HUNGRY FOR SOLUTIONS

Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit
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Brazil Ghana India Kenya Malawi Pakistan Uganda
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Contents:

List of Acronyms ................................................................. 4

Executive Summary ............................................................ 5

Chapter 1:
Introduction ......................................................................... 9

Chapter 2:
Crying out for Solutions .................................................... 17

Chapter 3:
National policies and initiatives: What progress? .................... 25
Country profiles from:
3.1 Brazil ............................................................................. 26
3.2 Ghana ........................................................................... 34
3.3 India .............................................................................. 37
3.4 Kenya ............................................................................ 42
3.5 Malawi .......................................................................... 48
3.6 Pakistan ........................................................................ 56
3.7 Uganda .......................................................................... 62

Chapter 4:
Examples of Best Practice ................................................... 69

Chapter 5:
Finding Solutions: Conclusions and Recommendations ............ 79

Bibliography ..................................................................... 83
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

List of acronyms

AAI  ActionAid International
ADB  Asian Development Bank
BPL  Below Poverty Line
CISANET  Civil Society Agriculture Network
CONSEA  Brazilian National Nutrition and Food Security Council
CSO  Civil Society Organisation
FCJTF  National Food Crisis Joint Task Force
FOSANET  Food Security Advocacy Network
GATT  General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GMO  Genetically Modified Organism
GPRS I  Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I
GPRS II  Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II
IARC  International Agricultural Research Centres
ICESCR  International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
IGWG  Intergovernmental Working Group
IMF  International Monetary Fund
JEFAP  Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme
MASIP  Malawi Agricultural Sector Investment Programme
MDG  Millennium Development Goal
MOFA  Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NFRA  National Food Reserve Agency
NFS  Nutrition and Food Security
NGO  Non-governmental Organisation
NSSO  National Sample Survey Organisation
PDS  Public Distribution System
TNC  Trans-national Corporation
SAP  Structural Adjustment Programme
SGR  Strategic Grain Reserves
UDHR  Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WB  World Bank
WHO  World Health Organisation
WFS  World Food Summit
WFS-fyl  World Food Summit - five years later
WTO  World Trade Organisation
Executive Summary

The year 2006 is halfway between the World Food Summit (WFS) of 1996 and the target date of 2015 when the WFS goal of halving the number of hungry people in the world is supposed to be realized. Despite this, the WFS goal is far from being achieved, according to this investigative study by seven ActionAid International country offices. Out of the seven countries studied - Brazil, India, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan and Uganda - only Brazil and India have implemented national-level policies specifically designed to address the problems of the food insecure populations, and even in these countries, vast numbers of people remain malnourished.

The aim of this study is not to offer a comprehensive analysis of the state of food security in the countries mentioned above, but to extract common problems and solutions for making progress in the realization of the right to food ten years after the WFS.

Problems crying out for solutions

Although the constraints vary considerably from one country to another, the following external and internal constraints were found to be common to all or most of the seven countries studied. At the policy and programme level, governments:

• Do not give enough attention to smallholder farmers. Agricultural policies promote large-scale agriculture, cash crops and agricultural production for export, at the expense of small-scale agriculture and household food production on which the majority of rural populations depend for their livelihoods.

• Do not put enough emphasis on people’s access to food. Agricultural policies promote agricultural production and availability of food, while failing to ensure that their populations have access to food. People still go hungry in countries that produce more than sufficient amounts of food to feed their populations.

External factors impinging on the ability of countries to achieve the WFS goals include:

• Policies imposed by International Financial Institutions through conditions attached to aid and loans. Under pressure from the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), governments are still cutting back on services to communities. For small farmers this means fewer extension services, less access to inputs, technology, and resources - and decreasing productivity and income.

• Inequitable international trade that leaves developing country markets open to an influx of subsidized agricultural products from developed countries, resulting in the destruction of small farmers’ livelihoods;
Hungry for Solutions:  
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

- Foreign food aid that undermines local agriculture and results in dependency;
- A reduction in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the agricultural sector, particularly small-scale agriculture.

Despite expressions of political commitment to the WFS Plan of Action, donor governments have continued to reduce financial resources destined for sustainable rural development and to institutions such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), with a mandate to end hunger and malnutrition. The global levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) destined for agriculture have been falling steadily throughout the 1990s, from US$6.7 billion in 1984 to US$2.7 billion in 2002.

At the national level, countries have yet to satisfactorily tackle the problems of:
- lack of access to, and control over land and other natural resources;
- bias against women farmers;
- lack of seed security and lack of implementation of biodiversity preserving measures.

As long as smallholder and family farmers lack access to land and resources to produce or provide sufficient healthy food for themselves and their families, eradicating hunger and poverty will remain an unattainable goal. Constraints to access to land range from inherited colonial land policies to privatisation of land and encroachment on lands by large landowners and corporations.

Discrimination against women still exists in most countries as a result of which women farmers face even more constraints to accessing land and other resources than men, due to inequitable laws and patriarchal inheritance systems. Since women comprise the majority of food producers in many countries, this lack of access to land and resources is a fundamental determinant of food insecurity and poverty.

Access to enough good quality seed by all farmers all year round is critical for agricultural production. With modernisation, globalisation and the promotion of private sector investment in the seed sector, small farmers are gradually losing control of seed. Genetically modified seeds, in particular, are leading to dependency on multinational corporations, increasing debt burden on farmers, a reduced genetic seed pool and decreasing biodiversity.

Positive steps towards reducing hunger
Significantly, countries that have taken positive steps towards reducing hunger, i.e. Brazil and India, have strong civil society and social movements that have been instrumental in pressuring their governments to implement right to food policies.
In Brazil, a strong civil society movement has led to the development of a Nutrition and Food Security (NFS) public agenda by the Brazilian Government. The National NFS Council (CONSEA), which comprises representatives of civil society and Ministers of State, and its state-level versions, has promoted national debate in negotiations between Government and civil society. CONSEA has also launched proposals for government programmes and non-governmental initiatives. Many of the non-governmental initiatives are closely linked with public programmes, including those of the Government Zero Hunger Programme. Innovative initiatives include promoting production by small farmers to supply food to national food aid programmes.

India’s strong social movement has brought together civil society organizations in a Right to Food Campaign that emerged from path-breaking litigation in the Supreme Court of India including Right to Food as a derivative of the fundamental right to life. The campaign has achieved major victories in lobbying for legislation and implementation of concrete programmes to increase food security amongst poor sectors of the population.

A call to governments

ActionAid International embraces a rights-based approach that affirms that all people have a right to food and to not be hungry or undernourished. Food security should be grounded in human rights. The obligation and accountability to ensure this right should rest upon States. ActionAid International calls on governments to:

• Reorient agricultural development policies to promote smallholder farmers and sustainable development by reversing the negative trend in ODA’s percentage dedicated to rural development;
• Shift investment from large-scale agricultural production to an agro-ecological model centred on smallholder production;
• Ensure that small farmers have access to sufficient land, resources, inputs and income to produce and provide sufficient healthy food for themselves and their families;
• Protect the land rights of small farmers against encroachment by agribusiness and other private interests;
• Establish an enabling legal and policy framework and actions that positively discriminate in favour of women, especially as regards access to land, credit and other resources;
• Establish comprehensive seed security policies that promote and protect farmers’ rights to seed and local biodiversity; and
• Strengthen cooperation with civil society movements in the design of appropriate national level policies.
1. Introduction

“We pledge our political will and our common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015.”

Rome Declaration, World Food Summit, 1996

Ten years have passed since world leaders met in Rome and pledged to halve the number of undernourished by the year 2015. With an estimated 800 million undernourished people in the world in 1990 (the baseline year), this was to result in a reduction of 400 million by the year 2015.

Yet, in 2006, the world seems further away from meeting this goal than ever before. Indeed, FAO figures indicate that hunger and malnourishment in developing countries have increased over the last ten years: 796 million in 1996, rising to 815 million in 2002, by conservative estimates (FAO, 2004). At the tenth anniversary of the World Food Summit, it is urgent that governments agree bold steps to reverse this upward trend and secure people’s right to food.

“Running out of food is not new to us. Even our fathers who could produce, eat and sell millet to buy animals also used to run out of food in some years...[But] today we run out
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

of food too early in the season - sometimes just after Christmas. We suffer the food shortage for a long period and more severely than our fathers and year after year it gets worse for us.”

Head of household in Upper West Region, Ghana, interviewed by AAI Ghana in 2006

This report assesses what governments in developing countries have done to meet both the World Food Summit (WFS) commitments and the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to reduce hunger and poverty. On the basis of research conducted by ActionAid International in seven developing countries (Brazil, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan and Uganda), the report reveals that little progress has been made towards meeting the goal of halving hunger by 2015. Only Brazil and India have implemented national-level policies specifically designed to address the problems of food insecure populations and even in these countries, vast numbers of people remain malnourished.

The World Food Summit

In 1996, 187 heads of State and Governments met in Rome and reaffirmed the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the fundamental right to be free from hunger. They pledged to eradicate hunger and halve the number of undernourished people by 2015. The Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the WFS Plan of Action laid the foundations for diverse paths to a common objective - food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels.

It stated that each nation must adopt a strategy, consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals, and at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organise collective solutions to global issues of food security. Hence, beside the prime goal of achieving food security, the Plan of Action also comprised other action areas, including:

- Poverty eradication as an essential element to improve access to food.
- Establishment of a peaceful and stable environment in every country as a fundamental condition for the attainment of sustainable food security.
- Implementation of targeted interventions on people and areas suffering most from hunger and malnutrition taking cognisance of their causes as a strategy to minimise rural to urban migration so as to avoid political, economic and social instability in the country.
- Sustainable management of natural resources and strategies that would ensure availability of enough food in an economy.
Some would argue that developing countries' failure to meet their WFS commitments is the inevitable result of global forces over which national governments have little, if any control - such as unfair trade liberalisation, rich country dumping, falling levels of aid to agriculture, and the increasing concentration of market power in the hands of multi-national agribusiness. Our research affirms the negative impact of such trends on small-scale agriculture.

However, this report also shows that good national policies can make a major difference to a population’s food security. As well as analysing what has gone wrong, the report identifies what has worked, with examples of best practice from around the world.

- **Reduction of harmful seasonal and inter-annual instability of food supplies, through appropriate strategies and effective early warning systems.**

The WFS Plan of Action has been criticised by civil society and non-governmental organisations as being excessively broad, making it difficult to establish priorities and clear, viable and verifiable indicators to measure actions toward meeting the overall commitments.

Some would argue that developing countries' failure to meet their WFS commitments is the inevitable result of global forces over which national governments have little, if any control - such as unfair trade liberalisation, rich country dumping, falling levels of aid to agriculture, and the increasing concentration of market power in the hands of multi-national agribusiness. Our research affirms the negative impact of such trends on small-scale agriculture.

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**Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

The first of the MDGs (adopted at the Millennium Development Summit in 2000) deals with the reduction of hunger and extreme poverty in the world. The targets that governments pledged to achieve by 2015 are to:

- Halve the proportion of people living on less than US$1 a day
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

This MDG is far more modest than that of the World Food Summit - reducing the “proportion” of hungry people rather than the absolute “number” of people. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2005 (SOFI, 2005) reports “the world population is expected to grow by approximately two billion between the baseline period (1990-1992) and 2015. So, even if the proportion of that larger population who are undernourished is reduced by half, nearly 600 million people in the developing world will still suffer from chronic hunger. To reach the WFS target of 400 million, the proportion of the population who are undernourished would need to be reduced not by half, but by two-thirds.”
What is food security?

The Rome Declaration on World Food Security states that: “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life.” In this definition, the four pillars of food security are: availability, stability of supply, access and utilisation.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and others have broadened this definition by highlighting the nutritional dimension, combining the aspects of food availability and food safety in a single concept, and emphasising the right to food in the context of sustainable development. For example, the Brazilian National Nutrition and Food Security Council (CONSEA) has adopted the following concept:

“Food and Nutrition Security is the realisation of the right of everyone to regular and permanent access to quality food, in sufficient quantity, without compromising access to other essential needs and based on food practices that promote health, respect cultural diversity and are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable” (CONSEA, 2004).

Although there is no single blueprint, the following measures seem to be essential in all countries to get back on track if the number of malnourished people is to be cut by half by 2015:

1. Shift investment from increasing large-scale agricultural production to an agro-ecological model centered on smallholder production. Most of the countries studied over-emphasise large-scale agriculture, cash crops and agricultural production for export, at the expense of small-scale agriculture and household food production on which the majority of their rural populations depend for their livelihoods.

2. Ensure that small farmers have access to sufficient land, resources and inputs and/or income to produce and provide sufficient healthy food for themselves and their families. In doing so design national level policies that adopt provisions of the Voluntary Guidelines on Implementation of the Right to Food.

3. Strengthen women’s rights to land, water, seeds, credit and extension services. Although women produce 60-80% of food grown in developing countries, they are typically unable to make decisions over what to grow, how much to grow, where to grow it and how to spend the income from the proceeds of the sale of agricultural output.
4. Establish comprehensive seed security policies that promote and protect farmers' rights to seed and local biodiversity. Having enough good quality seed all year round is critical for small farmers' production. But trans-national corporations are gradually taking control of seed, and where genetically modified seeds have been introduced, farmers must purchase them at much higher costs than traditional seeds. Since the majority of these seeds are sterile, farmers are forced to buy new seeds each year, as they cannot save a part of their seeds for the next crop.

5. Expand national level social security measures, to ensure that people do not go hungry in contexts where there is more than enough food to feed everyone. Ensure that such measures are coherent with the right to food approach to food security.

6. Let developing countries exercise their right and responsibility to protect domestic agriculture by allowing them to restore subsidies to farmers and impose tariffs on food imports. At the same time, rich countries must stop dumping cheap subsidised food crops on developing countries, and open up their own markets still further to agricultural products from developing countries.

7. Invest in developing local processing capacity in order to challenge the growing power of vertically integrated, trans-national corporations that are gaining control over the trade, processing and sales of food commodities.

8. Regulate the quality and quantity of food aid, insisting on local procurement. There is increasing evidence that food aid can be a constraint to local agricultural production in developing countries and can create an ongoing dependency. Most of the food supplied for food aid is imported from industrialised countries and is sometimes a means of dumping the surplus of their large-scale subsidised agricultural produce on developing countries. Moreover, food aid from abroad often arrives too late and is too costly.

9. Increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) to agriculture and rural development. Global levels of ODA destined for agriculture have fallen steadily over the past twenty years, from US$6.7 billion in 1984 to US$2.7 billion in 2002.

10. Strengthen cooperation with civil society movements over the design of appropriate national level policies.

The following report is based on the principle that food security should be grounded in human
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

rights. ActionAid International embraces a rights-based approach that affirms that all people have a right to food and to not be hungry or undernourished. The obligation and accountability to ensure this right should rest upon States.

Food as a Human Right

A rights based approach affirms that all people have a right to food and to not be hungry or undernourished. The concept of the right to food encompasses all the elements of food security and grounds them in human rights, and the obligation and accountability of States to ensure this right.

The rights based approach gained ground among civil society and governments after the World Food Summit. It is not a new concept on the international agenda. The right to adequate food and to be free from hunger is firmly established in international law, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 25.1), the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11.1 and 2) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24.1). According to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (General Comment 12), the right to adequate food is realised “when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement”.

By the time of the World Food Plus Five Summit in 2002 (WFS-fyl), the concept of the right to food was on the agenda. Heads of State and Government called for the establishment of an Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) to “elaborate, with the participation of stakeholders…a set of voluntary guidelines to support Member Nations’ efforts to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”.

The Voluntary Guidelines, adopted by the Committee on World Food Security in 2004, take a human rights approach to food security and are intended to provide practical guidance to governments on how to achieve the WFS Plan of Action goals. International organisations, NGOs and civil society representatives actively participated in their formulation.

