agrarian reform and the strengthening of indigenous land rights. Most developing countries remain agricultural economies with limited capacity to mobilize domestic resources or provide people with adequate means for their survival; more and more people are seeking work outside of agriculture, but employment opportunities are not being generated fast enough to meet the growing demand¹⁷. For these low-income, food-deficit countries, the current challenges are of a very high order, given the fact that, in the face of increased demand for food, increased prices of food on international markets and reduced capacity to import, their domestic food needs have to be met by domestic food production – production that in most developing countries in Africa and Asia is carried out by smallholder farmers¹⁸.

While investments in agriculture are well received as a way to improve the use of available arable land, land acquisitions pose some challenges to developing countries agricultural sectors, and notably create the risk to move towards large scale mechanised farms and monoculture systems threatening small-holder farmers who rely on diversified agriculture. What appear to be new as compared to past investments is the speculative nature of the deals, the fact that they mainly concern farmland devoted to staple food crops (cereals, rice, maize) which are key to local food security and the interest on land and water which are seen as new commodities. Moreover, the focus on large-scale foreign investments for offshore food or agrofuel production shouldn't ignore the reality that in many cases investors are domestic.

3. Undernourishment around the world: an assessment

The latest hunger estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) show a significant deterioration of the already disappointing trend witnessed over the past ten years. The spike in food insecurity in 2009 underlines the urgency to tackle the root causes of hunger swiftly and effectively¹⁹.

Even before the consecutive food and economic crises, the number of undernourished people in the world had been increasing slowly but steadily for a decade. The most recent FAO undernourishment data covering all countries in the world show that this trend continued into 2004–06. Thus, no progress was being made towards the World Food Summit hunger reduction target, even before the two consecutive crises made the situation substantially worse. This is especially disappointing because, in the 1980s and early 1990s, good progress had been made in reducing chronic hunger. The number of hungry people increased between 1995–97 and 2004–06 in all regions except Latin America and the Caribbean. Even in this region, however, the downward trend was reversed because of the food and economic crises. While the proportion of undernourished continually declined from 1990–92 to 2004–06, the decline was much slower than the pace needed to meet the hunger reduction target of the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) which is to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger (target 1C). Moreover, the World Food Summit has set the goal to reduce, between 1990–92 and 2015, the number of undernourished people by half²⁰.

¹⁷ UNCTAD, The Least Developed Countries Report 2009, cit., http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ldc2009_en.pdf

¹⁸ IFAD, Improving access to land, cit., <http://www.ifad.org/pub/policy/land/e.pdf>

¹⁹ FAO, More people than ever are victims of hunger, 2009

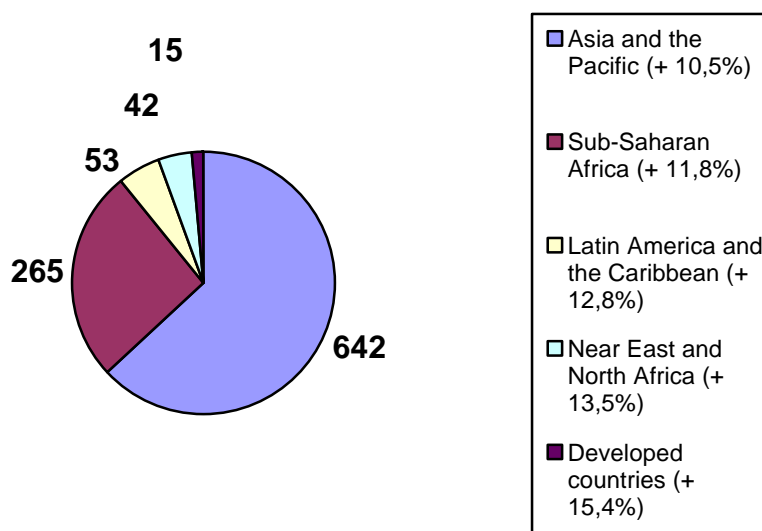
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Press%20release%20june-en.pdf

²⁰ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

3.1 Undernourishment estimates for 2008 and 2009

In spite of the negative consequences of the food and fuel crisis on the world's poorest and most vulnerable population groups, better-than-expected global food supply in 2007–08 has led FAO to revise its earlier estimates of undernourishment for 2008 down to 915 million (from 963 million). However, based on projections produced by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service, the economic crisis is expected to increase the number of food insecure by about 9 percent in 2009, which comes on top of a projected baseline increase of 2 percent for 2009 even in the absence of crisis (see Table 1 for a regional breakdown).

Table 1: Undernourishment in 2009, by region (millions)²¹

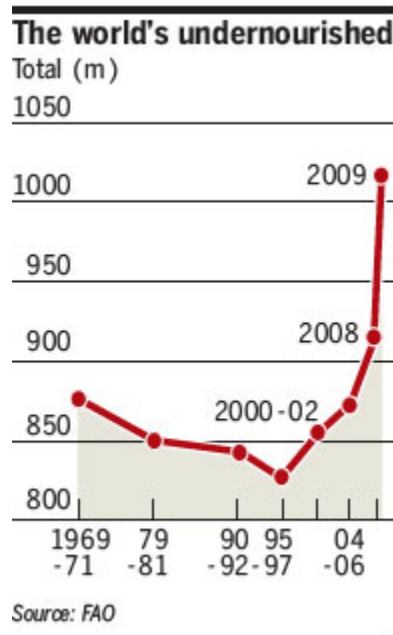


When applied to the revised FAO undernourishment estimates, these projections imply that the number of undernourished in the world will have risen to 1.02 billion people during 2009, even though international food commodity prices have declined from their earlier peaks. If these projections are realized, this will represent the highest level of chronically hungry people since 1970.

While the number of hungry people has been increasing since the mid-1990s, the number of undernourished in the world was actually declining in the 1970s and 1980s in spite of relatively rapid population growth during those decades (Table 2), and the proportion of undernourished in developing countries was declining quite rapidly

²¹ Source: FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

Table 2: number of undernourished in the world, 1969-71 to 2009²²



At that time, especially in the wake of the global food crisis of 1973–75, large investments in the agriculture sector (including for scientific research, rural roads and irrigation) led to rapid growth in cereal yields and lower cereal prices that, in turn, significantly reduced food insecurity. During those decades, the proportion of official development assistance (ODA, i.e. development aid contributed by donor governments) devoted to agriculture was also relatively high.

During the 1990s and the current decade, however, the number of undernourished has risen, despite the benefit of slower population growth, and the proportion of undernourished increased in 2008. In the same period, the proportion of ODA devoted to agriculture declined substantially; in 2007, after adjusting for inflation, the level of ODA was 37 percent lower than in 1988. Rice and wheat yield growth has also slowed substantially. Maize yield growth has increased, but this may be attributable to the fact that a much greater proportion of research and development (R&D) for maize is in the hands of the private sector compared with rice and wheat, and private R&D has been responsible for an increasingly large share of total R&D.

Given the increased importance of biofuels and the new linkages between agricultural and energy markets, increased cereal yields, if achieved, may not necessarily continue to lead to lower cereal prices. Because the world energy market is so much larger than the world grain market, grain prices may be determined by oil prices in the energy market as opposed to being determined by grain supply. Even if this proves to be the case, however, higher cereal yields will still help reduce poverty by raising revenues for small farmers and increasing demand for rural labour. Thus, it is time to learn from the past and re-invest in the agriculture sector to reduce food insecurity and poverty²³.

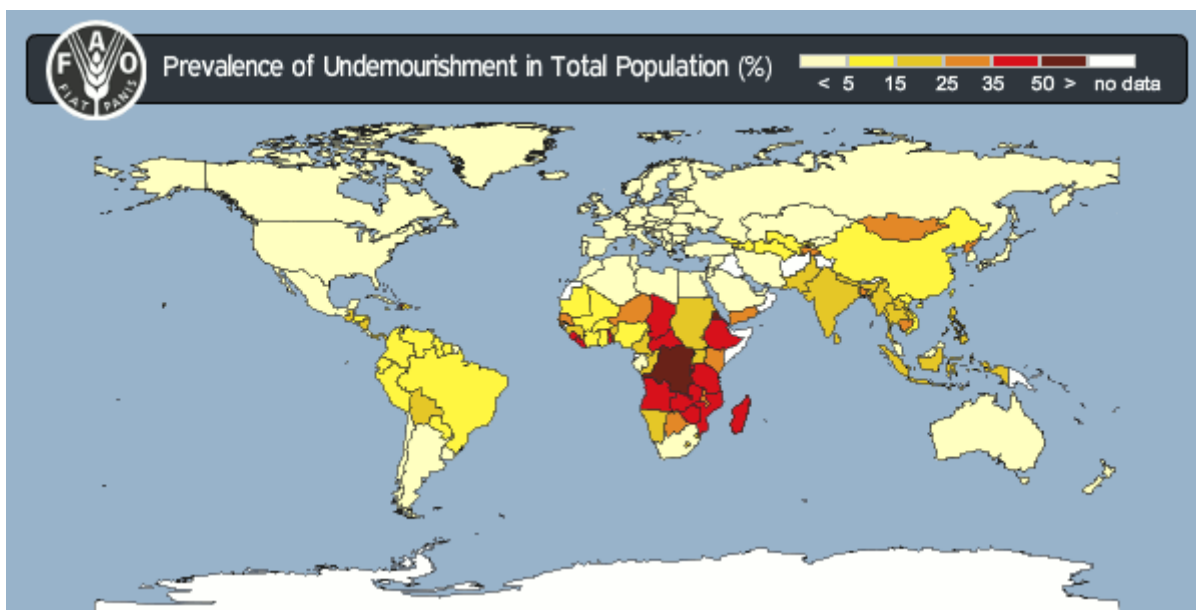
²² Source: FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

²³ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

3.1.1 Global overview

FAO's 2008 long-term estimates of undernourishment at the regional and country levels for the period from 1990–92 to 2003–05 confirm insufficient progress towards the WFS and MDG hunger reduction targets even before the negative impact of soaring food prices. Worldwide, 848 million people suffered from chronic hunger in 2003–05, the most recent period for which individual country data are available. This number is slightly higher than the 842 million people who were undernourished in 1990–92, the WFS and MDG baseline period. The vast majority of the world's undernourished people live in developing countries, which were home to 832 million chronically hungry people in 2003–05. Of these people, 65 percent live in only seven countries: India, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ethiopia. Progress in these countries with large populations would obviously have an important impact on the overall reduction of hunger in the world. Among these, China has made significant progress in reducing undernourishment following years of rapid economic growth.

