



From economic growth to food security and better nutrition

Collection of contributions received

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Introduction to the topic

This year's report on State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) published by FAO, WFP and IFAD introduced a new and improved methodology for assessing the number of the chronically food insecure and undernourished on this planet.

These new figures are significantly lower than previous estimates, however, with almost 870 million people living in food insecurity, the total numbers still remain remarkably and intolerably high. The food insecure population is still growing in absolute terms in some regions and we are still very far away from reaching the World Food Summit goals of halving, between 1990 and 2015, the number of people who suffer from hunger.

The report shows that in the last decade economic growth has taken place in all regions and provides evidence showing that this growth can be a powerful driver for increased food security when translated into agricultural growth and in particular when it is inclusive and reaches smallholder farmers and women.

However, the impact of economic growth on food insecurity reduction has not been the same everywhere. While some regions have fared particularly well, other seem to lack behind and have not been able to fully capitalize on the potential created by the growth their economies experienced as it seems that that growth has failed at reaching the poor.

To reduce poverty and hunger, growth needs to reach the poor and the increased income needs to generate demand for the assets controlled by them. Poor households need to be able to use the additional economic assets to improve their diets both in quantity and quality.

Some elements that have been identified as being instrumental for facilitating a pro-poor, inclusive economic growth are education, social protection, good governance and purposeful public action and governments need to use the additional resources generated by economic growth to put them into place.

However, as conditions vary from country to country we need to better understand how good governance and social protection have to function to translate economic growth into improved food security and nutrition.

Given the diverse background of the FSN Forum members, we would like to learn from your experience and ask you to share with us your views on the following issues.

- Can you share specific experiences in which social protection and better food security governance have led to advances in local food security and improved nutrition?
- Can you tell us about policies that led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture?
- How can we mobilize the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities?

We look forward to receiving your inputs .

Thank you very much

Juan Carlos Garcia y Cebolla, Mauricio Rosales

Contributions received

1. Benard Kiplimo Langat, Moi University , Kenya

My name is Benard Kiplimo Langat

I am a lecturer in the department of Agricultural Economics and resource Management, in the School of Business and Economics of Moi University Kenya.

I share my experience on household food security in commercialized subsistence economies. These are smallholder farm families who have been introduced to cash crop/non-food crop production in place of a food crop production such that production is constrained mainly by land size and scale of production. The assumption is always that high valued cash crop guarantees sufficient income to buy food crops and other household needs. Over the last three decades, the raging debate remains as to whether commercialization of subsistence economies presents a durable solution to food security problems in Sub-Saharan Africa. The debate has basically centred on the appropriate production strategy between advocates of food production for household food self-sufficiency, on the one hand, and household production of cash crops for income, on the other.

The critics have argued that commercialization of these economies increases competition between food and cash crops for scarce capital, land and other inputs. The fear is that food crops could crowd-out food production in the process jeopardising household food availability.

Advocates for commercialization, however, contend that cash crop production do not necessarily impact, negatively, on food production levels and that, in fact, the two forms of production should complement. Other supporters reason that even if cash crop promotion displaces food production, the latter should not be an issue as long as it is done on the basis of specialization. The logical reasoning of this view is that income earned from cash crops should finance imports capable of raising or sustaining domestic food consumption levels.

Our studies were focused on smallholder tea farming in Kenya. The subsector has been dubbed a success story in Africa. Tea subsector contributes significantly to Kenya's GDP and it is a leading foreign exchange earner. However, food security and poverty levels of households who directly depend on the cash crop do not reflect the handsome figures from the export of the crop.

Kenyan government had put in place strategies to guarantee sufficient household food supply when smallholder farmers were introduced into cash crop production. One strategy required farmers to set aside a minimum size of land for food production. Another strategy also was that farmers were needed to produce a given minimum size of land under the cash crop to ensure economies of scale. The advent of market liberalization, however, saw these strategies abandoned. Subsequently, despite favourable prices of tea in the international market, food security and poverty levels have worsened over time among these farm households. We found out that those farmers who continued the strategy of setting aside a minimum size of land to produce maize, which is a staple crop, were more food secure compared to their counterparts who depended purely on cash crop. I recommend that policies promoting commercialization in a smallholder setting should target improved production of cash crop as a complement to food crops without compromising attention to the latter.

Thank you

2. Bernardo Alayza Mujica, Peru

My experience in Peru is on supporting farmers associations in order for them to be able to supply new products to the urban markets.

3. Claudio Schuftan, PHM, Viet Nam

Dear all,

You mention pro-poor economic growth policies. I feel uncomfortable with any use of pro-poor. I have many times written that we rather need poverty alleviation (or rather disparity reduction!!) policies that are pro-nutrition. There is a big difference there. Pro-poor has the connotation of throwing a few crumbs, but leave them in poverty kind'a thing. It victimizes the poor.

This relates to your Q3:

How can we mobilize the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities?

Should we not be mobilizing politically for disparity reduction at least in parallel if not before? Can we change political will of elites with entrenched interests? Is this an illusion? Are we not really talking about exerting de-facto counter-power to their political priorities?

Claudio in Ho Chi Minh City

4. Shambhu Ghatak, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), India

Dear friends,

In order to check how social protection impacts nutrition and food security, I would like to quote here some portions of the report entitled: ***Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Act (MGNREGA) and Empowerment of Women in Rural Areas*** by Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women (2011-12), Fourteenth Report, Lok Sabha Secretariat, May, 2012,
http://www.im4change.org/docs/692mgnrega_report.pdf:

NREGS and Women Empowerment

Percentage share of employment availed by women under MGNREGS was 40% during 2006-07, 43% in 2007-08, 48% in 2008-09, 48% in 2009-10 and 48% in 2010-11. Hence, the percentage of women beneficiary under MGNREGA has been much higher than provided under the Act (i.e. 33% of total employment).

Out of total 26.69 crore registered workers under MGNREGA for whom job cards have been issued so far, 11.62 crore (43.53%) are women. In 2010-2011, out of the total of 8.73 crore workers who requested for work, 3.92 crore (44.9%) were women.

A closer look at the state-wise women participation rate during 2010-11 gives an impression that in some states it has been either abysmally low or significantly high. While states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu register 90.39% and 82.59% women participation in MGNREGA, respectively, Uttar Pradesh shows just 21.42%, Assam 26.51% and Bihar 28.49%.

Main reasons for low participation of women in MGNREGA have been non-revision of Schedule of Rates**, socio-cultural constraints and low awareness. Some of the States including Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and West Bengal have revised their SORs to make them work and gender sensitive

As per a study conducted by National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), New Delhi, there is an emergence of women's identity and their empowerment with the coming of MGNREGA as an economic opportunity provider.

Due to MGNREGS, women have also started to appear more actively in the rural public sphere as they take up their work and responsibilities. There is a general trend of low migration in the areas where assessment was carried out and workers have started to repay their debts.

As per a study conducted in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, there was a substantial jump in earning potential for women. Out of total sample, 69% workers said MGNREGA helped them avoid hunger. MGNREGA also provided easy access to credit.

Ministry of Rural Development has not conducted any specific study on the issue of wages earned by women. However, the 64th Round survey by the National Sample Survey (NSSO) in 2007-08 had found that there was no difference between wages earned by men and women under MGNREGA as compared to other public works and that there was a reduced difference in the normal male-female wage rates for casual labour in rural areas vis-à-vis urban areas.

A Study titled as "Concurrent Evaluation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the State of Uttarakhand" by IIT Roorkee, conducted in the districts of Udham Singh Nagar and Chamoli found that Women's participation in decision making process had increased after the introduction of MGNREGS, mainly due to their increasing wage earnings. The study further stated that participation of women is higher in the hill district of Chamoli than the plain district of Udham Singh Nagar. Apart from the lesser socio-economic constraints, non-availability of the male workers due to their significant migration to plains could be the basic reason for the larger participation of women under the Scheme.

A "Research study on changing gender relations through MGNREGS" in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu done by NIRD Hyderabad found that MGNREGS acted as social security measure to the aged women, widows, divorced/deserted women. The study further stated that female dependency level has declined after the execution of MGNREGS.

A study of "NREGA process and practices in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh: Appraisal cum research study", by Centre for Educational Research & Development found that NREGA helps the women in general and lactating women in particular, to meet their basic needs, like food by ensuring regular income.

When asked about the performance of women mates, the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women (2011-12) have been informed that the district administration of Jalore in Rajasthan focused on training of women for deploying them as mates at worksites. This would ensure an increase in women persondays, participation and economic empowerment as well as better monitoring at worksites. The training was phase-wise and women were given calculators, bags, diaries, measurement kits, medicine kits. The model has now been adopted by the remaining districts of Rajasthan, districts in Uttarakhand, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh.

Positive Impacts of NREGS

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Management, Shillong on the Implementation of MGNREGA in six districts has indicated that Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has sufficiently added to household income of the people who worked/ are working in Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. The workers were of opinion that they have been able to arrange their households' daily food requirements.

A study conducted by Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad has indicated that the earnings from Mahatma Gandhi NREGA are used as a supplementary income source during non-agricultural seasons.

