

Report of the  
In-House Retreat on the Role of Nutrition in FAO  
Philippines Room, C-277  
FAO Headquarters  
4 and 5 November 2008

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## **Report of AGN's in-house Retreat on The Role of Nutrition in FAO**

### **1. Background**

As part of the continuing reform process of FAO, the Economic and Social Department's Food and Nutrition Division (ESN) was transferred in 2005 to the Agriculture Department and renamed the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN). An Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO was conducted over an eighteen-month period and in November 2007 presented its report to the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference. The evaluation sought to assess the overall institutional performance of FAO, including its governance, and to shape it so that the Organization is better placed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to support humanity in facing the challenges of hunger and poverty and of the environment. The report found much that FAO has done well but also found a great need for change and renewal. A Conference Committee for the Follow-up to the IEE (CoC-IEE) established working groups to develop an Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), including elements of a new FAO Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan, for implementing the reforms. Within the context of the reform process underway, the Director of AGN, Mr Ezzeddine Boutrif called for a two-day in-house Retreat on the role of nutrition in FAO. The overall objective of the Retreat was to discuss the direction and scope of AGN's future work in nutrition, taking into full consideration the specific remarks and recommendations made by the IEE on nutrition and the draft Immediate Action Plan for implementing the reforms.

### **2. Purpose and expected outcome**

The purpose of the Retreat was to:

- identify emerging priority issues in nutrition, particularly related to food and agriculture, requiring FAO attention in the short and long term;
- elaborate an enhanced definition of the comparative advantage of nutrition in FAO;
- explore, discuss and reflect on the role of nutrition in FAO (direction, functions, scope) and encourage closer and integrated AGN work on food and nutrition assessment, policy and programmes and stronger collaboration with relevant technical units in FAO.

The expected outcome was a set of conclusions which would serve as a basis for:

- the preparation of an AGN position paper presenting the technical and scientific arguments of the essential role of nutrition in FAO;
- the elaboration of AGN's plan of work for 2009 and beyond;
- clarification of the position of AGN in the "international nutrition architecture".

### **Participants**

Participants included professional technical officers (15) from AGN, staff from other FAO technical units, four external consultants with international nutrition expertise, one resource person from FAO, one external Moderator, and a consultant to assist in the preparation and facilitate the proceedings. The Agenda, questionnaires sent out to FAO Representatives and to FAO Technical Units together with a summary of their responses, the guidance notes for writers of papers, the names of participants and details on the preparations made for the Retreat are provided in Annexes 1-5.

### **3. Proceedings**

#### **Opening**

The Retreat was held in the Phillipines Room in FAO Headquarters, 4-5 November 2008. It was opened by Mr Ezzeddine Boutrif, Director AGN on behalf of Mr M. Traoré, ADG/AG who was unable to attend due to other commitments. Mr Boutrif outlined the purpose of the Retreat and the expected outcome. He emphasised that the role of nutrition and the role of AGN in FAO must be seen in the light of new challenges for nutrition presented by agriculture and development trends and in accordance with the recommendations of the IEE and the ongoing reform process within FAO. He explained the outcome of the Retreat will feed into the reform process and will produce useful inputs for the preparation of AGN's work plans for 2009 and beyond. He drew attention to the background papers that had been prepared and circulated prior to the Retreat (Annex 6: Strategy for FAO Assistance to Social, Economic, Food and Nutrition Policy; Annex 7: The Role of Nutrition in FAO; Annex 8: Integrating Nutrition into Food Security Policies; and Annex 9: List of questions/issues to be raised and discussed). With powerful actors outside FAO becoming more involved in the fields of public health, food and nutrition, it is critically important to concentrate our energies on areas of comparative advantage of FAO in nutrition. Mr Boutrif spoke of the increased recognition worldwide being given to agriculture and its linkage to food consumption and to the new events on the international scene such as rising food prices, climate change and biofuels which have brought greater attention to nutrition. He hoped the Retreat will identify strategies that will strengthen AGN's work in FAO at global, regional and country level for ending hunger and raising levels of nutrition. He concluded that there is wide scope and many opportunities for AGN's work in the future and the Retreat, through open participatory discussion and reflection, by enabling AGN to have a clearer vision of its purpose and mission should allow us to grasp these opportunities.

#### **Expectations**

All participants expressed their hopes for a shared vision and direction for the nutrition work of AGN in FAO and that this vision of the role for nutrition obtains full recognition by the Organization. The participants looked forward to reaching agreement on a cohesive strategy with work priorities based on the identified comparative advantage of AGN in FAO; for shared understanding among staff and new ways of working together in such a way to effectively allow the strengthening of the role of nutrition in FAO. The participants recognized the need for change in the current *modus operandi* and work procedures, with an emphasis on more team work.

#### **New and upcoming issues in food and agriculture**

**Mr J. Schmidhuber** presented a Powerpoint on "*Long-term perspectives in agricultural development – implications for food consumption and nutrition*" (Annex 10). The likely consequences on food consumption and nutrition of population increase, urbanization, demographic changes, price returns for agricultural goods, and the effect of energy prices on agricultural prices were discussed. He suggested that AGN would contribute to a broadening of the FAO database on these issues and that AGN could assist ESA in making more sophisticated assessments on dietary change and consumption as well as on food policy analysis which would add value to the work of ESA.

### Implications for AGN's future work:

There is room for closer collaboration with ESA to broaden their more producer-oriented outlook towards AGN's consumer focus which emphasizes quality of diet rather than quantity and consumption. Such closer collaboration would require more analytical expertise in AGN, a study data base, expertise in policy analysis. The need for work on nutrition in urban environments was recognized. The implication of demand for bio-energy on nutrition and food consumption was acknowledged as well as the need to maintain attention to over-nutrition as well as under-nutrition. The importance for an AGN flagship publication was raised as well as the need for regular dialogue between FAO nutritionists and FAO economists. Enhanced collaboration with ESA economists would require better coordination of AGN work with ESA work as well as better communication and dialogue between the two Divisions. ESA in turn could strengthen AGN's work in nutrition policy analysis.

### **Comparative advantage of nutrition in FAO**

**Mr Richard Longhurst** presented his paper "*An overview of the international nutrition architecture and comparative advantage of the main UN agencies*" (Annex 11). There are at least 14 UN agencies and programmes dealing with nutrition, 5 international banks, at least 5 regional cooperation organizations such as the African Union, over 20 bilateral aid agencies, at least 15 charitable foundations, over 30 international NGOs, as well as many universities, international research centres (more than 20 with international scope) plus 15 centres of the CGIAR. The recent involvement of major trans-national food companies in this field further complicates teasing out the comparative advantages of individual actors. However considering the high levels of hunger, poverty and malnutrition and their links to the MDGs, the volume of resources allocated is small. Within the UN there are clear funding distortions and repetitive definition and redefinition of agencies' work in food security and nutrition. This can trigger intense turf wars. The Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) coordinates agencies' nutritional work but gets into trouble with its constituent agencies when it tries to take on the functions of a development agency with extra-budgetary funds. There is more recent focus on country level ownership and on greater UN coherence through UN Country Teams but nutrition is not considered a cross-cutting issue in this process. This needs to be corrected and agencies need to take greater interest in integrating nutrition in UNDAF. The UN is seen as being a neutral and a trusted partner to government, an intellectual leader, and a provider of public goods with a normative function which are provided to governments at no costs. Since governments trust the UN, new and stronger partnerships with organizations with large funds for nutrition programme implementation could overcome resource constraints. FAO, with a mandate for food and agriculture has a key role in nutrition but with food and agriculture being a long neglected area, AGN needs to make its technical products for food consumption and nutrition more visible if they are to get the attention they deserve. To develop external partnerships we need to convince those outside the Organization of AGN's value as a partner, for which we would first have to convince colleagues within FAO. AGN needs to match tried and tested products that achieve good results, as demonstrated by case studies and its normative work, with potential development partners and donors with large funds to assist governments scaling-up success stories. Ms Florence Egal added a short presentation of ongoing partnerships with SCN and the ECHUI/REACH project.

Implications for AGN's future work:

FAO has a clear comparative advantage in nutrition compared to other UN agencies, as it has a food-based approach to nutrition and focuses on nutrition in agriculture and food security policies and programmes. Moreover, nutrition work of FAO acts as a link between health and agriculture. The participants considered that various conditions need to be established in order to make this comparative advantage more visible:

- stronger advocacy required to make FAORs more aware of the importance of nutrition for development and the value it adds to government efforts in the UNDAF process;
- more collaboration with IUNS, academia/universities and centres of excellence;
- development of case studies of what works in the field as a basis for future normative work;
- increased visibility at community level and within FAO technical units, through field programme support;
- stronger partnerships require a more coherent and unified vision and position of AGN;
- stronger partnerships with organizations with large funds may overcome resource constraints, but this should not be at the expense of losing neutrality;
- better coordination among groups for providing technical assistance to countries.

**Ms Suraiya Ismail** presented her paper “*Introducing nutrition into food security, agriculture and development policies and plans – constraints and solutions*” (Annex 12). She recalled that FAO, and to various degrees other international and bilateral agencies, have tried to integrate nutrition into food security, agricultural and development policies for over thirty years with mixed results. Most importantly, the extent to which international pledges to eradicate hunger and raise levels of nutrition have been translated into national development policies has been, in most cases, limited. Difficulties include the lack of interagency and intersectoral collaboration and conflicting national sectoral priorities made worse by bureaucratic barriers. Added to this is the failure at the technical level of nutritionists from the health sector to recognize the crucial role of agriculture for nutrition while remaining ill-equipped to promote nutrition outside of the health sector. Similarly, agriculturalists and agricultural economists are not exposed to issues of food and nutrition security during their training. In order to overcome these challenges Ms Ismail calls for immediate attention to be given to translating international pledges into national development policies, focusing at least initially on those countries with a promising policy environment. A first step would be a systematic assessment of a country's political commitment and the availability of human, institutional and financial resources, the level of country-level coordination of the donor community related to nutrition activities and the existence of an adequate food and nutrition information system.

Implications for AGN's future work:

- routinely assess all policies, programmes and projects emerging from FAO for their likely impact on nutrition, focusing at least initially on those that hold the greatest promise for achieving good nutritional outcomes – ultimately no FAO project should be undertaken without having been reviewed by a nutrition lens;
- develop success stories of the benefits of integrating nutrition into agricultural development programmes by focusing, at least initially, on a few pilot countries with a promising policy environment where opportunities for success is strongest, and

develop case studies to provide evidence of success of large-scale food-based activities for better nutrition;

- support identified countries' Nutrition Unit and reach agreement at highest political level that most if not all agricultural programmes will include nutrition objectives and outcomes and will be explicitly designed to contribute to better nutrition;
- provide training in the economic costs of nutrition, food as a human right, the contribution of agriculture to food and nutrition security and that of nutrition to agriculture, and negotiation skills and tools;
- focus on activities that hold the greatest promise and document and disseminate the process and outcomes.

**Mr Stuart Gillespie** presented his paper “*Embedding nutrition in agriculture and related health policies and programmes: constraints, challenges and solutions*” (Annex 13). The paper described some of the major current and emerging challenges in effectively integrating nutritional considerations into agriculture and related health policies and programmes. These include the sector demarcation of institutions and policies, the relative sidelining of nutrition in development agendas, including agriculture and the related advocacy and communication challenges that this brings, the limited capacity at many levels in policy, practice and research is a major constraint, and the limited evidence of transforming small-scale actions into large-scale success of food security and nutrition improvement programmes. In addition there are several new, emerging (and some unknown) challenges that will need to be addressed including food price shocks, climate change and emerging and transboundary diseases. *Four pathways* were identified linking food production with nutrition outcomes: production for the household's own consumption, income-oriented production for sale in markets, the empowerment of women and lowering food retail prices (for net food consumers, reduced prices facilitate greater access to food). *Four drivers* of the changing agriculture-nutrition context are: agricultural technology, agricultural policy, changing consumption patterns, and food marketing systems. *Four design elements* for improving the nutrition outcomes of agricultural programmes are: take local people and contexts into account, incorporate nutrition outreach and behaviour change communications components for improved nutritional outcomes, empower women as agents of improved nutrition outcomes and provide small producers with support to capitalize on changing market demand. This is a useful template to identify where AGN's comparative advantage lies in improving the nutritional relevance of agricultural policy and practice. Opportunities should be seized for including nutrition components into broader development initiatives, including those from the agriculture sector, to help those initiatives meet their own goals. Potential solutions include an effective priority-setting process to determine what FAO should focus on in this complex arena, the need to be more strategic (and often opportunistic) in the way the Organization works, the need to foster more and stronger alliances and partnerships, strengthen policy communications and support for capacity building and development, and to promote the independent marshalling of evidence of what works on a large-scale.

Following a general discussion of the papers presented, the following implications for AGN's future work were identified:

- develop a more systematic and coordinated strategic approach, building on successes and good processes, and develop an integrated workplan to strengthen visibility and technical assistance;
- support capacity assessment and development, not just an added-on capacity building component, and include indicators of capacity development in performance monitoring;

- AGN has a prominent role in strengthening nutrition focus of agricultural policymakers and planners, building strategic alliances between nutrition advocates and agriculture, health, education, governance, trade and infrastructure and strengthening policy-programme-research-training links, networks and partnerships;
- promote the better understanding of the high costs of inaction – the inter-generational transmission of malnutrition and poverty - compared to the minor cost of known interventions and actions and the steep agricultural productivity-enhancing effects of nutritional improvement;
- explore linking small-scale farmers with social protection systems using food transfers;
- use a nutrition lens to look at agriculture and development programmes and an agriculture lens to health programmes (HIV/AIDS) for which AGN has a comparative advantage;
- better articulate to field representatives AGN's comparative advantage and contribution on all aspects of improving food and nutrition security to give them a clearer understanding of AGN's work;
- participation, local ownership and empowerment are key driving forces of community-based nutrition programmes that, if undertaken in parallel with supportive sectoral actions targeted on groups at nutritional risk and supported by policies aimed at improving household food security, access to social services, women's status and education and fostering equitable growth, are successful in overcoming general malnutrition;
- need for more advocacy of the importance of nutrition both within and outside FAO to make its crucial value understood by policy makers;
- hold governments accountable by widely publicizing the relevant international declarations related to reducing hunger and promoting food and nutrition security, including the promotion of nutrition as a human right;
- create partnerships, engage with civil society groups and local partners to increase public awareness for nutrition and publicise successful policies and intervention programmes;
- promote and support the systematic inclusion of nutrition in FAO's programmes and projects.
- focus on a few pilot countries where opportunity for success exists and develop case studies to provide evidence of success of large-scale food-based activities for better nutrition;
- promote dialogue on food security and nutrition at policy and programme level;
- increase visibility of AGN within FAO and more effective collaboration with relevant units;
- success depends strongly on training/capacity building and the improvement of food and nutrition information systems at country level; undertake formal as well as in-service training in the various aspects of nutrition in developed countries and agriculture with joint participation of different sectors; training should include skills in political negotiations;
- improve food and nutrition information systems and the management and generation of new knowledge; generation and management of knowledge of food consumption, dietary patterns and nutrition is AGN's comparative advantage and should be continued.

**Ms Marie-Claude Dop**, AGNA, presented the paper “*Ideas for discussion about assessment at FAO/AGN Retreat*” (Annex 14) prepared by Mr John Mason. The paper discussed conceptual frameworks or representations of the causes of malnutrition: food, health and care or their reverse, hunger, sickness and neglect. Clearly food, or rather the lack of it in terms of food insecurity, is a focus of FAO extending to how food consumption and its utilisation are affected by other factors. Since food insecurity was regarded in most circumstances as nearly identical to poverty, interventions to alleviate food insecurity are usually the same as those for poverty. The paper contentiously suggested that unless it can be demonstrated that the incorporation of nutrition objectives into policies and programmes is more effective than would be achieved by reducing poverty, the role for nutrition is mainly confined (except in special circumstances – see below) to the identification of those most in need and for monitoring impact. A clear role for AGN would therefore be the measurement and monitoring of poverty and related issues through the use of nutritional status and food and nutrition security indicators. As part of such assessment, FAO’s role is to measure and track food insecurity as part of efforts to monitor progress in MDGs as well as to contribute to the targeting and monitoring and evaluation of development projects. However, the paper points out that the current way of assessing food insecurity through food energy supply data at national level is vague and ill-defined (who, where, in what periods, for how long and to what extent are people going hungry?), and unable to vary in a meaningfully useful way for monitoring food availability, dietary quality and consumption of sub-national populations or vulnerable groups. Consequently it is not so effective for making policy and programme decisions and is not taken very seriously. The FAO meeting on “*Measurement of Hunger and Malnutrition*” in 2002 addressed this issue and proposed a new ‘suite’ of indicators to provide results and trends of hunger in almost real time. The paper described the benefits of ‘food perception indicators’ such as the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) and recommended AGN continues to promote these types of indicators. AGN could also usefully help establish the relationship between food security measures and the biological indicators of weight, height and clinical signs. The paper stressed the need for decisions in policy setting and planning to be made based on the evidence and called for case studies to be conducted to document what policies or programmes produce the results intended. Specific food and nutrition security problems of vulnerable groups not identified by poverty alone such as in some refugee and displaced person situations, people affected by disasters, PLHIV, urban slum dwellers, farmers and pastoralists on marginal lands, and those living in highly vulnerable agro-ecological areas most sensitive to climate change would benefit from the involvement of FAO, with nutrition providing the catalyst. Capacity building in public nutrition and food security to Master’s level was considered priority, with AGN playing an active role in this.

Following a general discussion of the paper led by Ms Dop, the following implications for AGN’s future work were identified:

- expand FAO’s role in assessing food insecurity to one that looks at both food and nutrition insecurity;
- AGN to continue to provide assistance to specific marginalised population groups, but priority to be given to mainstream nutrition into the food security and agricultural development activities of FAO with focus on rural small-holders and farmers;
- continue work to improve upon measures of hunger, food insecurity and poverty (such as HFIAS, Dietary Diversity Score (DDS), Body Mass Index (BMI) and stunting) and for providing disaggregated indicators for vulnerable groups;

- continue to develop simple tools for monitoring and evaluating the nutrition impact of FAO projects and of food and nutrition security policies and programmes;
- demonstrate the added value of incorporating specific nutrition objectives into policies and programmes for reducing poverty and improving nutrition by conducting case studies to analyse and document the impact of nutrition improvement actions on poverty reduction and overall development;
- integrate indicators into national surveillance systems and provide technical assistance to develop and maintain such systems at country level;
- be more active and visible in SOFI as well as in other FAO flagship publications;
- re-explore the benefit of AGN having its own publication;
- routinely participate in FAO impact studies;
- build capacity in public nutrition and food security.

#### **4. Discussions and reflections on the role of nutrition in FAO - functions, scope, integration and collaboration**

The three Senior AGN Nutrition Officers (**Ms Barbara Burlingame, Ms Ellen Muehlhoff and Mr Brian Thompson**) presented their Groups' current work describing the objectives, strategy and main activities for achieving them, their advantages compared to other agencies, the findings of auto-evaluations undertaken, and strengths and weaknesses including staff and budgetary resources (Annexes 15, 16 and 17).

The session continued with a presentation from **Mr Brian Thompson** on "*The Role of Nutrition in FAO*" (Annex 18). The paper provided background for discussions and reflections on how AGN is to apply itself to meet the expectations of Members and achieve its strategic objectives while remaining within the "core functions and comparative advantages" of FAO. The uniqueness of FAO's role in nutrition was stressed as it is the only UN agency that links nutrition with agricultural and rural development, food and health and the only UN agency with experience in raising levels of nutrition by promoting food and agriculture-based approaches. FAO addresses the longer term root causes of hunger and malnutrition by recognizing that agricultural production, livelihoods, incomes and access to food, health and care all need to be addressed simultaneously if food and nutrition security are to be achieved. This requires support for agriculture-based livelihoods to protect and promote food and nutrition security. No other agency is capable or willing to undertake this work and consequently AGN was said to have *both a distinct role and a clear comparative advantage* in ensuring agricultural development has a people focus that leads to the improved access to and consumption of food for better nutrition. By looking at nutrition from a food and agriculture perspective, AGN's work in nutrition is complementary to but distinct and separate from the health and care side of nutrition. The paper called for the identification and clear articulation what value 'nutrition' adds to FAO's food security and agricultural development programmes. Focus should be at the interface between food security, health and care. AGN should ensure that activities lead to better nutrition, placing greater focus on the use of food and on the agriculture sector and on rural areas for improving nutrition, on food and the consumer, on the demand for food and on food utilization and on incorporating nutrition objectives and considerations under each of the four pillars of food security. It can do this by providing technical support and advocacy, by showing the agriculturalists that malnutrition acts as a brake on development which will be slowed down considerably if the people are not well nourished. In summary the paper said AGN provides an agricultural and food friendly perspective to nutrition problems and a food and agriculture approach to their

solution, thereby underlining the importance of FAO for nutrition and of nutrition for FAO. FAO is stronger with nutrition as a functional well staffed Division and nutrition is stronger with FAO playing a strong leadership role. FAO cannot leave it to other agencies to look after nutrition. We need to do it as "One UN", with FAO providing its own complementary and essential contribution from a food and agriculture perspective. We need to:

- assess factors related to maintenance of food security, consumption, dietary diversity and nutritional status;
- analyse and interpret the food and nutrition situation with contextual information;
- provide feedback for:
  - methodology refinement;
  - policy development, briefs;
  - programme development and plans of action, including nutrition education;
  - communicating best practices and lessons learnt “proof of concept”.

Following these presentations, discussions were held in a brainstorming format since the breadth of the issues at stake did not allow for in-depth discussions given the limited time available. As a consequence, the exercises and group work held during these sessions resulted in the following list of points for further consideration. Sessions include the purpose or mission statement of AGN, priority work, strengths and weaknesses including an assessment of where we are today and where we wish to be in the future, and a discussion on AGN’s strategic objectives. What is needed for more effective collaboration within AGN and with other Units in-house, with our Regional and Sub-regional FAO Offices and with other UN agencies, the need for technical and managerial capacities as well as issues of budgetary resources, were also discussed.

### **Mission Statement**

A number of proposals for inclusion in a possible mission statement for AGN were developed in group work including:

- ensure that nutritious diets/foods are produced, accessible and consumed according to needs;
- assist stakeholders in improving nutrition of people;
- improve measurement of hunger;
- enable countries to improve and maintain the food and nutrition security of their populations; and
- ensure that FAO’s work has a positive impact on nutrition.

These elements have been combined to provide the following possible construction:

“The purpose of AGN is to ensure that all people consume foods that contribute to nutritious diets on a sustainable basis. This is achieved through the provision of technical advice and assistance to governments and other stakeholders in assessing nutrition situations, access to and consumption of food, and in designing policies and programmes for reducing hunger and malnutrition. We collaborate with others in FAO to ensure that FAO’s work contributes to improving nutrition worldwide.”

This text may need further elaboration and discussion before arriving at a commonly agreed mission statement.

## Priority work

Suggestions for work priorities included:

- Advocacy, policy advice
  - Policy advice to improve nutrition
  - Assistance in nutrition policy development
  - Capacity building, policy, advocacy (the “What”)
  - Awareness-raising about impact of nutrition on socio-economic development
- Mainstreaming nutrition into FAO’s work
- Data, knowledge
  - provision of nutrition information
  - provision of basic nutrition data
- Nutrition education and consumer awareness
  - helping Members to establish effective nutrition education and consumer awareness programmes
- Tools
  - development of tools to assist stakeholders in improving nutrition
- Partnerships
  - foster partnerships
- Integrated projects involving all AGN expertise (the “How”)
- Fund raising in the country through successful field programmes/projects
- Assistance in design, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.

The lack of identifying the specific objectives for AGN’s work after having first formulated a Mission Statement on the general purpose of AGN work, may have hindered the identification of a more detailed list of priority work areas.

## Perceived strengths and weaknesses of AGN were discussed

In order to arrive at a better understanding on how to improve AGN work allowing for higher impact, greater visibility and for being a more effective technical partner, a session was held to delineate the strengths and weaknesses of the Division. The following were raised reflecting how the staff perceives the picture of an “AGN Today”

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Experienced	Dispersed/fragmented/lacking clear focus
Technical competency	Competition, duplication, poor coordination
Dedicated/committed	Over-stretched and inefficient
Diversity in technical matters	Poor communication, low visibility, isolated
Strong presence in HQ	Weak presence in the field
	Lack of resources
	High female/male ratio in staff composition
	<i>Ad hoc</i> and weak management

and of an “**AGN tomorrow**” (grouped by topic):

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Activity</i>
<i>Mission and activities</i>	Clear agreed purpose Common vision Focus Information Credible evidence-based approach Prioritisation and rationalisation of activities Effective and focused on selected areas/projects/countries
<i>Linking with the reform</i>	Objectives and outcomes synchronised with IEE
<i>Visibility</i>	Present and indispensable at international and field level Success stories and proof of concept Recognition in-house and outside FAO Serious players in FAO and in the nutrition community Major players in malnutrition alleviation
<i>Link with the field</i>	Strong presence in the field AGN staff out-posted in FAO country offices and regional representations
<i>Working mechanisms</i>	Leadership Good management Sufficient funding Division adequately staffed and team approach Proper coordination and communication Unification of AGN groups and integration of the work Focal points for other divisions (in particular operational ones) within AGN A systematic integrated work process Integrated approach responsive to needs
<i>Team</i>	Happy staff working together Confident team Innovative and creative staff Effective team More pro-activity Effective and timely delivery
<i>Other topics mentioned</i>	Fundraising Restructuring Integration of the 3 AGN groups Increased staffing Identify criteria to prioritize activities

## **Strategic objectives**

The strategic objectives of AGN were considered to include:

- assembling, analysing and disseminating relevant nutrition information (data) to better assess the food and nutrition situation, identify the hungry and food gap and use available information for policy and programming;
- incorporating and integrating nutrition objectives, concerns, considerations and actions into national and regional policies relevant to food and nutrition security;
- advocating for the inclusion of nutrition objectives and outcomes into all FAO and agricultural development programmes and for raising the awareness by stakeholders of the importance of nutrition;
- providing tools for assessment, programming, monitoring and evaluation;
- building capacity of relevant stakeholders to implement integrated food and nutrition security interventions, for raising public awareness of the importance of nutrition;
- assessing impacts of AGN's work and sharing success stories (proof of concept, lessons learned, knowledge management);
- documenting and disseminating AGN's work to improve visibility.

It was recognised that the identification of AGN's strategic objectives must be given full and thorough attention with further in-depth discussions with staff.

## **5. Conclusions and Recommendations - Implications for AGN**

Nutrition is a multi-disciplinary subject that links agriculture and health and the state of nutrition is a key indicator of people's welfare. Nutrition is the foundation of good health with better nutrition leading to better health. Malnutrition reduces the ability to do work and to thrive and is an underlying cause of more than one-third of all child deaths. A healthy well nourished work force is more productive in both physical and human capital. Hence, better nutrition is an important driving force for a more vibrant economy and for improving living standards.

The contribution that agriculture makes to food and nutrition security and the contribution that nutrition makes to agriculture are crucial. Hence FAO's food-based approach which focuses on nutrition in agriculture and food security policies and programmes, gives FAO a clear comparative advantage in nutrition. This advantage would be more visible if there was stronger advocacy of the importance of nutrition for development. At the country level, there is a need to ensure that nutrition is explicitly incorporated into the UNDAF process and into poverty reduction strategies. AGN must focus, at least initially, on a few pilot countries where chances of success are highest, and strike agreements with the concerned government authorities, at the highest political level, that ensures that all relevant agricultural programmes include nutrition objectives and outcomes, and are explicitly designed to contribute to better nutrition. What works in the field needs to be better documented so as to provide an evidence base for future work. AGN should engage with concerned units in FAO to routinely assess relevant policies, programmes and projects for their likely impact on nutrition, focusing at least initially on those that hold the greatest promise for achieving good nutritional outcomes – ultimately all FAO projects should be reviewed by a nutrition lens;

There needs to be better coordination and integration of activities among groups within AGN for providing technical assistance to countries. Activities/projects that involve all three groups

in a complementary and integrated manner should be encouraged. Similarly AGN need to build stronger partnerships with external organizations, both public and private. Such partnerships require a more coherent and unified vision and position of AGN. Stronger partnerships with organizations with large funds may overcome resource constraints, but require careful consideration of FAO/AGN neutrality. AGN should continue to provide assistance to specific marginalised population groups, but priority should be given to mainstream nutrition into the broader food security and agricultural development activities of FAO with focus on the poorest segments of the population, in particular rural small-holders and farmers.

AGN should strengthen its collaboration, communication and dialogue with other FAO Divisions. AGN's consumer focus, which emphasises the aspects of consumption and the quality of the diet, rather than just quantity, can broaden the more producer-oriented outlook. Other Divisions could, in turn, strengthen AGN's work in nutrition policy analysis. Closer collaboration would require more analytical expertise in AGN and expertise in policy analysis.

AGN needs to strengthen its participation in inter-agency mechanisms and initiatives dealing with nutrition at international, regional and national levels. In particular, it should have a prominent role in SCN business and influence its work to include more agriculture/food related issues and less health related subjects. It should also play an active role in the shaping of inter-agency initiatives such as REACH and ensure that the food-based approach to alleviating nutrition problems is considered along with other interventions.

#### *Policy and strategy related actions*

AGN needs to develop a more systematic and coordinated strategic approach, building on successes and good practices, and to develop an integrated workplan when preparing its Strategic Objectives and Organizational Results to strengthen visibility and technical assistance. AGN has an important role to play in promoting dialogue on food security and nutrition at policy and programme levels, in strengthening the nutrition focus of agricultural policymakers and planners, building strategic alliances between nutrition and agriculture, health, education, and in strengthening policy-programme-research-training links, networks and partnerships.