The proportion of people who suffer from hunger in the total population remains highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where one in three people is chronically hungry. Latin America and the Caribbean were continuing to make good progress in hunger reduction before the dramatic increase in food prices; together with East Asia and the Near East and North Africa, these regions maintain some of the lowest levels of undernourishment in the developing world)²⁴.



3.1.1 ACP Regional overviews

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa's population grew by 200 million between the early 1990s and 2003–05, to 700 million. This substantial increase, coupled with insufficient overall and agriculture-sector development, placed a burden on hunger reduction efforts. However, while the overall number of undernourished people in the region increased by 43 million (from 169 million to 212 million), progress in reducing the proportion of people suffering from chronic hunger (down from 34 to 30

²⁴ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

percent). Most of the increase in the number of hungry people in sub-Saharan Africa occurred in a single country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Fuelled by widespread and persistent conflict, the number of its chronically hungry shot up from 11 million to 43 million and the proportion of undernourished rose from 29 to 76 percent. The number of undernourished has risen in another 25 countries in the region since 1990–92, presenting it with a major challenge in moving more rapidly towards the WFS and MDG hunger reduction targets.

At the same time, several of the countries that have achieved the steepest reductions in the proportion of undernourished are also located in sub-Saharan Africa. They include Ghana, the Congo, Nigeria, Mozambique and Malawi, with Ghana being the only country to have reached both the WFS and MDG targets. Key to Ghana's success has been robust growth, both in the economy at large and in the agriculture sector in particular. Spurred by policies that provide a larger return to producers and by relatively strong cocoa prices, Ghana's agricultural gross domestic product (GDP) has grown steadily. A recent World Bank study found that more than twice as many Ghanaians are moving back into agriculture as are leaving it.

In the 14 African countries on track to reach the MDG target of reducing the prevalence of hunger by half by 2015, the agriculture sector has achieved steady and relatively rapid growth, characterized by gains in agricultural value added, food production, cereal production and cereal yields. This is in marked contrast to the 14 African countries that either have failed to reduce the prevalence of undernourishment or have seen it increase since 1990–92. In these countries, food production has fallen sharply, while agricultural value added has edged up at less than one-quarter of the rate achieved by the more successful group. Importantly, countries that have scored successes include several that emerged from decades of civil war and conflict, offering striking evidence of the importance of peace and political stability for hunger reduction.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Among all the sub regions, South America has been the most successful in reducing hunger, with 10 out of 12 countries well on their way towards achieving the MDG 1 target. Backed by relatively high levels of national income, strong economic growth and strong productivity growth in their agriculture sectors, five countries in South America (Argentina, Chile, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay) have all reached the WFS and MDG targets. However, elsewhere in the region, progress has not been as uniform. Costa Rica, Jamaica and Mexico have joined Cuba on the list of countries that successfully reached both the WFS and MDG hunger reduction targets in 2003–05. On the other hand, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Panama continue to experience difficulties in reducing the prevalence of hunger. Despite facing persistently high levels of political and economic instability, poverty and hunger, Haiti has seen a small reduction in undernourishment since 1990–92. However, with 58 percent of the population suffering from chronic hunger, it has one of the highest levels of undernourishment in the world.

Asia and the Pacific

Like other regions in the world, the Asia and Pacific region shows a mixed picture of success stories and setbacks in hunger reduction. Asia has recorded modest progress in reducing the prevalence of hunger (from 20 to 16 percent) and a moderate reduction in the number of hungry people (from 582 million to 542 million people)²⁵.

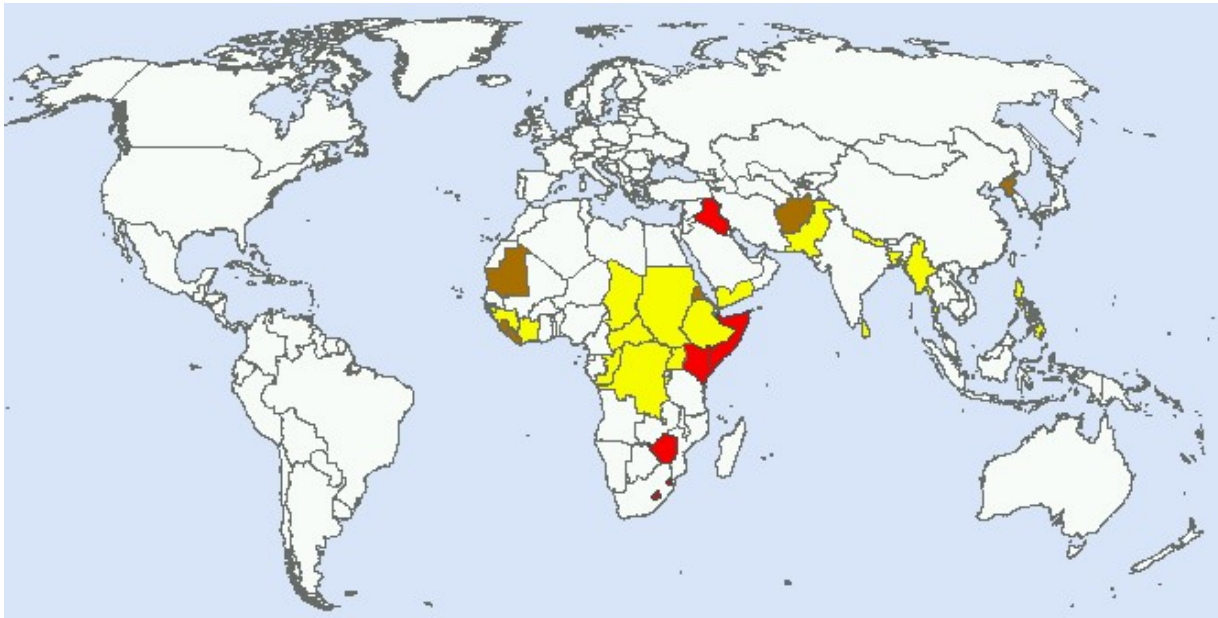
3.2 Hotspots and emergencies

The above analysis of long-term trends in undernourishment highlights the marked prevalence of chronic hunger in countries that have experienced food crises over several consecutive years. Food crises can emerge at any time and anywhere in the world as a consequence of severe adverse weather conditions, natural disasters, economic shocks, conflicts or a combination of

²⁵ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

these factors. In support of timely action to mitigate – and with the desire to prevent – a further deterioration in the food security situation of affected countries, the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) continuously monitors the situation on all continents and maintains a list of countries that are in crisis. Many such countries remain on the GIEWS list for a long time, or appear frequently, and are regarded as having “hunger hotspots” – areas where a significant proportion of people are severely affected by persistent or recurring hunger and malnutrition. The figure below shows a map of countries in crisis that require external assistance.

Table 3: Countries in crisis requiring external assistance (total: 31 countries)²⁶



Legenda :

	Shortfall in aggregate food production/supplies.
	Widespread lack of access
	Severe localized food insecurity.

Countries in Crisis Requiring External Assistance are expected to lack the resources to deal with reported critical problems of food insecurity. Food crises are nearly always due to a combination of factors, but for the purpose of response planning, it is important to establish whether the nature of food crises is predominantly related to lack of food availability, limited access to food, or severe but localized problems. Accordingly, the list of countries requiring external assistance is organized into three broad, not mutually exclusive, categories:

- Countries facing an exceptional shortfall in aggregate food production/supplies as a result of crop failure, natural disasters, interruption of imports, disruption of distribution, excessive post-harvest losses, or other supply bottlenecks.
- Countries with widespread lack of access, where a majority of the population is considered to be unable to procure food from local markets, due to very low incomes, exceptionally high food prices, or the inability to circulate within the country.
- Countries with severe localized food insecurity due to the influx of refugees, a concentration of internally displaced persons, or areas with combinations of crop failure and deep poverty.

A retrospective analysis of the nature and underlying causes of past and ongoing food crises is crucial to the framing of appropriate emergency interventions and policy measures to address

²⁶ Source : FAO GIEWS : <http://www.fao.org/giews/english/hotspots/index.htm>

hunger hotspots. This analysis provides a basis for assessing the impact of the sharp rise in agricultural commodity, food and fuel prices on countries already in crisis (and on many others highly vulnerable to these price shocks). Given the uncertain impact of soaring food and fuel prices on countries, households and individuals around the world, the distinction between countries already “in crisis” and others “at risk” has become much less clear, and this presents a series of challenges for monitoring and for timely and appropriate early warning of impending food crises²⁷.

4. High Food prices and food security: poor households worst hit

FAO global estimates show that high food prices have increased world hunger. FAO has examined the impact of high food prices on household welfare. The empirical analysis described in this section shows that, in the short term, the vast majority of poor urban and rural households are hit hardest by higher prices. Among the poor, it is the landless and female-headed households that are most vulnerable to sharp rises in basic food prices. The relative impact is not uniform, even among poor households, and depends on a number of factors. Particularly important is the extent to which households produce food for their own consumption compared with what they buy in the marketplace²⁸. buyers of food, even in rural areas where agriculture and staple food production determine the principal livelihoods for many. According to FAO data from nine developing countries, about three quarters of rural households and 97 percent of urban households are net food buyers. Net food buyers stand to lose from an increase in the price of food staples.