A study conducted by the Institute of Human Development has noted that the earnings from Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has contributed 8 percent of the total income of the households in Bihar and about 2.41 percent of the total annual income of a household in Jharkhand. It has contributed more to the income of the SCs (11%), OBCs (9%), landless (9%) and marginal landholders (8%). In both the states (Bihar and Jharkhand) beneficiaries have spent a substantial part of their earnings on food and daily consumption items, health, social ceremonies and education of the children. Debt repayment has also been formed as a component of expenditure from NREGA earnings.

A study entitled, "Supporting the Operationalization of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA in Khasi Hill, Meghalaya", by Martin Luther Christian University has noted increase in cash flow at the household level during the month of employment under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and the increase in the cash flow ranged from 13 to 32%.

A "Research study on changing gender relations through MGNREGS" in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu done by NIRD Hyderabad stated that MGNREGS became primary source of income for one third of households. Household's average income has increased significantly in all the three States, according to the study.

A study entitled as "NREGA process and practices in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh: Appraisal cum research study", by Centre for Educational Research & Development stated that beneficiaries of the Scheme in both the States reported that the Scheme increased their income by more than one fourth.

A study entitled as "Concurrent Evaluation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the State of Uttarakhand" by IIT Roorkee, conducted in the districts of Udham Singh Nagar and Chamoli found that the employment in the post-MGNREGS period had increased between 12 and 18 percent in both the districts.

A study entitled, "Socio-Economic Impacts of Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA" by Council for Social Development in tribal areas of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh noted that the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has contributed in increasing the food security of the rural masses and a major portion of increased income earned through NREGA was spend on food consumption. The beneficiaries have been able to construct house on their own land due to additional income from Mahatma Gandhi NREGA work.

A study on "Impact Assessment of NREGA in Bankura and Purba-Medinipur Districts of West Bengal" by IIT Kharagpur found that villagers consider Mahatma Gandhi NREGA a boon for improving rural livelihood. The availability of works within the village is an encouraging factor, especially for women.

Note: ** The value of work done by a worker is estimated using the Schedule of Rates (SoR) prepared by State Governments. In States there are Schedule of Rates Committees entrusted with the task of preparing SoRs. Schedule of Rates are arrived at based on the All India Standard Schedule of Rates 1986 published by Ministry of Urban Development in association with National Building Organization. For commonly used completed items for which the standards are not available, standards are decided by the Chief Engineer. SoRs are revised yearly on the basis of inflation and calculation of cost of material/ labour at the market rate of material and labour.

I am also sharing below links of a number of success stories pertaining to agriculture, livelihood and nutrition:

Farmville in the real world -GS Unnikrishnan, The Hindu, 10 October, 2012,

<http://www.im4change.org/success-stories/farmville-in-the-real-world-gs-unnikrishnan-17519.html>

Magic of millets-Ananda Teertha Pyati, Deccan Herald, 9 October, 2012,
<http://www.im4change.org/success-stories/magic-of-millets-ananda-teertha-pyati-17473.html>
Getting malnourished children back on the right track-Firoz Rozindar, The Hindu, 16 July, 2012,
<http://www.im4change.org/success-stories/getting-malnourished-children-back-on-the-right-track-firoz-rozindar-16278.html>
Chhattisgarh's smart move-Sreelatha Menon, The Business Standard, 1 July, 2012,
<http://www.im4change.org/success-stories/chhattisgarh039s-smart-move-sreelatha-menon-15974.html>
Grow and let grow-Baba Mayaram, The Hindu, 6 May, 2012,
<http://www.im4change.org/success-stories/grow-and-let-grow-baba-mayaram-15020.html>

Please check the following study so as to know how Public Distribution System (PDS) was improved in the state of Chhattisgarh (India) through political will:

Reforming the Public Distribution System: Lessons from Chhattisgarh by Raghav Puri,
Economic and Political Weekly, February 4, 2012 Vol xlvii, No. 5,
<http://www.im4change.org/docs/335reforming-the-pds-lessons-from-chhattisgarh.pdf>

Regards,
Shambhu Ghatak
Inclusive Media for Change
Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)
Dehli

5. Falana Adetunji Olajide, Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria

Dear Moderator

Thank you for the wonderful work.

This new Topic is actually long awaited and I sincerely appreciates the initiators.

To address the first question, I want to believe that experiences abound in most developed countries where social protection or security have enhanced better food security based on a sound Government policies. Social protection can be viewed from creating a functional market for locally produces by government and thereby create unrestricted demand. This definitely leads to local growth of the economic that will boost food security and better nutrition. Secondly, the provision of social security as being implemented in some countries, where monthly allowance are given for sustenance have direct impact on food security at household level and could influence better nutrition. Another way that social security can be viewed from is Price control and regulation. when there is little variability in the price of essential household commodities, then, food security and better nutrition can be guaranteed.

However, in contrast, most developing countries where social security or protection in form of functional market and price control of essential household commodities are virtually absent, then, the promotion of Sustainable Livelihood model should be encouraged and extensively promoted. This should be backed with micro-finance support which should be in agreement with household asset analysis. Also, the need for monitoring should be encouraged. If these can be put in place, the bases for economic growth would have been established which would invariably have direct bearing on better nutrition.

It has been noted in most developing countries that agriculture policies are only explicit on food security and little or nothing is know about Nutrition component and how food security and surplus will be integrated to have direct impact on nutrition security. However, presently in

Nigeria, effort is being gearing towards integrating most agriculture policies with nutrition programmes so that, food security will actually have direct bearing on nutrition security.

Putting Nutrition on Political priorities have continue to be an important National and International debate. But sincerely, I looked at this issues as much ado about nothing. Why? There are enough data and evidence that Good Nutrition is very important from conception till death if dignity of humanity is to be preserved. But looking at most under-developed and developing countries where the buck of malnourished children are concentrated, the leaders are also malnourished intellectually.

A lot of advocacy had gone down the drain without significant improvement in the health and nutrition status. Several methodologies have been used to advocate, sensitize and create awareness on the significant of Nutrition to National development, but these have yielded little result.

The overall solution is to empower the populace rather than the political class on the WHY Nutrition should be treated as a developmental agenda by any government in power and making sure that appropriately LAW, regulation, policies and guidelines developed are followed and implemented by such government. Voting right people in the position of authority is also very key.

Falana, Adetunji Olajide
Nutrition Division
Dept of Family Health,10th Floor
Federal Ministry of Health
Federal secretariat Complex
Phase III
Abuja

6. Tim Williams University of Georgia, USA

I think that we need to consider the full opportunity that social protection even in modest scales can achieve if done in an appropriate manner.

The Peanut CRSP in collaboration with the Society for Sustainable Operational Strategy, and Beacon Foundation in Guyana has over the past 10 years fostered what we believe is a great example of achieving development, social protection, economic growth, nutrition, empowerment of women in a very remote region.

At the start of the project the Rupununi Region (20K people living in 20K sq.miles, 6 hours drive from the coast) schools were provided milk and biscuits transported from the coast for children but there was little use of this resource due to lactose intolerance. The region produced about 15 t of groundnut, and women had very little prospect of employment. The country imported 500 tonnes of peanut.

By improving production, persuading the Ministry of Education to replace the unused milk/biscuits feeding program with a locally provisioned peanut butter/cassava bread/fruit juice snack we now have improved nutrition, greater school attendance, a significant employment for women making peanut butter for the schools and local market. Farmers have a local market and are more competitive with imported groundnuts on the coast.

7. George Akalemwa, Zambia Catholic University, Zambia

This is a very interesting topic yet again which you have started. SOFI is very right again to note that the figures of those living in food insecurity areas are very high. But allow me to add that even

when food may be available and in abundance in many areas but cannot be accessed in other many areas again.

In my humble contribution, I still feel our governments can actually play a very vital role in making sure that our people are food secure in both rural and urban areas. First and foremost, it is actually true that some of the best policies which can be employed by our leaders are the pro-poor growth policies. With their emphasis and target at the most vulnerable, most poor and most disadvantages, these policies can help uplift these souls from the jaws of poverty and subsequently food secure them. Unfortunately, most of our governments maybe have not seen the significance of these policies.

Secondly in my country, Zambia, talking about food security is sometimes very annoying and embarrassing. Zambia is one country in southern Africa which harvests most grains but again one which loses the most grains because of lack of planning by those entrusted to secure our grains. Most of the grain (maize- staple food) which has been secured using so much public funds will soon go to waste because of lack of planning from those entrusted to make sure all this maize is safe. It is very sad to note that our leaders talk on many platforms (proudly) how much grains the country has harvested and how much the government has bought from the farmers from last season. A few days later they are on the same platform inspecting huge wastage piles and piles of the same grain. Meanwhile so many of our people are going without food in many parts of the country. How can a country be food secure like this? With the onset of the rain season, it will be an every day news to see wastage maize after the government has spent so much public funds to secure all the staple food gains which were grown last season.

We are still using tents to cover and safe guard the maize and other grains bought by public funds all which can help provide food for our people. A hungry country is a dangerous country. It is here where we really need to take serious stock of all the grains we have and safe guard it jealously. This can only be done with better planning and commitment by our leaders at the same time implementing policies which look at the poor person and uplift him from the trap of poverty otherwise I am afraid, we will continue to be counted and added on the numbers of those who are food insecure in the world.

George Akalemwa

Zambia Catholic University

8. Jader José Oliveira, Presidência da República do Brasil, Brazil

Hi everybody!

