

A Billion Hungry People

Governments and aid agencies must rise to the challenge

High food prices have brought into sharp focus an existing global food crisis that affects almost one billion people. Lasting solutions to the problem include adequate investment in agriculture, fairer trade, the redistribution of resources, and action on climate change. But hungry people cannot be fed on the hope of long-term solutions. Governments, supported by aid agencies and donors, must act now to provide systematic emergency assistance and longer-term support to those in need, and to better protect people in chronic poverty against shocks such as drought, floods, and market volatility.

Summary

Look I have no shoes! But it's an empty stomach that will kill me, not wearing no shoes.

Pamela Ataa, Kenya, October 2008

The food price increases of 2007 and 2008 focused attention on a global food crisis that was already affecting more than 850 million people. Even before the 2008 food riots, some 16,000 children were dying every day from hunger-related causes – one every five seconds.¹ The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that by the end of 2008, rising prices had added 109 million to the ranks of the hungry.² Today, about one in six of the world's population goes short of food, almost a billion people.

Although food prices fell in the final months of 2008, they remain above the long-term trend and are likely to do so for the foreseeable future.³

Two growing threats are likely to exacerbate the problem of hunger:

- climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of hazards such as floods, drought, and tropical cyclones that destroy crops, livestock, and livelihoods; and
- the global recession looks set to further increase the number of people going hungry because of its impact on employment, incomes, and public spending.

The rapid and unpredictable fluctuations in food prices, exacerbated by volatile oil markets and increasing weather hazards, are a major challenge. Poor consumers in developing countries cannot buy food when prices rise, while sharply falling prices can destroy farmers' livelihoods and result in uncertainty that deters them from investing in increased production.

The reduction of world hunger requires governments to take long-term measures to address its underlying causes, such as inequitable access to land, water, and other resources. This paper argues that governments and aid agencies must also take urgent and sustained practical action to meet the food needs of people living in extreme poverty. Currently, the majority of hungry people receive no assistance. Where they do, it is often *ad hoc*, temporary, and inappropriate. Too often, hunger is simply ignored or accepted as a 'given', in the hope that long-term development will eventually solve the problem. Moreover, not enough is done to help communities increase their resilience to exceptional events or to assist them before a full-blown food crisis develops.

International humanitarian assistance – including the provision of food relief – is essential in situations of conflict or major disaster, when governments lack the capacity or political will to bring assistance and restore livelihoods. However, international organisations are increasingly called upon to provide emergency aid for people living in chronic poverty who are threatened by the vagaries of the weather and of markets. Since the beginning of the Millennium, all the large-scale food emergencies that triggered international interventions in Africa (in Southern Africa in 2002 and 2005, in the Sahel in

2005, and in the Horn of Africa in 2000, 2002, 2006, and 2008) took place in a context of extreme poverty, where millions live on the edge of survival, with little or no support from their governments. This immediate relief is often critical to saving lives and protecting livelihoods; however, aid organisations cannot fill the gap left by governments in the affected countries, who bear the prime responsibility for realising people's rights to social protection and adequate food and livelihoods.

The success of some countries in giving effective *long-term* support to vulnerable communities shows what can be done when the will is there. For example:

- India provides a legal guarantee of one hundred days' employment a year to any rural household willing to do public work for a statutory minimum wage;
- Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme assists over seven million chronically food-insecure people – about 10 per cent of the population – primarily through employment schemes and food or cash transfers;
- As part of its food security strategy, Brazil helps small-scale farmers supply food to the poor via public welfare programmes.

Elsewhere, as in Indonesia and Malawi, governments use older remedies: they help farmers access agricultural inputs and regulate food markets through trade policy, public procurement, and food storage.⁴ However, too few governments have established interventions that are sufficiently comprehensive to meet people's food needs effectively or protect them against disasters and market volatility.

Of course, the failure of many states to provide for people facing hunger is due in part to lack of political will and to the choices governments make in allocating their resources. But the international community must accept its share of the blame. Three decades of structural adjustment and pressure from donors has reduced the capacity for public interventions designed to guarantee economic and social well-being. Although earlier welfare programmes and state institutions, such as grain marketing boards, were costly and often poorly managed, their elimination or privatisation has generally increased the vulnerability of chronically poor communities. It is now time to reconsider market regulation measures, without repeating the mistakes of the past. Policies could include holding food reserves sourced from domestic procurement, as well as financial reserves for food procurement, along with appropriate fiscal and trade measures.

The international community continues to fail to provide adequate support that would allow national governments to fulfil their responsibility to assist families facing hunger and destitution. Donors and aid agencies place too much emphasis on the delivery of food aid, of which more than half is still sourced from rich countries rather than locally or regionally.

Donors are moving only slowly towards supporting more appropriate and flexible interventions – such as employment creation and cash payment schemes, earlier interventions such as de-stocking, disaster risk reduction (DRR) such as measures to mitigate the impact of droughts or floods, and

investments in recovery. To be effective, all these measures require funding that is predictable and sustained.

At the same time, despite the recent creation of a United Nations High Level Task Force (HLTF) on the Global Food Security Crisis, there is still little coordination or collaboration among UN organisations, the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donors in responding to food security issues. There is no functioning global mechanism to ensure coordination and policy coherence of the various actors, thus adding complexity to the response effort and reducing efficiency, particularly at country level. Reform of this 'global architecture' is pressing.⁵

Recommendations

Governments in developing countries must ensure the realisation of the right to food and social protection of people living in extreme poverty. This will require implementing comprehensive food, agricultural, and social protection policies to meet immediate needs, and to shield vulnerable communities better against shocks. International support will be needed when capacities and resources are lacking, as well as action at a regional level. Oxfam's policy recommendations are as follows:

Governments in developing countries should:

- Promote a shared understanding of hunger and vulnerability and of appropriate responses. Along with better and earlier needs assessment, this is essential to ensure that national and international actors address immediate food needs with adequate resources and the right investments. Adoption of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) or an equivalent system for crisis analysis at country level would help this process.
- Ensure affected communities have the necessary access to income and food through locally appropriate, social protection measures such as minimum wage legislation, employment programmes, direct transfers to families (food or cash), and provision of insurance, credit, and other inputs to farmers, pastoralists, and fishing communities. Given the chronic nature of hunger in many countries, such policies must be implemented as *long-term* relief measures rather than as belated responses at the peak of a crisis.
- Use food reserves at local, national or regional level to supply crisis-affected populations and to reduce volatility in food markets; and ensure that fiscal and tariff policies enhance access to food.
- Complement crisis response with investments in risk reduction, particularly to safeguard livelihoods, and in economic and social recovery after the worst is over. Relief spending should be designed to reduce vulnerability in the longer term, e.g. cash-for-work programmes to improve water conservation.
- Provide an environment in which civil-society organisations and the private sector can play an active role, for instance, through the delivery of assistance or the establishment of insurance and credit schemes.