According to the Guidelines, a human rights approach to food security “emphasises universal, inter-dependent, indivisible and inter-related human rights, the obligations of States and the roles of relevant stakeholders. It emphasises the achievement of food security as an outcome of the realisation of existing rights and includes certain key principles: the need to enable individuals to realise the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the right to freedom of expression and the right to seek, receive and impart information, including in relation to decision making about policies on realising the right to adequate food. Such an approach
Food sovereignty
This concept was developed by NGOs/CSOs in response to the persistence of hunger in the world and the failure to stay on track for attaining the WFS goals. It emerged as a reaction to commercial liberalisation and structural adjustment which prevented countries from designing and implementing sovereign food policies.

The Fourth Report to the UN Special Commission on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food provides the widely accepted definition, supported by the NGO/CSO Forum’s Statement Food Sovereignty: A Right for All at the WFS-five years later conference:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labour, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances.
It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies.

Food sovereignty means the primacy of people and community’s right to food and food production above trade concerns. This entails the support and promotion of local markets and producers over production for export and food imports. It is presented as an alternative strategy for action on a local, national and global scale. Many NGOs and CSOs place the goal of attaining nutrition and food security within the larger framework of the right to food and food sovereignty.

This report begins by presenting the constraints and obstacles to securing people’s right to food which are perceived to be common to a large number of countries with food insecure
populations. Chapter 3 assesses the progress made towards achieving both the WFS commitments and MDG 1 in each of the seven countries at a national policy level. The final chapters highlight examples of best practice in overcoming hunger and malnutrition from the case-study countries and make key recommendations for the urgent task of reversing the upward trend in numbers of malnourished and for reaching the WFS commitments of 1996 and MDG 1 by 2015.
2. Crying out for solutions

Our research in seven developing countries has identified a number of key obstacles to eradicating hunger and malnutrition which appear to be common to all - in spite of the diversity between them economically, politically, socially, and culturally. This chapter draws on the country-based research to present a summary of these problems. Once the common obstacles preventing people from securing the right to food are recognised by world leaders and by others with power in the world, there is a greater chance of finding common solutions - especially when many of the obstacles identified relate to macroeconomic factors at the international level.

Not enough attention to smallholder farmers
The agricultural policies of most of the countries we studied over-emphasise large-scale agriculture, cash crops and agricultural production for export, at the expense of small-scale agriculture and household food production on which the majority of these countries’ rural populations depend for their livelihoods.

In Pakistan, for example, the policy drive to grow for export has resulted in the cultivation of more cotton and less food crops. The area under cultivation of wheat grew by 3.9% from 1991/92 to 2003/04. However, the area under cotton during the same period increased by 12.3%. Most of the land in Pakistan is controlled by a small percentage of people who tend to grow cash crops.
These trends affect overall domestic food production and are pushing the landless and rural poor into a situation of food insecurity.

In Brazil, agribusiness in soybean monoculture is growing, mainly in the Amazon. Soybeans are responsible for 42% of Brazil's national agriculture production. They occupy 45% of the total area planted with grains, but employ only 5.5% of agricultural labour. The increasing soybean production is threatening the livelihoods of the traditional agro-extractivist communities of the Amazon forest as the vegetal coverage is being devastated by the monoculture production.

In Ghana, poverty and food insecurity are more prevalent in the North than in the South and yet efforts to improve agricultural productivity focus on export oriented agricultural production e.g. cassava for starch for export and oil palm for export - both crops found in the relatively food secure southern Ghana. Meanwhile, in the Northern Region, small farmers have virtually no access to extension services or to credit facilities, tractor services, fertilizers, or other agro-chemicals. As many food security experts verify, enabling smallholders “to realise their potential, get out of their cycle of deprivation, vulnerability, powerlessness and attain higher productivity requires specific pro-poor agriculture and extension policies” (Atengdem, 2004).

Our studies show that increased cash crop production does not, in itself, reduce hunger and poverty. Moreover large-scale monoculture with an elevated use of technology and chemicals frequently contributes to environmental deterioration and is therefore not sustainable. As the Ghana country study affirms: “a healthy and well-fed rural population is a better asset and contributor to national growth than macro level growth.” So long as smallholder and family farmers lack access to the resources they need to produce or provide sufficient healthy food for themselves and their families, eradicating hunger and poverty will remain an unattainable goal.

**Overemphasis on availability and not enough on access to food**

Availability and access to food are two of the four major pillars of the WFS definition of food security (along with stability of supply and utilisation). However, there is an imbalance between availability and access in many countries. The agricultural policies of most of the countries we studied focus on agricultural production and availability of food, but do not put enough emphasis on ensuring that their populations have access to food. This is partly why people still go hungry in countries that produce more than enough food to feed their populations. In India, for example, nearly 47% of children are malnourished, even though the country produces enough to feed its entire population.
Rectifying discrimination against women farmers

There is a growing recognition of the explicit and implicit bias against women who comprise the majority of small farmers in many countries and who play key roles in food production and provision in all societies. Current development rhetoric now recognises the key role of women farmers. But the reality is that women continue to be denied access to, and control over resources, particularly land.

Inequitable laws and a patriarchal inheritance system limit women’s land rights in many countries. As the Uganda country study states: “Women are therefore unable to make decisions over what to grow, how much to grow, where to grow it and how to spend the income from the proceeds of the sale of agricultural output. This inequality in access and control of the key productive asset is a fundamental determinant of poverty and social disadvantage”.

Women and access to land is a particularly difficult issue because land equals power. While women frequently provide most of the agricultural labour, their presence in decision-making relating to the use of productive and natural resources is minimal. This is not only an issue of human rights but also of food security. The existence of legal pluralism, i.e. customary versus statutory laws, can harm or help in the case of land access by women. While statutory law might give women equal status, this is rarely translated into practice where customary practices persist. In Uganda, for example, the Land Act addresses most of the gender inequalities in land ownership, but the rural population is largely unaware of the law or lack the means to ask for its enforcement. In other cases, customary laws can protect women’s access to land, which can be threatened through the process of privatisation of land resources.

Women's land rights not recognised in land reform processes

Since the Ugandan Government declared their land a game reserve, women in the Benet community in Kapchorwa have suffered from the inequitable allocation and re-allocation of land. Some of those who owned land are now completely landless. Communities are not allowed to cultivate the land; they are harassed by park rangers and there are no social services for them. The Benet community continues to appeal to the Government to settle their problems which they believe were caused by the land reforms. This time round, women are ready to join in the struggle to own their own land.

“It is important for a girl to inherit land. It allows her to make personal developments and profits. If I had my own land, I would make my own developments”.

Noeline, Jane Bukirwa’s daughter, Kyengaju village, Kibaale district, Uganda
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

Lack of access to and control over land
Lack of access to and control over land is a major constraint that prevents smallholders all over the world from achieving food security. All the countries reported problems with access to and control over land. The constraints on such access range from inherited colonial land policies in countries like Kenya and Malawi to encroachment on lands by large landowners and corporations in Brazil and Pakistan.

Inequitable international trade
Inequitable trade relations between industrialised countries and developing countries have a seriously negative effect on food security. Trade liberalisation often benefits industrialised countries and penalises developing ones. The Ghana national report speaks for many in asserting, “trade liberalisation has been interpreted to mean the elimination of tariffs and an open door policy to import surges of all types of agricultural products that have a negative impact on local smallholder production”. While developing countries have had to reduce tariffs for agricultural products from industrialised countries, rich countries maintain tariff and non-tariff barriers to protect their agricultural producers from competition from imports from developing countries.

At the same time industrialised countries have insisted on maintaining farm subsidies with the result that large-scale agricultural producers in rich countries are able to dump their surplus in developing countries, pushing down the prices of local agricultural produce. In the face of such unfair competition, smallholder farmers find their sources of livelihoods disappearing.

The failure of the Doha round of the World Trade Organization talks in July 2006 means that this situation will not change in the near future yet it offers an opportunity for all to rethink the institutional needs for promotion of a true fair trade international architecture.

In Brazil, the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) proposed identifying a series of “special products”, a category recently created to cover exceptions to the trade liberalisation commitments, according to NFS criteria specific to each country (importance in the food diet or in the income of small farmers) and not according to narrow commercial criteria presented by private lobbies, as occurs with so-called “sensitive products”. This proposal introduces criteria of social differentiation (small farmers or family farmers) in rules negotiated by product. Meanwhile, the “special safeguards mechanism” could be used in response to the threats to NFS posed by the international trade in food products. However, possibilities of adopting proposals of this type in the WTO negotiations are small or non-existent.
International Financial Institutions and Conditionality

International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continue to pressure governments into cutting or liberalising agricultural services of benefit to the poor. Such reforms have often been poorly planned and sequenced, without attention to ensuring that inputs remain accessible and affordable to poor farmers. As a result small farmers’ access to extension services, inputs, technology, and resources often drops, contributing to a decline in their productivity and income. Nearly all the country studies suggest that IFI liberalisation policies have been a constraint to achieving WFS commitments and the first MDG.

In Malawi, for example, as a condition for Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) financing, the World Bank required all input subsidies to be removed because of their cost to the public budget. The progressive removal of input subsidies was followed by the deregulation and liberalisation of fertilizer and seed markets. During the same period (1993/94), the country witnessed the collapse of the Smallholder Agricultural Credit Administration (SACA) that used to offer subsidised credit to smallholder farmers. Experts argue that all these measures have contributed to a decline in the productivity of maize farming on which the majority of Malawi’s population depends.

The pressure from the IFIs and other institutions to liberalise and deregulate over the past two decades has also undermined national food supply policies. Our study of food security in Brazil, for example, indicates that as a result of trade liberalisation and the deregulation of food production, processing, distribution and consumption, Brazil now lacks a food supply policy. The principle of national self-sufficiency has been abandoned and likewise price guarantees for farmers and the maintenance of basic food reserves. ‘Market forces’ now determine prices and supply, without effective State regulation.

In India, the country with the largest number of malnourished people in the world, IMF and World Bank conditions are widely blamed for a reduction in food subsidies and the dismantling of the Public Distribution System (PDS). As a result of these reforms, subsidised grain is now unavailable to many sectors of undernourished population.

Seed security

Access to enough good quality seed by all farmers all year round is critical for agricultural production. In many countries smallholder farmers are the major agricultural producers and account for most of the seed supply. With modernisation, globalisation, and the promotion of private sector investment in the seed sector, small farmers are gradually losing control of seed and this threatens their ability to produce their own food. The private sector is primarily profit driven and pays less attention to issues of rights. This has consequences for seed quality in terms of viability and varieties. In the absence of regulatory mechanisms, seed suppliers cannot be held liable for poor quality seeds on the market. Moreover, the high cost of seeds on the
private market can make it difficult for poor farmers to access improved seeds for better yields. Local seeds, on the other hand, are less costly for the poor and tend to be resistant to conditions like drought.

Where genetically modified seeds have been introduced, farmers usually must purchase them at much higher costs than traditional seeds. Since the majority of these private industry controlled seeds are sterile, farmers become dependent on multinational companies, and are forced to buy new seeds each year, as they cannot save a part of their seeds for the next crop. This has led to an increasing debt burden on farmers. Additionally the seeds may not deliver the promised higher crop yields, as in the case of the genetically modified cotton seeds in India which caused a massive crop failure and wiped out the livelihoods of huge numbers of farmers. The introduction of GMO seeds can also have a negative impact on local biodiversity by limiting the existence of the local seed varieties in use and reducing the genetic pool of seeds on which improvement of varieties depends.

For all these reasons, there is a need for comprehensive seed security policies that promote and protect farmers’ rights to seed.

Despair takes toll on Indian farmers

An estimated 2,300 cotton farmers in the cotton belt of Vidarbha in central India have killed themselves since 2000, because of heavy indebtedness. As many as 95% of the 3.4 million cotton farmers in this region are in debt (Gentleman, 2006). The causes can be attributed to:

• Farmers shifting from subsistence agriculture to much riskier commercial agriculture.
• The increasing cost of pesticides and fertilizers and the decline of Government subsidies.
• The introduction of a genetically modified seed, Bt, manufactured by Monsanto, which is said to be resistant to boll weevil. The modified seed costs about four and a half times more than normal seed, but promises higher yields. However, many of the Bt cotton plants were afflicted by a reddening that destroyed much of the crop, leaving farmers with huge debts.
• Most farmers are dependent on credit from moneylenders at high interest rates.
Poverty identification
Poverty identification ought to be an instrument for governments to assess the level of poverty and hunger in the country and to take the necessary corrective actions. It should also be a means by which the State targets welfare support at those who need it most. Unfortunately it can also be a deceptive process if governments manipulate the poverty indicators in order to reduce the amount of welfare services they have to provide, or do not have adequate systems to identify the poor or those who are food insecure.

In India, for instance, the Government has reduced overall welfare benefits and anti-poverty measures, restricting them to a small proportion of people. This has been done by manipulating the methods for estimating and identifying those below the poverty line.

Food Aid Dependency
There is increasing evidence that food aid can be a constraint to local agricultural production in developing countries and can create an ongoing dependency. Most of the food supplied for food aid is imported from industrialised countries. It can even be part of the policies of donor governments to dump the surplus of their large-scale subsidised agricultural produce on developing countries. Moreover, food aid from abroad often arrives too late and is too costly. A recent Oxfam study states that imported food aid can take months to arrive and can cost 50% more than locally purchased goods (Oxfam, 2006).

Development aid
Despite expressions of political commitment to the WFS Plan of Action, the donor governments have continued to reduce financial resources destined for sustainable rural development. The global levels of Official Development Assistance for agriculture fell steadily throughout the 1990s, from US$6.7 billion in 1984 to US$2.7 billion in 2002. This reduction is reflected in figures at a national level: in several of the seven countries analysed, government budgets for the agricultural sector appear to have fallen in recent years.

At the same time, and in spite of the ambitious goals set at the WFS in 1996, funding to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), with a specific mandate to end hunger and malnutrition, has been cut over the past ten years. Between 1994 and 2003, the FAO suffered a 24% budget cut in real terms to its Regular Programme, seriously undermining its ability to carry out its mandate (FAO, 2003).

Another perennial problem is the tendency for some donors to place too much emphasis on humanitarian relief and short-term results as opposed to addressing the long-term causes of hunger and malnutrition.
Conclusion

At least seven out of the ten common problems highlighted above relate directly to structures and trends in the global economy - whether it is trade liberalisation, rich country dumping, the promotion of genetically modified crops, the increasing concentration of power in the hands of multinational agribusiness, or reductions in donor support to agriculture. This underlines the fact that the problems preventing the eradication of hunger and malnutrition are not just problems for developing countries but also need to be addressed by the world's rich countries and powerful institutions at an international level as a matter of urgency. Nevertheless, action at a national level is also key, as the following chapter reveals.
3. National policies and initiatives: what progress?

As well as experiencing common problems, another feature shared by all seven countries analysed in this report is that none of them are likely to meet either the WFS commitments or MDG 1 by 2015 and most are lagging far behind. The following chapter – the longest in the report – examines what policies have been adopted by governments in different countries to address hunger and malnutrition over the past ten years and why so little progress has been made at the national level. In order to fully grasp the details of national experiences, mini-case studies on each of the seven focus countries are included from: Brazil, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, and Uganda.

Although the overall prognosis is bleak, national-level experiences reveal that in some cases, good policies have been instituted and some reductions in levels of poverty and malnutrition have indeed been achieved in some countries. Therefore, as well as exploring the specific obstacles and constraints to progress in each country, the studies also try to identify what policy initiatives have worked and what lessons can be learnt for the future and for other countries facing similar problems. Brazil’s experience of developing a National Food Security policy in recent years, for example, could prove extremely useful for countries that have not yet done so.
Hungry for Solutions:  
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

Brazil shows a very positive trend in reducing the number of poor and hungry people. However, it has not made the same progress in eliminating the factors that create social inequity and threaten environmental sustainability.