I'm working in Brazil for a long time ago, since 1977, with the rural credit. Recently, We had some important successes in reducing poverty. Now, we need advance on forms to guarantee that policies and actions are sustainable. I think we need to do more for better governance, social participation and monitoring and evaluating public policies.

Best regards!!

Jader.

9. Subhash Mehta Devarao Shivaram Trust, India

Dear Colleagues,

I am giving the link and also trailing a doc just published, as it addresses most of subjects being covered by this consultation process and will also be very useful to each one of us in case you do not have access to it.

The fact is that the world produces twice the amount of food we need (most in post harvest and or storage losses) but still about half the population does not have access to nutritious food resulting in hunger and malnutrition as they do not have the money to buy. This paper does have a number of answers.

[Study: Sustainable Farming Proven to Increase Yield at Zero Cost](#)

[Increasing Cropping System Diversity Balances Productivity, Profitability and Environmental Health](#)

Warm regards

Subhash

10. Final Year Economics Students (group 1), University of Guyana [first contribution]

We are in total agreement with Mr. Tim Willams. Equitable and strong economic growth of a country is based in part on growth of the agricultural and rural economy of low-income communities and goes a long way in enhancing access to food and improving nutrition of the very poor. However, some of the changes made possible through economic growth take time to bear fruit and the neediest population groups often cannot take immediate advantage of the opportunities it generates. Therefore, reducing hunger requires specific attention to both small- and large-scale interventions. Hence, the Peanut CRSP Initiatives undertaken by the Society for Sustainable Operational Strategies (SSOS) and the MOE in region 9, in Guyana is advantageous.

The success of the Expansion of the Ministry of Education's School Snack Program in the Rupununi Region (Target Region) has been impressive, this conclusion was made based on the 2010 annual report (most recent) of the School Feeding Programme. In detail, " Between the period of January 29, 2010- December 2010 numerous strides had been made; by the end of December 2010 the program had surpassed its target, reaching 41 villages (the target was 33), Total snacks served reached 311,345, 23 SSMCs (School Snack Management Committees) received startup loans to purchase basic raw materials and pay salaries for the first two months; of these, 16 repaid their loans fully before the end of the year, over 40 women were given full time jobs managing their respective programs, new markets for peanuts, cassava and fruits earned farmers over \$8 million, and over \$22 million was injected into 41 communities, creating a multiplier effect and making a significant impact on the quality of village life." Executive Officer, SSOS

11. Final Year Economics Students (group 1), University of Guyana [second contribution]

Can you share specific experiences in which social protection and better food security governance have led to advances in local food security and improved nutrition?

In improving countries food security and nutrition status one must recognize the inherent linkage they have with social protection and food governance. Below are just two occurrences in which the former led to improvements in food security and nutrition:

'Guyana's achievement of Food security has resulted from programmes established to ensure that the nation is producing enough food to feed every single household' (Guyana's Government Information Agency: GINA). The Ministry of Agriculture in Guyana has been spearheading the food,

nutrition and security initiative which has seen the implementation of several major projects that directly address issues pertaining to food security within the context of the 'Grow More Food Campaign' (which was implemented to ensure that Guyanese had adequate food available for themselves and excess to export to Caribbean countries as well as other outside territories). ***The Agricultural Export Diversification Programme*** (ADP aims to increase Guyana's export growth rate and reduce its volatility), ***the Agricultural Support Services Programme*** (ASSP aims to increase rural incomes by increasing the efficiency of agricultural production), ***the Rural Enterprise Development Project*** and ***the Rice and Beans Project for Hinterland Communities*** (this project directly targets the attainment of food security within the Amerindian Communities since these communities are the most vulnerable in this respect) are some of the major programmes. These programmes are encompassed in Guyana's ***National Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (2010-2020)***.

Rapid economic growth has been the main vehicle by which most Asian countries have reduced poverty and enhanced food security (World Bank, 1993). Governments can do many things to improve food security at the household and individual level and most countries in Asia have programs to do so. Rural education accessible to females and the poor, family planning and child-care clinics in rural areas, nutrition education, and extension specialists helping to improve home gardens are just a few of the possibilities (Block et al. 2004). Some Asian countries were successful at improving food security among their citizens by basing their strategies on two important elements which they have some degrees of control over. These two strategies are the sectoral composition of income growth (which focused on growth that reached the poor i.e. "pro poor growth) and food prices (where government's stabilized food prices particularly rice prices since it is the main staple food). The stabilization of food prices ensured that short term fluctuations and shocks did not make the poor even more vulnerable to inadequate food intake (Timmer 1991, 1996).

Reference: **Food Security and Economic Growth: an Asian perspective**

12. Final Year Economics Students (group 4) University of Guyana

Greetings all,

We begin our contribution to this discussion by addressing the first question posed:

1. Can you share specific experiences in which social protection and better food security governance have led to advances in local food security and improved nutrition?

It has been recognized that developing countries have shared experiences that regurgitate the importance of social protection and better food security governance towards the advancement of local food security and improved nutrition. It is only fair for one to remain cognizant that any mechanism implemented towards social protection will not yield immediate results, but rather reap long term benefits.

One project implemented under the Food & Nutrition Security Strategy of Guyana & facilitated by the Government of Guyana in collaboration with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (S.A.I.C.D.) & the Guyana Rice Development Board (G.R.D.B), was the Hinterland Rice & Beans Project in Administrative Region 9-Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo, where the Region is home to about 400 people. This programme was established with the provision of 150 acres for rice cultivation & 15.5 acres for beans cultivation in Moco Moco. In September 2010, approximately 82 acres & 11 acres of rice & beans were harvested respectively, which is equivalent to approximately 25 bags of paddy per acre & 900 pounds per acre of beans. Through the implementation of the project, indigenous communities were observed to become more self-sustaining; to generate employment within the communities instead of searching for jobs

elsewhere (the city) and to improve the overall livelihoods of residents, thereby contributing to food security in the village & by extension the economy.

Additionally, Guyana undertook the "Grow More Food" campaign which aimed at increasing the level of food production in Guyana by implementing a market led approach. This is a 5 step plan that includes the Agricultural Export Diversification Programme, the Rural Enterprise & Agricultural Development Programme, & increased investment in drainage & irrigation & by extension the maintenance of rehabilitated structures. More so, the establishment of the Guyana Livestock Development Authority along with improved extension services in 2008 benefited rural farmers, agro-investors & exporters through an increase in food production & a more productive means of livelihood. In addition to the increase in export, all of the above contributed to Guyana accomplishing the UN Millennium Development Goal of eradicating hunger.

Thank you for reading.

13. Sibabrata Choudhury, Landesa, India

Hi!, Everyone,

On the important subject of food security and nutrition I have to say that we as development professionals, funders, governments, etc. have miserably failed jointly in providing adequate quantities of food to the poorest sections. While there are huge disparities with regard to food production and availability of food, there remain grave concerns on the point of ensuring nutrition security among communities. Childhood malnutrition and food deficiency among the poorest (often land insecure) communities remain major problems even as we approach the MDG target of 2015.

On the issue of food security and better nutrition I have two points to make...

i) Governments worldwide, including in India have not really done enough on these points and many a times they have left the job half done. Though numerous agriculture development measures and public distribution system and other food distribution programmes are operational in India they have suffered from huge leakages and programme innovation, thus failing in meeting the desired objectives. For the past couple of years there has been discussion regarding the promulgation of a Food Security Bill which promises a lot but falls short of explaining how it will achieve the stated objectives in the current scenario.

ii) While most of the programme interventions have pointed towards addressing malnutrition and nutrition security through "external supplementation" there has been little effort for promotion of home based food production through kitchen garden or nutrition garden. I strongly believe that large scale and long term nutrition garden programmes designed for the poorest could be beneficial in achieving better household nutrition security. I have seen with minimal monetary inputs but with close facilitation poor families having even small plots of land have been able to grow a variety of vegetables, greens, tubers and fruit trees to feed to the family food basket. There is a need of proper packaging of the existent government programmes such as the seed mini kit, backyard plantation programmes and such an intervention can be implemented in a wide scale.

Nevertheless it still intrigues me why Governments fail to take up programmes that would directly benefit the poorest in the most simple and easy manner...

Thanks,

Sibabrata

14. Final Year Economics Students (group 5) University of Guyana [first contribution]

Dear moderator and fellow contributors, your comments has been very interesting and insightful thus far on the present discussion. We would like to make our contributions to question one:

Can you share specific experiences in which social protection and better food security governance have led to advances in local food security and improved nutrition?

As you all know food security is a major issue in our world today which has brought about an increase in demands for agricultural products. As a result, the Caribbean has brought about the initiative to grow more food in Guyana so as to satisfy these expanded markets for traditional and non-traditional agricultural products. Hence the Grow More Food Campagin was launched so as to meet these requirements. Below are two of the projects under this initiative:

1)The Ministry of Agriculture implemented the **Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Development Project** (READ) in 2009 of which it is still ongoing. This project contains an agricultural diversification strategy for both traditional products (rice and sugar) and nontraditional products (fruits, vegetables, spices) intended for the poor rural households. These products represent an opportunity for growth in Guyana and as such it promotes Guyana export capacity. READ falls under the 'Grow More Food Campaign' seeks at increasing the provision of food in Guyana. The small farmers(both men and women) gained by the improved technologies in production, improved rural income, availability of support and assistance to resource the small farmers, and the development of linkages between rural producers and distributors (wholesalers and retailers). The benefits that the small farmers acquire led to a greater yield and as such an improved quality of the produce of their fruits and vegetables. The Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Development project focuses on training the farmers in areas of rural enterprise (business ventures for farmers) and market development. The training and techniques famers gained will strengthen the human and social capital in the rural areas which will increase the self reliance when addressing challenges they may faced.

