

REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

**Initiative on Soaring Food Prices
(ISFP)**

Final Report Situation Assessment and Country Action Plan

This assessment mission was carried out in collaboration with the government of Gambia and does not necessarily imply formal endorsement of the report by the government.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
ANR	Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector Policy
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CAP	Country Action Plan
CFA	Compréhensive Framework For Action
CONACILSS	Coordination Nationale du Comité Permanent Inter-état de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel
CPM&ACD	Central Project Management and the Aid Coordination Directorate
CRR	Central River Region
CSD	Central Statistics Department
DOSA	Department of State for Agriculture
DOSFEA	Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs
DOSFENV	Department of State for Environment
DOSFWR	Department of State for Health and Social Welfare
DOSLGLRA	Department of State for Local Government, Lands and Religious Affairs
DOSTIE	Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment
DPO	Development Policy Operation
EU	European Union
ECOWAP	Economic Community of West African States Agricultural Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FMRIP	Farmer Managed Rice Irrigation Project
FSP	Food Security Profile
GAFNA	Gambia Food and Nutrition Agency
GBOS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GCCI	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFEF	Gross Foreign Exchange Earnings
GoTG	Government of The Gambia
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IASFP	Inter-Agency Assessment and Country Action Plan Identification Mission on Soaring Food Prices
IDA	International Development Association
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISFP	Initiative on Soaring Food Prices
JAS	Joint Assistance Strategy
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LIFDCs	Low Income Food Deficit Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MTs	Metric Tons
NADA	National Agricultural Development Agency
NaNA	National Nutrition Agency
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development

NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NASS	National Agricultural Sample Survey
NEA	National Environment Agency
NERICA	New Rice for Africa
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRA	National Road Authority
NSP	National Seed Policy
NTF	National Task Force
PIWAMP	Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project
PSPS	Public Service Pension Scheme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SFP	Soaring Food Prices
TANGO	The Association for Non-Governmental Organizations
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme of FAO
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program

Executive Summary

General Context

Under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Framework, the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have launched an initiative to assist countries in rapidly responding to the rising food price crisis. The initiative is supported by the African Development bank (AfDB), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Program (WFP), World Bank (WB) and other development partners through the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP).

The Gambia has been severely affected by the high price of oil and the shortage and high cost of staple food. It was estimated that the gap in food grain availability from local production for 2008 is approximately 151,000 metric tons (MTs). This represents 12 months' consumption needs for around 860,000 persons who have to meet the demand through purchase or barter.

Given the soaring food crisis context in The Gambia, the Government of The Gambia (GoTG) submitted an official request to the FAO's ISFP secretariat for an Inter-agency assessment and country action plan identification mission (IASFP) with the aim of scoping out the pertinent issues related to the causes, effects and mitigation measures concerning the crises. In response, an IASFP mission (FAO, WB, WFP and IFAD) was sent to The Gambia on July 21st to August 02 to examine the country situation and in collaboration with the existing National Task Force (NTF) prepare a Country Action Plan (CAP) for short and medium-to-long term measures.

The Soaring Food Prices and Government Response

The Gambian agricultural sector has suffered in recent years (since 2005) from declining production due to adverse weather conditions combined with a range of other constraints including weak levels of support. Since 2005 total food grain production has declined by 35 percent. A major part of grain consumed is imported (50-60 percent) in a normal year and in this year it was recorded at 58 percent. The production level in 2007 was very poor because of inadequate rainfall during the cropping season. These poor production levels caused income loss for many farmers especially smallholders. For the 2007/2008 harvest this has led to a critical situation when balanced against needs, and WFP estimates show a widening gap between the local production of food and the growing consumption needs. For an average Gambian who already spends a high proportion of their income on food, estimated at 60 percent, increasing prices will have a critical negative effect on their livelihood.

The GoTG drafted a rough action plan for immediate and medium/long term measures to mitigate effects of SFP. These actions included:

- i) direct support to farmers.** Supporting the purchase of fertilizer, pesticides, groundnut, rice, seeds and other cereals which were distributed to farmers on credit;
- ii) fiscal measures.** Reducing the sales tax on rice imports from 15 percent in July 2007 **to 5 per cent initially** and eliminating it altogether in May 2008 and setting an agreement with the traders on a price ceiling of not more than one thousand Dalasis¹ **(per 50 kg bag of imported**

¹ 20 Dalasis – \$US 1

rice) until end of September 2008. However this situation is not fiscally sustainable due to budgetary constraints and the GoTG has already announced its decision to stop after September 2008, the temporary elimination of sales taxes on rice imports;

iii) institutional arrangements. Under the Office of the Vice President establishing in May 2008 *a National Task Force* (NTF) which constituted a technical working group coordinated by the Department of State for Agriculture (DOSA) comprising all key stakeholders.

The GoTG has also benefited from the support of donors to better respond to the SFP situation. Current direct assistance has come from EU, AfDB, IDB, FAO, WFP, Italy, Taiwan, Egypt. A number of development partners are working in the country supporting strategies and programs of assistance relative to the soaring food crises, agriculture and nutrition, and urban and rural development in general. Potential access to resources from existing or additional “earmarked” financial mechanisms targeted specifically to the current food crises was highlighted during the IASFP mission. Also, potential immediate and long-term response measures and investments were examined.

Government policies, strategies and programmes

The GoTG has implemented structural reforms that have improved transparency and accountability in the use of public resources and reduced the opportunities for corruption. The country has enjoyed steady growth and a stable macro-economic environment in recent years and in 2007, macroeconomic performance was very strong as the economy grew by 6.3 percent. Growth has been broad based, led by the construction, telecommunication, and tourism sectors, but the agriculture sector where most poor people are engaged registered only a 4 percent increase. The fiscal policy has been largely consistent with macroeconomic stability.

Despite strong macro-economic performance, about 58 percent of the population lives in poverty out of which 39 percent live in extreme poverty. Of the 91 percent of the very poor, 72 percent are dependent on agriculture for their survival. The Gambia's longer term policy objectives are aligned with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sketched out in the Vision 2020, which seeks to transform the Gambia into a dynamic middle income country. PRSII provides a credible framework for poverty reduction.

As a pillar of PRSII, the agriculture sector has potential to support the country in achieving the long-term development goal of food self sufficiency and reducing poverty for a large segment of the population, but a number of challenges need to be overcome. There is need to transform agriculture from subsistence to a commercially-oriented agriculture but an appropriate policy framework is lacking to enable the agriculture sector to overcome existing constraints. GoTG policy frameworks in promotion of agricultural sector defined through the Agriculture and Natural Resource Sector Policy (ANR), National Seed Policy (NSP) and Food Security Profile (FSP), seem to be ambitious in their support to rural and agricultural development and to food security and interventions. But these agricultural policy frameworks are not fully operational and therefore not yet able to mobilize significant investments. In addition, the weakness of the public service sector, the lack of effective sectoral coordination, and finally the funding gap to support SFP could limit actions to assist the poor.

Food Security and Nutrition Situation

Food Production. The most important locally produced cereals are millet, rice, sorghum and maize. Since 1999, total cereal production has historically followed an increasing trend despite some important drops particularly in the last two years, which can be explained by adverse climate conditions. But this increase is explained by a remarkable increase of only early millet due to mainly increased cultivated area, while the other food crops remained on a stagnant trend up to now.

Cereal Availability. Unfortunately increased cereal production has not been sufficient to compensate for population growth and related food requirements. Estimates show that since at least 1991 the country has experienced a permanent gap between its needs of cereals for human consumption and net production levels; in the last three years the primary deficit grew from 65,000 MTs in 2005 to 151,000 in 2007. As a result, every year an important portion of the total population has been “net buyers” of grains in order to cover their food needs. According to different sources, rice imports have likely fully covered the gap, however due to the absence of reliable data on rice import and re-export operations it is not possible to confirm such assertions. In any case it can be expected that rice imports have primarily benefited urban households –who normally prefer rice over than coarse grains- because the traditional limitations of in-country commercial networks. For the rural net-buyers population, the availability of grains could have been more problematic and most likely partially compensated with other sources of food coming from other self-sufficient activities like livestock and/or gardening.

Access to Food and Food Security Situation. The mission did not find evidence that net-buyers (both at urban and rural level) have not been able to cope with this situation despite the chronic cereal primary gap. For example information regarding national nutritional evolution in recent years shows no evidence of a major or acute food insecurity crisis, affecting for example an important part of the population (country-wide or at local level). It appears that other production activities for self consumption like livestock and/or gardens have helped rural households cope with cereal deficits despite the current crisis of decreased groundnut production (traditionally the main source of cash for farmers). In the case of urban populations, better opportunities for income generation, easy access to imported rice, family-based solidarity networks and even agricultural production at very small scales may have contributed to access to food. Despite these successful coping strategies assumptions, it is likely that an important number of extremely poor households (currently impossible to estimate) may regularly suffer from food insecurity particularly at the lean seasons.

The primary deficits data collected by WFP indicates that in 2008 an important portion of the total population estimated at 630,000 persons has been cereal “net buyers”. To meet their food needs, they have to procure their food elsewhere than the household farm, mainly through the market provided that there is enough supply supported by commercial imports and sufficient purchasing power. *Nine rural districts are identified by WFP as the most vulnerable*, expected to be the most vulnerable notably during the ongoing hungry season. The categorizations has been done using a proxy indicator of 2007 Cereal Food deficit, combined with those Districts that have suffered important groundnuts losses in 2007. The estimated total population of all these districts amounts to 230,000. At the urban level, poverty levels and the foreseen food price increases after September make the extremely poor population of those districts highly vulnerable to food insecurity.

Groundnut is the main source of cash for Gambian farmers and the losses of income due to the groundnut crisis combined with the increasing trend in food prices is reducing the purchasing power of the rural as well as the urban population and increasing the malnutrition rates. Overall the household food security situation has deteriorated significantly and therefore urgent attention is required by both government and its development partners to reverse the situation.

Economic and Social Impacts

Soaring food international prices have not impacted the purchasing power of net-buyers, thanks to both, the fiscal measures taken by the Government and the agreement reached with rice importers to not automatically transfer the international price increases to consumers. However with the announced end of these special measures the increase of retail prices of cereals seems to be unavoidable. In such a scenario, the “access” factor will likely become a major cause of food insecurity for net-buyers with very limited cash availability.

Institutional Dimensions

In response to the soaring food prices, the Government of Gambia - under the Office of the Vice President - established in May 2008 a National Task Force (NTF) on Food Security which constitutes a technical working group coordinated by DOSA comprising government and other key stakeholders from the private sector and NGOs, as well as key UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNDP). The NTF under the Chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary of DOSA and the overall leadership of the Vice President assumes primary responsibility for overall strategic guidance, including, decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of CAP activities. Resourcing donor assistance to support CAP activities will be a shared activity among the government and the NTF in specific and, also key supporting agencies such as FAO and WFP. During the mission, developing partners expressed interest to examine potential resources from existing or additional earmarked financial mechanisms to support the CAP. Once activities commence, the NTF in close liaison with DOSA, will function as the key national ISFP/food security coordinating body and focal point. To undertake its responsibilities and effectively assume its coordinating role in implementing the CAP, the NTF requires institutional and technical strengthening and capacity development.

Mission Conclusions and Way Forward

In close collaboration with the NTF, the mission team prepared a draft CAP that was validated during a national stakeholder workshop. However, following the mission, the NTF drafted an alternate immediate action plan (with a total estimate budget of US\$44.22 million) to respond to immediate needs so that the 2009/2010 cropping season does not risk severe failure. To this end, the NTF recommended that some members of the mission team should be requested to return to The Gambia to assist the NTF to refine the short, medium and long term actions of the CAP and prepare its presentation to development partners.

A joint World Bank-FAO follow-up mission is therefore advised as a next step in order to work with the NTF to: (i) finalize the CAP and consult with key stakeholders and partners to refine the CAP roll out; (ii) start design of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system; (iii) assess the institutional set up and capacity for implementing the CAP and as appropriate, outline a capacity development programme for this structure; and (iv) provide support to the

Country team in organizing a national round table on the CAP including all major stakeholders.

Section I: INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgement

1. The mission expresses its profound gratitude to the Department of State for Agriculture (DOSA), World Bank, FAO and WFP for facilitating and actively participating in the mission's work. In particular, the Permanent Secretary of the DOSA, who is also the Chair of the National Task Force for Food Security supported the mission throughout the 12 days, and demonstrated high commitment to finalizing the action plan and response measures to the soaring food price situation in The Gambia. The mission would like to highlight and acknowledge the tremendous work in collecting available in-country documents done by the ISFP Task Force and particularly by its DOSA staff. It is important to note however that analyses of several subjects examined by the mission (e.g. poverty, agriculture or food security) were limited by difficulties in finding relevant and updated information or by inconsistencies among data available. The mission appreciates government's current efforts for strengthening official statistics, as in the case of Gambia Bureau of Statistics restructuring, and concrete improvements undertaken concerning the poverty data base.

General context of the International Soaring Food Price Situation

2. Global food prices have increased rapidly due to a multitude of factors including (i) growing demand in fast growing economies; (ii) increased diversion of grains to bio-fuels and animal feed; (iii) escalating production costs (costs of seeds, fertilizers and agro-chemicals)². At the same time, global food reserves are at their lowest level in 25 years due to de-regulation of markets and adverse weather conditions in key exporting countries. The dramatic rise in food prices is severely affecting the food security of large populations in many countries, particularly amongst the poorest and most vulnerable. Higher prices have also significantly increased the food import bill of Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDCs).

3. Anticipating the widespread impact and grave nature of soaring food prices, in December 2007, the Director-General of FAO launched the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP) to assist member countries to put in place urgent measures to boost the supply response during the next agricultural campaigns and to give policy support to improve access to food in the most affected countries. Acting in a catalytic role FAO allocated USD 17 million to initiate assistance to the most affected countries. The ISFP is intended to focus attention on activities required to address the issue of soaring food prices which FAO will support as requested in coordination with partners in the UN System, Bretton Woods Institutions, NEPAD within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) Framework, and elsewhere. In this context, the ISFP will contribute to the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) to address the Global Food Security Crisis being developed by the UN System and partners.

4. The initiative will assist countries in: (i) providing humanitarian assistance through social safety nets; (ii) boosting agricultural production through short-term emergency interventions to address the immediate crisis that will support the development of medium and longer-term solutions; (iii) developing policies to respond to high food prices in the short and

² Other factors include changes in diet and increased demand for cereals through higher meat consumption; short-term trade policies such as export bans aggravating the situation; and the fact that agriculture has been neglected in recent decades, illustrated by decreasing shares of government budget and international aid going to agriculture.

medium-term; and (iv) adjusting their budgets due to high food prices and policy costs. The initiative aims at mobilizing resources from participating development partners to back governments' own commitments to the resulting investment programs. It is recognized that country ownership and leadership within a programmatic approach is the basis for long-term impact. To ensure coherence and sustainability of the initiative, it needs to be integrated into wider national programs, policies and existing partnerships. The ISFP coordination structure is established at FAO Headquarters with a small Secretariat guided by an inter-departmental Task Force, and the whole overseen by a senior Policy Committee, headed by the Director-General. The coordination structure is tasked with guiding and monitoring implementation of the Initiative on Soaring Food Prices to ensure consistency and impact.

Specific Context

Mission Objectives and Composition

5. Given the current national context characterized by acutely rising household food insecurity, income losses and vulnerability, the GoTG submitted an official request to the FAO's ISFP secretariat to receive an inter-agency assessment mission with the aim of scoping out the pertinent issues related to the causes, effects and mitigation measures related to the dramatic rise in food and fuel prices in the country (see mission TORs in Annex 1). At this request, an Inter-Agency Assessment and Country Action Plan Identification Mission on Soaring Food Prices (IASFP) mission comprised of FAO, WB, WFP and IFAD³ teams, was carried out from July 21st to August 02th, 2008.⁴.

Mission Organization

6. The ISFP Mission worked directly under the leadership and guidance of the Chairman of the NTF⁵; this Task Force is the national multi-sectoral entity established under the Office of the Vice President with the objective of spearheading the national response to the soaring food crises. The IASFP Mission Team worked closely with this Task Force that also includes the Coordination Nationale du Comité Permanent Inter-état de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (CONACILSS). A series of technical meetings and exchanges were held throughout the mission and members met with a number of key civil society and private sector actors, including commercial farmers and traders, Chamber of Commerce members, rural development organizations and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), including the NGO-umbrella body the Association for Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO). The mission hosted consultative meetings with Coordinators from ongoing rural development projects and also with all UN and international agencies active in the country.

7. In collaboration with the NTF⁶ the mission made a two-day field trip to rural areas⁷, and had discussions with farmers' organizations, local authorities, and other field operators. The aim of the field visit was to assess first hand the food security and vulnerability situation in rural areas, including the most vulnerable districts of the country, and examine the

³ IFAD was represented by Mr. Omar Jammeh, Coordinator, and Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP).

⁴ The mission was led by Mr. Manievel Sene (Rural Development Specialist, World Bank) and comprised Ms Pamela Pozarny (Rural Sociologist, FAO TCIW), Mrs Salwa Amber (Senior Policy Officer, FAO Sub-regional Office), Mr. Oscar Saroca (Food Security Specialist, World Food Program's Consultant), Mr. Souleyman Jallow (Agronomist, National Agriculture Research Institute, Department of State for Agriculture), Mr. Omar Jammeh (Coordinator of PWAMP, IFAD supported project).

⁵ The Permanent Secretary, Department of State for Agriculture.

⁶ The National Task Force comprises of DOSA, DOSTIE, DOSFEA, DOSFWR, DOSLGLRA; DOSFENV, TANGO; FAO; WFP, NEA, NaNA; GBOS, GAFNA, NPC, Farmers Platform.

⁷ Five districts were visited: Jokadu, Lower Badibu, Upper Badibu, Fuladu East and Fuladu West.

effectiveness of household and community coping strategies as well ongoing project initiatives.⁸ The mission met with a wide range of rural actors in the field, conducting informal exchanges, semi-structured interviews with key resource persons, focus group brainstorming, and market and project site visits in the districts.

8. National engagement, ownership and commitment are essential to ensure appropriate design and sustainable implementation and operation of recommended mitigation measures that aim to assist the country in overcoming current and long-term food crises. To this effect, a national workshop “debriefing meeting” was organized at the conclusion of the mission where all stakeholders consulted and other key government officials were invited, with the objective to share overall findings of the mission and present and solicit feedback and concurrence with the proposed action plan matrix designed by the mission team and technical Task Force members. At the end of the mission, the team prepared a brief aide-memoire outlining the main conclusions and recommendations, which was discussed with the National Task Team and Department Of State for Agriculture (DOSA) representatives. This report, based on the Aide Memoire, presents findings of the mission, focusing on the situational analysis, causes and impacts of the SFP, and agreed upon proposals for the way forward.