According to some estimates, child malnutrition declined significantly in Brazil (by approximately 60%) between 1999 and 2004. However, these are only estimates as there is no regular up-to-date data on the nutritional profile of the population. Other estimates indicate that the number of food insecure people in Brazil is actually much higher. A recent study using new indicators to measure nutritional food security developed by the Brazilian Government (whereby the population is classified according to their capacity to access regular meals in terms of quantity and quality) shows that 34.8% of households (18 million households or 72.2 million people) were food insecure of which 6.5% were in a severe situation. Moderate or serious food insecurity was higher in households with children below 18 years old, in those headed by women, and in those inhabited by people that self-identified as black or brown. Child malnutrition remains a serious problem in Brazil, especially in the areas with higher food insecurity prevalence. It is estimated that malnutrition among specific populations (maroon communities, indigenous, rural settlers, land squatters, rubbish pickers and street dwellers) may still affect as many as 55% of the children.

Poverty

In relation to poverty, the most recent follow-up report on Brazil’s success in fulfilling the MDGs (IPEA, 2005) shows that the percentage of people in extreme poverty fell between 1993 and 1995 due to the immediate impact of the control of hyperinflation. It remained at around 8% over the following years and fell again between 2002 and 2003 due to various public policies such as rural social welfare, social assistance pensions, a real-term rise in the minimum wage and income transfer programmes.

The absolute reduction was significant, yet much lower than that obtained by comparing the percentages. This difference may suggest that the pace of the reduction in inequality was greater than the pace of the fall in absolute poverty, probably due to the trend observed in the middle and high-income brackets. Nevertheless, the Brazilian Government adopted a new goal for
2015, namely to reduce to a quarter the proportion of the population that lives on a daily income of less than US$1/day in relation to 1990 (IPEA, 2005).

The International commitments of 1996 and 2002
The Brazilian Report presented at the WFS was prepared and approved by a tripartite commission (government, civil society and the private sector) after consultation with civil society organizations. The report contained an in-depth diagnosis of the various dimensions of nutritional food security (NFS), recognised access to food as a human right and reaffirmed promotion of food security as one of the main pillars Brazil’s development strategy.

But the Brazilian Report to the WFS had little practical repercussion on the subsequent course of government actions. Indeed, at the WFS, the Government ignored the Report and reiterated its one-dimensional appeal for international trade liberalisation as an instrument to promote world food security. At the World Food Summit five years later (WFS-fyl) in 2002, the Brazilian Government maintained that the country was fulfilling its commitments made at the WFS, based on data on the increase in average income and the minimum wage, and on the reduction in the number of poor people. It renewed its appeal for free trade and presented demands regarding commercial protectionism and trade rules in relation to agricultural goods.

Progress towards achieving food security
The process of building a national nutritional and food security agenda was only really initiated when the current Government of Brazil took office in 2003.

Zero Hunger
The inclusion of the eradication of hunger among the main goals of the Lula Government, under the slogan of “Zero Hunger”, influenced the adoption of the NFS focus in Brazil. Zero Hunger was a programme launched by the Government in 2003 to eradicate hunger and reduce poverty through the integration and coordination of public actions. Such an approach was inspired by the World Food Summit and Millennium Development Goals. Extreme poverty - meaning inadequate resources to produce or to acquire enough food - was estimated by Zero Hunger to affect 9.3 million households or 44 million people in Brazil in 2002.

In 2003, Zero Hunger concentrated on implementing a Food Card Programme (the institution of a coupon to supplement the income of poor families) in order to meet the needs of families unable to feed themselves adequately. Now, Zero Hunger comprises more than 30 complementary programmes coordinated by the Ministry of Social Development and the Fight Against Hunger. They include an integrated range of interventions that combine access to food, support for family farming, income generation and mobilisation of civil society in managing the interventions.
The programmes with the highest numbers of beneficiaries and greatest financial resources are the following:

- The Family Grant Programme is a major income distribution program benefiting 11.1 million families in 2006 (60% of the poorest Brazilian families), each of whom receives US$30.00 a month. Reports show that this money is used mainly to buy food. Receipt of this benefit is conditional on the family keeping their children in school and maintaining routine health contacts.
- The National School Lunch Program offers at least one good quality meal a day in public schools to 37 million children.
- The Family Farm Agriculture Programme (PRONAF) seeks to increase the production of food for consumption in the rural areas. In 2004, Zero Hunger invested US$2.2 billion in PRONAF, benefiting 1.57 million families.
- The Food Acquisition Program purchases the produce of family farmers and distributes it to food insecure populations. These include indigenous populations and landless labourers. On the one hand, it guarantees income and market access to farmers; on the other, it helps poor families that have insufficient food.
- Million Cisterns Programme is a non-governmental initiative which currently includes around 750 entities located across almost the entire semi-arid region of Brazil. The Programme helps rural families develop their own methodology, replacing the “combat the drought” model with strategies for living in harmony with the semi-arid region through the installation of cisterns.

The direction of the Government’s actions has gradually been redefined: ‘Zero Hunger’ has ceased to be a programme and has become the Government’s strategy to ensure the human right to adequate food.

The key significance of Zero Hunger was in the inclusion of the issue of hunger within the national political agenda. National level mobilisation and participation in hunger reduction programmes was then reinforced by increased international attention to the issue. This enabled for a creation of political momentum that was necessary to build a Food and Nutrition Security agenda. To make this process effective, all the various actors in Brazilian society and social movements needed to participate. In order to achieve this participation, the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security – CONSEA - was reactivated. In sum, Brazil’s NFS agenda is the combined product of Zero Hunger, CONSEA and many programmes and actions emanating from civil society organisations, social movements and networks.

CONSEA – Recent Assessment of Public Programmes

CONSEA is directly linked to the Presidency of the Brazilian Republic and is composed of two thirds civil society representatives and one third of Government representatives. CONSEA is responsible for overseeing the implementation of national food security agreements and it
promotes the consolidation of NFS strategies with other social policies: education, health, social security and social assistance.

CONSEA is also responsible for evaluating actions and on-going programmes from the perspective of NFS. In the National NFS Meeting sponsored by CONSEA, in May 2006, an assessment was made of all governmental and non-governmental initiatives adopted since in order to inform the creation of the National NFS Policy and System (see below). Real advances were identified in the following four areas: institutional building, agricultural production, access to food and health and nutrition. As a result of the assessment, guidelines for the National NFS Policy were drawn up in the following areas:

- Promotion of inter-sectorality of governmental and non-governmental policies, programmes and actions.
- Development of common actions between the State and the society.
- Decentralization of actions and coordination/collaboration between different government entities.
- Equity in the formulation and access to policies without discrimination (economic, social, gender, ethnicity).
- Coherency between budget and management.
- Coordination between structural actions and emergency measures.

The assessment highlighted important challenges, including the key challenge of bringing together programmes that ensure access to food through income transfer with programmes that boost the population’s capacity for self-sufficiency and increase their quality of life. Another challenge involves connecting food programmes with support for family farming and agro-extractivism, and also with agrarian reform and support for agro-ecological models.

The evaluation gave special attention to the negative social and environmental impacts of the expansion of mono-cultures, land concentration and the indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides and GM organisms. It was pointed out that the Federal Government had failed to implement the proposals presented by CONSEA relating to the adoption of the precautionary principle vis-à-vis GM organisms. It also raised concerns over access to quality water as a result of water privatisation.

Building a National NFS Policy in Brazil

For the NFS agenda to become national policy, it must be adopted at all levels of government and civil society. The following components of the current national NFS agenda must be incorporated into the National NFS Policy:
Hungry for Solutions:  
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

Economic programmes
The determining factor of NFS is the population’s capacity to access healthy and nutritional food that is culturally adequate. This requires programmes for individuals and families who are unable to access food through their own resources. Factors that determine the capacity to access food include job generation, the creation of work opportunities and remuneration in the form of wages and the acquisition of income by small urban and rural business enterprises.

Current economic policies in Brazil have resulted in a modest growth in production and employment, but they have: failed to confront severe inequality in income distribution or to introduce wide-reaching agrarian reform; promoted the socially unjust and environmentally damaging agro-export model; and have involved the plundering of Brazil’s abundant resources.

Family farming
The dominant pattern of development in Brazil promotes the expansion of agricultural production, placing enormous pressure on natural resources and contributing to a rural exodus and urban unemployment. In contrast to large-scale farming, the small-scale “family” farming sector generates more than just products; it creates income and jobs, making it an important factor in any model of development that aims to combat poverty and social inequality. A great number of rural families in Brazil are both suppliers of food and poor households with inadequate access to food. The NFS deals with both these aspects: it promotes access to sufficient quality food by rural families and improves the contribution of these families to supplying society with agrifood products of sufficient quantity and quality.

NFS contributes to agrarian reform by providing productive capacity (via land settlement) to landless families, and enabling people who frequently depended on food hand-outs in the past to cultivate crops for their own consumption.

There is a growing recognition in Brazil of water as an essential dietary factor. CONSEA seeks to secure decentralised access to quality water and social control of its use, management and distribution in response to water privatisation. The main initiative is the One Million Cisterns Programme.

A key element of the NFS agenda has been the Family Farming Harvest Plan which marks a shift from the focus on large-scale production. This has expanded and diversified mechanisms for providing loans to small farmers (via the National Family Farming Support Programme (PRONAF)). It has also led to the creation of the Family Farming Food Purchase Programme (PAA), which aims to connect the need for food with the need for markets. Since its creation, the PAA has benefited around 200,000 producers and the purchased products have reached around
8.2 million food insecure people across Brazil. This coverage is still insufficient, given the actual demand, but is important nevertheless.

**Food supply policies**

Food supply policies constitute a core element of the NFS agenda. The aim is to increase people's access to quality and diverse foods, promote an adequate and healthy diet, but also promote socially equitable and environmentally sustainable forms of food production and marketing.

As a result of trade liberalisation and the deregulation of food production, processing, distribution and consumption over the past fifteen years, Brazil lacks a food supply policy. The principle of national self-sufficiency has been abandoned and likewise, price guarantees for farmers and the maintenance of basic food reserves. Private regulation of the market has replaced State regulation.

Special attention should be given to recalling the role of state in regulating food prices. Although lower prices for basic foods has helped control inflation and can be beneficial to the urban poor, it always occurs at the expense of small farmers. Therefore, food supply policies must be combined with rural development policies (employment and income generation for small farmers and the promotion of markets for their produce).

**Programmes focused on access to food**

National School Meals Programme (PNAE): This offers a free meal to over 36 million students across Brazil - the main meal of the day for many. The NFS agenda seeks to integrate awareness of the right to a healthy diet into the curriculum. It is also promoting the use of more regional products and fresh food in school menus, thereby decreasing the use of processed food. In this way, the School Meals Programme has the potential to benefit the local economy, including family farmers.

Family Allowance Programme: This aims to link income transfer programmes with NFS actions and programmes, including those targeted at specific population groups (indigenous peoples, maroon rural communities and the population of the Semi-Arid region).

The human rights vision of NFS demands that income or dietary supplementation programmes be permanent and universally accessible to protect the right to life and the right to citizenship. What should be temporary is the dependency of individuals and families, not the programmes that assure them a dignified existence when adverse conditions strike. These programmes should contain three elements: education about dietary habits and practices; organisation for the defence of citizenship rights and autonomy rather than dependency.
Decentralised implementation of federal and state food programmes to the municipal and community level is needed for the identification of population groups with specific needs and the development of joint responses, with clearly defined responsibilities.

Gender issues
Despite some improvement, gender inequalities persist in Brazil. A recent study showed improvement in women’s schooling and literacy rates in 1992 compared to 2002, but inequalities remain between urban and rural areas and between regions of the country. The expansion in rural schooling has not resulted in better working conditions for women, while the lack of a regular water supply (affecting 44% of rural households in 2002) has a particular impact on rural women.

The vast majority of support policies for rural development still primarily benefit men, even if advances have been made in highlighting the activities pursued by women and increasing women’s access to resources and decision-making. Laws on the ownership of goods need to be changed so that women can have access to goods and resources without depending on relations with men.

International Agreements
CONSEA has proposed that the Brazilian Government incorporate NFS considerations into international negotiations. This initiative presents great conceptual challenges, since it involves introducing non-commercial criteria into agreements dominated by the market logic. It also conflicts with powerful economic interests at national and international level.

The Council proposed identifying “special products”, a category recently created to cover exceptions to the trade liberalisation commitments, according to NFS criteria which would be specific to each country (importance in the food diet or in the income of small farmers) and not according to narrow commercial criteria presented by private lobbies, as occurs with so-called “sensitive products”. This proposal introduces criteria of social differentiation (small farmers or family farmers) in rules negotiated by product. Meanwhile, the “special safeguards mechanism” could be used in response to the threats to NFS posed by the international trade in food products. However, the possibilities of adopting proposals of this type in the WTO negotiations are small or non-existent.

International negotiations should also include the control of access to natural resources and protection of the environmental and natural heritage, biodiversity and traditional knowledge. At present, there is no systematic monitoring of Brazil’s fulfilment of its international commitments related to genetic resources.
Challenges for building a national NFS policy

The national NFS policy will interact with several government sectors which have their own guidelines and decision-making mechanisms. For this reason, this policy will require innovative initiatives in the formulation of integrated programmes and a continuous negotiation process between all the parties involved. The national NFS Policy should be comprised of the following fundamental areas: family agriculture, food supply, social policies, school feeding and nutrition and health actions.

Ensuring civil society participation still remains challenging. Although Brazil has a lot of experience in government-civil society interaction, it has failed to incorporate successful civil society programmes and actions into the National NFS System. If civil society organisations can systematise their experiences and analyse them as a whole, they are more likely to be considered by the National NFS System.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

3.2 Ghana

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<tr>
<td>Undernourished population (percentage )</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
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(Source: SOFI 2004, FAO)

The SOFI survey indicates that the number and percentage of undernourished people has declined significantly over the last decade in Ghana. Although this data is impressive, the food security situation in the northern part of the country has become far more precarious in recent years.

Data from the Upper West and Upper East Regions shows that there has been no significant increase in production of major staple and cash crops since 1996 in these two regions, which are the most poverty stricken and have the highest rates of hunger. It seems unlikely that these regions will achieve the MDG 1.

The data on the food balance of the Upper East Region also shows that there is a persistent food deficit in this region, particularly with regard to the production of primary food crops, maize and millet. There is a surplus production of sorghum, which is primarily a cash crop and used for brewing a local alcoholic beverage called pito. It is only used in the major staple food called Tuo Zaafi (TZ) when the primary choice of millet and/or maize is not available. Sorghum TZ is seen as a sign of hunger or food insecurity.

There has been a gradual increase in family farm populations with a corresponding increase in scarcity of farmland in northern Ghana. Youth out-migration from the rural farming communities in northern Ghana to southern Ghana has decreased the amount of family labour, resulting in poor farm yields.

A vision from the field
To explore the food security situation in the field, focus group discussions and analyses were undertaken by AAIG at community levels in three regions of the country: the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. The discussions involved 186 women and 150 community members of diverse ethnicity. In the different regions community members attested to a significant decline in production and attributed this decline to the same factors, namely climatic factors (erratic and inadequate rainfall, long dry season), no access to capital, which precludes the purchase and use of farm inputs and other farm investments, and no access to extension services.
In all three regions examined by AAIG, households resort to the sale of livestock, poultry and personal goods and hiring oneself out as a means of coping with food insecurity. Other strategies include: borrowing from relatives/neighbours, using farm as collateral/mortgage to collect a loan, migration, in particular of youth, to southern Ghana to work as labourers in farms and industry. Additional strategies include: intensive gardening, especially in leafy vegetables for quick sale; hunting for wildlife; picking and selling wild fruits; and burning charcoal for the urban market.

Government policies, strategies and actions
Since the MDGs were signed, Ghana has had no concrete policies, strategies or quantitative targets to address poverty and hunger. Government initiatives under the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I (GPRS I) of 2003 were directed at maintaining macroeconomic stability. Emphasis was placed on fiscal and monetary policies with the aim of reducing inflation and interest rates, and maintaining stable exchange rates and a fiscally sustainable debt regime.