AGN should work to incorporate nutrition objectives into regional, national and local policies and plans as well as promote and support the systematic inclusion of nutrition objectives in FAO's own programmes and projects. AGN will promote better understanding of the high costs of inaction – the inter-generational transmission of malnutrition and poverty - compared to the minor cost of known interventions and actions and to the steep agricultural productivity-enhancing effects of nutritional improvement.

#### *Programme and advocacy related actions*

AGN should continue to promote the use of a nutrition lens to screen agriculture and development programmes for being consistent with protecting and promoting nutrition and an agriculture lens to similarly screen health programmes (HIV/AIDS). For this, AGN has a strong comparative advantage. AGN needs to better articulate this comparative advantage in its communication with field representatives (FAORs, Regional and sub-regional offices staff) to provide them with a clear understanding of AGN's work. Participation, local

ownership and empowerment are key driving forces of community based nutrition programmes. If undertaken in parallel with supportive sectoral actions targeted on groups at nutritional risk and supported by policies aimed at improving household food security, access to social services, women's status and education and fostering equitable growth, they can be very successful in overcoming malnutrition.

Governments should be reminded of their pledges and pronouncements in relation to nutrition by widely publicizing relevant international declarations related to reducing hunger and promoting food and nutrition security. AGN needs to create partnerships and engage with civil society groups and local partners to increase public awareness for nutrition and publicise successful policies and intervention programmes. AGN should focus on a few pilot countries where opportunity for success exists and develop case studies to provide evidence of success of large-scale food-based activities for better nutrition and increase AGN's visibility within FAO by more effective collaboration with relevant units.

#### *Training and capacity building actions*

Success of food and nutrition improvement programmes depends very much on the capacity of governmental institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations to provide effective nutrition support services. Consequently, training and capacity building of such institutions in the various aspects of nutrition in development and the linkages with agriculture and health including assessment, design, management and monitoring of such programmes is crucial. Training may be conducted formally as well as through in-service training with the participation of different sectors. Support for capacity building is needed for the assessment of training needs, developing and conducting training programmes and for including indicators of capacity development in performance monitoring.

AGN can play key role in supporting countries' efforts to build the capacities of personnel in government institutions responsible for providing support to nutrition policy, programme development and implementation, both at national and sub-national levels. AGN should develop a comprehensive strategy and mobilize support to address gaps in capacity that exist in low-income countries in the provision of nutrition knowledge and practice, including nutrition information and education for the public and vulnerable population groups. As part of the strategy, training programmes can be developed aimed at young nutrition practitioners to create a cadre of future nutrition specialists and advocates to work in low-income countries. AGN should support country efforts by developing training materials and curricula and support the development of courses for nutrition professionals, practitioners and educators. The development of e-learning materials, though expensive in their development, may prove to be cost-effective given their potential for reaching many users.

#### *Assessment*

The generation and management of information and knowledge on food consumption, dietary patterns and nutrition is one of AGN's comparative advantages. AGN should continue to develop and support the use of tools for monitoring and evaluating both food insecurity and nutrition insecurity, for monitoring and evaluating the nutrition impact of FAO (non nutrition) projects and of food and nutrition security policies and programmes. AGN should continue to develop indicators and indices to measure the extent of hunger, food insecurity and poverty (such as HFIAS, Dietary Diversity Score (DDS), Body Mass Index (BMI) and stunting)

disaggregated by vulnerable groups and integrated into national surveillance systems, and to provide technical assistance to develop, apply and maintain such systems at country level. Food and nutrition information systems should demonstrate the added value of incorporating specific nutrition objectives into policies and programmes for reducing poverty and improving nutrition by conducting case studies to analyse and document the impact of nutrition improvement actions on poverty reduction and overall development.

#### *Food composition and nutrient requirements*

FAO has long-standing expertise and a comparative advantage in food composition (INFOODS Secretariat) and nutrient requirements (with WHO as a partner). Understanding the root causes of malnutrition necessitates knowledge of human nutrient requirements and the nutrient content of foods in the food supply. For regulatory purposes, food composition is the basic information required for food labelling and health claims; and together with nutrient requirements for nutrient reference values, upper tolerable limits, and safety assessments of nutrients and other food components. The cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition requires food composition data for conservation and sustainable use of food biodiversity; for plant and animal molecular biology and policy advice for health, agriculture and environment sectors; and for advocacy and mainstreaming of food biodiversity for improving nutrition. Food insecurity and vulnerability assessments, and food consumption surveys require nutrient data for their evaluation. Both food composition and nutrient requirements are fundamental to all nutrition-related activities, and many diverse activities, and should therefore be strengthened in the future.

## **6. Closure**

The meeting was closed by Mr Boutrif who thanked the participants for their active participation which provides a basis for further reflection and discussion on AGN's future work. He said the Retreat will lead to a more solid and clearer understanding of the comparative advantages of the role of nutrition in FAO and thereby of AGN's role in FAO, and of equal importance, of FAO's role in nutrition. The deliberations provide AGN with a guide for preparing a position paper and workplans for 2009, as well as inputs to the FAO Reform Process. Certainly and not unexpectedly, there is still a need to continue this process and start the more crucial and difficult work to prioritize with consensus the technical themes of all groups and to identify what needs to be given priority under current staff and budgetary conditions. Mr Boutrif urged that the opportunities for strengthening nutrition presented by current challenges should not be missed and that AGN uses this for advancing and strengthening the work and role of nutrition in FAO.

## Annex 1

### In-house Retreat on *The Role of Nutrition in FAO* A G E N D A

#### 1. Venue, dates and duration

FAO HQ Rome, Philippine Room (C277/281), 4 and 5 November 2008

#### 2. Purpose and expected outcome

The **purpose** of the retreat is

- a) to receive information on new/upcoming priority issues related to food and agriculture requiring FAO nutrition work in the long term;
- b) to elaborate an enhanced definition of the comparative advantage of nutrition in FAO;
- c) hold discussions and reflect on the role of nutrition in FAO ( direction, functions, scope) and strategies allowing closer and integrated work on food and nutrition assessment, policy and programmes of the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN) and stronger collaboration with other relevant technical units in FAO.

As **outcome**, a set of conclusions are expected which will serve

- a) as the basis for an AGN position paper highlighting the technical and scientific arguments of the essential role of nutrition in order to strengthen the overall work of FAO;
- b) for the elaboration of the plans of work for 2009 and beyond; and
- c) as clarification of the position of AGN in the “international nutrition architecture”

#### 3. Participants

Approximately 30 participants, including 5 external experts and one external moderator, all staff of AGN involved in assessment, policy and programmes and invited technical staff from relevant other technical units of FAO ( ESA, TCO/E).

#### 4. Agenda

*Tuesday, 4 November*

9.00 - 9.15     **Opening remarks** by Modibo T. Traoré, Assistant Director-General, Agriculture Department (AG)

**Welcome and Introduction** by Ezzeddine Boutrif, Director, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN)

##### **New/upcoming issues in food and agriculture**

9.15 - 10.00    Presentation of paper 1: “Long-term perspectives in agricultural development –implication for food consumption and nutrition” by Josef Schmidhuber (ESA). Discussion. Rapporteur: F. Simmersbach

##### **Comparative advantage of nutrition in FAO**

10.00 - 10.45    Presentation of paper 2 : “Overview of the international nutrition architecture and comparative advantage in nutrition of other UN agencies”, by Richard Longhurst (Institute for Development Studies, UK –IDS). Discussion. Rapporteur: F. Simmersbach

Coffee break

11.15 - 13.00 Presentations of paper 3: “Importance of introducing nutrition into food security, agriculture and development policies and plans – constraints and solutions”, by Suraya Ismail. Discussion.  
Presentation of paper 4: “Importance to introduce nutrition into agriculture and related health and education programmes – constraints and solutions” by Stuart Gillespie (IFPRI – International Food Policy Research Institute). Discussion.  
Rapporteur: F. Simmersbach

Lunch

14.00 - 15.00 Presentation of paper 5: “The importance of food and nutrition assessment for policies and programmes in agriculture and development – constraints and solutions” by John Mason (Tulane University, New Orleans, USA). Discussions.  
Rapporteur: F. Simmersbach

**Discussions and Reflections on *The Role of Nutrition in FAO*  
(functions, scope, integration and collaboration)**

15.00 - 16.00 Presentations of three papers on role, scope and direction of nutrition in FAO by three Senior Officers, AGN.  
Rapporteurs: P. Glasauer and L. Amoroso

Tea/coffee break

16.15 - 17.30 Discussion.



*Wednesday, 5 November*

9.00 – 10.30 Discussions on integration of technical activities and collaboration among technical groups of AGN.  
Rapporteurs: B. Thompson and C. Deligia.

Coffee break

10.45 - 13.00 Discussions on collaboration in- house, Regional and Sub-Regional Offices and with other UN agencies.  
Rapporteurs: J. Albert and H. Fournols.

Lunch

14.00 -15.30 Discussion on current capacities and future needs.  
Rapporteurs: V. Menza and N. Bayasgalanbat.

Tea/coffee break

16.00 -17.30 **-Conclusions.** Rapporteur: F. Simmersbach

**Annex 2**

**Questionnaire on the Role of Nutrition in FAO  
for FAO Representatives**

***Background***

The Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN) of FAO is organizing an in-house retreat from 4 -5 November 2008 in order to reach consensus on the role of nutrition in FAO in the light of new challenges for nutrition in agriculture and development. The retreat will serve to identify strategies that will strengthen FAO's work at global, regional and country level for ending hunger and raising levels of nutrition.

In preparations for this, we are requesting that FAO Representatives to complete the short questionnaire (below) and send it to the technical units for their completion. Please note that a separate questionnaire has been prepared for completion by those technical units of FAO which are collaborating closely with AGN in nutrition-related technical fields. We would appreciate it if you could complete the questionnaire and return it to us not later than Monday 13 October. We estimate that the completing the form will not take more than 15 minutes. Thank you for your collaboration.

1. Since 2007, has the Government requested from your Office nutrition-related technical assistance (please exclude all issues of Codex Alimentarius and food control and safety related issues in this and all following questions)?  
Yes..... Frequently..... Rarely..... No.....
2. Since 2007, have locally-based UN agencies made requests to your Office for collaboration on nutrition-related issues?  
Yes..... Frequently..... Rarely..... No.....
3. Have local NGOs or INGOs made such requests?  
Yes..... Frequently..... Rarely..... No.....
4. Is the technical support you receive from AGN sufficient? Yes.....No.....N/A.....
5. Is the technical support on nutrition you receive from Regional/sub-Regional Offices sufficient? Yes..... No.....
6. Is nutrition integrated into planned and ongoing government agriculture and rural development programmes? Yes..... Fully..... Partially..... No.....
7. Is there need for more technical assistance from AGN? Yes.... No.....
8. Does the Government have a food and nutrition policy? Yes..... No.....
9. If yes, which is the coordinating office for this? Ministry of Agriculture... Ministry of Health..... Prime Ministers Office..... Other (specify).....
10. Is a food and nutrition policy included in the Government's agricultural and rural development policies and plans? Yes..... Fully..... Partially..... No.....
11. Could the current technical assistance related to nutrition to the Government be improved by more frequent country visits of AGN HQ technical staff..... Regional/Sub-regional staff..... Consultants.....?
12. Observations/comments  
.....
13. Suggestions for strengthening collaboration with AGN?  
.....

## **Questionnaire on the Role of Nutrition in FAO** for FAO technical units

### **Background**

The Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN) of FAO is organizing an in-house retreat from 4 -5 November 2008 in order to reach consensus on the role of nutrition in FAO in the light of new challenges for nutrition in agriculture and development. The retreat will serve to identify strategies that will strengthen FAO's work at global, regional and country level for ending hunger and raising levels of nutrition.

In preparations for this, we are requesting that those technical units of FAO which are collaborating closely with AGN in nutrition-related technical fields to complete the short questionnaire (below) and send it to the technical units for their completion. Please note that a separate questionnaire has been prepared for completion by FAO Representatives. We would appreciate it if you could complete the questionnaire and return it to us not later than Monday 13 October. We estimate that the completing the form will not take more than 15 minutes. Thank you for your collaboration.

### **Questionnaire**

1. Which subject matters related to nutrition do you consider of direct and practical importance to your work for which you need technical input from AGN? (e.g. assessment (dietary, nutritional status, food security), nutrition policy and planning, nutrition education etc). Please list in order of priority.....

.....  
.....

2. Have you requested technical assistance from AGN for these issues during 2007-2008?

Yes.....      No.....

3. Are you receiving sufficient technical assistance from AGN?

Yes.....      No.....

4. Will you need more technical assistance in nutrition in your technical field in future?

Yes....      No.....

5. Are you obtaining technical assistance in nutrition-related matters from external consultants paid by your own managed funds?

Yes.....      Often.....      Sometimes.....      No.....

6. If you answered YES to question 5, please indicate reason (cross more than one item if necessary):

- a) long term needs which AGN cannot provide
- b) input of AGN not meeting required standards
- c) upon request there were no financial resources by AGN to share funds
- d) it is easier to work with external consultants for various reasons

7. Observations/comments

.....

8. Suggestions for strengthening collaboration with AGN

**Summary of Responses to Questionnaire**  
**Preparatory activity for AGN *In-house Retreat on the Role of Nutrition in FAO***  
**4 and 5 November 2008**

No. of questionnaires sent to FAORs = 96; 28 replies, Africa (18) and Latin America (8)  
No. of questionnaires sent to FAO technical units = 11; 6 replies

**Replies from FAORs**

1. They receive frequent requests for nutrition from governments and from local UN agencies for collaboration on nutrition related issues, and fewer requests for this from NGOs/INGOs.

2. Less than half the FAORs consider AGN's technical support sufficient. A majority of FAORs do not consider the support from our Regional/Sub-regional Nutrition Offices sufficient.

3. There is need and potential for more AGN work with governments. Nutrition in the majority of countries is only partially incorporated into agriculture and development programmes. A majority of countries have a Food and Nutrition Policy the responsible government office for this policy is the Ministry of Agriculture (1/3 of countries), the Ministry of Health (1/3), or the Prime Minister's Office (1/3). A food and nutrition policy in the majority of countries is only partially integrated into agricultural policies and rural development plans. A majority of FAORs ask for more contact with HQ staff and more projects in order to strengthen FAO's technical assistance in nutrition to governments.

4. Requests for improved collaboration with AGN include more information and advocacy material, and to be available on the website; regular training and technical updating of office and government staff; more support to programme formulation and implementation, and the translation of regional strategies into national nutrition programmes and plans.

**Replies from FAO technical units**

6. All expect more collaboration with AGN in the future; highest interest/need is for nutrition and dietary assessment and policy and planning, some for nutrition education

7. Specific subject matters for collaboration are: horticulture and nutrition (AGP); human energy requirements (ESS); assessment on vulnerable groups and micro-nutrients (ESW/ESS); anthropometric data by age and gender (ESS); expansion of global assessment of undernutrition beyond energy deficiency (ESS), and nutrition education (ESW).

8. There is overlap between AGN and ESA and scope for synergy and consolidation which need to be resolved (TCO); need to combine normative strength of AGN with TCO field programme development to improve field programme performance (TCO). Technical inputs by AGN to emergencies is too general, hence TCE works more with WFP and local nutrition institutions; increased, more concrete and systematic inputs from AGN is required (TCE); Disaster Relief Management (DRM)-related nutrition inputs could be a significant area of future collaboration (TCE). Joint programming in assessment and nutrition education is proposed (ESW). Collaboration with AGN is extremely valuable (KCE). Good opportunities exist for collaboration on food quality and safety but this would require strengthened team building effort from AGN staff dealing with this issue (AGP).

## Annex 3

### Notes for writers of papers

The following notes are for your consideration in the preparation of your paper:

- The importance of **nutrition in agriculture and development** has been well documented, even if at national level nutrition often remains the responsibility of the health sector and tends to focus more on curative aspects of malnutrition, especially mothers and children. While food and nutrition security – the mandate of FAO for which we have a **comparative advantage** - has become a priority for countries, these issues are rarely imbedded in national agricultural policies and plans and remain mostly at the programme level.
- Since the 1970s, efforts have been made by FAO and others to integrate nutrition into agriculture and rural development through technical assistance at policy, programme and community level supported by in-service and formal training. During this period emphasis in food and nutrition assistance has changed from projects to programmes to policy, from field level action to normative work and back. Value was added to these efforts by looking at environmental impact and sustainability, gender focus and recently human rights (right to food, to health, and others). Yet, nutrition problems expressed as under-nutrition or hunger remain unacceptably high.
- International Conferences (ICN in 1992 and World Food Summits in 1996 and 2002) were held and solemn Declarations made, international goals set (Millennium Goals) and Action Plans produced to reduce hunger and malnutrition. It appears that the international and national agendas are now set to tackle these problems but the latest figures show the numbers of the hungry are rising rather than being halved.
- What are the **constraints**, the technical or institutional impediments, for improving **food security and nutrition** of vulnerable people through agriculture based actions? What needs to be done to incorporate **nutrition objectives, concerns and considerations in agriculture and rural development**? How can agriculture based food and nutrition issues be integrated in a sustainable fashion in policies, plans and programmes? Would the re-establishment or strengthening of Nutrition Coordination Committee's, or the adoption of a **national food and nutrition policy** provide a solution? What needs to be done to make it a success this time round? Is **assessment, monitoring and evaluation** based on food, dietary and nutrition indicators using updated modern tools leading to better use of data in the development of policies and plans for food security and nutrition security? If not, what needs to be done to achieve this? Will emphasis on **capacity building** (in-service and formal training) and **information and education** for the public make the necessary change and create the environment for long-term success? Will **institution building** do this and in what form?
- Nutrition is a vast field and the voices for a holistic approach can be heard often. However, resources are limited and priorities have to be set. What are these **priorities** and what **strategies** need to be adopted to take them up by the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division of FAO so that technical assistance by FAO to member countries in nutrition can be more effective? Will more coordination between government sectors and more collaboration of UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, WFP) at national level make the difference needed for long-term change?
- The emphasis of the paper, particularly of the presentation, should thus be on what **needs to be continued and strengthened, on constraints and possible solutions** so as to stimulate discussions on the future role of **nutrition in agriculture**.

## **Annex 4**

### **List of Participants**

#### **A. External Participants and international consultants**

Terri Ballard, TCO  
Karel Callens, TCO  
Barbara Ekwall, ESA  
JoAnne Freeman  
Stuart Gillespie  
Suraiya Ismail  
Richard Longhurst  
Cristina Lopriore, ESA  
Josef Schmidhuber, ESA  
Ricardo Sibrian, ESS  
Mark Smulders, ESA

#### **B. AGN Participants (including local consultants and volunteers)**

Janice Albert  
Leslie Amoroso  
Juliet Aphane  
Nomin Bayasgalanbat  
Ezzeddine Boutrif  
Barbara Burlingame  
Sarah Cahill  
Renata Clarke  
Maria de Lourdes Costarrica  
Chiara Deligia  
Marie-Claude Dop  
Charlotte Dufour  
Florence Egal  
Hélène Fournols  
Peter Glasauer  
Gina Kennedy  
Mary Kenny  
Irela Mazar  
Valeria Menza  
Ellen Muehlhoff  
Franz Simmersbach  
Brian Thompson  
Bob Weisell

## **Annex 5**

### **Details and Procedures in Preparing for the Retreat**

For assisting in the preparation for the Retreat and in facilitating its proceedings, a consultant, Mr. Franz Simmersbach, was recruited from 11 September – 7 November 2008. On the basis of discussions on the purpose and expected outcomes of the Retreat with all professional staff from the three nutrition groups of AGN, a draft agenda was prepared and circulated for comments to staff (final provisional agenda attached as Annex 1). Regional and Sub-Regional Food and Nutrition Advisors were invited to send priority themes from their respective regions for discussion during the Retreat. Two short questionnaires (Annex 2) were prepared and sent to 11 technical units in FAO collaborating with AGN in various technical fields and to all 96 FAO Representatives respectively, in order to solicit information about their collaboration with AGN and their perceived needs for further collaboration in the future. The summary results of these questionnaires were circulated to staff as background material.

A note (Annex 3) was prepared as a guide for the writers of the papers and three background papers (Strategy for FAO's Assistance to Social, Economic, Food and Nutrition Policy, The Role of Nutrition in FAO, and Integrating Nutrition into Food Security Policies "Nutrition Programme- Management Views on the IEE Recommendations"(Annex 6, 7, and 8 respectively) were prepared and circulated. A list of questions for possible discussion and reflection was distributed to all staff (Annex 9). Telephonic discussions and e-mail exchange were made to brief the Moderator and prepare for her contribution to the Retreat. A one-day briefing took place at FAO with the Moderator immediately prior to the retreat.

## Annex 6

### Background Document: Strategy for FAO's Assistance to Social, Economic, Food and Nutrition Policy

#### 1. Analysis of needs and FAO comparative advantage

With limited resources equivalent to around one US Dollar per undernourished person at its disposal, there is little FAO can do to carry out its mandate (FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy and thereby contribute to the MDGs, particularly MDG1, on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, and MDG7 on sustainable management of natural resources, unless it uses these resources to influence policies and the way resources from other sources (governments and their development partners) are being used in the areas of the Organization's mandate.

This reality is reflected in the strong demand by the Membership for FAO's policy and strategy assistance. This demand is confirmed by various surveys (including that conducted by the IEE), consultations, discussion in FAO's Governing Bodies and an analysis of recently prepared National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks for FAO's assistance to Member States. The exact nature of demand varies from region to region, but overall demand for policy and strategy support is divided almost equally among sectoral policy, sub-sectoral policy and specific policy issues, while 40 percent of demand is for capacity building in policy. Demand is highly dependent on FAO's capacity to deliver in a timely way, the image FAO has in a given region or country and on the quality of the policy dialogue that it has with Member countries.

It is expected that demand for FAO's policy and strategy assistance will depend in the future on: (i) its ability to position itself as a quality lead provider of assistance compared to its competitors; (ii) emerging policy issues and challenges; and (iii) future trends in policy and strategy assistance modalities. FAO's ability will depend above all on the degree of priority that will be given to policy work by the Membership, and the extent to which the Organization will be able to build on its strengths and address its weaknesses. Emerging policy issues and challenges that can be foreseen today are all of a complex nature that requires a pluridisciplinary analysis and response: hunger and malnutrition; high food prices; transformation of world agriculture; transboundary risks; public goods such as healthy ecosystems, water, biodiversity, climate and energy; broad access to technological innovations; and disasters and related food emergencies. Trends already at work suggest for the future an increasingly knowledge-intensive policy assistance based on a stronger policy dialogue and the facilitation of policy processes.

FAO's comparative advantages result from several specificities and strengths of the Organization:

- its natural leadership in international efforts to defeat hunger and raise levels of nutrition.
- Its recognition as a global forum and venue for negotiating global policy frameworks.
- Its unique mix of pluridisciplinary skills in technical, economic and social skills domains.
- Its advocacy role through Summits and Conferences.

- Its presence at regional and country level with direct access and cooperation with regional organizations and governments.
- Its unique capacity to use experiences at country level to benefit policy advice for other countries.
- Its ability to link policy work with practical experience of people-centred actions at country/community level.
- An image of independence and neutrality, and a consultative working style.

## **2. Overall vision, mission, strategic objective**

*Vision:* In 2018, FAO will be the main source of independent and evidence-based policy and strategy advice in the area of agriculture<sup>1</sup>, rural development, food security and nutrition. It will be the natural first point of contact for Members to request for policy and strategy development assistance for guiding sector and sub-sector work, advising on cross-sector issues such as hunger and poverty alleviation, food security, nutrition and livelihoods and the right to food as contributions for achieving the MDGs, as well as responding to major inter-sector policy development issues, trends and challenges, in the areas of its mandate. It will provide efficient, effective and timely assistance to the Membership at global, regional and national level. It will work in partnership with other organizations, capitalizing on comparative advantages of partners, particularly, but not exclusively within the UN System.

*Mission:*

- Meet the needs and priorities of the Membership for support in policy and strategy development in a result-oriented and demand-driven way, while engaging in advocacy when justified by evidence.
- Apply agreed guiding principles based on core UN values which reflect the focus on people (raise levels of nutrition and standards of living and welfare, livelihoods, food security and the right to food) that underpins the interpretation of FAO's role and the implementation of its mandate.

*Strategic Objective:* Respond effectively, efficiently and in a timely manner to the needs of the Membership by providing policy and strategy development assistance to help them achieve the MDGs.

## **3. Expected main outcomes**

The main outcomes of the Strategy for FAO's work in the area of Assistance in Development of Policy and Strategy are as follows:

- At the global level, the international community will be better equipped to address the complex policy challenges it faces in the area of agriculture, rural development, food security and nutrition, based on evidence from pluridisciplinary studies and country experiences, and through enhanced facilitation of multi-stakeholder policy processes.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document agriculture is taken in its broad sense and includes crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry.

- At the regional level, regional organizations will have a deeper understanding of all the dimensions of the challenges they face in the area of agriculture, rural development, food security and nutrition, and their capacity strengthened to manage complex processes leading to better adapted and harmonized national policies and strategies.
- At the national level:
  - Governments will be able to take their policy and strategy decisions based on enhanced capacity and knowledge (based in part on other countries' experiences) and link them with investment formulation and budgetary processes.
  - Government policy and strategy decisions will be based on consultations with key stakeholders.

#### **4. Implementation issues**

This strategy assumes that FAO's policy and strategy development assistance work will see its priority enhanced in the Organization's Programme of Work and Budget. Higher priority will mean that a critical mass of highly qualified policy-oriented staff in FAO and a substantial amount of non-staff resources are in place to produce the various outputs required for FAO to become the main effective source of policy advice in its mandated areas. This will call for the allocation of a larger share of Regular Programme budget to policy and strategy work as well as the mobilization of additional extra-budgetary resources, preferably through a multidonor partnership programme to ensure the flexibility and responsiveness indispensable for effective policy and strategy assistance.

These resources will be used to reinforce the Organization's analytical work that will result in global, regional and national policy products, develop a capacity for policy intelligence and preparedness and to ensure adequate two-way linkages between norm-setting work conducted at Headquarters and assistance provided, particularly at decentralized levels. Because of the pluridisciplinary nature of the issues addressed, a specific mechanism will be needed for coordinating and integrating organically FAO's policy and strategy work and create the pluridisciplinary teams that will work on priority policy themes. Similarly, at country level, FAO's work in policy and strategy development will need to be closely linked to its investment formulation activities.

There will also be a need to strengthen the policy and strategy capacity of decentralized offices, particularly Country Offices as they constitute the main channel of policy dialogue with Member States. Training of the staff in those offices, the reinforcement of these offices through the recruitment of policy staff when activities justify, and the setting-up of support mechanisms from Headquarters, are some of the ways in which this capacity can be reinforced.

Lastly, providing high quality and responsive policy and strategy development assistance will also necessitate a revision of some of FAO's procedures:

- programme/project management should be outcome-based, to increase flexibility;

- more authority should be given to the FAOR for using TCP funds;
- utilization of international expertise under TCP funding should be authorized without need of a waiver; and
- the level of honorarium authorized for international consultants should be relaxed so as to put FAO in a position to take advantage of the best possible expertise available on the market.

## **Annex 7**

### **Background Document: The Role of Nutrition in FAO Brian Thompson, AGNP**

#### 1. Introduction

This note has been prepared to assist the Food and Consumer Protection Division of FAO in identifying and promoting the role of nutrition within the Organization leading to the preparation of an operational four year workplan for achieving the Strategic Objectives and Organizational Results identified in FAO's strategic planning exercise led by the Committee of the Conference-Independent External Evaluation (CoC-IEE) Working Group 1. The note describes what FAO is and what it does with specific reference to nutrition. This is followed by a summary of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) report's findings and recommendations for nutrition and of the deliberations of the CoC-IEE Working Group 1. The note discusses the role of nutrition in FAO and reviews our core functions and comparative advantages to identify areas where AGN can provide added value to FAO policies and programmes. The note ends by discussing the process by which AGN work plans may be prepared.

#### 2. Background: What FAO is and what it does

FAO is a Knowledge Organization present in all fields relevant to nutrition, food, agriculture and rural development, fisheries and forestry. FAO is a supplier of information and knowledge. It provides a neutral forum where nations meet to negotiate agreements and debate policy and address technical matters to provide the advice needed by decision-makers; and it is a source of expertise and technical assistance in best practices and policies.

According to the preamble of its constitution, FAO's mandate is "*to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living*" and is to do this by "*securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products*". As the only UN agency looking at nutrition from a food and agriculture perspective, FAO has a distinct comparative advantage as FAO is unique in that it is the only agency in the UN system that deals with the practical aspects of health, food and agriculture linkages.

AGN possesses a critical mass of expertise in the areas of national food and nutrition policy, assessment, and programme development. FAO's work in Nutrition includes providing reliable and current information (monitoring, information collection, compilation, analysis, interpretation and dissemination) to assess food and nutrition-related factors in support of the development of policies, strategies, programmes and plans of action for better nutrition through improved diets. AGN promotes a comprehensive "farm to fork" approach, focusing on sustainable food-based strategies to improve nutritional well-being and giving attention to the consumer end of the food supply chain. Activities include technical support for protecting and promoting nutrition from crisis to recovery and development, and nutrition education and consumer information for improving diets that stimulates demand for a diversified food supply, increases markets for food producers and boosts agricultural development and incomes. Nutrition is a standing item on the Committee on Food Security (CFS) and AGN is an active partner on the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) and collaborates with other UN agencies, bilateral partners and NGO/CSOs for improving nutrition and ending hunger.