Mission Report Structure

8. The purpose of the IASFP report is to serve as a framework for UN agencies, international financing agencies and other development partners to effectively collaborate in assisting The Gambian government in the short, medium and long-term to mitigate soaring food prices adverse effects. The report is structured according to the following sections: Section I provides an introduction summarizing the general ISFP context, the mission organization and initial findings ; Section II reviews the general context and the food situation in The Gambia and reviews food security-related issues, policy measures that underpin the SFP, the agricultural situation and proposed actions and measures; Section III contains an assessment of the SFP in The Gambia, including analysis of the main causes and effects on the most affected households in urban and rural areas; Section IV presents the Country Action Plan (CAP), and includes the CAP rationale, a description of actions and proposed measures to be implemented, the institutional framework required to implement the CAP including issues of coordination, and finally, potential risks and mitigation measures; Section V provides follow-up arrangements proposed, mainly to support continued engagement through dialogue and joint planning and implementation with national stakeholders and international partners. Annexes are attached.

The Soaring Food prices and Government Actions

9. The Gambian agricultural sector has suffered in recent years (since 2005) from declining production due to adverse weather conditions combined with a range of other constraints including weak levels of support. Using agricultural information collected by National Agricultural Development Agency (NADA)/Department of Planning (DOP)/Concern Universal, analysis undertaken together with WFP/ FAO in May 2008 shows that since 2005 total food grain production has declined by 35 percent. A major part of grain consumed is imported (50-60 percent) in a normal year and in this year it was recorded at 58 percent.

⁸ Central River Region South Rice Growers Cooperative Society and the Agricultural and Technical Programme technically-supported by the Taiwanese Government.

10. The production level in 2007 was very poor because of inadequate rainfall during the cropping season. These poor production levels caused income loss for many farmers especially smallholders. As for prices, The Gambia is free-market oriented and the supply and the demand mechanism allow price fluctuation, particularly important in view of the fact that The Gambia is a Re-Export country (foodstuffs and goods transfer into and out of Gambia for resale). Average current price of some of the food commodities are as following: Groundnut (D 30 per kg), Rice (D19 per kg), maize (D25 per kg), Millets (D18 per kg). For an average Gambian who already spends a high proportion of their income on food, estimated at 60 percent, increasing prices will have a critical negative effect on their livelihood.

11. Amidst the global food crisis and soaring prices, the GoTG in collaboration with its development partners planned and implemented a number of immediate activities and measures to combat the situation. H.E the President renewed his call and advocacy of “going back to the land” for farming and accordingly, the government plans to substantially increase the area identified for rice cultivation in the long-term and assist in the provision of a loan facility to enable farmers to purchase tractors. The GoTG took other initiatives to: (i) establish a task force to brainstorm on the issue of food security and The Gambia’s food situation, with emphasis on the importation of rice and other commodities; (ii) draft an action plan for immediate, medium and long term measures to mitigate the SFP situation; and (iii) purchase fertilizer, pesticides, groundnut, rice, seeds and other cereals, which were distributed to farmers on credit. In addition, the GoTG has responded to food price increases by (i) reducing the sales tax on rice imports from 15 percent to 5 percent in July 2007 and eliminating it altogether in May 2008; and (ii) reaching an understanding with traders on a price ceiling of not more than one thousand Dalasis (per 50 kg bag) until end of September 2008. However, as the rise in global food prices becomes a permanent fixture in the medium and long-term, the continued use of fiscal and monetary measures to combat food price inflation could impact negatively on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, employment and the attainment of the MDGs and of the objectives of the Vision 2020.

Partners’ Support to Government Actions

12. The mission organized a meeting attended by the majority of development partners working in the country to gather information concerning their strategies and programs of assistance, ongoing and pipeline, relative to the soaring food crises, agriculture and nutrition, urban and rural development in general. Potential access to resources from existing or additional “earmarked” financial mechanisms targeted specifically to the current food crises was discussed and possibilities to catalyze immediate and long-term response measures and investments were examined.

13. A number of development partners (AfDB, WB, IFAD...) are working in the country supporting strategies and programs of assistance relative to the soaring food crises, agriculture and nutrition, and urban and rural development in general (see Annex 2 and Annex 3). Current assistance includes the following:

- **European Union (EU)** has generously contributed 133 MTs of decorticated groundnut seeds, 1,500 bags of fertilizer and 200kg of seed treatment chemical worth over US\$0.33 million;
- **African Development Bank (AfDB)** reviewed the loan portfolios for the Gambia agricultural projects and shifted funds from two main projects; the Farmer Managed

Rice Irrigation Project (FMRIP – amount US\$0.80 million and New Rice Initiative for Africa (NERICA) – amount US\$0.464 million) for the immediate purchase of agricultural inputs (seeds, machinery and agro-chemicals);

- **Islamic Development Bank (IDB)** requested the DOSA to prepare a short term plan for agricultural support in the provision of agricultural inputs (seed, machinery and agro-chemicals) worth US\$ 48.89 million;
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** approved US\$300,000 for agricultural inputs to boost production, including two Technical Cooperation projects in the areas of Rural Aquaculture Development and on Nutritional Education. A TCP for US\$250,000 has been recently approved to provide immediate support for inputs. Also eleven small scale community projects have been approved for poultry production, fish smoking, fruit tree production and fruit and vegetable processing using solar dryers;
- **World Food Program (WFP)** has already approved an increase of US\$1.5 million dollars of resources to The Gambia for 2008, to its ongoing support programs, which include school feeding, covering all the rural primary schools;
- **Amongst bilaterals:** **Italy** through the Italian Africa Fund EU1 million worth of poultry meat was approved for distribution and 8 MTs of rice is expected; **Taiwan** provided 100 MTs of NERICA rice; and **Egypt** pledged 0.5 million Egyptian Pounds for fertilizer and irrigation pumps.

Main Findings from Meetings with Key Stakeholders

14. From the different meetings held with major stakeholders, it was highlighted that in addition to addressing core food security and development capacities issues, the ISFP should expand its response to take into account vulnerability assessments, response measure options concerning inputs, food aid, promotion of improved and diversified production systems and adequate post-harvest technologies. Similarly, wider macro-economic issues regarding policy, trade and finance measures need to be considered for long-term economic stability. One major gap identified during the mission assessment regarding institutional arrangements concerns insufficient coordination between and within the NTF and government, civil society and development partners. Stakeholders suggested that improved coordination, regular information sharing and collaborative diagnostic and analytical work would strengthen the task force in meeting its objectives. Also, informants explained that in order to most effectively leverage the comparative advantage from each player involved in food security issues, the NTF should encourage engagement and commitment from the range of players and partners at national and especially decentralized levels, who are best placed to carry out specific activities in the short and medium-long term.⁹ A description of the involved institutions in food security is presented in the table attached in the Annex 4.

Key Findings from the National Workshop

15. A national workshop was held at the end of the IASFP mission with Government, development partners and other stakeholders. Participants identified a number of priority interventions related to policy and production measures, including provision of inputs, plans to expand rice production and irrigation, promotion of backyard crop production and development of agro-industries. Key points of discussion included: the relevance of specific policies regarding irrigation and also mechanization for continuous commercial farming; development of Agricultural Improvement Centres; the importance of setting-up storage

⁹ Initial Task Force meetings have demonstrated limited participation among the key institutions due to a number of reasons, eg. administrative bottlenecks, lack of clearly designated staff, etc..

facilities (cereal and seed banks) for food and inputs; and the need to develop a Marketing Policy, which would be comprised of establishing and controlling for Quality Standards in order to compete with the international markets (see Annex 5 for the workshop agenda, minutes and participants). Participants, and officials in specific, noted that the workshop was successful not only in developing further the action plan, but also in raising awareness and catalyzing efforts concerning the issues and threat of rising food prices, food insecurity, and increasing poverty.

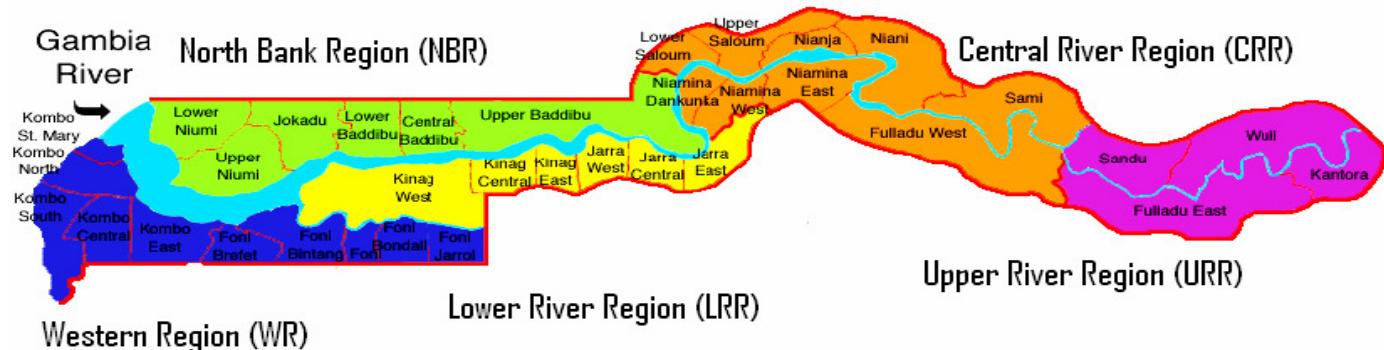
Section II: GENERAL CONTEXT AND FOOD SITUATION

General Background

16. The Gambia is located in the valley of the Gambia River on the West coast of Africa, stretching as a narrow band of land approximately 480 km long, varying in width from 48 km near the estuary of the river to 24 km inland. Its land area is approximately 11,000 km² and is bordered on the North, South and East by the Republic of Senegal and on the West by the Atlantic Ocean and divided by The Gambia River into North and South. The current population of 1.6 million has been growing at a fairly high rate of 2.8 percent per year over 1993-2006 and is concentrated around urban and peri-urban centers (57 percent). Sixty percent of the population is under 25 years old.

17. The natural vegetation types of The Gambia are Guinea Savanna Woodland in the coastal area, which gradually changes into Open Sudan Savana in the East. The climate is Sahelian, with a short rainy season during the period June-October and a long dry spell from November to May. The prevailing climate supports only short agricultural production systems. During the period 1990 to 1997, average national rainfall was 766 mm, which is below the long-term average of 800 mm inland and 2 000 mm in the coastal area. Poor rainfall in the past decade has resulted in drought conditions which have diversely affected the food production potential and the vegetation cover. Soils in The Gambia are predominantly characterized by low fertility, poorly developed structures and medium to high base saturation. Soils are subjected to various types of degradation attributed to soil erosion, clearing by burning, limited incorporation of green manure and salinization. Water resources are comprised of ground water and surface water. If ground water exploitation is minimal for irrigated agriculture, surface water is principally utilized in Central River Region (CRR) where the river is perennially fresh and used for rice irrigation. Agriculture is mostly rainfed and only about 6 percent of the irrigation potential ha been used.

18. Below is the map of The Gambia showing the administrative regions and districts?



Source: *Gambia Food security profile (2000)*.

Political and Economic Situation

19. **At the political level**, the country has made good progress in restoring its image of peace and stability in the last decade, but concerns of governance capacity remains (WB and AfDB, 2007; WB, 2008). There is a weak system of checks and balances among the branches of power, although the 1997 Constitution provides for separation of powers. The political system is characterized by a weak opposition and a limited press freedom. The Gambia is ranked 121 among 163 countries by Transparency International.

20. **On the economic side**, the country has enjoyed steady growth and a stable macroeconomic environment in recent years (WB and IMF, 2007, WB, 2008¹⁰). The PRSII Annual Progress Report (January-December 2007) reported that in 2007 macroeconomic performance was very strong as the economy grew by 6.3 percent. Growth has been broad based, led by the construction, telecommunication, and tourism sectors but the agriculture sector, where most of the poor people are engaged, registered only a 4 percent increase. Real GDP growth has averaged 6.2 percent since 2003 after a brief contraction in 2002 due to low rainfalls and poor macroeconomic management. Sustained fiscal and monetary discipline has been accompanied by significant improvements of public financial management. The average inflation rate declined from a high of 17.0 percent in 2003 to 2.1 percent in 2006. However, rising costs of food and oil imports pushed the annual rate of inflation to 5-6 percent in 2007 and 2008. The government has responded to the food price increase by reducing the sales tax on rice imports from 15 percent in July 2007, 5 percent initially and eliminating it altogether in May 2008.

21. **In the fiscal sector**, the fiscal policy has been largely consistent with macroeconomic stability (PRSII Annual Progress Report). The performance of the fiscal sector has been driven mainly by higher than expected revenues and lower than expected expenditures. In the past four years, the overall fiscal balance has averaged a deficit of 5.7 percent of GDP. It significantly improved from a deficit of 7.8 percent of GDP in 2007 to a surplus of 0.5 percent in 2008 due to reduced expenditures. The country registered a fiscal surplus for the first time after many years. The Dalasi appreciated by 32 percent in the later part of the third quarter of 2007 and this had helped to reduce the Dalasi payments against debt service obligations and other international payment obligations. However, the currency appreciation had created some risk to revenue performance particularly in the fourth quarter of the year.

22. **Monetary policy in 2007**, as showed by the PRSII Annual Progress Report, was totally concentrated on sustaining the disinflation process, maintaining exchange rate stability and a viable external position. All this was made possible because of the enabling domestic environment of subdued inflation and stable exchange rate.

23. With approval of the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) in December 2007, the stock of external debt fell from 133.6 percent to 50.0 percent of GDP. As a result, external debt payment is expected to decline from 1.4 percent of GDP to 0.4 percent in 2008. Government has funded significant public investments in PRSP priority areas including education, health, agriculture, infrastructure and public sector capacity building. However, the budget allocated to the DOSA has steadily decreased since 2003 and is at a low of 2.9 percent. Groundnut exports contribute significantly to the national economy, but exports collapsed as a result of failures in internal marketing arrangements. The government has undertaken

¹⁰ World Bank Programme Document Concept Note for a public growth grants sector reform, July 2008.

measures and started implementing strategic reforms to revitalize the groundnut sector. The partial recovery of groundnut exports as well as strong tourism growth contributed to the narrowing of the current account deficit in 2006. The improvements in macroeconomic management were buttressed by a number of significant reforms on public financial management and Central Bank operations. These reforms have improved transparency and accountability in the use of public resources and reduced the opportunities for corruption.

24. According to the HIPC¹¹ report for The Gambia, approved in November 2007, there appears to be favorable progress in macro-economic performance: (i) implementation of reforms in education and health sectors has been satisfactory and significant progress has been made in strengthening the public financial management; (ii) the economy has been stable and growing at an annual average rate of 6.5 percent in the past five years and inflation has been reduced in large part due to substantially improved macro-economic policy implementation; (iii) structural reforms to promote private sector development have been slower than initially expected but progress has been made recently in reforming the groundnut sector. The financial governance and public sector reforms involved in the creation of the new Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA), the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBOS), National Road Authority (NRA), National Agricultural Development Agency (NADA), and the Central Project Management and the Aid Coordination Directorate (CPM&ACD) under the auspices of Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs (DOSFEA) to coordinate the flow of aid and grants into the country. In addition, the WB is currently working with GBOS in preparing a Poverty Assessment

Government Policies, Strategies and Programmes

Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and Reforms

25. The Gambia's long-term policy objectives are aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sketched out in the Vision 2020, which seeks to transform The Gambia into a dynamic middle income country. The Vision 2020¹² sets out a broad outline of policies for six major activity areas relating to Agriculture, Industry, Trade, Tourism, Financial Services and Human Resource Development, which are also targeted by the PRSII. The PRSII and the Vision 2020 are harmonized into a single planning framework for the country to enhance economic growth and poverty reduction in parallel. The government has produced two full PRSP (PRSII 2002-2005 and PRSII 2007-2011) that provide a credible framework for poverty reduction.

26. PRSII defines principles for Government planning and budget execution for achieving meaningful poverty reduction. The priorities articulated are implemented through sector plans and financed through the annual budget. The implementation of PRSP II is therefore not a separate exercise but primarily operates through the actions of each sector and the annual budgeting exercise. In the PRSII process, a new aid coordination mechanism has been put in place with the setting up and operationalization of the Aid Coordination and Central Project Management Unit in the DOSFEA. Thanks to the coordination mechanism under PRSII, the WB and AfDB are now well-aligned with the second PRSII through their Joint Assistance Strategy (JAS), a strategic programming mechanism they prepared in

¹¹ Completion Point Document and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, November 28, 2008 of the HIPC.

¹² A number of actions have been taken to operationalize the Vision, primarily through the development and implantation of First, Medium Term Strategic Plans 2007-2011, 2012-2016 and 2017-2021. The Medium Term Plan for the period 2007-2011 has been formulated with the goal of accelerating economic growth and poverty reduction.

December 2007. The JAS lays out how the WB and the AfDB intend to support the implementation of the Gambia's PRSII for the next four years (FY08-11), and represents the first step of an effort to harmonize donor assistance in The Gambia in line with the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

27. Through PRSII, a civil service reform is initiated to strengthen institutional capacity for policy formulation, human resources development, and programme coordination and monitoring. It is also meant to improve governance and management of the civil service to ensure transparency and accountability and promote ethical values and standards. Two draft reports on civil service reform and pension reform were produced. The draft report on civil service reform provides recommendations on developing a civil service reform strategy and will help further develop the Public Sector Reform Sector Strategy Paper 2007-2011. The draft report on pension reforms proposes a series of parametric adjustments to the Public Service Pension Scheme (PSPS) employing actuarial modeling techniques to project the financial impact of different reform options.

Current Agricultural Policies

28. The current policy framework under which the agriculture sector is operating is provided by the Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector Policy (ANR), the National Seed Policy (NSP) and to a less extent, the Food Security Profile (FSP). Whilst the ANR seeks to raise income, improve food security and reduce poverty, all aiming to achieve the Vision 2020 objectives and also the MGDs, the objective of the NSP is to develop an efficient and sustainable seed system to meet the needs of the country's farmers. The seed supply system will contribute to national and household food security by increasing production and by providing seed in times of stress, such as drought. In addition, the government is committed to implement reforms¹³ of the groundnut sector¹⁴ in order to lift the sector from its current crisis as groundnut exports can boost farmer incomes substantially. In the 2004-2006 periods, the Gross Foreign Exchange Earnings (GFEE) of the groundnut sector was US\$ 12.0 mill. out of a total GFEE US\$ 250.7 mil¹⁵. The current policy framework seems ambitious in its support to rural and agricultural development and to food security and interventions against SFP.

Constraints to the Implementation of Strategies and Agricultural Policies

29. As a pillar of PRSII, the agriculture sector has potential to enable the country to achieve the long-term development goal of food self sufficiency and reducing poverty for a large segment of the population, but a number of constraints need to be overcome. There is need to transform agriculture from subsistence to a commercially-oriented sector but this needs an appropriate policy framework to enable the agriculture sector to overcome its constraints; these include *inter alia*: insufficient human and social capital development, limited capacity and inefficiency of extension services, weak research-farmer extension linkages, poor agricultural practices, declining soil fertility and soil erosion, low farmer productivity, major challenges to natural resources due to steadily rising urban populations, inefficient agricultural marketing systems, especially for groundnuts and food products, lack

¹³ Completion Point Document and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, November 28, 2007 of the HIPC and the Joint Assistance Strategy for the Republic of The Gambia for Fiscal years-2008-2011.