- Bring together all relevant ministries, international agencies, and civil-society groups such as farmers' unions and women's organisations, to design and co-ordinate food, agriculture, and social protection action plans. Plans must be explicit components of national poverty reduction strategies and be integrated into regional plans where relevant, such as the West African Common Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Donors and international organisations should:

- Support through finance and technical assistance the active role of the state outlined above, investing in national capacity for a sustained response to hunger and supporting regional initiatives. This requires longer-term and more predictable finance, along with greater spending on risk reduction, earlier interventions, and recovery.
- Increase funding for cash transfers to needy families and reduce the emphasis on in-kind food aid. Where such aid is needed, it should be sourced in-country or regionally in order to strengthen local livelihoods.
- Commit to a renewed global partnership on food and agriculture, which should build on existing global and regional mechanisms, and sustain the collaboration initiated by the United Nations HLTF in 2008, ensuring effective co-ordination, enforcement of global agreements, and convergence of support from international institutions around improved national-level responses.
- Reform the Food Aid Convention (FAC), which registers annual food aid commitments by donors, in order to ensure predictable funding in support of costed national and regional policies designed to respond to food needs. Such commitments should be binding. The FAC should be taken out of the International Grains Council and put under the administration of the UN agencies that deal with food issues – the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) should:

- Strengthen local and national mechanisms of prevention and response to food crises rather than just delivering aid to people. This should include participating in collective vulnerability and risk analysis in order to design better interventions.
- Support local civil-society organisations to participate in shaping and implementing national food, agriculture, and social protection policies.

Introduction

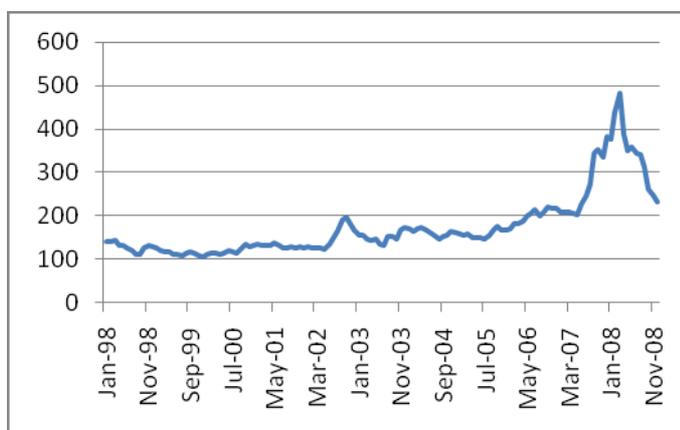
I would like to leave this place, go someplace where my children will not go hungry.

Heroro Wersami, Afar, Ethiopia, October 2008

The human tragedy of hunger continues to cast a long shadow across the world. Although the percentage of people experiencing hunger has fallen steadily over several decades, the absolute number has grown. The FAO estimates that the number of people suffering from hunger is now 963 million,⁶ about two-thirds of whom live in the Asia-Pacific region, including some 200 million people in India. Progress in reducing hunger has been variable, with some countries and regions making significant progress, and others falling further behind. Sub-Saharan Africa is a region causing serious concern, as the number of hungry people has increased by 43 million over the last fifteen years to 212 million.⁷

As shown in Chart 1 below, in the period 2002-2008, the world experienced rising food prices, with particularly rapid acceleration occurring from 2007. Prices have fallen back after peaking in mid-2008, but remain high compared to long-term trends. Costly food has a devastating effect on the welfare of the one billion people worldwide who live on less than a dollar a day, and particularly of families living in poverty in the least-developed countries (LDCs), as they generally spend 50 to 80 per cent of their income on food. High prices affect their food consumption, resulting in decreased quantity and poorer quality and nutritional value. At the same time, spending more on food leaves less money for other essentials and jeopardises access to basic services such as health and education.

Chart 1: Wheat Prices 1998-2008 (in nominal \$)



Source: International Grain Council

The poorest economies have been the most affected by high food prices, primarily because of their dependence on food imports; all but two of the 51 LDCs are net food importers. Volatility in global prices hits poor countries particularly hard that, like Senegal, import more than half their food requirements.⁸

In many countries, people living in poverty receive some form of social protection, such as a minimum income in France, food stamps in the USA, and public food or cash distribution systems in Indonesia and India. But many poor countries have no such mechanism: either because their governments lack resources or political will, or because public systems that protected consumers and producers in the past were removed or scaled down under structural adjustment programmes, often supported by the World Bank and IMF.

Public spending in developing countries, including pro-poor welfare expenditure, is likely to come under further pressure in 2009 due to the spreading global economic downturn, especially if international donors reduce aid budgets. Stagnant or negative growth will also directly impact on the incomes and employment of poorer people, and therefore on their access to food, though the scale of this problem cannot be easily predicted.

The recent fluctuations in global food prices have demonstrated the vulnerability of food markets to shocks. Unfortunately, particularly as a result of climate change, the future is likely to present more shocks and volatility rather than less. Climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of natural hazards, such as floods, droughts, and tropical cyclones. Natural disasters destroy people's livelihoods and often result in massive crop and livestock losses. For example, an estimated 600,000 metric tons of crops were destroyed in the few hours that Hurricane Sidr raged over Bangladesh in November 2007. This is equivalent to the annual rice consumption of over two and a half million Bangladeshis.⁹ Predictions of climate change impact on agriculture in the tropics and sub-tropics consistently point to substantial losses of production, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁰

Oxfam has repeatedly called for lasting solutions to the problem of food insecurity, including fairer trade, provision of public health and education services, investment in agriculture, and action on climate change. But hungry people cannot be fed on the hope of long-term solutions. Governments and aid agencies must take immediate action to meet rising food needs effectively, and to protect vulnerable people against fluctuations in weather and markets.

One of the most dramatic stories that emerged in 2008 around the rise in food prices was the challenge to the WFP's budget. WFP was confronted with a 35 per cent increase in operational costs due to the higher costs of food and transport, and had to find an additional \$755 million to maintain its assistance to some 70 million people.

However, these beneficiaries only constitute eight per cent of the total number of undernourished people worldwide. If the challenge of meeting the needs of the remaining 900 million is to be achieved, a major scale-up of United Nations and NGO assistance is essential, but national actors, primarily developing-country governments, must play a far larger role, with the participation of local civil-society organisations.

This paper considers some of the ways in which governments and aid agencies could address these needs. The first section explains that the initial step is for all stakeholders to recognise and agree on the nature and breadth of the problems on the ground. The second section recommends different responses to hunger and, in particular, longer-term relief measures to complement short-term emergency action. The third section argues that government responsibility must be accompanied by the empowerment of citizens and their ability to claim their rights to adequate food and livelihoods and social protection. The last section looks at the changes this implies for the international aid system, which needs to become more effective and more supportive of local response mechanisms.

1 Recognising the scale and nature of hunger

Rethinking food security analysis

A first step to improving assistance is to strengthen food security analysis at the country level so that it clearly identifies the nature and scale of food needs and helps to create greater consensus about what must be done.

Current practices in analysis and needs assessment do not adequately measure hunger or identify people in need of assistance, despite attempts to improve the integration of issues such as vulnerability and purchasing power.