2)Also in 2009, The Ministry of Agriculture initiated the **Rice and Beans Project** for the Hinterland communities. This project support rural development through increasing the cultivation of rice and beans (such as black eye beans) in Moco Moco. At the first harvest, more than 2000 bags of rice paddy and 4200 pounds of beans were produced. Accessibility to affordable food was provided and the development of dietary supplements in the Amerindian communities increases the nutritional intake of the residents. The expansion of these two food groups gives a direct attainment of food security since these areas are relatively food insecure. The Rice and Beans project is feasible and as such it was expanded to other Amerindian communities to become food secure. By utilizing the savannah lands and dealing with legumes, a bond was constructed for storing equipments, machines and chemicals. Human capital in the Hinterland communities was acquired through the support of The National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) by training the Amerindians modern agriculture methods. Significantly, the Rice and Beans project secured employment opportunities for the people.

Thank you!

15. Ipate Iudith, Romanian Academy, Romania

I think that from economic growth to food security it is important to apply a new concept: **eco-bio-economy**. Eco-bio-economy can be considered an attempt for a new shared vision of eco-economic and bio-economic development, which brings together integrated disciplines: economy, ecology, biodiversity, eco-economy and the bio-economy and focuses on developing smart integrated sustainable world. In all these areas, eco-bio-economy ideas allow valuable contribution of social economy, the economic welfare of solidarity, social responsibility and corporate governance, as

applied to future elements that could be used practically integrated in a multipolar world for a healthy and environmentally enhancing and promoting intelligent, creative and innovative, sustainable economic development. The high-level political decision and modern diplomatic instruments are expected catalyst and need an equation eco-bio-political and global economic success. According eco-bio-economic paradigm, a sustainable economy respects the "offer" of ecosystems is dependent upon all its resources, such as fisheries, forest resources, pastures and hayfields, arable land, etc.. As long as demand does not exceed sustainable yields can be sustained accepted limits of natural systems.

Savings based on wrong signals received from the markets on demand, will lead to irrational decisions increase the supply of products (mainly agricultural) decisions are "recipe" best for the destruction of natural systems. Under these conditions the modern economy should be based on fundamental rules of natural and artificial ecosystems (anthropogenic or anthropogenic).

All the best,

Dr. Ipate Iudith
Romanina Academy

16. Claudio Schuftan, PHM, Vietnam [second contribution]

Let us be honest. Food and nutrition issues get little policy attention from decision-makers. The lack of action is not due to a lack of knowledge by the latter. Other gaps are at the root - gaps that denote a deliberate choice of not attending to food and nutrition matters. It is ultimately power relations that affect policy choices. Policy processes can only be fully understood if analyzed politically. Consciousness raising and social mobilization are indispensable to influence policy processes. Research organizations have hardly engaged in this consciousness raising; most of them are rather conservative; they think that if decision-makers have more and better knowledge they will indeed take urgently needed decisions. But decision makers never go against their own interests. What is missing is to focus on what to do about the need for structural changes that address the basic causes of preventable hunger and malnutrition by organizing pressure from below; thus the importance of empowering claim holders.

Cordially

Claudio

17. Final Year Economics Students (group 5) University of Guyana [second contribution]

With reference to question 1, we would like to make an addition to our previous post:

In an effort to address the malnutrition problem among school children in Guyana, the Ministry of Education has implemented a **National School Feeding Programme**. The focus of this programme is to provide hot meals such as peanut butter, cassava bread and a drink to students of primary and nursery schools in the Hinterland regions. In addition to this, the Ministry of Education also operates a snack program which aids in the provision of milk and biscuits to all children attending public primary and nursery schools.

This programme seeks to reduce the predominant iron deficiency as well as other mineral and vitamin deficiencies. Also it would lead to an improvement in the school attendance and school achievements at both levels as well as to alleviate short-term hunger which results from the long distance of commute in this area.

Thank you!

18. Claudio Schuftan, PHM, Vietnam [third contribution]

Let me analyze the issues at stake here in a point-counter-point format.

Point 1:

As most nutrition colleagues would agree, the right food and nutrition policy decisions are not being made in a world where malnutrition is still a serious public nutrition problem and where a host of options for action do exist. It is fitting to ask for the reasons for this and for perhaps, the overall lack of policy attention that food and nutrition issues get from decision-makers.

Counter-point 1:

Some researchers in the food and nutrition community are indeed looking for ways to reduce the gap between knowledge-and-action. I counter-argue that it is not a lack of policy attention to the knowledge/action gap that is at the root of the problem. Instead, it is a deliberate ignoring of the food and nutrition problem as long as it is not the direct cause of social unrest. (To state the obvious, those who have the power are not those who have the problems). The real gap therefore is not between knowledge-and-action. It is not either a lack of political will. It is a choice of not attending to these matters if they are not jeopardizing the stability of the system controlled by those who hold the power. The current gap, if looked at as a knowledge gap, most decidedly exists, but is of little significance, because policy is only minimally affected by knowledge alone. It is political factors that define what the policies to be attended to, actually are - and it is ultimately power relations that affect policy choices. In short, policy processes can only be fully understood if analyzed politically.

As regards claim holders' genuine participation in decision-making, communities do not engage at all in the policy making process, because they do not have a voice; communities can thus not influence policy. They need to be empowered to do so in order to claim their rights.

How interactions between active civil society and various levels of government affect policy development and implementation is a chapter in the writing. The more militant civil society organizations have indeed achieved some real changes and there is much to be learned from those organizations. We have to help budding civil society organizations to achieve the clout (power) to demand needed changes and to monitor their implementation.

Consciousness raising and social mobilization are indispensable in influencing policy processes; this is best done using the human rights-based approach that organizes claim holders to demand policy changes from duty bearers. (Note that 'stakeholders' is a terrible neutral term!)

Point 2:

Existing food and nutrition research organizations often engage in attempts to influence policy makers by communicating their findings to them and by contributing new information to policy fora.

Counter-point 2:

Historically, however, most of these research organizations have hardly engaged in the consciousness raising and social mobilization of the 'needed type' at least not very proactively. In all honesty, most of them are rather conservative organizations, as for example those in the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research institutions (CGIAR). Just communicating

and contributing new information to decision-makers will not achieve the changes needed unless this information is more on the political side of changing things.

Point 3:

These organizations claim there is a 'disconnection between the spheres of policymaking and of science-and-knowledge'; that one needs to break ground methodologically to engage policy makers as decisions are made.

Counter-point 3:

Actually, this has been one of the problems of these food and nutrition research organizations for years: they try to connect policy with science-and-knowledge and not with politics. Do they really think that if decision-makers have more and better knowledge they will make decisions that go against their interests? In their guts, politicians already know what scientists want to tell them...they may not have quantified information, but they know. The need is not to break ground methodologically, but to break ground politically.

Point 4:

These organizations still often call for more interdisciplinary research.

Counter-point 4:

It is definitely not a dearth of interdisciplinary work that has hampered progress. Almost all the hurdles are political and ideological. If one puts together multidisciplinary teams of conservative researchers, the results and recommendations will be conservative and will just tinker with the immediate causes (and will do so strictly within the system). What is being argued here is the need for structural changes that address the basic causes of preventable hunger and malnutrition. (See www.humaninfo.org/aviva)

Point 5:

Moreover, many of these organizations call for setting up social protection and safety nets.

Counter-point 5:

The time is overdue to stop talking about safety nets! This is precisely what leads to tinkering with changes within the system. The ongoing neo-liberal global restructuring creates a mess and food and nutrition professionals are supposed to pick up the pieces? Just in order that the poor and marginalized do not revolt? Who is cheating here? We need to stop victimizing the poor and throwing them bread crumbs. What about, to begin with, changing the system that makes safety nets for the poor needed?

Point 6:

The CGIAR organizations have proven their ability to communicate effectively to bring certain actors together to promote "action".

Counter-point 6:

Yes, but what are they communicating? Rice with iron or with vitamin A? Doom forecasts for 2020? The horrible impact of AIDS on agriculture and on the economy? The need for improved agro-forestry? Super staple food species? GMOs? Is that enough? Does this imply that those who will listen and do some of it will then go on to make structural changes? If one brings actors together to

promote action, what meaningful and sustainable action will they promote? Will this be the political action needed?

People overlook the fact that some governments do place a high priority on reducing hunger and malnutrition. Take Vietnam, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Kerala State in India. What is the common denominator among them? Political determination. Period. This is not just an often used 'cliché'. So, the bottom line that affects policy-makers' choices is the politics of it all, i.e., political processes reign.

Epilogue:

To sum up, food and nutrition issues appear on the public agenda only when it is in the interest of the decision-makers or when international pressures become unbearable. Only occasionally does one see this happening when leaders have a clear mind and determination about the importance of food and nutrition in the development process. The only factor that ultimately works is organized pressure from below; thus the importance of empowering and mobilizing claim holders.

