

Food Security for the Food-Insecure: new challenges and renewed commitments

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Research evidence suggests that during the last 25 years, increases in food production have successfully kept ahead of population growth. Scientists predict that this can continue for the next 25 years and beyond if appropriate research and policy action is taken. Against this reality, hunger still persists in many parts of the world. Today more than one billion are very poor and suffer from food insecurity. 800 million are chronically malnourished. Every year, 6 million children under five die of malnutrition and related preventable diseases. Millions more become blind, retarded, or suffer other disabilities that impair functioning because of lack of vitamins and minerals. Moreover, hunger and poverty are the root of much political turmoil and armed conflict, and of a growing tide of refugees and migrants. The World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996 provided an opportunity for heads of states, United Nations agencies, the World Bank and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to put forward proposals to tackle the problem of hunger in the world.

This paper begins by exploring concepts of food security and insecurity. It goes on to examine food security indicators and methods of measuring them at national and household levels. It also provides some insights into how the poor cope during crises and disasters. Finally, it describes the three main proposals presented to the WFS, namely the WFS plan of action and the strategies of the World Bank and of the NGOs.

What is Food Security?

Concern with food security can be traced back to the world food crisis of 1972-74 - and beyond that at least to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which recognised the right to food as a core element of an adequate level of living (UN 1948). Food security as a concept emerged at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) World Food Conference in 1974. It is centred around two sub-concepts; food availability and food entitlement. The first, food availability refers to the supply of food available at local, national or international levels. The second, food entitlement refers to the capability of individuals and households to obtain food. It suggests that people do not usually starve because of an insufficient supply of food but because they have insufficient resources, including money ('entitlements'), to acquire it (Sen, 1981).

Thus, food security in a single country, or in the world as a whole, reflects the ability of food-deficit countries, or food-deficit regions within countries, or food-deficit households within them, to meet target consumption levels on a year-to-year basis.

The most widely used definition of food security is that of the World Bank: 'Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life'. The term "access" here is inclusive of both the supply side (availability) and the demand side (entitlement). The Sub-Committee on Nutrition within the UN Administration Committee on Coordination (ACC/SCN 1991:80) in defining food security at the household level brings in further dimensions. 'A household is food secure when it has access to the food needed for a healthy life for all its members (adequate in terms of quality, quantity, safety and culturally acceptable) and when it is not at undue risk of losing such access'.

What is Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity refers to a lack of access to enough food. There are two kinds of food insecurity: chronic and transitory. Transitory food insecurity is a temporary decline in a household's access to enough food. Chronic food insecurity is a continuously inadequate diet caused by the inability to acquire food. It affects households that persistently lack the ability either to buy enough food or to produce their own. Hence, poverty is considered the root cause of chronic food insecurity.

Famines are the worst form of transitory food insecurity. They can result from several causes: wars, floods, drought, crop failures, the loss of purchasing power by groups of households, and market failures including sometimes high food prices and grain hoarding. All of these types of disruptions to

food supplies can 'trigger' subsistence crises by threatening a population's access to food. They are the immediate causes of famine. But these precipitating 'triggers' lead to famine only where particular groups of people are already vulnerable to it. The most vulnerable include: small-scale subsistence farmers, landless agricultural workers, other workers who are affected by a drop in real income in famine regions, pastoralists, female-headed households, children, and the elderly. Vulnerability is complex and usually implies processes rather than events. Underlying processes 'set people up' for natural disasters or economic crises and, as Devereux (1993) puts it, 'they cause vulnerability, which is the real problem in the eradication of famine'.

Household Responses and Coping Strategies

Food security in recent years has been seen as one dimension of the broader concept of livelihood security. Chambers (1988) defines sustainable livelihood strategies as: '*Adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs. Security refers to secure ownership of, or access to, resources and income-earning activities, including reserves and assets to offset risk, ease shocks and meet contingencies. Sustainable refers to the maintenance or enhancement of resource productivity on a long-term basis*'.