GPRS II recognises that “the majority of Ghana’s working population continues to depend upon farming activities for their livelihood, and typically they cultivate small acreages”. It also acknowledges, “It stands to reason therefore that no significant progress can be made in raising the average real incomes of Ghanaians as a whole without significant improvements in the productivity of the small-scale farmer and farm labourer”. However, in designing policies and strategies, the emphasis is on “rationalisation and modernisation of agriculture” as a private competitive sector. The Government is pursuing a policy of promoting private sector investment, referred to as “private sector competitiveness in the agricultural sector in the medium term and in the industrial and other sectors over a long term” (GPRS II, 2005; p.xxiii).

Although extensive hunger and food insecurity is a critical issue at individual smallholder level, the Government is still pursuing macroeconomic investments that do not necessarily address hunger or food insecurity. Efforts to improve agricultural productivity focus on export oriented agricultural production e.g. cassava for starch for export and oil palm for export – both crops found in the relatively food secure southern Ghana. In the food insecure northern regions of Ghana, the Government plans to increase productivity of cotton for export and industry, and sorghum for breweries.

Obstacles and constraints
The achievement of the MDG 1 is hampered by the Government’s over-emphasis on macroeconomic development and on the production of non-traditional crops and livestock for export. Meanwhile, more traditional food crops like maize, rice, sorghum, millet, groundnuts, on which a large portion of the population still depends, have been neglected.
The promotion of trade liberalisation has had a negative impact on smallholder production, particularly in the poultry, rice, cotton sectors. Smallholders who used to rely on these agricultural products are now facing increased poverty and food insecurity.

The case of access to extension services and investment inputs
Access to Agricultural Extension by poor rural farmers is essential to alleviate rural poverty and enhance food security. Projects implemented since 1976 in northern Ghana have all stated their commitment to alleviating poverty through assistance to the smallholder farmer rather than the relatively large-scale farmer. However, current policies have not benefited the poorer farmers. AAIG’s study indicates that in the Northern Region, small farmers have virtually no access to extension services or to credit facilities, tractor services, fertilizers, or other agro-chemicals. Marketing is carried out by individuals who cart their produce in small quantities by bicycle and head-loads to distant urban markets.

Extension usually seeks to promote technical change and innovation for economic gain. Poor farmers, as in northern Ghana, live under precarious conditions and are more concerned with survival than change for economic gain. They are not well integrated into markets, the government system or the wider world, all of which influence production decisions under the conventional extension ideology. Even projects with poverty alleviation objectives for the “poor small-scale farmers”, often bypass these farmers in order to show results to evaluation teams and government officials.

It is true that extension services targeted at poor farmers do exist in certain parts of northern Ghana, thanks partly to AAIG and other NGOs. According to AAIG’s research, farmers in the Upper East Region receive regular extension services from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and from AAIG for both rain-fed and dry season farm activities, including donkeys and carts for haulage, and the provision of dams and irrigation pumps. As a result of the latter, households have intensified dry season gardening and thereby increased their sources of food and income, as demonstrated by the availability of fresh, leafy vegetables in the local market. Some of the farmers have also benefited from group collateral loans but complain of high interest rates, delays in accessing, and cumbersome disbursement procedures.

In the Upper West Region, members of one community interviewed by AAIG indicated that they receive extension services from the MOFA extension agent regularly, including technical advice on agriculture, and on accessing loans from the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB).
Chapter 3
National policies and initiatives: what progress?

3.3 India

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<tr>
<td>Undernourished population (percentage )</td>
<td>25</td>
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(Source: SOFI 2004, FAO)


India is home to the largest number of poor and malnourished people in the world. This number is far higher than the official poverty estimates. Moreover, in large parts of the country - especially the poorest areas - the proportion of malnourished children has actually risen over the past decade. High levels of malnutrition are reflected in extremely high levels of anaemia among women and the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age - at 47% almost double that of sub-Saharan Africa (Gragnolati, et al. 2005). Malnutrition among girls is 7% higher than boys.

Over the period 1991–1992 and 2000–2001 the average (three year moving averages) per capita availability of food grains declined from 485 grams per person per day to 447 grams per person per day. The figure for the year 2000/2001 was 414 grams and the average of the two-year period 2000–2002 was only 425 grams. While the decline amounted to 8% over 1991/1992 to 2000–2001, by 2001–2002 it had exceeded 12% (Patnaik, 2004).

A major concern is that the decline in cereal consumption has not been matched by an increased consumption of other foods. In fact, declining consumption is “almost certainly linked to the fact that overall employment growth has been very slow and real agricultural incomes (which still provide a large source of food demands) have been stagnant” (Mid-term appraisal of the Tenth Five Year plan).

Average rates of poverty and malnutrition are higher than many countries with comparable per capita incomes, but the problem is further exacerbated by structural inequalities inherent to Indian society, including the low status of women, the rural-urban divide, and regional and social disparities. The last decade has witnessed a considerable opening of India’s markets, but also reduced development expenditure and reduced allocations and coverage of the social security systems.
The caste segregation and stratification of Indian society is a key factor affecting poverty and hunger in India. Scheduled castes belong to the lowest rung of the caste society, while scheduled tribes are indigenous people living mainly in hilly and forest areas. Both groups are economically and socially very disadvantaged demonstrating very high rates of hunger and poverty. Child malnutrition is 21% higher among scheduled castes and 27% higher among scheduled tribes, compared to national averages.

Government policies and strategies
The Indian Government recently released its report on progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report claims that India is well on track to achieve the goals set out under the MDGs and those set at the WFS. It further states that the poverty rate in India decreased from 37.5% in 1990 to 26.1% in 1999–2000. The next major survey of consumption expenditure is currently under way. However, the claim that the poverty rate has reduced considerably has been criticised on many counts, as we explain below.

The Public Distribution System
The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank conditions have led to a reduction in food subsidies and to the dismantling of the Public Distribution System (PDS). The Government has shifted from the universal public distribution system (which was in place since the 1960s and was instrumental in avoiding famines) to a targeted Public Distribution System in 1997. As a result, subsidised grain became unavailable to the majority of the population and targeting criteria became a major issue of dispute.

The targeted PDS provides subsidised food only to those identified as poor. The problem is that the Government has tried to reduce those eligible for assistance from the PDS by redefining poverty identification criteria.

Poverty and poverty identification
The Indian Government has artificially depressed its poverty figures in order to restrict access to welfare services. Senior economists have shown that the poverty figures brought out by the Government are incorrect and actual poverty rates may be more than double the official figures.

Identification of the poor at grassroots level is carried out through a survey with no field testing or verification, often carried out by a local teacher without visiting the families concerned. Due to the faulty methodologies of identification, a large number of poor people are bypassed by the welfare system, which is provided only to those identified as BPL (Below Poverty Line). BPL status is very important for the poor as it determines eligibility for a number of government schemes, as follows:
• All BPL households are eligible to receive Subsidized Grain and the second lowest prices under the Public Distribution System (PDS).
• About a fifth of all BPL households are eligible for Highly Subsidized Grain, at the lowest price, under the PDS.
• All women of BPL households are eligible for support under the guidelines of the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (also the Balika Samriddhi Scheme).
• All BPL households are eligible to receive support under the guidelines of the National Family Benefit Scheme.
• In most states BPL status is used as minimum (though not sufficient) eligibility criteria for support under the National Old Age Pension Scheme.
• BPL status is used as minimum eligibility criteria for support under the Indira Awaas Yojana.
• BPL status is used as an eligibility criterion for subsidised credit schemes.

The 2002 BPL Census was challenged by civil society groups all over India, notably the Right to Food Campaign (RTFC), which has been engaged in the landmark Right to Food Case in the Supreme Court of India. The Supreme Court ordered a stay on the reduction of poverty numbers, which was in effect until the RTFC withdrew the writ petition after the Government agreed not to reduce the poverty numbers.

Complaint received by the Supreme Court about non-Inclusion in BPL list Saristal Hamlet, Village & Gram Panchayat Pendri, District Koriya, Chhattisgarh

There are about 80 households of the extremely marginalized Pando tribe in Saristal hamlet of Pendri village. Prior to 1998, most of these households had BPL cards. But when the BPL survey was done in 1998, all their names were deleted from the BPL list. As a result, the entire hamlet has been denied any benefits from many of the state run welfare schemes, including BPL rice and other food schemes for the last five years. This has led to further poverty in the community. The community demands that the reasons for deleting their names be investigated so that they can get their BPL status back.

I.A. In Writ Petition (Civil) No. 196 Of 2001, in The Supreme Court of India Original Civil Jurisdiction in the Matter of: People’s Union for Civil Liberties (Petitioner) Versus Union of India & Ors Respondents.
Obstacles and constrains

International constraints
The international constraints to hunger reduction in India include World Bank/Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Trade Organization (WTO)-led economic reforms and policies, as well as multinational companies (MNCs) and large Indian companies, capable of generating enormous profits but profits which only benefit a few.

Insufficient investment in agriculture
The bulk of India’s poor are dependent on incomes from agriculture. Although the Tenth Five-Year Plan targeted gross domestic product (GDP) growth in agriculture and allied sectors at 4% per annum for the period 2002-2007, this growth averaged only 1% per annum. One of the main reasons for slow agricultural growth is government disinvestment in agriculture that has led to an increase in prices of agricultural inputs, amongst other effects.

At the same time, stagnant Government procurement and the impact of the liberalisation process have kept prices of agricultural output low. The import of agricultural produce has increased at the expense of agricultural exports (source: Mid-term appraisal of the tenth Five Year Plan 2002-2007, Government of India). This has forced many farmers to grow commercial crops that have higher potential for profit, but higher risk. At the same time, the introduction of genetically modified seeds has played havoc with the livelihoods of farmers in various parts of the country.

Forced migration
Falling employment opportunities in the rural areas have forced tens of millions of people to move to far-off places in search of work. Apart from the low wages and exploitation they face in the labour market, migrants also lose out on their entitlements from the official food support programmes. Women and children are most acutely affected by this.

Rapidly expanding mining activities – and other activities requiring large land areas – are pushing out the poor (especially tribal groups) from their villages and destroying their livelihoods. Peaceful opposition from such groups is being suppressed through state terror. Hundreds of such displaced people have lost their lives through police action.

Civil society achievements: the Right to Food campaign
The Right to Food Campaign has achieved major victories in the various issues of Right to Food, in particular - the expansion of mid-day meals in primary schools, the expansion of the Child and Women’s and Girls’ Nutrition Programme, increase in the food subsidy allocations for the poorest and the status quo on the poverty estimates.
The recently enacted Right to Information legislation is helping poor people to monitor Government food security programmes. The Employment Guarantee Act that guarantees 100 days of employment at official wages in public work programmes has also been a major victory for the poor people of India.

The Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) are among the most marginalized and vulnerable communities. The PTGs have been severely affected by the nationalisation of their sources of livelihood as well as criminalisation of some of their livelihood activities. Being pre-agricultural communities, they did not acquire and control land as private property, and the nationalisation of forests has dispossessed them of their sources of livelihood. The latest population figure for PTGs (1991 Census) is 2.4 million, estimated to be at around 3 million in 2006.

The Food Rights Litigation (Writ Petition 196 of 2001, PUCL versus Union of India and Others) by the Right to Food Campaign sought universal coverage of all the PTGs under the “Most Subsidised” Antyoday (AAY) Food Supply Scheme. The Supreme Court of India ruled in favour of the food rights and, consequently, all PTGs are now entitled to coverage under the Antyoday Scheme.

This was a path-breaking order, but the field level implementation has varied depending on the grassroots level advocacy by civil society groups.

More advocacy work in favour of PTG population has been carried out by AAI in Orissa, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgar, Maharashtran and Tamil Nadu, which has resulted in welfare programme becoming available for the least advantaged groups.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

3.4 Kenya

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<td>Undernourished population (percentage)</td>
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(Source: SOFI 2004, FAO)

There was a marked improvement in food security in Kenya in the 1970s, followed by a plateau in the 1980s. A steep decline in food security followed in the 1990s. Despite the tremendous improvement in the nutritional status of Kenyans since independence, a significant proportion of people still live under continuous threat of hunger and starvation. Child malnutrition is particularly common at certain times of the year due to poverty and disruptions in food supply systems, among other factors. The incidence of poverty is estimated at 56% of the population. 82% of the poor live in rural areas.

Kenya’s poor economic performance in the 1980s and 1990s profoundly and negatively affected the overall welfare of the people of Kenya, and resulted in severe food insecurity. This was complicated further by the upsurge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its impact on the economy, especially agricultural production. The country’s physical infrastructure: roads, railways, ports, telecommunication, and others, also suffered, which in turn affected the delivery of public services and agricultural commodities.

Over the years, Kenya has faced increasing food deficits as a result of prolonged droughts and low agricultural productivity. The problem is compounded by an inadequate legal, regulatory and institutional framework; the lack of appropriate food security policy and programmes; lack of effective early warning systems; lack of adequate and appropriate strategic reserves; high post-harvest losses, and lack of effective control of crop and livestock diseases. This has created dependency on imported food relief and thus undermined the building of a sustainable national food security.

Famines in Kenya usually strike the poorest and most marginalized groups and the most vulnerable such as pastoralists. Lack of infrastructure, in particular, prevents pastoralists’ access to local markets and makes them vulnerable to exploitation by middlemen who buy livestock below market price.
Agricultural sector

Kenya’s economy is heavily dependent on agriculture. The sector directly contributes 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 60% of the export earnings while giving sustenance to 80% of Kenyans living in rural areas. Through links with manufacturing, distribution and service-related sectors, agriculture indirectly contributes a further 27% of the country’s GDP. Kenya’s agriculture is predominantly small-scale. It accounts for 75% of the total agricultural output and 70% of marketed produce. Small-scale farmers produce over 70% of maize, 65% of coffee, 50% of tea, 80% of milk, 85% fish, and 70% of beef and related produce.

It is estimated that women provide three quarters of the labour on smallholdings and are directly responsible for managing two-fifths of smallholder farms. In rural areas, 96% of women work on family farms. In addition to their work in food production, rural women play a predominant role in food storage and handling.

During the first two decades after independence, Kenya’s agricultural sector recorded one of the most impressive growth rates in sub-Saharan Africa, (an average of 6% per annum). This growth has not been sustained - between 1980 and 1990 it recorded an average annual growth rate of 3.5%. The sector performed extremely poorly in the 1990s, registering one of the lowest growth rates in the region. Between 1990 and 2000, it grew at an annual average of only 1.3%, compared with 3.2% for Tanzania and 3.7% for Uganda. This is far below the population growth rate, estimated at 2.9% over the period 1989–99. The deterioration in agricultural performance has resulted in a sharp decline in both overall economic growth and per capita income.

The poor performance of the agricultural sector affects almost all agriculture-related activities. With the exception of horticulture and tea, which have maintained impressive growth trends, growth in all key cash crops has nose-dived. Most notable is coffee, which has moved from the country’s highest foreign exchange earner to fourth position.

Kenya, however, has several advantages, which it could exploit to build a robust and dynamic agricultural sector, including:
- A varied climate suitable for undertaking diversified and specialised niches such as horticulture, herbs, spices, fruits, and lean beef.
- A relatively well-developed human resource capacity, including institutions for training and the capacity to provide quality research in crop and animal production technologies.
- Regional and international markets and a favourable location with regard to major sea and air routes. The country has not adequately utilised the large regional and international markets, which have arisen through regional and global integration. Regional integration also offers the opportunity develop a service hub in areas of processing, quality control and
referral services, the production of breeding material and information services and training. Having a large sea front and airports, the country could be a regional hub for exports to the Far East. Kenya is one of the few African countries with free trade access to the USA under African Growth Opportunity Agency (AGOA) arrangements. This is yet to be fully exploited.

The country has not taken full advantage of its huge potential to add value to its agricultural produce through agro-processing and vertical integration. It markets most of its agricultural produce in unprocessed forms.

**Government policies, strategies and actions**

In addition to the World Food Summit in 1996, Kenya is a signatory to a number of international treaties relating to food security, including:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966, which affirms the right of everyone to adequate food.
- The Lagos Plan of Action of the African Union (OAU, 1975), which calls for all African countries to accord priority to agriculture so as to attain national food security. A declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in 2003 specifically recommended that funding to agriculture be raised to 10% of national budgets.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, in which article 24 states that appropriate measures shall be taken to combat malnutrition and provide adequate food.