- Early warning systems and traditional needs assessments are often too focused on food production, and narrowly geared towards measuring needs for emergency food aid.
- As seen with the soaring food prices in 2008, the impact of volatile or failing markets is poorly integrated in our understanding of hunger, which does not take sufficiently into account the vulnerability of specific market-dependent groups, such as the urban poor, agricultural workers, pastoralists, fishing communities¹¹ or indeed many small-scale farmers for much of the year.
- Seasonal undernourishment, which every year affects hundreds of millions of people, has still to be recognised as a major problem.
- Vulnerability to disasters is poorly recognised by governments and aid agencies; this limits investments in prevention and preparedness activities.

More generally, approaching the issues of food and vulnerability from an entitlement perspective, i.e. the right to food, may provide stakeholders with new insights into developing effective policies and programmes. In particular, this approach helps promote an understanding of hunger as more than a lack of food, rather an inability to access available food. This more accurately describes the situation for the large majority of hungry people.

Box 1: The right to food and social protection

The term 'right to adequate food' is derived from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). In 2004, the FAO produced the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food 'to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security' through the efforts of governments and civil society. The right to social protection is defined by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as a range of protective public actions carried out by the state and others in response to unacceptable levels of vulnerability and poverty, and which seek to guarantee relief from destitution for those sections of the population who for reasons beyond their control are not able to provide for themselves.¹²

The Covenant imposes the obligation on all States to 'move as expeditiously and effectively as possible' towards the full realization of all human rights, including the right to adequate food. Therefore, at a minimum, developed countries should make measurable progress towards contributing to the full realization of human rights by supporting the efforts of governments in developing countries, through increased, predictable, and non discriminatory aid.

In the absence of any mechanism to oblige governments to guarantee the right to food, the role of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food assumes greater importance. It must be enhanced to better monitor and address violations of this right worldwide, to provide guidance to governments, international institutions, and civil-society organisations regarding the fulfillment of the right, and to ensure that a rights-based approach is adopted in international agreements on food and agriculture.

Famine or no famine?

There is frequently a lack of consensus about the severity and nature of a specific food crisis, and how best to respond to it. This is partly a result of poor information and analysis, but also stems from the often sensitive political dimensions to a crisis and of the government's response to it. In 2008, for instance, there were serious controversies in Ethiopia and Senegal about the numbers of food-insecure people and the gravity of the situation. In Niger, the government accused Médecins Sans Frontières of exaggerating the numbers of malnourished children and asked it to cease its operations in the country.¹³ Too often, governments do not recognise the extent of hunger and ignore their citizens' right to food, while international organisations tend to act according to their self-determined role, rather than in accordance with a commonly-agreed situation analysis and national plan of action. This can result in tensions between institutions with an emergency mandate, those with a more developmental approach, and governments.

National-level processes are badly needed to gain consensus between national government, civil society, and international organisations so

that they can work together on the most appropriate policies and programmes, deciding who should be responsible for what, and how actions can be financed.

Speaking a common language

One instrument which could help the different actors reach a common view is the IPC,¹⁴ which provides a standardised scale that integrates food security, nutrition, and livelihood information in a clear statement about the severity of food insecurity and the implications for responses. The IPC initiative, supported by international organisations including FAO, WFP, the USAID Famine Early Warning System (FEWSNET) and a number of NGOs, has already been established in about 15 Asian and African countries. If all relevant actors commit to setting up and participating in national mechanisms such as the IPC, this will help ensure better policies, and interventions, and comparative analyses enabling improved resource allocation between countries and regions.

2 Better responses to crises through longer-term relief

Our food is milk and meat. Now we are surviving only on what is given by the government. Sometimes we eat only one meal a day.

Haysama Mohammed, Afar, Ethiopia, October 2008

International humanitarian assistance is essential ...

International emergency interventions are required to save lives and protect and restore livelihoods in times of war and major disasters, when governments lack the capacity or political will to do so. Recent crises, such as the Indian Ocean *tsunami* and the war in Darfur demonstrate the strength and efficiency of today's relief system. Since 2004 in Darfur, for instance, the WFP and its partners have been transporting and distributing over 20,000 tons of food a month to more than 2 million conflict-affected people, scattered across a territory the size of France.¹⁵ As in many other countries in past decades, there can be no doubt that this effort is averting a major famine.

This is not, however, the only context in which food relief takes place. In 2008, the Horn of Africa was again hit by a major food crisis affecting 17 million people. Some of these are victims of the war in Somalia, but the main cause is a combination of relatively moderate weather fluctuations and high food prices, which have tipped poor and highly vulnerable populations into destitution. This was the latest episode in a series of food crises that have occurred in the region almost every year since 2000. Indeed, since the turn of the Millennium, all the significant food emergencies in the Horn, Southern Africa, and the Sahel that triggered international interventions occurred in contexts of chronic hunger and poverty, not war or major disaster. Where millions of people live precariously on the edge of survival, with no access to safety net programmes or insurance, and with few savings or assets to fall back on, relatively small economic or climatic shocks can create acute crises. International aid organisations are thus increasingly called upon to provide relief for people in extreme poverty, and should be enabled to do more. But, despite their commitment and worldwide presence, they are not in a position to meet all needs. The international aid system is not fit for this purpose; it cannot work at the scale required, and should not, in fact, seek to take on what should properly be the responsibility of national governments in the affected countries.

...but states must bear the primary responsibility

The duty to fulfil the right to food falls primarily on the state. This is a core purpose of government, and should be a natural role in any accountable political system. Indeed, there is evidence that famine rarely occurs in functioning, democratic states.¹⁶

Responding to exceptional famines is one thing. But responding to chronic hunger is another – and many well-functioning states are still governing populations with millions of hungry people. Addressing hunger on this scale requires ambition and a far-reaching, proactive agenda. This is a daunting task, but a number of countries have shown that progress is possible.

In the last decade, food relief averaging around 975,000 metric tonnes has been provided annually to at least 5 million chronically food-insecure Ethiopians.¹⁷ The annual emergency appeal system was costly and inefficient at addressing what were ultimately structural problems: every year, needs were assessed in order to launch international appeals, to which donors were asked to contribute and international organisations to lend support. In 2005, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) was put in place by the government, with international support, to help it tackle these chronic problems in a more effective way. Now, thanks to the long-term commitments of government and donors, aid has become more predictable and is delivered via a permanent mechanism, led and budgeted for by the government.

Box 2: A safety net for Ethiopia

The PSNP currently reaches over 7 million chronically food-insecure people – about 10 per cent of the population, which is a massive, and not always easy undertaking for a country the size of Ethiopia. In 2007, 57 per cent of programme resources were provided in cash, with the remainder provided in food.¹⁸

It aims to protect the assets of vulnerable households, and to provide them with access to food by offering predictable transfers of cash and/or food. The programme's public works component aims to build community assets such as roads, schools, and water sources.

The resources provided are generally just sufficient to meet people's most basic needs, and the cash component of the programme has proven to be insufficient in the context of high inflation in 2008.¹⁹ Although the programme has not helped many people to *graduate* out of aid dependency, it has allowed many to save assets and become more resilient to shocks, with beneficiaries' incomes doubling over a two-year period, whereas incomes of non-beneficiaries, declined during the same period.²⁰ This safety net has undoubtedly prevented 2008's major food

crisis from resulting in even deeper and more widespread humanitarian needs. The recipients believe that – without the transfers – they would have suffered much more acutely from the dual shock of drought and high food prices.