Even current legislation and legal systems do not affect action to reduce hunger and malnutrition to any great degree. This includes the promotion of the right to nutrition. Laws may be passed, but are not enforced. National leaderships often feel content with having passed the legislation, and do not care much about its enforcement. Legislation is also frequently in response to international pressures and not to a felt need. Only mobilizing civil society and providing them with the necessary teeth to monitor the laws' enforcement will make things work.

What can these research organizations then do to create the conditions for actions that will effectively reduce hunger and malnutrition in developing countries? They need to go through a profound process of revising and redefining their vision and their mission so that they can genuinely adopt the right to nutrition-based approach in all that they do. They are simply not looking at food and nutrition as a human right even as they may have made oral and written pronouncements to that effect.

They need, for instance, to engage more on operations research that tries out different approaches to maximize the social mobilization of claim holders to negotiate and demand their rights from duty bearers at different levels. In fact, research related to all areas of implementing the right to nutrition-based approach is of high priority.

As a general rule, if research findings have high social mobilization potential, they should be popularized directly to claim holders to empower them to claim their rights. 'Selling' research findings to decision-makers may continue bringing us more of the same disappointments. Policy makers do not always really (want to) listen...unless organized claim holders put pressure on them.

So, where is the gap?

Claudio Schuftan, Ho Chi Minh City

19. David Michael, Wonda Business & Technology Services, Australia [posted on LinkedIn Food Security Strategy Group]

The report you refer to states: "To reduce poverty and hunger, growth needs to reach the poor and the increased income needs to generate demand for the assets controlled by them. Poor households need to be able to use the additional economic assets to improve their diets both in quantity and quality". Not clear what this means and what assets are we talking about?

The quality of food and diet has been underestimated as a basic requirement for food security. Education is an important part of the solution to solving this problem. In regard to "policies that led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture" a key issue here is that attention has to be given to the whole food supply chain, not just the production end. Production is important but it's just part of the food supply chain, not the whole food chain.

In our study of food security and risk management we found very little investigation of the food supply chain beyond the farm gate. Sure, there are all sorts of value chain examinations etc. but not much into the food security aspects of the value chain. More about this at www.food-security.com.au and here at LinkedIn group food security 2050.

But food security, being about access, has to deal better and more thoroughly with the whole food supply chain. The private sector dominates food supply chain activity in every country, irrespective of their development status and inclination towards command styled economies. So the real question is how to improve private sector performance in food supply chains that deliver food security. Investment and capital accumulation drive private sector capacity to deliver best practices along the whole supply chain. From my examination of the FAO database there is a very close correlation between capital investment in agriculture and the agricultural output index of production. It's a great pity investment and capital accumulation data is not available beyond the farm gate. Policy settings, including social protection, have to work closely with the privately driven food supply chains if they are to have any lasting impact.

20. Jamie Kyles, Sustainable Livelihoods Consultant at UNEP, Canada [posted on LinkedIn Food Security Strategy Group]

You say "to reduce poverty and hunger, growth needs to reach the poor and the increased income needs to generate demand for assets controlled by them". I suggest one should examine the situation from the opposite perspective - looking from the bottom up. What products do smallholders currently produce that are profoundly "mis-managed" and thus present significant opportunity to impact positively on socio-economic conditions of the producer community?

I am involved with two projects in NW Tanzania that fit into this category and have the potential for significant lateral scale-up and huge positive impact. One, now entering its 4th year and encountering significant success, is a smallholder coffee project and the other, which is just beginning, involves solar drying of fruit. For the coffee project, multiplying net income from the only cash crop by 5 to 7 times within 6 years will have a huge positive impact on disposable income, and hence potentially on nutrition levels (to the extent this is a spending priority for smallholder families).

For the solar dried fruit project, we will be breaking the cycle of huge surpluses going to waste during harvest time and significant nutritional deficits occurring during the rainy season. This enterprise provides a combination of increased cash and improved nutritional levels, depending on decisions made by individual farming families.

Both projects are based on using donor money to provide zero interest loans to smallholders who will repay the loans within 5 years (coffee) and 2 years (dried fruit), at which time said donor money will be used to finance the next stage of the project (next village).

Both projects work with existing crops that are grown by very large numbers of smallholders across the region and so have huge lateral scale-up potential.

Both projects identified significant improvement opportunities in value chains and crop management that can be captured with very low-tech interventions and the ongoing support of

high quality regional and national NGOs. This does NOT mean these enterprises are "slam dunks" because, as always with smallholders, high quality village leadership and group dynamics & basic business training are critical success factors.

These two opportunities demonstrate the potential value of a "bottom-up" approach.

21. William Fiebig, Consultant in Climate Smart Agriculture, USA [posted on LinkedIn Food Security Strategy Group]

As a farming systems agronomist with 35+ years living and working in Africa and elsewhere around the world, I feel strongly that production of food is not the problem nor the silver bullet to reduce food and nutrition insecurity. I argue that it is infrastructure & governance in the developing world that is lacking. Without roads and markets, how can value chains develop beyond traditional boundaries? If Gov't is not investing in rural development, what is the future for their people's welfare?

22. Tammy Dlamini, World Vision International, Swaziland [posted on LinkedIn Food Security Strategy Group]

From a smallholder point of view, there has been large evidence of post harvest losses, including improper food preparation, lack of proper hygiene and sanitation. As a result even in food surplus months, children (as the primary indicator group) are not doing well in terms of nutrition, that is, even if you put food on the table, a child with water-borne disease will not benefit from increased consumption (that is if they are able to eat at all).

This among other factors shows the need for a holistic approach, ensuring that nutrition education, primary health care education need to be given a priority in terms of achieving improved food security.

I also agree fully with the need for policy shift in terms of infrastructure and increased access to food by the poor

23. Juan Carlos Cebolla and Mauricio Rosales, facilitators

Dear FSN Forum members,

we wish to thank all of you that took time to follow and engage in this challenging discussion on how to make economic growth work for improved food security and nutrition, inspired by the latest report on the State of Food Insecurity in the world (SOFI).

In our first question we asked you to tell us about experiences in which social protection and better food security governance have led to advances in food security and improved nutrition. We are happy to see that many projects have successfully managed to improve food security and nutrition of local communities: examples include the "[Development of the Peanut sector for Guyana and Selected Caribbean countries](#)" and the [reformed Public Distribution System in Chhattisgarh \(India\)](#). Further, among countries that progressed in improving food and nutrition security over the past decade Brazil and many in Asia were mentioned.

Successful experiences have been able to leverage and take full advantage of social protection and government determination; it's worth noting that Guyana, from where many examples were shared, has met the target of halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger set by the [Millennium Development Goal n.1](#).

We encourage you to keep sending examples and further references on experiences to enrich this exchange across countries and different professional perspectives.

While in some cases governments are engaged and determined, in others commitment and interest seem to be lagging behind and leaving the goal of eradicating food insecurity still far from reach. Some of you argue that where improvements are not being achieved, this is due to the fact that food security and nutrition are not high enough on the decision makers agendas.

Others blame wrong or uninformed policies for not being able to tackle the problem correctly or even for exacerbating the situation. In this regard alternative policies and approaches were also mentioned and advocated by participants such as: promoting market access versus food self subsistence; traditional - high input agriculture versus sustainable methods; or giving attention to the whole supply chain rather than only the production end.

We would now like to draw your attention and reflections to our third question: how can political will be mobilized to truly take action for hunger reduction and improved nutrition?

Does the gap that we still see in many countries need to be filled by knowledge of the problems and right solutions, good and sound legislation frameworks or do the responses need to be found elsewhere, such as in civil society empowerment and mobilization (as suggested in some posts)?

Let's dig in deeper into this difficult and complex question which probably has more than one answer, by looking at what made countries more or less successful in improving food security of their people. Is there any lesson to be learned about links between social protection policies and civil society empowerment? Thanks for your contributions to figure out how can we avoid SOFI to keep counting and adding countries to the high numbers of those who are food insecure in the world, no matter what methodology is used.

We really enjoy reading your contributions, it helps in refining our thinking and widening our perspectives.

Juan Carlos and Mauricio

24. Peter Steele, Italy

Food/Nutrition Security comes from Investing in Agriculture

The contribution from George Akalemwa of Zambia got me thinking – which is good; for that's what these debates are all about – so, the questions are these: how can national decision-makers say one thing and do another; how come some of them no longer relate to the ordinary man/woman in the street/bush when the majority people whom they may represent are sometimes really poor? Why don't they spend more on agriculture?

Kenyans taking a stand

Some of you may have read, seen or heard about the riots that took place in the streets of Nairobi in October this year following the news that national lawmakers – 222 of them – were awarding themselves bonuses valued at US\$105,000 for when parliament breaks up next March. Parliamentarians in that country earn of the order US\$10,000/month and there are additional earnings from attendance and perks that come with the job. Who would not want to be a politician in Kenya? Fortunately, that man/woman in the street was able to follow events on the basis of local reporting, and the government quickly stepped back from this particular confrontation.

It's not just the audacity of this kind of decision-making, but the sadness that it represents wherein national leaders may be so detached from the reality of the ordinary people who will never share

their kind of wealth. In Kenya today it takes, according to the news reports, more than 60 years for an ordinary man/woman to earn the kind of money that the parliamentarians awarded themselves as a 'bonus' – they still had their annual incomes to fall back on. Sure these are taxed, but only at around 25%. How can you be surrounded by so much poverty – ever visited Kibera in Nairobi Africa's most notorious slum and home to more than 600,000 people – and not see the contradictions of wealth to which George Akalemwa refers.