¹⁴ Earlier attempts to restructure the groundnut sector were unsuccessful. However, in 2007 the government prepared and started implementing a sector reform "roadmap" to fully liberalize the sector. As part of the roadmap, the government has allowed the free entry of operators at all levels of the value chains and intends to privatize the management of the public groundnut processing plants by 2008.

¹⁵ According to the Joint Assistance Strategy for the Republic of The Gambia for Fiscal years-2008-2011, the Groundnut is the third foreign exchange earning sector in The Gambia following Tourism and Re-Exports.

of access to short and long term financial capital, low agricultural investment, and inappropriate land tenure arrangements that do not give women full rights.

30. The current agricultural policy framework provided by the ANR (and NSP as well) is not operational and therefore not yet able to mobilize significant investments to develop the potential of the sector. These policies are not costed and a sector plan does not exist for agriculture to drive investments, compared to the education sector and the health sectors that have respectively sectoral wide approach programme (SWAP) and five year investment programme. The budget allocated to the DOSA has declined from 2003 (5.9 percent of the total budget) to 2008 (2.9 percent). In addition, weakness in the public service sector exists; there is an instability (changing) and high turnover of ministers and senior government officials and migration of skilled staff that will harm the implementation of policies. The lack of an effective sectoral coordination will interfere with the implementation the Vision 2020 and its related policies. Finally, the funding gap (of about US\$350 million) for PRSP II (PRSP II annual progress report) and the continued soaring food prices could require more budgetary allocations to the sector to the detriment of policies' actions to assist the poor.

National/Regional Trade and Borders

31. Large movements of food commodities from the country pose a number of potential "threats." These include (a) porous borders to areas of high prices and (b) increased activity in the re-export of food commodities and of the imported food the government and the private sector provide. With the likelihood of such threats, "policy measures" would need to be introduced, which might include the following: (i) increased efficiency of border check points to control the movements of food commodities in and out of the country; (ii) establishment of a sub-committee under the NTF for constant monitoring of the re-export sub-sector and to improve the data base of re-export trade with a special focus on food commodities particularly rice, sugar, vegetable oils and other grains. However, the implementation of these policy measures should be aligned with current policy frameworks in West Africa and the continent.

32. Existing policy frameworks for agriculture in West Africa¹⁶ and for Africa in general have potential to support food security and rural development. In this regard each African country is a signatory to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and Economic Community of West African States Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) respectively, which are mutually consistent in terms of principles, objectives and instrumentation. The policy measures in the CAADP and ECOWAP consist of a number of instruments namely: trade policy – tariff regimes; non-tariff barriers to trade; transportation policy – road transport; rail transport; air transport; investment policy – investment incentives; financial institutions and mechanisms for regional cooperation; infrastructure investment. As the GoTG is a signatory to the CAADP and ECOWAP, these actions and policy instruments will definitely have an impact on the Gambia situation in view of the following: (i) Gambia's re-export trade; (ii) Gambia's porous borders which may cause high movements of staple food commodities away from the country; (iii) the rise of Gambia's comparative advantage and competitiveness in producing and exporting high value market commodities.

¹⁶ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has the mandate of the AU to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which includes the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) in West Africa.

Poverty Situation

33. ***The soaring of food prices hit the world by surprise and has not spared The Gambia.*** The country is already characteristically prone to regional/global economic trends and shocks, vulnerable to natural environmental conditions being dependent on rainfed agriculture. Once the fiscal measures and the commercial arrangements are no longer sustained –most likely after September 2008- the volatility of commodities and oil in the international markets will directly affect internal food prices, particularly in terms of imported rice price and its availability for Gambian consumers. The Gambia is classified as a Least Developed, Low Income Food Deficit Country (LIFDC) and is currently ranked as 155 out of 177 countries according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) for 2007. Poverty statistics somewhat vary among sources¹⁷, but overall they indicate high levels and increasing poverty with increasing disparity among populations. In 2006, the PRSP II reported that 63.3 percent of the rural population and 57.2 percent of the urban populations are living in poverty. In rural areas in particular groundnut producers - with a poverty rate of about 76 percent - are among the poorest in the country compared to a national average of 58 percent and are highly vulnerable to the production and market performance of the sector¹⁸. Given the reported 53 percent production loss in groundnut in 2007, rural incomes have reported to seriously decline by more than 50 percent in 2008, thus eroding livelihood standards of households¹⁹. According to the Household Poverty Survey Report of June 2006, about 58 percent of the population lived in poverty out of which 39 percent live in extreme poverty. Of the 91 percent of the very poor, 72 percent were dependent on agriculture for their survival.

34. ***Distribution rates of poverty is rising in the Gambia.*** The Gini coefficient at the household level is reported in the PRSP II (2006) to have risen from 0.466 in 1998 to 0.483 in 2003. Poverty is highest among those in rural areas, reported in Central in the Upper River Regions among agriculture and fishing sectors and unskilled workers, lowest among social, personal and sales service professionals and workers. According to the WB (2008), the rate of urban poverty is lower than rural areas, although still substantial at an average of 56 percent. Urban poverty increase is about 60 percent compared to 41 percent in rural areas. These statistics indicate the rapid rise of population in urban areas and poverty rates²⁰. Increased stress on socials services is a major cause for rising rates of urban poverty levels. Although Banjul and its environs currently have maintained a relatively modest proportion of poor people, estimated at 10.6 percent, it has a growing population, currently at 51 percent of the total population of the country, which has implications on poverty. From a regional perspective, Kuntaur rural area has the highest poverty numbers (92.3 percent), followed by Kerewan rural (67 percent)²¹.

35. ***The dimensions of poverty in the Gambia are complex and dynamic.*** Poverty in the Gambia has important youth implication, as the national population is skewed heavily towards younger age bands, where about 44 percent of the population is aged 0-15 years. However younger household heads (below 30 years) have lower poverty levels rates (39.5 percent) compared to elderly household heads above 50 years (64.6 percent). Implications on poverty

¹⁷ It is reported (Muller 2006) that data design and collection shortcomings have been prominent in the past national poverty surveys.

¹⁸ World Bank Programme Document Concept Note for a public growth grant sector reform and g, July 2008.

¹⁹ Food Security Situation and Response Strategies to Food Crises Situation in the Gambia (May 2008) DOP/NADA.

²⁰ Urban growth rates are high, about 53 percent of the population lives in urban areas according GBOS 2003 and the PRSP II 2006.

²¹ Muller, C. (June 2006) Poverty analysis of the Integrated Household Survey CSD in The Gambia. Capacity Building for Economic Management Project.

reduction among youth include efforts to generate employment opportunities, and increasing access to productive assets such as credit, skills training and education. It is noted that poverty levels are higher among non-educated heads of households, 65 percent, compared to heads with education, at 40.6 percent.

36. ***The implication of gender and household size***, which are a cross-cutting issues, is of concern regarding national poverty dimensions. There is concern that a “*feminization*” of poverty in The Gambia is underway, as exemplified by higher levels of poverty among female-headed households of which 63 percent fall below the poverty line compared to 48 percent of male-headed households (CSD 2003). Evidence indicates that discriminatory socio-cultural practices prevent gender equity notably in areas of service delivery access. It is reported that over 78 percent of women engage in the agricultural sector of which only one third report receiving cash income compared to 43 percent of men. In general, median incomes for men are reported twice those of women working in the same sector. In addition, men are reported to enjoy much more diversified employment opportunities. Despite efforts to mainstream gender into national development efforts, responsiveness has been reported as low and in need of strengthening. Other notable features of poverty include that larger households have higher reported poverty levels than smaller households. Statistics show that those households with three or less members have average poverty levels of 13.3 percent averages, compared to 71.1 percent for 10 or more members. Poverty seems to affect ethnic groups differentially as well. As reported by Muller (2006) the Mandinka ethnic group are the poorest ethnic group in the country, estimated at 67.3 percent, followed closely by the Fula, of whom 66.3 percent are reported as poor. Data shows that Jola, Sarahulled and Serer are much less affected by poverty (Muller 2006).

Overview of the Agricultural Sector

Context of the Agricultural Sector

37. According to the PRSII annual progress report, the agricultural sector employs 68 percent of the labor force, and accounts for 33.0 percent of GDP of The Gambia, the second largest sector in the economy. It is also the sole means of income generation for the majority of rural households below the poverty line. About 91 percent of the extremely poor and 72 percent of the poor in The Gambia are in the agriculture sector. The agricultural sector is the prime sector for investments to raise income, improve food security and reduce poverty and therefore contribute to meeting the Vision 2020 objectives and the MDG - “to halve the proportion of poor and those who suffer from hunger. However, the performance and share of the agriculture sector in most key socio-economic indicators have stagnated or ever declined in the past decade due to a combination of several factors²². Field crops account for over half (66 percent) of agriculture's contribution to national GDP. In line with the JAS, about 63 and 80 percent of the 82,000 rural households are engaged in groundnut. As reported by the Pogramme Document Concept Note for a Public Sector Reform and Growth Grant, prepared by the WB in July 2008, groundnut accounts approximately 60 percent of domestic exports. However, groundnut farmers are among the poorest in the country and the performance of the sector has been poor in recent years primarily as a result unpredictable and erratic rainfall patterns and rural infrastructures deficiency. Horticulture is increasingly becoming a prominent feature in the farming systems and contributes about 4.2 percent of GDP (NSP, 2008; Food Security Profile, 2008).

²² As already stated, among these factors are adverse climatic conditions; low private investment, especially in value added, declining international agricultural commodity prices; inadequate domestic policies, institutional support and investment in the sector, particularly in infrastructure.

Land Use and Main Farming Systems

38. *Gambia agriculture is characterized by subsistence production of food crops comprising cereals, semi-intensive cash crop production and traditional livestock raising.* Farmers generally practice mixed farming, although crops account for a greater portion of the production. Farming systems in The Gambia are characterized by a wide range of production and cropping patterns; the two main farming systems are upland and lowland. The upland system involves crops such as groundnut, millet, sorghum, maize and horticultural crops as well as livestock husbandry. The lowland farming system traditionally is predominantly rice-based. It is usually characterized by rice ecologies such as upland, rain-fed lowland, tidal mangrove, tidal freshwater, and irrigated.

39. Household size has been decreasing in general in The Gambia. To have an idea of the evolution of household size, it has been found that the number of members by household decreased from 8.95 in 1993 to 8.61 in 2003 at national levels (data source not yet updated). For this last mentioned year, Local Government Areas (LGAs) with larger household size were Basse (14.7), Kuntaur (11.05) and Janjanbureh (10.43)²³.

40. Combining population with agricultural land/area data it is possible to have some proxy indicators to roughly characterize land access in The Gambia, which are summarized in **Table 1**²⁴ In 2005 the availability by holder²⁵ was estimated at 6.5 ha of cultivable land of which 35 percent was devoted to cereal crops. It also shows that at that time –a year in which the country reached the highest area dedicated to crops (336,600 ha) during the period 1974–2007 - the average holder had theoretically a margin of 2 ha to increase his/her cultivated area. This margin to expand production is confirmed at country level by looking at the yearly average of total cultivated area between 1974 and 2007 (206,700 ha), which represents only 37 percent of cultivable area. These figures seem to confirm a shared view within the country that availability of land is not (yet) a limitation to increase agricultural production.

Table 1. Indicators on land availability in 2005

Tot. cultivated area (all crops)	336,000 ha
Tot. cultivated area (cereals)	195,600 ha
Area cultivable/cap (rural pop.)	0.5 ha
Area cultivable/agric. holder	6.5
Tot. crop area/holder	4.0
Tot. cereal area/holder	2.3

Source: NASS 2005/06, Draft

²³ “Food Security Profile: The Gambia”, Revised draft, September 2007.

²⁴ Indicators were prepared based on the total area of suitable land (553,000 ha) and data from NASS 2005/06 on both cultivated area and the number of crop holders.

²⁵ NASS’ definition of “holder” is “... the person (man, woman or youngster) who makes the day-to-day decisions for the agricultural holding. A holder could be the owner, manager, senior partner, etc. but should be present in the household. According to this survey, in 2005 there were 84,500 crop holders.

Major Constraints and Challenges

41. Adequate rainfall is one of the main agricultural limitations in the country. The Gambia as part of the Sahelian region has been hardly affected by the phenomena of climate change. For example in the last sixty years and as a result of a south to south-western shift of cumulative rainfall, areas with average rainfall (during July-August-September) less than 800 mm have increased since 1965 from 36 to 93 percent (NADA 2007). Nevertheless, a small country which counts with an important river (the Gambia River) crossing the whole country from East to West and its flooding surrounding plains, constitutes a comparative advantage in terms of the potential for irrigated crops. This potential has not been yet fully exploited, partly because of lack of sustainable irrigation systems. The irrigated area has stagnated around 2,500 ha.

42. Based on findings of this mission, key constraints more specifically to coping with and overcoming soaring food prices and long-term food security in The Gambia have been prioritized as the following:

Agricultural production and productivity Lack/limited access to inputs:

- Limited post-harvest/ processing/transformation and weak storage facilities
- Limited access to consistent, appropriate technical field delivery services
- Inefficient land and water use; soil infertility – land degradation and impact of climate change.

Social safety nets

- Low/decreasing purchasing power : especially among rural households due to the groundnut crisis
- Limited diversification of income generating activities and assets, notably among youth

Trade and policy

- Limited access to finances for agricultural investment
- Weak market information systems at national and regional levels.
- Absence/weak data/information collection systems (vulnerability, areas of acute food insecurity, situation of production systems, early warning etc.)
- Limited producer organization capacity to service members
- Limited coordination among national inter-sectoral partners; as well as with development partners, including for information sharing and synergy in interventions

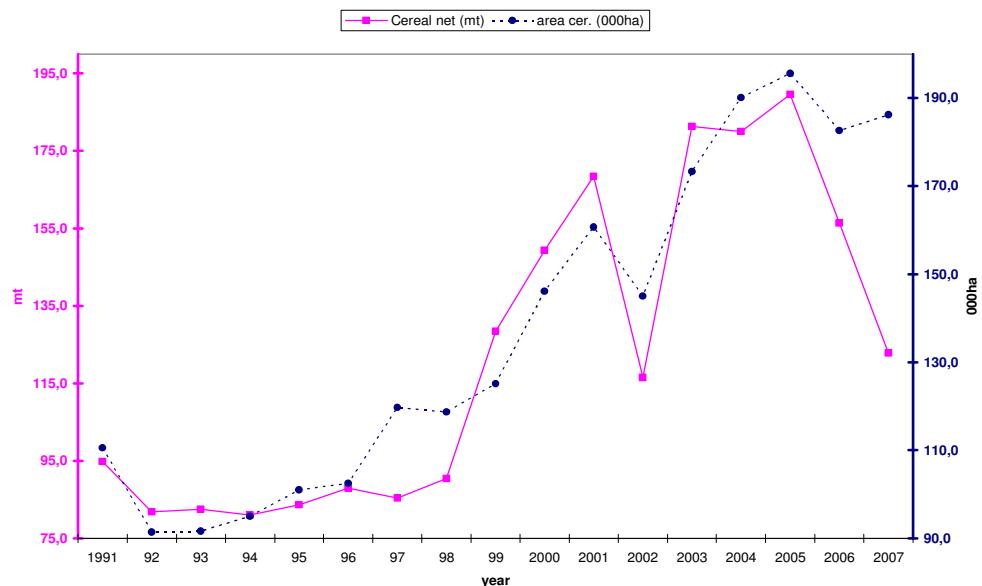
Food Production and Availability

43. The Gambia agricultural sector is characterized as highly dependant on rainfall and oriented toward self-subsistence, with households cultivating very small land plots through traditional agricultural practices applied since generations (e.g. labor intensive, limited diversification, very little incorporation of new technologies with high aversion to risk).

44. Structural changes are occurring however, including a wide adoption of animal traction, the diversification into sesame production, and the availability of short-cycled varieties of rice - NERICA, groundnut and millet. Clearly, the agriculture policy needs to target the problem of low yields, which calls for improved inputs and extension.

45. Analysis of cultivated area can indicate the importance of each food crop. It is assumed that this indicator translates most directly into farmer's preferences and decisions making, although not necessarily production. This latter indicator of production is much more influenced by climatic conditions -particularly rainfall- after the holder decides how much area he/she will plough. Chart 1, shows correspondence between area and production, which in general follow the same pattern and even have very close values. However, as expected, production is much more variable due to, for example the 2002 drought or the dry spell conditions in 2006 and 2007, both which affected crop productions.

Chart 1. Evolution of area and production of cereals (1990-2007)



Prepared based on data from NASS and S. Sonko

46. In The Gambia the most important cereals produced are millet, rice, sorghum and maize (**see Table 2**). Total cereals have represented on average 52 percent of the area cultivated during the last 34 years, the other 48 percent have been mainly groundnuts. The table also shows that "coarse" grains (early and late millet, maize and sorghum) are the main source of cereals for internal consumption when compared with rice. It should be noted that millet has always occupied the predominant position among food crops. In the case of rice, despite that it is appreciated most by consumers (mainly in urban areas) both production limitations (with only an average of 18.7 percent of total cereals cultivated area devoted to paddy) and consumption patterns of rural households likely explain the contradiction between its "high social value" and its rather modest position among national food crops production. As mentioned further on in this analysis, thanks to commercial imports, rice seems to play²⁶ an important role in the urban food basket.

²⁶ The mission did not have the opportunity to access comprehensive and updated data/analysis on consumption patterns and household food basket composition (at rural and urban level).

Table 2. Average area dedicated to food crops (1974 – 2007)

Crop	Yearly average (000 ha)	Percentage
E. Millet	45,3	42
L. Millet	14,1	13
Total Millet	59,4	55
Maize	14,2	13
Sorghum	15,1	14
Tot. Coarse grains	88,7	82
Paddy	18,7	18
Total Cereals	107,4	100

Source: "Food Security Profile: The Gambia" Revised Draft, S. Sonko, September 2007

47. **Chart 2** shows the sustained growing trend of early millet area since 1974, with a decrease in 2006 and 2007. The other increasing trends for the same period – somewhat less important- are the cases of maize and sorghum (see **Chart 3**), which at the same time shows the decreasing area of rice and the stagnant trend of late millet.