### 3. Strategic Planning Exercises

#### a. The IEE report

The IEE report makes a number of references to nutrition and makes a number of recommendations on FAO's Nutrition Programme suggesting what areas of work could be discontinued and what should be continued due to FAO's comparative or absolute advantage. AGN has responded in detail to these recommendations (see Annex 1). In summary, AGN welcomes the reports conclusion that "*Raising levels of nutrition and ending hunger and undernutrition continue to be FAO's mandate and responsibility*". We are also in support of the IEE recommendation to "*move from agricultural production to income generation, access to food and nutrition*"; to focus on "*advocacy and policy support and provide a holistic approach to food security and nutrition*"; to "*Form a more systematic and differentiated assessment of the economic, food and nutrition policy support needs of FAO's developing member countries*" and to "*Pay increased attention to nutrition as an integral part of food, food security and food vulnerability policy, with more emphasis given to understanding the root causes of mal and under-nutrition; fully integrate nutrition work integrated into policy;*". We agree that our main concern should be to ensure nutrition objectives, concerns, considerations and outcomes are integrated into policies, strategies and programmes throughout the planning process. We are raising awareness of our recently produced tools and materials that emphasize better understanding of the root causes of mal and undernutrition and reorienting our work at community level to respond to countries needs for policy support and institutional capacity building for use by government, NGO and other implementing partners.

We approve of IEE's call for AGN to "*discontinue activities in home gardening, now undertaken by other Organizations*". AGN was only marginally involved in home gardening activities with input limited to the development of guides and other tools to assist poor household to grow vegetables and other crops that can improve the quality of the diet. What we will continue to do as part of efforts to promote dietary diversification strategies for combating micronutrient deficiencies, is to provide guidelines and tools for use by governments, NGO and other implementing partners for encouraging an increase in the production, access and consumption of an adequate quantity and variety of good quality and safe foods through various means including through home gardens.

However we are concerned that the IEE's opinion that there are areas (specific mention was made to nutrition education in schools and community nutrition) that are "*better carried out by other organizations, in particular UNICEF*" may have led to a feeling in some quarters that nutrition is more the responsibility of other organizations such as UNICEF and WFP rather than FAO and that FAO should end its work on nutrition and focus on food security. That nutrition can be better carried out by other organizations is a misconception and gives a distorted picture of what AGN does and what is our role in FAO. As said above, FAO is the only UN agency dealing with nutrition from a food and agriculture perspective. Other UN agencies (WHO, WFP, UNICEF) dealing with nutrition, address nutrition from a health, food aid or care perspective and focus more on children or particular vulnerable groups rather than on the general public. They largely promote narrow mother-child focused programmes or certain unsustainable and limited interventions such as fortification and supplementation. FAO as the principal UN agency focusing on agriculture, food and nutrition has experience in promoting food and agriculture-based improvements to nutrition and in linking nutrition with agricultural and rural development, food and health.

AGN recognizes that agricultural production, livelihoods, incomes and access to food, health and care all need to be addressed simultaneously if food and nutrition security are to be achieved. This requires support for an appropriate mix of enabling policies, institutions and infrastructure that support agricultural-based livelihoods and protect and promote food and nutrition security. No other agency is capable or willing to undertake this work. FAO therefore has both a unique role and a distinct comparative advantage in delivering the services needed for ensuring that agricultural development has a human focus that leads to improved access to and consumption of food for improving nutrition, thereby making a significant contribution to achieving all the MDGs.

Consequently in responding to the view that FAO should focus on food security rather than nutrition, FAO and its Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division needs to maintain its strong and active role in the field of nutrition by providing an agricultural and food friendly perspective to nutrition problems and therefore a food and agriculture approach to their solution. This underlines the importance of FAO for nutrition and the importance of nutrition for FAO. FAO cannot leave it to other agencies to look after nutrition. We need to do it as "One UN", with FAO providing our own complementary and essential contribution from a food and agriculture perspective.

#### b. CoC-IEE Working Group 1

In translating the IEE recommendations into strategic and operational plans, the Committee of the Conference-Independent External Evaluation (CoC-IEE) established three working groups, the first of which has been deliberating on FAO's strategic objectives and programmes and organizational results.

##### i. Strategic objectives:

In the hierarchy of results, Strategic Objectives are higher level results to be achieved by Member countries over a 10-15 year time period. Twelve Strategic Objectives have been identified which are listed below (PIRES dated 1 August 2008). The first six are core sector objectives of FAO (sustainable food production and management of natural resources) – crops, livestock, fisheries, quality and safety of food (SO D), forestry, and sustainable management of land and water. The other are six cross-cutting objectives including incomes and livelihoods, food security and nutrition (SO H), emergency preparedness and response, governance, gender and investments. While AGN has an interest in many of these Strategic Objectives, SO H is of major importance for AGN as it provides the basis for our existence and the direction for our future. Our response to this will likely determine our budget allocation. The full text of Strategic Objective H is given in Annex 2.

- A. Sustainable intensification of crop production
- B. Increased livestock production in support of rural development
- C. Sustainable management and use of fisheries and aquaculture resources
- D. Improved quality and safety of foods at all stages of the food chain
- E. Sustainable management of forests and trees
- F. Sustainable management of land, water and genetic resources and improved responses to global environmental challenges affecting food and agriculture
- G. Enhanced incomes and livelihoods in rural areas

- H. Improved food security and better nutrition [including implementation of the progressive realization of the right of adequate food in the context of national food security]
- I. Improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies
- J. Improved frameworks for global and regional governance on food and agriculture
- K. Gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in the rural areas
- L. Increased and more effective public and private investment in agriculture and rural development.

ii. Organizational results:

Organizational Results are the outcomes that are to be achieved over a 4 year period. They are the first step beyond the products and services (outputs) that FAO produces. Strategic Objective H has six Organizational Results and AGN has an interest in all of them. They are:

- H1 - policy advice and best practices;
- H2 - improving efficiency of food processing and markets;
- H3 - nutrition policies and programmes
- H4 - Right to Food
- H5 - trends and early warning
- H6 - statistics and other information

Organizational Result H3 of Strategic Objective H is at the heart of nutrition work in AGN:

“Countries able to design and implement nutrition programmes, incorporate nutrition concerns, considerations and objectives into agricultural and rural development policies, strategies, programmes and plans of action and into food security policies and interventions through:

- analyses, guidelines, methodologies and approaches for assessing and analysing the nutritional situation and the impact of interventions;
- technical support, capacity building and policy advice to enhance the design of policies and strategies and the implementation of integrated food security and nutrition plans of action, in support of the poor and food insecure.”

iii. Indicators:

Given the relevance of OR H3 to nutrition in FAO, the preliminary list of indicators identified for each of the Organizational Results show how we may contribute to achieving SO H. Indicators are provided on three levels: outputs, outcomes and impact. Outputs are the goods and services provided directly by the Organisation. Outcomes are the results generated by the use of these goods and services by the primary user. The impact is the benefit derived from using these outcomes. For the Results-Based-Management System to be functional, indicators must be verifiable, both for internal use and regular reporting to the Governing Bodies, through the biennial Performance Implementation Report. The number of indicators should be realistic to what can be achieved over the four year time horizon of the Medium-Term Plan and for each biennium.

iv. Core functions and comparative advantages of FAO:

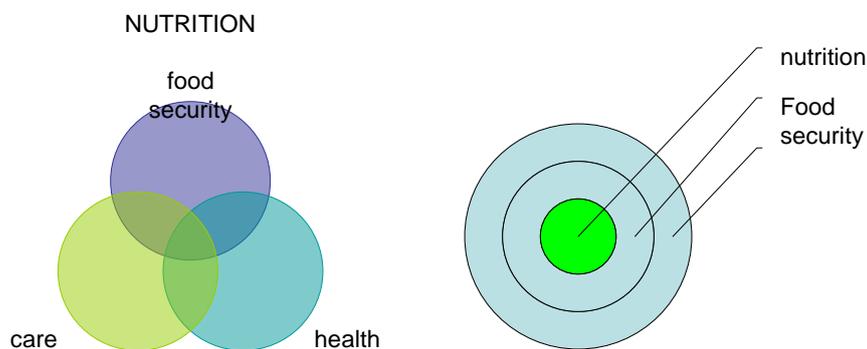
The preparation of our work plans will need to take into consideration the core functions and comparative advantages of FAO identified by the CoC-IEE WG1. These are:

- Perspectives, trend monitoring and assessment
- Information, knowledge, statistics
- International instruments
- Policy advice
- Technical support, capacity building
- Advocacy, communication
- Interdisciplinary approach
- Partnerships, alliances

4. Nutrition and food security – what is the added value of AGN’s nutrition work to FAO?

Food security sometimes may usefully be seen as being part of nutrition, the left side figure. Alternatively nutrition may sometimes usefully be seen as being a part of food security, the right side figure. Both can be correct depictions of their inter-relationship depending upon your viewpoint. Does it matter?

## nutrition and food security?



For determining the focus and the limits of our work programme perhaps it does. As noted above, the IEE report questioned the role of nutrition in FAO and spoke on the comparative advantage of other agencies in nutrition. The fact that “*and better nutrition*” is included in the title of OR H3 indicates that AGN has been reasonably successful in advocating for the important role of nutrition in FAO. However to maintain the relevance of that role, we must be clear what the scope and limits of that role is. A recent Aide Memoire of the CoC-IEE WG1 reports that “*Members emphasised that adequate nutrition should be seen as an aspect of household food security and not in a separate context*”. No matter the questionable accuracy of the Aide Memoire, it drives home the point that we need to respond to critics by clearly articulating what it is that AGN provides to FAO programmes and demonstrating that our added value is unique and indisputable.

The BIG question is what is the role of nutrition in FAO and how can AGN shape its work to meet the expectation of Member countries, achieve our strategic objectives, satisfy senior management while remaining within the “core functions and comparative advantages” of FAO?

From the viewpoint of the left side figure, nutrition encompasses not only food but also health and care. This clearly illustrates that food security may be essential but not sufficient for better nutrition. This is the consistent position of WHO, UNICEF and other non-food agencies. Consequently if we consider FAO’s mandate “to raise levels of nutrition”, does this imply that AGN should be involved in areas that are clearly outside the domain of FAO’s expertise? I think not as these areas are best dealt with by other agencies, and this perhaps is what the IEE report intended when they made these remarks on our comparative advantage. And this is perhaps the reason for similar concerns and misgivings of some of our colleagues that our work overlaps WHO and UNICEF. If we are to survive in FAO we must correct this misperception by clearly showing that AGN’s work in nutrition from the food and agriculture side is complementary to but distinct and separate from the health and care side of nutrition.

Should we instead focus on the value nutrition adds to food security and other food and agriculture programmes? If so, what does this mean in practice? What is it that we can provide to food security policies and programmes, agricultural and rural development policies, plans and programmes, project design, monitoring and evaluation that will confirm AGN as providing benefits of undeniable and unquestionable value. These are the questions we must have answers to before commencing the next step in the process of preparing our annual workplans and completing our programme of work and budget exercises.

#### 5. Operational Work Plan Preparation

We should first focus on preparing a detailed workplan for Strategic Objective H. Although nutrition, as distinct from food quality and safety (food quality and safety has its own Strategic Objective D), has a contributing role to play in the implementation of other Strategic Objectives, as well as to other Organizational Results within SO H other than H3, given its major importance we need to get this one right first.

Why should we care so much? Because the resource allocation for nutrition work in AGN and consequently our ability to develop our normative core programme of work, fill staff positions, recruit consultants, engage in or support field activities will likely depend upon the manner in which we can tailor our workplans to assist member countries achieve Organizational Result H3.

So the first question is how can we best assist countries achieve SO H and what is the process by which this is to be prepared?

A meeting of AGN staff from the three groups working on assessment, policy and programmes, and education and knowledge transfer took place Friday 8 August to discuss these issues. It was proposed that we continue these discussions over the next few months for jointly preparing an integrated workplan for the rest of 2008 and for 2009 on how we are to assist countries achieve H3. Indicators for two years and for four years will need to be identified as well as milestones to monitor progress in implementation.

The workplan should eloquently make the case for FAO's comparative advantage in the nutrition field. It should be integrated and harmonized ensuring that outputs, outcomes and impact are coherent and synchronized, with outputs being used to produce outcomes in a sequential manner. In summary we need to:

- focus on how AGN can assist countries achieve H3 through support to food and agriculture
- review current workplans and FAO's core functions and comparative advantages
- prepare revised plan of work for 2008 and 2009
- produce an integrated and harmonized workplan with coherent and synchronized outputs, outcomes and impact
- identify indicators for two years and four years (Medium Term Plan) as well as milestones to monitor progress in implementation

In preparing the workplan we need to make explicit the inter-connectivity and linkages between each of the current three Programme Entities (assessment, policies and programmes, education), each of us producing outputs that can be used by others for producing outcomes.

For example, in assessment, we need to continue to conduct nutritional assessment, monitoring and evaluation of FAO food and agricultural programmes especially food security policies, programmes and interventions using **nutrition-specific indicators**. AGN's strength is the development and fine-tuning of metrics designed to assess household food security and dietary diversity. Such information is critical for **policy advice, targeting and impact assessment** and **programme design and evaluation** and the outputs of assessment are to be used as inputs for such purposes.

The transfer of knowledge, communication and **nutrition education** ranges from face-to-face communication through to mass marketing of public nutrition and social awareness. A critical aspect of this is the success by which such programmes change behaviours for positive nutrition and here AGN has particularly strong comparative advantage, especially in promoting **dietary diversity**. Crop diversification is an objective for a majority of FAO's partner countries, and AGN involvement is needed to promote the translation of crop diversification into dietary diversification. This transition from "farm to fork" (i.e. from crop diversification to an improved quality and variety of intake via a more varied diet) may be expedited by a range of marketing campaigns that raise awareness of dietary diversity at the national and district level.

Kindly note, none of the above critical areas of what nutrition provides to agriculture, are part of UNICEF or WFP mandates.

In summary:

- assess factors related to food security, consumption, dietary diversity and nutritional status
- analyse and interpret with contextual information
- provide feedback for:
  - methodology refinement
  - policy development, briefs
  - programme development, plans of action
  - developing best practices and communicating lessons learnt, knowledge transfer including nutrition education

AGN's aim should be to raise levels of nutrition by providing support to food and agriculture. To do this we need to reorient our activities so that added value is provided to our colleagues in food production, harvesting, storage, processing, distribution and marketing to ensure their activities encourage nutrition improvement. This requires greater focus on the use of food for improving nutrition, on the food and agriculture sector and on rural areas, on food and the consumer, on the demand for food and on food utilization.

The Director of AGN has suggested that in conducting this task we solicit the views of international experts and invite them to a meeting in Rome where we may discuss these issues with a view to get clear direction for the future of nutrition in FAO. This would at the same time provide an opportunity to showcase to FAO colleagues that AGN is responsible for and being pro-active in taking the lead in the nutrition area.

## **Annex 8**

### **Background Document: Integrating Nutrition into Food Security Policies Brian Thompson, AGNP**

#### **What do we mean by Policy?**

**A policy** consists of a set of inter-related decisions for the setting of goals or long term aims of where one wants get to; a series of policy instruments or tools for moving towards that goal; the ability to collect information to monitor and inform on progress being made in getting there; and the analytical capacity to use such information to compare and contrast the efficacy of different ways, strategies or approaches for reaching them.

**A food security policy** is one where food security objectives are the goal. Food security as defined by the World Food Summit exists when all people at all times have the physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Consequently achieving food security means ensuring that sufficient food is available, that supplies are relatively stable and that those in need of food can obtain it. Four pillars were identified: availability, stability, access and utilisation (see Appendix 1).

At national level food security may be achieved by actions grouped into the following categories: those related to food and agricultural production, such as quantity, quality and variety; those related to markets and the economy, for instance control of prices and incomes, export and import tariffs, input subsidies etc.; and social support mechanisms or safety nets for those who are unable to take advantage of or who are disadvantaged by the policy environment. Trade offs and balances between these tools and other potentially competing and conflicting policies for example such as those related to environmental concerns and to economic growth needs to be worked out and cost/benefit analysis can assist in this work.

However greater progress can be expected if nutrition objectives, concerns and considerations were to be explicitly integrated into agricultural and rural development policies and more specifically into food security policies.

#### **What is the linkage between nutrition and food security?**

The body requires adequate quantities of nutrients in a biologically utilisable form to support normal growth and development. Nutritional requirements for populations and individuals may be calculated for energy, protein, fats, vitamins and minerals and FAO together with the World Health Organization (WHO), have held several Expert Consultations that provide the scientific basis for determining the levels of human nutrient requirements.

**Nutritional status** is the state by which the nutritional needs and requirements of an individual or group of individuals are or are not being met. This may be assessed in terms of overall energy intakes and expenditures, or of specific nutrients such as proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals and trace elements. Poor nutritional status affects growth and development, body size and physical activity, and clinical health status. Good nutritional status is the basis for good health and normal growth and development. The ability to reach one's potential, to learn and to do work, and to fight infection all depend on good nutritional status.

**Malnutrition** is a term used to describe the consequences of chronically inadequate food intakes and/or sickness and infection which deplete body stores to such an extent that this may be measured by indicators of poor growth, clinical signs or an impairment of physiological function. It is commonly used to describe both undernutrition either of energy or of micronutrients as well as overnutrition. Micronutrient malnutrition commonly refers to vitamin and mineral deficiency disorders. It often occurs as part of general undernutrition due primarily to overall inadequate food intakes through either poor access to the foods that are good sources of these nutrients, poor dietary habits or infection.

The term “undernourishment” is used to refer to the status of persons whose food intakes regularly do not provide enough calories to meet their basic energy requirements. It is calculated from food supply data and estimates of food consumption derived from income distribution. Individuals whose food intakes are calculated as consistently falling below their energy requirements are considered to be in a state of undernourishment.

This differs from “undernutrition” which is most generally applied to the physical condition resulting from an energy (or a protein and energy) deficiency, but may also refer to vitamin and mineral deficiencies brought on by a failure to maintain body stores of these nutrients. Undernutrition used here denotes the status of persons whose anthropometric measurements indicate either inadequate food intake and/or poor health and sanitation conditions that may prevent them from deriving the full nutritional benefit from what they eat.

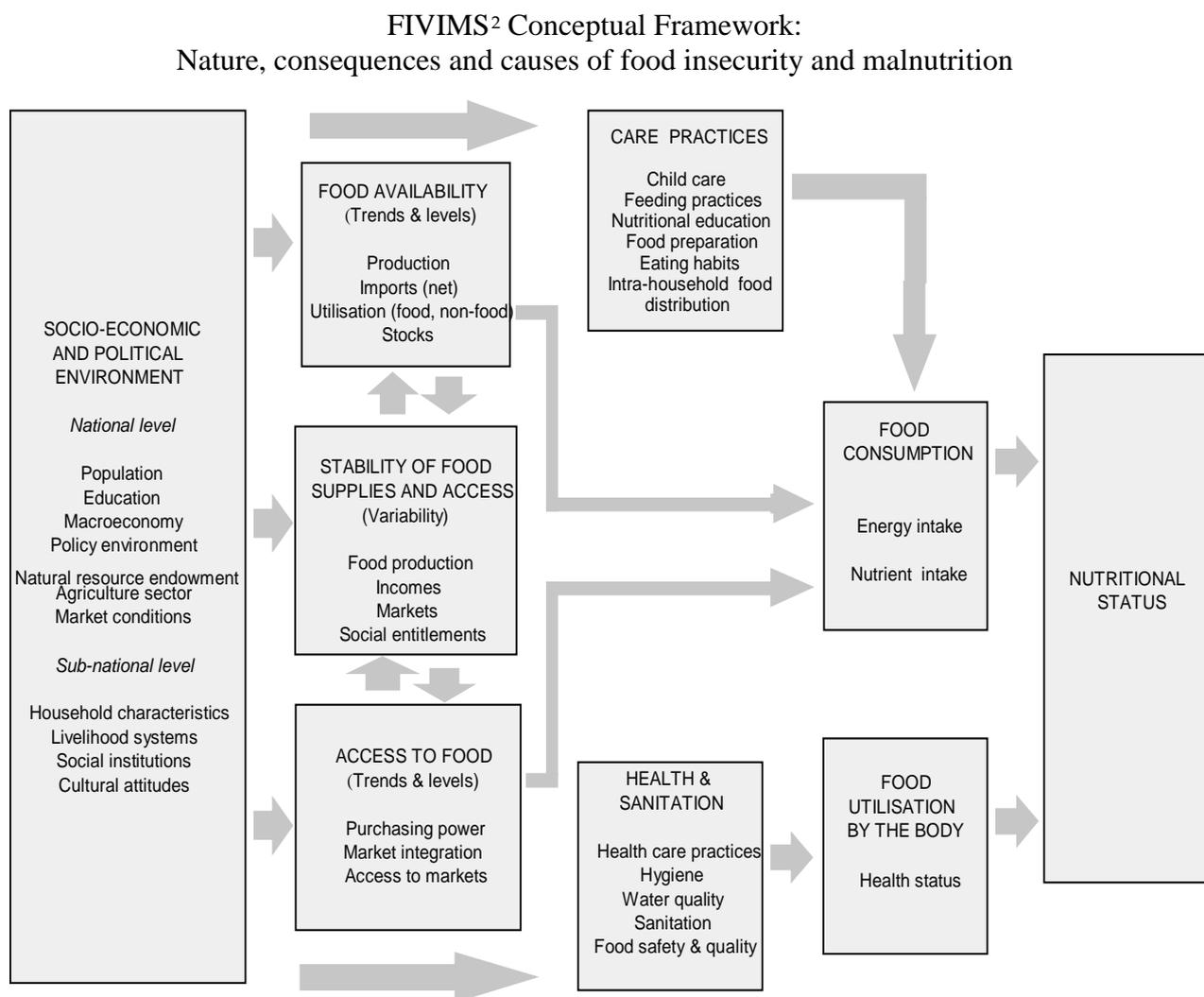
Through the measurement and assessment of weight, height, and age of children indicators of wasting (acute) stunting (chronic) and underweight are calculated and compared with those of standard levels to assess nutritional status; while the acute malnutrition is usually the result of seasonal food deficits, unsanitary drinking water, diarrhoea and/or infection, chronic malnutrition is usually linked to longer-term structural factors of poverty, low agricultural production, low income, debt, poor rural infrastructure, unbalanced diets as well as a lack of appropriate health care and other essential services.

### **Integrating nutrition into policy**

**A nutrition policy** is one where protecting and promoting good nutrition is the goal. Since the attainment of food security is an essential element of nutritional security, it is clear that nutrition objectives, concerns and considerations aimed at improving the nutritional status of people may be integrated into food security policies in all four of the above-mentioned pillars of food security, i.e. availability, stability, access and utilisation. These may include, for example, the introduction of nutritional considerations into agricultural and rural development projects, dietary guidelines, nutrition intervention programmes that benefit the entire population or specific groups of a population, nutrition education and awareness campaigns, and measures that facilitate the fulfilment of the right to food (see examples in Appendix 1).

Given the multi-sectoral nature of nutrition, there are a range of policies on food, agriculture, prices and incomes, health, and care that have an impact on nutrition. For instance a government policy that facilitates the access of the poorest segments of a population to basic foodstuffs through various measures, or introduces the fortification of some food products to eliminate a nutritional deficiency (e.g. Iron fortification of flour; Iodine fortification of salt; etc.), or influences the food consumption pattern towards a more balanced, nutritionally

Fig.1 Food insecurity and poor conditions of health and sanitation are the major determinants of nutritional status as indicated in the conceptual framework below.



improved diet, are all examples of nutrition policies. Therefore a comprehensive food and nutrition policy needs to address the four pillars of food security (availability, access, stability and utilization) as well as the additional dimensions of care, health, water and sanitation. Examples of nutrition policies under each one of the four pillars as well as for care, health, water and sanitation and emergency preparedness are provided in Appendix 1.

### **AGN Nutrition Policy Work**

With the mandate of FAO being to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, analysing the effects of policy on nutrition and providing advice on and assistance for the development and delivery of policies that affect nutrition is critical. Much of such advice has been provided

<sup>2</sup> Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping System (FIVIMS) is an inter-agency initiative with FAO acting as Secretariat set up to monitor progress in achieving the World Food Summit goal for eradicating hunger and achieving food security

by AGN. From 1970 -1994 the Division was called the Food Policy and Nutrition Division and carried out a range of policy related work and continues to do so despite a change in name and in 2006 being moved to the AG Department without any change in mandate or structure.

In 2000 the policy assistance work conducted by FAO was evaluated by PBE. The evaluation report noted that FAO provides assistance to countries for the development of national policies in food and nutrition and that FAO was considered to be the best source of such support by more than 50% of the responses. There is great scope for strengthening AGN's policy support function for accelerating progress in reducing levels of malnutrition. A large number of training materials, guides and manuals (Appendix 4) have been developed by AGN for use at national, community and household levels with policy assistance and advice focusing on:

- formulation of national plans of action for nutrition as follow-up to the ICN and WFS;
- incorporating nutritional and food security objectives into agricultural and other development policies, programmes and projects;
- improving household food security;
- developing national dietary guidelines;
- developing nutrition education curricula and learning materials;
- addressing nutrition in emergencies;
- overcoming micronutrient malnutrition;
- building local capacity to develop nutrition policies and programmes;
- assessing and monitoring nutrition and food consumption as basic inputs to policy development in nutrition and household food security; and
- providing policy advice and guidance on technical, regulatory and legislative issues related to the quality and safety of food supplies.

#### At the global level – policy advice

At the global level FAO serves as a forum for exchanging information and knowledge, for dialogue, negotiation, coordinated action and advocacy. This includes providing an international forum for intergovernmental negotiations on codes, agreements and regulatory frameworks and decisions resulting in international declarations, such as the International Conference on Nutrition and the World Food Summit in which AGN played a central role in and actively participated in preparations for. FAO works closely within the UN system (SCN and the IASC), and with non-governmental organizations, civil society and private sector organizations to uphold the key strategic importance of the role of food and agriculture and of agricultural livelihoods for food security and nutrition. Outputs include: The 6th World Food Survey, 1996; The World Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition and technical inputs to the series of thematic papers prepared for the ICN, particularly Theme Paper No. 1 “Improving household food security” prepared with IFPRI as well as Theme Paper No. 2 “Incorporating nutrition objectives into development policies and programmes” prepared with Tufts. Since then, AGN has continued to provide policy advice to member countries by assisting them in preparing their national plans of action for nutrition. Technical inputs to the series of background documents prepared for the World Food Summit to underpin the drafting of a policy statement and plan of action for achieving universal food security, especially TD05 “Food Security and Nutrition” principally authored by Joachim Von Braun in an inter-agency process led by AGN. Other policy related papers/publications are listed in Appendix 4.

### At the country level – policy assistance

At the national level FAO provides Members with assessments and perspectives regarding needs and resource capacities providing assistance and capacity building. Activities related to improving the collection, analysis and interpretation of food and nutrition-related data for influencing policies and programmes have been conducted in a large number of countries. An initial assessment of the food and nutrition situation is undertaken indicating where the vulnerable and malnourished are located and the extent and severity of the problem. A monitoring mechanism is developed and information fed back to decision-makers for action. FAO works to integrate food security and nutrition objectives into national development frameworks including agricultural and rural development plans and Poverty Reduction Strategies. The importance of gender, of rural people's participation in policy decisions and in the realization of the right to food is highlighted.

At present, FAO's ability to provide policy analysis, advice and assistance to member countries is weak and in Africa where such help is most needed, FAO's institutional ability to deliver is particularly weak. This is reflected for example in the fact that agriculture, food security and nutrition are not as prominent in many of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as they should be. As recognised by the IEE, FAO's capacity in this area needs strengthening and AGN has already made plans to contribute to such endeavour. A description of activities undertaken by AGN related to policy advice in food and nutrition is provided in Appendix 3.

### **Working Together - integrating AGN's nutrition policy work with of other policy units in house**

The IEE Report made the following recommendations related to nutrition policy:

*"Pay increased attention to nutrition as an integral part of food, food security and food vulnerability policy, with more emphasis given to understanding the root causes of mal and under-nutrition: fully integrate nutrition work into policy; ..... (3.18.A and 3.23.E)"*

*"Nutrition - Form a more systematic and differentiated assessment of the economic, food and nutrition policy support needs of FAO's developing member countries. Clarity on this would enable greater use of partnerships and better division of labour in all aspects of policy work, including with IFPRI and international commodity bodies (3.18)"*

The IEE Report calls for more emphasis to be given to understanding the root causes of mal and under-nutrition. We recognize that nutrition situations are always evolving and changing and consequently we agree that policy-makers need to keep abreast of changing circumstances. However it may be useful to point out that a broad consensus has been reached on the strategies for ending hunger. These have emerged from a number of international conferences and summits including the International Conference on Nutrition (FAO/WHO, 1992), the World Food Summit (FAO, 1996) and its follow-up the World Food Summit: five years later (FAO, 2002) and the Millennium Summit processes. FAO's Anti-Hunger Programme, the report of the UN Millennium Project Hunger Task Force ("Halving hunger: it can be done") and the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme which all point in the same direction. In summary this is to:

- create an enabling environment to promote peace, eradicate poverty, and remove gender inequality;
- promote a fair and market-oriented world trade system;
- increase investments in human resources, sustainable food production systems, and rural development;
- implement policies to improve physical and economic access by all to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilization;
- focus on participatory and sustainable agriculture recognising the multifunctional nature of agriculture;
- use a “nutrition lens” to direct multisectoral actions to improve household food security; improve food quality and safety; prevent, control and manage infectious diseases and micronutrient deficiencies; promote appropriate diets including breast-feeding and healthy lifestyles and to provide care for the vulnerable, including those with AIDS; and introduce productive safety nets and provide direct assistance;
- prevent and prepare for emergencies;
- build anti-hunger alliances.

We fully agree however that nutrition needs to be integrated more into FAO’s policy work in general and in food security in particular. AGN has constantly been trying to overcome this lack of integration and we see the IEE recommendation as strengthening our case.

As to the question how AGN can best respond to the IEE recommendation to fully integrate nutrition into policy (food policy/food security policy), there are a number of possible options for the sighting of nutrition policy within FAO’s architecture in terms of structure and institutional location. These may be summarized as follows:

- (a) physical merging of policy units bringing people together in one unit;
- (b) creating structural linkages between policy units in each technical division;
- (c) establishing clusters; etc.