The extent of the impact depends in part on dietary patterns. Households that spend a large proportion of their income on internationally traded food staples (such as wheat, rice and maize) are more likely to suffer a decline in overall welfare. These include most urban households. The extent of this decline depends on the ability of a household to shift consumption towards less-expensive foods that do not generally enter global markets, such as roots and tubers. In contrast households with land and those that derive some income from the production and sale of food staples that are also traded internationally could benefit from higher world prices. However, high fuel and fertilizer prices are likely to offset some of these gains. In the medium term, most farmers tend to shift production towards more profitable crops. This could enable them to move from being net buyers to net sellers of staple foods. Their ability to change depends on the movement in relative prices as well as their access to land, resources and services needed to facilitate change. FAO has simulated the short-term impact of a 10-percent increase in the price of key internationally traded staple foods on the income of different types of households in urban and rural areas Using a uniform 10-percent increase illustrates how the effects are distributed among different household groups and allows more meaningful cross-country comparisons. Simulating the higher price increases occurring in many countries would yield higher impacts, but the distribution among household groups would remain the same. In terms of the percentage loss in income, the results show that the poorest households are hit hardest by rising food prices in both urban and rural areas. This is a cause for concern because the erosion of their real income harms not only their current ability to cover basic needs but also their prospects of escaping poverty. In order to cope with the added stress of high food prices, poor households may be forced to sell assets that would reduce their livelihood base, to reduce the number and/or the diversity of meals they consume, or to reduce expenditure on essential non-food items, such as health care and education.

Households tend to be less affected in countries where the **diet** consists largely of **food staples** that are not internationally traded. For example, Ghanaian households appear to be relatively

²⁷ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

²⁸ A household is defined as a net food buyer when the value of food staples it produces is less than the value of food staples it consumes.

insulated from swings in international food markets because a large share of their diet is based on local staples such as cassava and sorghum. Should the price of these local staples also increase as demand for them grows, rising food prices would have a much stronger impact.

The effects of rising food prices may also vary substantially among countries that have similar dietary patterns but differ in terms of **land distribution and productivity levels**. Access to key productive assets, especially land, influences the extent to which households, even at similar levels of income, are affected positively or negatively by higher food prices. Across the board, high food prices hit landless households hardest. Landowners, especially the wealthier ones, are in a favourable position to gain from price increases in internationally traded staple foods.

Household **livelihood strategies** are another important factor in determining the impact of increased food prices on household welfare.

Agriculture-based households (those deriving more than 75 percent of their income from farming) stand to gain from the price increase, or at least lose less, depending on the extent of staple crop production. More surprisingly perhaps, wealthier agriculture-based households may not always gain most from price increases in staple foods as they may be producing other commodities whose prices may not necessarily be rising, such as high-value or non-food crops (e.g. tobacco in Malawi), or livestock.

The welfare impact of a 10-percent rise in staple food prices also varies by **gender**. Among urban households (which are primarily net buyers of food), female-headed households suffer a larger proportional drop in welfare than male-headed households. The most important exception found in the countries analysed is in Pakistan, where female-headed households represent a larger proportion among the wealthier income groups. Among rural households, female-headed households face considerably higher welfare losses in all countries.

Overall, at the national level, female-headed households are more vulnerable to food price shocks for two reasons. First, they tend to spend proportionally more on food than male-headed households; hence, they are hit harder by higher food prices. Second, they face a variety of gender-specific obstacles that limit their ability to produce more food and, thus, to benefit from an increase in food prices. Chief among these constraints are differences in access to inputs and services, particularly land and credit²⁹.

4.1 The nutrition impacts

In the short term, households have few choices or none as to how to cope with high food prices, which often leads to a reduction in daily diets. However, in the medium-to-longer term, households may employ different strategies to cope with the drop in purchasing power caused by higher food prices. Depending on the severity, frequency and duration of food price increases, household coping strategies could be food-based, non-food-based or a combination of both.

In countries where people have access to a more diversified diet, households will respond to a sudden and dramatic increase in food prices by first reducing the number of foods consumed from different food groups while leaving overall consumption of staples unchanged. High prices of internationally traded commodities, such as staple grains and vegetable oils, are expected to increase the prevalence of malnutrition among both urban and rural households, with a greater impact in countries with already low levels of dietary diversity³⁰. The links between high staple food prices and nutritional outcomes are complex and subject to contextual factors, including the

²⁹ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

³⁰ From a scientific perspective, **nutrition** is an area of knowledge that is concerned with the provision of food and its utilisation in the body. The body needs nutrients for growth, development, health and general wellbeing. On the same basis, **undernutrition** Physical manifestation of hunger resulting from inadequate intake of macro- and micronutrients or disease, and characterized by wasting, stunting or other clinical signs. These deficiencies impair body processes, such as growth, pregnancy, lactation, physical work, cognitive function, and disease resistance and recovery. It can be measured as weight for age (underweight), height for age (stunting) and height for weight (wasting).

geographical distribution of the food price increases, the number of commodities affected in any one country and the choices made at the household level that affect food, health and care practices. In general, in analysing the possible nutrition impacts of household and individual behaviour in response to high food prices, coping strategies can be classified as being either food-based or non-food based.

Among the food-based coping strategies, a sudden loss in purchasing power may result in changes in the quantity, quality and/or diversity of food items consumed. For example, an increase in the price of imported rice in West Africa might force households to switch to cheaper domestic rice or other starchy staples, such as locally produced sorghum or millet. Low income households with little or no choice to reduce the diversity of their diets will respond by simply eating fewer meals per day and by reducing non-food expenditure. Non-food based coping strategies may involve a reduction in expenditure on health care and education, in addition to seeking other sources of income to offset the loss in purchasing power. Importantly, the extent to which households and individuals are affected depends considerably on their consumption behaviour and income status before the price shock took place³¹.

Nutrition impacts vary

The proportion of income spent on food in any one country tends to decrease with higher levels of per capita income. On average, this proportion may range from about 60 percent for some of the lowest income countries to 15 percent or less for high-income countries. Households in low-income countries generally derive a larger share of total energy intake from cereals. Therefore, the relative impact of high food prices, particularly of high cereal prices, will be largest in low income countries. This effect is magnified in countries where a large share of the population is already undernourished and where diets among the poor are less diversified.

In these countries, households have little choice but to reduce the number of meals and/or the portion size, resulting in reduced energy intake and increased levels of undernourishment. In countries where people have access to a more diversified diet, the nutritional concern associated with a price shock centres on increased risk of deficiencies in essential micronutrients, such as iron and vitamin A, as households are forced to consume fewer foods³².

Dietary diversity and nutrition

The strong influence that income exerts on food choices can be seen in country-level data from food balance sheets. The share of dietary energy from animal foods, vegetable oils, sugar, fruits and vegetables increases with higher per capita income levels, while that from roots, tubers and pulses tends to decrease.

As a result, diets in low-income countries are typically rich in cereals, roots and tubers, while the poor consume less meat and fewer dairy products, smaller amounts of oils and fats, and fewer fruits and vegetables. These foods are usually the most expensive, but they are also the most concentrated sources of many nutrients. Meat and dairy products are rich in high-quality proteins and micronutrients, such as iron, zinc and vitamin A. Fruits and vegetables contain vitamin A precursors. Oils are rich in dietary energy. Thus, the poor in developing countries usually suffer disproportionately from malnutrition in part because diverse, nutritionally well-balanced diets are unaffordable. Households first respond to high food prices by buying less food or switching to relatively cheaper foods. After the African Financial Community franc (CFA franc) was devalued in 1994, the price of imported rice increased, but many urban households in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal continued to consume the same amounts of rice. The strain on food budgets resulted in less diverse diets for the poorest households in these areas. In Dakar (Senegal) and Brazzaville (the Congo), fats and vegetables became even less prominent in the daily diet. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to the nutritional effects of high food prices, as

³¹ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

³² FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

they are more likely to suffer from micronutrient deficiencies when driven to consume less diversified daily diets³³.

Impact on under nutrition

As mentioned above that higher staple food prices are likely to lead to increased undernourishment (following reduced dietary energy intake). A general association between levels of undernourishment and prevalence of under nutrition in children under five years of age can be made and it is thus reasonable to conclude that when levels of undernourishment in the total population increase, child under nutrition increases as well. Particularly critical levels of under nutrition occur when 10 percent in the total population. Based on this association, it is expected that under nutrition in children under five years of age will increase, especially if prices remain high and no preventive measures are taken³⁴.

4.2 Non-food coping strategies: impacts on health and education

Having examined the short-term impacts of high food prices on undernourishment levels, it is also necessary to consider the longer term negative effects on nutritional levels and their consequences as households attempt to cope by decreasing non-food expenditure and/or by increasing their income.

Reduced expenditure on **health**, already often low among poor populations, and **education** means that health conditions deteriorate and children will have less schooling, thus adversely affecting their future income-earning opportunities and overall development prospects.

Households may attempt to engage in new income-generating activities. Time constraints among women with small children may have negative health and nutrition-related consequences for children. Disease and malnutrition are closely related. Infections increase the likelihood of various types of malnutrition due to reduced utilization by the body of essential nutrients. For example, routine health activities, such as child growth monitoring and immunizations, declined in Brazzaville after the 1994 CFA franc devaluation, partly because of mothers' decreased capacity or willingness to take their children to health centres. The prevalence of child stunting and wasting rose and the nutritional quality of infant complementary foods declined. Increased female employment may lead to less or lower-quality child care at home. It may interfere with breastfeeding, home-based food preparation, sanitation practices and seeking medical assistance when children are sick. Older siblings may have to take over from mothers in providing child care, while being less equipped to do so. Increased child labour at home or outside may have further negative nutritional consequences for children and interfere with their education³⁵.

5. Quantifying the food security impacts of the economic crisis

The impact of the economic crisis on the poor and food insecure is likely to be substantial, especially in light of the negative impact of soaring food and fuel prices already experienced by the most vulnerable population groups during 2006–08. The more difficult global economic environment has a significant influence on national food security in a number of poorer countries, many of which have become increasingly dependent on grain imports over the past decade. This reliance on food imports was spurred by trade liberalization policies and the expansion and improvement of the global transportation system. Increased reliance on grain imports has helped keep prices more affordable for consumers, but the lack of domestic agricultural growth that

³³ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

³⁴ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

³⁵ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2008. High food prices and food security. Threats and opportunities <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0291e/i0291e00.htm>

drove the imports has exposed many countries to volatility on international markets. Imported foods, including basic staples such as grains and vegetable oils, now constitute an important component of diets in most countries. From 1970 to 2003, import dependency grew most among the least-developed countries compared with higher-income country groups. In 2003, least-developed countries relied on imports for 17 percent of their grain consumption (compared with 8 percent in 1970), 45 percent for sugar and sweeteners (18 percent in 1970), and 55 percent for vegetable oils (9 percent in 1970). At individual country level, the situation varies significantly. For example, imports accounted for more than half of grain supplies in 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Eritrea, the Gambia, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) in 2005–06. In another seven countries (Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique), this share ranged from 30 to 50 percent³⁶.