The SRA aims to transform the Kenyan agricultural sector into a viable economic activity capable of attracting private investment and providing gainful employment. It recommends the following specific interventions:

- Reforming the legal and regulatory framework governing agricultural operations to make it fair for all farmers, processors, and others involved in agro-related activities.
- Promotion of research and technology development.
- Reforming the extension service system to create a more effective linkage between research, extension and farmers as the ultimate beneficiaries.
- Establishment and development of a market-based agricultural credit and inputs system.
- Promotion of domestic processing of agricultural produce in order to provide increased opportunities for adding value, employment creation and foreign exchange earnings.
While these Government policies, strategies and action plans address the WFS resolutions, political commitment, sound governance and implementation strategies have been lacking.

Progress towards achieving food security

The Government has recorded achievements in the following areas:

• An Agriculture Sector Coordinating Unit has been institutionalised to coordinate cross-sectoral issues in planning and implementing the Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA) recommendations.

• A National Agriculture Sector Extension Policy has been formulated to increase the adoption of new technologies in the interests of greater productivity and competitiveness.

• Agricultural information desks have been set up and the Agricultural Information Resource Center (AIRC) re-engineered to provide information services to the sector.

• The legal and institutional framework of the agricultural sector is being reviewed in order to harmonise over 163 statutes and come up with umbrella legislation for the sector. Many commodity policies have been reviewed to improve regulatory functions and increase private sector participation in agricultural development, particularly the coffee, pyrethrum, sugar, cereals and cotton industries. Draft policies and legislation have been prepared.

• Drafting of the National Food and Nutrition Policy. This document is still under discussion with the stakeholders. At the same time the Ministry of Agriculture is implementing the Special Food Security Programme in selected pilot districts.

• Reforms in the Dairy and Beef Industries, including the regularisation of the informal milk sector. Milk output increased by 3.5% in 2005. Significant progress was made in enhancing local and international market access for beef, particularly in the Middle East. Progress was also made in reducing the incidence of Foot and Mouth Disease.

• Fisheries development was enhanced by closer monitoring, control and surveillance of the Exclusive Economic Zone.

• A National Land Policy was drafted and the Forest Act of 2005 was enacted. Irrigation schemes were initiated to encourage rice and sugarcane production.

• Reforms were initiated and accelerated to give ownership and control to stakeholders in the rural sector.

• The Kenya Tea Development Authority was transformed into the Kenya Tea Development Agency Limited, incorporated as an independent and private enterprise owned by small-scale farmers. Since then there has been growth in the tea sector. A similar arrangement to liberalise the coffee sector has begun.

• The National Environmental Authority was established, which has endeavoured to involve communities in environmental restoration.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

Obstacles and constraints

IMF and World Bank loan conditions
Despite the statements on food security in the PRSP, there was no provision for direct implementation of the food security component. This was principally due to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank placing conditions on the Government before they could qualify for additional loans. These conditions required that the Government undertake drastic economic and political reforms before accessing any funds. Internally, Kenya’s economic growth was at its lowest and there were no alternative sources of funding to implement the food security programmes.

Failure to implement policies aimed at alleviating poverty and inequality.
A lack of political will is a major obstacle. Many disasters that have wiped out livelihoods could have been alleviated if there had been political determination to address problems early enough, through, for example, raising budgets for food security and poverty alleviation programmes; or addressing the insecurity arising from cattle rustling or tribal clashes.
Even where there are good policies for poverty alleviation and food insecurity, there have been bottlenecks in implementation and a lack of sufficient budgetary resources. The Government has developed participatory policies exemplified by the PRSP but has fallen short of developing the strategies for participatory implementation and evaluation.

Lack of investment to foster development
Public investment in productive sectors is still not optimised. The agriculture sector, which is the mainstay of the economy, has been getting less than 3% of the national budget. There is marginal improvement but a lot more still has to be done. Private sector investment would be enhanced by policies that enable access to credit and abolish unnecessary licenses.

Declining fertility of land and poor management of water resources
High and rising population density has contributed to rapid soil nutrient depletion, declining yields, and environmental degradation.

Lack of a coherent land policy
Land policy does not coherently cover land use and administration, land tenure and land delivery systems. Women continue to contend with legal impediments to land ownership, in addition to facing retrogressive customary practices. This limits women’s decision-making in food production and access to other productive resources.

Reduced effectiveness of extension services
The effectiveness of extension services declined in the 1990s, owing to the ineffectiveness of the travel and visit extension model pursued and also to reductions in Ministry of Agriculture’s budget.
Poor access to credit
In the past, the Government provided subsidised credit to farmers through the Agricultural Finance Corporation and the Cooperative Bank. By 1995, the Agricultural Finance Corporation had collapsed due to poor loan repayments. The Cooperative Bank provided credit mainly to farmers producing cash crops, particularly coffee. A number of microfinance institutions are operating and new initiatives are underway, but they reach only a small proportion of smallholder farmers. Credit is not generally available to smallholder farmers through commercial channels and, when available, interest rates are high.

Declining health status of the population
In recent years, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed to the decline in labour productivity.

Poor infrastructure
Poor infrastructure, particularly the rural road networks, and high transport costs reduce the competitiveness of bulky products and increase the cost of access to inputs and markets. Electricity in rural areas is expensive and not readily available, which means reduced investments in cold storage facilities, irrigation and processing.

Inadequate food storage facilities
It is estimated that one quarter of food produced in Kenya is lost due to spoilage, insects and rodents. Storage of food crops is critical to achieving food security both at national and local levels since it has the potential of containing price fluctuations and ensuring a stable food supply.

Unconducive food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies
At the international level, trade liberalisation and the dumping of subsidised agricultural produce by developed countries have hurt Kenya’s small producers. Meanwhile, Kenya’s agricultural exports have not generated extra revenues. The decline in global commodity prices, particularly coffee, has had a negative impact on Kenya’s ability to become food secure.

Prevention and preparedness for natural disasters and man-made emergencies
Policies and preventive action are still inadequate with regard to disaster risk reduction, adaptation to climate change, chronic food shortages, and the perpetual vulnerability of certain communities to famine and floods. The provision of planned safety nets such as social insurance, food for work, livestock off-take and famine relief are also inadequate.

Responses to the current drought and hunger emergency have been hampered by delays in the delivery of emergency relief food, coordination gaps between the district and national levels; poor targeting of communities/families that are most in need; inadequate donor pledges, and a lack of effective monitoring.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

3.5 Malawi

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<td>Undernourished population (percentage)</td>
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(Source: SOFI 2004, FAO)

In spite of various initiatives implemented since the WFS in 1996 to address the problem of hunger in the country, Malawi continues to experience severe food insecurity with 3.8 million undernourished out of the population of 11.6 million. There has been a clear downward trend in the number and percentage of undernourished people over the last 10 years, but vulnerability to food insecurity in Malawi has increased at all levels. Alternate floods and droughts have resulted in erratic food production. This effect has been compounded by the daunting problem of HIV/AIDS, volatile food prices, erosion of access to agricultural inputs and lack of diversity in rural production systems and livelihoods. The repeated shocks have eroded assets, savings and informal networks, such as the ganyu, a system of casual labour paid for by cash or in-kind, while local social security systems are less willing or able to provide assistance (Devereux, 1999).

Vulnerability and the inability to cope are significantly gendered in nature for a number of reasons:

• Women comprise about 70% of the agricultural labour force, but they are less likely to control decision-making.

• The value of assets owned by male-headed households is double that of female-headed households and male-headed households are more likely to own productive assets.

• Women’s pay rates for ganyu are likely to be one third less than men’s pay.

• Women face more difficulties in accessing credit, as they do not possess assets for collateral.

• As household assets are depleted, women are likely to engage in sexual transactions to meet household subsistence needs (Tango, 2004).

• The HIV/AIDS pandemic affects 8% of the population, with higher prevalence rates among women, especially from 15 to 24 years old, who are three to four times more likely to be HIV positive than men. Women are also the main caretakers for the chronically ill.

The agricultural sector was for a long time highly controlled and regulated. The Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) had a monopoly on both input and output
markets for smallholders and farmers enjoyed input and credit subsidies. Achievement of self-sufficiency in maize was then the prime policy goal.

As a condition for Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) loans, the World Bank required all subsidies to be removed because of their cost to the public budget. The progressive removal of input subsidies was followed by the deregulation and liberalisation of fertilizer and seed markets, whereby the private sector was allowed to import and sell fertilizers and seeds upon acquisition of a license. During the same period (1993/94), the country witnessed the collapse of the Smallholder Agricultural Credit Administration (SACA) that used to offer subsidised credit to smallholder farmers managed through ADMARC.

The overall effect has been a decline in the productivity of maize-based farming systems. Maize is the staple food in almost all districts, and most small-scale farmers grow it for their own consumption. The level of maize production is low (between 600 and 1000 kilograms per hectare) and most smallholders do not produce enough to feed the family throughout the year and also lack sufficient cash income to purchase additional maize or other foods. As a result, Malawi has shifted from being a net exporter of maize during most of the 1980s to a net importer of maize during the 1990s, a situation that continues to date.

Over the last decade Malawi has been relying on food imports and food aid, with an estimated 40% of the country’s 9.8 million people unable to satisfy their caloric needs and 55% of the rural population suffering from chronic food insecurity (UNDP, 2001). It is estimated that over 50% of rural households run out of food four to six months after harvest and have to seek opportunities to earn income to purchase food on the market.

Government policies, strategies and actions
The Constitution of Malawi recognises access to and utilisation of nutritionally adequate and safe food as a right of each individual. Achievement of sustainable food and nutrition security is one of the prime policy objectives of the Vision 2020, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. These broad economic growth and development policy strategies have formed the building blocks of the recent 2005 Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

Land policy
The Government has also developed a new Land Policy to address the problem of skewed land distribution. As in other Southern African countries, Malawi inherited a colonial rural settlement structure in which white farmers held the most fertile and well-watered land. This and the subsequent expansion of estate agriculture after independence has been compounded by the high population pressure, leading to the fact that around 80% of smallholder farmers cultivate
less than one hectare of land (NSO, 1996). In addition, leasehold estates have been particularly prone to abandonment and under utilisation, since many holders obtained grants far in excess of what they could absorb. The key objective of the new Land Policy is to ensure sustainable and equitable access to cultivable land as an entry point to enhancing production based food security.

**Gender policy**
The Ministry of Gender, Child Welfare and Community Services is in charge of mainstreaming gender as a crosscutting issue in all development policies and programmes including nutrition and food security. A critical analysis of Malawi society shows that there are strong traditional and cultural forces that result in disparities between men and women in power sharing, participation and control over decision-making.

**Extension policy**
Since the introduction of multiparty democracy, Malawi has been going through major changes in its approach to service delivery. Previously, extension services were mainly provided in a top-down manner. Now, a demand-driven extension policy has been developed, in line with increased de-centralisation. However, extension delivery is still heavily affected by the lack of frontline extension staff.

**The Food Security Joint Task Force**
Following the President’s declaration of the state of disaster in February 2002, the Government of Malawi created the National Food Crisis Joint Task Force (FCJTF) to address the food crisis and medium and long-term food security issues. It includes a broad representation of Government and para-statal bodies involved in food security issues, UN agencies and civil society.

**Progress towards food security**
Since the mid-1990s, Malawi has implemented a number of programmes aimed at reducing the number of hungry people in the country and meeting the targets set at the World Food Summit.

**Investments in research and development and setting new budgetary priorities**
Agricultural Research and Development programmes in Malawi are implemented through a number of research stations, International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs), and university institutions. The main emphasis has been on maize. The Maize Productivity Task Force (MPTF) was set up within the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoAI) with the aim of increasing the productivity of smallholder maize production at the family farm level and to promote crop diversification.
However, this programme is dormant because Government funding to the Ministry has been erratic and low (less than 0.5% of Agriculture GDP). Although agriculture is the main engine of economic growth and development, it now ranks third in terms of budgetary allocations. This has affected research activities and other investments in the sector and undermined the role of agriculture in the economy. The current Government intends to increase the budgetary allocations to the agricultural sector.

**Development of irrigation**
The irrigation sector was chosen as a priority as agriculture could no longer rely on rain-fed agriculture alone. A National Irrigation Policy and Development Strategy (NIPDS) (June 2000) aims to develop sustainable irrigation in areas having potential, using a participatory approach. It develops initiatives only if these meet sustainable development criteria and only on request of smallholder farmers. NIPDS also encourages private sector development of irrigated agriculture and the transfer of existing government schemes to their beneficiaries. NIPDS conducts research in irrigation technology, promotes the use of both simple and advanced irrigation technologies and addresses specific difficulties faced by women.

**Drought recovery and other long-term investments**
The Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) was initiated as a direct response to the WFS and in recognition that two thirds of smallholder farmers were chronically food insecure partly as a result of drought. It aimed to identify and test-apply appropriate technologies for improving agricultural productivity, to enable the food insecure to access these technologies and apply them on a sustainable basis. Irrigation was one of the major components of the pilot project.

*The Emergency Drought Recovery Project* was designed as a response to the 2001/2002 food crisis in Malawi.

*The Malawi Agricultural Sector Investment Programme (MASIP)* focuses on the implementation of medium and long-term measures to increase access to inputs, improve market infrastructure, and information, improve access to land and efficiency of its use, enhance technology generation and dissemination, and build capacity for the effective delivery of key services in rural areas. Initiatives are promoting improved management of water by smallholder farmers, the conservation of soil and water, improvement of soil fertility through expanded use of organic manure, and the adoption of improved technologies.

**Strategies to improve smallholder farmers’ access to inputs**
The Government of Malawi, donors and NGOs, have initiated several agricultural input programmes aimed at rebuilding agricultural productivity.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

The Universal Starter Pack Programme (USP), which later became the Targeted Input Programme (TIP), initiated in 1998/99, focused on improving the productivity of smallholder maize-based cropping systems through increased access to improved maize seed and fertilizer technology, and diversifying the cropping system through the adoption of grain/legume rotations.

The most cost-effective package of practices was identified for each of Malawi’s agro-climatic regions – the so-called “Best Bets”. The ‘Best Bets’ were incorporated into the Starter Packs distributed to 2.8 million smallholder farmers in 1998 and 1999. While the Starter Pack’s contribution is not known, production in each of those years was approximately 500,000 tons higher than before or 67% higher than the twenty-year average.

The Targeted Input Programme (TIP) was a nationwide programme implemented in all districts and villages with household rather than geographic targeting. While there were benefits to individual smallholders in having free access to seed and fertilizer supplies, there were evident drawbacks to the programme regarding the selection of beneficiaries, the lack of an exit strategy and the creation of a dependency syndrome.

In 2000, it was decided that a more holistic approach to inputs was required, involving policy reforms, human capacity development, technology transfer, improved financial services, market information system (MIS) development and an improved regulatory framework, and also alternatives to free input distribution. The Agricultural Inputs Market (AIMs) Project (started in 2002), as well the Sustaining Productive Livelihoods through Inputs for Assets (SPLIFA) project were duly constituted, using trained local agri-input dealers to provide the packages. While the system had some drawbacks, there was some improvement in productivity. However both programmes ended in 2005.

Back to agricultural input subsidies
During the 2005/06 cropping season, the Government of Malawi went back to implementing an agricultural fertilizer subsidy because of the limited success of the previous strategies in achieving sustainable food and nutrition security.

The new fertilizer input subsidy has been implemented through a targeted voucher system, supplemented by a cash for work programme managed through the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) Public Works Programme. Preliminary assessments point to a significantly positive outcome: the expected harvest is 2.5 million MT of maize, of which 400,000 MT will be surplus. However, programme implementation has been marred by irregularities that led to extending the subsidy to many undeserving farm families. Due to political pressure, the subsidy has also been extended to tobacco.
Chapter 3
National policies and initiatives: what progress?