Since the 1990s, Brazil has been developing programmes to support impoverished people and family farmers. Family farmers benefit from credit, insurance schemes, technical assistance, and a food procurement programme that buys food from them for redistribution to the poor and destitute.²¹ Support to agriculture is combined with social protection measures that include universal access to the Rural Social Security System, the *Bolsa Família* (family grants) programme, school meals, and minimum wages. This comprehensive approach to food security has greatly reduced the prevalence of hunger in the country. According to the Brazilian Government,²² malnutrition in children under the age of five fell from 13 per cent to 7 per cent between 1996 and 2006.

These two examples illustrate ways in which states can take responsibility for alleviating hunger and responding to food crises. This is less a matter of resources than of political will. Middle-income countries, and particularly big food exporters such as Brazil, can use their own resources, while poorer countries like Ethiopia, Niger or Malawi have shown that substantial public action is possible using international aid. National leadership and government commitments to put effective mechanisms in place can generate stronger and more sustained support from donors than repeated emergency calls to deal with recurrent food shortages.

Government action needs to cover a wide range of activities if it is to address people's needs effectively; much depends on the varying vulnerabilities that confront different groups. Measures might include, for instance:

- Providing food and cash transfers through employment schemes or targeted at certain groups (e.g. pensions to old people or nutritional products to malnourished children).
- Providing subsidies for inputs, as well as insurance or credit to farmers, pastoralists, and fishing communities.
- Using food reserves and public procurement to stabilise prices, support farmers and distribute or subsidise food to insecure households (see next heading for further detail).
- Removing health and school fees and improving nutrition education.

- Using legislation to define and protect citizens' rights; for instance, fixing minimum wages at a level which meets basic needs.

Whilst governments must take the primary responsibility for providing social protection to the hungry and vulnerable, they must also provide an environment in which civil-society organisations and the private sector can play an active role, for instance, through the delivery of assistance or the establishment of insurance or credit schemes.

Intervention in food markets, or *laissez faire*?

Many developing countries once had public institutions and policies aimed at protecting both producers and consumers against sharp rises or falls in food prices. Some, such as Malawi, India, and Indonesia, still intervene substantially in food markets, but the majority dismantled or scaled down these mechanisms over the past three decades.²³ This was partly due to intense pressure from international donors who pointed to the problems of high cost and the ineffectiveness of public mechanisms such as grain reserves, of corruption, and of restraint on private-sector development. One key argument advanced against grain reserves was that global food markets had become larger and less volatile, so countries were better off buying abroad, when necessary, than they were holding domestic stocks.²⁴ Since some key donors are also major cereal exporters, such policy advice may not be entirely disinterested.

Soaring food prices in 2007 and 2008 have raised serious questions about the benefits of this *laissez faire* approach. Global food markets have become highly dependent on volatile oil markets, and are increasingly tied to fluctuations of supply due to weather hazards or measures such as export bans taken by individual countries. This is particularly problematic in the context of reduced global grain stocks, which in 2008 have fallen to their lowest level in 25 years.²⁵ Given this uncertainty in the food supplies for importing countries, it is time to reassess the need for some form of government intervention in food markets. One should not, however, overlook the shortfalls identified in the past around managed food systems. It is important to learn from earlier experiences, and to be innovative in the design of new responses.

Some experts are proposing 'virtual' global food reserves.²⁶ This may help curb speculation on global markets but would keep developing countries dependent on the goodwill of the big exporters for their food supply and should only be a complement to measures taken at

local, national or regional level to reduce the volatility of food prices and ensure adequate supply.

At community level, farmers can enjoy greater power in markets through local grain banks or instruments such as warrantage, which allow a farmer to sell crops to a warehouse at harvest time and then obtain the additional revenue generated when the stored food is sold a few months later, when prices are normally higher.

Well managed national reserves, which can be expanded or sold off as appropriate, combined with judicious use of tariff and fiscal policy (e.g. lowering VAT on basic foodstuffs), can play an important role in reducing price volatility and can also be used for food distribution to vulnerable populations.²⁷ Unlike imported food aid, which may undermine local agriculture, domestic procurement of food reserves can greatly benefit local farmers.

In order to limit the cost of holding physical stocks, such reserves may be combined with financial reserves for the procurement of food. Attention should also be given to innovative instruments – such as purchase options guaranteeing capped or fixed prices for food imports – which have been successfully introduced by countries like Malawi in recent years.²⁸

Developing regional mechanisms can make sense in parts of the world that are now economically integrated. This is the choice made by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), which has decided on the creation of a 500,000 metric tonne regional food stock, to be procured locally.²⁹ The challenge of poor management and corruption in state and para-statal institutions is real but can be addressed by greater accountability and increased participation by stakeholders such as farmers' associations.

Reducing risks and building resilience

Another role for the active state is helping to protect people against disasters. This is becoming more and more critical due to the effects of climate change. DRR encompasses the actions necessary to build resilience and reduce disaster losses by addressing people's vulnerability to hazards. The need for DRR has become even more urgent now that climate change is escalating the number and intensity of natural threats such as floods and droughts, with consequent losses in food production.

Risk reduction is more cost-effective than trying to respond to a disaster after the event. Every \$1 spent on hazard mitigation saves an average of \$4 in relief and recovery costs.³⁰ China's \$3.1 billion flood

control spending between 1960 and 2000 is estimated to have averted losses of about \$12 billion.³¹

Box 3: DRR in action: reviving agricultural knowledge in Bolivia

Severe flooding, seasonal droughts, and fires happen on a regular basis in Beni District, Bolivia. Drainage and soil conditions are poor, and slash-and-burn agriculture predominates – the land is productive for around three years before farmers move to new areas – clearing land and cutting down the rainforest.

Ancient civilisations made vast modifications in the landscape to cope with these same challenges. One of these was the creation of elevated seedbeds (*camellones*), which local communities have begun to replicate. The *camellones* are above seasonal flood water and thus prevent seeds and plants being washed away; they are part of a water management system that produces fertile soil, fish stock, fodder, and localised drainage. *Camellones* also allow food to be produced even during the flood season, which had previously been a time of hunger for many households.³² According to Yenny Noza, a local farmer, ‘In the old system we lost a lot of plants and seeds when the flood came. Then we had to wait for the water to go down before we could start replanting ‘... but in this system the land where the plants are growing doesn’t get covered with water. So we can still harvest and then we can immediately sow seeds again...’

In 2000, a coalition of 168 governments, UN agencies, regional bodies, and civil-society organisations agreed the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, which sets priorities for DRR policies. These include institutionalising DRR in national institutions and policies, improving early warning systems and preparedness, building a culture of safety, and investing in risk reduction and resilience.

Although there have been some advances in responding more effectively to disasters, progress on the Hyogo Framework is uneven. DRR is still rarely seen as a priority by governments; too often it becomes the responsibility of one ministry or department rather than being mainstreamed across national development plans.