Financial and economic crisis set to deepen food insecurity in 2009

In spite of declines in international food commodity prices during the latter part of 2008, deteriorating purchasing power and higher levels of food insecurity are expected in 2009. Based on historical trends in production in the 70 countries considered by the USDA Economic Research Service model, the number of food-insecure people will increase by at least 2 percent, which is consistent with FAO's data showing that undernourishment was increasing even before the crises. The economic crisis will exacerbate this problem substantially. For countries that are dependent on food imports, and assuming no major domestic production shortfalls, two critical determinants of food import capacity are export earnings and capital inflow (FDI, remittances and foreign aid). When a decline in exports or capital inflows occurs, this is likely to force a reduction in imports, including food imports (unless the country is able to borrow internationally, which is not an option for many poor countries). Thus, even if aggregate world food availability remains unchanged, the access of poor countries to that food will be reduced, compromising their food security³⁷.

Which groups will be most affected by the economic crisis?

The economic crisis will negatively affect large segments of the population in developing countries. The position of those who were hurt most by higher food prices (the rural landless, female-headed households and the urban poor) is particularly precarious because they have already approached, or in many cases reached, the limit of their ability to cope during the food crisis. Among these groups, the urban poor may experience the most severe problems because lower export demand and reduced FDI are more likely to cause employment to fall in urban areas, which are more closely connected to world markets than rural areas. But rural areas will not be spared – reductions in employment have caused back-migration from urban to rural areas, forcing the rural poor to share the burden in many cases. In some countries, declining prices for specific crops will add to that burden. Thus, despite the recent fall in food prices, urban and rural areas have experienced a reduction in various sources of income, including remittances, diminishing the overall purchasing power of the poor and food-insecure³⁸.

Countries with large current account deficits, recurring crises and large food price shocks are most vulnerable

The degree to which countries are affected by economic crises that started elsewhere depends on their degree of integration with international markets for goods and services, including financial products. Countries with large current account deficits (which occur when a country's total imports

³⁶ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

³⁷ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

³⁸ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

of goods, services and transfers is greater than its total exports of goods, services and transfers) and low levels of foreign reserves (foreign currency deposits and bonds held by central banks and monetary authorities) are particularly at risk, because these deficits are paid for with inflows of private or public capital, such as FDI, remittances, foreign aid and borrowing. But these financial inflows can end abruptly: the 17 largest Latin American economies received US\$184 billion in 2007, which was roughly halved in 2008 to US\$89 billion, and is expected to be halved again to US\$43 billion in 2009. A reduction in capital inflows will mean that consumption must be reduced. For some low income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs), adjusting consumption may mean reducing badly needed food imports and other imported welfare-related items such as health-care equipment and medicines.

Countries that have experienced other crises in recent years are particularly vulnerable to the current crisis because national and regional crises strain coping systems and often lead to macroeconomic imbalances. FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), which identifies hotspots and emergencies every year, has identified 16 countries that have experienced human-made crises, natural crises or both at least once in each of the past ten years. Nearly all these countries have been ranked by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as highly vulnerable to the current crisis (only Uganda was considered to be at low risk).

Indeed, these countries constituted a major share of the 26 countries identified by the IMF as highly vulnerable. Because many low-income countries are also net food importers, large numbers of poor people in these countries were vulnerable to the domestic food price increases experienced during the global food crisis. However, the extent to which basic food prices rose in low-income countries – and subsequently fell in late 2008 – was not fully understood until recently. The domestic food price database compiled by FAO shows that year-on-year price increases (e.g. January 2007 compared with the same month a year earlier), even after adjusting for general inflation, exceeded 48 percent for half of nearly 127 case studies of domestic grain and bean prices in the developing countries. Although domestic prices for most countries declined somewhat during the second half of 2008, in the vast majority of cases, and in all regions, their decline did not keep pace with that of international food commodity prices. At the end of 2008, domestic staple food prices were still 17 percent higher in real terms than two years earlier, and this was true across a range of important foodstuffs³⁹

6. Addressing food-security risks: the need for a comprehensive approach

Today's increasingly high-risk environment coexists with new opportunities to increase the affordability and accessibility of risk-management mechanisms.

Innovative information and communication technologies (ICTs), for example, are reducing high delivery costs, lowering premium payments, and expanding the reach of risk management mechanisms and related public and private services. The severity of the impacts of food-security risks is unpredictably high both for the poor and for low income countries. The outlook for the future, however, does not have to be grim if the appropriate policies and management strategies are employed to mitigate each type of risk in a comprehensive manner. Policies, institutions, and technology have important roles to play in mitigating the severity and likelihood of food-security risks. Global risks need to be addressed through coordinated global action, and national risks mainly through domestic policy action. Trade restrictions, for instance, have not only local but global effects, as shown in the food crisis. Country-level actions, especially in poor countries, have very limited effectiveness in addressing global food-security risks and cause distortions that have high costs. To enhance improvements in food security, specific actions need to be taken in

³⁹ FAO, Food insecurity in the world 2009. Economic crises - impacts and lessons learned, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0876e/i0876e00.HTM>

a context of inclusive and sound economic policies. In low income countries, particular attention needs to be paid to agricultural growth-enhancing policies⁴⁰.

It is imperative to rethink existing policies and strategies and to explore underutilized and new options in order to deal effectively with emerging risks. IFPRI's global policy consultation in 2006–08 on the poorest and hungry identified several key emerging strategies to reduce poverty and hunger: focusing on inclusive growth; improving access to assets and markets; phasing in social protection more quickly and comprehensively; accelerating investments in health and nutrition programs, particularly for children and women; and including the excluded.

A comprehensive approach for supporting the poor in managing growing food-security risks includes:

1. productivity enhancement,
2. market and trade opportunities,
3. insurance opportunities, and
4. social-protection opportunities.

Productivity enhancement - Productivity-enhancing mechanisms are needed to help reduce the risks related to agricultural production and markets, as well as to nutrition and health.

Investments should be scaled up in agricultural research and development (R&D), rural infrastructure, rural institutions, and information monitoring and sharing. Doubling investments in public agricultural research, from about US\$5 billion in 2008 to US\$10 billion in 2013, would significantly decrease the risk of poverty and hunger. If these R&D investments are targeted at the poorest regions of the world—Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia—282 million people would be lifted out of poverty by 2020 through income and consumption effects⁴¹. The CGIAR will have to play a key role in this global effort. Investments in innovative, high-impact technologies such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, and ICTs should be increased. ICTs, for example, have the potential to enhance productivity along the entire food chain and create significant positive externalities. Expanded ICT infrastructure could be beneficial for poor rural households through larger economies of scale, reduced physical barriers, and informed decision making.

Increasingly important is the development of innovative ways to provide poor small farmers with access to technologies that are tailored to their needs. An important element in related risk-reduction strategies is the enhancement of drought resistance in food crops and their ability to deal with climate change-related risks, such as heat stress. While a host of factors ultimately influences progress in hunger reduction, it is telling that those low-income countries that achieved higher agricultural growth also made more significant progress in reducing hunger, as measured by the Global Hunger Index (GHI)⁴².

- Among the 20 low-income countries whose agricultural sector grew the fastest between 1990 and 2006, 11 are also among the top 20 countries whose GHI score decreased the most.

- A simple regression analysis, holding per capita national income constant, indicates that GHI scores decrease by 1.9 points for each percentage point of agricultural growth in a sample of 35 low-income countries. For instance, in Ethiopia or Bangladesh (which reduced their GHI scores between 1990 and 2006 by 13 and 11 points, respectively, and whose average annual agricultural growth was 4 and 3.5 percent, respectively) the role of agricultural growth has been quite strong for the GHI reductions.

⁴⁰ IFPRI, *The poorest and hungry : Assessments, analyses, and actions*, 2009

<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/oc63.pdf>

⁴¹ IFPRI, *International agricultural research for food security, poverty reduction, and the environment: What to expect from scaling up CGIAR investments and "best bet" programs*, 2009

<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/oc58.pdf>

⁴² The GHI is a combined measure of three equally weighted components: (1) the proportion of undernourished as a percentage of the population, (2) the prevalence of underweight in children under the age of five, and (3) the under-five mortality rate. For the most recent GHI, see: IFPRI et al., *Global Hunger Index 2009*, <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ghi09.pdf>

- However, the same statistics for a larger sample of 65 developing countries show the power of agricultural growth for hunger reduction is reduced when agriculture has a smaller role in the economy (a reduction of only 1.1 points compared to the above-mentioned 1.9 points in the GHI for each percentage point in agricultural growth). It is also noteworthy that low-income countries have made greater absolute progress than lower middle-income and upper-middle-income countries in hunger reduction. This review of change in hunger and agricultural growth reveals that sound growth promoting agricultural policies can go a long way toward helping low-income countries to achieve food security. Thus, the absence of such policies creates a risk for the poor. It is no surprise then, that in countries such as Burundi, where agricultural growth decreased by 1 percent on average between 1990 and 2006, and Zimbabwe, where growth increased by less than 1 percent and was negative in the latter part of that period, the GHI increased by 7 points and 2 points, respectively. Because climate change in developing countries will cause yield declines for the most important crops, actions to improve agricultural productivity will need to be even more comprehensive to enhance food security in the future. As some authors also point out, climate change will result in additional price increases for the most important agricultural crops—rice, wheat, maize, and soybeans. Higher feed prices will result in higher meat prices. Calorie availability in 2050 will not only be lower than in a no-climate-change scenario; it will actually decline relative to 2000 levels throughout the developing world, and child malnutrition will be 20 percent higher relative to a world with no climate change. This study suggests that agricultural productivity investments of US\$7.1–7.3 billion are needed to raise calorie consumption enough to offset the negative impacts of climate change on the health and well-being of children.