The fertilizer subsidy program is acting as a stimulus to maize production. However, past experience has shown that due to the limited alternative uses of maize in Malawi, substantial drops in maize prices have followed surplus production. Reduced prices for maize act as a disincentive to produce more maize for anything other than subsistence. From an urban bias food policy perspective, low food prices are desirable in an economy with relatively low wages. However, the disincentive to produce more maize will lead to a diversion of subsidised inputs to cash crops which give a higher return, creating unnecessary budgetary pressure. Consequently the fertilizer subsidy is expected to give such crops as tobacco an additional boost.

If the subsidy program is to continue for several years, strategies need to be devised to ensure good maize prices for farmers. This would include effective management of the Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR).

**Demand side strategies**
Over the years, Malawi has implemented an urban bias food policy. Under the maize price band, minimum and maximum prices of maize were set to protect the consumer to the detriment of the producer. This has had a negative impact on the adoption of improved technologies such as improved seed and organic fertilizers. After abandoning the maize price band, strategies have been put in place to enhance efficiency in maize marketing. This has included reforming the management of the Strategic Grain Reserves and transferring it to the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA), which was created as a government agency for stabilising food supplies and hence prices in the country. The effectiveness of the NFRA in managing the SGR is, however, still far from convincing.

**Disaster preparedness and management**
Disaster preparedness and management have been enhanced through capacity building that has involved reviving the Civil Protection Committees (CPCs) and finalisation of the National Disaster Management Action Plan. Public Works Programmes have been used to transfer cash or food to target households or individuals and school feeding programmes have been used to ensure access to food by the chronically poor. Due to frequent and recurring disaster situations in the country, all the key players (Government, donors, and NGOs) have tended to lose sight of long-term initiatives and have focused more on these short-term low growth initiatives.

Food handouts have been criticised for creating dependency among the target beneficiaries. They have been considered a drain on public resources without creating corresponding growth. Cash transfers are progressively replacing in-kind food transfers. There is currently a strong debate in Malawi about promoting cash transfers to deliver measurable welfare benefits and stimulate economic growth, both through investment in the supply side and through the creation of steady demand for agriculture products (Harvey et al, 2005).
Obstacles and constraints

Lack of policy implementation
Malawi has lacked clear and consistent food and nutrition strategies and implementation. While the Food and Nutrition Security Policy was approved in June 2005, it took almost three years to produce it. Furthermore, no implementation framework is yet in place while at the same time the nutrition component is being transferred to a separate policy statement under the pretext of looking for more focused strategies for addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS. The implementation of programmes dealing with food and nutrition insecurity in the country has lacked focus, consistency and continuity.

Inefficient management
Inefficient management of the Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR) during the 2001/2002 food crisis and the Government’s interventionist policies crowded out the private sector. High food prices due to scarcity, compounded by high poverty levels and low wages, resulted in hunger.

Failure to include small local businesses and traders in free input initiatives
The Government, in partnership with NGOs, has implemented a number of free input initiatives that have discouraged small local private traders from investing in the sector. The small local input sector is very fragile as much of the business is concentrated around the planting period. The Government has sourced much of the seed for its free input distribution programmes from regional and even global markets.

The effects of the fertilizer subsidy programme on the small local private sector have been negative in the extreme (CNFA, 2006). The quantity of fertilizer subsidised is 92% of the normal annual smallholder demand. Hence the private sector is only left with 8% of the demand. It is ironic that in an attempt to build capacity to produce food locally, the local manufacturing and distribution capacity of the inputs required most to produce this food is being destroyed. It is not the subsidy per se which has this effect, but the exclusion of the small local private sector in the procurement, distribution and sale of these subsidised inputs, which fails to utilise the capacity of local manufacturers and distributors.

Donor policies and food aid
The donor community has tended to rally behind short-sighted Government strategies and initiatives to the detriment of long-term strategies. The lack of balance between short-term and long-term initiatives is also evidenced in NGO activities that are largely funded through donors. Under the pretext of food aid, some donor agencies have been used to promote their governments’ dumping policies. Food aid can be an anti-development tool when it creates dependency syndromes. Moreover, it costs a lot more to bring food aid into the country than to implement strategies aimed at enhancing local food production.
Donor-driven NGO efforts
Civil society organisations have tended to focus much of their efforts on relief programmes in order to access donor funding. The sustainability of most NGOs is contingent upon their ability to attract donor funding, which is usually ensured through demonstrated results. The preference is therefore for the ‘quick results-quick money’ strategy rather than developmental activities which have a longer time-lag. But the root causes of hunger and malnutrition will only be addressed by a combination of short-term and long-term strategies.

Narrow definition of food
Although production of other food crops such as cassava, sweet potato and rice has significantly increased, the definition of “food” continues to be nsima, a thick porridge prepared from white maize. The heavy reliance on maize, which is prone to drought and highly demanding on fertilizers, explains the vulnerability of farmers to shocks. Many view cassava and sweet potatoes as snacks, while rice is a “rich man’s” food. Cassava flour is only widely used to make the much-cherished nsima when households have run out of white maize. A revolution in food habits and diet diversification is a necessary and urgent need.

HIV/AIDS crisis
This has a negative impact on agricultural productivity, with a reduction of the productive workforce, both among extension staff and the farming community. Child headed households are on the increase and they have few resources or capacity for food production. The increasing number of orphans looked after by the elderly with low productivity worsens the problem. Deaths due to HIV/AIDS also lead to the loss of knowledge and skills required to sustain production.

Lack of capacity for effective decentralisation
The on-going decentralisation process aims at supporting participatory and pluralistic processes. Participatory planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and programmes are expected to enhance local level ownership and have higher levels of impact. This process has faced a lack of requisite institutional human capacity and a weak infrastructure.

Limited capacity building in the ministry
In the 1980s, the Government invested in training a cadre of over 250 professionals, including over 30 doctorates. However, a significant number of these people have left through retirement, resignation, and HIV/AIDS-related deaths. There have been limited investments in capacity building to reverse this trend.
3.6 Pakistan

“I have no hesitation in declaring that Pakistan will meet most of Millennium Development Goals and targets.”
Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaukat Aziz
Pakistan’s first Millennium Development Goals Report (October 2004)

“The country remains seriously off-track in its race towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)... Afghanistan, Pakistan and poorer states in India remaining off track unless progress quickens substantially.”
The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank (2005)

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(Source: SOFI 2004, FAO)

Since the World Food Summit in 1996, the population of Pakistan has grown from 127.51 million in 1996 to 153.96 million in 2005 (Government of Pakistan, 2005) and is growing at an annual rate of 2.4% (World Bank, 2003). Although it has large tracts of land and an irrigation network, Pakistan has only ever achieved food self-sufficiency for a few years. The majority of the rural population and urban poor experience food insecurity and lack access to quality food. More than 60% of the population reside in rural areas and earn their livelihood and food from agriculture. There are few off-farm employment opportunities. Agriculture depends mainly on the availability of river flows and rainfall. The 1990s experienced a long spell of drought, rising poverty and low economic growth.

The first comprehensive district study on food insecurity was conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2003. The study found that out of 120 districts, 74 (62%) were food deficit in terms of net availability and deficit in caloric supply, assessed on the basis of 2350 Kcal per capita per day as recommended by the planning commission of Pakistan (WFP and SDPI, 2003). On the basis of three factors, i.e. food availability, economic access to food and effective biological utilisation, the study concludes that 80% of rural Pakistan is food insecure. The study rejects the commonly held notion that Pakistan is moderately food secure at macro level.
Food availability in Pakistan
Food availability depends on both domestic food production and imports. Pakistan has always been able to maintain adequate food availability. However, the aggregate figures of food availability conceal the truth of hunger, just as per capita income conceals the truth of poverty. Although the Government of Pakistan made a commitment to achieve WFS goals, the food balance sheet reported by Government itself shows no progress in the seven years from 1996/97 to 2003/04. The per capita availability of the main staple food, wheat, which accounts for 53 percent of caloric intake, declined from 130.85 kilograms per capita annually in 1996/97 to 116.31 kilograms in 2002/03. Per capita per day caloric level in Pakistan is less than the recommended allowance of 2550 kcal/day (Government of Pakistan, 2005).

Improvement in nutrition has been negligible between the First National Nutrition Survey (NNS) in 1985–87 and the Second NNS conducted in 2001–02. The Government attributes this to the unavailability of health facilities, but it may also be due to the problems of distribution of, and access to food among the rural poor.

Status of malnutrition
The prevalence of malnutrition, which is high in mothers and children, is a serious concern and has not shown improvement over 15 years. The main causes are inadequate food intake and poor health status that are influenced by poverty and lack of access to food, feeding practices and large family size (Government of Pakistan, 2004a).

Government policies, strategies and actions
The State of Pakistan is a signatory of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Although Pakistan did not ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which states that countries will do every thing possible to ensure adequate nutrition, including legislation to that effect, it did sign the Covenant in November 2004. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees the right to food under Chapter 2: Principle of Policy. While the State does not mention the right to food in its fundamental rights, the constitutional provision under the principle of policy provides a constitutional recourse for citizens to claim their right to food. Article 38 (d) Promotion of social and economic well-being of the people, affirms that the State shall “Provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, that are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment.”

The Government of Pakistan participated in the World Food Summit and, as a signatory of the Rome Declaration, is committed to achieving food security for all in an ongoing effort to eradicate
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

hunger. Pakistan's country position paper for the World Food Summit (WFS) recognised the existence of social imbalances and the importance of the availability of adequate food for everyone. The paper identified the following reasons for the high incidence of chronic under-nutrition and food insecurity (Government of Pakistan, 1996):

- Low productivity in agriculture associated with policy, institutional and technological constraints.
- High seasonal and year-to-year variability that is often linked to insufficient water or inadequate water control.
- Scarcity of off-farm employment opportunities.
- Inadequate and uncertain incomes in both rural and urban areas.

The paper set out the Government's aims to: reach a minimum growth rate of not less than 7%; make agriculture profitable; achieve self-sufficiency; alleviate rural poverty, and generate employment at the grassroots level. The paper claimed that agricultural performance had not been affected by the reduction in government investment in agriculture.

Pakistan followed a neo-liberal market policy from the early 1980s. The Pakistan economy was in a good position at that time: economic growth was above 5%. However, this was due primarily to foreign aid. Less importance was attached to the agriculture sector than in the past, even though it is the backbone of the economy. The allocation to agriculture as a percentage of annual development plans was reduced substantially.

The paper further stated the need for Pakistan to continue economic reform, including privatisation of public enterprises, phasing out of producer subsidies, and a reduction in protectionist policies under the structural adjustment programme. The Government was in the process of reducing and then eliminating the agriculture subsidies under the policy prescription of the IMF and WB during the structural adjustment programme, even before the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the conclusion of negotiations on the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

The Pakistan Country paper presented at the WFS did not refer to the structural causes of food insecurity, but key recommendations were:

- maximisation of crop yield;
- application of necessary modern technologies for extensive and intensive cultivation;
- development of equitable sharing between producers, market developers and consumers;
- minimisation of post-harvest losses;
- a special programme for targeting the poorest segment for food security;
- adequate availability of all the inputs; and
- special attention to promote livestock and fisheries sub-sectors.
The Government of Pakistan is addressing the problem of nutrition through two programmes. One is the Tawana Pakistan Programme, created in 2000, and covering schoolgirls in 5300 schools of the 29 districts across the country. Implementation has been slow and incomplete when compared to the envisaged targets. The second programme is food support designed to mitigate the impact of increases in wheat prices. Initially the coverage extended to 1.2 million poorest households with a monthly income of Rs 2000 of less. A cash support of Rs 2.5 billion has been allocated for disbursement on a biannual basis (Government of Pakistan, 2003).

In spite of these attempts to reduce the problem of malnutrition and the claims of better economic performance, the statistics reveal the dismal performance of the government in addressing hunger.

**Obstacles and constraints**

The factors in Pakistan impeding efforts to eliminate hunger include: high population growth rate, skewed land ownership pattern, inequity in the distribution of economic gains, huge gender inequalities, oligarchic characteristics of the state, lack of democracy, corrupt bureaucracy, erratic water flows, degradation of soil, low yields, reduced public spending on social welfare, lack of political commitment, dominance of the patriarchal system and international factors such as increasing debt payment, elimination of support/subsidies to small farmers and the international trade regime.

**Agriculture sector performance**

The performance of the agriculture sector is directly linked to food availability, employment generation and rural well-being.

Data on agricultural growth shows lower growth rates by the end of the 1990s and beyond. This dismal performance has badly affected the food security situation in rural Pakistan. The high fluctuations in agriculture demonstrate the vulnerability of the country as a whole and of the rural population in particular.

The policy drive to grow for export has resulted in the cultivation of more cotton and less food crops. The area under cultivation of wheat grew by 3.9% from 1991/92 to 2003/04. However, the area under cotton during the same period increased by 12.3%. Most of the land in Pakistan is controlled by a small percentage of people who tend to grow cash crops. These trends affect overall domestic food production and are pushing the landless and rural poor into a situation of food insecurity.

Reduced annual average growth rate of output and annual average growth rate of yield per acre are also key concerns. Several factors underlie this phenomenon, including inefficient use of
inputs, untimely availability of irrigation water and credit, non-supportive pricing policies and non-equitable distribution of land. Share croppers and tenants have no incentives if they do not benefit from tilling someone else’s land.

In addition to changes in cropping patterns and the reduction in the growth rate, overall support to the agricultural sector has been drastically lowered under the “reform” process prescribed by the World Bank and IMF. These reforms have included the privatisation of public enterprises, the phasing out of producer subsidies, and a reduction in protectionist policies under the structural adjustment programme.

**Inflation**

The rise in consumer prices is another key factor that affects the affordability and access to important food items. The macro level food availability may be adequate, but if the prices are not affordable, then the people have to make a trade-off between key necessities. For example, the price of wheat flour has risen 264% over the last 14 years (Government of Pakistan, 2005).

**Increased debt and debt service**

The structural adjustment programme recommended by the World Bank and the IMF exacerbated the debt burden. Total public debt (external plus domestic) increased from Rest 155.4 billion to Rest 3,196 billion between 1980 and 2000, the peak time of implementing World Bank and IMF reforms. The debt-servicing burden of total public debt as a percentage of government revenue increased from 19.6% in 1980 to 60.3% in 2000.

**Reduction in annual development expenditure**

Increased public debt and debt servicing caused by the structural adjustment programme can be directly correlated with a reduction in the annual development expenditure. This was reduced from 7.4% of GDP during 1972/73 to 3.5% of GDP during 1999/2000. This reduction negatively affected the GDP growth rate, and increased poverty, unemployment and fiscal imbalances. This vicious cycle created by IMF and World Bank polices pushed the Government towards borrowing more money to pay the import bill.

**Land distribution**

Land holding in Pakistan has been highly skewed since colonial times, when thousands of hectares of land were used to buy loyalties. The vast majority of the population does not own land, while a few people control the major tracts of irrigated land. In the World Development Report 2005 published by the World Bank, Gini coefficients for land distribution in Pakistan has been estimated at 0.57, which puts Pakistan among the countries with uneven distribution (Burki, 2006).
Pakistan has attempted land reform several times, but without success. The reforms attempted in 1956 and 1972, re-appropriated an area of 1,022,927 and 481,244 acres respectively. This land was distributed among 186,555 and 71,501 farmers during the 1959 and 1972 reforms. However, about 6% of the land from the 1959 reforms and 39% of the land from the 1972 reforms has yet to be distributed (Arif, 2004).

Pakistan has around five million farms of which 81% are under five hectares (generally called small farms) and which account for 38% of the total farming area; 12% are from five to 10 hectares (medium farms); 5% are from 10 to 20 hectares and the remaining ones are over 20 hectares (large farms). The majority of food producers are operating on a small scale – less than half the actual area of small farms is cultivated, and for medium and large farms less than one quarter of the land is cultivated (Government of Pakistan, 2004).