Check out the Kenyan story - if you don't already know it – it's available at a number of websites such as: <http://www.thelondoneveningpost.com/africa/kenyans-demonstrate-against-mps-new-bonus-of-105000-each/>

Getting the priorities right

As George Alalma says; '*A hungry country is a dangerous country*' and you don't have to look far to see countries in which equality becomes a catch phrase for '*me first*'. And, that link between nutrition security and economic wealth – sure, we're getting there - but the Kenya/Nairobi example is a pertinent one representing as it does the most successful commercial hub in the Great Lakes Region – 4M people servicing a hinterland of more than 100M with the services, industry, finances and techno-commercial skills that make this a gem of a city going places that can only continue to rise on the natural wealth of the region – including the vitality of the people.

But what if those national decision-makers and their counterparts in the private sector – equally as rich if not richer - do not invest in agriculture; and this is any low-income country anywhere, not simply Kenya/Nairobi. If you don't invest in agriculture you commit your community to the poverty of out-dated production systems that simply cannot keep pace with demands for more foods, novel foods and foods that entertain. That's been covered at other times in the FSN debates but the nexus of this particular contribution is the priority required of the national decision-makers and the size of the national budget. If you – as a government - don't invest in agriculture sufficient to keep pace with changing demands, increased populations, rising wealth and more, then who will?

This is small agro-country anywhere

Take a small country, well, you name one. Designated a 'middle-income' country you would reason that the majority people would *not* be poor – in the sense of abject poverty. But this is not always what it may seem from first impressions, and you need to explore beneath the surface; and there you find the dichotomy of people living in largely subsistence poverty but surrounded by the natural wealth of the soil, land, forests and oceans. Estimated 40% of the population of our example country of 1.1M live below the poverty line as exemplified by the food/nutrition vulnerability of rural children under five: 60% stunted, 45% underweight, etc. Locally grown foods are vulnerable to the low-productivity of traditional agro-production systems, but also to the vagaries of tropical storms that erode crops, soils and land alike. In 2007 30% of the people faced crop losses and starvation that necessitated international aid/food supplies; people died from hunger.

What is agro-investment worth?

Investment in agriculture is a requirements of all government strategic planning, but herein is the paradox of a national budget of US\$1.67B in 2012 that continues to allocate <1% (US\$16M) to the Ministry of Agriculture for providing agricultural public services, etc., and yet retains almost 50% (US\$800M) for use by a centrally-controlled 'fund'. An additional US\$9.4M from this fund will be invested in '*agriculture*'. So, this boosts investments to around US\$25M. National planning for the next four years had earmarked investments of around US\$46M, but these figures don't stack up given the bulk of public funding required to service that public agricultural sector; only a small proportion of that MAF allocation will find its way into development funds.

People matter

So, how do you handle those nutritional wish-lists? Fortunately for our national managers in our small middle income country, off-shore oil&gas revenues help to boost the national coffers and, at time of reporting, special oil&gas derived accounts contained >US\$9B of assets. More than enough

to meet national strategic development planning for the current period and Vision 2030; and more than enough to provide the half million food/nutrition vulnerable people with some sense of security. But, like those slums in west-central Nairobi, you can't develop without carrying the people – all of the people – with you; and, for national managers, this means investing in those socio-economic assets that will help break that cycle of low-input/low-output land productivity.

The challenge facing national managers will be one of setting priorities, maintaining discipline and seeking to achieve stated objectives without becoming side-tracked and, importantly, remaining within the tenants of state legislation for fair governance, transparency, law&order and similar; that wealth can be shared equitably.

Then you get to sharpen those development models with focus upon nutrition (and health, school kids, women, WATSAN, mosquito nets and more).

Peter Steele

25. Mohammad Monirul Hasan, Germany

Institute of Microfinance

This is a very important topic to discuss especially the debate about the growth elasticity of poverty. Developing countries are lagging behind from distributing the fruits of impressive growth which fostering the inequality and poverty. Nutrition is also a very important analysis in this regard. The definition of poverty is multidimensional; feeding the 2100 kilocalorie per day is also a misleading idea. However, I think improvement is possible by making awareness among the societies and how to live better with limited resources.

I can share some field experiences that I have got from North-western Part of Bangladesh. In this region of Bangladesh, poverty was severe in the last decades because of the seasonal unemployment which generated seasonal food deprivation for months. To mitigate this crisis, some microfinance institutions (MFIs) were supported by the DFID funded project to reduce this seasonal crisis of the households. After the intervention of this program like flexible microcredit, supporting Income generating activities (IGA), agricultural loans, training for IGA, primary health service etc. the impact is huge. These vulnerable people become self-dependent later on and also most of them graduated from this chronic poverty. The success of this program came by the proper scrutinizing of the member households. They were informed about the health and nutrition value of their food also. This group of people performed better than the other people who were not offered this program. So I think the challenges of nutrition can be faced by improving the mass communication media and involving the community leaders. Besides government infrastructure like community health clinic and community awareness week is necessary.

I can also share another awareness movement of the residents of Dhaka city. It is very common now days that most of the vegetables, fruits, fishes are contaminated because of formalin which is very bad for health. But there is nothing to do from the consumers' side to stop this contamination. Social media and electronic media reported it several times in the national media like TV, newspapers but nothing happened. But recently there is a change making progress. Some Community of the Dhaka city declared their market Formalin free, i.e. no food will be contaminated by formalin and other additives. They spread this news to the media and the response from the buyers is enormous. Following this success some other markets are also declaring formalin free. So the change is coming from the micro-level. Government tries several times but failed to handle this crisis. Last week government declared that importing formalin would be strictly handles by the government authorities. But there is also a question here also, how efficiently government can handle this with its inefficient administration. So I believe movement should start from micro-level to make the market work. Other-wise success will not come up.

Economic growth can only reduce poverty by increasing inequality if no redistribution takes place. Special action should be taken into consideration to reduce the poverty and malnutrition.

ref:

[http://inm.org.bd/document/PRIME%20final%2030%20March%206 .pdf](http://inm.org.bd/document/PRIME%20final%2030%20March%206.pdf)

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=255932>

Thank you.

Mohammad Monirul Hasan
Institute of Microfinance (InM)

26. Final Year Economics Students (group 1), University of Guyana [third contribution]

Can you tell us about policies that led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture?

Improved food security stems directly from a set of government policies that integrates the food economy into a development strategy that seeks rapid economic growth with improved income distribution (Timmer, Falcon and Pearson 1983). With such policies, economic growth and food security are mutually reinforcing.

One of the main goals of China's agricultural policy is ensuring national food security. By producing most of the food it needs for its large population, China contributes significantly to world food security and accounts for much of the decline in the number and percentage of the world's population who are undernourished. China's success in increasing the supply of food and fibre in the last 50 years to meet the needs of its growing population is well recognized. Per capita daily energy supply reached 2,990 kcal, well above the recommended level of 2,100 kcal in the MDGs and 14 percent higher than the average daily energy supply in developing countries and 8 percent higher than the world average (FAOSTAT database, 2008).

At the national level, grain security has received the attention of national leaders: in the late 1990s, a target of 95 percent grain self-sufficiency was set. To achieve this, China invested heavily in irrigation and other agricultural infrastructure (Wang, 2000), research and extension (Huang et al., 2000) and domestic production and marketing of chemical fertilizer and pesticides (Nyberg and Rozelle, 1999).

Agricultural reforms in China had huge consequences for food security and the improvement of the nutritional status of Chinese citizens. According to FAO estimates, the number of undernourished people decreased from 304 million in 1979–1981, 30 percent of the population, to 123 million in 2003–2005, 9 percent of the population. One policy that brought China to this level was centered on DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY. Since a country such as China, where agriculture is dominated by small farms, this is even more important.

Reference: Agricultural Development and Nutrition: the Policies behind China's Success

27. Economist Views On-The-Go, University of Guyana

Hello everyone,

Considering the first question, close emphasis was placed in examining the strategies used by the Government of Guyana in their quest to improve the Agriculture Production in Guyana. Over the years several constraints to the Agriculture Sector have been recognized and highlighted and as

such programmes have been developed. Firstly, in 2010 the “Guyana Food and Nutrition Strategy” was developed. This strategy is as a result of joint collaboration between the Government of Guyana and key agencies and aim at generally promoting short term development strategies so as to ensure availability and access to food and nutrition especially to vulnerable groups such as women and children.

In 2008, shortly after the rise in world food prices the Government of Guyana lauched the “Grow more Food Campaign”. This campaign basically provides initiative and encouragement to every Guyanese to strive to be self-sufficient by employing simple means such as having a basic kitchen garden at home. Initiatives employed in this strategy included the distribution of a variety of seeds and agricultural supplies necessary to further self-sufficiency. Added to this, there are also numerous other projects developed under the Grow More Campaign which includes the “Rural Enterprise and Agriculture Development (READ)” which is basically providing support in the form of Equipment, technology and in some cases micro financing. Another project launched in 2009 was the “Agricultural Export Diversification Programme (ADP)” which seeks to increase exports of food from Guyana and to decrease instability within the Agriculture Sector. It focused on the increase of non-traditional agriculture in 3 areas- Aquaculture, Livestock and Fruits and Vegetable”. This Initiative seeks to improved the Agriculture Export Environment and Facilitation; health and food safety practices including Internationa Best Practices in Sanitary Practices improved Drainage and Irrigation Mechanisms and generally create an enabling envornment that will promote Agricultural Exporting. The Agricultural Support Services Project (ASSP) is another such project implemented in 2009 which focus on development of agriculture in rural areas. Also in 2009 the Ministry of Agriculture launched the Rice and Beans Project which targeted the increase in rice and beans production in hinterland communities. The Rice and Beans Project’s main objective is to ensure food security in communities which are often remotely located and as such prone to food insecurities.