Market and trade opportunities - Reducing extreme market volatility requires two collective actions at the global level. First, a small, independent, physical food reserve should be established exclusively for emergency response and humanitarian assistance. Second, a coordinated virtual food reserve and intervention mechanism should be created to help avoid price spikes. The organizational design of the virtual reserve would include a high-level technical commission that would facilitate coordinated releases from reserves and intervention in futures markets. It would also include a global intelligence unit that would signal when prices head toward a spike. At the national level, commodity exchanges offer new opportunities for smallholders to manage market based risk and catalyze production and growth. Commodity exchanges could engage small farmers in the market economy in important ways by generating market information; making product grades, quality, and market-clearing prices transparent; and promoting self-regulation. Warehouse receipt schemes could also reduce market uncertainty and improve efficiency by decreasing the volatility of agricultural supply and prices and the amount of storage losses. For effective performance, warehouse receipts should be supported by a sound legal and institutional system.

Insurance opportunities - To extend affordable insurance to low-income households, new insurance products (such as index-based weather insurance) need to be developed, and new delivery channels (such as nongovernmental organizations, community support networks, and microfinance institutions) should be explored. These new products should be supported by substantial investments in information and technology, including remote-sensing technology, computer-processing power for real-time satellite analysis, and geographic information databases. Insurance interventions targeted at the poor should build on the existing traditional capacity for addressing risk. Proper insurance regulation should ensure that the poor are reached. In India, for example, insurance companies are required by a government decree to increase coverage in rural areas. For the poorest people who cannot afford insurance, however, government regulation may not be enough. Smart insurance subsidies are needed to make insurance a viable option for their risk management and coping. These subsidies should involve the private sector from the beginning and facilitate a transition to market-based arrangements. At the same time, national and international emergency response capabilities remain essential for food security and will be indispensable. Their functions, reach, and needed scale, however, will change in the context of a comprehensive approach as outlined here.

Social-protection opportunities - With the food and financial crises, it is vital to re-examine the role of social protection, particularly in preventing hunger risk and protecting the most vulnerable. Social protection is essential for reducing the vulnerability of the poor to risks, as well as for reducing poverty and hunger by providing access to additional income and resources, jobs, healthcare, and good nutrition. Social protection also promotes economic growth by creating individual, household, and community assets, protecting assets from shocks, increasing the effective use of resources, facilitating structural reform in the economy, and reducing inequality. In turn, insurance for the poor can provide social protection by improving health, and protecting earnings and assets. Efficient insurance can reach excluded households and individuals, reduce transaction costs, and respond to the needs of targeted beneficiaries. By smoothing consumption during economic shocks, social protection helps to increase future incomes and access to food. Protective actions—including conditional cash transfers, pension systems, and employment programs—are needed to mitigate short-term risks. Preventive health and nutrition interventions are also needed to avoid long-term negative consequences. Since good nutrition is crucial for children’s physical and cognitive development, as well as their productivity and earnings as adults,²⁶ early childhood nutrition actions and school-feeding programs that have positive spillovers to poor households should be strengthened and expanded to ensure universal coverage. The expansion of social protection should be based on existing institutions and broad political and stakeholder support. To ensure financial sustainability and program efficiency, the national tax base should be strengthened, information on the precise nature of nutrition problems should be improved, and proper incentives for beneficiaries and program administrators should be put in place. Effective targeting is also essential for cost-effectiveness and for reaching the intended beneficiaries. In failed states, however, financial and administrative capacity is lacking for implementing insurance and social protection schemes, leaving the poor without any form of state protection in times of severe crises. In these countries, it is crucial to strengthen capacity and governance practices⁴³.

What concrete steps towards sustainable global and local food markets?

Policy options for addressing food security require a combination of approaches. Social protection strategies should be designed to mitigate the current shock for the most vulnerable, lay the foundation for sustainable recovery, and prevent negative impacts in the future. An important part of the solution to global hunger is reducing gender inequality as evidence shows that higher levels of hunger are associated with lower literacy rates and access to education for women. Policy options should also include the establishment of food stocks and a global minimum grain reserve, developing high-value and underutilized crops, strengthening local markets and improving food safety and quality. Price shocks and extreme weather events call for a global system of monitoring and intervention for the timely prediction of major food shortages. Given the close link between local production and food insecurity, investments in the agricultural sector and agricultural research that increase food availability and strengthen the resilience of the food production system will have immediate positive impacts in food insecure regions (the amount spent in agricultural research and development has fallen dramatically by more than 50% over the last decade). Trade policy approaches to benefit developing countries include, among other measures, the removal of barriers for products in which they have a comparative advantage; reduced tariffs for processed commodities, deeper preferential access to markets for least developed countries, flexibility to allow developing countries to designate “special products,” crucial for food security, livelihood and development⁴⁴.

7. International action and responsibilities for combating hunger and food insecurity

⁴³ IFPRI, Food-Security Risks Must Be Comprehensively Addressed. Annual Report Essay 2008–2009 <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ar08e.pdf>

⁴⁴ International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAATSD), Synthesis Report, 2009, [http://www.agassessment.org/reports/IAASTD/EN/Agriculture%20at%20a%20Crossroads_Synthesis%20Report%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.agassessment.org/reports/IAASTD/EN/Agriculture%20at%20a%20Crossroads_Synthesis%20Report%20(English).pdf).

Soaring food prices have triggered worldwide concern about threats to global food security, especially for the millions of the world's most vulnerable. It was recognized that a crisis of this nature and magnitude requires an urgent, comprehensive, coherent, and coordinated global response in order to produce significant results in the shortest period of time.

Global governance of food security

Global governance of food security refers to a mechanism that will facilitate debate, convergence of views and coordination of actions to improve food security at global but also at regional and national levels. This concept was first introduced at the turn of the 20th century when the League of Nations recognized the need for some form of multilateral world food security arrangement. It was not until the FAO and the UN were created in 1945 that a vision of world food security extending beyond the bounds of nations or regions was articulated. High level political summits, such as the UN World Food Conference in Rome in September 1974, the International Conference on Nutrition in 1992 and the World Food Summits in 1996 and 2002, endeavoured to create the foundations of an international governance system for food security. Commitments were made to combat hunger and food insecurity and structures were created within the UN system to address food and nutrition security. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was created in 1974 following the World Food Conference to serve as the intergovernmental body within the UN system to review and follow up policies and programmes concerning world food security. As an intergovernmental mechanism, the CFS is universal. It is open to all Member Nations of FAO and Member States of the United Nations and to representatives of other international organizations, NGOs, civil society and the private sector. In 1996, the CFS was charged by the World Food Summit (WFS) with the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action. However, the leadership required to make substantial and rapid progress towards global food security was not successful, partly due to the prolonged neglect by governments of the underlying causes of hunger, and partly due to lack of coherence and convergence among policies and programmes of countries, donors and other stakeholders⁴⁵.

Recent developments

Over the last few years, especially in the wake of soaring food prices and the global economic and financial crisis, widespread concerns about food and nutrition security have been raised. Renewed political attention has been given to world food security and its governance with the intention to address both the effects of crises, but more importantly, the long-term, structural factors that contribute to hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Pledges to increase resources devoted to agriculture and food security especially in those countries most in need have been renewed. The progressive realization of the right to food has been considered in various fora as an important over-arching framework for food security.

A number of national and regional efforts (policies and programmes) have been developed through a participatory process to promote food and nutrition security at national and sub-national levels and a conducive policy framework for growth of agriculture. Existing and emerging regional and sub-regional responses (such as NEPAD/CAADP and Latin America sin hambre) promote integration, coherence and consistency of national level efforts. The drive for greater policy and implementation coherence is also evident in the efforts of donor coordination through the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. The International Alliance against Hunger (IAAH) was established after the World Food Summit: five years later as a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder mechanism to capitalize on experiences and reinforce initiatives at the national level. In response to the devastating impact of high food and fuel prices on global food security, the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis was created in April 2008 to promote a comprehensive and unified response by UN bodies by facilitating the creation of a prioritized plan of action and coordinating its implementation at national level.

⁴⁵ FAO, Global governance of Food Security, 2009, <http://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/018/k6367e.pdf>

Under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General, the Task Force brings together the Heads of the UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as relevant parts of the UN Secretariat, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organization. The primary aim of the Task Force is to promote a comprehensive and unified response to the challenge of achieving global food security, including by facilitating the creation of a prioritized plan of action and coordinating its implementation. The Secretary-General appointed Assistant Secretary-General David Nabarro as Coordinator of the Task Force. Mr. Nabarro is supported by a small HLTF Coordination Secretariat to help the HLTF pursue its Programme of Work.

In July 2008, the Task Force responded to the request for a plan of action and produced the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA). The CFA is a framework that sets out the joint position of HLTF members, and aims to be a catalyst for action by providing governments, international and regional organisations, and civil society groups with a menu of policies and actions from which to draw appropriate responses. It pursues a twin-track approach: It outlines activities related to meeting the immediate needs, like investing in food assistance and social safety nets, as well as activities related to the longer-term structural needs, like scaling up investment in agriculture within developing countries, increasing opportunities for producers, pastoralists and fisher folk to access land, water, inputs, and post-harvest technologies, focusing on the needs of smallholders, and enabling them to realize their right to food, sustain an increase in income and ensure adequate nutrition⁴⁶.

At the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy (FAO, June 2008) and the G8+ Summit in Japan (July 2008, Tokyo Declaration) concrete proposals were made for the creation of a Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food. This was reaffirmed at the Madrid High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All (January 2009), where the Food Security and Nutrition were added to the calls for a global partnership. These proposals were further discussed at the FAO Conference in November 2008, at the G8+ L'Aquila Summit in July 2009 and at the G8 Summit in Pittsburgh in September 2009.