(a) the physical merging of policy units

The IEE Report recommends the physical merging of all policy units (except those in fisheries, forestry and livestock) to ESD: “*The nutrition programme to be strengthened and moved to a newly created Economic, Social and Food and Nutrition Policy Division in ESD.*” The rationale for excluding the policy units from fisheries, forestry and livestock is unclear. It maybe because the IEE considered it best for policy work based on a specific technical area of expertise to remain in that technical unit for support. We would agree. Alternatively we could achieve a merging of policy staff if the food security and agricultural economists were to join the Nutrition Policy Unit in what would be a return to the beginning of FAO when nutrition was a Department.

However our main concern is not so much the institutional architecture, it is to ensure that nutrition objectives, concerns, considerations and outcomes are integrated into policies, strategies and programmes throughout the planning process. Whether this can better be accomplished by merging all policy units under one roof is not clear. Indeed placing all policy units under one Division or unit would not guarantee improved coordination. Having policy units in each of the technical divisions does not necessarily mean policy work is fragmented so long as policy advice is coordinated, coherent and consistent. Furthermore if staff are moved away from their technical department to a centralised policy unit, this would

immediately weaken the technical unit and over the medium term there would be a danger of the transferred staff losing their technical competence. The question is rather how can we ensure nutrition objectives are reflected in FAO's general overall policies and integrated into food security policies? How can this be better coordinated?

(b) creating structural linkages between policy units in each technical division

There is considerable interdisciplinary cooperation in existence, both ad hoc and as well as formalized and a specific unit may be identified to be responsible for ensuring the dissemination of coherent and comprehensive policy advice at the global level and to coordinated inputs into national development frameworks, food, agriculture and nutrition policies, and programme development at country level.

(c) rolling out a cluster approach

The IEE proposed a fundamental strategic shift from agricultural/food production systems to broader rural and agricultural development initiatives aimed at income generation and promoting access to food. If this is implemented, AGN has much to offer in the area of social accountability and people-centred actions and is well placed to make substantive contributions in these areas. However our recent experience with the Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods cluster indicates a lack of practical and operational direction.

## Appendix 1: **Integrating Nutrition Policy into Policy Frameworks**

### Availability

- Increases in farm productivity can reduce food deficits, increase food surpluses and raise incomes. Improved agriculture production thus provides opportunities to sustainably reduce poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition and thereby improve the quality of life.
- Recognise that issues related to the variety and quality of food are essential for nutritional security.
- Provide advice on food self-sufficiency versus self-reliance.

### Stability

- address the volatility of production
- conserve and improve the sustainability of the ecosystem and protection of the natural resource base and the environment
- combat plant and animal diseases
- deal with food emergencies and risk management issues

### Access

- Improving access through increased investment in productivity growth must also be directed to smallholder agriculture and complemented by policies that support the translation of productivity gains into improved consumption of a varied good quality diets.
- With adequate market access, diversification into higher-value products or more capital-intensive forms of agriculture (cash crops, livestock, and aquaculture) provide opportunities to generate cash income and can free up labour either for other productive activities, for meeting social obligations or for leisure.
- Trade is expected to play a vital role for food security and economic growth in many countries. A large number of low income countries rely on increasing amounts of food imports to satisfy domestic demand. With rising demand for food staples from increasing numbers of populations from developing countries as well as from increased demand for biofuels, food prices will rise. Net food producing countries and households will flourish, net food importers and food consumers may be under pressure.
- Rural income generation from adding value to primary products holds great promise in many low income countries.
- Greater rural employment and higher wages will increase access to resources and markets. An enabling environment is needed to ensure this is achieved with equity between men and women and between socio-economic groups and without further marginalising the nutritionally vulnerable.

### Utilisation

- Adequate food utilization requires adequate dietary quality and quantity and FAO advises Members on food safety and nutrition policies and provides nutrition education.
- Strengthen voluntary Right to Food.
- In close cooperation with WHO, FAO also has a major programme in food safety, including both the setting of science based international food safety standards and practical advice and capacity building at country level.
- Develop standard and safe food and promote food consumption pattern as per national and local requirement and resource availability.

### Care

- Support for nutrition education, communication and behaviour change with focus on healthy lifestyle including the intra-household distribution of appropriate complementary food and for food processing, preservation and preparation techniques.

### Health

- Incorporation of nutrition outcomes into National Health Policy and Strategy

### Water and Sanitation

- Safe water for crops as well as adequate quantity and quality of water for domestic consumption
- Safe disposal of human and animal waste and crop residues

### Emergency preparedness

- Nutrition policies in emergencies
- National Action Plan on Disaster Preparedness and Management

### Monitoring and Evaluation

Finally an effective food and nutrition policy requires an effective food and nutrition monitoring and early warning system which in turn requires:

- a comprehensive understanding of the policy framework for all interventions intended to improve food security and nutrition;
- a long-term and early warning mechanism for monitoring, analyzing, assessing, and decision making in relation to food security, nutrition and risk management;
- processes for designing, funding and delivering appropriate interventions in response to both imminent and existing disasters.

Assessing food security and nutrition through food security and nutrition information systems (including nutrition profiles as components of FIVIMS) is an important element of a monitoring and evaluation system.

## Appendix 2: **New challenges and evolving issues for nutrition policy**

For this section numerous FAO papers and policy documents<sup>3</sup> have been drawn upon in the identification of major challenges and evolving issues requiring policy support from FAO. These include:

- Unacceptably slow progress in the alleviation of hunger and poverty. In a number of countries, the number of undernourished remains stagnant or is even increasing.
- Rapid transformation of agriculture worldwide (from primarily being *price* driven to meeting consumer demands for *quality, food safety, convenience, and choice*) lead to major shifts in demand, the supply response to which presents new challenges, opportunities and risks, especially for smallholders. The vertical consolidation of the food marketing chain from field to supermarkets is also a threat to fragmented smallholders.
- The intensification of inputs (in terms of capital, technologies and skills) threatens the natural resource base, the environment, bio-diversity and human health.
- Risks arising from the increased trans-boundary movement of humans, goods and services on common goods (ecosystems, water, biodiversity, biosecurity, climate and energy) present opportunities as well as risks to rural livelihoods.
- Standards, regulations and protocols to address increased public concern for food safety and food quality and for protecting consumer health, and social and environment sensitive consumer-driven standards such as organic, good agricultural practices, traceability, fair trade and workers health and safety, as well as for animal health and welfare.
- Effects of climate change and implications of the growing energy scarcity and increased demand for bioenergy on rural incomes, poverty, food insecurity and nutrition.
- Increased numbers and intensity of natural and human-induced disasters leading to food emergencies, combined with the need to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to the threats and changing nature of disasters and food emergencies.
- Providing efficient and effective communication and capacity building to overcome the knowledge divide between and within countries for the development of and broad access to new technologies that encourage the wider adoption of best practices and new effective innovative sustainable systems.
- Improving data availability and knowledge exchange in the fields of food and nutrition, agriculture, fisheries and forestry

To what extent can FAO ensure that these major issues are understood, and policies for mitigating their negative impacts are identified and implemented at the country level? What are the strategies that FAO can play in this and how in particular can AGN become more involved? Potential areas for policy support include:

Ensuring food and nutrition security are policy priorities of decision-makers e.g. by support streamlining of food and nutrition security into national policy frameworks (PRSPs, UNDAF etc.), support advocacy activities, making explicit the relationships between nutrition and food security and country priority objectives, demonstrate the importance of hunger reduction for poverty alleviation and economic growth.

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<sup>3</sup> The Role of FAO in food, agricultural and rural development policies in a changing global environment, de Haen, draft 2008; Suggested Strategic Directions for the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department of FAO, Conway et al January, AGD, 2008.

Mainstreaming smallholder farmers' interest into policy making by building political platforms for professionals and civil society to influence policy-makers/policy-making and raising politicians' awareness of farmers' interests, particularly on what constitutes a farmer friendly policy framework.

Link research and programme/project activities to policy making. Undertake a Users (or decision-makers) Needs Assessments to identify requirements in food and nutrition security information. A stakeholder analysis analyzes the different decision-making levels: who they are (power/influence); where (or at which level) they operate (central vs decentralized); what type of decisions they face; how they take them – including extent of participation (what, why and how they use information in these decisions i.e. who needs what information and why? (see AGN proposed policy workshop). It is self-evident that policies can only be effective if policy theories are put into implementation at country level. This will require:

- Advocacy and awareness-raising to position hunger and nutrition protection and promotion higher up national, regional and global agendas
- Strengthening national capacities for incorporating food security and nutrition objectives into the policy agenda through technical training, policy backstopping, and the promotion of the right to food and legal frameworks
- Applied research and the feedback of information generated by food and nutrition security observatories into policy

### Appendix 3: **Country level activities involving policy advice/assistance in nutrition**

1. The FAO-Belgian Survival Fund (BSF) Partnership Programme which laid out the strategy for collaboration with AGN in selected African countries, was signed in 2000. Project activities initially begun in Zambia in the early 1990's for boosting household food security and nutrition through participatory approaches were expanded to Ethiopia and Mozambique. These projects were then incorporated into FAO's Special Programme for Food Security (TCOS).

2. Nepal: TSS-1 NEP/94/02T: Incorporating Nutrition Consideration in Agricultural Planning and Implementation was a project jointly prepared and implemented by ESN and ESC. Outputs included: a final report that was released at a news conference; a National Plan of Action for Nutrition; a round table meeting of donors and stakeholders and a series of meetings with national consultants. A number of key project ideas that were identified and developed by the project were taken up for implementation by the Special Programme for Food Security in Nepal.

3. Indonesia: TSS-1 INS/94/01T: Implementation of Indonesia's Plan of Action for Nutrition. This project was prepared by AGN at the request of GOI to assist BAPPENAS prepare their National Plan of Action for Nutrition as follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition. The project was approved by UNDP Indonesia. Support for the National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN). Outputs: An operational National Plan of Action for Nutrition; three international consultants fielded to develop activities in the areas of food and nutrition education and training, food safety, law and regulations and food security; and a BAPPENAS workshop for policy makers and implementers for putting the plan into action.

4. Bangladesh: BGD/94/01T: Support for ICN Follow-up. Output: National Plan of Action for Nutrition including a Plan of Action for Agriculture containing goals, objectives and strategies for implementation, a list of indicators for monitoring and eleven project profiles. DP/BGD/98/002: Plan of Action for Nutrition. AGN participated in the World Bank Preparation Mission for the Bangladesh National Nutrition Programme 16–31 May 1999. Technical areas included policy advice on intersectoral food security programmes, the policy and regulatory framework in support of the NNP, food quality and safety, street foods, and education and training.

5. Namibia: GCPS/NAM/003/NOR: Policy and Programming Assistance for a Food Security and Nutrition Action Plan and TCP/NAM/4454: Assistance in Finalizing the National Agricultural Policy. Outputs included: Food Security and Nutrition Assessment Report; which was used as the basis for updating their National Food Security and Nutrition Action Plan; National Declaration on Food and Nutrition; and a Food and Nutrition Policy for Namibia, NFSC, Namibia, August 1995. A National Food and Nutrition Council and a National Food Security and Nutrition Technical Committee were set-up by Cabinet decision September 1994 and a Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat was established in the MoA to provide operational support. UTF/NAM/007/NAM: Support to Food Security and Nutrition Development in Namibia for updating the Namibia Food Security and Nutrition Assessment Report, 1998.

6. Sudan: Programme Design Consultancy, Operation Lifeline Sudan, 1998 that provided policy advice and recommendations for managing disasters, food aid and household food security.

7. Iraq: Various food and nutrition assessment missions were conducted (1993, 1995, 1997 and 2000) that provided a basis for giving policy advice to the GOI and to the UN.

### **Current/Planned Activities**

8. Afghanistan: technical assistance is provided to the GOA for the integration of food security, nutrition and gender objectives into government policies and strategies. Outputs include the Master Plan for the Ministry of Agriculture, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) for agriculture, through the ANDS Consultative Groups on Health & Nutrition and on Gender and the update of the inter-ministerial Action Plan for Nutrition.

9. Lesotho: Ongoing assistance is being provided to the GOL by AGN through a TCP project for preparing a national nutrition policy.

10. AGN is promoting simple tools for monitoring and evaluating of the dietary impact of policies and programmes for food security and nutrition. Work has been done since 2005 to develop capacity in adaptation, use and interpretation of two simple tools – dietary diversity and the household food insecurity access scale – in 5 countries of Africa. AGN is proposing to use these tools to monitor the impact on nutrition of a broad range of policies and programmes. For example, the simple tools could be used for M&E of the nutritional impact of National Programmes for Food Security.

11. AGN promotes the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of policies and programmes on food consumption. Improvement of dietary diversity has been included as a specific objective in food security and nutrition policies in several countries (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique). These countries have requested technical assistance from AGN in monitoring progress and evaluating impact of the nutrition aspects of their National Programmes for Food Security.

12. FAO is engaged in the REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger)/Global Initiative for Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition (ECHUI). This inter-institutional framework, geared to assist countries achieve MDG1, will be instrumental in harmonising food and agriculture policy assistance with that of other development sectors. The four expected outcomes of REACH are:

- Increased awareness and understanding of hunger and undernutrition, their root causes, and the potential solutions and actions needed to address them;
- Strengthened, resourced and effectively monitored national policies and programmes affecting hunger and nutrition;
- Increased capacities at the international, national, community and household levels for action on child hunger and undernutrition;
- Increased efficiency and accountability of global efforts to reduce child hunger and undernutrition, through monitoring and evaluation of the work of partners; and including programme interventions and their impact for children.

13. A series of Sub-regional workshops (Southern, Eastern and West Africa) are planned for this biennium, in collaboration with NEPAD and the AU, for assisting countries translate their African Regional Nutrition Strategy into practical plans of action at country level. The

workshops aim to increase national capacity to reduce hunger and improve nutrition by examining the determining factors of organisational capacity and identifying strategic pathways, priorities and opportunities for increasing the capacity of national level institutions and partners to reduce hunger and improve nutrition. Draft guidelines and enquiry tools for incorporating food security, nutrition and livelihood objectives into common development assistance frameworks and practical plans of action at country level have been prepared by FAO. These include:

1. Ending Poverty, Hunger and Malnutrition in Africa: incorporating food security, nutrition and livelihood objectives into common development assistance frameworks - A review of the external policy environment
  2. Incorporating Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihood Objectives into Community Action Processes (CAP) - frameworks for building organisational capacities
  3. Incorporating Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihood Objectives into Community Action Processes (CAP) - evaluating organisational capacities
  4. Passport to Improving Nutrition in Social Protection and Agricultural Development Initiatives
14. A compendium on Food-based Strategies for Combating Micronutrient Deficiencies is being prepared and is expected to be published in 2008.
15. A policy paper as background for the High Level Conference on World Food Security and Climate Change entitled “Nutrition, Climate Change and Bioenergy”, June 2008 is under preparation.

#### Appendix 4: AGN publications related to nutrition policy

- The Nutrition in Agriculture Series Nos. 1-5 produced by AGN over the last 20 years provide policy advice in the following areas:
  - No. 1 Integrating Nutrition into Agriculture and Rural Development Projects: a manual.
  - No. 2 Integrating Nutrition into Agricultural and Rural Development Projects: Six case studies.
  - No. 3 Selecting interventions for nutritional improvement: a manual.
  - No. 4 Data Needs for Assessing the Nutritional Effects of Agricultural and Rural Development Projects
  - No. 5 Conducting small-scale nutrition surveys: A field manual.
- Promoting under-exploited food plants in Africa - a brief for policy makers, 1987.
- Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, FAO/Netherlands Conference on Agriculture and the Environment, 1991.
- Considering Nutrition in National Forestry Programmes, 1996.
- “Food Security in a World Without Borders”, 17th International Congress of Nutrition, August 27-31, 2001, Vienna.
- Incorporating nutrition considerations into agricultural research plans and programmes, 2001.
- Inputs to the background paper *Anti-Hunger Programme: Reducing hunger through agriculture and rural development and wider access to food* as preparation for the *WFS-fyl* side event that led to FAO’s *Anti-Hunger Programme 2002*.
- Improving Nutrition Programmes - An Assessment Tool for Action, 2002
- Community-based food and nutrition programmes - what makes them successful? A review and analysis of experience, 2003
- Paper prepared by AGN and FI for the CFS on “The Role of Aquaculture in Improving Food Security and Nutrition”, CFS 2003/6.
- Incorporating Nutrition Considerations into Development Policies and Programmes: Brief for Policy-Makers and Programme Planners in Developing Countries, 2004
- Community-Centred Food-Based Strategies for Alleviating and Preventing Malnutrition, Impacts of Agriculture on Human Health and Nutrition, in Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS), UNESCO, 2004.  
<http://www.eolss.net>
- Position Paper: Fortification of food with micronutrients and meeting dietary micronutrient requirements: Role and position of FAO, 2006.
- Food-based approaches for combating iron deficiency. Sight and Life, 2007.

## Annex 9

### **List of questions/issues to be raised/discussed during the In-House Retreat on the Role of Nutrition in FAO** (not in order of priority)

- There exist or emerged recently a number of financially strong alliances dealing with nutrition (e.g. GAIN, Bill Gates Foundation, etc...). Should AGN have an active role in all of them or should we only focus on collaboration with UN agencies?
- How much attention (workload, budget in %) should be given to nutrition subject matters not directly addressing vulnerable groups, food security, and the Millennium Development Goals (e.g. nutrient requirements, nutrition education for the general public, right to food etc.)?
- What aspect of nutrition education should be our focus in the future, given the IEE recommendation on this matter?
- Every AGN group has a strong in-service training element as part of the work. Should these elements be united in a divisional in-service training approach?
- Should AGN have a “flagship”-publication series to enhance visibility and promote its comparative advantage?
- In the future, FAO is asked to work more at policy and planning level. Should a working group combine the work of all policy and planning elements of the AGN groups?
- Should AGN primarily work in a concerted fashion with all groups on priority countries rather than working where extra-budgetary funds for assistance to other countries become available?
- FAORs have often to rely on WFP, UNICEF and /or INGOs for technical assistance in nutrition. Could AGN have locally -hired nutrition representatives to ensure that nutrition in agriculture issues are adequately supported in government policies and programmes?
- FAORs and technical units of FAO expressed specifically more need for technical assistance in food and nutrition assessment as well as monitoring and evaluation. How can AGN respond to this effectively, considering staff and budget?
- Advocacy will be one of the priorities of FAO in the future. How should AGN’s response to this be organized for continuous, coherent and effective action?
- Should AGN’s groups be reorganized, and if so how, taking into account the IEE recommendations?
- How can the existing and future Regional and Sub-regional Nutrition Advisors be adequately trained so that they can become and remain more active and informed in nutrition work as seen by AGN?
- More cannot be done with less, of course; there are obvious limits of time, budget, and staff. But there is also waste of it by scattered efforts, unclear directions, fragmented work. How can this state practically and formally be changed?
- Work on food consumption and its impact on nutrition has disappeared in AGN, and taken over by ESA. Do we need to revive this work in AGN? If yes, how?

**Annex 10**

**Powerpoint Presentation by Mr. J. Schmidhuber:  
Long-term perspectives in agricultural development –  
implications for food consumption and nutrition**

Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

Drivers, Trends and Assessment Needs to 2030/50



Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies

FAO, AGN 4. November 2008

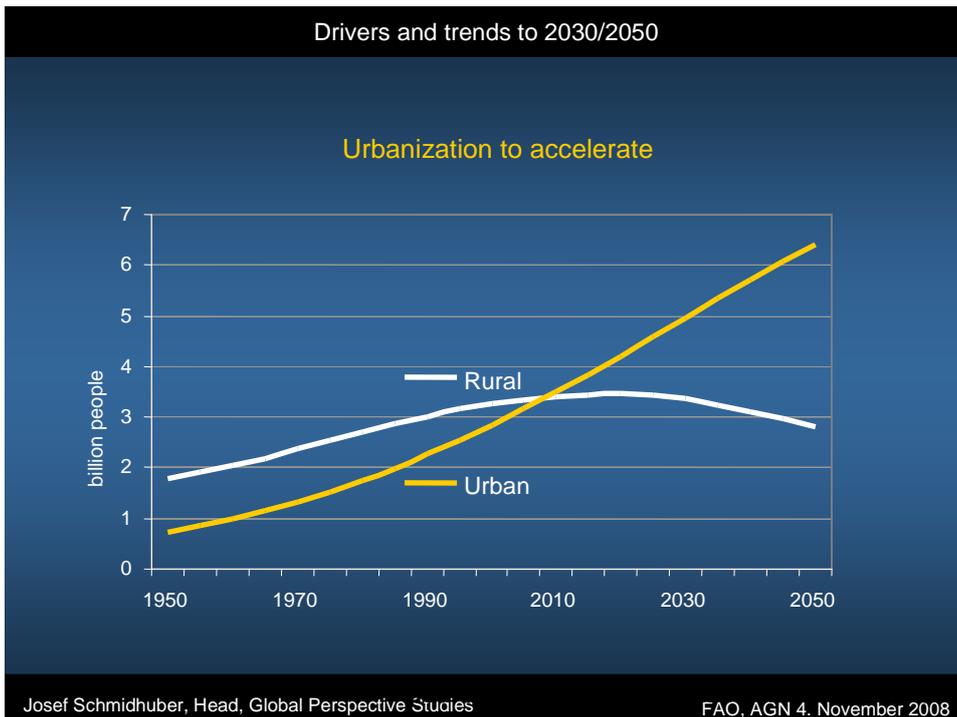
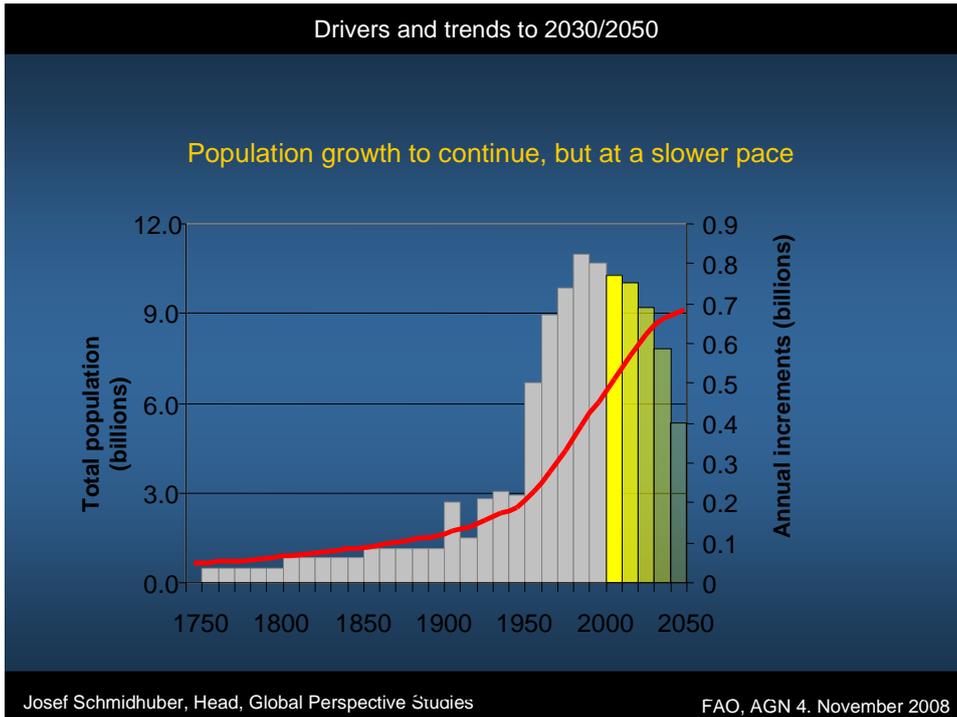
Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

Long-term perspectives

1. drivers
2. trends
3. assessments and analyses

Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies

FAO, AGN 4. November 2008

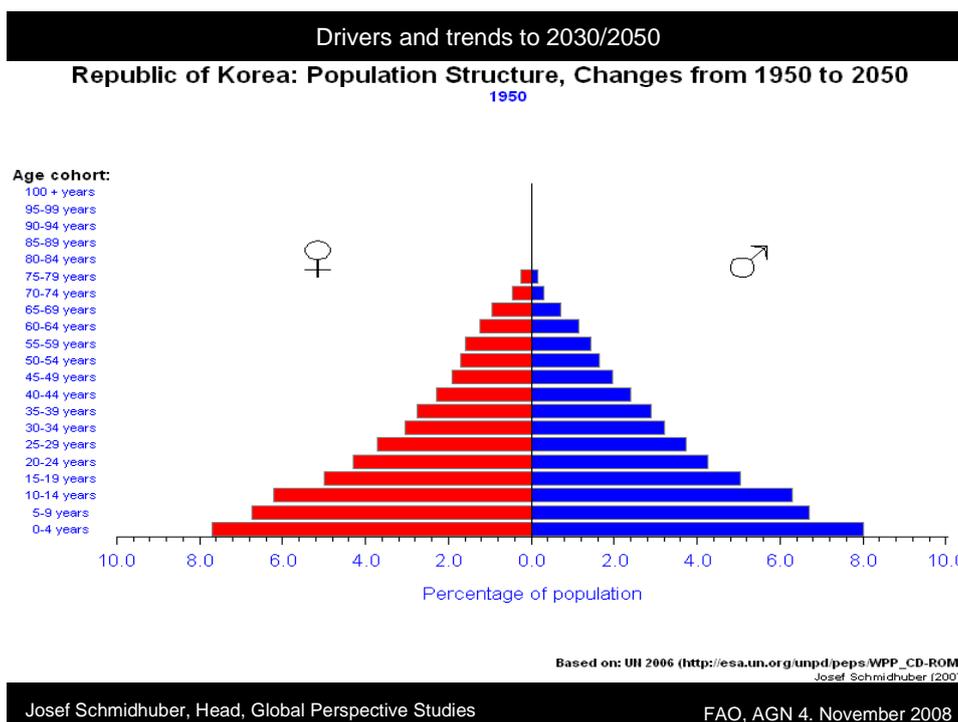


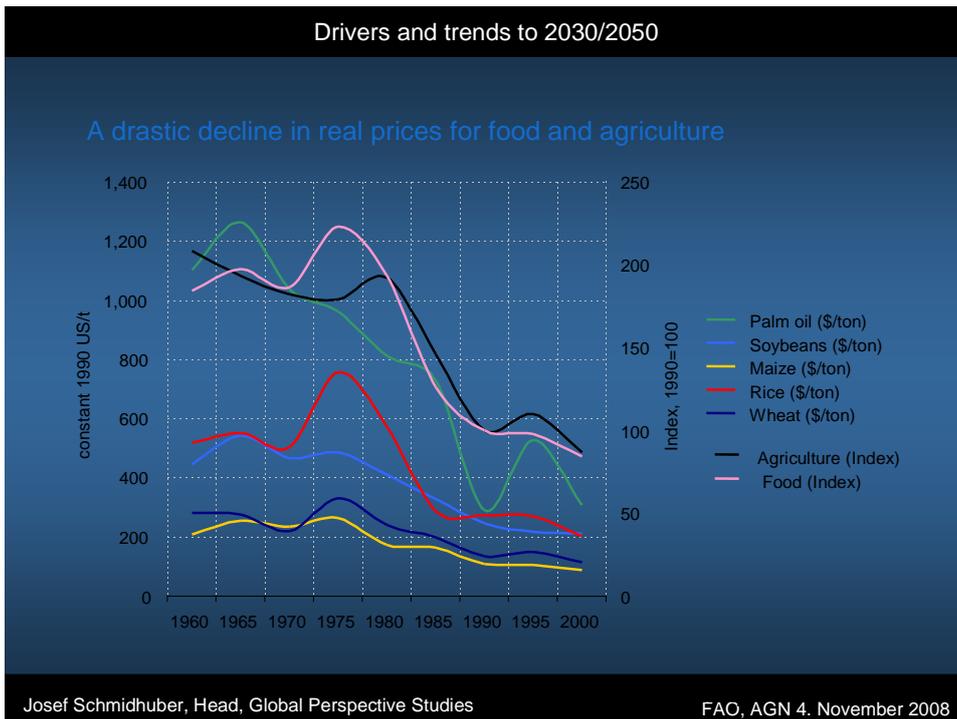
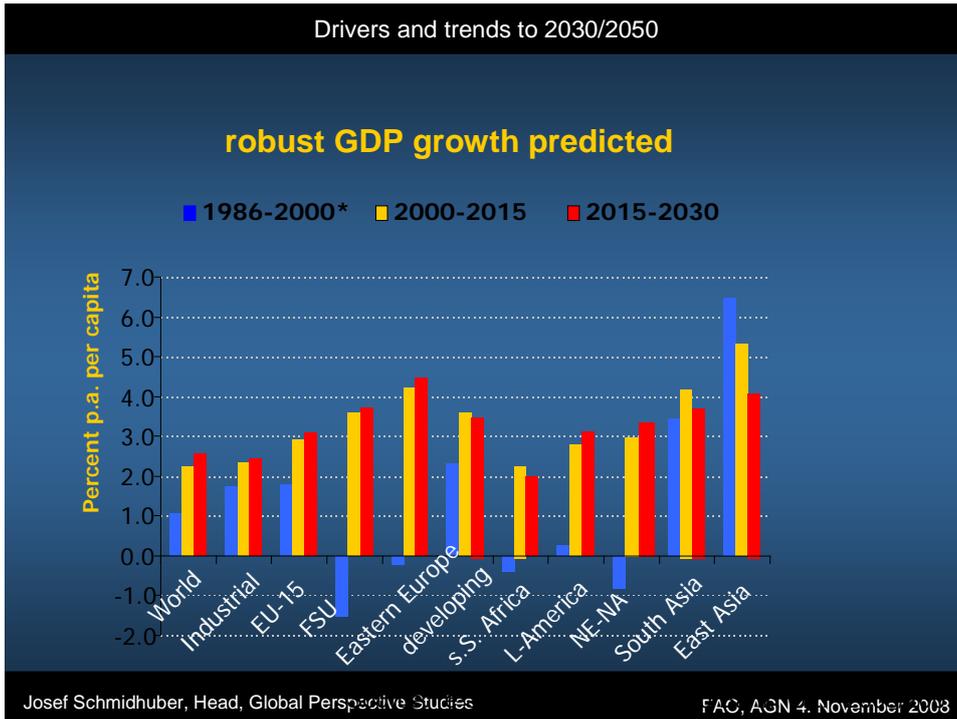
Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