Maxwell and Frankenberger (1992) state that within this context, food security is seen as one sub-set of objectives. Food is one of a whole range of factors that determine why the poor take decisions and spread risk and how they finally balance competing needs in order to survive. Determination to preserve assets can effect the behaviour of the poor at times of food insecurity. De Waal (1989) claims that the people of Darfur in Sudan during the famine period chose to go hungry in order to preserve their assets and thus their future livelihoods. They were quite prepared to put up with considerable levels of hunger, in order to preserve seeds for planting, or to avoid having to sell an animal. Corbett (1988) found that preservation of assets takes priority over meeting immediate food needs until the point of destitution, when all options have been exhausted. Oshaug (1985) identified three kinds of households, "enduring households", which maintain household food security on a continuous basis; "resilient households", which suffer shocks but recover quickly; and "fragile households" which become increasingly insecure because of their vulnerability to external shocks. Maxwell argues that the dilemma facing small farm households involves a trade-off between immediate subsistence and long-term sustainability.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 1995) defined sustainability as: 'The management and conservation of the natural resources base, and the orientation of technological and institutional change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations'. It is often argued that food security is achieved at the expense of environmental degradation and that the poor do not distinguish between food entitlements and environmental entitlements. Chambers rejects this view and argues that the poor have a vested interest in conserving their natural resource base, for both food security and livelihood reasons. They will do so, he claims, if they are given the chance and the opportunity.

Gender Contribution to Household's Food Security

Women are the principle producers of food in subsistence agriculture in developing countries. Men also share in agricultural fieldwork. In addition to farm work, women are solely responsible for housework including preparing meals, taking care of children and the elderly in the family and in most cases engaging in off-farm income earning activities.

Women who are also the heads of households find it particularly difficult to satisfy household food needs from own food production only. For instance, women in Africa are central to the region's food security for the following reasons: most African farmers are women and increasing their productivity will determine agricultural performance and rural incomes. Women support children, mostly through subsistence farming and petty trade, and head many of the households most at risk of food insecurity. Women are most likely to suffer from malnutrition during pregnancy and from carrying out such arduous and time and energy consuming tasks as fetching water and firewood (Ochieng 1990). Research evidence suggests that woman's contribution to on-farm; off-farm and non-farm activities are highly acknowledged by governments, donors and NGOs, but not fully tackled at policy-making levels. Plan of actions are produced by many national governments in an attempt to improve the status of poor women, failed to achieve its objectives simply because it was either mainstreaming women's concerns or treating their issues as an added component to their development programme. Both approaches proved to be of no relevance to solving the many problems which women might face in their daily life and in trying to produce enough food to feed their families and some surplus for the market. Moreover, to ensure food security at household level. Policy makers need to identify the most

vulnerable groups at community and household levels and initiate plan of action based on providing equality in access to resources both legal, material, and social.

Measuring Food Security and Insecurity

There are a number of ways, and levels, at which food security and insecurity can be measured. These levels include: continental, regional, sub-regional and households levels.

- At the continental and sub-regional levels, food security can be measured by comparing regional nutritional requirements with availability of dietary calories per head. The ultimate goal is to meet the food requirements of the population at all levels. At the country level, the most widely used indicators are quantities of available food compared with needs, as well as import requirements compared with the country's capacity to import.
- At the household level, food security is measured by actual dietary intake of all household members using household income and expenditure surveys. It is important that changes in socio-economic and demographic variables be monitored continuously over time.

The question arises: can household income and expenditure surveys produce indicators of food security for every member of the household? To answer this question Chen et al (1994) suggest measuring an individual's food security by food poverty indicators and by anthropometric data.

A food poverty indicator shows the number of individuals living in a household whose access to food is sufficient to provide a dietary intake adequate for growth, activity and good health. The anthropometric measure refers to nutritional status at individual level. Thus, individual food security implies an intake of food and absorption of nutrients sufficient to meet an individual's needs for activity, health, growth and development. The individual's age, gender, body size, health status and level of physical activity determine the level of need.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its annual Human Development Reports, uses the following indicators to measure food security at national level: food production per head, agricultural production as a percent of gross domestic product, food consumption as a percent of total consumption, daily calorie supply per head, food supply from fish and seafood, food imports, cereal imports, and food aid in cereals. Of course, UNDP data measuring food security at national level are estimated averages and do not reflect food security at household level. Moreover, they do not indicate an individual's differential access to sufficient food and to a nutritionally balanced diet. For example, the data do not distinguish between pregnant and non-pregnant women, between female and male children, or between elderly women and men, and so on. Averages are never very helpful for policy formulation designed to eliminate food insecurity and malnutrition at sub-regional and household levels

