



NATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR FOOD SECURITY: FAO'S VISION OF A WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER

We, the Heads of State and Government or our representatives, gathered at the World Food Summit (WFS) at the invitation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 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 on World Food Security, 13 November 1996

Millennium Development Goal (MDG)1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

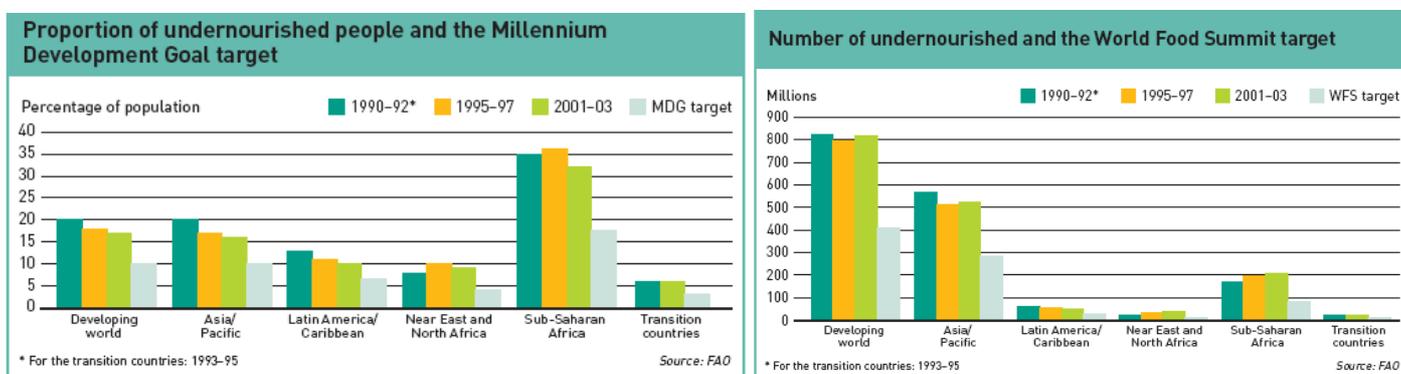
Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Target 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

*Road Map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration
Report of the Secretary General, A/56/326, 6 September 2001*

THE CHALLENGE

Although the world produces enough to feed all of its over 6 billion people one in eight of our fellow humans do not get enough to eat each day. While there has been a drop in the *proportion* of the global population that is chronically undernourished, the actual *number* has changed little since the World Food Summit, and stands at around 850 million people. In spite of this, FAO remains convinced that, with strong commitment and a sharper focus on direct actions that can have immediate impact, it is still possible to reach the MDG1 and WFS targets of halving the proportion and number of undernourished between 1990 and 2015.



THE VISION

FAO's vision of a world without hunger is one in which most people are able, by themselves, to obtain the food they need for an active and healthy life, and where social safety nets ensure that those who lack resources still get enough to eat. This vision, which is already a reality in developed countries and is also becoming a reality in a number of emerging developing countries, now needs to be extended to all developing countries, starting with those where the problems of hunger and malnutrition are most widespread and severe. Success in moving fast to cut the number of hungry and malnourished people will cut human suffering, stimulate economic growth where it is most needed, and contribute to global stability, to everyone's benefit.

THE STRATEGY

To make this vision a reality, development processes combined with social safety nets must reach marginalized and food insecure people on a large scale, in the places where they live. The strategic approach advocated by FAO draws on lessons learned from **FAO's Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS)** as well as from similar demonstration projects by other development partners and the experience of countries which have already succeeded in reducing the incidence of hunger. From 1995 to 2005 FAO implemented pilot SPFS projects in 105 requesting countries, with the objective of demonstrating the feasibility of improving yields, incomes and the household welfare of small-scale farming families. The initial focus was on improved water control, sustainable intensification of crop production and diversification into small livestock, aquaculture and horticulture, but other activities were added later in response to local needs.

Experience showed that it was possible to engage very large numbers of rural people in identifying and applying locally-specific solutions involving the use of simple, improved technologies to address problems of hunger and malnutrition. Participatory learning methods such as farmers' field schools and savings groups worked well and proved to be cost-effective. It also became clear that combating hunger and achieving MDG and WFS targets would require a comprehensive set of actions at the national level. Consequently, FAO started promoting national action programmes to achieve sustainable food security.