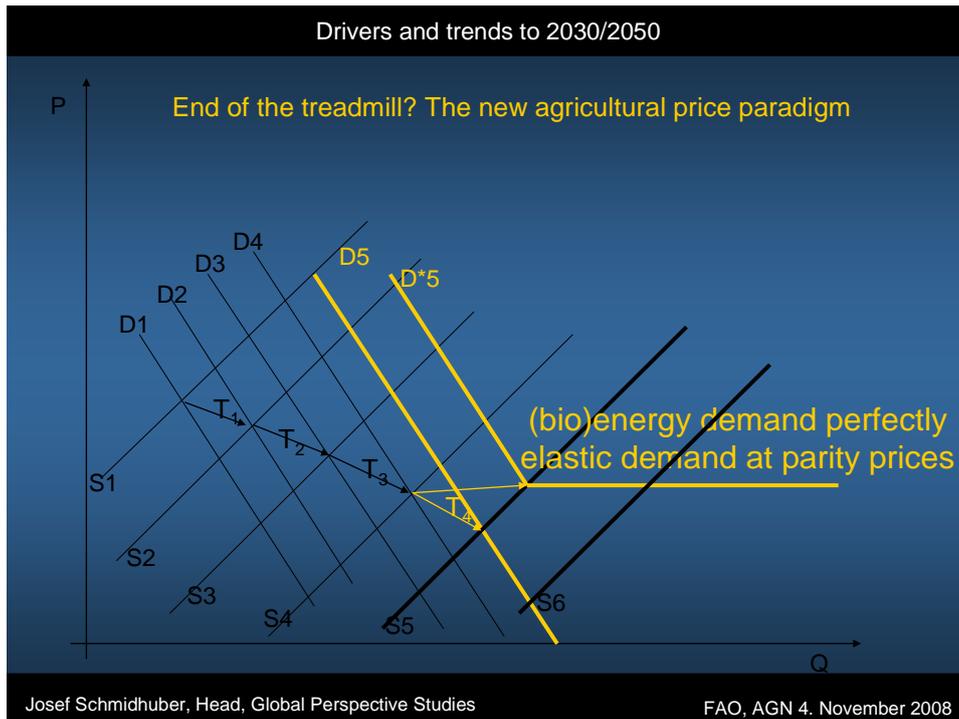
### Urban-rural difference in chronic disease risk in developing countries

	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Reference
NIDDM prevalence	8.2	2.4	Ramachandran (1998)
CHD prevalence	46.1	5.0	Chadha et al. (1990)
Cancer incidence	118.8	57.6	Gopalan (1997)

Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies FAO, AGN 4. November 2008







Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

## Long-term perspectives

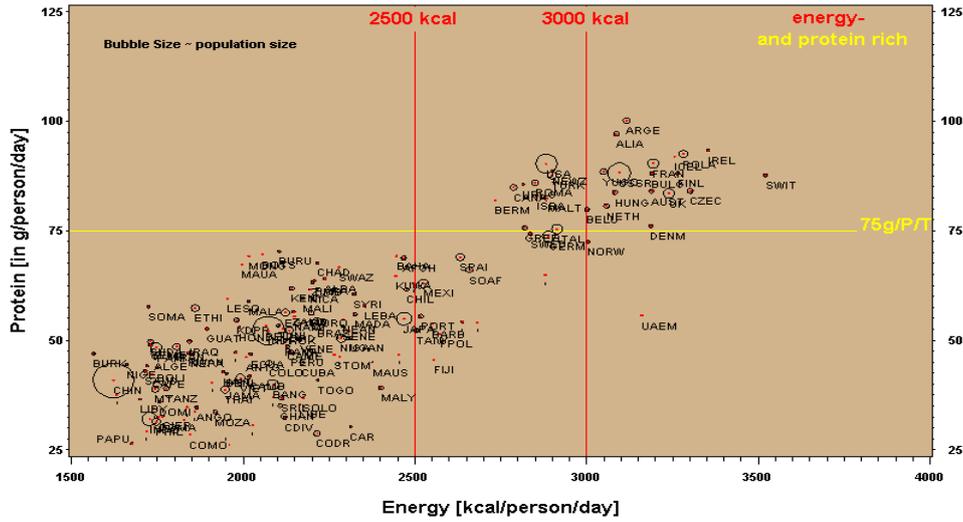
1. drivers
2. trends

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Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

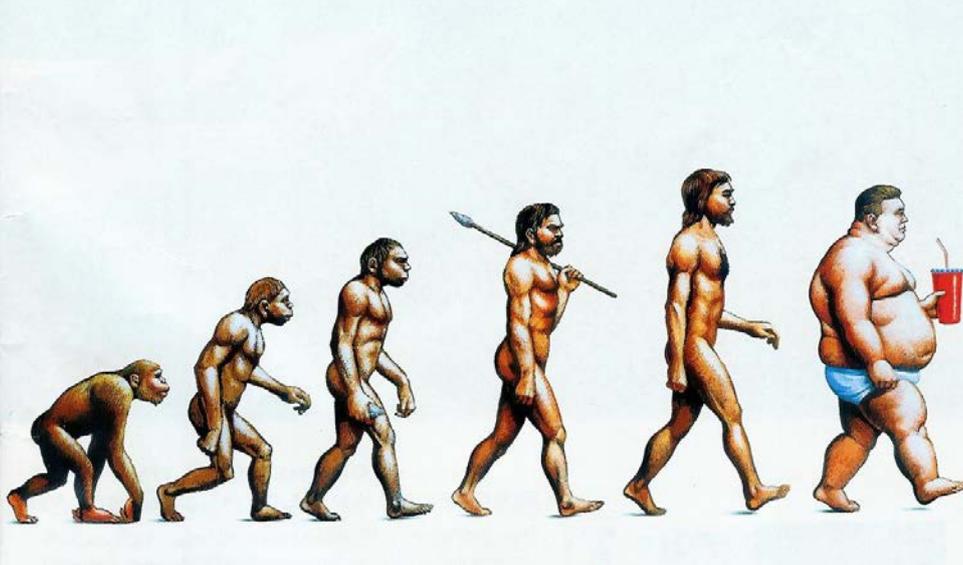
Energy- and Protein Content of the Diet, Total Availability  
1961



Source: FAO

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FAO, AGN 4. November 2008

Drivers and trends to 2030/2050  
Double burden of malnutrition

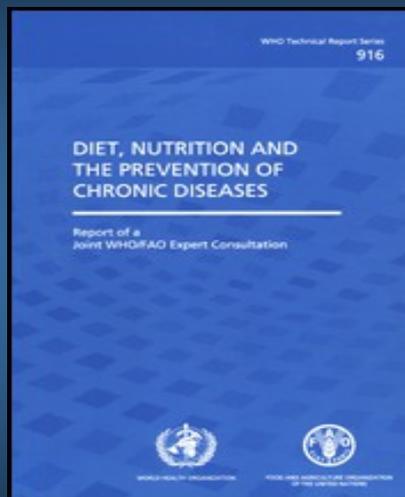


Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies  
FAO, AGN 4. November 2008

## Long-term perspectives

1. drivers
2. trends
3. assessments and analyses
  - dietary assessments

## How healthy are our diets?



<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/ac911e/ac911e00.htm>

Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

Dietary Intake Ranges (1) (as a share of total energy intake)	
Dietary Factor	Recommendations (WHO/FAO)
Total Fat	15 - 30%
Polyunsaturated FA	6-10 %
Saturated FA	<10 %
Trans FA	<1 %
Total Carbohydrate	55 – 75 %
Free sugars*	<10 %
Protein	10 - 15%

\* "Free sugars" refers to all monosaccharides and disaccharides added to foods, plus sugars naturally present in honey, syrups and fruit juices

Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

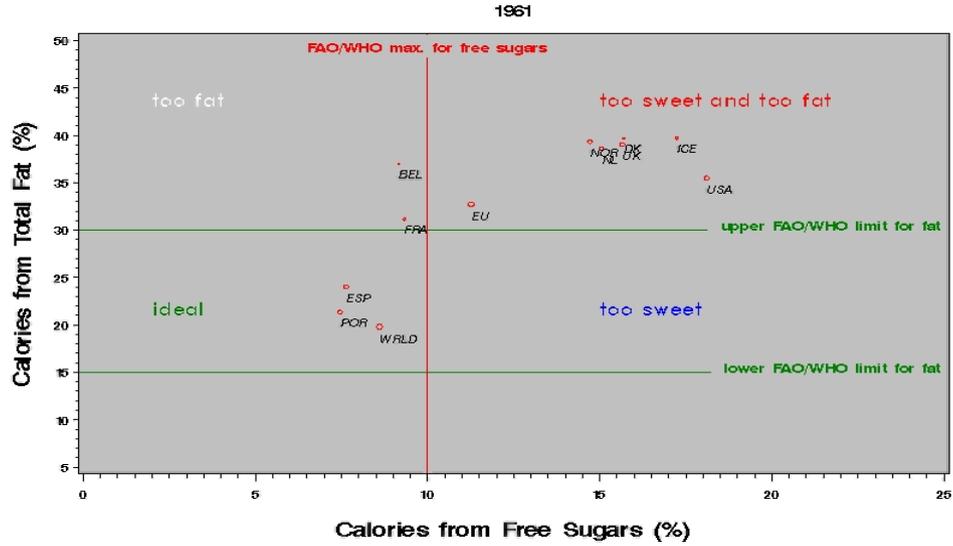
## 1. How healthy is the EU Diet?

Dietary Intake Ranges (2) (in g or mg/person/day)	
Dietary Factor	FAO/WHO Recommendations
Cholesterol	< 300 mg/day
Sodium chloride (sodium)	<5 g/day (<2 g/day)
Fruits and vegetables	≥ 400 g per day
Total dietary fiber/Non-starch polysaccharides (NSP)	(>25 g, or 20g/d of NSP) from whole grain cereals, fruits, and vegetables

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/ac911e/ac911e00.htm>

Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

Free Sugars vs Total Fat, Availability and Recommendations



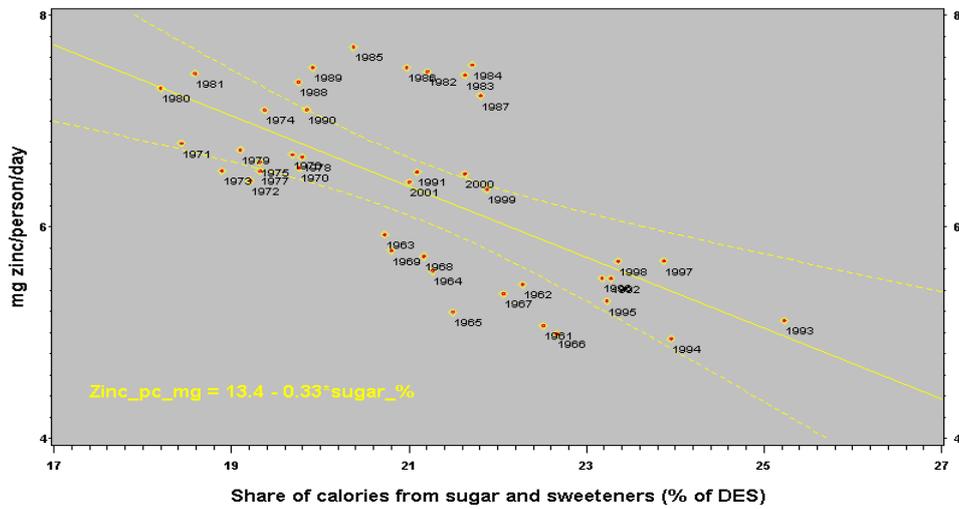
The Atlantic Diet Source: FAO, Global Perspectives Studies Group, ESDG (JS,2003)

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Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

Is sugar crowding out zinc ?

Share of energy from sugar and availability of Zinc in Cuba, 1961-2001



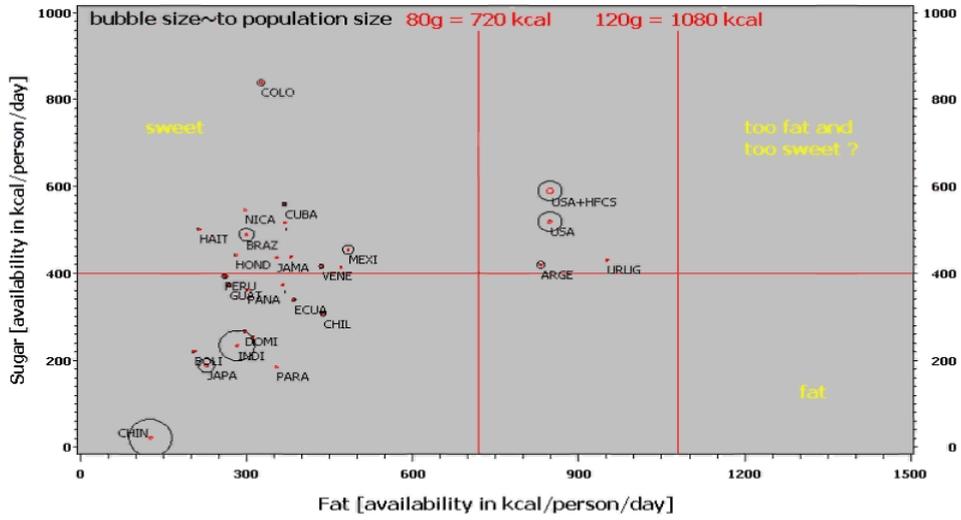
Source: FAO, Global Perspectives Studies Group Josef Schmidhuber, 2004

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Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

Is the "Latino" diet getting too sweet and too fat?

1961



Source: FAO, Global Perspectives Studies Group  
Josef Schmidhuber, 2004

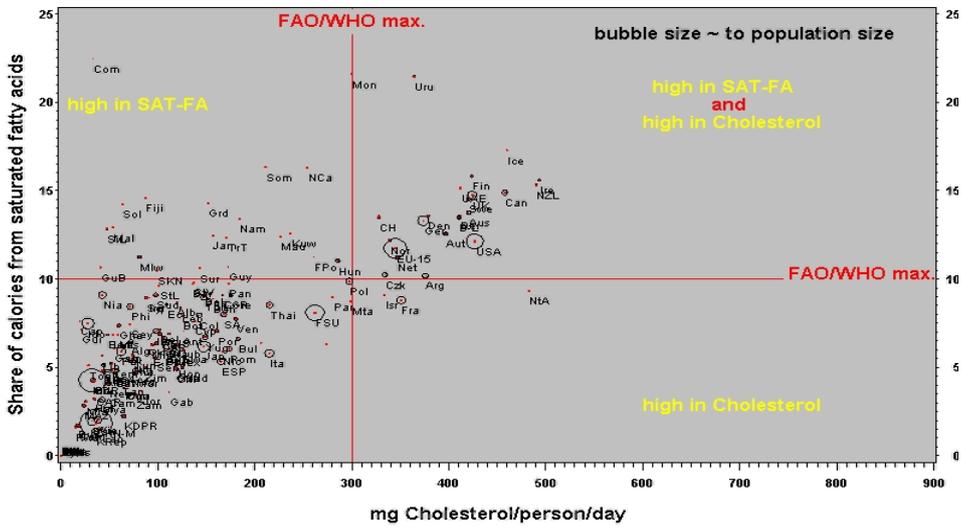
Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies

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Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

Towards an Unhealthy Global Diet? High in Cholesterol and Saturated Fatty Acids

1961



Source: FAO, Global Perspectives Studies Unit  
Josef Schmidhuber, 2004

Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies

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## Long-term perspectives

1. drivers
2. trends
3. assessments and analyses
  - dietary assessments and analyses
  - policy assessments

## Principal policy effects of the CAP 2001/03

	MILLION €	€/PERSON
<b>1. Taxes</b>		
• Taxes through higher prices than world prices	-51,904	-136.8
• Other taxes on consumers	-698	-1.8
<b>2. Subsidies</b>		
• Subsidies from taxpayers to consumers	3,762	9.9
• Excess feed cost (not relevant as a food tax/subsidy)	570	1.5
<b>Net effect (total tax)</b>	<b>-48,271</b>	<b>-127</b>

## Price tax effect of the CAP by Commodity (main commodities only)

	1986-88		1994-96		2001-03	
	Total (million €)	per person (€)	Total (million €)	per person (€)	Total (million €)	per person (€)
Oilseeds	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Eggs	900	2.7	262	0.7	0	0.0
Wheat	6254	18.4	1343	3.7	157	0.4
Rice	377	1.1	317	0.9	180	0.5
Potatoes	619	1.8	900	2.5	444	1.2
Coarse grains	7043	20.7	2703	7.4	559	1.5
Sheep	2497	7.4	1376	3.8	1113	2.9
<b>Sugar</b>	<b>2699</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>2100</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>2739</b>	<b>7.2</b>
Poultry	2950	8.7	3995	11.0	3179	8.4
Pork	4473	13.2	2973	8.1	4401	11.6
<b>Beef</b>	<b>10208</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>7205</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>10470</b>	<b>27.6</b>
<b>Milk</b>	<b>16667</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>17278</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>16373</b>	<b>43.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>54686</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>40452</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>39615</b>	<b>104</b>

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### The CAP distorts relative prices –

both vis-à-vis world markets and within the bundle of consumption goods

	Domestic-to-international distortions EU prices to international prices (ratios)			Internal distortions of relative prices (relative to EU wheat prices)		
	1986-88	1994-96	2001-03	1986-88	1994-96	2001-03
Wheat	2.14	1.14	0.98	1.0	1.0	1.0
Rice	2.43	1.84	1.32	1.1	1.6	1.3
Coarse grains	2.33	1.41	1.05	1.1	1.2	1.1
Oilseeds	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.5	0.9	1.0
Potatoes	1.17	1.15	1.10	0.5	1.0	1.1
<b>Milk</b>	<b>2.76</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Beef</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>1.63</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Pig meat	1.38	1.17	1.25	0.6	1.0	1.3
Poultry	1.79	2.07	1.55	0.8	1.8	1.6
Sheep	2.86	1.59	1.36	1.3	1.4	1.4
Eggs	1.40	1.22	1.04	0.7	1.1	1.1
<b>Sugar</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.8</b>

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## Consumer subsidies through the CAP

Transfers from EU Taxpayers to EU consumers (million Euros)			
	1986-88	1994-96	2001-03
	million Euros		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4387</b>	<b>4146</b>	<b>3762</b>
<i>Cereals</i>	310	286	249
<i>Oilseeds</i>	32	0	0
<i>Sugar</i>	-361	-138	248
<i>Sugar storage levies (net)</i>	-65	-24	99
<i>Sugar chemical industry levies (net)</i>	1	67	157
<b><i>Milk and butter</i></b>	<b>2169</b>	<b>1549</b>	<b>1035</b>
<i>Olive oil</i>	388	365	26
<i>Cotton</i>	723	1100	874
<i>Fruits and vegetables</i>	1126	986	1330

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## CAP Consumer subsidies for milk

	1986-88	1994-96	2001-03
	(million Euros)		
<b>Milk and butter, total</b>	<b>2,169</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>1,035</b>
<i>Other measures relating to butterfat</i>	212	645	454
<i>School milk</i>	165	130	77
<i>Aid for SMP for use as feed for calves</i>	901	438	246
<i>Aid for liquid skimmed milk for use as feed for calves</i>	112	24	0
<i>Aid for SMP for use as feed for animal other than calves</i>	0	0	0
<i>Aid for liquid skimmed milk for use as feed for animals other than calves</i>	179	0	0
<i>Aid for skimmed milk processed into casein</i>	580	311	258
<i>Aid for powdered milk with 10% fat for use as feed for calves</i>	0	0	0
<i>Other Aid (milk)</i>	0	0	0

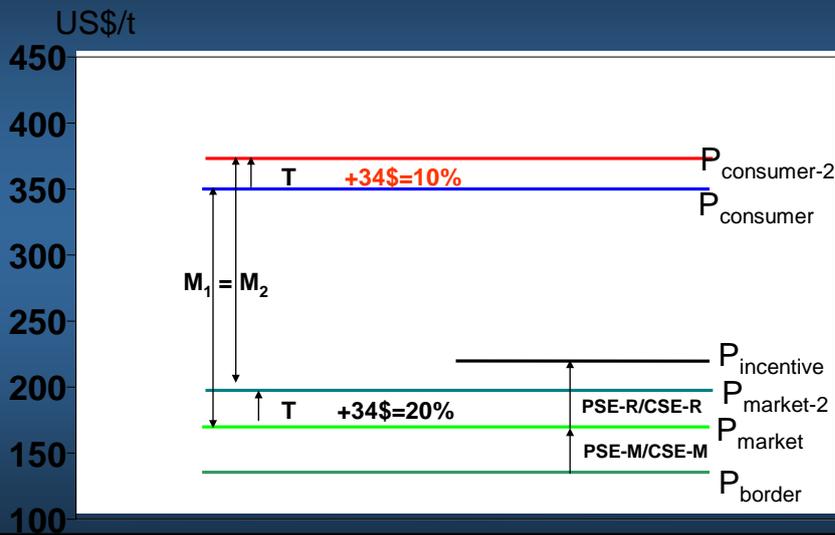
Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies

FAO, AGN 4, November 2008

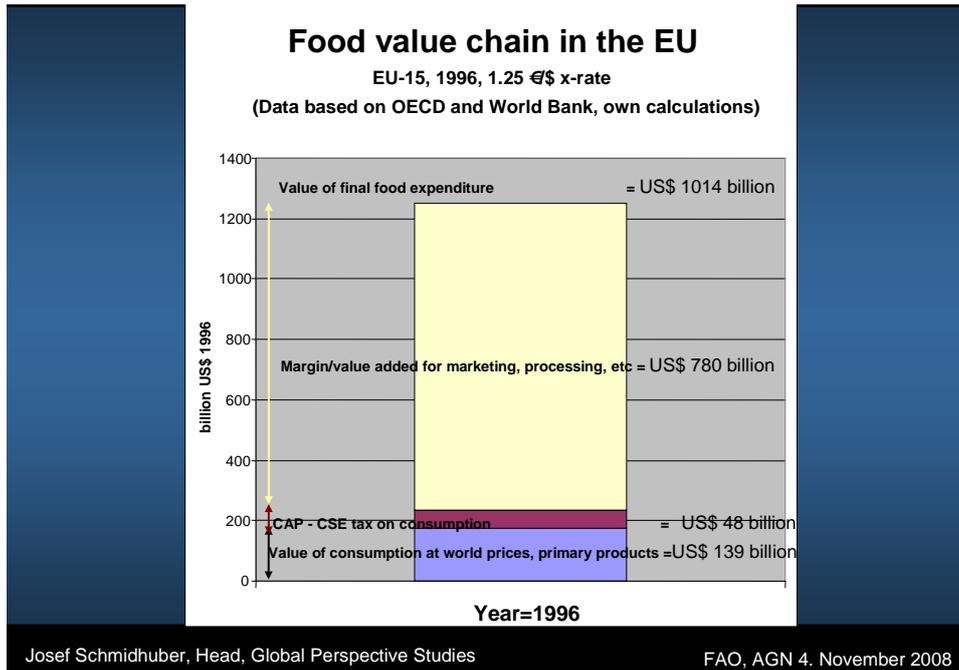
## Long-term perspectives

1. drivers
2. trends
3. assessments and analyses
  - dietary assessments and analyses
  - policy assessments
  - policy analysis

### Vertical price transmission: The impact of the CAP with **high** margins



Vertical price transmission – the empirical evidence

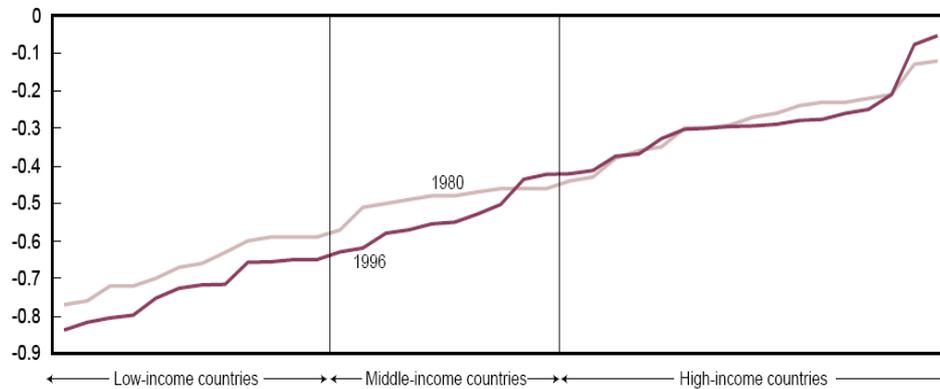


## Drivers and trends to 2030/2050

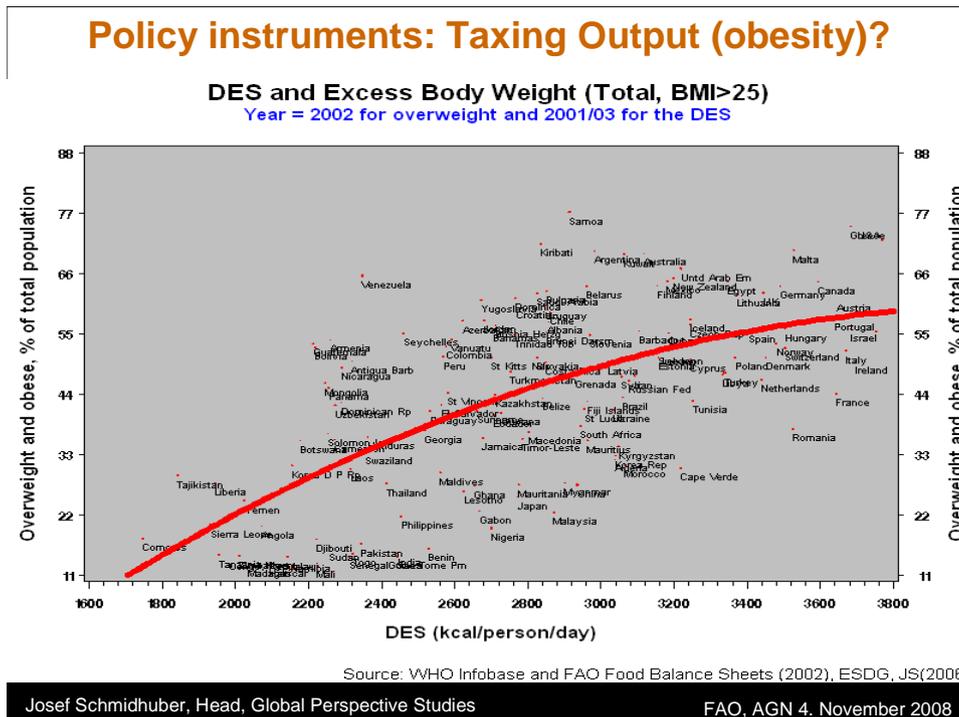
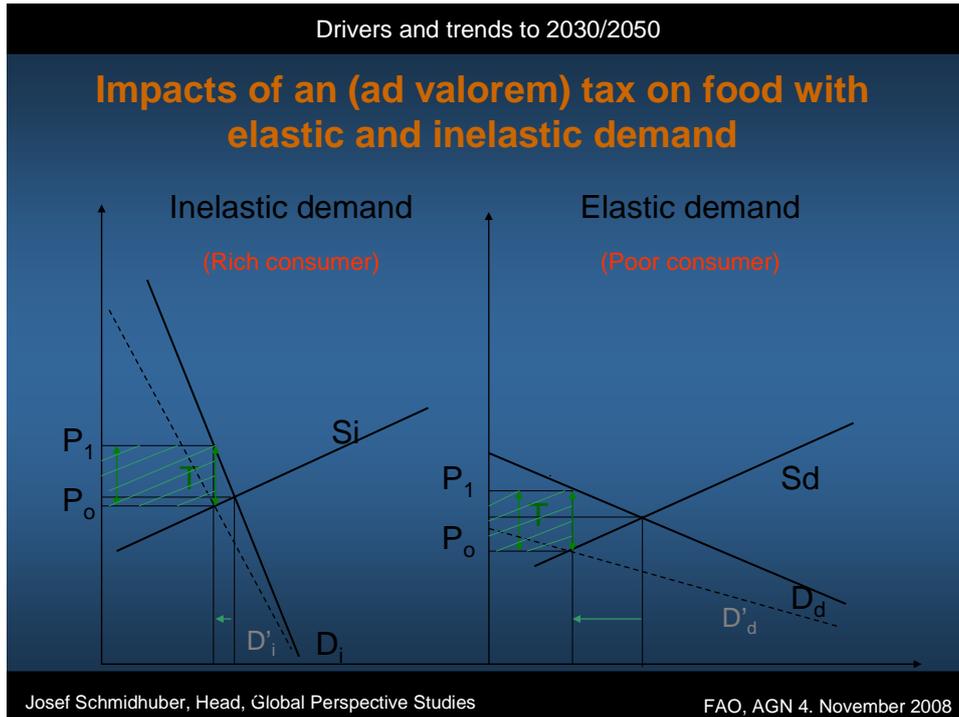
### How elastic is food demand?