Internationally, there is little funding for DRR, which remains a low priority.

In recognition of this, representatives of governments and other stakeholders will convene in 2009 to identify the remaining gaps and actions needed to accelerate implementation. This will provide a significant opportunity to revitalise political and financial commitments to DRR, which could bring significant benefits to highly food-insecure communities.

3 Empowering people and communities to secure their rights to food and livelihoods

However good the policies of the government are, nothing will come of them without the active participation of each and every one of us.

Nelson Mandela, May Day 1998

A matter of rights

Oxfam believes that food and social protection are an entitlement and not a matter of charity. People must be able to claim these rights, and to participate as citizens in the policy choices that affect their lives. The state must play a central role in upholding and fulfilling these rights, which can be achieved through a range of public and private initiatives. A particular focus should be the development and maintenance of social protection programmes. Social protection does not only mean risk management instruments, it also involves direct transfers of resources, institutional arrangements, and legislation that defines and protects citizens' socio-economic rights.

Box 4 shows that institutionalising people's rights to work and earn a decent wage has been effective in fulfilling the right to food for rural communities in India.

Box 4: The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in India³³

Since 2005, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) has granted one hundred days' employment a year to any rural household willing to do public work at a statutory minimum wage. Roughly one-third of the NREGA work force must be women, paid at the same rate as men.

The establishment of NREGA as a legal right for citizens was a key step forward in the realisation of the right to achieve an adequate livelihood and the right to food. The Act covers 27 states and 21 million self-selected beneficiaries, who are mostly the poorest households, many of the minority groups, and women. The obvious link between a claim for paid employment – which must be processed by law within 15 days, and the provision of an employment opportunity, has resulted in greater numbers benefiting than in previous, more passive employment schemes.³⁴ Studies in Andhra Pradesh show that NREGA has resulted in a doubling of rural wages, reduced migration, and the achievement of equal incomes by women.³⁵ Access to the programme is critical in preventing undernourishment in minority and marginalised groups.

Creating space for the effective participation of citizens

Governments must create opportunities for the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of national food, agriculture, and social protection policies. 'Platforms' must include producers' groups (such as farmers, fishers, and pastoralists), consumer organisations, women's organisations, unions, private sector, minority groups, relevant ministries, and international organisations. National co-ordination should be matched at local level. In the case of food crises, the local communities must be involved in the decisions that will affect their lives and livelihoods.

Such participation enhances the relevance, value, equity, and legitimacy of the policies put in place and ensures better buy-in and implementation by all concerned. It can also make state and para-statal institutions more accountable, less likely to discriminate (as in Zimbabwe and Myanmar, for instance, where some populations may not receive adequate assistance because of their political affiliation or ethnicity),³⁶ or succumb to corruption, as seen with the mismanagement of the national grain reserve in Malawi in 2002.³⁷

Box 5: A participative approach: Brazil's food security system

Brazil's food security policies are designed and implemented by three main institutions: the National Conference, the National Food Security Council (CONSEA), and the Inter-ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber. The Conference and the Council are collegiate bodies that involve representatives of the relevant government departments, civil-society organisations, and the private sector. The Chamber is made up of ministers of state and is responsible for fostering cross-sectoral links around food and nutrition security, and for implementing the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. National conferences define policy guidelines that are then monitored by CONSEA, which is a permanent forum for discussion of issues related to the human right to food and nutrition.

Opening the management and governance of para-statals to formal participation by farmer and civil-society organisations is also essential to improving effectiveness. Oxfam research in Malawi found this to be a far better option for the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) than the privatisation advocated by certain donors.³⁸

4 International aid: money, partnership, and coherence

In poor countries, international assistance is needed to help finance and support hunger reduction strategies. But, in addition to increased funding, international agencies need to make significant changes in their ways of working if they are to become more coherent and effective.

Supporting local capacities

Humanitarian aid delivered by international organisations and interventions by national governments responding to hunger must be complementary. In this way, assistance will be provided not only to the victims of declared 'humanitarian crises', but also to all those who cannot afford the food they need to live in dignity and good health.

Not all countries have the capacity of middle-income countries such as Brazil, which is why international aid organisations must do more than provide direct assistance to populations in poorer countries; they must also build the capacity of national structures and programmes, and of citizens and their organisations. This is also crucial to ensure that aid does not substitute for, or even duplicate, local-level responses.

Such a shift in the role of aid agencies involves rethinking their roles and portfolios of activities, which are too often focused simply on projects and delivery. For instance, in its new strategy,³⁹ WFP is considering moving away from just food delivery in order to support local capacities, through, for example, procurement from local small holders, policy advice to governments, and transfer of expertise on hunger reduction tools.

Addressing the imbalances of international aid

Imbalance between different forms of aid is still an issue of serious concern. Adequate support to food production in the form of credit or agricultural inputs provided to farmers would often prevent food crises and the need for relief assistance. After the food crises of 2002 and 2005, Malawi has turned from being a major food aid recipient to a food exporter after the government started subsidising agricultural inputs to farmers with donor support.⁴⁰ Yet, food aid commonly remains the dominant form of response to hunger. In 2008, food aid represented 41 per cent of all humanitarian appeals and was funded at 86 per cent, whereas the requirement for agriculture, which

represented only 3 per cent of all appeals, was only 42 per cent covered.⁴¹ FAO estimates that agriculture requires annual aid of \$30 billion,⁴² yet donors have only allocated \$4 billion in recent years, a mere 13 per cent of this requirement.⁴³ Such investment can bring immediate benefits in terms of access to food, as well as strengthen longer-term livelihoods.

Beyond food aid, external funding is required to help governments put in place social protection and DRR programmes and mechanisms. As seen earlier, experiences in Ethiopia and Niger where donors pool their resources to support national plans and instruments are encouraging. The UK Department for International Development (DFID), for example, set itself a target of assisting the transfer of 16 million chronically food-insecure people in six African countries from humanitarian assistance programmes to long-term safety nets.

However, this form of international funding remains at the experimental stage and is far below the scale required. Social protection and DRR tend to fall between donor institutional categories, which are generally split between relief and development, and food aid and agriculture. Structural changes are also required in the way funding is provided. These should include a higher share of cash rather than in-kind resources, more predictability and longer-term commitments, and more budget support instead of project funding.

Buying local: how food can empower local communities

Food interventions are often administered through stand-alone programmes in which governments or aid agencies distribute food to beneficiaries. This tends to undermine farmers' livelihoods, especially when it involves in-kind food aid donated by large food exporting countries. In addition, this model views people as objects, rather than the subjects of the solution. In fact, many of the people targeted for food assistance, for example, are farmers and could be part of the long-term solution to hunger and insecurity.