Chart 2. Cultivated area of Early Millet (1974-2007)

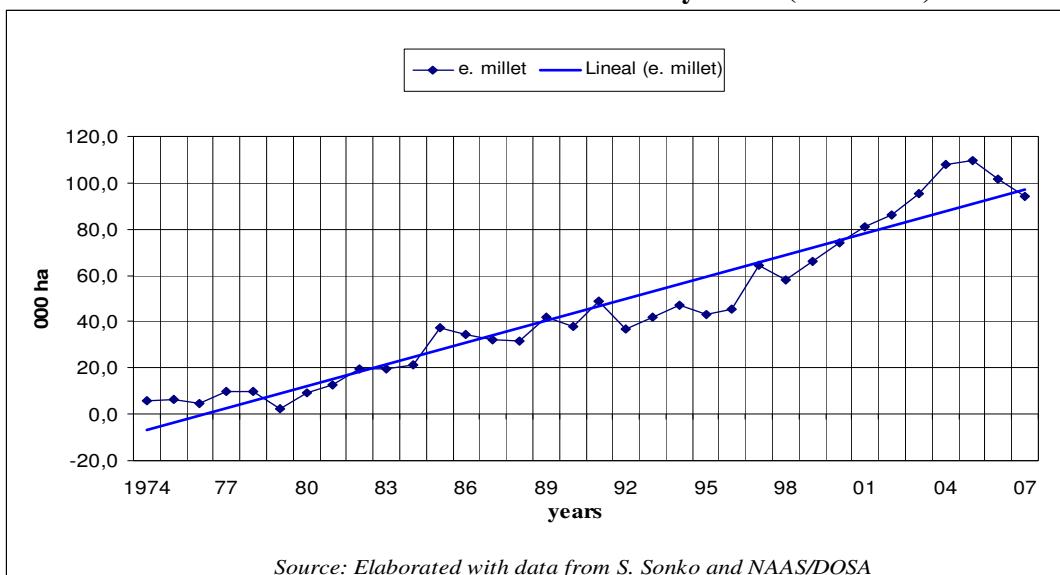
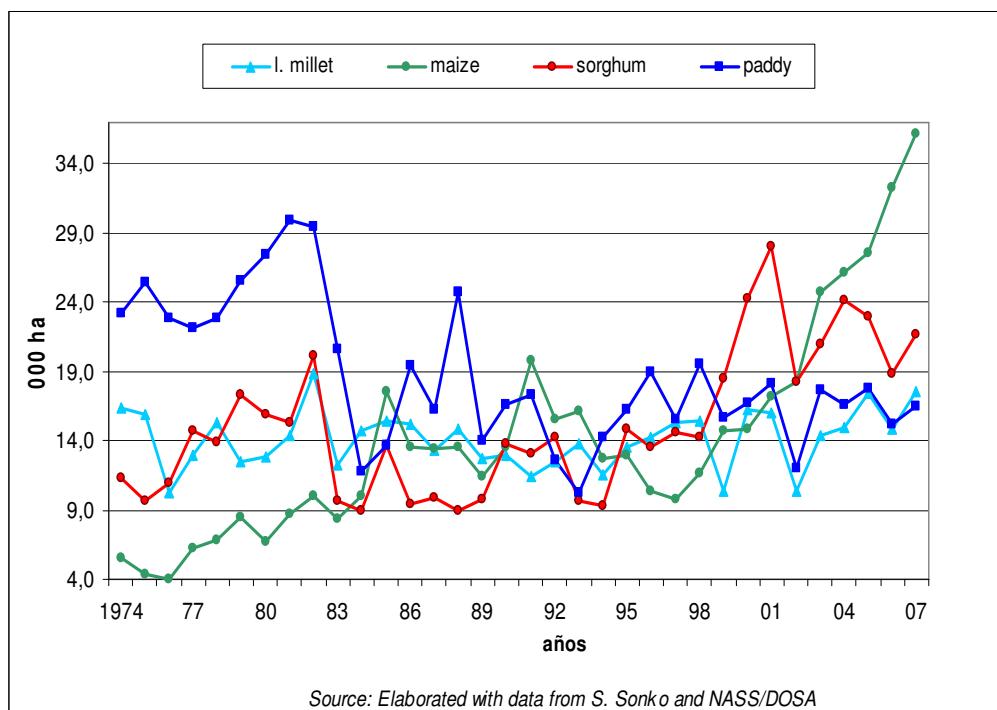


Chart 3. Cultivated area of selected cereals (1974-2007)



48. Using available data from 2004 agricultural season of area dedicated to food crops by LGA administrative areas²⁷ and assuming that the spatial distribution of crops has not changed significantly in recent years, it appears that Kerewan (on the North Bank Region) is the most important LGA in terms of crops production. It has the largest area concentration of coarse grain and cereals (30 and 31 percent respectively, in 2004), followed by Basse with around 24 percent. The smallest areas of food crops are found first in Brikama and second in Mansakonko (approximately 5 and 12 percent of the area, respectively). In terms of paddy, the area distribution among LGAs seems to be more uniform with less disparity (between 12 and 20 percent on each LGA).

49. The smallest contribution of Brikama made to the national cereal output may be explained by the combination of being the most populated LGA (more than those predominantly urban such as Banjul and Kanifing) with a relatively reduced availability of cultivable land (3.6 ha per holder) compared with an average of 6.5 ha for the six “rural” LGAs.

50. From the point of view of output or production and as shown by **Table 3**, the importance of each crop approximately follows the same pattern as area.

Table 3. Contributions of E. Millet and Paddy to Total Cereal Production			
Indicator	Percentage		
	1994	2005	2007
E. Millet/Tot. Cereals	46	58	52

²⁷ Among the eight LGAs, those more “urban” (Banjul and Kanifing) were not taken into consideration on this analysis.

Coarse grains/Tot. Cereals	79	91	92
Paddy/Tot. Cereals	21	9	8
<i>Prepared with data from NASS</i>			

51. The years selected for the analysis correspond to the lowest cereal production (1994), the highest (2005) and the last agricultural year. It points out again the key importance of early millet and therefore coarse grains on the total food crop production, as well as the diminishing importance of paddy.

52. Looking at the historical evolution of cereal production (as illustrated in **Chart 1**) as well as area in cultivation, evidence shows an increasing trend despite some falls that can be explained by rainfall deficits. This trend increased from 1999 onwards until 2005. The explanation of this growth is due to the increasing area dedicated to early millet. It has to be noted that yields for this last mentioned crop –as well as for almost all the others- have been roughly stagnant (around 1,000 MTs per ha). The minimum gross production of early millet during the period (1974 – 2007) has been 1,700 MTs in 1979 and the maximum, almost 130,000 MTs in 2005. Other coarse crops production (late millet, maize and sorghum) has been fluctuating between 4,500 and 33,500 MTs by year. Paddy like in the case of coarse grains, followed the same stagnant trend, but between a wider ranges (11,000 and 43,000 MTs).

53. Regarding the recent cereal production trend, **Chart 1** also points out that the trend seems to start to be reversed after 2005. Once again the weight of early millet on the total cereal production explains these changes. Compared with 2005, this coarse grain has suffered a reduction of 18 percent in 2006 and 42 percent in 2007. Applying the same comparative criteria, cereal production decreased 18 percent and 35 percent respectively, always taking as a reference point the record production of 2005.

Cereals Gap

54. Despite the relative increasing trend of cereal net production²⁸, the population growth and therefore *country's cereal needs*²⁹ has been consistently above local production with the result that the cereal gap has been widening (between 1991 and 2007), as shown by **Chart 4**. Within the last three years, the primary deficit increased from 65,661 up to around 150,000 MTs in 2007.

²⁸ In the absence of accurate studies and better information, net production equals gross less 15 per cent for seeds, livestock feed and losses. Evidence indicates that post harvest losses are an important problem in Gambia and the percentage applied might be rather conservative.

²⁹ Calculated on the basis of 175kg/GE/capita/year, criteria applied by CILSS on its cereal balance sheets.

Chart 4. Cereals Consumption Needs versus Net Production

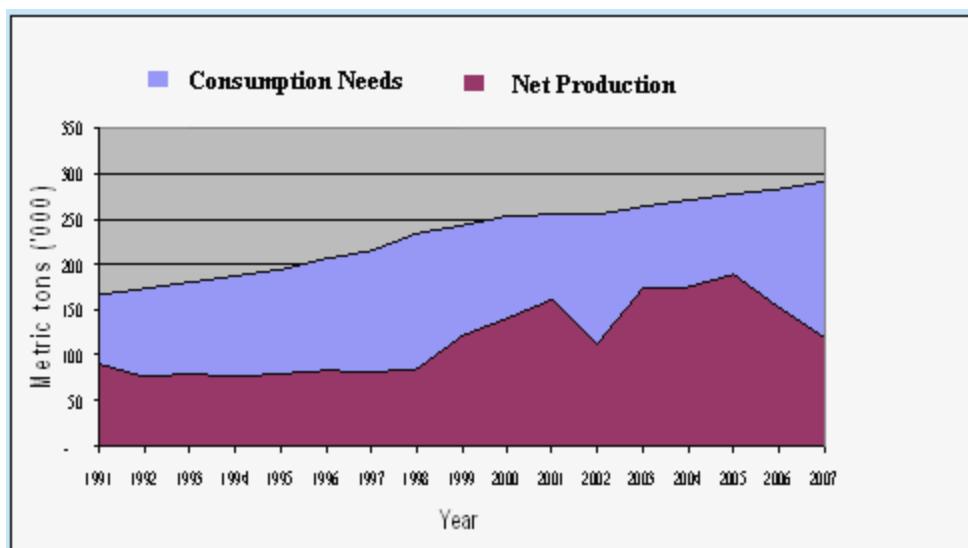


Chart developed by WFP based on NASS data

55. This increasing cereal gap *may* have been covered in part by commercial imports and food aid - rice, wheat flour and vegetable oil have been the basic food commodities traditionally imported into the country with priority given to urban consumption. Several sources interviewed by the mission estimate that almost each year between 50 and 60 per cent of the total needs have been covered by rice imports, but it is hard to confirm such figures. The difficulty lies on re-exporting operations which are not registered in a accurate or clear manner, resulting on unreliable estimates on the net balance of imported rice that remain in country for local consumption³⁰.

56. During the period 1990 – 2006, cereal food aid can be estimated at around 5 per cent of the cereal net production, which clearly illustrates that in The Gambia, food aid has not played an important role as in other Sahelian countries in helping to cover the food gap .

57. The Cereal Balance Sheet prepared every year by DOSA with the assistance of CILSS suffers from the same limitations in terms of data reliability (particularly on imports and in-country stocks estimates). Taking the 1986-2006 final balance series, it shows a yearly average of 49,000 MTs of cereal deficit. Besides the difficulties in having a good estimate of the 2007 final cereal balance and by just taking the “primary” deficit (needs less net production), one finds that in 2008 an important portion of the total population has been net-buyers of cereals (estimated at around 860,00 people).

58. Within the context of a growing gap between local production and cereal needs, it is clear that imports of rice –the only cereal imported besides wheat flour- have been the only source to alleviate or at least cover the gap. In the coming years, even if local production may start to reverse the ongoing trend –which in any case will take some time- the country will continue to be highly dependant on cereal imports. However the soaring food prices will likely impose heavy limitations to the volume of grain –particularly rice- imports that the country will be able to afford.

³⁰ Re-export estimations go from 30 to 50 per cent of cereal commercial imports, depending on the information source.

59. Besides the fact that cereals are the main component of Gambians' food basket, there is little data on household consumption patterns. One research study³¹ revealed the difference on cereal basket composition, between urban and rural areas. It shows that rice provides 44.1 percent of urban calories intake compared to 37.4 percent in rural areas. The second source of calories for urban households, was groundnut oil (10.3 percent of calories), and for rural households "other grains" (22.5 percent).

60. Other important sources of food are livestock and horticulture, but it is difficult to estimate their contribution to the household food basket. **Table 4** provides an indirect idea of their relative importance based on the number of holders engaged in the respective production activities.

Table 4. Main food productions, other than cereals		
Type of production/activity	% of total holders *	% of holders by activity **
Livestock	87	
Chicken		80
Goats		61
Sheep		56
Cattle		43
Vegetables	74	
Tomato		70
Okra		70
Sorrel		48
Gardens eggs		38
Pumpkins		35
Access to fishery	3	
Percentage based on the total number of holders country wide (86,000)		
** Percentage based on the number of holders managing livestock or producing vegetables.		

Prepared based on NASS 2005/2006 data

61. According to the analyzed data, livestock production was undertaken by 87 percent of total holders, followed very close by horticulture with 74 percent. Livestock (cattle, small ruminants, different species of poultry, pigs and equines) is an important source of food, income, manure and farm power. According to the Gambia Food Security Profile (2007), there has been a general increase of cattle and small ruminants whilst those of pigs and chicken fluctuate. Cattle population averages around 430,000 heads, 220,000 sheep and 300,000 goats, 16,000 pigs, and 400,000 chickens. Despite the large number of cattle, off-take remains low due to holding of stocks as reserves of wealth by owners. Within animal production, poultry is by far the most important activity (80 percent of livestock holders) with an average of almost 11 chickens by holder; the scale of production reveals that the activity is likely for household consumption. Goat and sheep breeding are more important than cattle; they are a means of household investments/assets, as well as important sources of animal byproducts. Poultry

³¹ Cornell University Nutrition Policy Programme 1989/90 Survey, conducted by the University of Cornell.

seems to be concentrated in Brikama and Kerewan. On the contrary, Mansakonko, Janjanbureh and Kuntaur are the LGAs with a relatively reduced number of poultry holders (between 9 and 10 percent each). In terms of all ruminants, with the exception of Basse which occupies the first position, it is not possible to find a clear animal production pattern among LGAs. Per capita meat consumption is estimated at 8 kg par annum. Large volumes of meat, eggs and milk are annually imported to meet consumption requirements. Due to low input management systems and poor husbandry practices, productivity and output have been generally low in the traditional free-range extensive systems. In the emerging modern sector, semi-intensive management systems are predominant with increasing utilization of composite animal feed and concentrates.

62. Regarding horticultural crops, data shows that Brikama is the highest producing LGA and Mansakonko the lowest. The horticulture sub-sector has good potential for growth. Consequently, horticulture is increasingly becoming a prominent feature in the farming systems. Horticulture production is concentrated in the peri-urban areas. Farmers are diversifying their production base to include vegetables and fruits for both home consumption and marketing. The sub sector is becoming one of the growth points in the country's export and foreign exchange earnings and therefore can contribute to poverty alleviation through increased employment and income from sales in rural areas. Key constraints to development of the sector include:

- costs of water for irrigation are high and threaten to reduce margins and create disincentives to investment;
- the level of research support to the industry is low and may expose the industry to low competitive products and of course make it unattractive for further investment;
- proper soil management is lacking and may limit the industry to meet quality requirements of its products;
- pests – weeds, insects, diseases in horticultural crops are relatively high in production areas, and pose a serious threat to the quality of the products and produce and may result in high production costs which may render the industry less competitive;
- availability and accessibility to essential production inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides are inadequate, especially for small holders because of their relatively low investment capacities;
- there are no reliable systems of market information and promotion which small holders or producer organizations could benefit from, and as such, they cannot participate sufficiently in the industry;
- the infrastructure to support higher returns to producers and marketers is low - farm to market roads are very poor; storage facilities to handle perishable commodities are mostly ground floor spaces in verandas of houses, rickety baskets or damaged wooden or plastic boxes; air cargo space during peak horticultural season are inadequate and air freight costs are high; processing and preservation technologies are low output resulting in lower quality products;
- there is very little institutional support for horticultural exporters. Export promotion, which should be handled by government institutions and private and civil society organizations, is at best an expressed intention.

63. Finally Fisheries constitute an important natural resource and provider of protein for a significant proportion of the population. It is estimated that the Maximum Sustainable Yield from The Gambia's continental shelf and estuarine area is 80,000 MTs per year, whilst current catches are put at 30,000-40,000 MTs. The observation also indicates that high valued demersal species are under threat from exploitation. High post-harvest losses, lack of credit,

low skill levels and lack of infrastructure for landing constitute key constraints encountered in the sector. It has to be mentioned that only 3 percent “of agricultural holders declared to have access to this activity”. It is most likely that this population refers only to those farmers who develop fishing as a secondary activity. On the other hand, data from the Fisheries Department³² shows that the catch of the “artisanal sector” has been historically increasing, with volumes much higher than the industrial sector. Precedent figures suggest that at least in rural areas, in addition to cereal production, fish production and consumption may have an important contribution to household food security, which is not possible to estimate at present.

Access to Food

64. The major factor affecting access to cereals, in The Gambia is retail prices, specifically of millet and local rice. Data from NASS shows that for millet between 1990 and 2001 the price at the lean season has suffered minor changes. They have fluctuated around an average of 2.9 Dalasi per kg. However in the lean season of 2002³³ millet price increased 108 per cent, with a relatively minor new increase (26 percent) in 2005. The data series consulted for local rice starts in 1998 and from that year until to 2001 the price fluctuated between 5.0 and 5.8 Dalasi per kg. In the case of local rice, major increases were spread between 2001 and 2004 (138 percent). After these increases, prices for both cereal and rice were stable but at new higher levels.

65. The capacity to buy needed food depends on household sources of income and ultimately on its poverty level. In rural areas, where levels of poverty seem to be bigger than in urban areas and where households have no less than 8 persons³⁴, the major source of cash is groundnut production, in addition to selling marginal quantities of their own produced food (part of crop reserves -on extreme situations- or outputs from horticulture or livestock activities). The other source of cash for both rural and urban households is remittances.

66. Groundnuts engage 63-80 percent of agricultural holders and has accounted for 60 per cent of domestic exports. It is a main source of rural household incomes. The cultivated area has historically been erratic. During the period 2002 – 2007 it has fluctuated between a minimum of 105,000 ha (2002) and a peak of 137.3 ha (2005). Very recently and in terms of production, there have been three consecutive years (2005-2007) of decreased output with a reduction of 46 percent in 2007 harvest compared with 2004 (a year when the production level was one of the highest since 1991). The groundnut crisis has been seriously eroding livelihood standards of households through the reduction of their purchasing power, further exacerbated because it lies within a context where these farmers have traditionally been the poorest within the rural population. The majority of groundnuts farmers are concentrated in Kerewan and Kuntaur districts.

67. At the urban household level it should be noted that the increase of the national urban population has been steady, particularly in Banjul. According to GBOS, in 2003 urban population reached 53 percent of the total population, when in 1973 it was only 23 percent. Available data suggest that urban poverty levels are slightly lower than in the rural areas (see page Poverty Section above). In Banjul and its surrounding areas, poverty levels are much

³² Taken from Food Security Profile: The Gambia” Revised Draft, S. Sonko, September 2007.

³³ In 2002 an important rainfall deficit affected almost all crops in The Gambia, which resulted in a sharp rise on the inflation rate. This inflation increase coupled with exchange rate depreciation had interrupted a long period of macroeconomic stability, characterized by stable prices and economic growth.

³⁴ The national average in 2003 was 8.6 persons by household, with Banjul and Kanifing (its neighbor district) having 5.2 and 6.5 respectively.

more reduced³⁵. This situation may change in the future should the country's economic and food security situation decline due to the international crisis (food and oil soaring prices).

68. Sources of income and particularly coping strategies for urban "net buyers" of cereals are less diversified than in the rural areas, however they have potentially more profitable revenue sources. Main employment opportunities other than the public administration are related to the services sector, especially the tourism industry (seasonal employment), which in the last years has experienced some difficulties.