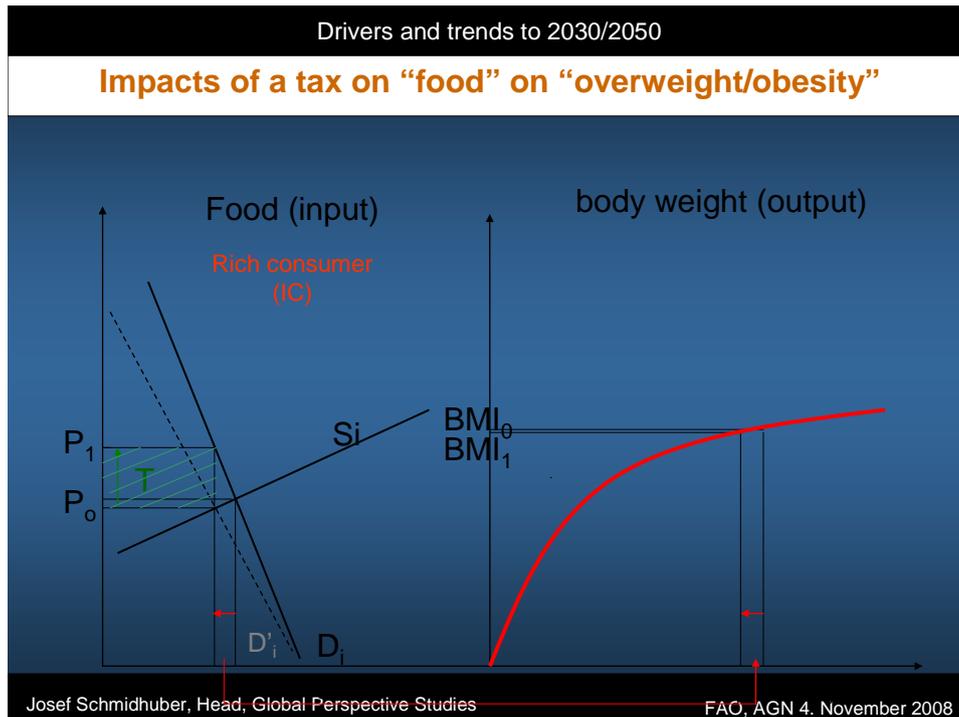
Own-price elasticity for food

Elasticity



Source: 1996 data are ERS/USDA estimates based on International Comparison Project data. 1980 data are from Theil, Henri, Ching-Fan Chung, and James L. Seale, Jr., International Evidence on Consumption Patterns (1989).





- Drivers and trends to 2030/2050
- ### Food taxes: some pros and cons
- Higher farm prices ineffective means to change final consumer prices (high margins in vertical price transmission).
  - Low price elasticities for food demand make food taxes in general ineffective in reducing consumption.
  - Regressive on consumers with high calorie needs.
  - Difficult to implement, VAT rates in the EU, need for non-discriminatory taxes.
  - Untargeted, unfair: all consumers bear the price of higher food prices while only the obese/overweight cause the external costs (violates the “polluter pays principle”).
  - + But low elasticities mean high tax revenues which could be used for nutrition education, prevention, and other measures.
  - + Food taxes can be effective, where there are healthy substitutes (e.g. low-sugar soft drinks); high elasticity of substitution would require only a small tax on unhealthy food of a small subsidy on the healthy food.
  - No general food tax, but specific taxes on unhealthy foods possible.
  - Part of a policy mix but not a stand-alone measure.
- Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies FAO, AGN 4. November 2008

## Q&A conclusions: CAP-Health

1. Is the CAP the main culprit for the EU's dietary problems?
  - NO (clear and resounding)
2. Is the CAP as a food tax an efficient instrument to curb food consumption?
  - NO (equally clear and resounding)
3. Will CAP reforms help address the nutritional problems?
  - NO, quite the contrary!
4. Can a reformed CAP provide opportunities to address nutritional problems?
  - YES, but these opportunities do not come automatic!
  - CAP reforms: new openness for non-core agricultural policy measures
5. Are food taxes more generally an important means to address the problem?
  - YES, to raise funds for more efficient measures
  - NO, as a stand-alone measure to reduce food intake
  - YES, as a specific, targeted tax on unhealthy substitutes
  - Potential problems in non-homogeneous (economic) environments (skewed income distributions, etc.)

Josef Schmidhuber, Head, Global Perspective Studies

FAO, AGN 4. November 2008

## Conclusions and outlook

1. EU diets have become increasingly unhealthy, the quality of the Mediterranean Diet is gradually deteriorating.
  - The EU diets are too rich in calories, fat, sugar, cholesterol and saturated fats.
  - Dietary fibre as well as fruit and vegetable consumption have increased over time, but some countries still show deficits.
  - Consumption of polyunsaturated fats has increased, but largely through a widening of the  $\omega$ -6/ $\omega$ -3 ratio.
  - The total glycemic load of the EU diets has increased slightly with carbohydrate consumption, but remained low compared to NENA countries.
  - There has been a growing convergence in diets, new member countries move towards EU-15 diet, albeit some country-specific features remain.
2. Overall, CAP provides a net tax on food consumption, albeit some subsidy elements are important.
3. As a tax on primary consumption, the demand curbing effects of the CAP remain limited; CAP effects are to be seen against: (i) low vertical price transmission; (ii) high margins for processing and marketing; and (iii) low demand elasticities.
4. Taxes on final consumption can be more effective, but only where healthy substitutes exist.
5. Food taxes on inelastic demand can be used as a revenue source for more effective measures (education, etc.)
6. A combination of various measures would be necessary, no single policy measure likely to be sufficient. What is the most effective policy mix?

## Annex 11

### **An overview of the international nutrition architecture and comparative advantage of the main UN agencies**

Paper prepared for the AGN retreat on the role of nutrition in FAO, 4-5 November

Richard Longhurst,  
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#### Introduction

The international nutrition architecture provides a sense of frustration to most who work in this area (certainly this author). With clearly identified problems of hunger and poverty in the world - embodied through among other things, the MDG1 which many regard as the 'most' important, vital linkages to other MDGs, high levels of nutrition related child mortality, well indentified links to labour productivity and essential elements in the respect of human rights - the volume of resources devoted by the international community is small. But although nutrition is a programming area with which many are interested, insufficient resources are committed. It triggers intense turf wars. My bias towards the importance of food and agriculture in nutrition is its contribution to nutrition through two major areas: first food (obviously) and second through income and work generation through which food can be bought. This brief paper provides a personal overview of the international nutrition architecture, and tries to identify some of the issues as to why the importance of nutrition is not matched by efforts at the international level.

#### Who are the major nutrition-related actors within current structures?

There is a need to define the universe of nutrition actors. First, the broadest list of the actors involved in programmes that reduce under nutrition has been provided by Morris, Cogill and Uauy (2007)<sup>4</sup>. This lays out the following 'transnational' organisations, based outside the countries worst affected with under nutrition. These are:

- Agencies and programmes of the UN (at least 14)
- International and regional development banks (five)
- Regional cooperation organizations such as the African Union (at least five major)
- Bilateral (or country-to-country) aid agencies (over 20)
- Charitable Foundations (at least 5 major) and the implementing agencies they create (at least 15)
- International nongovernmental organizations (over 30)
- Major university and research centres (at least 20 with international scope, plus the 15 centres of the CGIAR)
- Academic journals (several hundred) and the non specialist media, and
- Multinational commercial food and nutrition companies (at least 12 major).

It is not clear from the publication how 'working to reduce the global burden of under nutrition' was defined. Also the definition of what a nutrition activity has always been problematic. In terms of defining organisations in terms of showing an active interest in

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<sup>4</sup> The methodology for this was very broad, involving reviewing the CABI nutrition and food sciences database (6000+ abstracts), quantitative analysis of financial flows, key informant interviews and much more.

promoting better nutrition, and having identified staff with positions that take on some sort of specialised nutrition ‘portfolio’, most would find the numbers in the above inventory on the high side.

Most observers of ‘who is doing what’ in international nutrition and wanting to review international nutrition architecture, especially from the perspective of the UN, would however, look first at the state of the agencies and actors working together under the umbrella of the Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN). Levels of interest in international nutrition (some would argue) could be more realistically assessed by the level of participation in the SCN. The original aim of the SCN was to serve as a forum where nutrition related policies and interventions of UN agencies could be harmonised, cooperation optimised, and overlaps avoided. Since its founding, additional groups such as NGOs, bilaterals and some beneficiary governments were added.

But the SCN is a structure that is (not for the first time) under intense review at the moment and there are many activities being geared up that do not fall under its loose structure (mostly health biased). However, a brief look at its participants is a useful means of describing the international nutrition architecture, and the absence of more accessible information about the range of actors.

The role of the nutrition scientific community in fora of the UN generally and the SCN in particular has fluctuated: in the original format of the Protein Advisory Group (PAG) the nutrition scientific advisers held the top spot, reporting directly to UN heads of agencies: then, in the 1980s and 1990s the scientific community were represented through an expert group: the Advisory Group of Nutrition (AGN), but this group has now been abolished. These observations are important when considering the normative function relating to nutrition in the UN.

As most will know, the SCN community organises itself into three constituencies: i) the UN agencies, which includes the World Bank, ii) the bilateral donors, who also welcome aid recipient governments to join them, and iii) civil society and academia. Taking each group in turn, their characteristics are:

#### The UN agencies

The main UN agencies which are part of the SCN grouping are<sup>5</sup>: WFP, UNICEF, FAO, UN, World Bank, UNFPA, IFAD, UNHCR, WHO, UNU, and IAEA, and these are the stalwarts of the SCN umbrella group as they pay the core funds<sup>6</sup>. IFPRI also contributes to core funds. The main UN agencies view their interest in nutrition rather conservatively according to their technical mandates: for FAO this is food and agriculture, WHO it is health, WFP it is feeding (regarding that they are the UN lead agency for ‘hunger’), UNHCR, protection of refugees, and UNICEF, does not subscribe to a technical area but most things relating to the well-being of the young child.

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<sup>5</sup> In order of decreasing expenditure as of the 2006/07 biennium. Also members but do not contribute funds are: ECA, IAEA, ILO, UNEP, UNHCHR, UNRISD

<sup>6</sup> UNAIDS (2000/01), UNDP (1998/99) and UNESCO (2000/01) had all contributed in previous biennia

### The bilateral group

The bilateral group is usually represented at the SCN annual meeting by advisers to governments, but the role and influence of the bilaterals has dwindled in size as the funds provided by them to nutrition programmes have also decreased. Norway, Denmark, Holland are the main actors still with an interest, but interest has waned from the US (USAID), and the UK (DFID) despite its expanding international assistance budget, has never shown an active interest in supporting nutrition, although this now appears to be changing. Major health initiatives launched by bilaterals usually only consider nutrition in passing, and it will be interesting to see that if/when major donors re-embrace agriculture and food as a long neglected area then the food consumption and nutrition aspects will be given proper attention.

### The civil society group

The civil society group which also includes academia mainly involves the large NGOs, many of whom (such as Save the Children, MSF) have larger budgets for nutrition activities than many UN agencies. It is the civil society representatives that show greatest enthusiasm for the working groups and technical sessions of the SCN, the networking functions at its annual meeting and sharing of technical information (though regrettably not to the same enthusiastic extent in its working groups) as one of the strong benefits of the SCN.

As noted above, the executive role of the scientific community has been downgraded since the days of the PAG (up to 1977). Although this may have had some benefits in terms of the developmental role of the SCN, it has weakened the normative voice of the UN in nutrition.

### Who are outside this structure?

Several key players are not part of the SCN structure, and they are crucial. The fact is that some of these agencies (notably the Billanthropic Foundations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) are now providing a greater market share of resources to development than the UN, and the private sector (which the SCN body has been trying to find an entry point for some time) is moving rapidly ahead (using among other institutions through the role of the Global Alliance on Nutrition GAIN). The European Union as one of the largest multilateral donors has been unseen on the nutrition front, although a recent White Paper on poor nutrition (concentrating too much for some on overweight) may lead to a change in opinion. If the EU came heavily into nutrition programming then the aid architecture would be very significantly changed.

The follow up to the Lancet process is triggering some activity but this is largely health based.

### UN agencies, UN reform and nutrition

International aid architecture has been changing with a greater focus on country level ownership and UN coherence through UN country teams. This work that been mostly through development issues (hence the UNDAF) and lead by the four Ex-Comm agencies of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. Three of these are members of the SCN and UNDP was recently a member. But the weakness of nutrition within these agencies is one reason (though probably not the main one) why nutrition has not appeared as a cross cutting issue in the UNDAFs<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> I am willing to be corrected on this by someone more up to date

But motivation, guidance and best practice on integrating normative aspects into the UNDAF (for which FAO and WHO as two leading specialised agencies would show greatest interest) is weak.

### Comparative Advantage of the UN

The comparative advantage of the UN in the normative area is strong:

As trusted and neutral partner: at a general level, governments in poor countries (where under nutrition is high) see the UN as 'trusted partner'; they see the UN as an institution that they own which stays with them through the longer term. This is important as UN actions become more country focussed.

As intellectual leader: a powerful set of findings is emerging through the UN Intellectual History Programme that, despite its limited resources, the UN has been a leader in setting the intellectual agenda of development in a durable manner.

As provider of global public goods: the UN does not charge for its services or restrict its goods to certain members or sections of the international public.

The normative function of the UN: the UN's strongest asset is its credibility in setting laws, rules and conventions, and coming to consensus understandings among nations. A world body needs to be able to do this<sup>8</sup>. In nutrition there are controversial issues such as nutrient requirements, and safe levels of foods. Related to its normative function are the strengths of the UN specialised agencies in promoting examples of good practices, tool kits etc., which may not sound exciting are essential for governments with limited resources trying to programme more successfully and efficiently.

But in development areas the UN is weak (the normative and humanitarian areas are much stronger). Its funds are tiny compared to the Bretton Woods Institutions and UN funds are mostly used to 'gear up', capacity build, test or pilot its normative and public goods work. Budget constraints in the UN and the willingness of donors to give extra budgetary funds to UN agencies rather than to their regular budgets means that this development/normative distinction has become blurred.

### Summing Up: Issues to consider in reviewing the international nutrition architecture

There is no UN agency for nutrition (and perhaps nor should there be) but the SCN (and the PAG before) has existed to cement the UN- agency-wide normative functions required: the SCN has got into trouble with its UN constituents when it has tried to take on the functions of a development agency with extra-budgetary funding. Normative functions are the UN's strongest function and any future architecture must make space for this.

In the UN nutrition is shared across many – too many – agencies for really effective programme implementation. But governments trust the UN. UN agencies should build

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<sup>8</sup> The SCN most admired functions are its normative outputs: the Review of the World Nutrition Situation and other publications on good practice in nutrition.

partnerships with the organisations that now have the large funds for nutrition programme implementation.

On paper the UNDAF structure should help nutrition: it is a cross cutting theme that can be applied like gender. But, as far as this author knows, nutrition has not been adopted as a cross cutting theme in any UNDAF<sup>9</sup>. The SCN has taken a lead in some countries but UN nutrition agencies must take greater interest in the UNDAF. That said the integration of the normative function at country levels is given too little attention by UNCTs, and this is where a real strength of nutrition lies.

With the importance of MDG1, the linkages of nutrition to other MDGs, the spread of nutrition activities across UN agencies and the role of the UN in being able to programme for the long term, it's a mystery to many that nutrition does not take off as an important programming issue for the UN in the new aid architecture. There are promising funding indications through the Gates Foundation and possibly the EU, but if these are to be shown the way, then UN agencies need to be ready to move into new partnerships and massage their technical mandates to a greater extent than they have to date.

Finally, on recommendations for FAO and AGN in particular on partnerships, some of the following comments will reflect my ignorance of up-to-date activities in AGN:

- First, AGN/FAO should not assume that its resource constraints mean that it is short on 'products' to offer potential partnerships: within its staff resources and programming and project experience, it will have many useful productions, though possibly not well articulated and 'packaged'.
- Second, a central role in developing partnerships is that in order to convince those outside the organisation of your value as partner, you must have first to convince colleagues in other departments internally. Unless AGN has developed a viable set of partnerships internally, it will be hard to work with outsiders.
- Third, in terms of external partnerships, AGN has to prioritise those areas which can be scaled up by application of development funds from well funded organisations. These could be (for example), the Gates, Google and Omidyar Foundations or the EU (Gates and the EU are now working with ILO, for example, the Gates and ILO on micro finance). Regional development banks also provide some potential. It is concluded from the current SCN experience that bilateral donors are not likely to be a useful source of funds at the moment.
- Fourth, in trying to match AGN 'tried and tested products' on the one hand and potentially large sources of funds on the other, this will require staff resources (and specialised expertise and time). Either AGN has to appoint a development officer to make these matches or existing staff have to behave in a very entrepreneurial fashion and given the latitude to pursue these 'matches'. Perhaps this happens already, but my experience of working with another specialised agency, the International Maritime Organisation, which was very adept at setting up partnerships, has shown me the importance of getting the internal structuring right.

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<sup>9</sup> Again my information may not be up to date on this.

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16<sup>th</sup> October 2008

## **Annex 12**

### **Introducing nutrition into food security, agriculture and development policies and plans - constraints and solutions**

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October 24, 2008

#### **Abstract**

FAO, and to varying degrees other international and bilateral agencies, has promoted the introduction of nutrition into food security, agricultural and development policies for more than thirty years. While some successes are on record, the experience on the whole has been disappointing. This paper recommends focusing attention, initially at least, on countries with the most promising policy environment. Successes in these countries can then be used to tackle more challenging situations. Priority recommendations in selected countries include:

- **Setting the stage:** Securing bi-sectoral cooperation agreements between agriculture and the sector in which the country's nutrition unit is located, such that relevant policies will include nutrition considerations.
- **Achieving success:** Working closely with one or more food security or agricultural programme so as to achieve successful models that can provide the evidence needed for expansion to other programmes.
- **Enabling dialogue:** Train nutritionists and agriculturalists to fully understand the issues and to be able to communicate effectively with each other.

At the same time, it is important that in-house efforts to promote the routine inclusion of nutrition in FAO's programmes continue, so that FAO's own food security and agricultural policies reflect what it is promoting at the country-level.

#### **Background**

Introducing nutrition into food security, agriculture and development policies and plans can be considered at three levels: at the international level, the national level and at the sub-national level. At the international level, we are concerned firstly with the outcomes of international conferences (declarations, resolutions, policy statements, setting of goals), and secondly with policies of international and bilateral agencies. At the national level, a number of constraints have been experienced, largely by national nutritionists but also by FAO, in persuading governments to include nutrition indicators and outcomes in their food security and agriculture policies and plans. The sub-national level includes provincial, regional, district and community levels.<sup>10</sup> At this level, there can be considerable overlap with the programme level.

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<sup>10</sup> Geographical and administrative sub-divisions and nomenclature of these sub-divisions vary from country to country.

Efforts to integrate nutritional concerns into national and international policies, plans and programmes began more than thirty years ago. Resolution 8/77 from the 1977 FAO Conference recommends that the Director General of FAO:

*“suggest methods for ensuring that nutritional considerations are, as appropriate, adequately included in FAO’s planning and execution of agricultural projects and programmes.”*

In 1979, the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development stated that:

*“nutritional considerations should be explicitly considered in the planning, design and implementation of rural development projects.”*

Since the mid-seventies, FAO nutritionists have pursued the goal of incorporating nutritional objectives and outcomes in policies and programmes at all levels, with varying degrees of success. Within FAO, efforts were most successful within specific programmes that had a social dimension.<sup>11</sup> On the whole however, mainstreaming nutrition so that nutrition considerations are routinely included in all of FAO’s programmes has proved elusive.

Experiences in other agencies have been similarly varied. Efforts to achieve in-house intersectoral collaboration have themselves been mixed, some agencies making little or no effort, others have tried and failed, and others yet are still trying, with mixed results.<sup>12</sup> Thus, for example:<sup>13</sup>

- DFID’s promotion of integrated rural development programmes which held a real potential for addressing nutrition were abandoned because of poor results and difficulties of intersectoral collaboration. DFID has moved now to Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAPs) in which cross-sectoral issues are not easily addressed, thereby reducing their contribution to poverty alleviation and the reduction of malnutrition.
- USAID and IDB make no mention of nutrition in their food security and agriculture programmes; the emphasis in these agencies appears to be on agricultural technology and trade. However, some pilot studies have been supported that use agricultural technology to improve intakes of specific micronutrients.
- IFAD appears to be making a real effort, and has done for some time. In 1994 its Executive Board adopted a comprehensive strategy to move its rural investment projects towards improved nutrition. To achieve this it promotes investment in low potential areas where malnutrition is high, and encourages an enabling policy environment and a more effective operationalization of nutrition objectives. It also recognizes the need to sensitize its staff, collaborators and policy makers on “relevant concepts and practical ways of addressing [household food security and] nutrition”.
- The World Bank has produced recently a useful document entitled “From Agriculture to Nutrition – Pathways, Synergies and Outcomes”. However, its large-scale agriculture programmes at least appear not to address nutrition.

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<sup>11</sup> Examples are social forestry and “Nutrition in fisheries”.

<sup>12</sup> These statements and examples are based simply on an examination of the agencies’ websites; considerable research would be needed to confirm or refute these findings.

<sup>13</sup> Abbreviations used on the next page: DFID-Department for International Development; USAID-United States Agency for International Development; IDB-InterAmerican Development Bank; IFAD-International Fund for Agricultural Development.

At the national level, many countries established national food and nutrition councils, especially from the mid-70s onwards, the heyday of multi-sectoral food and nutrition planning. Many of these councils are now non-functional or defunct, despite efforts at revival at the International Conference on Nutrition (1992):

*“These coordinating bodies have however seen little if any success in achieving effective cooperation between sector ministries, leaving little empirical basis for assuming that such institutional adaptations actually work.”<sup>14</sup>*

The World Bank report points out that there have been changes in agriculture in recent decades that need to be taken into account when promoting the inclusion of nutrition concerns in national agricultural policies and plans.<sup>15</sup> These include a move to a market-oriented approach with less state intervention, the liberalization of trade and of consumer prices, technological advances and changes in food marketing systems and consumption patterns.

At the sub-national and programmatic levels, the situation looks more hopeful. Here bureaucratic barriers are less entrenched. Communities and districts are more willing to take a holistic approach to development, and are less concerned with sectoral priorities and responsibilities or with the national economy. Programmes are more focused on the particular needs of a district, targeting local problems and taking into account local cultural and other relevant issues.

Finally, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should have presented an excellent opportunity for mainstreaming nutrition. Disappointingly, while nutrition is implicit in at least three of the MDGs, it is not explicitly mentioned in any. Hunger is indeed mentioned, and mostly in relation to children, but to most non-nutritionists this translates simply into an inadequate quantity of food, without any real consideration for the quality of the diet or its ability to meet the requirements for individual nutrients. The approach of the MDGs, even in relation to hunger, is welfarist rather than treating access to a nutritionally adequate and safe food supply as a human right.

## **Constraints**

While the incorporation of nutritional concerns into agricultural policies and plans can function at different levels, it is important to recognize that the levels are inter-related. Thus for example:

- An enabling international policy environment, created by international and bilateral agencies' policies and through declarations and resolutions from international conferences, will help nutritionists at the national level. Similarly, country-level success stories may persuade agencies to re-think their own policies and approaches to development assistance.
- On the one hand, successful pilot studies and programmes at the sub-national level can persuade countries to adopt similar approaches nationally. On the other hand, a national policy environment that recognizes the value of nutritional improvement towards

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<sup>14</sup> *From Agriculture to Nutrition – Pathways, Synergies and Outcomes*. World Bank Report No. 40196-GLB, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

achieving national development goals will promote activities at the local level that include nutritional considerations and objectives.

Why has it proved so difficult to introduce nutrition into food security, agriculture and development policies and plans? There is no single, simple answer, and the particular combination of the following issues and challenges faced by international and national nutritionists vary from agency to agency and from country to country:

- Do international and bilateral agencies really collaborate with each other at country level? The coordinating mechanism may exist, but the extent to which it is effective is questionable. And, at country level, are they able to promote intersectoral collaboration if they are unable to achieve this within their own agencies? If these agencies are unable to set an example, why do we expect countries to accept and address nutrition as a cross-cutting issue rather than a problem of the health sector, and even within health, as a problem of maternal and child health?
- Conflicting sectoral priorities: for agriculture, the emphasis may be on export crops and the need to support the national economy through profits from these crops. Additionally, export crop production is frequently on a large scale with a workforce that is dependent on an adequate income and affordable food prices to meet their nutritional needs. Large scale production is also now often in the hands of the private sector, with limited state intervention and the profit motive of paramount importance.
- Bureaucratic barriers constrain intersectoral collaboration. Each government ministry has its own priorities and responsibilities, and no ministry has jurisdiction over another.
- The level of sectoral participants in a multisectoral food and nutrition council or committee can be problematic. If the level is too high, there are frequent absences because of other activities considered more important than nutrition. If the level is too low, members have no decision-making power.
- Nutrition departments are often located in the health sector, and viewed as the responsibility of health alone. Even within the health sector, nutrition activities are sometimes limited to maternal and child issues.<sup>16</sup>
- National nutritionists are often ill-equipped to promote nutrition outside the health sector. Their familiarity with the language and issues of economics, agriculture and national development may be limited. Moreover, their focus on young child nutrition may promote a welfare approach like the MDGs, rather than a human rights approach.
- Similarly, national agriculturalists and agricultural economists are not exposed to issues of food and nutrition security during the course of their training. The emphasis of most training programmes is agricultural production, increasing productivity and agricultural technology, rather than ensuring that people have economic and geographical access to a nutritionally adequate and safe food supply. Indeed few agriculturists are able to provide a full and adequate definition of food security.<sup>17</sup>
- Food and nutrition information systems are often inadequate in quality and coverage, erratic in frequency, and may provide out of date information. Disaggregation to local

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<sup>16</sup> In Guyana, for example, the Food Policy Division which handles all nutrition activities falls within the Maternal and Child Health Department. Collaboration with other departments in the ministry is limited.

<sup>17</sup> I found an encouraging and welcome exception to this in Guyana's Ministry of Agriculture – the co-ordinator of the Ministry's programme in Guyana's hinterland regions, home to its Amerindian peoples, was able to give me a comprehensive definition of food security. He ensures that nutrition objectives and outcomes are included in the hinterland agricultural policy and in all hinterland agricultural plans and programmes. He gave me copies of some examples. However, he admitted that this was certainly not true for national agricultural policy and programmes.

levels may be difficult, making it difficult to highlight vulnerable communities. Such surveillance data are essential advocacy tools for promoting good nutrition and for monitoring trends.

- Finally, but probably most importantly, support at the highest level is generally lacking. National leaders may pay lip-service to eradicating hunger and malnutrition in international fora, they may sign impressive declarations, but the extent to which these international pronouncements translate into enabling national development policies is limited in most cases.

These are some of the challenges that FAO nutritionists have faced in their efforts to promote the introduction of nutrition into food security, agriculture and development policies and plans, both within FAO and at the country-level.<sup>18</sup>

## Solutions

Two quotes from Thailand's experience are apt at this point:

*It may take more than a decade to get things off the ground, another decade for continual assessments and adjustments to be firmly established within the system, and another decade before the impacts can be clearly seen and evaluated.*<sup>19</sup>

*Thailand's experience has indicated that policy decisions which bring about deliberate actions are often in response to political concerns, public opinion and awareness.*<sup>20</sup>

Solutions are as varied and as location or situation-specific as are the challenges:

- Political activism: develop a public awareness campaign to promote nutrition, highlight key issues, and urge action on the part of the country's leadership. Accepting food and nutrition security, with all its ramifications, as an essential development goal and a human right is a crucial first step to achieving intersectoral collaboration and creating an enabling policy environment. The campaign can act on a number of fronts:
  - ✓ Seize opportunities as they arise. Thus, for example, the current alarming rise in food prices is a vital issue around which support from civil society can be engaged.<sup>21</sup>
  - ✓ Create partnerships with the private sector and with NGOs.
  - ✓ Publicize success stories, examples of plans and programmes that have worked: this can be done by FAO and by national nutritionists.
  - ✓ Publicize international declarations and resolutions to which the country is a signatory, and require that the government stand by its promises.
- For ensuring that nutrition considerations are routinely included in all FAO's agricultural, rural development and food security projects and programmes, establish:
  - ✓ Criteria for assessing the likely impact of the project on nutrition.

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<sup>18</sup> There is one other possible challenge, which is pure speculation on my part. I have observed that in many countries national nutritionists are women. Is the failure to take to nutrition seriously a gender issue?

<sup>19</sup> Integrating Food and Nutrition into Development: Thailand's Experiences and Future Visiobs. Edited by P.Winichagoon et al. UNICEF/EAPRO and the Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University, Thailand (1992)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> In Guyana, this has been done by Red Thread, a well-established women's NGO, by publishing food prices and demonstrating the high cost of a nutritionally adequate dietary for a family in relation to its income.

- ✓ Establish minimum requirements for all projects. If the project's primary objectives cannot be changed, then the project must include a specific nutrition component as a minimum e.g. nutrition education.
- Ensure that food and nutrition security and the contribution of agriculture to nutrition improvement are key topics covered during the training of agriculturalists and extension officers.
- Similarly, expose nutritionists to basic training in economics, the links between agriculture and nutrition, and negotiating skills. Nutritionists need also to be provided with tools (data, case studies) to "sell" good nutrition as a human right, and to highlight the economic cost of malnutrition. Ensure that nutritionists view nutrition as a cross-cutting issue, and are able to function comfortably outside the health sector.
- Community-based and local activities and programmes probably hold out the best hope for success. Intersectoral collaboration is much less problematic at this level. Indeed most of the success stories that we have are at this level, rather than at the national level. Local programmes need to evolve from within the community, addressing a felt need, and they should be location and culture specific. The participation of national nutritionists at the programme level is relatively easy, and much less subject to institutional and territorial barriers. However, while a programme or project-level approach is tempting, programmes and projects often have limited life spans, especially if they are externally funded. Sustainability is thus a challenge.
- Broaden partnerships to include civil society, the private sector and NGOs.
- Encourage local small-scale food production alongside large scale production of export crops.
- Working around cultural constraints, enable and empower women engaged in agricultural activities. It is well established that income in the hands of women is much more likely to be used for the household's food supply, for education and health care, than if it is left in the hands of men.
- Establish sound food and nutrition surveillance systems. Reports using simple, non-technical language should be publicized, on a regular basis.