Based on experience with the SPFS and recommendations of an independent external evaluation carried out in 2001-2002, **National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS)** were introduced by FAO as an instrument that could help countries act at a scale sufficient to achieve WFS and MDG targets by 2015. The objective is to reach millions rather than thousands of people, through programmes that are tailored to country-specific needs and priorities. NPFS are usually part of broader national efforts to achieve the MDGs, as well as national objectives such as equitable economic growth and sustainable agricultural, poverty reduction and rural development.

While each country decides the content of its own NPFS, FAO promotes a systematic village-by-village approach that puts in place activities to enhance productivity, diversify livelihoods and build the capacities of food insecure people to achieve sustainable food security in the medium term, while simultaneously assisting those in immediate need, through safety net programmes. It also recommends:

- systematic use of food security analysis in programme design;
- provision for impact monitoring and pro-poor policy adjustments during the life of the programme;
- investment in adequate infrastructure that allows access to markets;
- institutional arrangements that bring together the public sector and civil society and foster partnerships among international and bilateral aid agencies that share similar goals at country level.

In countries where NPFS do not cover all the recommended elements, other complementary national programmes are expected to fill the gaps.

NPFS are designed and implemented by national teams, and are launched only when political leaders at the highest level commit to them. FAO acts as a catalyst and facilitator. Its main roles are advocacy, technical support, monitoring and reporting, promotion of partnerships for the mobilization of resources. As of January 2007, NPFS were operational or under formulation in 37 countries, following one of four models shown in the box.

Regional Programmes for Food Security (RPFS) were developed by Regional Economic Integration Organisations in response to the World Food Summit, with support from FAO. They typically comprise a vertical component aimed at supporting food security activities in participating countries, and a horizontal component which seeks to harmonize food quality standards and trade regulations and to enable local producers and traders to gain access to cross-border and global markets. RPFS are currently operational in the Caribbean Community, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Monetary Union of West Africa.

Since 1996 **South-South Cooperation (SSC)** has made it possible for technicians from emerging developing countries to work directly with farmers in countries implementing SPFS projects. New strategic alliances are under development, which take into account the lessons learned and changing needs. They will permit increased use of SSC experts and technicians in support of NPFS and RPFS.

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SPFS APPROACH UPSCALED TO NATIONAL LEVEL: Pakistan has committed US\$130 million to extend the Sargodha Productivity Enhancement Model developed during the SPFS pilot phase to over 1 000 villages by 2011. Key components are: (i) formation of Village Organizations (VOs), (ii) revolving funds that offer loans to VO members for purchasing inputs and equipment and investing in small-scale infrastructure, (iii) capacity-building for improving crop productivity and (iv) establishment of small enterprises to add value to farm produce and enhance livelihoods.

COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL PROGRAMME: Guatemala

acknowledged the Right to Food with a new Food Security Law developed with SPFS support and enacted in 2005. Government has now put in place institutions to implement the law, the Ministry of Agriculture has selected six good practices to replicate on a nationwide scale, with the aim of reaching 85,000 households by the end of 2008, and urban food banks are being supported by the private sector. A comprehensive NPFS that brings together all food security initiatives in the country is under formulation.

STAND-ALONE COMPONENTS WITHIN A CROSS-SECTORAL FRAMEWORK:

The NPFS in **Malawi** was initially conceived as a comprehensive ten-year programme, but based on donor response, it was reformulated with an action plan and budget for each programme component. Components funded to date include: *Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods and Agricultural Development* (World Bank, US\$40 million); *Starter Pack Programme for Promoting Green Revolution in Malawi* (Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, US\$ 10 million); *Enhancing Food Security and Developing Sustainable Rural Livelihoods* (Norway, US\$ 5 million).

SPFS APPROACH INTEGRATED INTO NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL OR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: South Africa

has expanded its SPFS into a national Household Food Production Programme and integrated it into its Comprehensive Agriculture Sector Programme, with an annual budget of US\$14.5 million and an initial target of 62 000 households in 2006-07. Participating communities receive support for establishing school and community gardens, harnessing valuable water supplies, using land more productively and improving access to market information.