Nutritional and Health Factors

69. According to recent available data³⁶, malnutrition of children under the age of five³⁷ shows a declining trend (1985-2005) among those surveyed - outside the classic seasonal lean season peaks. Regional variations show a declining trend (1985-2005) among those surveyed. In 2006, one on five children was moderately underweight (20.3 percent) and 4 percent severely underweight. Almost a quarter (22 percent) was moderately stunted or too short for their age. The critical age in The Gambia seems to be at around 18 months, when undernourished indicators show the highest values. This fact "*is related to the age at which many children cease to be breastfed and are exposed to contamination in water, food and the environment*" (*taken from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey - MICS*).

70. Nutritional and health problems seem to be more related to feeding practices than to access to food. As already mentioned, there is the important issue of breastfeeding practices - where there is still room for improvement. According to MICS "*only 40 percent of children aged 0-11 months and 39 percent aged 6-11 months are adequately and appropriately fed*". Problems related to salt iodization and vitamin A supplementation are other important key issues in the Gambian context that are receiving particular attention. Together with breastfeeding practices and special care for pregnant and lactating mothers, their improvement will have direct benefits on food "utilization" and on reducing overall food insecurity.

Some conclusions in terms of Food Security

71. Up to the present, the historical gap in cereals has limited the availability of grains for human consumption. This availability problem has been the result of the imbalance between rice imports and re-exports operations, in other words, the quantities of imported rice which were finally made available in the local market. It has to be pointed out that despite that rice is the grain preferred by consumers, coarse grains also have an importance in the food basket composition -particularly for rural households- but according to statistics they are not subject to commercial importations. All these facts seem to suggest that urban populations have potentially benefited first from the imported rice. Rural markets may also have been supplied, depending on the quantities imported and on the coverage of the commercial network.

72. In terms of access to cereals, in view of retail prices from 1990 up to the end of 2006, they have been rather stable with the exception of some peaks likely due to hard climatic situations. The major increase for all grains to a much higher level (from values in general below 5 which jumped to 9 – 14 Dalasi/kg, depending on the kind of grain) was a consequence

³⁵ It is expected that a Poverty Assessment will be conducted shortly, with the assistance of the World Bank.

³⁶ The Gambia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2005/2006 Report and data from NaNA, quoted by S. Sonko. NaNA conducts twice a year a nutritional survey through Primary Health Care (PHC) Villages (rural areas only) on children under 5 years old.

³⁷ Malnutrition measured in terms of casting and stunting.

of the 2002-2003 economic crises and the sharp rise of inflation. Based on available information that poverty levels are higher in rural areas and that the ongoing groundnuts crisis is further eroding farmers purchasing power, it can be expected that rural farmers have been more affected than urban population in terms of capacity to buy cereals needed.

73. Independent of availability problems and the limited purchasing power of the poor, in recent years there has not been evidence of major food insecurity Data on child malnutrition rates indicate that major problems are on the group of less than 3 years and are related to inappropriate breastfeeding practices. Reported poverty levels and the crisis of the agricultural sector however indicate that a number of households (difficult to estimate quantity and location) face a tough situation in meeting their food needs every year, particularly during the lean period. The study and monitoring of this situation deserves urgent priority by the government with the support of the international community.

74. In a first attempt to better understand food insecurity situation in The Gambia, WFP has elaborated a preliminary vulnerability map using disaggregated information by district during the last three consecutive years of poor agricultural results. The purpose is to identify the most vulnerable districts based on two criteria: (i) two consecutive years (2007 and 2006) of cereal deficit³⁸ and (ii) more than 10 percent losses on 2007 groundnut harvest compared with the previous year. The combination of both factors implies first, that during 2008 those identified districts will be net buyers of cereals and also that their availability of cash to buy the needed cereals has been seriously compromised. Nine districts were identified, which may be considered at the present time as the most vulnerable in rural areas. Their total population is estimated at 238,000 people (see **Table 5**).

Table 5. Most expected vulnerable rural districts in 2008

LGA	District	Population (000cap)
Brikama	Foni Bintang	17.99
	Foni Kansala	13.49
	Foni Bondali	7.23
Mansakonko	Jarra West	28,79
Kerewan	Lower Nuimi	53,03
	Upper Nuimi	29,67
Janjanbureh	Niamina East	22,97
Basse	Wulli	43,03
	Sandu	21,76
Total	9	237,96

Table prepared with data collected by WFP from DOSA and GBOS

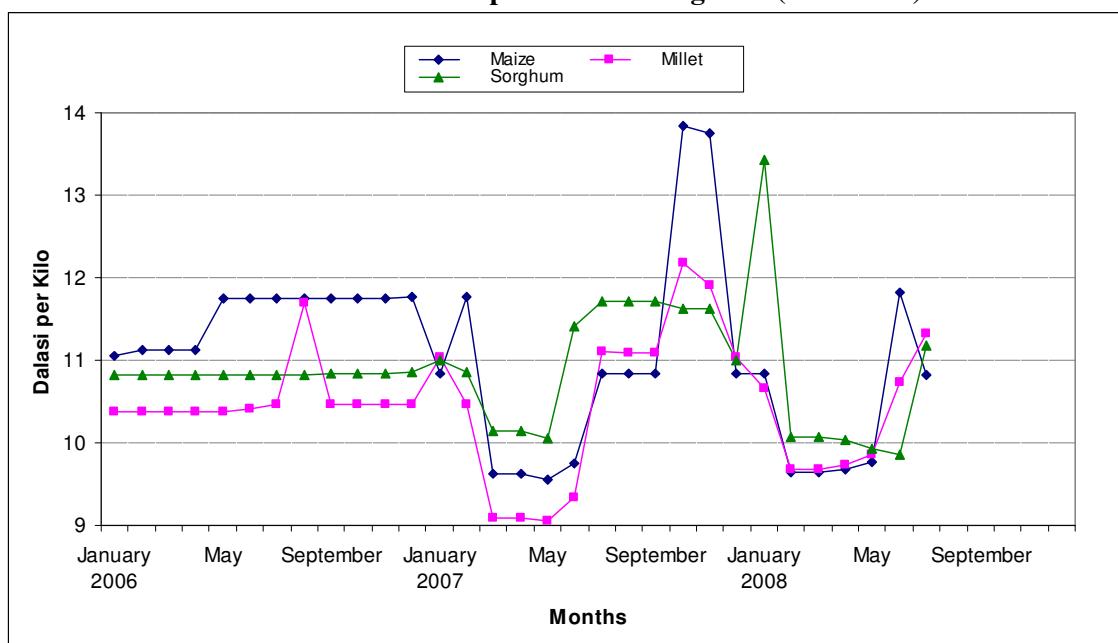
³⁸ Deficit refers to cereal consumption needs less cereal net production.

Section III. ASSESSMENT OF THE SOARING FOOD PRICE IN THE COUNTRY

Recent Developments on Food Security Situation in the Country

75. To understand fluctuations in the food security situation in The Gambia that may continue in the coming future due to the current international economic environment, it is important to refer to the economic developments in The Gambia since 2007, particularly to the inflation issue³⁹. After the economic crisis of 2002-2003, macroeconomic stability was restored with the implementation of corrective measures that helped to control and reduce inflation. However inflation increased sharply in 2007. In December 2007 the year-on-year inflation rose to 6.0 percent from 1.4 percent in the previous twelve months. The appreciation of the Dalasi and a relatively tight monetary condition helped to decelerate consumer price inflation beginning of 2008. However this trend was reversed in May and June 2008 when the annual rate of inflation rose to 1.6 percent and 2.2 percent respectively. The Government objective for 2008 is to keep inflation below 6.0 percent. This recent evolution of the inflation rate can be appreciated from **Charts 5 and 6**, on the fluctuations of retail prices of grains, which are key components of Gambian's consumer price index.

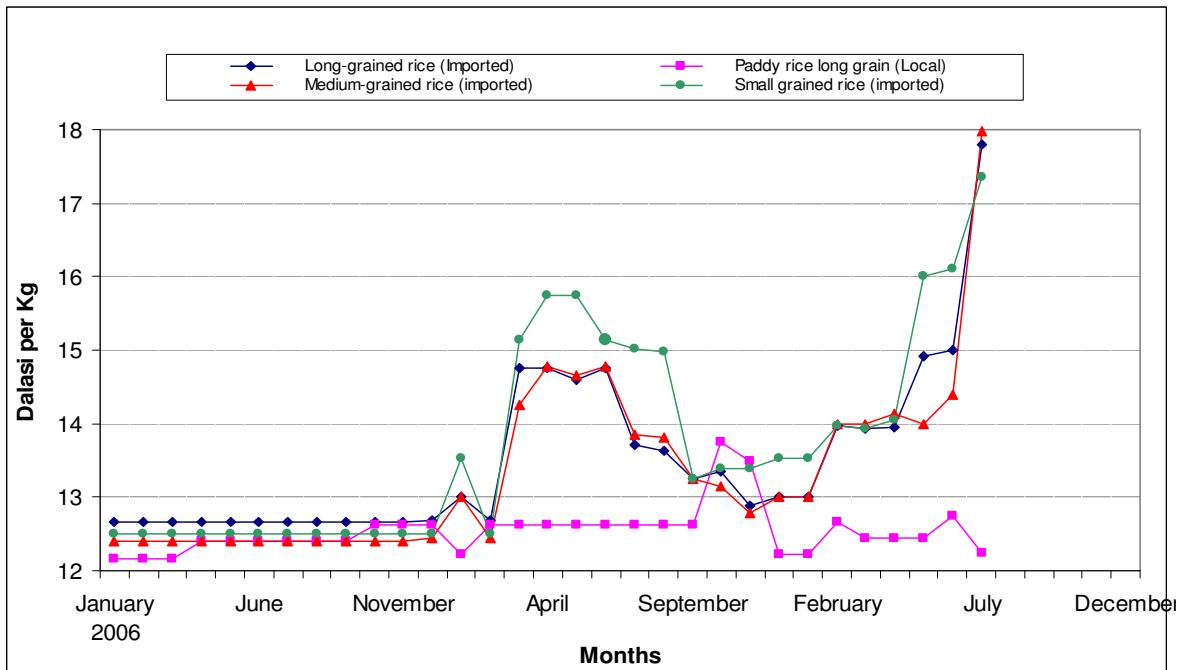
Chart 5. Retail prices of coarse grains (2006-2008)



Prepared by WFP based on GBOS information

³⁹The information on inflation which follows, has been provided to the mission by Government economic authorities as well as taken from a recently Completion Point Document and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, November 28, 2007 of the HIPC.

Chart 6. Retail prices of rice (2006-2008)



Prepared by WFP based on GBOS information

76. In 2007 major increases on retail prices for millet and maize took place between October and December/January 2008, 10 and 27 per cent respectively. In the case of imported rice the most important increases were between March and May, which were between 16 and 26 percent according to the quality of grain; the price of local rice remained practically stable.

77. For 2008, looking at imported rice, a remarkable rise in prices starts in April, which up to July reached values between 24 and 28 percent depending on the type of grain. The same trend takes place for millet and maize, starting in May which also up to July has also resulted in price increases of 15 and 21 percent respectively.

78. At the time of preparing this report it was expected that these trends on cereal price and particularly on rice will continue and that the country will progressively be more exposed to the fluctuations of international food markets. In late 2007 early 2008, key macroeconomic decisions (a revaluation of the Dalasi, together with reduction of sales taxes on imported rice from 15 to 0 per cent) prevented passing on the international price increases to the local market. However, due to budgetary reasons the government has already announced its decision to stop the temporary elimination of sales taxes on rice imports after September 2008. Given the current international environment and taken into account The Gambia's recent economic process of stabilization, the room for fiscal measures to protect consumers becomes narrow. At the same time, beyond July, the price of incoming consignments of imported rice (which have likely been negotiated at the highest level that rice prices reached in the international market during the first semester of 2008) will need to be transferred - partially or totally- to the consumer. Being that The Gambia is totally dependent on international rice prices and that options for protecting the population from soaring international prices are now exhausted, consumers will be confronted with a very tough situation, particularly those on the edge of poverty line.

Economic and Social Impact

79. A rise in food prices has implications for those households on the poverty line that might likely be pushed further into extreme poverty. In urban areas, poverty levels and the foreseen food price increases after September make the extremely poor populations highly vulnerable to food insecurity. At this stage, it is not possible yet to refine the analysis to identify those most vulnerable among the urban poor.

80. According to “The Gambia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2005/2006 Report”, the low birth weight infants is 19.9 percent, 20.3 percent of under-five children is moderately underweight and 4 percent severely underweight. This situation is due not only to inappropriate child feeding practices, particularly early end to breastfeeding, but also to inadequate complementary feeding after 6 months age. Micronutrients deficiencies (vitamin A and iodine) are also important contributory factors.

81. The current levels of rice retail prices will likely severely affect access to this grain for both urban and rural households and particularly among urban populations given their greater dependence on imported rice⁴⁰. With the given cereal production gap scenario, the probable increase in prices of rice will influence a rise in the prices of coarse grains as well, at the critical time when poor households will start to substitute rice by other less expensive grains.

82. As in other Sahelian countries, the food security situation in The Gambia is severely and regularly affected by a continuously decreasing rainfall pattern largely caused by climatic changes. Unfortunately, this challenge is expected to remain in the future and in complement, may be aggravated by rising food prices if the rates verified during 2007 and the first semester of 2008 persist. Access in addition to availability is now another key food security issue that the country will need to closely monitor.

Institutional Landscape

83. Certain institutional arrangements under the DOSA have been put in place for addressing the soaring food crises in The Gambia and for following the implementation of agricultural policies and programs (see **diagram in Annex 7**). Among these include the recently formed National Task Force on Food Security (NTF) to address the soaring food prices crises (discussed below), and the recently formed parastatal agencies NADA and National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI); National Nutrition Agency (NaNA), and other relevant institutions including the Departments of State for Trade and Finance, the Farmers’ Platform⁴¹, the National Planning Commission (NPC), and the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI), which is a link between public and private sectors (including seed producers, traders/importers, commercial farmers etc.) also work actively in the sector. In addition to this, there is a Food Security Thematic working group, coordinated by WFP, which comprises government, development partners and NGOs. It meets as required to share information and act as a donor coordinating body regarding food security and vulnerability issues.

⁴⁰ Note that at the current prices the cost of a bag of rice (50 kg) should be around 900 Dalasis, which is more than the lower grade salary of a civil servant (D582-D810).

⁴¹ The apex umbrella producer organization representing 600,000 smallholder producers organized through a network of producer organizations and cooperatives.

84. *In response to the soaring food prices, the Government of Gambia - under the Office of the Vice President - established in May 2008 a National Task Force on Food Security* which constitutes a technical working group coordinated by DOSA comprising government and other key stakeholders from the private sector and NGOs, as well as key UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNDP), to address: a) the causes and impacts of the food crises- particularly concerning the main food staple, rice; b) increasing national food deficits exacerbated by the approaching “hungry season”; and c) the challenge of meeting national food security and adequate nutritional levels. The technical working group has since convened two meetings to assess the national situation and outline measures relating to rice availability, price hikes, reducing taxes on rice, seed production/distribution/banking, access to inputs, vulnerability needs assessments, water management and irrigation, marketing issues and improved coordination. Ongoing and proposed initiatives to mitigate the pending crises have been identified and a simple matrix was elaborated containing recommended/and ongoing activities and measures for the short and medium-long term specifying responsibility for follow up. This matrix was the starting point for the ISFP mission team. A focal point from the NTF National Task Force has been a full collaborating member of the ISFP mission team, and members of the “technical group” of the task force worked intensively with the mission team throughout.

85. To successfully meet its objectives, it is imperative that the NTF operates through a holistic, multi-sectoral and inclusive, participatory approach. In addition to addressing core food security and development capacities issues, it has to take into account vulnerability assessments, implementation of effective response measures (inputs, food aid), and promotion of improved and diversified production systems in addition to adequate post-harvest technologies. Similarly, wider macro-economic issues regarding policy, trade and finance measures need to be considered for long-term economic stability. One gap identified during the mission regarding institutional arrangements concerns insufficient coordination between and within the NTF and government, civil society and development partners. Improved coordination, regular information sharing and collaborative diagnostic and analytical work would strengthen the task force in meeting its objectives. To leverage the comparative advantage from each player involved in food security issues, the task force would benefit from focusing on increasing the political commitment and engagement from the range of players and partners at national and decentralized levels who are best placed to carry out specific activities in the short and medium-long term⁴². The involved institutions in food security are presented in the table attached in the **Annex 4**.

Way Forward

86. It is vital to strengthen the institutional framework to ensure effective follow up of the food security situation, including importantly nutritional and health matters. At present, the responsibility for the subject is fragmented between many government ministries and institutions resulting in the absence of comprehensive and regularly updated analyses of the subject (see institutional landscape section below for more detail). The current follow up of the crises is conducted by two key bodies, one, the National Task Force, and second, by an informal food security thematic group chaired by WFP, which originally was comprised of only donors and now includes participating representatives from government: DOSA and NaNA, civil society, among others (see Annex 7: Institutional Arrangements/Organigram). As it has been previously highlighted, it is essential that vulnerability to food insecurity is better understood (who, where and why). The vulnerability map prepared by WFP is a first step in

⁴² Initial Task Force meetings have demonstrated limited participation among the key institutions due to a number of reasons, eg. administrative bottlenecks, lack of clearly designated staff, etc..

this direction.). An appropriate food security follow up requires an official, multidisciplinary and full time technical group, notably when designing and implementing safety nets interventions. Appropriate targeting in specific is a vital issue

87. Technicians as well as government authorities conveyed to the mission their conviction that there is still room, to increase productivity through increasing area cultivated. The government aims to reach these goals through supporting the traditional small-scale subsistence based farmer while also supporting development of commercial agriculture. A number of challenges are posed however and risks need to be carefully taken into account, particularly the costs that traditional farmers would assume. There is potential for increases in rice production – subject to a global feasibility study with attention to the advantages of surface water availability on the shores of the Gambia River. Rice could be an important source of cash, however there remains a perception that groundnuts are the only cash crop and in addition barriers from a cultural, technical and commercial point of view including that the traditional farmer will need to develop a more commercial orientation. Rice is not seen as a cash crop according to traditional farmers – despite its skyrocketing food price trend. Overall, the mission learned that small farmers in general did not perceive the current soaring food prices as an “opportunity” to increase production, ensure self sufficiency or gain marketable surplus.

Section IV. COUNTRY ACTIONS PLAN (CAP)

At the conclusion of the mission, the team and members of the NTF together designed a draft CAP, which was validated through a national stakeholder workshop. Following the mission's departure, the CAP was thoroughly reviewed by NTF members who expressed satisfaction and their endorsement. However, in addition to the short, medium and long term action plan, in order to respond to immediate needs so that the 2009/2010 cropping season does not risk severe failure, the NTF drafted an alternate immediate action plan for transmission to the development partners of The Gambia.