Sourcing food locally for emergencies or social protection schemes has a multiplier effect on farmers' incomes and can greatly benefit the rural poor, smallholders, and local off-farm capacities (processing, storage, transport, and marketing). The WFP 'Purchase For Progress' initiative to procure food from smallholders, made possible by donors increasing their cash contributions, has significant potential. In 2008, WFP acquired more than \$1 billion of food in developing countries,⁴⁴ more than the World Bank spends annually on agriculture in Africa. WFP projects that, in its pilot phase, this

initiative will increase the annual incomes of 350,000 smallholder farmers, and support 1.5 million people at an average of \$50 a year.⁴⁵ This demonstrates the potential to use food aid procurement as a powerful tool for longer-term food security.

Predictable funding to support national long-term relief

In the Comprehensive Framework for Action published in July 2008, the United Nations HLTf on the Global Food Security Crisis estimates that \$25–40 billion per year in additional funding is required for food and nutrition security, social protection, agricultural development, and functioning food markets.⁴⁶ It is thus essential that donors make strong and predictable commitments to help governments in countries lacking resources to develop social protection, agriculture and DRR policies and become less reliant on the use of international relief assistance to meet chronic needs. Box 6 below shows the use of predictable funding to strengthen the national system in Niger in recent years. This, in turn, requires national governments to develop clear and comprehensive, results-based policies and costed action plans.

Box 6: Niger: a donor-supported National System of Prevention and Response to Food Crises

Despite functioning early warning systems, the Government of Niger and its partners failed to prevent the 2005 food crisis. The response was late and poorly co-ordinated. It saw a rush of international relief aid delivered by NGOs and UN agencies, while the public system did not have the means to respond effectively and to co-ordinate. The crisis also exposed the fact that chronic and seasonal hunger had not been addressed, and that malnutrition was affecting hundreds of thousands of young children every year.

Three years later, the National System of Prevention and Response to Food Crises has been strengthened in several ways:

- It combines permanent interventions aimed at addressing chronic hunger, with mechanisms to deal with disasters.
- The national action plan relies on the collective action of local administration and national ministries, UN agencies, and NGOs.
- The system includes a wide range of interventions, such as food and cash transfers, nutrition activities, support to grain banks, provision of seeds to farmers, and the provision of fodder to pastoralists.
- It manages a national food reserve and an emergency fund for food interventions.
- Implementation of the plan is financed through pooled donor fund. Since 2005, international funding for the system has been substantially increased with long-term commitments made by a number of donors.

Source: Oxfam interview with Cellule Crises Alimentaires, Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Niger, March 2008

Investing at global level for a more effective international effort

Oxfam welcomes the creation of the HLTF established by Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary-General in April 2008, and composed of the heads of the United Nations specialised funds, agencies, and programmes, together with the World Bank and IMF. For the first time, these financial institutions are coming together with the rest of the UN to define a common policy framework to address the food crisis.

However, the HLTF has not yet resulted in change on the ground. Rather, in 2008, the various institutions have defined their own individual action plans and called for funds in an un-coordinated way, and with noticeable overlaps. For instance, the World Bank's Global Food Response Program, set up to respond to high food prices, finances WFP's food aid and the provision of agricultural inputs, whereas the FAO's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices, is also centred on the provision of inputs, for which, like the WFP, the FAO

has independently requested donor support. In most countries where they operate, these institutions compete for funding for separate plans, with similar overlaps and lack of clarity over their respective roles.⁴⁷

One month after the June 2008 World Food Conference in Rome, the G8 proposed the launch of a Global Partnership for Food and Agriculture (GPFA) to address the food crisis, which would build on the work initiated by the HLTF. There is good reason to feel sceptical about this announcement, given that the two earlier world food summits came to similar decisions. In 1996, the Committee on World Food Security was created to follow up the Plan of Action that emerged from the summit. Then in 2003, the International Alliance Against Hunger was established to join forces against hunger (prompted by the World Food Conference in 2002).

Nevertheless, the renewed global partnership on food and agriculture proposed by the G8 will draw welcome attention to the needs of nearly a billion hungry people and, above all, could help bring co-ordination, consistency, and effectiveness to the response. The GPFA should support national food, agricultural, and social protection plans. It should establish political, technical, and financial co-ordination mechanisms through partnerships between governments, producer and consumer organisations, the private sector, and NGOs both nationally and globally. Oxfam believes that the global partnership should:

- Ensure broad democratic ownership of policies, through support to national-level processes that include all the relevant stakeholders (including farmers' and women's organisations, private-sector organisations, minority groups, trade unions, and consumer organisations) in their design, implementation, and accountability.
- Guarantee medium-term, predictable funds for countries and communities most heavily affected by hunger and food crises where national resources are insufficient.
- Develop benchmarks by which the quality of costed national food security plans could be assessed.
- Establish enforcement mechanisms (including effective operation of a reformed Food Aid Convention [FAC] – see the next heading below) to ensure donors and governments meet their commitments to enable the rights to food and social protection.

- Establish mutual accountability mechanisms such as peer reviews between the key actors at national and global levels.
- Provide funding for CSOs to enable their engagement in food security policy development and implementation, and independent assessment of outcomes at national and global levels.

Reforming the food aid convention

The FAC is the only international treaty that commits donors to minimum annual disbursements targeted at hunger reduction. The FAC registers annual food aid commitments (cash and in-kind) by donors and provides a set of principles and guidelines for the provision of food aid. The current convention commits donors to providing five million tons of food per year. Although this is supposed to guarantee annual, predictable disbursements of food aid, it has been fairly ineffective in doing so over the four decades of its existence.⁴⁸ Housed in the International Grains Council (a trade promotion body) and with exclusively donor representation on its board, the FAC has more been serving the commercial concerns of cereal exporting countries than acting as a vehicle of development.⁴⁹ There is no mechanism to ensure that the resources allocated under the FAC are prioritised for the neediest countries, are of the right kind – for instance, cash or in-kind food aid, or come at the right time. Nor is there a means to ensure that donors honour their self-defined commitments.

The FAC has the potential to provide predictable support of the kind described in Niger but it needs to be reformed in terms of membership and role, and to shift from being an accounting system to being a mechanism that co-ordinates and monitors the allocation of resources, in cash or in-kind, for the implementation of national policies and action plans in the poorest countries.

One immediate recommended measure is to take the FAC out of the Grains Council and put it under the joint administration of the three Rome-based UN agencies that deal with food issues – WFP, IFAD, and FAO – where it could act as an important pillar of a global partnership.

Recommendations

Governments in developing countries must ensure the realisation of the right to food and social protection of people living in extreme poverty. This will require implementing comprehensive food, agricultural, and social protection policies to meet immediate needs, and to shield vulnerable communities better against shocks. International support will be needed when capacities and resources are lacking, as well as action at a regional level. Oxfam's policy recommendations are as follows:

Governments in developing countries should:

- Promote a shared understanding of hunger and vulnerability and of appropriate responses. Along with better and earlier needs assessment, this is essential to ensure that national and international actors address immediate food needs with adequate resources and the right investments. Adoption of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) or an equivalent system of crisis analysis at country level would help this process.
- Ensure affected communities have the necessary access to income and food through locally appropriate social protection measures such as employment programmes, direct transfers to families (food or cash), minimum wage legislation, and provision of insurance, credit, and other inputs to farmers, pastoralists, and fishing communities. Given the chronic nature of hunger in many countries, such policies must be implemented as *long-term* relief measures rather than as belated responses at the peak of a crisis.
- Use food reserves at local, national or regional level to supply crisis-affected populations and to reduce volatility in food markets; and ensure that fiscal and tariff policies enhance access to food.
- Complement crisis response with investments in risk reduction, particularly to safeguard livelihoods, and in economic and social recovery after the worst is over. Relief spending should be designed to reduce vulnerability in the longer term, e.g. cash-for-work programmes to improve water conservation.
- Provide an environment in which civil-society organisations and the private sector can play an active role, for instance, through the delivery of assistance or the establishment of insurance and credit schemes.