28. Final Year Economics Students (group 4) University of Guyana [second contribution]

To continue or contribution to the discussion, here is our take on the third question posed:

How can we mobilize the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities?

To mobilize political will, there must be an adoption into national strategy, the intended goals of improving key areas such as hunger and poverty reduction. If national strategies, in terms of the development goals of a nation, are geared towards the alleviation of hunger and poverty - symptoms of the underprivileged in society - at a broad level, then there can be significant assurance of policy implementation to favor the goal of hunger reduction.

Governments have at their disposal, the shared knowledge of the various policies (and their shortcomings) that can be implemented in tandem with agricultural policies based on the objectives of food security and food entitlement. Economic growth in less developed countries can be achieved, for example, using the basic agricultural policies (price policy, marketing policy, credit policy, mechanization policy, land reform policy, research policy and irrigation policy), that intend to improve welfare at a broad level. However, these policies must also be married to the goals of improving nutrition, especially for the underpriveleged. The 'traditional' measures of nutrition indicate very ephemerally, the standard of nutrition that is prevalent in populations under study. Simple caloric intake measures do not suggest overall improvement in nutrition. It therefore follows that the deliverables of the broader agricultural programs, should include improvements in wider measures of nutritional intake. 'Agricultural policy' and 'nutrition policy' need to be interchangeable terms in the strategic outlook and rhetoric of policy makers.

29. George Kent, University of Hawai'i, USA

FSN Friends –

As the opening statement by Juan Carlos García y Cebolla and Mauricio Rosales reminded us, The State of Food Insecurity in the World for 2012 shows that economic growth “can be a powerful driver for increased food security when translated into agricultural growth and in particular when it is inclusive and reaches smallholder farmers and women.”

This language acknowledges that the linkage between economic growth and increased food security is not tight. It depends on whether those in power are genuinely motivated to increase food security, especially among the poorest sections in the population. And it depends on the successful implementation of programs favoring the poor. Thus, as Juan Carlos and Mauricio have emphasized, their third question is particularly important:

How can we mobilize the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities?

This challenge is especially difficult when the political will of the central government to end hunger is completely absent. However, where the will is present but weak, there are options. It might be possible to find means for addressing hunger that are not difficult or costly for the central government.

This approach could mesh nicely with ideas that emphasize local food sovereignty and self-reliance. Instead of thinking in terms of central governments providing food directly to needy people or organizing large-scale projects, the emphasis could shift to having the central government facilitate local initiatives.

To illustrate, central governments could encourage the creation of local food policy councils that would take initiatives to improve local food systems. This practice is already widespread in several high income countries. Central governments could also encourage local exchanges of information on farming practices, marketing, household food production, nutrition education, etc. The policies of central governments could shift to place greater emphasis on local rather than national food systems.

Many things could be done, at little cost, to encourage community-based nutrition security, so that people come to depend more on each other than on the central government. Many different kinds of food and nutrition projects could be implemented locally, and also managed locally, through programs that would build local capacities.

Food insecurity at the local level could be diagnosed, and ways might be found to strengthen communities so that serious nutrition problems do not arise. Rather than designing projects to fix problems, it might be possible to make changes in communities so that basic nutrition is no longer a problem. Achieving this would mean that the hunger problem has been attacked at its roots.

Aloha, George Kent

30. Final Year Economics Students (group 5) University of Guyana [second contribution]

[Peter Steele](#) well said. We particularly like the section that focuses on “**Getting the priorities right**”.

On that note here are suggestions on how can we mobilize the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities.

We believe personally, that we must first carry out investigations among persons of the various economic statii in society beginning from the rich downwards. Then we make a vast comparison between the different classes hence assessing the nutritional situation and views currently in our society. From this we can then involved in the sensitization process and targeting the different media forums. Creating advertisements, welcoming publicity and making the public aware of the importance of proper nutrition for the biological systemic functions would be our next step. While doing this we can then highlight the results of your recent finding on the nutritional views and show the adverse effects of not legitimatizing nutritional importance through legal declaration. In doing this, we will need the support of the business community and nutritionist to petition for this stand point. In doing so you create a substantial strain on the government to pay emphasis on the issue at hand and draft policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition moving it up the list of countries and political priorities.

31. Victoria Zi, China

Dear [Juan Carlos García y Cebolla and Mauricio Rosales](#) and other members:

As a brand new member, I feel it a great honor to be permitted to join the FSN Forum recently. In response to the emails from [Juan Carlos García y Cebolla and Mauricio Rosales](#), I tried to answer the question: **“How can political will be mobilized to truly take action for hunger reduction and improved nutrition?”** by quickly catching up with the progress of the **Coherent Food Security Responses: Incorporating Right to Food into Global and Regional Food Security Initiatives**.

In addition to the three traditional separations of powers (the National People’s Congress/Parliament, Executive and Justice), the National Congress of the Communist Party of China (the overall mid to long term strategies and orientation) and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (China’s top advisory body) all participate in the design of national strategies and priorities. This structure facilitates wide reflection of issues, in particular food insecurity at national and sub-national levels and mobilization of the political will of the top leaders to **truly take action for hunger reduction and improved nutrition**. Furthermore, many government agencies have opened official blogs to announce new draft polices for discussion and collect emerging issues from the general public.

Guarantee of national food security has been integrated into the national strategy by the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The ongoing Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) calls for continuity of the progress toward the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects set at the Sixteenth Congress, and continuing to work hard to ensure its attainment by 2020. In this Congress, it is the first time to set the target of doubling per capita GDP as well as per capita disposable income in 2020 in comparison of that in 2010, which will benefits the poor and help better guarantee of national food security in China

The FAO has given the Agricola Medals to two Chinese statesmen: the first time was to the former President Jiang Zemin; the second time is to the current Premier Wen Jiabao. These medals are strong incentives for mobilizing the political will of the top Chinese leaders as well as the top leaders in other countries to integrate food security more closely into new national strategies and plans.

The findings of emerging issues, solutions on food insecurity in the world through the efforts by the FSN Forum will also make contributions to mobilizing the political will of the top national leaders in the world to **truly take action for hunger reduction and improved nutrition**.

This is the first time for me to send my personal views. I used my penname to facilitate discussion.

32. Final Year Economics Students (group 6) University of Guyana [first contribution]

Can you share specific experiences in which social protection and better food security governance have led to advances in local food security and improved nutrition?

Social protection and improved food security governance is crucial to the survival, development and empowerment of the poor in the developing world. Guyana is no exception even with its huge endowment of natural resources and the potential to be a leading exporter of agricultural products in the Caribbean.

The Government of Guyana and donor agencies over the years have become increasingly involved in social protection policies and improved food security for vulnerable groups in society. The recently initiated Rice and Beans project in the hinterland village of Moco-Moco are testament to the move by the government and donor agencies to improve the overall economic and social conditions in these communities. It is argued that prevalence of poverty is higher in hinterland regions, projects such as the Rice and Bean project contribute towards improved incomes for persons within these communities. In addition to increased incomes the village population has access the wider variety of foods in addition to their traditional staple diet which leads to improved nutrition.

The Government of Guyana has also encouraged cooperatives in the quest for greater food security and the United Nations essentially embraced the idea of cooperatives with this year's World Food Day theme "Coops- the key to food security." Cooperatives in developing countries can play a pivotal role in ensuring food security and social protection by income generating projects especially through agricultural projects. In Guyana, approximately fifty percent of sugar cane is grown by cooperatives and the private sector. Sugar is one of the largest foreign exchange earners in Guyana hence cooperatives ability to contribute and earn income for their members and increases the overall welfare of the country.

The Mangrove Reserve Women Producers is another example of cooperatives enhancing social protection and food security. This group comprise mostly of women living along communities on the coast of Guyana often they referred to as "country women." These women have low levels of education or none at all and have little chances of employment in the formal sectors and a culture of male dependence dominates amongst them. Since this group was organized these women were able to produce a variety of products using local knowledge such as cassava bread, coconut biscuits, local drinks, pepper sauces and dried fruits and meats. They have also engaged in small scale farming and gardening in a variety of crops. It is clearly evident that through organization into cooperatives they were able to produce products for market locally and the potentially for international markets and at the same growing their own food.

33. Final Year Economics Students (group 6) University of Guyana [second contribution]

Can you tell us about policies that led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture?

INVESTMENT PROMOTION POLICY

Guyana's investment policy regime includes a wide range of instruments to stimulate and attract new investments into the agricultural sector.