In sum, country has now prepared a CAP for immediate needs and delayed the preparation of short, medium and long term action plans. To this end, the NTF recommended that part of the mission team should be requested to return to The Gambia to assist the NTF to refine the short, medium and long term actions of the CAP.

The CAP of immediate measures has been approved by NTF on the food crisis chaired by the Vice President and is attached in Annex 6a. The total estimate budget to implement the CAP is US\$44.22 million. The draft CAP proposed by the mission team is also attached (Annex 6b). The country action plan comprises three major themes in the short and medium/long term timeframe: (i) Support to agricultural production; (ii) Social safety nets and support to food security and; (iii) Enabling environment for promoting policy measures and market access. These themes are subdivided into issues, and each issue highlights measures, activities, expected results and risks. The stakeholders, potential partners and estimated costs are also defined.

Rationale and Objectives

The Gambia is a low income, food deficient country characterised by high degree of food insecurity and high malnutrition rates. Increasing poverty and the high cost of food have resulted in a narrowing of the variety and quantity of foods consumed. The problems of food

insecurity and malnutrition effect mostly the poor in both rural and urban areas of The Gambia especially women and children. Seventy-five percent of its population depend on agricultural activities for their livelihoods.

The overall objective of the immediate action plan is to provide social safety nets through increasing productive activities of vulnerable groups in order to minimise the impact of soaring food price (reaching about 50 percent of vulnerable households in the country). Towards this end, the specific objectives are as following:

- To increase agricultural production through the provision of inputs (seeds, planting material and agro-chemicals);
- To add value to farm produce through provision of equipment for post harvest processing;
- To improve availability and access to food through cereal banking;
- To improve storage facilities through rehabilitation of stores;
- To enhance the production of short-cycle livestock species (poultry and small ruminants).

Description of Proposed Actions

The proposed activities and outputs are described as following:

- Provision of processing equipment;
- Rehabilitation of seed and grain stores;
- Provision of production inputs for the 2009 cropping season;
- Purchase, store and resell surplus produce;
- Provision of inputs for poultry production.

The main expected outputs are:

- Processing equipment available to 50 percent of the vulnerable farmer beneficiaries across the country;
- Six regional and thirty five village stores fully rehabilitated and available to farmers for storage of grain and seeds;
- Fifty percent of the national agricultural production input (seeds, planting materials and agro-chemical) requirements are procured and made accessible to farmers;
- Fifty percent of total coarse grain purchased as surplus and made accessible during the lean period;
- 250 households each to be provided with 200-layer and 100-broiler birds.

CAP Components

The immediate-response CAP prepared by the NTF comprises five components:

Farm Machinery and Equipment. Under this component, farm machinery and equipment would be acquired and services rendered to the farmer beneficiaries at a cost. In view of the negative impact of untimely land preparation and the drudgery involved in post harvest activities, especially coarse grains, the machinery discerned below are envisaged to contribute in enhancing the food security status of the most vulnerable group as well as reduce produce crossing the boarder through foreign entrepreneurs involved in the threshing industry. The Farm Machinery and Equipment will involve:

- **Tractors** – these machines would be used to expedite land preparation as well as for the operation of coarse grain threshers, amongst others.
- **Power tillers** – these machines will be exclusively used to facilitate land preparation, a major production constraint, in the rice production ecology where women, the most vulnerable of the vulnerable group are the major actors.
- **Draught animal package** – this package, predominantly used by the men, would be provided on hire purchase basis to the resource poor underprivileged farmers, especially the women, to reduce drudgery and enhance production and productivity of the expanding upland rice production amongst others.
- **Threshers** (for rice and coarse grains)– these equipments, to be let on hire purchase basis, are a requirement for reduction of post harvest losses and subsequent maintenance of quality in addition to the reduction of drudgery involved in the process.
- **Mills** (for both rice and coarse grains) - these will be provided on hire purchase basis. Access to these equipments would enable the women, the main actors involved in this process, to have time for other income generating activities.
- **Coarse grain de-hullers** - these equipments, also to be let on hire purchase basis, will reduce post harvest losses and drudgery involved in the process.

Grain and Seed Stores. This component intends to rehabilitate thirty five village seed stores across the country and provide six regional grain stores (one per region). The seed stores will act as storage and training ground for the maintenance of quality seed within each district. The grain stores, to be located within each region, will be used to store grain procured during harvest and/or threshing periods for reselling during the lean periods. In case of **surplus grain** this will provide seed money for the purchase of surplus produce at harvest and/or threshing period for reselling during the lean periods at an affordable price. This will further reduce the quantity of grain being siphoned out of the country and re-exported back at exorbitant prices.

Crop Production Inputs. Under this component, the project intends to contribute to addressing the constraints to agricultural crop production and productivity associated with use of unviable seeds and planting materials and low soil fertility. This will be done through the timely provision of production inputs (certified seeds, fertiliser, planting materials and agro-chemicals) to the farmer populace especially the vulnerable group in the form of a revolving loan or given as gratis.

Poultry and Small Ruminant Production Inputs. This component intends to create a favourable environment for effective and productive utilisation of time available to the farmer by using labour saving devices in the production chain. The project targets 250 households for poultry production nationwide and 140 farmer groups for small ruminant production. The project will provide each of the 250 poultry households targeted for poultry production with 200 broilers and 100 layers with the required feed for 8 weeks. On the other hand, 500 farmer groups will be provided with funds for the acquisition and fattening of small ruminants (sheep, goats, swine and rabbits). This income generating activities will enhance the capacity of the farmers to expand the area under crop production through the procurement of mechanisation services and other production inputs. Consequently, production and productivity increased and national food security enhanced.

Institutional Support. This component will support the implementing agencies to effectively monitor and provide technical back-stopping to the operators at field level whilst local capacity

is being developed for sustenance. The component will provide two motor cycles per Region and two 4-WD vehicles (one for the Western Regions and one for the Eastern Regions) to facilitate monitoring and timely maintenance of the machinery as well as provision of technical guidance to the beneficiaries. Furthermore, training and development of technical staff, operators and farmer beneficiaries in technical to managerial skills will be a major activity conducted under this component. This component will comprise the following activities:

- **Communication Education and Information.** Under this component, the project will support dissemination of information about the project and project activities to the target beneficiaries through the media, especially radio and television services (national, private and community based station).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation.** This component is envisaged to be implemented by the Department of Planning (DOP) under the Department of State for Agriculture. The DOP will be provided with the necessary financial support to enable it collate and analyse data on project activities and evaluate project impact amongst others.
- **Seed Multiplication Centres.** Under this component, the project will establish a seed multiplication centre in each of the six regions. The centres will be equipped with irrigation infrastructures to facilitate year round seed production. Furthermore, an initial capital will be provided to finance seed production activities.

Institutional Arrangements and Coordination for Country Action Plan Implementation

88. The NTF, under the Chairmanship of the Permanent Secretary of DOSA and the overall leadership of the Vice President, will assume primary responsibility for overall strategic guidance, including, decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of CAP activities. The NTF is a representative, robust multi-stakeholder body, which will ensure that a wide spectrum of views and concerns are presented, analyzed and taken into account as appropriate regarding the broader ISFP issue and CAP activities. The technical arm of the NTF will assume responsibility specifically for guiding analysis on specific technical issues and themes that require attention, and inform the wider NTF of these results to improve decision-making and planning. The technical team under the NTF will also assume the main role in overseeing/guiding operational aspects in particular.

89. Resourcing donor assistance to support CAP activities will be a shared activity among the government and the NTF in specific and, also key supporting agencies such as FAO and WFP. Once activities commence, the NTF in close liaison with DOSA, will function as the key national ISFP/food security coordinating body and focal point, among whose main tasks will include:

- Communication and information circulation;
- Maintaining an updated inventory of initiatives and financing sources;
- Ensuring integrated and coordinated interventions through organizing sharing events etc.;
- Overseeing an efficient and effectively designed monitoring and evaluation M&E system of CAP interventions, whose findings are regularly reported, widely circulated, and analyzed.

90. To undertake responsibilities and effectively assume its coordinating role in implementing the CAP, the NTF will require institutional and technical strengthening and capacity development. At present, despite its potential, the NTF is not functioning at optimal performance, and operates in a fairly loosely organized, ad hoc, informal manner having met

formally only twice. Likewise, coordination and communication appears limited between the NTF with the National Planning Committee (NPC), the key planning committee in the country with a lead role concerning macro-economic policies, PRSP activities, monitoring sectoral integration and performance including agriculture, economic and finance, social and institutional etc.) -despite that some persons are formally members of each. The NTF has not yet assumed a strategic leadership role in managing the soaring food crises due to a number of reasons: limited time due to competing priorities among NTF members and leadership; limited holistic and integrated strategic vision; limited technical and financial resources; undefined lines of authority and operation to effectively perform and fulfill its mandate; poor coordination with other ministries and agencies, among others.

91. To initiate capacity development to enhance NTF performance, it will be essential for the relevant national decision makers to clarify and reach agreement of NTF's role, responsibilities, and expected outputs. At that stage, a series of capacity building events/modules can be defined and delivered to ensure that NTF functions effectively and so that members are well informed and capable of fulfilling their mandate. Monitoring and evaluation of the CAP is a critical dimension of the ISFP to ensure: (i) meeting expected targets, in both short and long term; (ii) systematic monitoring/assessment of SFP indicators and trends, and evaluation of what has been the most effective strategies and interventions; and (iii) facilitating a progressive process of attaining more stable and resilient food security and national capacity to cope with shocks and disasters in the long term.

92. Attention to establishing an effective ***monitoring and evaluation system*** will be essential to tracking progress and impact of SFP activities and should be integral to the ISFP implementation plan in The Gambia. Responsibility for ensuring overall M&E of CAP will be assumed by the NTF, in close collaboration with the NPC. An initial thorough assessment of existing M&E systems and capacity among the key agencies should be conducted, including DOSA, the NPC, and among other key ministries and UN and donor agencies. Based on this analysis, details of the design and operation of an M&E system, capable of monitoring CAP activities and outcomes, should be defined in order to optimize and build upon existing information systems, and sufficiently collect, coordinate and use data and information. Strengthening NTF capacity and providing resources in M&E system will likely be required.

Potential Risks and Mitigation Measures for CAP Implementation

Potential Risks

93. A number of key challenges and risks exist in planning and implementing the proposed measures and activities presented in the immediate and further short to long-term country action plan. Most of these risks have been explicitly identified in the CAP and are referenced according to proposed interventions; others are discussed in this report. Among main risks identified include:

- *Insufficient coordination* among the key institutions and agencies, namely, the NTF, NPC, DOSA/NDA/NARI, NANA among other relevant agencies and organizations working in collaboration with the NTF to address SFP issues;
- *Limited institutional authority, organizational, technical and resource capacity of the NTF* to effectively assume their responsibility and lead role in planning and managing the ISFP;

- *Limited strategic and holistic integrated vision* essential for short and long-term planning to mitigate immediate and future soaring food crises occurrences and impacts;
- *Insufficient inclusion, participation, and meaningful engagement among stakeholders* concerned with and effected by soaring food prices in the processes of reflection/analysis, planning, implementation and M&E of the national ISFP (e.g. private sector, producer organizations, etc.);
- *Constraints in national budget and considerable loss of government revenue* due to implemented measures, such as temporary subsidies, ease of duties and taxes, to reduce impacts of soaring food prices in the country;
- *Limited response among developing partners* in contributing to proposed CAP measures and activities to alleviate SFP short and long-term impacts.

94. In addition to above, a number of more specific risks have been identified in the short to long-term CAP proposals (see matrix) and include for example:

- *Lack of capacity and willingness to restructure financial institutions* in order to increase private sector investment in agriculture, and to offer more appropriate, accessible micro-finance conditions to small-scale farmers in rural areas;
- *Inappropriate technologies and/or lack of dissemination of information and adaptive technologies to rural farmers* to strengthen production practices, and soil and water conservation measures;
- *Mis-management and/or “elite capture” of targeted assistance* that aims to alleviate SFP impacts (e.g. emergency relief aid, food supplements, beneficiary identification in food for work/school feeding, etc.);
- *Dependency on subsidies and other forms of temporary assistance*, which in addition, risk distorting local markets and prices.

Mitigation Measures

- *Strengthening the role and performance of the NTF* is one strategy toward mitigating risks. The NTF requires clear institutional authority, technical capacity resources, and defined terms of reference that include responsibilities, a program of work and identified indicators reflecting benchmark achievements. The NTF requires engaged and active leadership able to develop broad and strategic plans concerning soaring food prices/food security and to oversee its implementation and M&E. The NTF should promote coordination among partners, and active and broad involvement among its wide range of members.
- *Comprehensive analysis and planning of SFP interventions*, coordinated by NTF with involvement of relevant technicians and key stakeholders should minimize risks specified above. It is imperative that adequate technical and operational planning is undertaken with collaboration from the responsible ministries and agencies and relevant civil society and NGOs. This is vital to ensuring well-coordinated and appropriate interventions. NTF should play the coordinating to ensure these linkages, maximizing participatory processes that include all relevant stakeholders. Awareness raising and sensitization should be integral to these activities.

- *Effective M&E of ISFP interventions should ensure early identification and management of risks* and enable systematic lesson learning and improvement of ISFP interventions. A cost-effective monitoring, evaluation and learning system should be developed to enable the NTF to gain timely information on ISFP interventions and modify activities based on evidence, experience and feedback. The M&E system should capture not only outputs, but outcomes and impacts of interventions concerning all aspects of ISFP over time (production systems, food security, household consumption and nutritional levels, farmers' livelihoods, household poverty and economic levels, impacts on policy and trade adjustments). Participatory M&E is strongly recommended, which encourages stakeholders' integral involvement in processes of reflection/lesson learning decision-making and future planning. All information should be gender-disaggregated and differentiated as appropriate by regions, poverty levels, livelihood systems.

Section V: FOLLOW UP ARRANGEMENTS

Follow-up Mission

95. Based on the recently drafted immediate-response country action plan, the NTF has recommended that some members of the IASFP mission team return to The Gambia to assist the NTF to further refine the short, medium and long term actions of the CAP. A follow-up mission is therefore advised (preferably joint World Bank-FAO) in order to work with the NTF to: (i) finalize the CAP and conduct discussions/consultations with key stakeholders and partners to refine the CAP roll out; (ii) design the M&E system (identifying/sharpening the key indicators in line with the CAP, and preparing the Results Framework and Monitoring of the CAP) of the CAP; (iii) assess the institutional set up and capacity for implementing the CAP and as appropriate, outline a capacity development programme for this structure; and (iv) provide support to the Country team in organizing a national round table on the CAP including all major stakeholders.

National Round Table on the CAP

96. During the follow-up mission, it is proposed that the government holds a one-day round table with donors, technical partners and main stakeholders in the country in order to share the final CAP and seek commitment for further support and financing of the CAP - prioritizing proposed immediate measures and actions. This roundtable will serve as a first step to the dialogue/negotiation process for the implementation of the CAP in term of (i) decision on preparation of projects with priority, and (ii) agreement on the mechanisms for coordination, and for support to the implementation and monitoring of the CAP.

ANNEX 1

Draft Terms of Reference

Global food prices have increased rapidly due to a multitude of factors including (i) growing demand in fast growing economies, (ii) increased diversion of grains to bio-fuels and animal feed (iii) escalating production costs (costs of fertilizers and agro-chemicals). At the same time, global food reserves are at their lowest level in 25 years due to de-regulation of markets and adverse weather conditions in key exporting countries. The dramatic rise in food prices is severely affecting the food security of large populations in many countries, particularly amongst the poorest and most vulnerable. Higher prices also significantly increase the food import bill of Low Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDCS). Under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Framework, the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have launched an initiative to assist countries in rapidly responding to the rising food price crisis.

The initiative will assist countries in: (i) providing humanitarian assistance through social safety nets; (ii) boosting agricultural production through short-term emergency interventions to address the immediate crisis that will support the development of medium and longer-term solutions; (iii) developing policies to respond to high food prices in the short and medium-term; and (iv) adjusting their budgets due to high food prices and policy costs. The initiative aims at mobilizing resources from participating development partners to back governments own commitments to the resulting investment programmes. It is recognized that country ownership and leadership within a programmatic approach is the basis for long-term impact. To ensure coherence and sustainability of the initiative, it needs to be integrated into wider national programmes, policies and existing partnerships. The initiative is supported by the AfDB, FAO, IFAD, WFP, WB and other development partners. FAO's assistance to the initiative will be provided under its Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP).

The main objectives of the Inter-agency Assessment Mission will be to (a) identify pertinent issues related to the effects of high food prices on vulnerable producers and communities in The Gambia, and (b) prepare a Country Action Plan that provides the framework for UN agencies, international financing agencies and other development partners for effectively collaborating to assist the Gambian Government in the short, medium and long-term to mitigate adverse effects. In developing short and longer-term response strategies it is envisaged to build on existing national medium and long-term development plans.

The objectives of this action plan will correspond in broad terms to the core objectives of the MDG Initiative for Africa currently coordinated by the AU Commission and FAO, for which major Official Development Assistance (ODA) donors and private foundations have already expressed interest and are mobilizing resources through harmonized and aligned processes. Other than AU and FAO, the principal partners of the MDG Africa Initiative include NEPAD, World Bank, WFP, IFAD, AfDB, UNDP, IFPRI, and various bilateral donors. Specifically, to assess the overall situation and identify potential response mechanisms, the mission will:

- Hold discussions with the Gambian Government including: (i) Department of State for Agriculture, (ii) Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs, (iii) Department of State for Local Government and Lands, (iv) Department of State for Trade, Industry and Employment, as well as with (v) Agricultural Research and Rural Development Organizations and (vi) the private sector and NGOs.

- Hold discussions with representatives from UN and international agencies active in the country including (i) AfDB, (ii) FAO, (iii) Based on the initial consultations, identify potential interventions (to be followed up in subsequent programming and formulation missions) that can be undertaken in (i) the short-term to assist target populations and groups who are most vulnerable and (ii) the medium and longer-term to ensure sustainability. The mission will pay due attention to key issues which Government has indicated as being priority areas. These include:

Grain storage in rural areas and at farm level.

The medium and long-term strategy for grain storage at divisional and national levels.

The feasibility of enhancing production through increased irrigation.

Short and medium-term requirements for agricultural inputs including fertilizers and high-yielding seed varieties.

Strategies for reducing post-harvest losses.

Improved information databases (prices/productivity etc) to complement policy interventions.

Possible policy options to be considered – tariffs, taxes and minimum support prices etc.

- Agree with the Government, partner agencies and donors on the outline of the Country Action Plan to be submitted to donors and used for UN Appeal. The Country Action Plan will be integrated into wider national programmes, policies and existing partnerships. The country program resulting from the mission's work should be costed and have a time frame associated with it.
- Agree with the Government on the focal agency/unit at national level for the initiative, which will coordinate follow up activities.