In July 2009, the G8+ Summit in Italy gave rise to the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative where those present committed themselves towards a goal of mobilizing USD 21 billion over three years to improve agriculture and food security in a more coordinated, comprehensive manner. Since then a number of meetings within the context of The Road from L'Aquila have been held with concerned international bodies and donors to prepare a systematic approach to translate L'Aquila commitments into concrete plans and practical steps.

In addressing fundamental concerns over food security and nutrition, these initiatives have called for a new design of the governance of world food security, building on and reforming existing institutions, and strengthened partnerships. The functions of the organizations addressing agriculture and food security need to be realigned, strengthened and coordinated to meet new and emerging challenges. These initiatives have led to partial solutions toward coherence and convergence (e.g. coherence among UN agencies or groups of countries like the G8). However, it is evident that greater coherence in the global governance of food security is still needed to encourage convergence of policies and actions taken by all stakeholders. The latter include governments, concerned national and international institutions, civil society groups such as producer and consumer organizations and other key players in the global food system. The role of the private sector should not be underestimated, as well as the food industry, which has large research and development capacity and extensive supply chains and market penetration. Working together, these stakeholders can contribute more effectively towards eliminating chronic hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition and preventing future food security crises from occurring⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ Source: UN HLTF website, <http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce/background.shtml>

⁴⁷ FAO, Global governance of Food Security, 2009, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/018/k6367e.pdf>

Elements of the Comprehensive Framework for Action developed by the UN System High Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis

The Mandate for the HLTF is contained within the April 2008 UN Chief Executives' Board Communiqué on the UN Response to the Global Food Crisis. The Political Context for its work is the Declaration of the June 2008 Rome High Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy. The starting point for the Comprehensive Framework for Action is Millennium Development Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger. The first HLTF objective is improved access to food and nutrition support and increases in food availability through meeting the immediate needs of vulnerable populations. To realize this objective the following actions must be taken now with a view to the achievement of immediate results:

- a) Enhancing and improving access to emergency food assistance, nutrition interventions and safety nets: through ensuring that emergency needs are fully met, protecting the basic consumption needs of poor people, scaling up nutritional support and management of under-nutrition; promoting school feeding; adjusting pensions and other social protection programmes; allowing free-flow of food assistance; exempting food purchases for humanitarian purposes from export restrictions; exploring options for reserves of humanitarian food;
- b) Boosting smallholder farmer food production: through providing productivity-enhancing safety nets to poor smallholder farmers by supplying critical inputs such as locally adapted quality seeds, fertilizer, small irrigation pumps and veterinary medicines and services, rehabilitating both rural and agricultural infrastructure; reducing post-harvest crop losses and improving village-level stocks; linking small-scale farmers to markets by reducing constraints to domestic trade throughout the food chain; improving animal health services;
- c) Adjusting trade and tax policies: through immediately reviewing trade and taxation policy options and their likely impacts on poor consumers and farmers, as well as implications for government revenues, international food markets and commitment to enhanced international trade; using strategic grain reserves to stabilize prices; avoiding generalized food subsidies which have high fiscal costs and divert public resources away from support to the poor; (in food exporting countries) minimizing the use of export restrictions or restrictions on the use of stocks to support humanitarian need and international trade in periods of significant market turmoil; (in food deficit and importing countries) reducing import tariffs and other restrictions on food commodities and agricultural inputs; improving the efficiency of trade facilitation; temporarily reduce VAT and other taxes and critical agricultural inputs where these represent a significant proportion of retail prices;
- d) Managing Macroeconomic Implications: through holding down core inflation and inflation expectations; assessing the impact of higher net food imports on the balance of payments; mobilizing external support to finance additional food imports; ensuring adequate levels of foreign exchange reserves; assessing and costing all fiscal measures taken in response to the food security crisis.

The second HLTF Objective is to address the underlying factors driving the food crisis through building longer-term resilience and contributing to global food and nutrition security. To realize this objective the following actions must be phased in now with a view to achieving durable results:

- e) Expanding social protection systems: through strengthening capacity to design and implement social protection policies and programmes; moving towards more efficient programmes as the mechanisms for beneficiary selection and the toolbox for effective programme delivery are fine-tuned; identifying alternatives to unconditional assistance through linkages to other social sector programmes using a combination of food and cash inputs; and improving the quality and diversity of foods channelled through nutrition interventions to highly vulnerable groups;
- f) Sustaining improvements in smallholder food production: through improving the enabling policy framework by reviewing current macroeconomic, budget, trade and sectoral policy impacts on incentives for smallholder production and development of input and output markets that serve smallholders; stimulating both public and private investment in agriculture; ensuring secure access to and better management of natural resources (including land, water and biodiversity);

investing in agricultural research on food crops, animal protection and inland fisheries; improving rural infrastructure such as roads, irrigation and electrification; ensuring sustained access to competitive, transparent and private sector-led markets for food produce and quality inputs focusing on key food commodity chains and their stakeholders; supporting development of producer organizations; and strengthening access of smallholders and other food chain actors to financial and risk management instruments to increase farm level investments, boost productivity and enhance assets;

g) Improving international food markets: through reducing agricultural trade distortions, in particular subsidies and market restrictions, in higher income countries; rapidly completing the Doha round of negotiations to provide an enhanced set of agreed rules for a more transparent and fair international trading system taking into account the food and livelihood security and rural development needs of developing countries; implementing aid for trade so that developing countries can better benefit from international trade in food products; strengthening analysis and oversight of food commodity and futures markets to limit price volatility; build capacity for international financial markets to better meet the needs of lower income countries; support development of regional or global mechanisms for improving emergency access to food through stock sharing;

h) Developing an international biofuel consensus: through preparing a common reference framework for sustainable biofuel development and enforcement mechanisms; developing biofuel guidelines and safeguarding measures that minimize adverse impacts on global food security and the environment; reassessing biofuel targets, subsidies and tariffs, facilitating private investments in biofuel production in developing countries to diversify energy sources and reduce market volatility with appropriate safeguards for vulnerable groups; promoting research and development, knowledge exchange and capacity building.

The HLTF encourages actions to ensure that there is adequate information and monitoring capacity to support the realization of these objectives and the twin-track approach that they imply. This requires the strengthening of global information and monitoring systems through better coordination of information systems; conduct of comprehensive assessments and monitoring in selected vulnerable countries; analyzing the impact of increased food prices; conducting health and nutritional assessments and setting up a nutritional surveillance system; analyzing policy options for easing pressure on food prices and identifying programmatic approaches for channelling immediate assistance; and through reviewing contingency plans and strengthening early warning systems⁴⁸.

Towards a global partnership: the reformed Committee on World Food Security

The most recent and promising initiative to strengthen coordination and partnerships to combat hunger and food and nutrition insecurity is the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The reform package, which was approved by CFS members on 17 October 2009, aims to make CFS "... a central component of the evolving Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition [that will constitute the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings.]"

The recently concluded reform of the CFS presents a unique opportunity to improve governance. And with the involvement of relevant consultation mechanisms at national level, it provides a basis for an effective and efficient global partnership on agriculture and food security. Features of the renewed CFS include:

- Successful global coordination of effort to eliminate hunger and ensure food security for all. This includes supporting national anti-hunger plans and initiatives; ensuring that all relevant voices are

⁴⁸ UN HLTF on Food security, Comprehensive Framework for Action, July 2008
<http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce/Documentation/CFA%20Web.pdf>

heard in the policy debate on food and agriculture; strengthening linkages at regional, national and local levels; and basing decisions on scientific evidence and state of the art knowledge.

- Inclusion: give voice and effective roles to a wider range of organizations working with food security and nutrition from UN agencies like the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and other UN bodies⁴⁹. The CGIAR Centres, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and regional development institutions will also be involved, as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations. The Committee shall also be open to representatives of private sector associations and philanthropic foundations. A fundamental ingredient in food security governance will be stronger partnerships and alliances among all major stakeholders, at all levels. Sound scientific base: receive high-level scientific advice from a High-Level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition and related subjects. This will ensure that the policy-making bodies are provided with the best scientific and knowledge-based analysis towards more effective solutions to ending hunger. Creating structural links between knowledge-experts and decision making bodies is essential in effectively combating hunger and poverty. A platform for discussion and coordination: greater policy convergence including through the development of international strategies and voluntary guidelines on food security and nutrition based on best practices and lessons learned from countries who have succeeded in reducing hunger, will be promoted. Countries and regions should be able facilitated in seeking assistance to address how hunger and malnutrition can be reduced more quickly and effectively⁵⁰.

Policy considerations

A number of policy considerations will have to be faced as the reformed CFS is implemented, and as the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition takes shape. These could include:

How can one ensure that food security governance is effective?

With the building blocks of reform in place, improving global food security governance implies greater integration and coordination of reform initiatives horizontally (among countries, organizations, relevant stakeholders, etc.) and vertically (from local to global levels). The challenge is how to facilitate and accelerate such integration and guarantee that the ongoing reform in practice effectively serves the fight against food insecurity on the ground.

How can food security be embedded in national development priorities?

Hunger reduction policies are not just for better management of food and agricultural systems in times of crisis; they need to be fully integrated into national development priorities and strategies including social protection programmes. Hunger reduction objectives should feed into other global and regional programmes to make sure that food security issues are properly addressed (for example for trade and climate change negotiations, economic agreements etc.). Sustainable responses to the crises and increased resilience of food systems require priority to be given to local approaches.

How can emergencies and long-term assistance be better balanced?

There has been a tendency for short-term emergency food and agricultural aid to increase and for long-term assistance in strengthening public goods to decrease. What is the proper balance between short-term emergency response and long-term assistance so that emergencies are limited? How can improved global governance enable donors and implementing agents to ensure long-term aid in strengthening human and institutional capacity in developing countries is properly addressed?

How can food security governance be flexible and responsive to meet evolving challenges?

Contemporary causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition are sometimes different from those faced during previous food crises. They are also likely to change as globalization spreads

⁴⁹ FAO, Global governance of Food Security, 2009, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/018/k6367e.pdf>

⁵⁰ FAO, Global governance of Food Security, 2009, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/018/k6367e.pdf>

and accelerates, and as population growth decreases and urbanisation increases. The new governance system should be inclusive, considerate of members' views, flexible and able to mobilize political consensus, scientific expertise and financial and other resources as needed⁵¹.