Data produced by the FAO (Table 1) suggest that in the period 1979 to 1992, the very high levels of chronic undernutrition actually increased in Africa, while they declined significantly in Asia and Latin America. The increasing food insecurity in Africa has been associated with low per capita food availability and high fluctuations in food supply as well as high food prices arising from the liberalisation of agricultural prices on the one hand and removal of subsidies on the other. Africa is the only region in the world where food production, with a few notable exceptions, has declined in per capita terms since the early 1960s. Where developing countries are food-deficit and very poor, they usually have to rely on food imports and/or food aid to offset shortfalls in domestic food production. FAO forecasts of undernutrition suggest that 30 percent of sub-Saharan African countries will still suffer from undernutrition in 2010. At the same time, the FAO suggests that rates in all other regions of the developing world will have fallen to 12 percent or less.

Table 1. Estimates and forecasts of the incidence of chronic undernutrition by world region

Region	Period	%of Total population
Sub-Saharan Africa	1979-1981	39
	1990-1992	41
	forecasts for 2010	30
Near East/North Africa	1979-1981	10
	1990-1992	10
	forecasts for 2010	10
East Asia and South East Asia	1979-1981	27
	1990-1992	16
	forecasts for 2010	6
South Asia	1979-1981	33
	1990-1992	22
	forecasts for 2010	12
Latin America/Caribbean	1979-1981	13
	1990-1992	14
	forecasts for 2010	7
Total	1979-1981	27
	1990-1992	20
	2010	13

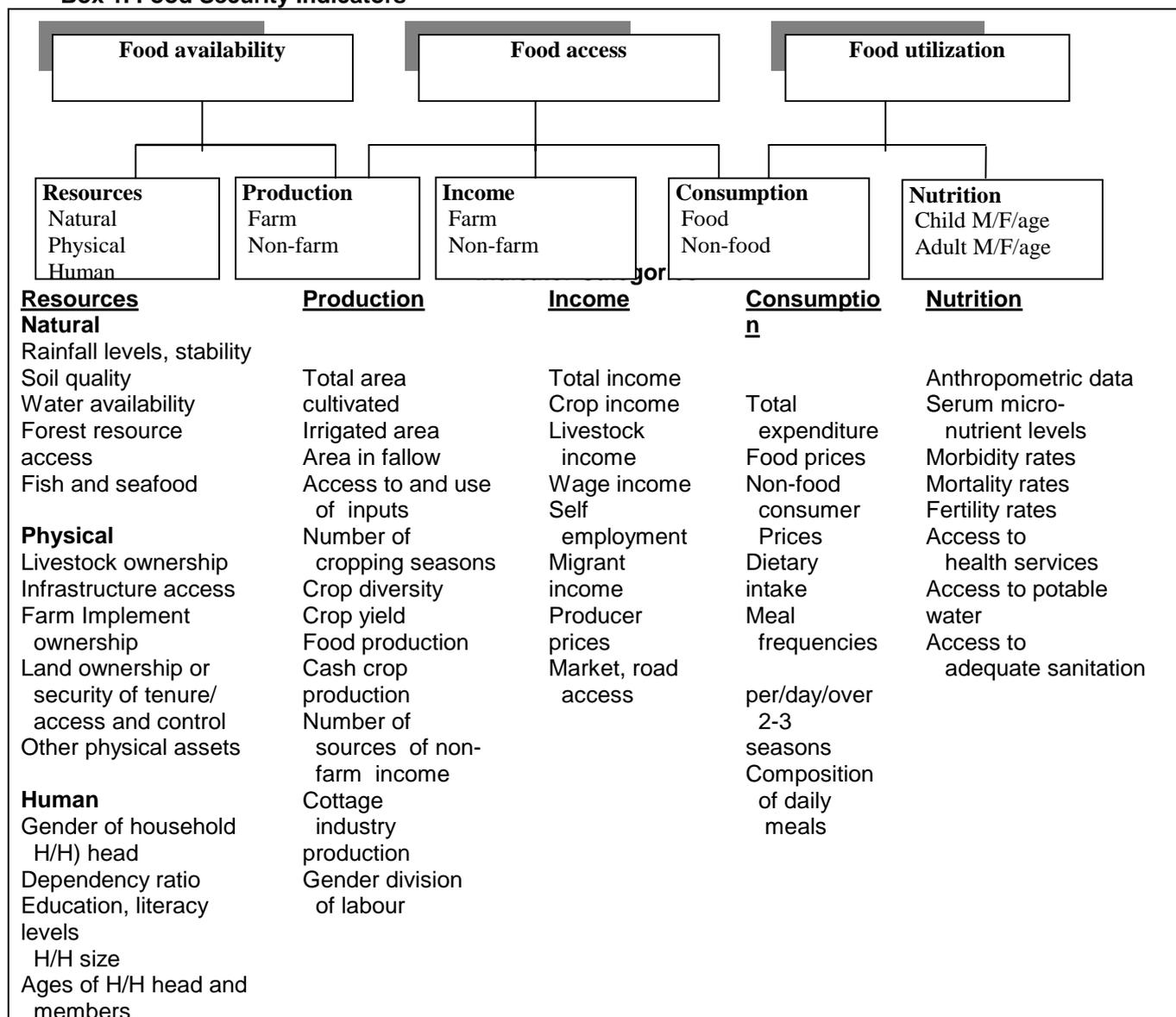
Source: Adapted from FAOSTAT (1994 and 1996)