### **Priority recommendations**

Priority recommendations relate primarily to AGN's country level work. However, an important parallel recommendation is that work within FAO needs to continue.

#### **A. Within FAO**

All agricultural, rural development and food security programmes and projects emerging from FAO should ultimately be assessed for their likely impact on nutrition. Given AGN's limited resources, the recommendation is that, initially at least, programmes and projects are selected that hold the greatest promise of achieving good nutritional outcomes.

#### **B. At country-level**

The emphasis of this recommendation is to achieve success stories, in order to argue for change in other more challenging situations.

Based on the knowledge of AGN staff, it is recommended that a number of countries be identified where an enabling policy environment is likely to exist. Then AGN should undertake a systematic assessment of each of these countries that includes the following:

- Level of political commitment;
- Availability of national resources: this refers primarily to the existence of a strong nutrition unit, with nutritionists who have a good understanding of the broader issues relating to nutrition, beyond maternal and child nutrition.
- Level of country-level co-ordination of the donor community, as it relates to nutrition activities;
- Availability of an adequate food and nutrition information system.

Out of this assessment, a limited number of countries should emerge with the most promising policy environment, and these should be supported in the following specific areas, with the full and active assistance and cooperation of the country-level donor community:<sup>22</sup>

- If the country's nutrition unit is in the Ministry of Health, or indeed in any Ministry other than Agriculture, secure a bi-sectoral cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture. The agreement should state that most, if not all, agricultural programmes will include nutrition objectives and outcomes, and will be explicitly designed to contribute to nutrition improvement.<sup>23</sup> If the nutrition unit is in the Ministry of Agriculture, then secure a similar agreement within the Ministry.
- Focus activities on one or more agricultural, food security or rural development programmes which hold out the greatest promise of nutrition improvement. Document the processes and the outcomes.
- Offer training to national nutritionists and agriculturalists in areas such as the economic cost of malnutrition, food as a human right, the contribution of agriculture to food and nutrition security, and good nutrition as a development goal. The training should be provided by economists and agricultural economists working with nutritionists. A separate session should focus on negotiation skills and tools for the nutritionists.
- Document the experiences of the selected countries and publicize the successes.

## Conclusion

It would be wrong to conclude that no progress has been made in ensuring that nutrition is addressed adequately within agriculture, rural development and food security policies, at all levels. We do now see nutrition included, at least in international fora, within the definition of food security. Access to an adequate food supply is often referred to as a human right, and we have thus moved away from a purely welfare approach to nutrition. Substantial progress has been made, but more efforts are needed.

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<sup>22</sup> It is strongly recommended that the country representatives of the relevant international and bilateral agencies participate fully in all negotiations with government ministries. They will make a stronger case than can be achieved by an AGN staff member working alone.

<sup>23</sup> At the initial stage at least, we recommend that the agreement involves only two sectors. If appropriate, the agreement can be expanded incrementally to engage other sectors.

## Annex 13

### **Embedding nutrition in agriculture and related health policies and programmes: constraints, challenges and solutions**

Stuart Gillespie  
International Food Policy Research Institute  
29 October 2008

#### ***Abstract***

*This is a summary of a paper which aims to describe some of the major current and emerging challenges in effectively embedding nutritional considerations into agriculture and related health policies and programmes. Major constraints and challenges include the sectoralization of institutions and policy, the relative sidelining of nutrition in development discourse and agenda-setting (and the related advocacy and communications challenges that this brings), limited capacity at many levels in policy, practice and in research – and limited evidence of large-scale success. In addition there are several new, emerging (and some unknown) challenges that will need to be addressed including food price shocks, climate change and transboundary disease. Potential solutions revolve around an effective priority-setting process to determine what FAO focuses on in this complex arena, the need to be more strategic (and often opportunistic) in the way the organization works, the need to foster more and stronger alliances and partnerships, strengthen policy communications and support to capacity strengthening, and to promote the independent generation of evidence of what works on a large-scale in this field.*

#### **CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES**

##### **1 Sectoralization of institutions and policy**

Nutrition is inherently a multisectoral issue in that it usually requires several sectors to act to make sustainable progress in reducing or preventing malnutrition, and often to act in an integrated way. But promoting cooperation in research and policy between different sectors is challenging – sectoral barriers that provide disincentives to collaboration need to be overcome, and challenges in trans-disciplinary analyses and communications confronted. Intersectorality is a mechanism, a matter of practice, not an end in itself. It requires an enabling policy environment, effective institutional arrangements, and the capacity of individuals to engage in an intersectoral dialogue, and it relies on evidence generated by multidisciplinary research from credible sources.

Agriculture and health policies and programmes tend to remain locked in sectoral silos, and seldom are they integrated or coordinated. Agricultural policies address natural resource management, farmers' livelihoods, food security, and food safety – while public health policies tend to revolve around the provision of prevention and curative care within clinic-based health systems. Agriculture is driven by an economic development rationale, while health aims to maximize human development. Agriculture is productive, health is concerned with reproduction. These fundamentally different societal functions have kept the sectors apart. As such, incentives are skewed toward competition over limited resources, rather than toward collaboration.

Despite being a pivotal interface between these domains and sectors, nutrition tends to fall between the cracks of agriculture, health and more recently, social protection. We need to better understand the factors that hinder or promote multisectoral integration at the levels of policy, programme, and project implementation.

In this environment, nutrition may be well served through encouraging a proactive focus on agriculture-health linkages – and by bring these two sectors together. There is a particular need to study the outcomes and processes of effective integration of health and agriculture to build stronger and more convincing evidence.

## **2 Sidelining of nutrition in development agendas, including agriculture**

Despite the proven impact of nutrition on health, mental development, and productivity, it remains relatively sidelined in policy agendas. Beyond the nutrition community, knowledge about malnutrition, its consequences, and its links to poverty and other human development goals is fragmented and inconsistently applied. Opportunities for including nutrition components into broader development initiatives, including those emanating from the agriculture sector, to help those initiatives *meet their own goals* are being missed. There needs to be a greater understanding of the process whereby political commitment to improving nutrition is generated. A limited view of policy processes tends to generate an over-reliance on “lack of resources”, “lack of political will” and “lack of conventional research” as explanations for lack of progress in reducing malnutrition.

Key to a better understanding of when and how nutrition considerations can strategically leverage large development-related resource flows—whether they originate from donors, governments or the private sector--will be increased knowledge about the structures and processes that govern those flows. It will be important to understand the scope and ability of different groups to access power and how that is affected by external resource inflows. A much better understanding of the policy process is required if nutrition is to be effectively and sustainably embedded within development policy. Nutritionists need to become more politically “streetwise”.

## **3 Limited capacity at many levels**

Inadequate capacity at all levels—from households to national governments and international agencies and across the range of policymaking tasks and actions—represents a major constraint. Capacity is complex, both conceptually and operationally. It can be defined as the ability of a person, community, or organization to take control of its destiny and manage and direct its development through an iterative process of assessment, analysis, and action. Capacity goes beyond the quantity and quality of human, economic, and organizational resources. It also includes such factors as authority, power, responsibility, incentives, leadership, and systems of problem-solving, decision-making, and communication. Different actors need different capacities to undertake the tasks required in pursuing a common goal.

In order to generate sustainable solutions to malnutrition, capacity development must be taken seriously. And before this can be done, capacity gaps or weaknesses need to be proactively assessed using appropriate tools and methods. Nowadays, many effective nutrition-relevant technologies and interventions (the ‘toolbox’) are relatively well known. What is still needed however are people who are adept in using/adapting and further developing these tools in different situations.

#### **4 Limited evidence of large-scale success**

What is needed to transform small-scale efficacy into large-scale impact on malnutrition reduction is stronger alliances between researchers and programme people, and a heightened ‘nutritional literacy’ of development actors. This will require a move beyond the traditional units of observation (individuals and households) toward the behavior of agents such as project managers, policymakers, and community health workers; and the organization of structures such as NGOs, local government, nutrition projects, and ministries of agriculture and health.

#### **5 New and emerging challenges**

There are several important new and emerging challenges currently shaping the food and nutrition landscape globally. The recent rapid rise in food prices clearly has a huge impact and there has been a major focus on this already to date, at least in terms of media interest and policy statements. The food price issue represents an acute crisis overlaying a chronic one. FAO and other organizations concerned with food and nutrition security should emphasize this point – when food prices drop, we will still be left with a food crisis (if not a food price crisis) due to the other long-term drivers of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. FAO should also seize this opportunity to “get their foot in the door” and raise the profile of nutrition – putting in place alliances and partnerships that will endure and have relevance for the broader chronic crisis. Nutrition is a leading indicator of household stress, and a vital goal to be protected in the face of such crises. Second, climate change is another long wave process that will increasingly put pressure on food and nutrition security. Climate change will exert its effect through a long term gradual build up of pressure on resources at many levels, and by raising the frequency and severity of sudden catastrophic events (floods, droughts etc). Such effects will be channeled through all three of the key pathways to nutrition – food, health and care. Again, FAO has a clear role here in shining a light on the food pathway and generating long-term remedial responses in concert with other agencies and governments. Third, new emerging diseases, often zoonotic and transboundary such as avian influenza and HIV, will emerge in coming years/decades and put pressure on food security. There are other unknown challenges that lie beyond the horizon, requiring an institutional flexibility to ensure that FAO responds, in line with its mandate, in a timely way.

### **POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

#### **1 Addressing the “what” question**

As a recent review by IFPRI and the World Bank on agriculture and nutrition has suggested “*there is good reason to anticipate that nutritional outcomes will become more prominent in the calculus by which the value of agricultural programmes is rated.*” (Hawkes and Ruel 2008). Following the identification of the four major pathways linking food production to nutrition outcomes, the review highlights four important drivers of change and recommends four key design elements that would improve the nutrition outcomes of agriculture. This is a useful template against which to address the question of where FAO’s comparative advantage lies in improving the nutrition relevance of agricultural policy and practice.

## **Agriculture and nutrition: pathways, drivers and new design elements**

### Pathways linking food production with nutrition outcomes

- Production for the household's own consumption.
- Income-oriented production for sale in markets.
- The empowerment of women.
- Lowering food retail prices.

### Drivers of a changing agriculture-nutrition context

- Agricultural technology.
- Agricultural policy.
- Changing consumption patterns.
- Food marketing systems.

### Design elements for improving the nutrition outcomes of agricultural programmes

- Incorporate nutrition outreach and behavior change.
- Empower women as agents of improved nutrition outcomes.
- Take local contexts into account.
- Provide small producers with support to capitalize on changing market demand.

Hawkes and Ruel 2008

But FAO can also effectively engage with other emerging agendas and fields.

### *1.2 Bringing the agriculture and health sectors together*

There are major potential benefits of cooperation in research, policymaking, and practice between these two sectors. Linkages between agriculture and health are becoming increasingly pronounced – examples include the interaction between HIV and agriculture, avian influenza, food safety and food-borne disease, water-related diseases and their interaction with agriculture (e.g. malaria and irrigation), and fundamentally, the issue of nutrition, diet and health itself. It is hoped that FAO will continue to play an active role in the CGIAR plus initiative – the Agriculture and Health Research Platform (AHRP).

### *1.3 Engaging with the social protection agenda*

Social protection initiatives are generally classified as development interventions but are motivated by a desire to keep chronic poverty and shocks from undermining the development process. Conditional cash transfers have worked well in Latin America, and there are promising signs with regard to non-conditional transfers in sub-Saharan Africa. There seems to be an opportunity for bridges to be built between small-scale agricultural regeneration and social protection. How to link small-scale producers with social protection systems that may require food transfers? Attempts, for example, are being made by the Gates Foundation to incentivize links in this way – initially between agriculture and health service delivery of food rations linked to HIV treatment. This is an area where FAO could play a role.

## **2 Be more strategic**

### *2.1 Policy is what it does*

Taking the approach that “policy is what it does” (rather than just a statement on a piece of paper) avoids having implementation be seen as something separate that happens after policy is made. Several of the National Plans of Action for Nutrition that emerged some years after the International Conference on Nutrition in 1992 did not discuss implementation. Policy statements need to clearly identify how policy actions are to be carried out and regulated, building in accountability and transparency.

### *2.2 Learn by doing: reforming policy by improving programmes*

Appropriately designed and effectively implemented, nutrition programmes can themselves change policies or trigger the development of a specific policy. This is the reverse of the notion that policy directs programmes. Among the potential advantages of such a route is that approaches are tested in the context in which they will be applied.

### *2.3 Build on success*

Earlier internal divisions in the nutrition community on priorities and the pervasive “either-or” mentality (“micronutrients *or* general malnutrition”) hurt advocacy. More creativity needs to be applied to transform the success with micronutrients into opportunities for initiating broader approaches, not just tradeoffs. Overall, experience shows that general malnutrition can be effectively addressed on a large scale, at reasonable cost. Most successful policies to overcome malnutrition have as their cornerstone participatory, community-based nutrition programmes undertaken in parallel with supportive sectoral actions that converge on groups nutritionally at risk. Such actions are often supported by policies aimed at improving household food security, improving poor people’s access to social services, enhancing women’s status and education, and fostering equitable economic growth.

### *2.4 Ensure a good process*

Beyond programme design issues, there are critical questions about *how* activities should be initiated, implemented, managed, and monitored. Indeed, it is these questions that have proved to be the main stumbling blocks in realizing the large-scale potential of nutrition interventions shown in efficacy trials. Success in nutrition requires more than just achieving desirable outcomes—such as less child malnutrition -- It also requires achieving these outcomes through a good process, because without a good process, outcomes are unlikely to endure. A good process is one in which participation, local ownership and empowerment are key driving forces. Thus a focus on process aligns with the human rights rationale for action, in which beneficiaries are considered subjects of their own growth and development rather than passive recipients of welfare transfers. In programmes involving different partners a good process means generating a working consensus on the problem and its main causes before attempting to design solutions.

### *2.5 Collaborate*

It is essential for any one organization in this complex field to collaborate. By nature, nutrition is intersectoral and interdisciplinary. Nutritionists need to be adept at working at the

interface, or the intersections of other policy domains – indeed they should strive to build bridges and strengthen connectivity.

## 2.6 *Promote sectoral convergence and local integration*

Complex and multifaceted, the problem of malnutrition raises questions about how to coordinate programme implementation across sectors. Evidence suggests that the packaging of multiple interventions into single, centrally financed programmes should give way to the local convergence of interventions from separate programmes. Indeed, the shift toward decentralization is in line with this. Moreover, local governments and communities seldom see interventions for health and nutrition, or interventions for women and children, as separate from one another. Attempting to do everything in a single programme with inadequate financing usually leads to patchy coverage and little impact.

## 2.7 *Don't get hung up on institutionalization*

The debate about the institutionalization of nutrition has moved through several stages. The question now is not so much “where nutrition resides” institutionally, because there may be several locations. The real question is *what types of capacity need strengthening at different levels and in different institutions to support and sustain positive change and ensure the coordination needed to achieve the country's nutrition goals.*

# 3 **Strengthen advocacy and communications**

## 3.1 *Nutrition policy entrepreneurs*

We need more *nutrition policy entrepreneurs*, who are able to recognize and catalyze the convergence of problems, policies, and politics. At times this convergence can propel a rather broad and general agenda (such as “nutrition”), and at other times it can focus on a specific issue within that agenda (such as food-based micronutrient interventions). The chances of success will be much greater when such an entrepreneur pays close attention not only to the soundness of the nutrition arguments but also to their compatibility with the goals and interests of other actors and organizations (that is, to politics).

## 3.2 *Process is more important than policy per se.*

Nutritionists need to learn how to interact more strategically at all stages of policy development, from agenda-setting to evaluation, and to complement this with good understanding of other parties' values, priorities, and decision-making. Change occurs in different ways over different time spans, and it may take a long time to cultivate alliances and networks and to foster a spirit of ownership to pave the way for effective advocacy.

## 3.3 *Emphasize the unique aspect of nutrition as a low-cost intergenerational investment*

The impact of nutrition on economic and human development and the long term consequences of malnutrition, need more emphasis. A better understanding of the possibility of fueling virtuous cycles of improving nutrition and reducing poverty could lead to clear opportunities for repositioning nutrition globally and nationally. Malnutrition has intergenerational, often irreversible, effects. The costs of intervening with known technologies and solutions are minor in comparison with the costs of inaction. This role as a

*driver of intergenerational development* is underplayed. FAO is well positioned to identify opportunities for attaching specific nutrition-related elements to agricultural development agendas.

#### **4 Strengthen capacity**

FAO is well placed to support capacity assessment and development. Capacity development should be integral to country support, not something tacked on as a ‘capacity-building component’. Performance monitoring needs to include indicators of local capacity development. And time horizons should be determined by the pace of capacity development, not the fiscal years of donors. Among the various nutrition-relevant capacity gaps, FAO could have a prominent role in: a) strengthening nutrition focus of agricultural policymakers and programme managers; b) facilitating the building of strategic alliances between nutrition advocates and communities in agriculture, health, education, governance, trade and infrastructure; c) widening and deepening capacity by forging active policy-programme-research-training networks and partnerships. Both scale and capacity may be increased through partnership formation.

#### **5 Manage and generate useful knowledge**

##### *5.1 Improve operational research, monitoring and evaluation*

Operations research remains fundamental to improved programmes. As with capacity development, it should not be thought of as an *ad hoc* exercise, but rather as a fundamental component of the management information system, and one that has a clear budget line. While funds should be pre-allocated to support such research, the actual research questions will themselves only become known as the programme evolves. Good evaluations are valuable fuel for advocacy—because they state what works and, hopefully, why. Yet there are few evaluations of large-scale nutrition-relevant programmes, and many of those that do exist are poor in quality.

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## Annex 14

### Ideas for Discussion about Assessment at FAO/AGN Retreat

Original paper by J.B. Mason, Tulane University  
with comments from Marie-Claude Dop, AGN

*Framework for contributing to FAO's efforts to improve food security and nutrition.*

This note is based largely on the documents received as background for the AGN/FAO Retreat, and dialogue on comments made in response to these<sup>24</sup>. The tone and content are intended to catalyze discussion at the retreat (at which I regret not being able to be present), and does not mostly represent immutable beliefs.

When improving nutrition the issues related to poverty must remain central. Livelihood is a sort of substitute, but with not much profile (e.g. in the FAO/FIVIMS framework).

Food security is nearly identical to poverty under most circumstances (say, for 90% of food insecure people), and importantly therefore interventions to alleviate food insecurity are usually the same as those for poverty. This is not surprising, since (say) about 60%+ of expenditure goes on food. This has quite extensive implications. In particular, it means that there is limited role for incorporating 'nutrition' into policies etc: mainly in identifying those in most need – nutritional status is an excellent measure of poverty and related issues – and measuring the effects of policies on them. The actual policies *themselves* are going to be the same as those that most effectively reduce poverty.

#### ***1. Some issues for considering FAO's role in food security and nutrition.***

Asserting that FAO has a crucial role of incorporating nutrition into policies implies more than being an issue of targeting, and one of the ways this is suggested is that (somehow) nutrition incorporation favours dietary diversity: but so does better income, unless there are differential price effects, and is seldom driven by concerns for nutritional balance. However, the concept of evidence-based decisions (popular with WHO, and obviously assumed here to be at least implicit) applies: the evidence that nutrition incorporation into policies and programs is more effective than would be achieved by reducing poverty itself needs to be clearly laid out (and indeed by what factor?). If it is, the lessons can be adopted; if not, one can revert to the targeting and monitoring/evaluation issue; of course, in relation to the circumstances.

(a) *Framework.* While litres of ink and hectares of paper have been taken up in conceptual frameworks, I do believe that one should start with simple but largely true formulations, before moving onto more detailed and complex ones. Almost any simple framework can be faulted by specific examples, but the benefit of a general structure for discussion is to give a starting point and a language. The UNICEF (1990) framework achieved this (attached as Table 1), and now many people use in the FAO/FIVIMS framework (similar to the commonly accepted UNICEF (1990) framework), food consumption and utilization – very similar to dietary intake and health/disease as the proximal determinants – depend on household food access and livelihood (as well as caring practices

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<sup>24</sup> I much appreciate comments from Marie Claude Dop, which for clarity (of whose opinion they are) I have suggested should be made separately, or as an adjunct, to this paper; and inputs from my former esteemed colleague Franz Simmersbach : I have somewhat recast the introductory section, and kept his suggestions for the remainder.

and health environment and access to services). Near enough to ‘food, health, and care’ as a starting point for discussions such as these, for which the opposites of food, health and care are hunger, sickness, and neglect, which most people can agree are fundamental issues to address. There are many flaws (beyond of course that there may be exceptions): the one I point out to students (who have become so familiar with it that groans that greet my referring back to it) is that two dimensions are not enough. The top part is individual, the middle society, and the bottom the country or indeed the planet: you need a third dimension through the page. Nonetheless the framework seems to me about as simple as can be justified, and the more useful for that. Clearly ‘food’, maybe as ‘food (in)security’ is FAO’s focus.

The FAO/FIVIMS framework (FAO, 2000, p 15 in background doc) is similar enough not to confuse the discussion, consistent with ‘food, health and care’ as key underlying causes (there is no priority, in my view, to debating the differences between the two frameworks). Food consumption and utilization are very similar to dietary intake and health/disease as the proximal determinants (or immediate causes), together with caring practices and health environment and access to services). Clearly ‘food’, maybe as ‘food (in)security’ is FAO’s focus, and the other causes are to others (e.g WHO and UNICEF).

(b) *Poverty*. In the background documents, as in the various frameworks, it is striking that the word ‘poverty’ is virtually never used. ‘Livelihood’ is a sort of substitute, but with not much profile, e.g. in the FAO/FIVIMS framework. In my view, food security is nearly identical to poverty under most circumstances (say for 90% of food-insecure people), and importantly therefore interventions to alleviate food insecurity are usually the same as those for poverty. This is not surprising, since about 60% of expenditure goes on food. This has extensive implications. In particular, it means that there is limited role for incorporating ‘nutrition’ into policies etc: mainly in identifying those in most need – nutritional status is an excellent measure of poverty and related issues – and measuring the effects of policies on them. The actual policies *themselves* are going to be the same as those that most effectively reduce poverty.

Thus, of the three underlying causes of malnutrition, food (security) is of particular concern to FAO (and the other causes are to others (e.g WHO and UNICEF)). FAO’s efforts should contribute to alleviating poverty for those (say 90%) for whom poverty and food insecurity would be addressed by the same interventions – if this overlap of poverty with food insecurity is accepted. These interventions to address poverty are quite well known, and range from safety nets (e.g. cash transfers) to income generation – for FAO, especially for farmers, I would imagine – but overall they are mainly within the scope of the development agencies, e.g World Bank, UNDP, etc. A clear role for FAO (including AGN) would be to measure and monitor the food security of those most food -insecure, and link this back to poverty alleviation (see point 2). (At the moment, this surely relates especially to the recent increases in food prices, and the likely forthcoming economic recession.)

Asserting that FAO has a crucial role of incorporating nutrition into policies (as in some comments) implies more than this targeting issue, and one of the ways this is suggested, for example, is that (somehow) nutrition incorporation favours dietary diversity: but so does better income, unless there are differential price effects, which I imagine are seldom driven by concerns for nutritional balance. However, the concept of evidence-based decisions applies: the evidence that nutrition incorporation into policies and programs is more effective than would be achieved by reducing poverty itself needs to be clearly laid out (and indeed by what

factor?). If it is, the lessons can be adopted; if not, one can revert to the targeting and monitoring/evaluation issue; of course, in relation to the circumstances.

The 10% (or whatever) of affected people whose food security would be less effectively reduced by reducing poverty – whose food insecurity in other words is not only due to poverty – presumably are those with restricted physical access to food, where markets aren't working, or where physical conditions prevent access. This could be refugees, people isolated by disasters, etc. These need special attention, and could be a legitimate particular focus for FAO. This is addressed in point 4 below.

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#### 1. *Measuring food security and malnutrition.*

The 10% (or whatever) of affected people whose food security would be less effectively reduced by reducing poverty – whose food-insecurity in other words is not only due to poverty – presumably are those with restricted physical access to food, where markets aren't working, or where physical conditions prevent access. This could be refugees, people isolated by disasters, etc. These need special attention, and could be a legitimate particular focus for FAO. This is addressed in point 5 below.

It seems, therefore, that AGN/FAO's particular role would be in information, and its potential comparative advantage should be in measuring food insecurity. This was discussed at the 2002 Symposium on Measuring Hunger and Malnutrition. As noted, one outcome was to suggest that a set ('suite') of four indicators be considered, with different roles (although triangulation across indicators would also be good). As discussed later, I think that the 'perception' indicators, HFIAS, now present a significant opportunity for AGN/FAO to make a new impact in contributing to planning and monitoring/evaluating development projects. Malnutrition, assessed by biological measures (anthropometry, haemoglobin, etc), is probably not FAO's main focus, although its link with food security could well be. FAO could usefully help to establish the relations of food security measures with biological indicators.

#### 2. *Measuring food security and malnutrition.*

The present ways of assessing food security are not helping FAO very much to play the role of measuring food insecurity adequately. The main widely known estimates are approximately '900 million hungry' (or thereabouts). It's not just (or even mostly) that this number is both non-defined (e.g. hungry when and for how long?) and not taken very seriously. It is that it is intrinsically unable to vary in a useful way – say to track trends for national or sub-national populations over months (or even years). This is, as we all know, because the two bits of input data are the DES – only available, and roughly, at national level, with a year or more lag – and the measure of distribution, which comes from surveys and is only allowed to change over periods of several years; and that anyway these two aren't

enough to detect meaningful changes that could be used for monitoring food insecurity in such a way as to be effective as an input to policies and programs.

AGN/FAO's particular role could be in information, and its potential comparative advantage should be in measuring food and nutrition insecurity. This was discussed at the 2002 Symposium on Measuring Hunger and Malnutrition. As noted, one outcome was to suggest that a set ('suite') of four indicators be considered, with different roles (although triangulation across indicators would also be good). As discussed later, I think that the 'perception' indicators, HFIAS, now present a significant opportunity for AGN/FAO to make a new impact in contributing to planning and monitoring/evaluating development projects. Malnutrition, assessed by biological measures (anthropometry, haemoglobin, etc), is probably not FAO's main focus, although its link with food security could well be. FAO could usefully help to establish the relations of food security measures with biological indicators.

The other indicators defined at the 2002 symposium were (a) food consumption, from food consumption surveys – useful for research and case studies, but not for normal planning and monitoring/evaluation (too expensive, too slow, not large enough sample feasible, etc); (b) kcal consumption from household income/expenditure surveys, when food prices are also collected. These latter data are potentially quite widely collected, but not often analyzed to give household kcal consumption estimates; but they also have a serious flaw, which is they cannot be interpreted in terms of adequacy as the requirement is not known, and the consumption is usually correlated with the requirement (e.g. more active occupations require more and consume more). Economists, including at the 2002 Symposium, tend to ignore this flaw, but it substantially reduces the utility for program planning, and certainly for evaluation, unless additional data on activity, or at least occupation, at the household level, can be obtained.

The present ways of assessing food security are not helping FAO very much to play the role of measuring food insecurity adequately. The main widely known estimates are approximately '900 million hungry'. It's not just (or even mostly) that this number is both non-defined (e.g. hungry when and for how long?) and not taken very seriously. It is that it is intrinsically unable to vary in a useful way – say to track trends for national or sub-national populations over months (or even years). This is, as we all know, because the two bits of input data are the DES – only available, and roughly, at national level, with a year or more lag – and the measure of distribution, which comes from surveys and is only allowed to change over periods of several years; and that anyway these two aren't enough to detect meaningful changes that could be used for monitoring food insecurity in such a way as to be effective as an input to policies and programs.

At the 'Measurement of Hunger and Malnutrition' meeting a few years ago and no doubt many times since, the need for better and more operational measures was stressed, and the 'food perception indicators' (HFIAS) – 'have you skipped/missed any meals in the last month?', etc – were recommended. These have now become quite developed – as 9, 8, or 4 questions – and they are a great opportunity to start to estimate levels and trends in something like 'hunger', almost in real time, in such a way as to be useful for policies and programs.

The other indicators defined at the 2002 symposium were (a) food consumption, from food consumption surveys – useful for research and case studies, but not for normal planning and monitoring/evaluation (too expensive, too slow, not large enough sample feasible, etc); (b) kcal consumption from household income/expenditure surveys, when food prices are also

collected. These latter data are potentially quite widely collected, but not often analyzed to give household kcal consumption estimates; but they also have a serious flaw, which is they cannot be interpreted in terms of adequacy as the requirement is not known, and the consumption is usually correlated with the requirement (e.g. more active occupations require more and consume more). Economists, including at the 2002 meeting, tend to ignore this flaw. But it substantially reduces the utility for program planning, and certainly for evaluation, unless additional data on activity, or at least occupation, at the household level, can be obtained.

The HFIAS questionnaire can be administered quickly, either as part of another survey or in a custom-made one, and analyzed readily. Moreover, the results have intuitive meaning, a defined and recent time-frame, and can be linked to households (or higher aggregates, unlike DES-derived ones), and initial results I've seen give very credible answers. It is recommended that AGN/FAO fly with this, and use this outcome measure very widely. (Later I note the design issues for planning and evaluation.)

To clarify, my understanding is that in fact 3 questions could be used, along the lines of asking how often in the last month conditions were such that:

- there was no food of any kind to eat;
- people went to bed hungry for lack of food;
- people went for a day and night with no food.

Probably these may vary with severity, for internal comparisons; but anyway these types of enquiries are what we are talking about.