**International Trade Regime**

Pakistan is a founder member of the WTO and has signed all the agreements of the Uruguay Round (UR), including the Agreement on Agriculture. Under the WTO regime, farmers in Pakistan have been exposed to international competition with farmers of rich countries, who market excess production financed by high government subsidies. Meanwhile, subsidies to farmers in Pakistan have been virtually eliminated.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

3.7 Uganda

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(Source: SOFI 2004, FAO)

Although aggregate data at a national level indicates that Uganda is food secure, this masks the reality of food insecurity at a regional and household level. A study published in 1999 showed that 40% of households in the country were food insecure (Bahiigwa, 1999). This is unlikely to have improved since then, as there have been no major shifts in agricultural production patterns. In fact, more recent statistics indicate that food insecurity is on the rise.

According to the 2003 Uganda Food and Nutrition policy, the country still faces problems of malnutrition and pockets of famine and hunger. There are high levels of childhood under-nutrition, and 40% of deaths among children are due to malnutrition. The causes include inadequate food intake, pre-disposing diseases, poverty, taboos, life-styles and the effects of HIV/AIDS.

In Uganda, food insecurity is characterised by regional and seasonal variations, with northern and eastern regions emerging as the most affected. The situation is worse for children, women, people living with HIV/AIDS, and internally displaced persons living in camps due to armed conflict, estimated at about 1.8 million people (Office of the Prime Minister, 2004). Rural smallholder subsistence farmers, with an average land size of 1-2 acres per family, are the main food producers. The proportion of people engaging in agricultural production has declined from 67.7% in 1999/2000 to 52.2% in 2003 (Rosetti et al, 2006). The resulting low agricultural productivity, coupled with limited household incomes, has contributed significantly to a decline in food availability.

Trends in per capita food production
One of the indicators that demonstrates a country’s food status is per capita food production. Uganda’s statistics show that per capita food production in Uganda fell by 40% between 1970 and 2005. There was a downward trend over the period 1995 to 2005, and no indicators yet to suggest a reverse of this situation since then.
Land is a major resource for food security, and the available land for each Ugandan to produce food has been dwindling. In addition to the downward trend of per capita arable land, yields of most crops in Uganda have remained the same for the past twenty years or so. Soil productivity has also declined.

The agricultural sector is the backbone of Uganda’s economy and contributes about 41% of the GDP. It also presents a good opportunity for poverty eradication because it employs 80% of the labour force. According to the 2002 Census Report, Uganda’s population growth rate is 3.3%, one of the highest in the world. This alone is a challenge to food security. 88% of the population or 23,584,000 people live in rural areas (UBOS, 2002).

Government policies and strategies
Uganda signed the WFS commitments to reduce the number of people suffering from hunger by half and the MDG to cut the proportion of hungry people by half by 2015. It also agreed to the WFS Plan of Action. The Government of Uganda has put in place a policy framework to combat hunger and food insecurity. The main pillars of this framework are as follows:

International Conventions
Uganda is a signatory of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), both of which provide for the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living including adequate food.

The Constitution of Uganda
Uganda’s anti-hunger stand is rooted in its Constitution. The Preamble of the 1995 Constitution affirms that the State will take appropriate steps to encourage people to grow and store adequate food; establish national food reserves; and encourage and promote proper nutrition through education.

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)
Uganda’s overall development policy is guided by the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) adopted in 1997. The PEAP is a twenty-year framework that guides public policy formulation and implementation. The PEAP has been revised twice since 1997, in 2000 and 2004. Each version is implemented over a three-year period and challenges emerging from its implementation form the basis for the next revision. The current PEAP covers the period 2004/2005 – 2007/2008, and includes the following priority areas: removal of bureaucratic barriers to investment; improvement in transport infrastructure and utility services; modernisation/commercialisation of agriculture; actions to improve rural access to finance and to strengthen SME development; actions to enhance environmental sustainability; security in Northern Uganda; and a continued focus on HIV
prevalence reduction and impact mitigation. The PEAP was the basis the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) and the Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (ASIP) in 2000.

The Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA)
The PMA is a multi-sectoral poverty reduction framework, aimed at transforming subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture. It recognises the need to make agriculture more profitable by linking it with initiatives that can improve agricultural marketing. The vision of the PMA is “poverty eradication through a profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agro-industrial sector.” (Government of Uganda, 2000).

The Food and Nutrition Policy (FNP)
The Food and Nutrition Policy (FNP) was formulated in 2003, under the overall framework of PEAP, but also borrows guidelines from the PMA, the National Health Policy, the Population Policy, the National Plan of Action for Children, and the Decentralisation and Universal Primary Education (UPE) (Government of Uganda, 2003). The FNP aims to “ensure food security and adequate nutrition for all the people in Uganda, for their health as well as their social and economic well-being” and “to promote the nutritional status of the people of Uganda through multi-sectoral and coordinated interventions that focus on food security, improved nutrition and increased incomes.” (Government of Uganda, 2003). The policy has nine guiding principles:

- Adequate food and nutrition is a human right.
- Food is treated as a national strategic resource.
- The policy on food and nutrition is part and parcel of the overall national development policy.
- The policy emphasises the cross-cutting nature of food and nutrition as they affect men, women and children.
- The policy further seeks to provide a legal basis for the existing food and nutrition structures, sectoral policies and action plans.
- The policy details strategies for responding to food and nutrition concerns at all levels.
- Gender considerations and the needs of all vulnerable groups are integral to all components of the policy.
- Uganda meets its national and international obligations as set out in national laws and international conventions, treaties and resolutions on the right to food.
- In the planning, budgeting and implementation of the policy, a Rights-Based Approach will be adopted to promote and protect the right to adequate food and nutrition and ensure participation of the rights’ holders and accountability of duty bearers.
Chapter 3
National policies and initiatives: what progress?

Obstacles and constraints

Inadequacies in the Food and Nutrition Policy (FNP)
There are gaps in the FNP that need to be addressed. The current policy document is not properly focussed on what the country should do to attain food security at national and household levels: i.e. whether the country should rely on the market as prescribed by the PMA or adopt a household food self-sufficiency approach. In addition, there are no clear strategies to assist the most vulnerable to access food. Finally, the section of the FNP that covers Food Storage, Marketing and Distribution states that “surplus food should be marketed especially to those areas with food deficits or to those who need to diversify their diets”. However, food deficits in these areas are mainly due to the lack of purchasing power.

Transformation of subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture
The Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) emphasises improving the welfare of poor subsistence farmers through market-led production while food security is to be addressed through the market (Government of Uganda, 2005). This appears to contradict objective XXII (i) of the constitution that affirms that the State shall “take appropriate steps to encourage people to grow and store adequate food”.

The emphasis on agricultural commercialisation without considering the ability of smallholder farmers to access resources such as seeds and land or to access good markets, may compromise the nation’s food sovereignty in the long run. Uganda’s agriculture is still dominated by subsistence production. The goal to meet household food security through market mechanisms alone in a largely subsistence agricultural model is not realistic.

Access and ownership of land
Land is the most critical productive resource for the achievement of food security. The unequal ownership of land by the rural poor, in particular women, is a serious obstacle to food security. Women’s land rights are limited by the customary patriarchal inheritance system and the legal structure that has not yet addressed in practical terms unequal ownership of assets between men and women. Although the Land Act (1998 and amended in 2004) addresses most of these inequalities, the rural population is largely unaware of the law or lack the means to ask for its enforcement.

Women contribute 60% of the labour force for cash crop production and 80% for food production, yet the majority (87%) till and toil on land they do not own. Women are therefore unable to make decisions over what to grow, how much to grow, where to grow it and how to spend the income from the proceeds of the sale of agricultural output.
This inequality in access and control of the key productive asset is a fundamental determinant of poverty and social disadvantage. Without secure rights to land, women’s ability and incentives to participate in income-expanding economic activity are reduced.

Women, Land and the Law

The Ugandan constitution is hailed as being one of the most gender-sensitive in sub-Saharan Africa. It provides for the protection of the land rights of the poor, the majority of whom are women.

Articles 26 (1) and 26 (2) of the Constitution of the republic of Uganda (1995, p.25) guarantee the right of every person to own property individually or in association with others, in addition to protecting the right of every person not to be deprived of personal property without compensation. This guarantee does not in any way discriminate on the basis of gender or marital status.

Article 32 commits the State to take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender for the purpose of addressing existing imbalances. This provision places direct responsibility on the Government of Uganda to address the inequalities in access to and control over land between men and women.

Article 33 recognises the important role women play in society and affirms that the State shall protect women and their rights, taking into account their unique status and maternal functions.

In practice women still face unequal treatment with regard to property and land rights. This is attributed to traditional and patriarchal societal beliefs that women are the property of the males in the home and cannot own land. Poor women also fail to pursue legal claims to land due to the high costs and lack of simplified procedures. The Ugandan policy that is gradually promoting transformation of subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture requires large pieces of land. The tendency is for the poor to sell land to investors to meet other domestic demands. Experience shows that men often sell the land and spend the money on misdirected priorities, rendering the women and children landless.

Seed security policy

In Uganda, smallholder farmers are the major agricultural producers and they account for over 90% of the seed supply (Kabele, 2001; FRA, 2003). However, with the advent of modernisation
and globalisation, the culture of saving and recycling seeds has come under threat. Internal displacements due to conflict and natural disasters also affect farmers' abilities to save seed, and productivity in the long run.

Smallholder farmers are gradually losing control of seed and this threatens their ability to produce their own food, and hence food sovereignty. The withdrawal of Government interventions and the promotion of private sector investment in the seed sector has increased the cost and reduced the quality of seeds in the market with serious implications for affected smallholder farmers. There is therefore a need for a comprehensive seed security policy that will promote and protect farmers' rights to seed. Access to enough and good quality seed by all farmers at all times is critical for agricultural production.

**HIV/AIDS and agricultural production**

HIV/AIDS has affected Uganda's food security. HIV infection rates in Uganda have shown a continuous downward trend since 1990. In terms of absolute numbers, the 5% adult prevalence rate represents 1.27 million while the children orphaned by HIV/AIDS are estimated at 2 million (TASO, 2002). The high orphan rate has increased the country's dependence ratio, encouraged child labour and has also widened the poverty gap. Loss of family members and sickness due to HIV/AIDS has reduced family labour available for agricultural production. Working hours have declined over time, leading to tilling of less land and a shift in cropping systems. Food security and nutrition of infected and affected households have deteriorated and the tradition of passing skills and knowledge from generation to generation is being lost.

**Monitoring Food Security**

The Government has established a poverty monitoring unit (UPPAP) in the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, although there is no unit to specifically monitor food security. The National Food and Nutrition Council (NFNC) helped in the establishment of the National Early Warning and Food Information System in 1991 (NEWFIS) which is helpful in foreseeing food insecurity, but does not monitor or design preventative strategies. There is little or no information about the situation at household level (Bahigwa, 1999). The major constraint on monitoring food insecurity is the lack of reliable and timely data on acreages and production levels of various food crops in the country. The current system of estimating food production through local government agricultural departments is weak and does not give accurate figures.
This chapter highlights the examples of best practice identified during the course of our research. Although several of these examples are taken from ActionAid’s experience at the grassroots, the Farm Acquisition Programme in Brazil and the Right to Life Campaign in India demonstrate how micro-level actions at a community level with poor and marginalised households and communities can be scaled up to achieve national-level coverage and results, benefiting hundreds of thousands if not millions of people.

4.1. Promoting small-scale agriculture and supporting family farmers

**Food Acquisition Programme, Brazil: promotion of market access to small farmers**

The Food Acquisition Program (which is part of the Government’s Zero Hunger Programme) purchases the produce of family farmers and distributes it to food insecure populations. These include indigenous populations and landless labourers. On the one hand, it guarantees income and market access to farmers; on the other, it helps poor families that have insufficient food.

It has promoted market access to around 100 thousand families in the rural areas, and distributed food to around 2.1 million poor people in 1,698 municipalities, between July 2003 and June 2005. It represents an additional income of approximately US$96 per month per family.
Although still below the minimum wage (equivalent to US$161), it is enough to change peoples’ lives, as shown by Profírio’s statement:

“My income rose significantly. Before, I had no fixed income. Now I’m sure that if I produce I have somewhere to send my produce. Besides the distribution to schools we have the agro-ecologic open market. I survived on daily work payments. Now I don’t depend on daily payments and I’m only selling vegetables. Before I walked 12 kilometres to find daily work. Now I have time to work in our common land with the animals take care of the yard and play with my children. To me it only brought good things.”

(Profírio, Feijão Community).

ActionAid Brazil’s local partner organisations in the Northeast and North of Brazil have been involved in the management of the programme. Among those organisations is the NGO Conviver.

Besides increasing individual income, the programme has had positive impacts on the collective organisation of farmers and increasing participation of their grassroots associations in the local NGO Conviver. The income generated by selling fruits and vegetables to the institutional market allows the family farmers to pay for electricity and this helps in the pumping of the water from the traditional water tanks of the community. Because of this permanent access to water, vegetable production can be carried out through all the seasons – even the dry one – and the families have now diversified food ion their table and extra income – increasing their food security.

The major impact of this programme is that it enables the improvement of food security and the eradication of hunger among both suppliers (family farmers) and consumers (children in school; and maroon, indigenous and vulnerable communities). It is a good example of how a governmental programme that is designed and built with due regard for civil society’s experiences can help change lives and fight poverty.

Grain banks in Ghana

The experiences of AAI Ghana and partner NGOs in the three northern regions of Ghana show that investing in small, micro-type support ventures for smallholder’s results in improvements of the food security of households. ActionAid International Ghana and allied NGOs invested in small micro-type support ventures for smallholders that resulted in marked improvement in food security of households. Donkeys and carts, small inventory credit, small-scale irrigation facilities, and livestock improvement projects, helped small farmers to move closer to food secure households.

One of the micro-level ventures for smallholders was the creation of grain banks. AAIG has introduced grain banking to rural communities who otherwise would be compelled to sell their
produce at harvest to itinerant traders. Grain banks enable rural communities to minimise the sale of produce shortly after harvest when prices are at their lowest. At the same time it ensures cash availability to the community members who sell their produce to the grain bank and it ensures food availability to community members during the long dry season. Communities also learn to manage their own resources for their general good.

Before community grain banks were introduced, marketing was done mainly in distant urban communities by individuals who sent loads of grain on market trucks. The cost of transportation and distances were major disincentives to increased production and marketing of livestock. To complement the benefits of grain banking, AAIG has also provided credit for inputs such as donkey carts.

“The Grain Bank built in partnership with AAIG in our village, has worked like magic for us. We used to sell our maize, millet, sorghum and groundnuts at harvest to market women at low prices - only to go back and buy from them later at high prices. Now I sell my grain to our bank and I take part in deciding how to re-sell back to us. This has reduced hunger in our village.”

Safura Amadu, Banu, Upper West Region, Ghana

Kenya: Farming cooperative revitalizes Cashew nuts production

Cashew nut is amongst the oldest cash crops in Kenya. In 1950 an improved type of drum roaster was installed and new drying oven built. This brought a great deal of economic stability in Kilifi, an area that needed such a boost. In 1964 the Cashew nut industry was placed under the Ministry of Agriculture, which ran it through the Agricultural Produce and Marketing Board.

The liberalisation of cashew nut marketing coincided with the demise of the main processing factory, Kenya Cashew Nuts Limited, in 1998. Orchards were neglected as a result of the decline of the cashew nut industry. It is against this background that ActionAid engaged the community in discussions on how to revive cashew nut production.

Farmers formed a cooperative association (SHAFAA Cashew Nuts Farmers Association) where inputs would be managed by farmers who would collectively market their raw produce. Costs of inputs were recovered from the produce that passed through the cooperative and therefore ensured sustainability. Poor farmers who could not purchase farm inputs could access them and pay for them later through their own produce. The results of this project were immense and far-reaching. Trees that were once yielding less than five kilograms per season were yielding more than 20 kilograms. This elicited a lot of interest from other areas. In 2002, based on this experience, the project was scaled up. Currently, the project has over 600 members engaged in cashew nut activities.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

Farmers’ field schools were initiated in 2005 to provide support to farmers on how to improve cashew nut production and manage their orchards. The schools engage in spraying and pruning, coppicing, pollarding and introducing farmers to new cashew nut varieties for planting.