Identifying and Targeting the Food Insecure

A great deal of research has been undertaken in recent years which is aimed at identifying the numbers and types of people who suffer from chronic undernutrition. Such research is vital if the food insecure are to be properly targeted both in situations of crises (when they need food aid) and to help them achieve long-term food security (through, for example improvements in food production, access to land, inputs and water, and better roads and communications). Researchers collect both quantitative and qualitative data to help national governments, donors, and NGOs to identify the vulnerability of poor households to all types of shocks and disasters.

For purposes of quantitative analysis, researchers disaggregate existing data that were collected from groups of households and classify them by gender, age, access to resources, control over assets, and income. If the existing data are unreliable, researchers survey levels of vulnerability of households to external and internal shocks, by using household food security indicators (FSIs). For the qualitative analysis, researchers often use an approach called participatory rural appraisal (PRA) or participatory learning action (PLA) which was developed by Chambers and Conway in the early 1980s (Chambers 1994). Box 1 shows a conceptual framework for FSIs.

Box 1. Food Security Indicators



Sources: Adapted from Webb, Richardson, and von Braun (1993), 'Conceptual framework for famine analysis: A household income approach', International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and Chung, Haddad, Ramakrishna and Reily (1997), *Identifying the Food Insecure: The application of mixed-method approaches in India*. Washington DC, IFPRI.

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India is an example of a country that suffered from famines in the past but has now succeeded in implementing famine prevention policies. However, the government still spends around US\$100 million annually in providing food to food-insecure areas of the country. There is a widespread belief that current levels of food security in India could be achieved with less strain on the public finances if programmes were better targeted at the under-nourished. Box 2 shows how the search for better targeting methods is crucial if food security is to be attained.

Box 2. Case study: targeting the food insecure in India

Famines in India are "a nightmare of the past". Food production, at national level, has kept up with population increases. Government buffer stocks of grain have stabilized food grain prices. Democracy and a free press give the rural poor a voice. Relatively efficient interregional grain markets now exist, informal consumption credit is available, and a set of explicit famine-relief policies such as rural public works programmes are now in place. Despite that, the search for better targeting methods is crucial. First, improvements in food availability at national and regional levels have not eliminated chronic and often severe food insecurity in all regions throughout the country. Child malnutrition rates in India are still very high. According to the UNDP, 53 percent of children under five in India were under-weight during the period 1990-97, the highest rate of any of the 174 developing countries listed. Second, national food aid programmes are designed to address the problem of scarcity of resources, which are allocated to target the food insecure. Since it was launched in 1954, India's food aid programme is ranked as the world's largest non-emergency food programme. Policy-makers use the following indicators to help capture important aspects of food security status and to identify the most food insecure: low scheduled caste, lack of land, poor maternal knowledge of nutrition, mother forced to work outside the home, young age of mother at marriage, having late birth order and recent diarrheal infection. The Indian government's food aid programmes are diverse but centre on providing aid to food insecure pre-schoolers, women, and poor households. However, many needy households and individuals receive few benefits. The level of leakage from programme resources can be high in some areas. Benefits still accrue to many who are not among the most needy.