- Bring together all relevant ministries, international agencies, and civil-society groups such as farmers' unions and women's organisations to design and co-ordinate food, agriculture, and social protection action plans. Plans must be explicit components of national poverty reduction strategies and be integrated into regional plans where relevant, such as the West African Common Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Donors and international organisations should:

- Support, through finance and technical assistance, the active role of the state outlined above, investing in national capacity for a sustained response to hunger and supporting regional initiatives. This requires longer-term and more predictable finance, along with greater spending on risk reduction, earlier interventions, and recovery.
- Increase funding for cash transfers to needy families and reduce the emphasis on in-kind food aid. Where such aid is needed, it should be sourced in-country or regionally in order to strengthen local livelihoods.
- Commit to a renewed global partnership on food and agriculture, which should build on existing global and regional mechanisms, and sustain the collaboration initiated by the United Nations HLTF in 2008, ensuring effective co-ordination, enforcement of global agreements, and convergence of support from international institutions around improved national-level responses.
- Reform the Food Aid Convention (FAC), which registers annual food aid commitments by donors, in order to ensure predictable funding in support of costed national and regional policies designed to respond to food needs. Such commitments should be binding. The FAC should be taken out of the International Grains Council and put under the administration of the UN agencies that deal with food issues – the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) should:

- Strengthen local and national mechanisms of prevention and response to food crises rather than just delivering aid to people. This should include participating in collective vulnerability and risk analysis in order to design better interventions.

- Support local civil-society organisations to participate in shaping and implementing national food, agriculture, and social protection policies.

Notes

¹ Black, R. Morris, S and Bryce, J. (2003) 'Where and why are 10 million children dying every year?' *The Lancet* 361: 2226–34.

² 109 million is the difference between 854 million in 2007 and 963 million announced by FAO in December 2008. See FAO(2007) 'Agriculture key player to stop degradation of vital ecosystems', Rome: FAO, <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/EN/news/2007/1000542/index.html> and FAO (2008) 'Number of hungry people rises to 963 million', Rome: FAO, <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/8836/icode/> – both last accessed December 2008

³ FAO (2008) 'Assessment of the World Food Security and Nutrition Situation', Committee on World Food Security, 34th Session, Rome, October 2008', p6. Rome: FAO. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/014/k3175e.pdf> – last accessed 16 January 2009.

⁴ The Indonesian government regulates the rice market: this includes rice storage and the use of stocks for public distribution. The price and availability of other food items is largely determined by markets.

⁵ Global architecture refers to the ensemble of multilateral and bilateral aid institutions as well as to the international agreements, treaties, and instruments used for their governance and the co-ordination of their activities.

⁶ FAO (2008) 'Number of hungry people rises to 963 million', Rome: FAO. <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/8836/icode/> – last accessed 11 December 2008

⁷ FAO (2008) 'Assessment of the World Food Security and Nutrition Situation', Committee on World Food Security. *op. cit.*

⁸ Oxfam International and Save the Children (2008) 'Rising Food Prices in the Sahel: The urgency of long-term action', Oxford: Oxfam International.

⁹ Very few individual weather events, such as Cyclone Sidr, have been directly attributed to human-induced climate change. However, the severity of storms in that region have increased over recent years and there is some evidence that this trend will continue. See Cruz, R.V., Harasawa,H., Lal, M., Wu, S., Anokhin, Y., Punsalmaa, B., Honda,Y., Jafari,M., Li, C., and Huu Ninh, N. (2007) 'Asia. Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability'. Contribution of Working Group II to the *Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Parry, M.L., Canziani, O.F., Palutikof, J.P., Van der Linden, P.J., and Hanson, C.E., (eds), pp469–506, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 469–506.

¹⁰ Easterling, W.E., Aggarwal,P.K., Batima,P., Brander,K.M., Erda,L., Howden,S.M., Kirilenko,A., Morton,J., Soussana,J.F., Schmidhuber, J., and Tubiello,F.N., (2007) 'Food, fibre and forest products. Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and

Vulnerability'. Contribution of Working Group II to the *Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, Parry, pp273–313, M.L. et al (eds).

¹¹ Over 1 billion people in developing countries depend on fish for more than 25 per cent of their income or their nutrition – UN (2005), 'UN Atlas of the Oceans', United Nations. <http://www.oceansatlas.org> – last accessed January 2009.

¹² Articles 23 and 25 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) stipulates (amongst other things) that:

- Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

¹³ Christopher, C. (2008) 'Le Niger menace d'expulser Médecins sans frontières', *Le Monde*, 23 October.

¹⁴ IPC website, www.ipcinfo.org/ – last accessed 15 November 2008.

¹⁵ WFP Website, [www.wfp.org.](http://www.wfp.org/) – last accessed 8 December 2008.

¹⁶ This is a point famously made by Nobel Prize winning economist, Amartya Sen, who argued that acute famines are only possible where the accountability is weak. He cited the case of India, which has not experienced an acute famine since independence and elections in 1947. Chronic hunger – a function of poverty – is another matter, of course. See Sen, M. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁷ Tonnage figures – WFP interfaï, <http://www.wfp.org/interfaï/>, June 2008 figures and for beneficiary figures – Mousseau, F., (2003) 'Rapport de Mission d'Evaluation de Securite Alimentaire, Ethiopie', Ethiopia: Medecins Sans Frontieres.

¹⁸ MoARD (2008) 'Productive Safety Net Programme: Implementation Report, July – December 2007', cited in Save the Children UK (2008) 'Cash, Food, Payment and Risk – A Review of the Productive Safety Net Programme', London: SCUK.

¹⁹ SCUK, 'Cash, Food, Payment And Risk', p34, *ibid*.

²⁰ Devereux, S., Sabates-Wheeler, R., Slater, R., Tefera, M., Teshome, A., Brown, T. (forthcoming) 'Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme: 2008 PSNP Assessment – Summary Report', Ethiopia: Joint report by Institute of Development Studies Sussex, Overseas Development Institute, The IDL Group, UK, Dadimos Development Consultants, Addis Ababa, A-Z Consult, Addis Ababa.

²¹ Through the National Supply Company (CONAB), the Brazilian Government purchases food from family farmers without requiring tender procedures, provided that their prices are no higher than those prevailing in regional markets. The food products that are bought are used to supply public programmes or services such as

meals served in schools, distribution of basic food baskets to extremely poor families, meals served in hospitals and penitentiaries, and building reserves. Since it was created, the Food Procurement Programme has invested around \$646 million to buy 1.25 million tons of food products from 86,000 family farmers. This food was consumed by about 10 million people through public programmes. Source – Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome (MDS), *Jornal MDS* Nº 4, June 2008, pp. 6-7, http://www.mds.gov.br/servicos/Coordenacao/jornal-mds/servicos/Coordenacao/jornal-mds/2008/jornal_mds_junho.pdf - last accessed January 2009.