The rehabilitation of more than twenty thousand cashew nut trees demonstrates that there is much opportunity and potential if farmers strive to increase production. This will subsequently lead to increased incomes and improved livelihood security.

The farmers are now trying to get the Government to develop a policy to regulate the cashew nut industry.

Family farmers challenging agribusiness expansion: Babassu nut breakers in Brazil

Across the world, agribusiness (agro-export production) is associated with modernity, development and progress. But the indiscriminate growth of this business supported by governments is generating negative impacts on the rural and urban population, the environment, and is leading to impoverishment.

Although the Brazilian Government has started to increase public programmes focused on family farming and agro-ecology, the disparity of resources dedicated to this group in comparison to agribusiness is huge, especially given that 90% of rural workers are family farmers and only 2% are employed by large scale agribusiness.

Today agribusiness in soybean monoculture is growing in several regions of the country, mainly in the Amazon. Soybeans are responsible for 42% of Brazil’s national agriculture production. They occupy 45% of the total area planted with grains, but employ only 5.5% of agricultural labour. The increasing soybean production is threatening the livelihoods of the traditional agro-extractivist communities of the Amazon forest as the vegetal coverage is being devastated by the monoculture production.

This is the threat from which the women Babassu nut breakers and their families in the states of Pará, Tocantins, Piauí and Maranhão are suffering. These families’ livelihoods are based on the gathering and breaking of small babassu palm tree coconuts. They make charcoal, oil (refined and boiled), soap, Babassu flour, recycled paper, handcrafts (baskets, necklaces, boxes), and house building materials from the tree and coconuts.

As an achievement of their long empowerment process, they are now strongly organised into the
Women Babassu Nut Breaker Interstate Movement (MIQCB), an ActionAid Brazil partner organisation. This movement networks with Babassu Nut Breakers in the four Brazilian states where the palm tree grows, advocating for their rights. The organisation of the Women Babassu Nut Breakers has already resulted in creating market access for Babassu by-products in some regions and niche markets nationally and internationally. This in turn, has allowed the Babassu Nut Breakers to increase their income and food security. They are also fighting for the approval of the Free Babassu Law at three legislative levels (federal, state and local), which will protect the palm trees and assure the Babassu Nut Breakers access and control over this natural resource.

4.2 Seed security for food security

Smallholder Seed Development Project, Malawi

The ActionAid-Malawi Smallholder Seed Development Project (MSSDP) was established in 1995 to enhance crop productivity through better seed delivery targeted at poor farming communities. While not-so-poor farmers were encouraged to produce certified seed and operate independently, poorer farmers were organised into community groups.

**Small producer enterprises.** Not-so-poor smallholders formed small-scale enterprises to invest in seed production and distribution within their communities. The enterprises bought basic seed from the Ministry of Agriculture and multiplied it into certified seed. Seed was sold mostly through government departments, NGOs, and middlemen. Efforts were made to improve the flow of seeds through a network of stockists or shopkeepers located nearby.

**Seed producer groups.** Poorer smallholders formed community-based seed producing groups to undertake improved seed production to enhance household food security. Group members were selected through a participatory exercise to facilitate targeting of poor households. Focusing on the poorest households meant that there were more women (70% of group members and 80% of seed groups) than men. Female groups were better organised and their seed revolving grants had higher repayment rates than those from male groups.

**Seed multiplication.** In the first season, certified seed was given to the group and used for multiplication. After harvest, some of the seed was shared among the members as compensation for their labour, and was used mainly for establishing small private seed plots. A greater part of the seed was retained for group planting the following season. In the second season, seed was again multiplied in the group garden and field days were organised to demonstrate quality attributes of the crops and varieties to farmers in the community. Farmers from surrounding areas were invited to examine and discuss crop performance in terms of growth, adaptation to
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

environmental conditions, duration of maturity, seed size, straw quality, etc. Food attributes such as suitability for particular local dishes, cooking time, and taste were also demonstrated.

Distributing and marketing. After harvest, seed producer groups processed and packaged seed for storage. The groups tried not to sell seed soon after harvest, but to store their seed until the planting season, when demand and prices were at their highest levels. The seed producer groups sold directly to farmers within the community. However, the market within the vicinity of the producer groups became saturated and there was a need to channel excess seed to more distant locations with the help of intermediaries such as traders and shopkeepers.

Sustainability. Groups saw this venture as an income-generating activity. Many groups preferred groundnut seed production, which is a high-value cash crop. The additional cash earned from groundnut seed sales was used to satisfy multiple needs, including school fees and purchase of food or additional seed. Since the groups were expected to repay the initial seed grant to MSSDP, groundnut production seemed attractive in providing a better opportunity for earning more cash for repayment.

Community managed seed bank initiative, Uganda

Ugandan farmers depend on an informal farmer-based seed provision system for both modern and traditional crop varieties. Over 90% of seed and other planting materials used by the farming community are from seed stocks selected and saved by farmers. Seed selection, production and exchange are part of crop growing. Year after year, smallholder farmers either collectively or individually, select, store or exchange among themselves adequate amounts of seed to achieve their crop growing plans.

ActionAid International Uganda (AAIU) has supported interventions to help smallholder farmers have access to and control over seed production by supporting men and women farmers to establish seed banks in Pallisa and Katakiwi Districts. About 450 households were mobilised to participate in the seed bank initiative. Through organised community groups, farmers agreed on mechanisms for revolving seed schemes. AAIU provided seed money and conducted awareness sessions to facilitate their decision making.

The farmers purchased the initial stock and stored it in the seed banks. At the beginning of each planting season, groups met and agreed on the criteria for distributing seeds and the processes for recovery. Each participating farmer was required to return the amount received plus a predetermined additional amount to facilitate building a larger seed stock. Every season, more and more farmers are benefiting. These efforts have contributed to improved household incomes, nutrition and standards of living. Access to improved seed has enabled farmers to increase yields
of groundnuts from less than 10 bags to over 20 bags and earn gross incomes of between five hundred thousand and one million shillings per acre per season.

Community managed revolving seed schemes have the potential to meet the diverse agricultural productivity needs of small-scale resource poor farmers. With the timely availability of good quality from the seed banks, farmers have been able to improve their productivity and household incomes. For example, a woman farmer from Pallisa, obtained ground nut seeds from a seed bank. After harvesting and returning what was due to the seed bank, she saved enough money from sales and bought a milking cow. This greatly enhanced household income and nutrition in the home.

4.3 Constructing a national nutrition and food security agenda (NFS).

In Brazil, the Government and civil society have been working together to build a national nutrition and food security agenda.

This agenda covers a broad set of themes, including:

- A focus on the macroeconomic factors that impinge on NFS, including international agreements;
- The promotion of equitable and sustainable models of production, based on the support for family farming and agro-extractivism, intensification of agrarian reform and protection of genetic resources;
- Widening access to food through supply programmes, income transfer and school meals;
- The promotion of adequate and healthy diets;
- The institution of nutrition watch systems and integrated planning of healthcare initiatives;
- The adoption of actions focused on specific population groups.

Three main courses of action have contributed to building the NFS agenda in Brazil:

- The National NFS Council (CONSEA), which comprises representatives of civil society and Ministers of State, and its state-level versions have promoted national debate in negotiations between Government and civil society. CONSEA has also launched proposals for government programmes and non-governmental initiatives, evaluating current programmes that focus on NFS and influencing the main themes of the debate in Brazilian society and within the Government;
- The Zero Hunger and related programmes implemented by the federal and other layers of government; and
- The proposals, projects and other initiatives originating from civil society organisations as well as the growing number of studies and research projects on the various dimensions of NFS.
Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

The big challenge is to make NFS a guiding principle of development strategies at national and local level because initiatives for doing so provoke tensions and conflicts with economic interests that sustain the socially unfair and environmentally unsustainable model of development that characterizes Brazil.

4.4 Civil society campaigning

In many countries, it is clear that participation and pressure from civil society, whether at grassroots or national level, has been a key factor behind policy changes of benefit to poor and malnourished people, as the following example from India demonstrates.

Right to Food Campaign, India

The Right to Food Campaign, India, emerged from the path-breaking litigation in the Supreme Court of India including Right to Food as a derivative of the fundamental right to life. The campaign has achieved major victories in the various issues of Right to Food, prominent among which are the Universalisation of Mid-Day Meals in primary schools; expansion of the Child and Women’s and ‘Girls’ Nutrition Programme; increase in the food subsidy allocations for the poorest; and status quo on the poverty estimates (preventing the implementation of welfare cuts on the basis of the faulty government claim that poverty has declined sharply from 36% in 1997 to 26% in 2002). The recently enacted Right to Information legislation is helping poor people to monitor government food security programmes. The Employment Guarantee Act that guarantees 100 days of employment at official wages in public work programmes has come as a major victory for the poor people of India.

However, the Government of India has artificially depressed its poverty figures by not taking into account the extent of hunger among its citizens. Due to the faulty methodologies of identifying the poor, a large number of the poor people get left out of poverty eradication and income/food support programme, as these are provided only to those identified as BPL.

ActionAid India and its partners have played a key role in supporting the national level processes demanding proper identification of the poor. In 2002, one of the first reports on the design flaws of the Poverty Identification Methodology originated from the Lok Adhikaar Network, a network of NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs) working on the right to food of the most marginalized. The ActionAid regional office in Bhopal carried out an evaluation of the Census for identification of the poor in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The report critiqued the process from the perspective of households left out of the survey as well as the political interference in the operationalisation of the poverty benchmarks. The Bhopal office facilitated a process whereby more than 100 NGOs and CBOs came together to collaborate with the state Government to
ensure better implementation of the BPL Survey at the grassroots level. In thousands of villages, this ensured that the survey process did not leave out the poorest of the poor.

ActionAid’s grassroots level work also formed the bulk of the arguments made by the Right to Food Campaign in the Supreme Court Case challenging the validity of the BPL Census process. This included findings regarding the non-selection of poor people in the survey process of 1997 and the possibilities of non-selection of the poor in the survey of 2002. After the stay on the BPL Survey was lifted in 2006, ActionAid projects in various parts of India have helped the poor to challenge their non-selection in the BPL Census process with the local governments and district administrations.
5. Finding Solutions

Conclusions and recommendations
Evidence from Brazil, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan and Uganda presented in this report has identified some of the key problems that are currently preventing people from securing their right to food. In so doing, the report has provided at least some of the explanation for why the numbers of malnourished in the world are increasing. It has also presented examples of initiatives and policies that are having a positive impact on household and individual food security.

This concluding chapter proposes solutions and makes specific recommendations directed at governments, at development and donor agencies, and non-governmental and civil society organisations, as they all address the mammoth task of fulfilling the WFS commitments and the first MDG by 2015.

Promoting food security through support for agriculture and small-scale farmers
In countries where the majority of the population depends on small-scale farming for their livelihoods, eradicating hunger and achieving the right to food requires policies, strategies and actions that support small farmers, and ensure that people have access to food - either through producing it themselves or through earning sufficient income to purchase it or to obtain it through other means.
Hungry for Solutions:  
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

With regard to national development policies, governments should:
- Reorient the emphasis of agricultural development policies from large-scale monoculture production to technological improvement of local production methods.
- Ratify and monitor the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Realization of the Right to Adequate Food.
- Promote the participation and contribution of civil society in the formulation of national food security policies.

With regard to budgetary allocations, donor governments should:
- Shift investment from large-scale agricultural production to promotion of an agro-ecological model centred on smallholder production.
- Increase funding dedicated to rural development, ensuring that it reaches at least 12 percent of Official Development Assistance, a level already reached in 1980-84.
- Increase financial contributions to FAO, especially to its Regular Programme budget and to areas that support implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food inclusive of seed and land tenure security.

With regard to access to land and natural resources, governments should:
- Carry out necessary land reforms, obeying the principles and provisions of the International Conference on Rural Development and Agrarian Reform (for ICARRD see www.icarrd.org).
- Take affirmative action to give the poor, women, landless, fisherfolk and marginalized groups more equitable access to, and control over land, water, forest, and fisheries resources.
- Design specific and transparent guidelines for monitoring the country level implementation of ICARRD provisions ensuring full participation of civil society.
- Direct national agricultural research to innovative and agro-ecology technologies for smallholder agricultural production systems and address the technological and information gaps of smallholder farming systems.
- Capitalise rural banks and support them to offer credit facilities in specially designed packages for smallholder agricultural production; ensure that micro-credit facilities provide women with equal opportunities for credit.
- Invest in irrigation to improve irrigation practices, increase water use efficiency, agricultural productivity and control soil degradation. The investment should be directed at community-based traditional practices rather than mega projects with negative social and environmental effects.

With regard to biases against women farmers, governments should:
- Eliminate legal impediments to women’s land rights and take positive measures in favour of women to overcome customary discrimination, particularly as regards land rights but also
Examples of good practice in relation to access to other resources.

- Enact legislation to guarantee women equal rights, opportunities and control over resources; and take measures to monitor and ensure the enforcement of such laws.
- Ratify and implement all of the provisions of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Development and donor agencies should:

- Support the mobilization and organisation of women. The trend to reduce funding to women's organisations in the name of gender mainstreaming should be reversed, as it is only through strong and empowered women and women's organisations that the bias against women will be overcome.

Changes to international trade rules and to donor conditionality

The failure of the Doha round of the World Trade Organization talks in July 2006 gives developing countries an opportunity to rethink the course of future negotiations.

With regard to trade negotiations, key issues that need to be considered are:

- Inclusive and transparent negotiating processes must finally be put in place, alongside other reforms, such as reform of the dispute settlement mechanism to ensure fair and proper access for poor countries.
- A new mechanism needs to be established, independent of the WTO and not under the control of rich countries, to conduct impact assessments of WTO agreements (See also ActionAid International, Indecent Proposals: Why developing countries should reject the WTO Trade deal, 2006, 16).

Developing country governments should:

- Prioritise more South-South trade.
- Subordinate trade agreements to national development purposes and food security concerns, including the use of protectionist measures.

Developed and donor country governments should:

- Stop forcing developing countries to liberalise trade and inward investment, whether through aid conditionality or reciprocal trade agreements.
- Stop dumping subsidised agricultural produce on developing countries.
- Open up rich country markets by eliminating tariffs on agricultural products from developing countries.
Hungry for Solutions:  
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit

Seed Security
Comprehensive and enforceable seed security policies that promote and protect farmers’ rights to seed and to protect biodiversity and local seed varieties are needed at the national level.

With regard to seed security, governments should:
• Take enforceable measures to protect biodiversity in line with the provisions of the Convention on Biodiversity: i.e. ratify the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
• Support farmers’ seed banking initiatives and acknowledge farmers’ role in the preservation of biodiversity by protecting indigenous knowledge.
• Utilize the capacity of small farmers and the local private sector in the procurement, and distribution of free or subsidized seeds.

Poverty identification
Systems are needed that adequately identify the poor and food insecure so that national governments and the international community are accurately informed of the extent of the problem and can also target programmes and actions to alleviate hunger and food insecurity at those who need them most.

Governments should:
• Ensure that poverty and food insecurity identification systems are adequate, transparent and not manipulated for political or economic motives.

Food aid and humanitarian relief
Long-term development efforts are required that will reduce the need for food aid. In the meantime, policies on food aid should be developed to ensure that food aid does not undermine local livelihoods and does not create a dependency syndrome among its beneficiaries.

Donor governments should:
• untie food aid. Recipient countries and communities should not be required to meet conditions that are not relevant to ensuring timely, appropriate and adequate delivery of food assistance to those in need.
• develop a food aid policy that ensures that food aid does not undermine local livelihoods and does not create a dependency syndrome among its beneficiaries;
• procure food aid locally or regionally whenever possible.
• balance and combine short-term humanitarian relief with long-term assistance that addresses the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition.
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Hungry for Solutions:
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit


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Hungry for Solutions:  
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HUNGRY FOR SOLUTIONS
Progress towards securing the Right to Food Ten Years after the World Food Summit