### **3      *Use of data for planning, monitoring, and evaluation.***

I'm sure it doesn't need much emphasis to this audience that the use of data for these purposes depends more on the design of the data system than the specific variables. The outcome variable that would be so useful would be the HFIAS indicators derived from questions like those above.

As to data requirement for planning and monitoring; for evaluation; and constraints the following is to be considered. For the first two items, the requirements are straightforward in principle: one needs estimates of outcome indicators (dependent variables: both levels and preferably trends) by relevant independent variables, measuring targeting criteria, possible causes, potential for intervention, and so on. What's needed would be to use the HFIAS outcome variables (and others, for sure, but this would be central), in the usual way. A few Powerpoint slides that illustrate the analytical process, from research questions to specifying independent and dependent (outcome) variables have been provided (<FAO food security.ppt>).

### **4.      *Evidence-based decisions.***

This links to another striking aspect of the papers distributed: there are no case studies! Examples are essential of what was done where, when, and what was the result. I cannot see how one can discuss inputs to policies – which is much of what this is all about – without case study material. Of course, this links closely to the paucity of useful outcome data, like what would be produced by HFIAS indicators. Would not an important way ahead be to develop case studies, addressing questions like: what policies and programs, for specified vulnerable groups, have been shown to (sustainably? – useful but not essential) improve food security?

Eventually, more generalisable evidence needs to be accumulated, for example by building up evaluation experience.

## 5. *Recommendations*

A. It is understandable that FAO needs to be concerned with broad issues. But realistically, while the big investments may be influenced by FAO's work, they will not usually flow through FAO (and quoting mandates has historically had little influence on this – maybe even being counter-productive). The easiest issues to tackle are those where policies are clear and agreed, where the return on investment is likely to be good, and these will be scooped up by the investment agencies, especially the investment banks and bilaterals: they are easy to justify. This is no doubt frustrating. But there are a lot of crucial issues, of high priority in humanitarian terms that may not be on the radar of the big banks, where a technical agency like FAO could have a disproportionate impact, and gain crucial credibility. Several specific nutrition/food security problems, not necessarily identified by poverty (alone), could be directly addressed by FAO with reasonable prospect of impact – maybe cooperating with larger-funded-partners, but with FAO providing the stimulus, and indeed nutrition providing the catalyst. FAO could make these its particular concern, and get much credit for it. Some examples are:

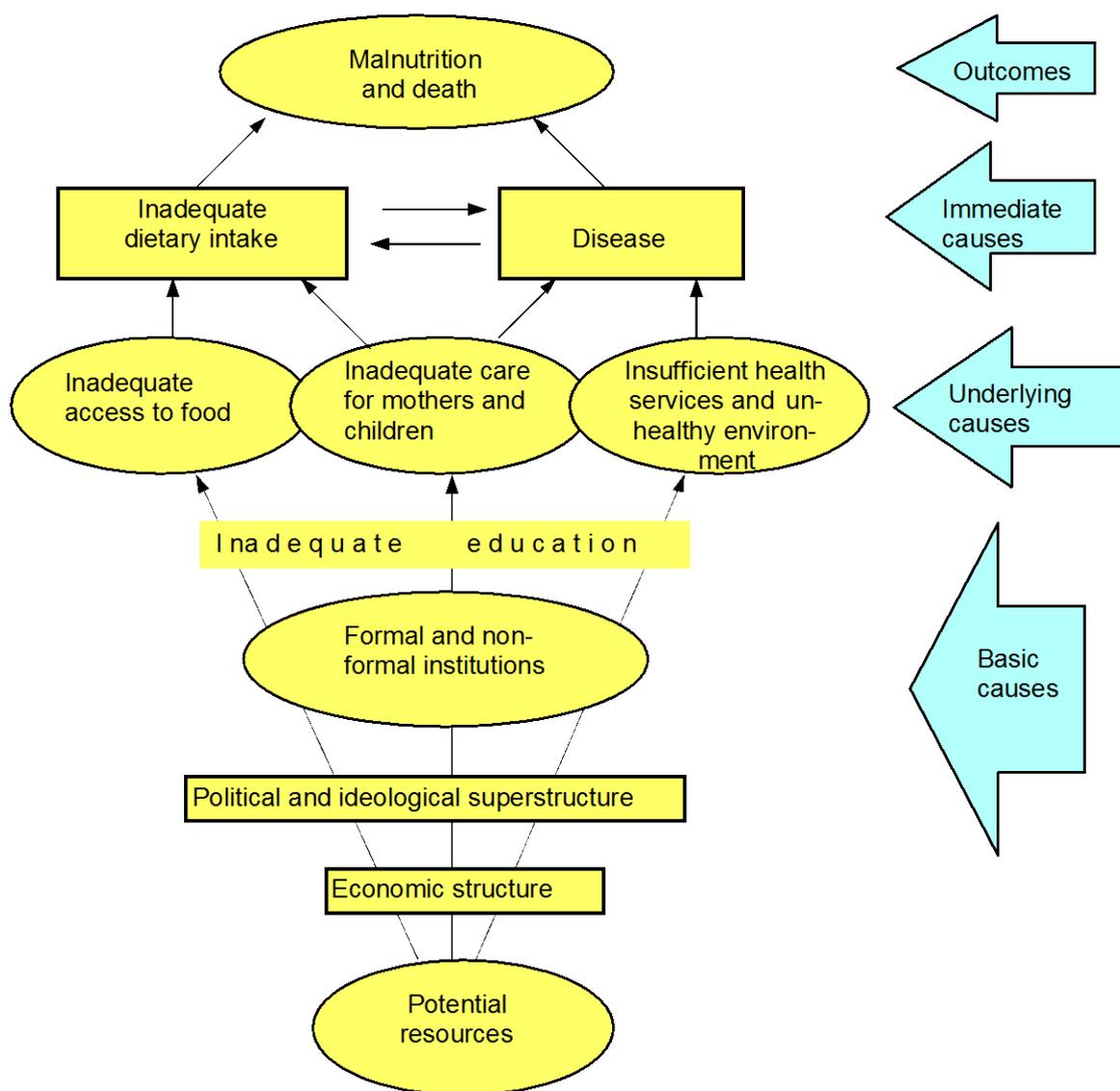
- Marginal lands and issues of pastoralists: it is evident that there are not properly developed policies concerning the future of pastoralists, e.g. in the Horn of Africa – I've been working on nutrition and drought there (with UNICEF), and it's clear that most of what happens is *ad hoc*.
- A clear problem linked to food is HIV/AIDS, and while there is a lot of attention, again the policies are under-developed. These two are perhaps linked – it has often seemed to me that the long-term entitlement needed for people with HIV/AIDS to resources including food (maybe from food aid) is quite similar to the intermittent and shorter term entitlement needed for people vulnerable to drought; and somewhat analogous mechanisms might apply.
- Urban slum dwellers tend to get overlooked, and have particular problems of an adequate diet – mostly reducible by tackling poverty, no doubt; but the concepts of community-based programs which have been effective in reducing malnutrition in many (agreed, mostly Asian) countries have not been translated into urban communities, which would have important differences.
- Refugees and displaced people have particular food security problems – and these would be very well open to monitoring and better understanding with new information, like food perception data..
- Ecologies highly vulnerable to climate change. I was deeply impressed on a recent visit to Tigray to be reminded how, on the one hand, the high population density is attuned to exploiting every niche in the environment for livelihood, in a finely developed ancient system of agriculture; and how vulnerable this is to even minor shifts in (say) the rainfall timing. This should be something *par excellence* that FAO can highlight, and it has clear nutritional issues.

B. FAO has a realistic chance for making a big difference by focusing on dietary diversity and using HFIAS outcome measures in a range of circumstances, for planning and for evaluation. These provide a nimble method – quick, not dirty, not too expensive, easy to process, interpret, and communicate – that could be widely and quickly applied.

C. There is an urgent need to give priority to capacity building to enhancing higher level training (up to, say, Master's level) in the areas of public nutrition, food security and health. There is a great need to broaden the base of people with these skills, and FAO/AGN should play an active role in this.

Table 1. UNICEF framework.

**Figure 1.8. Conceptual framework for the causes of malnutrition in society**



Source: Redrawn from UNICEF, 1990 [39]

## **Annex 15**

### **2DP02 - Nutrient Requirements and Dietary Assessment**

#### Objectives:

To assess and address the root causes of malnutrition and to promote nutrition as a significant component of food quality for achieving nutrition security for all.

#### Strategies:

Develop standards, tools and instruments;  
Facilitate the generation, compilation, dissemination, analysis and use of nutrition information;  
Build capacity through training and infrastructure development;  
Contribute to intersectoral policy development and implementation

#### Main activities:

436 - Recommendations and applications of human nutrient requirements  
456 - Dietary intake assessment and data analysis in monitoring nutrition transition  
457 - Food composition data management

Human nutrition requirements, in collaboration with WHO

Expert Consultation on Fats and Fatty Acids in Human Nutrition

Expert Consultation on Carbohydrates in Human Nutrition

Provision of scientific advice to Codex, GEMS/Food, JECFA, Members

Provision of scientific advice to SCN, FAOSTAT and SOFI

Biodiversity indicators for nutrition (indicator development, compilation/reporting)

Food composition

Food consumption

Dietary assessment

Measuring and monitoring the nutrition impact of development programmes

Total diet studies capacity building and standards development

Capacity building in the use of standardized tools for nutrition assessment

International Network of Food Data Systems (INFOODS) Secretariat

Journal of Food Composition and Analysis

Capacity building: international/regional training courses and materials for food data systems

Nutrition information systems development and standard setting for food data systems

#### Weaknesses of the PE vis-à-vis other UN agencies

- Very limited budget given the scope of the work the PE is undertaking.
- Very low budget for technical consultations, staff participation in international meetings and conferences, printing of publications and dissemination.
- Poor visibility.
- Lack of nutrition officers at regional/sub-regional and country level.

#### Staff and Budget PE 2DP02: 2008/09

The AGNA Group has four staff members: one Senior Officer (P5), 2 Nutrition Officers (P4 and P3, and one vacant post which was downgraded from P4 to P2. The Group has several long-term consultants, one each working on Requirements, Composition, and Assessment; and shorter-term consultants working on Nutrition Country Profiles, food composition, and nutrition + biodiversity. The Group usually has several volunteers working on Assessment and food composition (e.g., the Journal of Food Composition and Analysis). Note: All staff have various percentages of time in PE 3BA01.

Total working allotment for PE 2DP02: \$2,067,000; total non-staff: \$526,000.

## **Annex 16**

### **Programme Entity 2DA06 - Food and Nutrition Education and Consumer Awareness**

Objective: To enable consumers to practice lifelong healthy eating habits.

Strategies:

- (a) strengthen capacities of national and local institutions in developing countries and countries in transition to implement effective nutrition education and communication programmes and activities
- (b) create an enabling environment for consumers to access nutritious foods and diets
- (c) promote knowledge and skills to enable consumers to make healthy food choices.

The PE's comparative advantage vis-a-vis other UN agencies was examined by comparing FAO with WHO, UNICEF, WFP and UNESCO. Each of these UN agencies has a different constitutional mandate, structure and operational setup, leading to differences in approaches and emphasis when it comes to nutrition.

#### Strength of the PE vis-à-vis other UN agencies

While the PE frequently collaborates with other UN agencies, especially with WHO, FAO/AGN is unique with regard to the following aspects:

- nutrition education is part of FAO's mandate
- has a dedicated unit and budget for nutrition education and consumer awareness
- has specialized expertise in nutrition education and consumer awareness
- consistently promotes a food-based/dietary approach to improving nutritional status
- addresses the double burden of malnutrition
- applies a comprehensive approach to nutrition education and behaviour change (programme and policy advice and links with regulation)
- undertakes normative work in NE and consumer awareness
- gives advice to governments and supports national programmes and field projects
- integrates NE into FAO food security and emergency projects (TCOE and TCOS)
- responds to requests of Member Countries through mobilising technical assistance, TCP and donor funding

#### Auto-Evaluation

Responses from 200 survey participants indicate that users are highly appreciative of FAO nutrition education materials and activities. Member countries find the PE's work to be very relevant to their needs.

#### Weaknesses of the PE vis-à-vis other UN agencies

- Very limited budget given the scope of the work the PE is undertaking.
- Very low budget for technical consultations, staff participation in international meetings and conferences, printing of publications and dissemination.
- Poor visibility.
- Lack of nutrition officers at regional/sub-regional and country level.

#### Staff and Budget – 2008/09

The NE Group has four staff members: one Senior Officer (P5) and 3 Nutrition Officers (P4). The Group has no long term consultants.

Total working allotment: \$1,597,200; total non-staff: \$250,200. NB. Staff deficit of \$40,000 is covered from above non-staff cost.

## **Annex 17**

### **Programme Entity 2DA05 – Household Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods**

#### Objective

To assist policy-makers and programme planners to better incorporate household food security, nutrition and livelihood (HFSNL) objectives into national and sectoral policies and plans, and to complement these with effective, inter-disciplinary, participatory and community-focused actions aimed at addressing local causes of malnutrition such as, chronic or seasonal food shortages, lack of dietary diversity, inappropriate feeding practices, HIV. Better nutrition makes a significant contribution to the achievement of all the MDGs.

#### Strategy

Build capacity and support regional, national and sectoral policies, strategies and plans of action for addressing local causes of hunger and malnutrition and for improving access to and consumption of nutritionally adequate foods by the hungry, poor, food insecure and vulnerable. Attention is also given to protect and promote food security, nutrition and livelihoods in crisis situations (natural and man-made).

#### Guiding principals:

- work with and for the malnourished;
- strengthen vertical linkages for community action planning;
- strengthen horizontal linkages for an integrated approach based on multi-sectoral action; and
- build partnerships.

#### Outputs:

441: guidance, methodologies and tools for community-focused action for improving HFSNL

442: capacity building

449: regional, national and sectoral policies, strategies and plans of action for nutrition improvement

450: enhanced partnerships and knowledge networking for improving HFSNL

#### Main activities:

- providing nutrition policy advice
- protecting and promoting nutrition in emergencies (including, HIV/AIDS)
- combating micronutrient malnutrition
- special projects

*Normative work* of the PE includes preparing policy briefs and background papers, manuals, tools, guides, and training courses and provides a network and platform for debate. Normative work has been greatly strengthened by our success in obtaining external financial resources for field projects for which the ratio of extra-budget (from GCP and TCP sources) to regular budget income for the PE, a key indicator of the relevance of our work and the priority given to it by donor and recipient countries, has been consistently above 4.0 for the last seven years. *Direct technical assistance* includes technical advice, capacity building and policy support to countries.

Auto-Evaluation 2000-04

The auto-evaluation endorsed the recommendations of the 3rd High-level Panel (mid-2004) to give greater attention to food insecure households, expand the community nutrition and livelihoods approach, include nutrition in the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) and improve data on nutrition situations and on food consumption. Two additional main recommendations were to develop and use a logframe approach with a results-based output orientation, and to better document and use lessons learnt in implementation.

IEE Report 2007

The IEE Report proposes a fundamental strategic shift for FAO to focus on three core areas: policy support, capacity building, and advocacy. This PE is in alignment with the IEE report as it focuses on nutrition policy support, on building capacity of local and national institutions and of service providers, social care agents and on advocacy at local, national and international levels for a multi-sectoral inclusive approach.

Staff and Budget – 2008/09

The Household Food Security and Community Nutrition Group has three professional staff members: one Senior Officer (P5) and two Nutrition Officers (one P4 and one P3) and one secretary (G5), and two consultants. Total annual working allotment is around \$1million, 75% staff costs and 25% non-staff resources (\$256,000).

## Annex 18

### **The Role of Nutrition in FAO** **Paper presented at the AGN retreat 4-5 November, FAO Rome** **Brian Thompson**

FAO has the mandate “to raise levels of nutrition” and AGN plays a direct role in achieving that mandate. But what is the role of nutrition in FAO and how can AGN shape its work to meet the expectation of Member countries, achieve our strategic objectives, satisfy senior management while remaining within the “core functions and comparative advantages” of FAO?

FAO’s role in nutrition is unique in that it is the only UN agency that links nutrition with agricultural and rural development, food and health and is the only UN agency with experience in raising levels of nutrition by promoting food and agriculture-based approaches. Other agencies working in nutrition have different mandates, operational set-ups and orientation, leading to differences in approach and emphasis. WFP, WHO and UNICEF address nutrition from either a food aid, health, or care perspective and focus on particular vulnerable groups, the sick and on children rather than on the general public. They tend to apply short-term curative approaches, not necessarily addressing the root causes of hunger and malnutrition, and promote narrow mother-child focused programmes or certain “limited” interventions such as fortification and supplementation. FAO on the other hand looks at the food and agriculture linkages to nutrition and tries to address the longer term root causes of hunger and malnutrition as it recognizes that agricultural production, livelihoods, incomes and access to food, health and care all need to be addressed simultaneously if food and nutrition security are to be achieved. This requires support for an appropriate mix of enabling policies, institutions and infrastructure that support agricultural-based livelihoods and protect and promote food and nutrition security. No other agency is capable or willing to undertake this work and so *AGN has both a distinct role and a clear comparative advantage* in ensuring agricultural development has a people focus that leads to the improved access to and consumption of food for better nutrition. FAO’s work in nutrition does not overlap with or duplicate other agencies work in nutrition. Rather, because FAO looks at nutrition from a food and agriculture perspective, AGN’s work though complementary to, is distinct and separate from, the health and care side of nutrition.

Specific activities that reflect AGN’s distinct role and comparative advantage include:

- a unit with a specific budget and a critical mass of specialized expertise in food and nutrition assessment and requirements, policy design and programme development that promote rural and agricultural development initiatives aimed at increasing access to and consumption of a variety of food
- development and fine-tuning of metrics designed to assess household food security, nutritional status and dietary diversity and the conduct of nutritional assessment and monitoring and evaluation of FAO food and agricultural programmes, especially food security policies, programmes and interventions using nutrition-specific indicators
- provision of reliable and current information (monitoring, information collection, compilation, analysis, interpretation and dissemination) to assess food and nutrition-related factors critical for assessing “hunger” and developing policies, strategies, programmes and plans of action for better nutrition
- ready access to technical support from other groups in-house for implementing a comprehensive “farm to fork” approach to improving nutrition, focusing on

sustainable food-based strategies and giving attention to the consumer end of the food supply chain

- adoption of a comprehensive “farm to fork” approach, focusing on sustainable food-based strategies to improve nutritional well-being with attention at the consumer end of the food supply chain, moving from crop diversification to dietary diversification where an improved quality and variety of intake is achieved by promoting dietary diversity, stimulating demand for a diversified food supply, increasing markets for food producers and boosting agricultural development and incomes
- this transition from "farm to fork" is expedited by a range of social marketing and advocacy campaigns that raise awareness of nutrition and dietary diversity at national and district level and nutrition education and information at the consumer level for changing behaviours and improving diets
- policy work in nutrition is carried out, not in isolation, but linked to programmes that aim to have positive nutrition outcomes at community level
- technical support for protecting and promoting nutrition from crisis to recovery and development
- through FAO’s strong normative and inter-disciplinary field programme activities, AGN is well placed to assist member countries, institutions and communities to devise practical strategies and methodologies aimed at the long-term protection and promotion of good nutrition as well as preventing declines in nutrition through safeguarding and improving access to and consumption of nutritionally adequate foods by the food insecure, hungry, poor and vulnerable and to encourage the replication of successful approaches “proof of concept” on a wider scale by others.

None of the above crucial elements of what nutrition provides to agriculture are mandates of UNICEF or WFP.

#### Policy work linked to programmes

Policy work is not carried out in isolation but linked to programmes that have positive household food security and nutrition outcomes at community level. Consequently, in the event that the IEE recommendation for a strategic shift from agricultural/food production systems to broader rural and agricultural development initiatives aimed at income generation and promoting access to food is implemented, AGN has much to offer in the area of social accountability and people-centred actions and is well placed to make substantive contributions in these areas. AGN contributes to the field programme by providing technical support as well as training manuals, guides, methodologies, tools, policy briefs and approaches. These outputs are used by our implementing partners (national governments, civic society and private sector) and lessons learnt in their application on practicality and replicability are fed back to strengthen policy. The result is more robust and relevant policy instruments and approaches for wider use by our implementing partners (national governments, civic society and private sector).

#### Partnerships

AGN is an active partner on the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) and a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Nutrition Cluster and collaborates with other UN agencies (WHO, WFP and UNICEF), bilateral partners and NGO/CSOs for improving nutrition and ending hunger. Within FAO, AGN complements and contributes to the inter-disciplinary work of the Cluster on Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods and to various PAIAs and IDWGs. Nutrition is a standing item on FAO’s Committee on Food Security (CFS).

### Weaknesses

- lack of a common vision and position by both AGN and FAO staff on the role of nutrition in FAO and consequently weak integration with FAO policies, programmes and strategies
- lack of a clear understanding by outside stakeholders on the contribution FAO makes to nutrition consequently leading to FAO's less than full participation in nutrition initiatives
- limited budgets affect the development of our normative programme, the filling of staff positions, support for field activities, the recruitment of consultants, the holding of technical consultations and participation of staff in international meetings and conferences, printing of publications and their dissemination
- lack of nutrition officers at regional/sub-regional and country level
- these weaknesses result in continued poor visibility at international and national level

### Opportunities

During this retreat we have the opportunity to address this first weakness, the lack of a common vision. As a contribution to the debate on what this vision could be, two papers have been circulated "The Role of Nutrition in FAO" a background paper for preparing AGN's four year workplan and "Integrating Nutrition into Food Security Policies" a briefing paper prepared for our ADG ,to help answer some of the following questions:

- given our comparative advantages listed above, what is the role, scope and direction of nutrition in FAO?
- what are the priority areas for our work?
- how is nutrition related and linked to food security?
- are the health, care and social aspects related to nutrition outside FAO's mandate? if so, how can we best address these important issues and legitimate concerns?
- what added value can AGN bring to FAO's agriculture programmes and to food security programmes in particular?
- how can the various nutrition groups of AGN work and collaborate in the future?
- what are the opportunities for increasing our relevance in the house?
- what external partnerships should be continued and/or strengthened?

Discussions on these and other questions will hopefully serve as a basis for preparing an AGN position paper highlighting the technical and scientific arguments of the essential role of nutrition in order to strengthen the overall work of FAO as point a) under Outcome of the Agenda. It will also provide the basis for stronger advocacy in future as requested by the IEE.

The definition of food security is well known and need not be repeated to this audience. But we all realise that nutrition encompasses not only food but health and care. This clearly illustrates that although food security is essential it is not sufficient for better nutrition. However for FAO, nutrition is an aspect of food security. Indeed an Aide Memoire of the CoC-IEE WG1 reports that "*Members emphasised that adequate nutrition should be seen as an aspect of household food security and not in a separate context*". It is therefore clear that for FAO, nutrition has an essential role to play in and is an important component of food security policy design and programming. It is here where we need to focus and clearly articulate what is the added value nutrition provides to FAO's food security and agricultural programmes.

But what should be the limits of AGN's work in nutrition? Considering FAO's mandate is "to raise levels of nutrition", and given the wide cross-cutting and multi-sector nature of nutrition (clinical, social-economic, environmental, food and agriculture), does this imply that AGN should be involved in these non-food non-agriculture areas too? How far should FAO's nutrition programme be extended before it goes beyond FAO's core functions and comparative advantage? Aspects of nutrition including setting standards for nutrient and energy requirements and nutrition education essential for achieving the MDGs and preventing malnutrition are within our mandate. But there are areas clearly outside the domain of FAO's expertise best dealt with by other agencies to which IEE report referred to when making remarks on our comparative advantage.

AGN should focus on the interface between food security, health and care and on the value nutrition adds to food security policies and programmes, agricultural and rural development policies, plans and programmes, project design, monitoring and evaluation which the CoC-IEE Working Group 1 grouped under "sustainable food production and natural environment" and "enabling environment for food security and livelihoods". AGN should provide support to our colleagues in food production, harvesting, storage, processing, distribution and marketing to ensure their activities lead to improved consumption and better nutrition. What does this mean in practice? It means placing greater focus on the food and agriculture sector and on rural areas, on the food insecure and nutritionally vulnerable, on the use of food for improving nutrition, on food and the consumer, on the demand for food and on food consumption and utilization and on incorporating nutrition objectives and considerations under each of the four pillars of food security:

- Pillar 1: Availability: production, land use, water management –gender and nutrition issues, self-sufficiency versus self-reliance, composition of foods available for consumption
- Pillar 2: Stability i.e. resilience to consequences of sudden shocks or cyclical events, stability of food systems, especially in terms of volatility in production, buffer stores, resilience of agro-ecosystems to climate variability; adaptation to climate change through agricultural practices and technologies that increase agro-ecosystems' performance in the face of increasing natural disaster incidence
- Pillar 3: Access i.e. access of individuals to adequate resources for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet, inclusion of malnourished on track one for boosting production while at the same time receiving direct support from track two on safety nets; diversification of food systems for both nutritional purposes and agro-ecosystem stability aims, especially traditional food crops.
- Pillar 4: Utilization i.e. biological utilization of food through adequate diet, clean water, sanitation and health care to reach a state of nutritional well-being, quality, resilience and safety of the food supply, fortification. Food safety is an intrinsic aspect of food security. Food borne illnesses exacerbates problems of undernutrition and the adverse effects of contaminants are likely to be greater in populations with poor nutritional status. National food control systems for protecting the safety of the domestic food supply are a public health imperative necessary for trade with resultant social benefits.

In advocating for nutrition, we may draw attention to the fact that when GNP doubles, reductions in malnutrition are often far lower. Although economic development does improve nutrition outcomes, it often does so at a very slow pace, and direct reductions in income poverty do not imply proportional reductions in undernutrition. The same is true for efforts to

improve nutrition through boosting agricultural production. The reasons are various but it is clear that the impairment in the physical ability to perform work as a result of poor nutrition is a major factor. Indeed agricultural efficiency and productivity is severely compromised by poor nutrition, and economic growth is seriously retarded in countries where malnutrition is widespread. It follows that any agency promoting an efficient rural and agricultural development strategy should have nutrition as a national policy priority so that good nutrition, along with fiscal, foreign investment, exchange rate, and sector-specific policies, is seen as a prerequisite to efficient programmes and sustainable economic growth.

New challenges and evolving issues for nutrition are provided in Annex 2 of the paper “Integrating Nutrition into Food Security Policies”. These may be summarised as:

- unacceptably slow progress in the alleviation of poverty, hunger and malnutrition at the same time as rising overnutrition
- smallholders threatened by the rapid transformation of agriculture worldwide, major shifts in demand and consolidation of the food marketing chain from field to supermarket
- intensification of inputs threatens environmental sustainability, bio-diversity and human health
- food security threatened by climate change, energy scarcity and increased demand for biofuels
- common property resources threatened by increased trans-boundary movement of humans, goods and services
- increased frequency and intensity of natural and human-induced disasters and emergencies
- concerns for food safety standards and regulations and consumer-driven standards for quality
- poor communication and exchange of knowledge necessary to breach the divide between and within countries for the adoption of new technologies and best practices
- inadequate information on the extent and severity of hunger, food and nutrition insecurity

These challenges have implications for the selection and prioritization of technical subject matters for our future work. We need to ensure food and nutrition security are *policy* priorities of decision-makers e.g. by incorporating food and nutrition objectives into national policy frameworks such as NMTPF, PRSPs, CCA/UNDAF. However policies can only be effective if action is taken at country level and this may be facilitated if we were to use a “nutrition lens” to direct multisectoral actions to improve nutrition. For the agricultural sector this means at least to design programmes that maintain levels of nutrition, prevent malnutrition, improve household food security, promote consumption of appropriate diets, combat micronutrient deficiencies and improve food quality and safety where appropriate. And where necessary, to encourage other sector assistance to prevent, control and manage infectious diseases, promote breastfeeding and healthy lifestyles, provide care for the vulnerable, and introduce productive safety nets. This may include:

- *advocacy*, demonstrating the importance of better nutrition for poverty alleviation and economic growth thereby raising the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition higher up national, regional and global agendas and upholding smallholder farmers’ interests by building political platforms for professionals and civil society to influence policy-

makers/policy-making and raising politicians' awareness of farmers' interests, particularly on what constitutes a farmer friendly policy framework;

- *capacity building*, strengthening national and local capacities for incorporating food security and nutrition objectives into policies and programmes through technical in-service and formal training;
- *policy*, assessing the food and nutrition security situation, linking research and programme/project activities and feeding back information as inputs to policy and programme development;
- addressing nutrition in emergencies;
- overcoming micronutrient malnutrition;
- developing national dietary guidelines;
- developing nutrition education curricula and learning materials;
- providing policy advice and guidance on technical, regulatory and legislative issues related to the quality and safety of food supplies

For each technical area, we need to define strategies and approaches for the implementation of this work at HQ, at Regional and sub-Regional levels, and at country level and to work out appropriate modalities for reorganizing working arrangements according to specific themes. In preparing our workplan we need to make explicit the inter-connectivity and linkages between each of the current three Programme Entities (assessment, policies and programmes, education) and that of food safety, for achieving our common Strategic Objective. The workplan should make the case for FAO's comparative advantage in nutrition. It should be an integrated and harmonised workplan with coherent and sequential outputs, outcomes and impact.

To summarise, AGN provides an agricultural and food friendly perspective to nutrition problems and a food and agriculture approach to their solution. This underlines the importance of FAO for nutrition and the importance of nutrition for FAO. FAO is stronger with nutrition as a functional well staffed Division and nutrition is stronger with FAO playing a strong leadership role. FAO cannot leave it to other agencies to look after nutrition. We need to do it as "One UN", with FAO providing our own complementary and essential contribution from a food and agriculture perspective. We need to:

- assess factors related to maintenance of food security, consumption, dietary diversity, nutritional status
- analyse and interpret the food and nutrition situation with contextual information
- provide feedback for:
  - methodology refinement
  - policy development, briefs
  - programme development and plans of action, including nutrition education
  - communicating best practices and lessons learnt "proof of concept"