8. EU initiatives on food security

At present there is no food security policy framework in place at European Community (EC) level. The EC approach to food security was based on Council Regulation 1292/1996, which was repealed with the entry into force of the Development Cooperation Instrument (2007). The Regulation focused on food aid and on short term operations and did not provide guidelines on how best to assist developing countries addressing chronic situations of food insecurity.

Even though the EU is the world's largest donor, with regards to both Official Development Assistance and humanitarian aid and even though the EC and EU Member States have in place a number of policy frameworks and funding instruments to address food insecurity in developing countries, one of the key question is how to ensure "the mobilisation of all possible sources of financing for development, export credits, investment guarantees and technology transfers, and instruments to leverage assistance aimed at stimulating inclusive growth, investment, trade and job creation." (Council Conclusions of 18 May 2009 on supporting developing countries in coping with the crisis)⁵².

Nonetheless, several instruments and measures address food security issues in ACP Countries. In 2007 EC released a Communication on "Advancing African Agriculture": a proposal for closer cooperation between Europe and Africa in terms of agricultural development in Africa⁵³. The initiative was based on the acknowledgement that significant progress towards the Millennium Development Goals would require acceleration in agricultural growth and in rural poverty alleviation. It follows on from the 2005 EU Strategy for Africa and responds to the increasing prominence that donors accord to the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) in Africa as a useful framework to stimulate agricultural development in a coordinated way.

For the period 2007-2013, the EU food security policy is financed through three types of instruments:

- the implementation of food security policy at national and regional level is supported by geographical instruments, such as the European Development Fund (in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) and the Development Co-operation Instrument (in Latin America, Asia and South Africa),
- food security issues at global, continental and regional level are addressed by the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP). This also tackles food security issues in those countries where the geographical instruments cannot be fully utilised,
- In order to respond rapidly to problems caused by the food crisis in developing countries, the € 1 billion Food Facility provides assistance to countries most affected by the crisis over a three-year period 2009-2011.

⁵¹ FAO, Global governance of Food Security, 2009, <http://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/018/k6367e.pdf>

⁵² European Commission, Issues paper, Towards a EU policy framework to assist developing countries addressing agriculture and food security challenges, November 2009
http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/files/europa_only/CONS_EU_policy_framework_food_security_20091113_en.pdf

⁵³ EC, Advancing African Agriculture Proposal for continental and regional level cooperation on agricultural development in Africa COM(2007) 440,
http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_PDF_COM_2007_0440_F_EN_AFRICAN_AGRICULTURE.pdf

On 18 December 2008, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a Regulation establishing the € 1 billion 'Food Facility'⁵⁴, which constitutes the main EU response to the worsening global food security situation in 2007/08. Today's financing decision as well as the overall plan for the Food Facility have both also been approved by the European Parliament and all EU Member States.

Addressing the period in-between emergency aid and medium - to long-term development cooperation, the Food Facility will operate for a period of 3 years (2009-2011). Three types of activities will be supported:

- measures to improve access to agricultural inputs like fertilizers and seeds and services like vets and advisors;
- other small-scale measures aiming at increasing agricultural production like microcredit, rural infrastructure, training and support to professional groups in the agricultural sector; and
- safety net measures, allowing for social transfers to vulnerable population groups, often in the form of labour-intensive public works (roads, irrigation projects etc).

The current financing decision by the Commission provides support to projects and programmes in 23 developing countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burma/Myanmar, Burundi, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Cuba, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe. The full text of the decision including allocations by country will be available at the link below.

All funding of the projects adopted today will be channelled through International Organisations: the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and specialised UN agencies like UNOPS (in Myanmar/Burma) and UNRWA (in Palestine).

The overall plan for the implementation of the Food Facility contains a list of 50 target countries which will receive assistance during a three year period. Support will be provided through International Organisations, Regional Organisations and national governments as well as a Call for Proposals for activities by Non-States Actors, Member States bodies and other eligible implementing actors.

The Commission Decision underlines the importance of the European Union as the worlds' principal partner in improving food security across the globe. The projects to be funded will impact positively on the lives of millions of the poorest people in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Food aid, being basically a humanitarian tool, is managed by DG ECHO under the Instrument for humanitarian aid⁵⁵. Within the Commission, the responsibility for programming financial resources is shared between Directorate General Development (for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the FSTP)⁵⁶ and the Directorate General External Relations (geographical resources for non-ACP countries)⁵⁷.

⁵⁴ Source:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/490&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>; Commission decision for implementing the facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries to be financed under Article 21 02 03 of the general budget of the European Communities in 2009,

http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_COM_PDF_2009_3068_FOOD_PRICES_EN.pdf

⁵⁵ See European Commission/DG ECHO website: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/food_en.htm

⁵⁶ European Commission/DG Development, Rural development, territorial planning, agriculture, food security http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/ruraldev_en.cfm

⁵⁷ See European Commission/DG RELEX website: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/external_relations/index_en.htm

Towards a EU policy framework to assist developing countries addressing agriculture and food security challenges

The European Commission is considering revising its approach to agriculture and food security in order to propose a policy framework for the European Community (EC) and the EU Member States. The development of an EU framework would appear particularly relevant and needed at this point in time, given the new challenges posed to developing countries' agriculture by demographic changes, globalisation and climate change. Similarly ongoing discussions on possible changes in the international agriculture and food security governance system and agenda also require a coherent response by the EU. The main purpose of the proposed EU policy would be to provide a common framework to address long term food security challenges, which is relevant in today's world where people and markets are more and more interconnected and in which population growth and pressures on natural resources are increasingly threatening sustainable access to food for all. Concerning short-term, emergency interventions, the Commission is in the process of redefining its approach to humanitarian food assistance.

To this end, the EC released an "issues paper" aimed at launching a public consultation to gather orientations and views from relevant stakeholders regarding the proposed rationale, scope, strategic objectives, approach and implementation of such a policy framework for the EU⁵⁸. The issues identified in the paper result from the analysis of leading research organisations and international agencies as well as European Commission own research. Existing EU policy frameworks, where available have equally informed this paper. On issues where agreed European positions do not exist, the paper proposes some elements for discussion and exchange of views. The consultation will run from 16 November 2009 to 9 January 2010 and is open to any interested stakeholder. Individuals, organisations and countries that intend to participate in the consultation are invited to send their contributions, in the form of answers to some or all the questions presented at the end of each chapter and/or as general comments on the issues that are raised in the document⁵⁹.

According to the Paper the objective of the policy will be to assist developing countries addressing long-term sustainable agriculture and food security challenges by

- 1) increasing availability of food;
- 2) improving access to food;
- 3) improving quality and ensuring appropriate utilisation of food;
- 4) improving crisis prevention, preparedness and management.

This objective will be attained by: a) giving primacy to national ownership of development strategies and processes and to partnerships with developing countries and b) mainstreaming of food security policy objectives in the political dialogue conducted by Member States and EU institutions.

In addition, the policy will be based on the following principles i) equity and participation of the beneficiaries (in particular women) in policy formulation and decision-making processes; ii) targeting the most vulnerable groups, in particular small farmers, women and children; iii) linking agricultural development and food security with adaptation to climate change; iv) ensuring coherence between instruments (scope, action, timeframe) and between policies (such as agriculture, trade, fisheries, energy, environment).

⁵⁸ European Commission, Issues paper, Towards a EU policy framework to assist developing countries addressing agriculture and food security challenges, November 2009
http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/files/europa_only/CONS_EU_policy_framework_food_security_20091113_en.pdf

⁵⁹ European Commission/DG Development website: Consultation on an issues paper entitled "Towards a EU policy framework to assist developing countries addressing agriculture and food security challenges"
<http://ec.europa.eu/development/how/consultation/index.cfm?action=viewcons&id=4785&lng=en>
The issues paper is currently published on the European Commission website (<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/>).

Selected resources available online (English and French)

En italique les documents disponibles en français

European Commission

Issues paper, Towards a EU policy framework to assist developing countries addressing agriculture and food security challenges, November 2009

http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/files/europa_only/CONS_EU_policy_framework_food_security_20091113_en.pdf

Document d'analyse. Vers un cadre politique communautaire pour appuyer les efforts des pays en développement pour répondre aux défis de l'agriculture et de la sécurité alimentaire

http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/files/europa_only/CONS_EU_policy_framework_food_security_20091113_fr.pdf

Advancing African Agriculture. Proposal for continental and regional level cooperation on agricultural development in Africa, 24 July 2007, COM(2007) 440

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FAO

World Food Summit 2009, Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, November 2009

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/Docs/Final_Declaration/WSFS09_Declaration.pdf

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http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/Summit/WSFS_Issues_papers/WSFS_Global_E.pdf

More people than ever are victims of hunger, 2009

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Press%20release%20june-en.pdf

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Glossary⁶⁰

Asset

In a livelihood context, assets are the resources a household owns, or over which it has legal or customary usufruct rights. They fall into five broad categories: natural, social, physical, human and financial assets. Using these resources, a household can acquire food directly through production, or indirectly through exchange and transfer.

Bennett's law

As household income increases, a smaller share of calories comes from starchy staples as the diet becomes more diversified. This change in eating patterns generally entails the purchase of higher quality foods.

Cash crop

A crop that is grown for trading purposes, as opposed to subsistence food crops, which are mostly consumed by the farmer. In developing countries, cash crops are usually exported. They include tropical fruits, cocoa, coffee, cotton and relatively expensive vegetables.

Commodity

A tangible good that has value and can be exchanged.

Community

A community may be defined as a group of people living together in one place and considered as a whole especially in terms of social values and responsibilities. The group may have either an official or a customary form of administration. There are also cases where both forms co-exist. Local terminology may exist to distinguish between the two. There may be a more or less clear agreement and understanding regarding the application of customary versus statutory law and regarding the roles, responsibilities and powers of traditional versus government organisations.