Source: Adapted from Chung K, Haddad L, Ramakrishna J, and Reily F (1996) *Identifying the Food Insecure: the application of mixed-method approaches in India*, Washington, DC, IFPRI.

Alternative Strategies to Achieve Food Security for the Poor

Food-insecure people neither consistently produce enough food for themselves nor have they the purchasing power to buy food from markets. The same can be true at national levels. Some countries have the capacity to achieve food security by promoting food production nationally. However, others, especially poor food-deficit countries, are not well endowed in terms of resources, institutions and technology, and will always need to import food, unless new research findings and technology enable them to mobilise their resources to achieve food security in the long run. There are two main strategic approaches that can be followed in order to feed a global population that may exceed seven billion by 2010.

The first strategy suggests that food-deficit developing countries should maximize the efficiency and output of their export sectors, and then use the resulting foreign exchange earnings to import food. According to this strategy, continued growth in world trade will allow them to produce and export other primary products, industrial goods, and services that should enable them to purchase significant quantities of food from food-surplus countries in both the North and the South. For this food to reach the food-insecure in poor countries, the development of effective national food security policies is required. The FAO suggests that these policies must ensure higher food entitlements for both the rural and urban poor through sufficient access to food made possible by income generation and employment.

The second strategy thought to be more realistic by many analysts, suggests that food deficit countries in the South should re-orient their development strategies toward increased investment in their agricultural sectors. They need to increase their own food production significantly and adopt specific policies to alleviate food insecurity at national, regional and household levels.

Commitments to Solve Global Hunger: The World Food Summit 1996

The proportion of undernourished people in the world fell from 27 percent in 1979 to 20 percent 1992. In global terms, food production has outpaced population growth. This has come about from a combination of improved farming methods, dissemination of new technology, and more intensive use of inputs such as high yielding varieties (HYVs) of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides. Moreover, closer integration of markets has sustained the growth in production in many developing countries, particularly in Asia and Latin America. However, per capita food production has not increased in many poor low-income countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Famines, on the other hand, have tended to be confined to conflict situations. The draught-related crises particularly affecting pastoralists in marginal environments in Africa, such as in western Darfur, Sudan or Turkana, Kenya, were largely alleviated by post-1974 food security arrangements. This containment of famine is, to a significant degree, the real achievement of the process of international negotiations which followed from the first World Food Summit held in 1974 (Overseas Development Institute (ODI) 1997). Following that conference, new institutional arrangements were put in place and

a fresh conceptual framework for analysing international food problems was established. But much remains to be done if the ambitious targets are to be met in a sustainable way. The second WFS was held in Rome in 1996. Attendance included 185 countries, the European Union, 24 UN agencies, 55 other inter-governmental organisations and 457 NGOs. Box 3 shows the Declaration and Plan of Action that was unanimously adopted on the Summit by all national representatives. It reaffirmed 'the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger'. The Summit set what was regarded as an attainable target of reducing the number of undernourished people to half of its present level by no later than 2015. A mid-term review is to be carried out by 2006 to ascertain the level of progress that is being made. The emphasis has been placed on national action, supported by international co-operation. National representatives put forward seven commitments. The implementation of these commitments is to be monitored at national, sub-regional, regional and international levels through the FAO committee on World Food Security. Box 3 sets out these national commitments while Box 4 presents the World Bank approach.