The mission will visit The Gambia during the period 21 July to 01 August 2008. The mission was led by Mr. Manievel Sene (Rural Development Specialist, World Bank) and comprised Ms Pamela Pozarny (Rural Sociologist, FAO TCIW), Mrs Salwa Amber (Senior Policy Officer, FAO Sub-regional Office), Mr. Oscar Sarocca (Food Security Specialist, World Food Program's Consultant), Mr. Souleyman Jallow (Agronomist, National Agriculture Research Institute, Department of State for Agriculture), Mr. Omar Jammeh (Coordinator of PWAMP, IFAD supported project)

ANNEX 2

Multilateral and bilateral partnerships

The mission organized a meeting attended by the majority of development partners working in the country to gather information concerning their strategies and programs of assistance, ongoing and pipeline, relative to the soaring food crises, agriculture and nutrition, and urban and rural development in general. Potential access to resources from existing or additional “earmarked” financial mechanisms targeted specifically to the current food crises was highlighted. Potential immediate and long-term response measures and investments were examined:

- EU/EC: potential of accessing funds from Envelope B of the 10th EDF, a total 1.9M Euro (for 2008-9), used for unforeseen events; noted as the “best instrument” for the food security response. Potential Technical Cooperation Facility funds (9th and 10th EDF), used for ad-hoc studies or short-medium term technical assistance at the request of the National Authorizing Officer (DOSFEA), an earmarked amount of 100-150,000 Euro suggested. Existing interventions include: Financing Agreement (1.5 Mill Euro from STABEX fund) to improve competitiveness of the groundnut sub-sector; two ongoing projects in the rural water sector to increase water supply access(@8 Mill Euro); small-scale rural livelihood projects increasing crop production and implemented by NGOs, eg. Concern Universal and Children’s Christian Fund (CCF). EC humanitarian agency, ECHO, can deliver prompt crises response assistance.
- Taiwan High Commission: currently supporting the Rice Farmer Cooperative Society project in Central River Region, a five-year program to support improved rice production and aquaculture (XX Mill Euro), targeting a total of 1,800 ha. Expressed interest in contributing further financing.
- United States Embassy: USAID has a Population, Refugee and Migration (PRM) fund accessible to countries upon request. Considerable PRM financing is allocated to the Central Africa region, which is potentially accessible to Gambia.
- US Peace Corps (PC): has 106 volunteers working in a range of programs related to food security and agricultural development, including: improved crop production (rice and seed production intercropping, urban and school gardens, drip irrigation, demonstration sites), multi-purpose tree production (including Acacia and Moringa, Pigeon pea), land reclamation, hybrid cashew production, apiculture, solar-based food drying, drying and preservation. PC is collaborating with WFP in conducting food security assessments at the village level, with the Taiwanese project, supporting rice seed multiplication and production, and with DOSA extension agents.
- African Development Bank ADB): is supporting a number of projects in the country, including the NERICA project (4.8 Mill \$US), Farmer Management Rice Irrigation Project (9.4 Mill US\$), the PIWAMP

(14.7 Mill US\$) in collaboration with IFAD, the Participatory Integrated Management of Invasive Aquatic Weeds Project (0.6 Mill \$US), the Gambian Artisanal Fisheries Development Project (14.7 Mill US\$), and the Community Skills Improvement Project (10.3 Mill US\$). In direct response to the food crises, ADB has been able to shift program resources in two of their projects amounting to 1.3 Mill \$US to support immediate response measures including purchasing/distributing agricultural inputs.

- World Bank: The Africa Emergency Locust Project (2.04 Mill US\$) is contributing directly to support of food security and agricultural production via its component Emergency Agricultural Investment. Also, supporting to food security would be possible through the Community Driver Development Project (19 Mill US\$). The World Bank is working with African countries to respond to the food crisis in the short- and long-term. In the short term, The World Bank has put together a new \$1.2 billion rapid financing facility to address immediate needs, including \$200 million in grants targeted at vulnerable groups to support safety nets, micronutrients to fight malnutrition, rapid provision of seeds and fertilizer to small farmers, and compensation for sharp reductions in fiscal revenues in some countries. Access to this Trust Fund is capped at \$10 million. In the long term, the World Bank is scaling up support for agriculture in four areas critical for productivity growth: land and water management, markets and infrastructure, risk and vulnerability, and agricultural technology. In Africa, agriculture lending will increase from \$450 million to \$800 million in response to priorities expressed in country programs.
- UNICEF: a proposal has been formulated for the use of the Resident Representative's "set aside" funds totaling 350,000 \$US in response to the potential impact of rising food crises in Gambia. This proposal comprises four strategies and will be incorporated into the annual work plan: strengthening evidence-base decision-making on appropriate policy and programme interventions; advocating for child protection from adverse effects of rising food prices; strengthening child survival interventions; and strengthening access to WASH (improved sanitation) and education.
- UNDP: noted their interest in supporting sectoral plans, including for Agriculture, which would comprise costing.
- UNHCR: since 2006, has supported the approximately 14,000 refugees in the Gambia, mainly through collaborating with WFP in providing food rations seeds to farmers and assisting returning migrants in accessing land in host villages.
- IFAD: is currently supporting a number of programs related to food security and rural development (see projects and programs section and Annex XX). Projects of note include the Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP) totaling (15 Mill \$US) with focus mainly on soil and water management, and the Rural Finance Project (RFP), totaling 8.7 Mill \$US) focusing on supporting micro-finance institutions countrywide.

- WFP: two main intervention are supported by WFP including: school feeding project, reaching approximately 120,000 school children covering about 80% of all Gambia's primary rural schools; and secondly, an emergency operation to support 7,300 Senegalese refugees coming from the Casamance region and 960 host households. WFP has been with FAO, the lead UN agency in operationalizing the ISFP in The Gambia, including hosting the ISFP mission, leading the Food Security Thematic Group, which includes the UN and donor community, as well as government and civil society, and conducting a preliminary food security assessment at village levels with PC collaboration.
- FAO: three ongoing Technical Cooperation Projects financed by FAO directly respond to the soaring food price crises; these include one rural aquaculture development project, one project concerning nutritional education, and a third addressing the strengthening of phyto-sanitary capabilities. FAO's flagship Telefood projects are actively addressing immediate food security needs. Eleven small-scale projects are in progress, including poultry production, promotion of fruit trees, fish smoking, and post-harvest preservation through solar drying techniques. In addition FAO has committed 300,000 \$US from the ISFP Secretariat to support Gambia in seed, fertilizer and agro-chemical provision, a recent TCP for the total of \$US250,000 ha also recently been approved for immediate response support.
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB): supports the Gambian Lowland Development Project (12.7 Mill \$US) which addresses food security through supporting specifically horticulture and rice production. With FAO, IDB is supporting the SPFS to ensure increase food security through improved production incorporating short-cycle crops, livestock and fisheries systems.
- Kuwait Fund: supporting the Irrigated Rice Development Project (3.3 Mill US\$) to increase rice production in the Central River Region North.
- Other bilateral: Italy: has pledged 2 Mill \$US as a Trust Fund in collaboration with FAO to promote commercialization of agriculture and production, and also, 1 mill \$US of poultry meat; Japan: has pledged 45,000 bags to fertilizer to distribute to districts; China: has pledged a grant of 100 metric tons of NERICA rice.

ANNEX3. Rural Development Projects/Programmes of The Gambia and Status of the implementation activities of on going rural development projects

Title	Description of Activities	Expected Outputs	Target Areas	Executing Partners	Financial Partners	Budget (US\$M)	
						Existing	Dis
1. Multinational NERICA Rice Dissemination Project (MNDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide NERICA Foundation Seed through Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS), and seed multiplication on-station On-farm adaptive trials such as: Varietal Screening (12 Entries), and Fertilizer Quantity (Nitrogen Rates) are being carried by NARI Community-based Seed Schemes (CBSS) have already established NERICA fields in all the Regions through Individuals, Groups, and NGOs / Institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of NERICA technology from WARDA to the seven participating countries supported Strengthen linkages between and among research extension farming communities and private sector An estimated 400,000 ha additional land cropped under NERICA by Year 5 600,000 metric tons of rice produced Import bill reduced by about US\$100 million Directly benefits about 241,000 upland rice growers Net income of upland growers enhanced from a loss of about US\$19.50/ha/year before project to a net gain of US\$216.30/ha/year 	Nation-wide	Department of State for Agriculture (DOSA)	African Development Bank and Government of Gambia Government (GoTG)	US\$4.8	28%
2. Rural Finance Project (RFP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate key bottlenecks in the weak governance both of the VISACAs and the rural Credit Unions; undertake business planning exercises as soon as possible for the VISACAs, assist NACCUG and GAWFA in updating their existing business plans, and engage qualified (if necessary, external) Build up the capacity of MFIs to develop simple and appropriate financial products for their clients; Assist the MFIs in improving OSS; address the capacity-building requirements of the SIs, including MFD-CBG as regulator; MFPC as a source of qualified training and quality assurance; GAMFINET as a source of information and backstopping, advocacy, policy dialogue and networking; and the TSPs; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GMD 113.5 million mobilized by VISACAs by end of the project VISACAs are expected to grant loans amounting GMD 63.7 million Loan to deposit ratio of the VISACAs increased from 0.45 to 0.56 reflecting a higher growth of lending than of deposits mobilization rate Indirectly 80 VISACAs, 100 credit unions affiliated to NACCUG and 2,276 groups under GAWFA will be operating in The Gambia by end 2012 180,000 clients would have benefitted by end of Project 	Nation-wide	- Ditto-	IFAD and The Government of The Gambia (GoTG)	US\$8.73	Just
3. Farmer Managed Rice Irrigation Project (FMRIP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate sustainable income improvement and increase rice production. Irrigation infrastructure developed and operational. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,200 ha developed and upgraded by PY3 2,300 smallholders producing rice by PY5 	Central River Region (CRR South), Pacharr and	- Ditto -	ADB and GoTG	US\$9.424	22%

	3. Rural Infrastructure to be renovated 4. Recruitment of NGOs for farmer group formation and training 5. Conduct Training workshops for farmers, and agricultural extension agents 6. Conduct Farmers' visits to other groups 7. Construct/Rehabilitate Offices in SAPU.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yields increased from 2 to 3.0mt/ha by PY3 & 5.5mt/ha by PY5 7,000T of additional milled rice produced annually beginning PY5 Construction of 6 meeting sheds, 20 stores, 82 drying floors by PY3. 8-Day-care centres and 15 wells constructed and rehabilitated by PY3 	Niamina East District				
4. Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP)	1. Reduce rural poverty by increasing total land productivity on a sustainable basis through sound environmental and natural resources management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Incomes of lowland farmers increased by 129% from GMD1,574 Incomes of upland farmers increased by 28% from GMD 3,593 by PY8 Lowland and swamp production increased by 237% from GMD12,584 mt by PY8 Upland production increased by 32% from 2,122 mt by PY8 Food import reduced by 25% by PY8 	Nation-wide	- Ditto -	ADB (NTF), IFAD and GoTG	US\$14.72	42%
5. Irrigated Rice Development Project (IRRIDEP)	f. To increase rice production and productivity in CRR North g. Uplift the nutritional status of beneficiaries h. Improve the income levels of beneficiaries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced poverty among project beneficiaries Nutritional status among beneficiaries improved Income levels increased Continuous production of rice enhanced 	CRR North	- Ditto -	Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development and GoTG	US\$3.328	18%
6. Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To Develop Peri-Urban Horticulture cum Mushroom Production for increasing farmers' income and improving their diets. To develop Peri-Urban Poultry Production in 10 settlements involving women groups for income generation and increased family consumption of poultry products. Supporting 10 women groups to establish small ruminant fattening and breeding units for income generation To increase the production of short cycle rice by 480 ha to improve food availability and access by 96 farmer groups from food-deficit households. Increasing fish production through aquaculture development in 6 community sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased food security through increased production of short-cycle species of crops, livestock, fisheries and diversification of products Improved nutritional status of household members Women groups empowered for increased income earnings 	Nationwide	- Ditto -	Government of Italy, IDB, FAO and GoTG	US\$2.65	39%
7. Gambia Lowland Development Project (GALDEP)		1. Improve food security and alleviate poverty by enhancing the production and productivity of vegetables, rice and other cereals through	Western Region (basically the 9	1. Ditto -	Islamic Development Bank (IDB)	US\$12.71	Abc

		the improvement of lowland soil and water management, and 2. Developing irrigation in the upland.	Districts of Foni and Kombo)				
8. Africa Emergency Locust Project (AELP)	2. Strengthen the capacity of The Gambia to prepare and implement programs and actions designed to prevent, control and manage desert locust infestations within its territory and in the region, and 3. To mitigate its economic, environmental, and social impact, including impact on agriculture production, livestock and food supply	4. Farmer brigades trained and equipped 5. Crop loss compensation to affected farmers executed and completed 6. Regional Locust teams trained and also equipped 7. Intermittent spraying of pests particularly grasshoppers found on farmers fields is being carried out	Nationwide	8. Ditto -	World Bank, IDB and GoTG	US\$2.043	46%
9. Participatory Integrated Management of Invasive Aquatic Weeds Project (PIMIAWP)	9. Contribute towards controlling invasive aquatic weeds (IAW) in shared water bodies in the Gambia and 10. Minimizing any residual impact of invasive aquatic weeds (IAWs)	1. Weed densities reduced by about 60% on the Gambia river and tributaries by PY3, as a result of operational mechanical control; 2. From almost nobody in PY1, a significant portion of the trained members of the riparian communities actively involved in manual control activities in project area by PY3; 3. From 0% in PY1, about 25% of the infested areas treated with biological agents by PY3; 4. From 0% in PY1, about 80% of trained technicians actively involved in the project implementation by PY5;	National water bodies	5. Ditto -	ADB, ECOWAS and GoTG	US\$0.592	20%
10. Community-Driven Development Project (CDDP)	Primary objective of the project is for rural communities in partnership with Local Government Authorities to plan, implement and maintain their priority social and economic investments. It has three main components namely: i) Community Development Facility, ii) Strengthening Capacity for Community Development, and iii) Project Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation. Under these components the following activities are executed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides an opportunity for communities to take charge of local development challenges through experience with participatory planning, budgeting, financial management• Capacity building activities to enhance technical and fiduciary skills needed at different decentralized levels to execute local development activities• Strengthen the capacity of decentralized staff to enhance community level development planning and investment• Capacitate local authorities to efficiently monitor development plans and investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All villages for grant support have been clustered• Local communities empowered to take charge of their own development planning, budgeting and financial management• Technical and fiduciary skills needed at decentralized levels strengthened and enhanced	88 Wards and 600 villages in six Local Government Areas (LGAs) are targeted. Project is expected to benefit 435,000 farmers	Department of State for Local Government, Land and Religious Affairs	The World Bank, Japan and Gambia Governments	US\$19.0	25%

11. The Gambia Artisanal Fisheries Development Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a project coordination team responsible for effective technical and fiduciary oversight of the project. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Training of middle level fisheries staff Training of senior level staff now completed Scheduled training of fisher-folks and target beneficiaries have all been carried out Civil works are on-going regarding the construction of a fisheries jetty, a central fish market and rehabilitation of three inland fishing sites wth access roads leading to these sites (Tendaba, Albreda and Bintang) Beneficiaries continued to access credit Project procurements are on-going Fisheries research program on socioeconomic survey, bio-statistics and fisheries stock assessment are on-going 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8 middle level staff to be trained and so far only 4 completed 4 senior staff training targeted, 3 completed successfully and the remaining 1 will complete soon Construction of a jetty and fish market is at an advanced stage Enhanced fisheries research program with improved information system 	Coastal and inland fishing sites of The Gambia	Department of State for Fisheries and Water Resources	ADB (NTF), BADEA and GoTG	US\$14.75	70%
12. Community Skills Improvement Project (CSIP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building of project staff and beneficiaries are being conducted New literacy centres have been built and opened for adult learning Skills training being conducted in all project areas with acceptable benefits (tie-dye, bar and powder soap, food processing, embroidery, body cream, weaving and pottery) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.4 female staff plus the skills and income-generation Coordinator undergoing training in Ghana Community based Project Management Committee members are being re-organized prior to training 416 classes are currently operational 14,939 adults have been enrolled first quarter of 2008 13,128 persons have learnt skills 59% practicing skills for income and livelihood activities 	Nationwide	Department of Community Development, Department of State for Local Government, Lands and Religious Affairs	ADB and GoTG	US\$10.272	60%	

ANNEX 4. Institutions Involved in Food security

KEY INSTITUTIONS	ROLE IN FOOD SECURITY	PERFORMANCE LEVEL	MEASURES FOR INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING
National Task Force on Food Security & Task Force Technical Team	Assess rising food price and food security situation; propose and lead mitigating measures for short & long term	Needs improved coordination and synergy with other partners; will require more active engagement to finalize and follow up ISFP action plan.	Reinforce leadership commitment and resources to ensure technical staff availability and adequate support for required tasks; maintain regular coordination meetings
DOSA: parastatals: NADA & NARI	Key agency DOS responsible for food security, production and post-harvest.	Requires improved decentralized service delivery; research-extension collaboration; enhanced data collection and analysis, and planning; improved coordination	Reinforce technical departments notably service delivery, data analysis, planning, and coordination within and outside of DOSA
National Nutrition Agency (NaNA) – President's Office	Key DOS responsible for nutritional policies, assessments and programs, and provides the planning, coordination and technical backstopping for activities concerning prevention and immediate response to malnutrition	Relatively effective operations, although limited staff; bi-annual nutritional surveys ongoing; nutritional committee established to share information; seemingly effective to respond to immediate needs. Very proactive in outreach to other sectors	Reinforce information data collection and analysis systems and optimize the use of existing data, particularly regarding early warning; improve linkages between food security and nutrition to ensure an integrated approach and follow up; reinforce collaborative efforts among pertinent planning and operational partners.
DOSTIE	Key DOS for promoting national trade and investment; active involvement in promoting a favorable environment for agricultural investment	Effective performance	Enhance coordination/information sharing with DOSA
DOFEA	DOS responsible for overseeing macro-economic policy measures	Good capacity	Reinforce coordination and information sharing with DOSA and other agencies
National Planning Commission	Agency responsible for planning and coordinating national policies and programs and PRSP action plan	Newly formed, and in process of defining role and operational modalities; good expertise but weak	Requires increased sensitization and visibility among partners, including government. Needs to better collaborate with key partners.

		coordination.	
Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Responsible umbrella agency for coordinating private sector activities, and advocacy on behalf of member interests	Visibility is high, good support of business community; effective collaboration with other institutions; constructive dialogue with government but unable to meet objectives due to challenges concerning tax policies.	Strengthen advocacy and influence vis a vis DOSFEA
TANGO (NGOs)	A coordinating apex body of 120 NGOs working in poverty reduction and agricultural-oriented sectors; aims to improve coordination, provide services to members, share information and represent members' interests	Good dialogue with government and effective linkages with developing partners; lack of resources to expand and develop new programs.	Promote/increase partnerships; expand resource base to implement field activities in support of the rural/urban poor
Farmers' Platform	Apex body representing smallholder farmers nationwide, with 600,000 members organized through producer associations and cooperatives	Weak institutional capacity, including in group formation, leadership, agro-business and financial matters. Weak advocacy skills. Weak networking and communication skills.	Capacity building in institutional strengthening, financial and business management skills, networking and communication, including with regional partners.
UNCT	UN country team responsible for providing technical support to a range of sectors to promote overall human welfare and economic growth and development	Strong coordination among UN agencies and with other developing partners, and with government.	Reinforce UNCT platform as an important coordinating point in partnership with government
Donors/Development projects	Assist in a wide range of activities related to food security and agricultural development, including technical support and operational and financial support in policy, economic management and rural development.	Not sufficiently coordinated notably in field operations. Insufficient information sharing. Weak sustainability of activities following project closure.	Improve coordination through more systematic donor coordination meetings and information exchange. Support government efforts to better coordinate and harmonize donors. Enhanced focus on strengthening sustainability of project intervention.