²² Ministry of Health, Brazil (2008) 'Pesquisa Nacional de Demografia e Saúde da Criança e da Mulher', <http://bvsmis.saude.gov.br/bvsmis/pnds/index.php>, last accessed December 2008.

²³ In the case of Indonesia, the government has actually increased measures to protect both consumers and producers over the last five years.

²⁴ As an Overseas Development Institute (ODI) paper put it in 2003, 'greater integration into the international market would reduce the variability of food prices'. See Anderson, E. and Slater, R. 'Food Security in Indonesia' p14 in Gill, G.J., Farrington, J., Anderson E., Luttrell, C., Conway, T., Saxena, N.C., and Slater, R. *ODI Working Paper 231, Food Security and the Millennium Development Goal on Hunger in Asia*, London: ODI.

²⁵ FAO (2008) 'Soaring Food Prices: Facts, Perspectives, Impacts and Action Required' p6, High Level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, Rome, June 2008, Rome: FAO. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/PANA-7F5HYU?OpenDocument> – last accessed December 2008.

²⁶ See, for instance, Von Braun, J. and Torero, M. (2008) 'Physical and Virtual Global Food Reserves to Protect the Poor and Prevent Market Failure', IFPRI Policy 4 June 2008, Washington: IFPRI.

²⁷ An FAO survey of policy responses in 77 countries revealed that during 2007 and early 2008, approximately half of the countries reduced cereal import taxes and more than half applied price controls or consumer subsidies in an attempt to keep domestic food prices below world prices. One-quarter of the governments imposed some type of export restriction, and roughly the same proportion took action to increase supply, drawing down on food grain stocks. The survey found an uneven effectiveness of these different measures. FAO (2008) 'Assessment of the World Food Security and Nutrition Situation', Committee on World Food Security, 34th Session, Rome, October 2008', p12. Rome: FAO. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/014/k3175e.pdf> – last accessed 16 January 2009.

²⁸ Dana, J. 'Malawi's experience with SAFEX-based market solutions for food security', United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 3 September 2007.

²⁹ IRIB (2008) 'Southern Africa: SADC meal planning', www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=79946, last accessed October 2008.

³⁰ Asian Development Bank (2008) 'Positioning ADB's Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy in a Changing Regional Environment', paper, April 2008.

³¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, <http://unfccc.int/2860.php> – last accessed January 2009.

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- ³² On camellones see for instance Bulmer-Thomas V., Coatsworth J., Cortés Conde R. (2006) *The Cambridge Economic History of Latin America: The Colonial Era and the Short Nineteenth Century*, pp79-80, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ³³ Pankaj, A (2008) 'The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in India, Guaranteeing the Right to Livelihood' in Mathur, H. (ed) *India Social Development Report 2008*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ³⁴ Drieze, J. and Oldiges, C. (2007) 'Commendable Act', *Frontline* 24 (14)
- ³⁵ K.S.Gopal, Andhra Pradesh Shows Several Pathways in NREGA Implementation, New Delhi, September 2008 – Paper written for the International Seminar on 'National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in India: Impacts and Implementation Experiences' organised by the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, on 16–17 September 2008.
- ³⁶ See, for instance Human Rights Watch Africa (2003) 'Zimbabwe, Not Eligible: The Politicization of Food in Zimbabwe', Vol. 15, No. 17(A), and UNHCR (2007) 'UN Human Rights Experts Call on Myanmar to Address Discrimination Against Members of Muslim Minority In North Rakhine State', 2 April 2007, <http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/F0ED9448671A73E6C12572B100553470?opendocument> – last accessed 31 December 2008.
- ³⁷ See Mousseau F. (2004) 'Roles of and Alternatives to Food Aid in Southern Africa, A review of the Southern Africa food crisis', Report to Oxfam, March 2004, Oxford: Oxfam GB. www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000998/index.php
- ³⁸ Nthara, K. (2002) 'What needs to be done to improve the impact of Admarc on the poor', Report for Oxfam, Malawi: Oxfam GB. <http://poverty2.forumone.com/library/view/15033/> – last accessed January 2008.
- ³⁹ WFP Strategic Plan 2008–2011, WFP July 2008, <http://www.wfp.org/english/?ModuleID=137&Key=2871> – last accessed January 2008.
- ⁴⁰ It must be noted however that if the provision of free or subsidised chemical fertilizers is an effective short term measure to boost production, it also takes resources away from more sustainable and long term solutions to food insecurity; it may for instance undermine efforts to diversify to more traditional drought resistant crops than maize in the case of Southern Africa and also deprives the agricultural sector of much needed investment in research, irrigation, and agricultural extension to the poorest areas.
- ⁴¹ OCHA website, <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts/pageloader.aspx?page=emerg-globalOverview&year=2008> – last accessed 19 January 2009.
- ⁴² FAO (2008) 'Le monde a besoin de 30 milliards de dollars par an pour éradiquer le fléau de la faim', FAO press release, 3 June 2008.
- ⁴³ United Nations (2008) 'Comprehensive Framework For Action, High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis', July 2008, New York: UN, <http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce/docs.shtml> – last accessed January 2009.
- ⁴⁴ WFP webpage – 'Purchase for Progress: connecting farmers to markets' http://www.wfp.org/p4p/?section=12&sub_section=6 – last accessed 10 November 2008, Rome: WFP.
- ⁴⁵ Purchase For Progress Grant Proposal to the Gates Foundation, World Food Programme, 2008.

⁴⁶ United Nations (2008) 'Comprehensive Framework For Action, High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis' p43, July 2008, New York: UN.

⁴⁷ UN agencies and programmes barely participate in the design of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), though they constitute key policy frameworks for governments and Bretton Woods Institutions, A comprehensive review of 50 UN Common Country Assessment (CCA) reports and 25 PRSPs carried out in 2003 observed that UN organisations were involved in only half the PRSPs, and in only a quarter of them with an active involvement. The involvement of the FAO was mentioned in only one case and this solely through the provision of comments. FAO (2003) 'Focus on Food Insecurity and Vulnerability, A review of the UN System Common Country Assessments and World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers', Wageningen: FIVIMS Secretariat, FAO / Wageningen University and Research Centre <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/006/Y5095E/y5095e01.htm#bm01> – last accessed February 2007.

⁴⁸ See Barrett, C.B. and Maxwell, D.G. (2005) *Food Aid After Fifty Years: Recasting Its Role*, chapter 3, p10, London: Routledge, 2005).

⁴⁹ This is also confirmed by the fact that the renegotiation of the FAC is tied to the outcome of WTO negotiations on agriculture. For more on the FAC, see Mousseau, F. (2005) 'Food aid or Food Sovereignty? Ending World Hunger in Our Time', p13, Oakland, California: The Oakland Institute.

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