Box 3. World Food Summit *Plan of Action*: the seven commitments

- Ensuring and enabling a political, social, and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty and for durable peace, based on full and equal participation of women and men, which is most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all
- Implementing policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all
- Pursuing participatory and sustainable food production and rural development policies and practice in both high and low potential areas, which are essential to adequate and reliable food supplies at household, national, regional and global levels, and combating pests, drought and desertification, considering the multifunctional character of agriculture
- Ensuring trade policies conducive to fostering food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system
- Preventing and forestalling natural and man-made disasters and meeting transitory and emergency food requirements in ways that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, development and a capacity to satisfy future needs
- Allocating public and private investments to foster human resources, sustainable agricultural systems and rural development in high and low potential areas
- Implementing, monitoring and following up the Plan of Action at all levels in co-operation with the international community.

Box 4. The World Bank Approach: *Food Security Strategy for the World*

- Supporting government strategies and policies that encourage investment and growth, and which do not discriminate against agriculture or small farmers
- Encouraging open international trade and stable access to international markets
- Promoting the generation of better technology and processes through support for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and national agricultural research systems, and getting the information to farmers
- Investing in infrastructure, roads, telecommunications, electricity, and irrigation
- Investing in people through education, health, and nutrition programmes
- Involving local communities, and especially the poor, in designing, implementing, and monitoring projects
- Focusing on the critical interface between agriculture and the environment. The WB proposed the following key activities in its action plan to promote sound natural resource management:
 - Using economic incentives
 - Sharing benefits of resource-use equitably
 - Decentralizing decision-making
 - Building capacity to monitor changes
 - Managing better soil productivity
 - Mainstreaming biodiversity in production systems
 - Integrating sound pest management practices into agriculture, forestry and animal health
 - Underscoring the potential to improve livestock, rangeland and pasture for arid and semi-arid regions
 - Developing small-scale fisheries and aquaculture
 - Linking forestry and agro-forestry firmly to agricultural and environmental concerns.

The NGOs at the WFS presented their own set of proposals for achieving food security for the food insecure. Their approach called into question the existing approaches, policies and practices to achieve food security for all. Box 5 shows their collective statement *Profit for the Few or Food for All*.

Box 5. The NGOs approach: *Profit for the Few or Food for All*

- Strengthening the capacity of family farmers through reorienting all aspects of local and regional food systems in favour of family farmers. This should include:
 - providing the technical, managerial and financial support, i.e credit, extension and direct access to markets for farmers' associations
 - encouraging safe and sustainable urban agriculture
 - insuring women's right of access to productive resources and equal opportunities to use and development of their skills
 - reversing the concentration of wealth and power through the implementation of agrarian reform in favour of the rural poor
- Changing farming systems towards agro-ecological principles through:
 - reorienting national and international research, education and extension services to integrate the knowledge and experience of men and women farmers
 - preventing and reducing the impact of draught and desertification through soil and water conservation and sustainable use of natural vegetation
 - adopting policies and practices of agro-forestry and organic agricultural production
- Emphasising that primary responsibility for ensuring food security lies with national and local governments, whose capacity must be strengthened and accountability enhanced
- Strengthening the participation of peoples' organisations and NGOs at all levels
- Ensuring that food sovereignty takes precedence over macro-economic policies and trade liberalisation
- Ensuring that all countries and peoples have the right to develop their agriculture. Negotiation should be carried out to develop more effective instruments to implement the right to food. These instruments should include:
 - issuing a code of conduct to govern the activities of those involved in achieving the *Right to Food*, including national and international institutions, as well as private actors such as transnational corporations

The FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS): Responding to the challenges of the World Food Summit

The FAO's Committee on the World Food Summit (CFS) was established by the Summit and is responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and consulting on the international food security situation. It analyses food needs, assesses food availability, and monitors and disseminates information on food stock levels. The CFS also provides recommendations on policies designed to ensure adequate cereal supplies. It undertakes food security surveillance and monitors current and prospective levels of food supply and demand. The monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Summit's Plan of Action is done in cooperation with national governments, UN agencies (on follow-up and inter-agency coordination), and other relevant international institutions. The most recent session of the CFS was held in June 1999. It took two practical steps towards improving the feasibility of attaining the 1996 World Food Summit's over-riding goal. It endorsed moves to improve assessment of the number and characteristics of food insecure and vulnerable people who are the target of the Summit's follow-up actions. It also agreed to provide an improved structure for monitoring and reporting at all levels, and suggested a number of improvements in the indicators to be used.