Community food security

Community food security (CFS) is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice. Community food security represents a comprehensive strategy to address many of the ills affecting our society and environment due to an unsustainable and unjust food system. Community food security has six basic principles of:

Low Income Food Needs

Like the anti-hunger movement, CFS is focused on meeting the food needs of low income communities, reducing hunger and improving individual health.

Broad Goals

CFS addresses a broad range of problems affecting the food system, community development, and the environment such as increasing poverty and hunger, disappearing farmland and family farms, inner city supermarket redlining, rural community

⁶⁰ Sources : FAO and WFP,

<http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/glossary0/en/>;

<http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp200279.pdf>;

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disintegration, rampant suburban sprawl, and air and water pollution from unsustainable food production and distribution patterns.

Community focus

A CFS approach seeks to build up a community's food resources to meet its own needs. These resources may include supermarkets, farmers' markets, gardens, transportation, community-based food processing ventures, and urban farms to name a few.

Self-reliance/empowerment

Community food security projects emphasize the need to build individuals' abilities to provide for their food needs. Community food security seeks to build upon community and individual assets, rather than focus on their deficiencies. CFS projects seek to engage community residents in all phases of project planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Local agriculture

A stable local agricultural base is key to a community responsive food system. Farmers need increased access to markets that pay them a decent wage for their labor, and farmland needs planning protection from suburban development. By building stronger ties between farmers and consumers, consumers gain a greater knowledge and appreciation for their food source.

Systems-oriented

CFS projects typically are "inter-disciplinary," crossing many boundaries and incorporating collaborations with multiple agencies.

Effective demand

Actual demand for particular goods or services that is supported by a capacity to purchase. This is distinguished from notional demand, which is the desire or need for goods and services, which may not be supported by purchasing power, so cannot be communicated to suppliers through the price mechanism.

Elasticity

A measure of the responsiveness of one variable, such as demand or supply, to changes in another, such as price or income. For instance, the price elasticity of demand refers to the percentage change in demand that results from a percentage change in price. A good is price-elastic when a change of 1 percent in price results in a change larger than 1 percent in demand. The change is smaller than 1 percent for an inelastic good. Staple foods are typically inelastic.

Engel's law

The observation made by Ernst Engel that people tend to spend a smaller share of their budget on food as their income rises.

Entitlements

The set of alternative bundles of goods and services that a person can acquire by converting his/her endowments, such as land and labour, through production, trade or gifts.

Food access

A household's ability to acquire adequate amounts of food regularly through a combination of production, purchases, barter, borrowing, food assistance or gifts.

Food availability

The amount of food that is present in a country or area through all forms of domestic production, imports, food stocks and food aid.

Food consumption

The food consumption refers to the amount of food available for human consumption as estimated by the FAO Food Balance Sheets. However the actual food consumption may be lower

than the quantity shown as food availability depending on the magnitude of wastage and losses of food in the household, e.g. during storage, in preparation and cooking, as plate-waste or quantities fed to domestic animals and pets, thrown or given away.

Food deprivation (Intensity of)

The intensity of food deprivation indicates how much food-deprived people falls short of minimum food needs in terms of dietary energy. It is measured as the difference between the minimum dietary energy and the average dietary energy consumption of the undernourished population (food-deprived). The intensity of food deprivation is low when it is less than 200 kilocalories per person per day and high when it is higher than 300 kilocalories per person per day. The greater the food deficit, the greater the susceptibility for health risks related to undernutrition.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food, and/or inadequate food utilization. Food-insecure people are those individuals whose food intake falls below their minimum calorie (energy) requirements, as well as those who exhibit physical symptoms caused by energy and nutrient deficiencies resulting from an inadequate or unbalanced diet or from the body's inability to use food effectively because of infection or disease.

Food-price dilemma

The dilemma between increasing domestic food availability and increasing food access. High food prices provide production incentives to suppliers, but may obstruct access, especially for poor consumers. If prices are too low, producers may not be able to cover their costs. This conflict is at the heart of food security policy.

Food security

A condition that exists when all people, at all times, are free from hunger. Food security involves four aspects: (1) availability; (2) access; (3) utilization; and (4) stability.

Food utilization

The selection and intake of food and the absorption of nutrients. Food utilization depends on adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and health care.

Household

A household may be defined as a unit of people living together, headed by a household head. This is often a man or a woman, in case there is no man. Increasingly, grandparents are taking up this role, as well as adolescents, in those households where both parents have deceased. Apart from the head of the household, there may be a spouse, children and permanent dependants like elderly parents or temporary dependants like a divorced daughter or son.

Household Food Security

Household food security depends on year round access to an adequate supply of nutritious and safe food to meet the needs of all family members. Often, the term 'household food security' and 'food security' are intermingled. While food security is defined in its most basic form as access by all people at all times to the food needed for a healthy life, the focus of household food security is on the household or family as the basic unit of activity in society. This distinction is important because activities directed towards improving household food security may be quite different from those aimed at improving food security in general. The latter often being more related to macro-level production, marketing, distribution and acquisition of food by the population as a whole.

The focus of household food security is on how people produce or acquire food throughout the year, how they store, process and preserve their food to overcome seasonal shortages or improve the quality and safety of their food supply. Household food security is also concerned

with intra-household food distribution and priorities related to food production, acquisition, utilisation and consumption. It is clear that the focus is not only on the food but also on the people and households and how they give shape to their food chain and are being affected by conditions and issues emanating from higher levels such as national agricultural policies, prevailing environmental conditions, available infrastructure for marketing and distribution or even international food aid programmes. These factors are referred to as the root causes of malnutrition.

Hunger

A condition in which people lack both the macronutrients, energy and protein, and the micronutrients, vitamins and minerals for fully productive, active and healthy lives. Hunger can be a short- or long-term problem with many causes and a range of effects, from mild to severe. It can result from insufficient nutrient intake or from people's bodies failing to absorb the required nutrients – hidden hunger. Two billion people suffer from vitamin and mineral shortages. It can also result from poor food and childcare practices.

Livelihoods

The capabilities, assets and activities a household requires to secure basic needs, including food, shelter, health and education.

Macronutrients

Include carbohydrates, protein and fat. They form the bulk of the diet and provide all energy needs.

Malnutrition

A physical condition in which people experience either nutrition deficiencies (undernutrition) or an excess of certain nutrients (overnutrition).

Micronutrients

Include all the vitamins and minerals that in small amounts are essential for life.

Minimum dietary energy requirement (MDER)

In a specified age and sex group, the amount of dietary energy per person is that considered adequate to meet the energy needs for minimum acceptable weight for attained-height maintaining a healthy life and carrying out a light physical activity. In the entire population, the minimum energy requirement is the weighted average of the minimum energy requirements of the different age and sex groups in the population.

Monetization

The open-market sale of food aid.

Nutrition

From a scientific perspective, nutrition is an area of knowledge that is concerned with the provision of food and its utilisation in the body. The body needs nutrients for growth, development, health and general wellbeing. Often, people's understanding of what nutrition is concerned with is limited to the visible effects of under- or over-nourishment on bodyweight and health. The relationship between nutrient intake and health status is clearly important. In the case of protein-energy malnutrition, this relationship is quite straightforward, even to the layman. The effects of specific nutrient deficiencies may be more insidious and remain hidden to the non-nutritionist as in the case of most micronutrient deficiencies. Apart from the health-nutrition relationship, there are many other, but not necessarily less important, aspects to nutrition. These include the relationships between nutrition and: (1) physical activity, development and work

capacity; (2) mental activity, development and educational performance; (3) social behaviour and cultural practices, etc.

Price

The amount of money required for the exchange of a good or service to take place. Prices are an important source of market information, providing the incentive for market actors' decisions.

There are different types of prices:

- Farm-gate price: the price a farmer receives for a product at the boundary of the farm, not including transport costs or other marketing services.
- Wholesale price: the price of a good purchased from a wholesaler. Wholesalers buy large quantities of goods and resell them to retailers. The wholesale price is higher than the farm-gate price because of the marketing margin.
- Retail price: the price of a good purchased from a retailer by a consumer. The retail price is higher than the wholesale price because of the marketing margin.
- Import parity price: the price paid for an imported good at the border, not including transaction costs incurred within the importing country.
- Export parity price: the price received for an exported good at the border, including transaction costs incurred within the exporting country.

Purchasing power

The quantities of goods and services that can be bought with a given amount of money. It depends on income and prices.

Risk

The probability that a negative impact occurs as a result of the interaction between a hazard and vulnerable conditions.

Undernutrition

Physical manifestation of hunger resulting from inadequate intake of macro- and micronutrients or disease, and characterized by wasting, stunting or other clinical signs. These deficiencies impair body processes, such as growth, pregnancy, lactation, physical work, cognitive function, and disease resistance and recovery. It can be measured as weight for age (underweight), height for age (stunting) and height for weight (wasting).

Undernourishment

The condition of people whose dietary energy consumption is continuously below the minimum required for fully productive, active and healthy lives. It is determined using a proxy indicator that estimates whether the food available in a country is sufficient to meet the population's energy requirements, but not its protein, vitamin and mineral needs. Unlike undernutrition, undernourishment is not measured as an actual outcome.

Vulnerability

Conditions that increase a household's susceptibility to the effect of hazards. It is a function of a household's exposure to a hazard and its coping capacity to mitigate the effect of that hazard.

Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMAD	Agricultural Market Access Database
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CFS	FAO Committee on Food Security
DDA	Doha Development Agenda
EBA	Everything-But-Arms Initiative (EU)
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission
ECOWAP	West Africa Regional Agricultural Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPAs	Economic Partnership Agreements (between EU and ACP countries)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FOB	Free on board (export price)
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross national income
GNP	Gross national product
HIPC	Heavily indebted poor country
HLTF	Un High Level Task Force on Food Security
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDCs	Least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
ODA	Official development assistance
PIK	Payment in kind programme (US)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
R&D	Research and development
SALM	Sustainable agricultural land management
SFP	Single Farm Payment scheme (EU)
TDR	Trade and Development Report
UN	The United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	World Food Summit
WTO	World Trade Organization