Development Banks	Both at national and decentralized micro-levels, a range of financial institutions supporting agricultural sector through projects, including micro-finance initiatives at local levels	Macro-level loan limitation due to current loan repayments and HIPC context. Not always able to be responsive to local needs, such as provision of soft and more long-term loans, revolving loans etc. to government as well as to farmers.	Design more appropriate affordable, demand-driven loan packages and windows for soft credit, in response to local context and current soaring food price crises. Special focus should be made on agriculture-related and livelihood diversification activities.
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ANNEX 5. Agenda and minutes of the workshop with stakeholders on the country action plan

Stakeholders

To take into account the need of private sector involvement (commercial farmers, traders, micro and other financial institutions, entrepreneurs, etc.) on those proposed initiatives where they can play a key role to boost the agricultural sector.

Beyond just grains

Take into account the support and initiatives to also develop other agricultural sectors –like livestock (particularly small animals like poultry), fisheries, aquaculture and horticulture/gardens which could make an important contribution to food security and agricultural diversification. Therefore proposals referred to key agricultural inputs, should also take into account the needs of these other sectors.

Supplementary budget

Doubts have been raised about the reliability on estimations of supplementary funds needed to implement the proposals. The PS has requested the Task Force to make a review of these figures within the context of activities foreseen on the Road Map. *Please note that cost of WFP-assisted project which will be incorporated into the matrix before Mission's departure, will give a reliable estimation of final budgets.*

Cereal banks

The importance of this tool for small farmers has been highlighted. The banks allow cash advance to cover immediate household needs and at the same time avoid selling their production or part of it, when prices are too low (generally immediate after the harvest).

National manufacture of basic agricultural equipment & tools

To take into account the need to support this private economic activity integrated into the initiatives proposed to develop and diversify agricultural production.

Agricultural Improvement Centres

Make specific reference to this ongoing approach adopted countrywide, by the extension services.

Urban gardens

Recommendation has been made to promote this activity which could have important impact on improving urban food security, particularly of most vulnerable groups. It is also a potential tool for sensitization purposes of children and their parent if they are developed at school level, together with other food production activities like poultry.

NADA

Review the indications on key “stakeholders”, in order to ensure that NADA has been taken into account on those proposed activities where NADA has a clear mandate.

Implementing institutions

Observations have been made the need to keep in mind the difference between Stakeholders and the identification of lead implementing institution.

Implementation timeframe

Important issue to be included when refining the CAP.

Environmental impacts

Another key issue which was recommended to be taken into account when proposing policies, programmes and projects, like utilization of improved seed or other genetic related input, fertilizers, agrochemicals, mechanization, technical packages, etc. Also related to this matter, it was raised the issue that recommendations on the utilization of raw materials and agricultural inputs in general should enforce that they have to comply with minimum quality standards.

Safety Nets

There is the need to urgently associate Government as well as other stakeholders dealing with Social policies and programmes. It is important to support the formulation of related policies as well as the identification of new or ongoing proposals (to scale up) Social Protection/Safety Nets which not necessarily imply food aid (protecting and improving health and nutritional status of vulnerable groups; training; development of income generating activities; protecting: street children, orphans, elderly persons, ill people; etc.)

ANNEX 6a. Task Force Country Action plan for immediate measures

Component	Output	Activities	Time Frame (9 Months) Budget – US\$ x 1000			Total	Implementing agency	
			Oct-Dec 2008	Jan-March 2009	April – June 2009			
1. Farm machinery and equipment	Processing equipment available to vulnerable farmers.	Purchase and distribution of farm machinery	Tractors and tractor operated threshers	173	692	0	865	DOSA
			Power tillers	0	90	60	150	
			Draught animals with implements	0	240	60	300	
			Mills, de-hullers & other threshers	493	594.5	0	1087.5	
2. Rehabilitation of grain and seed stores.	Grain and seed stores. Rehabilitated.	Rehabilitation of grain and seed stores.		446	111.5	0	557.5	DOSA/ DOSGLRA
3. Purchase of surplus grain.	Surplus grains of 2008 purchased, stored and resold.	Purchase, store and resell surplus produce.		0	160	65	225	DOSA/ DOSGLRA/ DOSFEA/ DOSTIE

4. Production inputs.	Provision of production inputs for the 2009 cropping season.	Purchase and distribute production inputs.	Seeds	0	1724.85	6149.4	7874.25	DOSA/ DOSFEA
			Garden and fencing materials	0	200	0	200	
			Fertilizers	0	17341.4	1926.8	19268.2	
			Planting Materials	0	0	4512.5	4512.5	
			Pesticides	62.5	125	250	437.5	
5. Poultry and small ruminant production	Provision of poultry and small ruminant production inputs	Procurement and provision of poultry production inputs.	Poultry	0	1182.5	0	1182.5	DOSA/ DOSFEA
			Small Ruminants	0	250	500	750	
6. Institutional support and capacity building	Trained and motivated personnel and farmers.	Conduct training for mechanics, operators and farmers. Purchase tool boxes, motor cycles and vehicles.	Training	30	90	30	150	DOSA/ DOSFEA/ NFPG/ NGOs
			Workshop tools	12	12	0	24	
			Vehicles and operating cost	50	100	20	170	
7. Information Education and communication	National sensitization on the overall project activities.	Campaign through radio and television		10	10	5	25	DOSA/ DOSCIIT/ NGOs/CIVIL SOCIETY
8. Monitoring and evaluation		Monitor and evaluate.		4	8	8	20	DOSA/GBOS

9. Seed Multiplication			1,200	1,200	2,400	
Total		0	1,200	1,200	2,400	
Contingency		123.68	2405.75	1466.47	3995.9	
Grand Total		123.68	4,805.75	3,866.47	8,795.9	

ANNEX 6b. IASFP Mission Country action Plan of proposed measures

Support to Agricultural Production and Productivity

Short-term Period (2009-2010)

ISSUES	MEASURES ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED RESULTS	TARGETED AREAS	STAKEHOLDERS ⁴³	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	RISKS	BUDGET (MILLION OF \$US)	
							EXIST.	SUPPL.
Limited access to inputs	-GoTG ensures sufficient input supply to identified farmers	-Timely and appropriate inputs	Nationwide	NARI; NADA; DOSA; DOSFEA; FPL; Commercial Farmers; Seed Groups Associations; NGOs	GOTG; FAO; WB; EU; ADB	-Insufficient govt finance -Late response -Dependency	3.5	8
Limited post harvest; storage; transformation	-Rehabilitate existing storage facilities; sensitized communities -Assessment of post harvest grain losses and impact on food security	-Operating storage facilities at local levels -impact of post-harvest grain losses is determined and	Nationwide	DOSA; VDCs; PO; NGOs; Food Processing Associations	ADWAC/NGO; EU; CDDP, WB	-Insufficient organizational capacity -High demand	1	2.5
Limited access to agricultural and technical services	-Increase the number of extension workers -Increase the capacity of extension workers, notably applying farmer to farmer approaches	-Improve farm level production / productivity -Boost export trade and household food security	Nationwide	UTG, Gambia College, NADA, IEC(former ACU), NARI, DOSTIE, NGOs, GBOS, Farmers'Platform	GOTG, WB, FAO, ADB,	-Budgetary constraints -High attrition rates	1	2
Land degradation and Water management problems	-Promote appropriate farming methods (dikes, organic farming, contour ploughing, use of appropriate farm machinery) and agricultural/rural Infrastructures -Promote irrigation for continuous cropping	-Adoption of farming methods and establishment of agricultural and rural infrastructures -all-year production increasing food security	Nationwide	NADA, DWR, NARI, NEA	GOTG, ADB, WB, Taiwanese mission	-Low Acceptance / ownership -Limited financial resources	2	8

⁴³ Stakeholders are defined as potential operational actors, while Partners refers to potential external support from donors and other financial institutions.

Medium and long-term Period (2011-2015)

ISSUES	MEASURES ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED RESULTS	TARGETED AREAS	STAKEHOLDERS	PARTNERS	RISKS	BUDGET (MILLION OF \$US)	
							EXIST.	SUPPL.
Limited access to inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement policy to facilitate essential farmer access to inputs in crop, livestock and fisheries production -Establish seed production and banks at all levels -Promote organized privatized seed production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input access revitalized -Long-term, sustained seed supply -Seed production and banks established at all levels 	Nationwide	SAME; Ext agents; local communities, Private sector, National financial institutions	SAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Private sector access to funds -Organizational capacity at local levels 	1	6
Limited post harvest; storage; and transformation infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish new community-level public and private storage facilities -Promote agro-processing initiatives and investments -Promote small-scale agro-industry for the manufacturing of basic agricultural equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Long-term reliable storage; dynamic agro-industry sector; reduced post-harvest loss; improved food security -Available, consistent domestic supply of equipment 	Nationwide	Private sector; local communities; NGOs; DOSA; DOSFEA, NADA, DOSE, DOSTIE, NARI, Private financial institutions	SAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Low demand; SAME 	3	10
Limited access to agricultural and technical services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sustain and retain the capacity of extension workers -Strengthen the agricultural research and extension services for farmers' demand-driven, and farmer to farmer approaches -Provide sufficient and appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improved farming techniques -Generation and dissemination of adapted agricultural technologies -Adoption of improved agricultural and rural 	Nationwide	UTG, NADA, IEC(former ACU), NARI, DOSTIE, NGOs, GBOS, Farmers'Platform	GOTG, WB, FAO, ADB, IARC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Under-utilization of research findings -Attrition 	1.5	5

	backstopping of improved agricultural and rural practices -Support to establish Ag Improvement Centers -Promote gender equity in agricultural services delivery	technologies						
Land degradation and Water management problems	-Consolidate/Sustain/ Scale-up farming and agricultural/rural infrastructures -Adopt best practices in land and water management	-Sustained land productivity and production, water-use efficiency and availability -Reduced land degradation. -Better harnessed water resources -Increased yields and production	Nationwide	NADA, DWR, NARI, NEA, Private sector, Private financial institutions	GOTG, ADB, WB	-Inappropriate technologies -Climate change	2	7

Social Safety Nets and Support to Food Security
Short-term Period (2009-2010)

ISSUES	MEASURES ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED RESULTS	TARGETED AREAS	STAKEHOLDERS	PARTNERS	RISKS	BUDGET (MILLION OF \$US)	
							EXIST.	SUPPL.
Identification of vulnerable population in urban & rural areas	Design and implement VAM capacity	Better targeting of food insecure households	Those indicated by the VAM system	NaNA, NADA, NGOs, DOSBE, REDCROSS, DOSLGL&RA, PROJECTS, NPC	WFP, FAO	-Insufficient institutional commitment to improve coordination and complementarities	1	2
Increased food insecurity of urban households due to reduced purchasing power	-Food Emergency Contingency Stock for immediate response through targeted food for work in urban areas -Promotion of backyard gardens	-Improved access to food during the most critical period of the hungry season; mitigation of adverse impact of soaring prices on poorest households	Most vulnerable households in urban areas	LGAs, NADA, DOSA, DOSFEA, NPC, Workers'Union, NaNA, Peace Corps	WFP, NGOs, REDCROSS, Peace Corps	-Elite capture -Social unrest	1	3
Children food security at risk	-Expand the geographical coverage of ongoing School Feeding Project to urban areas -Strengthen school gardens and introduce poultry production	Contribute to improve children's household food security	Schools in urban areas	DOSE, NaNA	WFP, Unicef, Peace Corps	Weak commitment from teachers-parents community	1.5	5

Medium and long-term Period (2011-2015)

ISSUES	MEASURES ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED RESULTS	TARGETED AREAS	STAKEHOLDERS	PARTNERS	RISKS	BUDGET (MILLION OF \$US)	
							EXIST.	SUPPL.
Absence of reliable and comprehensive information to timely follow up Food Sec. and Nutritional situation	-Design and put in place a manageable and coordinated inter-institutional information system	To have reliable and timely information to decision making	Nation-wide	NPC, GBOS, NADA	FAO, UNICEF, WFP, CILSS,	-Weak institutional commitment -Information system management become too complex	3	3
Rural household food insecurity due to reduced purchasing power	Food for work activities linked to labor intensive works to improve agricultural production and productivity -Promote farmer-level aquaculture	-Improved food security during the hungry season -Increased nr. of productive assets -Minimize farmer risks -Improved nutrition and increased incomes	Most affected Districts by food insecurity	DOSA, Agricultural Projects	FAO, WFP, IFAD, ADB	Weak coordination between projects staff and food interventions managers	5	13
Increasing nr. of urban food insecure households due to reduced purchasing power	The medium term response to this issue will be the extension up to 3 years of the intervention proposed as an immediate response.	-Improved access to food during the most critical period of the hungry season; mitigation of adverse impact of soaring prices on poorest households	Most vulnerable households in urban areas	NADA, LGAs, DOSFEA, NPC, Workers' Union, NaNA	WFP, NGOs, REDCROSS	-Elite capture -Social unrest	8	16
Children food security at risk	- Extension up to 3 years of the School Feed. Projct in urban areas, proposed as an immediate response. -Same for School garden and poultry production	Contribute to improve children's household food security	Schools in urban areas	DOSE, NaNA	WFP, Unicef, Peace Corps	Weak commitment from teachers-parents community	6	13

Enabling Environment: Promoting Policy Measures and Market Access
Short-term Period (2009-2010)

ISSUES	MEASURES ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED RESULTS	TARGET AREAS	STAKEHOLDERS	PARTNERS	RISKS	BUDGET (MILLION OF \$US)	
							EXIST.	SUPPL.
High duties for agricultural-related imports	-Ease /lower duties on agricultural-related imports during food crises periods	-Entry of agricultural-related imports facilitated to promote production	Nationwide	Min Trade Min of Finance	SAME	-Loss of GoTG Revenue -Fraud	3	3
High costs for raw materials for commercial agricultural production	-Temporary subsidies	-Commercial agricultural production able to catalyze production; eventually lower food prices	Nationwide	Min of Finance DOSA	SAME	-Loss of GoTG revenue -Fraud	3	3
Access to finance	-Promote micro-finance activities directly to the beneficiaries. -Promote credit union	Nominal interest rate	Nationwide	NACCUG, Micro-finance and other private financial institutions, Central Bank, DOSFEA, NPC	GOTG, ADB	-Defaults -Mis-use of funds	2.5	5
Inadequate and inaccessible market information systems and limited infrastructures	-Build on the capacity of GBOS / DOP -Support the establishment of agricultural value chains	-Timely and accurate information available to farmers -Improved agricultural market infrastructures -Farmers get better prices through a more competitive market price mechanism	Nationwide	GBOS, DOSTIE, DOSCIT, Private sector	FAO, WB, ADB	-Lack of timely information -Inequitable access to information -Sustainable management of information system	1	2
Unfavorable financial environment for agricultural investments	-Reduced sales tax on agricultural inputs -Temporary targeted subsidies for inputs	-Temporary relief providing impetus to production -Attract increased investment in agricultural	Nationwide	DOSFEA; DOSA; DOSTIE; GCCI; GIPFZA, Private sector	IMF, WB	-Subsidy dependency -GoTG budget constraints	2.5	3.5
Weak producer organizations	-Capacity building for strengthening technical	-Vibrant/active producer organizations	Nationwide	Farmers'Platform; NGOs; NADA; DOSI	FAO; NGOs; WB; IFAD	-Lack of motivation from PO	1	2

	organizational and business management -Networking/ platform building -Strengthening advocacy	-POs capable to better deliver services to members (production/market/ finance) -Increased POs engagement with GoTG				-GoTG resistance -Elite capture -Limited skills for capacity building		
Weak inter-sectoral coordination and weak coordination between GoTG and development partners	-Establish intersectoral thematic working groups -Organize interministerial and intersectoral consultations -Strengthen dialogue between GoTG and DPs through Food Security Group among other fora	-Coherent active consultation process -Synergy in planning -Improved cooperation and information sharing between GoTG sectors and between GoTG and DPs	National, Sectoral and LGA levels	DOSA, NPC and other relevant DOS, DPs	UNCT	-Lack of commitment	1	2

Medium and long-term Period (2011-2015)

ISSUES	MEASURES ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED RESULTS	TARGETED AREAS	STAKEHOLDERS	PARTNERS	RISKS	BUDGET (MILLION OF \$US)	
							EXIST.	SUPPL.
Limited information; Lack of public-private sector dialogue	-Promote platform for commercial farmers -Strengthen advocacy and networking	-Commercial farmer influence in govt policy -Increased private sector activity in support of agriculture	Nationwide	Commercial farmers Chamber of Commerce DOSA	WB	-GoTG resistance -Limited commercial farmer commitment	0.2	3
Access to finance	-Involve credit unions in provision of finance -Encourage micro-insurance schemes -Establishment of agricultural development bank	-Availability of financial support for farmers	Nationwide	NACCUG, Micro-finance and other private institutions, Central Bank, DOSFEA, NPC, GCCI, NADA	GOTG, ADB	-Defaults -Mis-use of funds	4	15
Inadequate and inaccessible market information systems, and limited infrastructures	-Build on the capacity of GBOS / DOP -Support establishment of agricultural value chains	-Timely and accurate information available to farmers -Consolidate and sustain the improved agricultural-market infrastructures -Increased farmers' incomes	Nationwide	GBOS, DOSTIE, DOSCIT, Private sector	FAO, WB, ADB	-Lack of timely Information -Inequitable access to information -Sustainable management of information system	2	4
Unfavorable financial environment for agricultural investments	-Promote tax rates/measures to enhance agricultural investment and reduce constraints	-Vitalized agricultural sector -High investment in agriculture	Nationwide	SAME	WB; IMF-	SAME	5	10
Weak producer organizations	-Consolidate and expand emerging POs -Build network with wider regional platforms	-POs can influence policy decisions -Strong dialogue with GoTG and other stakeholders including CSOs	Nationwide	SAME	WB, GoTG, NGOs, Regional farmers' platform	-Elite capture -GoTG resistance -Disengagement	2	3.5
Weak sectoral coordination with development partners	-Consolidate ongoing initiatives	-SAME	SAME	SAME	SAME	SAME	0.5	2

ANNEX 7 Institutional arrangements for Food security