At global level, in addition to supply-side indicators, other suggestions included undertaking research on: dietary composition, a poverty index, income distribution and purchasing power, trade position, terms of trade, external debt, private capital flows, and overseas development aid. Various recommendations were also made for improving monitoring of food availability and accessibility at national, household and even individuals levels. The Committee decided to take up the question 'who are the food insecure?' as a major theme at its 26th session to be held in 2000.

The CFS reports on some 20 countries that have incorporated the "right to food" in their constitutions since 1996. In collaboration with other UN agencies, national institutions and NGOs, and as specified in

the Summit Plan of Action, progress has been made in establishing the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Mapping System (FIVMS). FIVMS involves the gradual development and establishment of the system at national and international levels, building upon existing information systems and mechanisms.

Concluding Comments

Despite the level of consensus reached at the 1996 World Food Summit, a number of concerns remain. Sen (1997) has stated that 'the WFS succeeded in emphasising and drawing attention to the enormity of the so-called food problem, but failed to take a sufficiently differentiated view of distinct types of food deprivation and their diverse causations'. The summit focused much more on the production of food rather than on the determination of who gets how much of it and how they get it. While acknowledging that food production is indeed an important component of solving the problem of world hunger, Sen claims that much more attention needs to be paid to issues relating to: economic growth; employment, and decent pay; diversification of production; provision of medical and health care; arrangements for special access to food on the part of vulnerable people (including deprived mothers and small children; spread of basic education and literacy; strengthening of democracy and news media; and reduction of gender-based inequality.

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) claims that what was achieved at the WFS represents only a restatement of commitments acceptable to every government and rephrased in the sustainable, participatory, gender-sensitive, anti-poverty, environmentally friendly terms of the moment. The ODI (1997) makes the point that, in common with most other UN conferences, the agreements reached are not binding. No fresh aid or other commitments were made amid much reference to working with 'available resources'. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the Plan of Action is 'to be the sovereign right and responsibility of each State'.

One of the few new and specific proposals is the commitment of governments to monitor progress in reducing chronic hunger. Its implementation involves the production of hunger maps for use in identifying vulnerable populations, and monitoring hunger-reduction strategies. Another Summit achievement was to achieve a near-consensus on the need to tackle the inter-related problems of hunger and poverty. However, like all other single issue conferences, it failed to address the difficult international and inter-agency institutional issues. Coordination of the work of various UN specialised agencies, other international organisations and the FAO committee on World Food Security (CFS) is essential if the CFS is to meet the challenges of the WFS.

The world has the knowledge and expertise to achieve the objectives of the WFS to solve the problems of world hunger and food insecurity. What is needed the political will and commitment of both national governments and international organisations, to put that knowledge to work.

Recommendations¹:

At National Level

- **Commitment to promoting health and nutritional well-being of all the people**
 - growth with equity, sharing of benefits by all people. Development strategies should aim at reducing poverty, emphasise social justice, and achieve better nutrition for all and in particular protecting vulnerable groups
 - countries should make a firm social, economic and political commitment to achieve the objective of promoting the nutritional well-being of its people as an integral part of its development policies, plans and programmes in the short and long run
 - ministries such as agriculture, health, education and other relevant sectors should consider where possible, incorporating nutrition objectives in their plans, programmes and projects. Equally necessary is the coordination with NGOs and the private sector
 - assuring access to adequate and safe food supplies, health care and education and related services which must be achieved using sustainable measures which are environmentally sound. This requires better utilisation of natural resources to meet the nutritional and other needs of the growing population without jeopardizing the capacity to meet the needs of the future generations. This can happen by providing farmers with incentives to adopt sustainable and efficient practices in managing natural resources such as land and forest ownership, technical knowledge and through markets promotion

- Priority must be given to the most food insecure, infants, small children, female child and adolescents, pregnant and nursing women and the elderly within households, the disabled, other groups include indigenous populations, refugees and displaced persons
 - People's participation at local level is a prerequisite for improving food production and sustaining access to food, and for adequate nutrition improvement programmes and projects. The importance of the informal sector in the processing of and distribution of food should be recognised.
- **Focus on women nutritional well-being**
 - promote equality between men and women, this should include the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in accordance with the 1979 Convention on Elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women including detrimental traditional practices
 - Relieve the workload of women through the provision of clean water, introduction of appropriate, relevant and affordable technology such as high capacity stove to save energy for cooking etc, and transports facilities e.g. (modified bicycle). Research centres and extension should promote the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at smaller scale and exploring ways of finding alternatives to herbicide to reduce the time spent by women on weeding in cases where farm households can not afford to buy herbicide
 - educating members of the household on the importance of shared responsibilities both in performing agricultural tasks and housework
 - women and girls should be afforded equitable access to family resources and to educational and training opportunities
 - legal measures should guarantee women's equal access to productive resources such as land, through joint or co-ownership and this will enable women to access credit, irrigation, inputs and markets, agricultural extension and research
 - women and men should have equal access to family planning programmes which would enable them to plan the spacing of their children and to achieve fertility rates which are in consonance with their resource endowment and are sustainable to meet the needs of their current and future generations.
 - **Cooperation between developing countries to promote food security and nutritional well-being for the food insecure**
 - strengthening cooperation among developing countries and within regions in tackling common problems, in learning from each other's experiences and, where possible, in channeling regional resources to solve regional problems within the framework that already exist between developing countries
 - encouraging triangular food aid.
 - **Cooperation with multilateral and bilateral aid donors and international organisations**
 - to achieve the objective of eliminating hunger and improving nutritional well-being of the chronically food insecure, adequate financial, technical and in kind resources is needed for implementing programmes and projects.
 - many developing countries lack the financial capacity to meet this challenge, thus the international community, particularly bilateral agencies, multilateral financing institutions and international organisations, should support country efforts in this direction. Free and fair trade, re-negotiation or alleviation of debt, and increased official assistance, bearing in mind the accepted United Nations target of 0.7% of GNP of developed countries (of which 0.15% should be for Least Developed countries). Economic assistance measures should be designed in such a way that they do not undermine the long-term financial and economic stability of a recipient country.
 - issuing a Code of Conduct to govern the activities of those involved in achieving the right to food, including national and international institutions such as the WTO as well as private actors such as transnational corporations.
 - the ILO in 1998 has published a preliminary analysis of approximately 215 Codes. In 1999 the OECD published an inventory on Codes of Corporate Conduct which analyses 182 codes. According to Piepel (1999) 'the accelerating establishment of such codes is mainly a reaction of companies, trade unions and other developed country civil society organisation towards the increasing documentation of grave violations of workers' rights in export-oriented industries in many developing

countries of the south. Reports on the use of child labour, on suppression of free trade unions, the payment of wages below the official minimum level of environmental devastation provoke critical mass media reports, consumer campaigns and company activities to defend or protect the image of a single firms of branches'. The OECD study mentioned by Pieple² differentiates five areas of norms in codes of conduct: fair business practices; observance of rule of law; fair employment and labour rights; environmental stewardship and corporate citizenship. Fair employment and labour rights are the most popular criteria used in such codes as 114 of the 182 codes analysed refer to these norms. These criteria are especially found in light industries where they occur in 90 percent of codes of companies. However, environmental criteria are more common in codes of companies engaged in heavy industries.

- codes of conduct need to be monitored at international as well as at national level. Civil society, NGOs, trade unions can combine their work with the authority and experience of the ILO. Other UN organisations such as UNCTAD, FAO, UNIDO, WHO can assist also using their area of specialisation when it is necessary. This forum should have the mandate to play an important role for the future development of voluntary instruments designed to help improve working conditions and protect workers' rights
- create the right balance between macro-economic policy objectives and food security needs, minimise possible adverse impact of structural adjustment programmes on food security of the poor, and where some negative effects are unavoidable, introduce transitory measures to alleviate the hardships. Governments and international organisations should promote programmes which will increase food production and agricultural trade so that the poor countries and poor people have better access to food. International lending practices should be re-examined and long-term action must be planned to maintain food supplies, to provide employment opportunities through diversification of economic activities at levels necessary to meet the needs of all people and in particular the food insecure.

Box 6. Further Reading

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