These include:

Tax holidays on pioneering activities

1. Accelerated depreciation
2. Export allowances for non-traditional export outside CARICOM
3. Exemptions on plant, equipment and machinery
4. Exemption of import duty and consumption tax on fish and seafood
5. processing equipment, refrigerated vehicles, packaging material and other inputs for seafood processing
6. Unlimited loss carryover from previous periods

Since 2001, GO-INVEST, the Government of Guyana Investment Agency established in 1994, has been responsible for investment, trade and export promotion activities of the economy. The New Guyana Marketing Corporation (NGMC) is a trade-facilitating institution to support and promote the exports of non-traditional commodities. The NGMC has been mandated to expand the market for local agricultural produce locally, regionally and internationally. Agribusiness and marketing entrepreneurs interested in commodity export activities from Guyana are provided with advisory support and information services from GO-INVEST. With regard to export promotion, GO-INVEST provides exporters with trade information, assists in export promotion and advises Government on policy formulation and strategies to stimulate export performance. Investment profiles are also developed to guide investment opportunities. Duty-free imports and tax holidays are also available to investors on the basis of certain defined criteria. Together, GO-INVEST and NGMC are expected to be in the forefront of the new development paradigm to support the sector's competitiveness. Further, these institutions are expected to undertake the lead role in export trade facilitation and market intelligence as well as monitoring the effectiveness of promotional instruments in support of the sector's competitiveness.

34. Bengir Al Labib Miru, University of Development Alternative (UDA), Bangladesh

Dear All,

I share one concept that can help to develop food security of Bangladesh.

"Utilization of functional space for food production and nutrition improvement in Bangladesh.

As high population density in Bangladesh leads her major priority for food and nutrition crisis to mitigate. For few years it obtains self-sufficient in food. Due to natural calamities like flood, heavy rain, drought, saline intrusion which forecasting the loss of food and cash crops that disturbs the continuing progress of the entire economy. Bangladesh is based on agrarian economy. Agriculture is the single largest producing sector of economy since It comprises about 30% of the country's GDP and employing around 60% of the total labor force. Agriculture related with the major macroeconomic objectives like employment generation, poverty alleviation, human resources development and food security. The holdings of agriculture in Bangladesh are generally small. The use of modern machinery is gradually gaining popularity. Rice, Jute, Sugarcane, Potato, Pulses, Wheat, Tea and Tobacco are the principal crops. The crop sub-sector dominates the agriculture sector contributing about 72% of total production. Fisheries, livestock and forestry sub-sectors are 10.33%, 10.11% and 7.33% respectively. The government of Bangladesh play role in some objectives, such as increase in grain production, etc.

Bangladesh has several organizations (governmental, non-governmental) and these are holds many unutilized place or ornamental place. Where Bangladesh carry a strong weakness of food and nutrition crisis, the use of these places for only beautification (very few of them cultivate) is not hopeful for our nation and can not contribute to minimize the crisis. Why there are no initiatives from these organizations (any types) to contribute in food production? Why do all these organizations not become a part of to ensure country's food security ? or a tinny part to support mankind?....."

Thank you.

35. Adèle Irénée Gremombo, France

Bonjour à tous

voici quelques éléments de Réponse à ces questions

- Les projets Telefood ont contribué à l'amélioration de l'état nutritionnel des bénéficiaires. Ces projets concernent la production agricole, l'élevage, la pêche, l'apiculture.
- Pour mobiliser la volonté politique. Il faut organiser les tables rondes avec tous les acteurs et plaider pour que la sécurité alimentaire soit inscrite comme priorité dans les plans de développement de chaque pays. Chaque Etat doit accentuer les actions pour la sécurité alimentaire à travers l'organisation des foires agricoles, des fêtes de moisson en plus de la Journée Mondiale de l'Alimentation qui se tient tous les ans.

Adèle Irénée GREMBOMBO
Consultante en Nutrition
Paris (France)

36. Final Year Economics Students (group 5) University of Guyana [third contribution]

2. Can you tell us about policies that led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture?

Policies aimed at improving nutritional status through investment in agriculture are vital for development.

The comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) under the AU/NEPAD initiative is aimed at, among other things, reducing food and nutrition insecurity through agriculturally led development. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed the regional agricultural policy (ECOWAP) which outlines the principles and objectives allocated to the agriculture sector as well as guides interventions in agricultural development within the region. A joint ECOWAP/CAADP action plan was developed for the period 2005-2010 by ECOWAS and the NEPAD Secretariat for such development. The ECOWAP/CAADP agenda is an important part of national efforts to provide solid investment programmes at both a national and regional level towards improving the lives of the people.

With respect to Ghana, the CAADP focused on improving existing policies and strategic plans. The goal of reducing food insecurity and poverty called for a coordinated approach for effective development in the agriculture sector.

The Government of Ghana (GoG) compact sets parameters for long term partnership within the agriculture sector, specifies main commitments of both government and partners, and clarifies expectations regarding the agribusiness and farming communities as well as sector policy, budgetary and investment commitments. The compact outlines the intentions of the GoG with regards to the agriculture sector with its ultimate purpose being to increase effectiveness of planning and execution of government efforts, increasing effectiveness of delivery of external assistance in the agriculture sector with both limited transaction costs and coordinated donor support, and providing a solid framework by which assistance can be increased to help meet the

short and long term investment needs of the sector. The overall goal is to achieve economic growth as well as development towards ensuring food and nutrition security for the whole population.

37. Final Year Economics Students (group 6) University of Guyana [third contribution]

How can we mobilize the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities?

Hunger reduction and better nourishment are not high on the agenda of policy makers. The problem is not one of knowledge about nutrition and hunger, policy are well aware of the importance but they fail to take into consideration what impact better nutrition and freedom from hunger has on higher priority objectives. These include high priority objectives such as poverty reduction, literacy improvement and health improvement.

policies makers often believe that if these objectives are achieve, problem such as hunger reduction and better nourishment well correct themselves, for example with the improve income individuals will have better nourishment and cure hunger. What most policy maker s fails to take into consideration is the implications variables such as hunger and nutrition have on achieving high priority objectives such as literacy improvement.

For example policy makers would design policies to improve school accessibility to children, but fail to take into consideration what can impact attendance and performance in school. These factors are usually seeing as exogenous factors in the eyes of policy maker and can be self-corrected if these larger objectives are achieved. In Guyana students, especially at the primary level usually eat breakfast on their way to school. This is not one of high nutritional content usually a cheap aerated drink and biscuit. Some even attend school without breakfast and just a small pocket change for lunch which is similar to the breakfast mention above. Most families cannot afford a more nutritious breakfast, which tend to have great impact on student's attention span, problem solving abilities and forgetfulness, which greatly hinder academic performance. This would affect academic attainment which also has great implications for poverty reduction, since education is the key to escape poverty for and be self-sustainable not only for Guyanese but most people living in poverty around the world.

Therefore we would recommend a more join policy approach where policy makers design polies and are encourage to incorporated variables such as nutrition and hunger. This could be done by sharing success stories and research findings of programmes that have work jointly on achieving a major objective. For example the school snack programme implemented by ministry of education in Guyana "Mention by final economic student group one". There is also the school uniform programme which was also implemented by the ministry of education. These too programmes implemented together would have a greater impact on improving literacy in Guyana which is one of the major objectives of the government. The school uniform programme has improve poor families ability to send their children to school while the school snack programme aid in better nutriment and reduce hunger which helps to solve some of the problems mention above that is associated with hunger and academic performance. This is just one example of how policies makers can be encourage placing hunger reduction and better nourishment higher on the list of objectives.

38. Final Year Economics Students (group 3) University of Guyana [first contribution]

Greetings from Guyana!

Below are our contributions with specific emphasis on Question One:

“Can you share specific experiences in which social protection and better food security governance have led to advances in local food security and improved nutrition?”

Since the beginning of time, human beings actions have been influenced by their need to have food. Thus, food security has always been a concern for everyone, it is a national responsibility. Even though everyone would've probably mentioned this already, the real question is “What is food security?” “[Food security] is ... access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Its essential elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it. Food insecurity, in turn, is the lack of access to enough food.” (World Bank 1986).

Given the fact that food security is a concern for all people, food insecurity is prevalent in poor lesser developed countries (LDCs), because of their inability to generate enough income to purchase food it gets worse when they're unable to grow their economies and simply produce their own foods. We all know that the one condition that can solve the problem of food insecurity for any nation is that of “economic growth” as was mentioned in the forum. Developing and developed economies have in fact proven this to be true, as their gross domestic product steadily increase their undernourished populace decreases.

Social Protection and better food security governance can indeed lead to advancement in local food security and improved nutrition. When countries faced with food insecurity issues, can significantly improve their levels of social protection (which can even be in the form of policies implemented to protect local farmers in their economies from outside competition and foreign based products). They can prevent their economies from being dominated by foreigners and taking away pools of resources to their foreign land and even to the point of exploiting labourers in the relatively poor countries. With this capital outflow it means that citizens' earnings are not being properly invested or used in their own countries thereby not contributing to the growth of the economy which is essential for betterment in poorer nations.

For example, right here in Guyana we see a wide variety of well packaged plantain and banana chips made in Costa Rica, of which our Guyanese people are going fanatical for but the ironic thing is that Guyanese grow both bananas and plantains of which we do not desire, and the more amusing thing is that the chips taste no different from the ones we can buy here at home (Guyana). These are the simple things that create huge economic problems for small or poor countries and Governments need to put better measures in place to deal with these issues. Why import something that your country produces?

However, there are some advantageous methods implemented by the Government of Guyana such as; local agricultural farmers are given certain packaged seeds to encourage them to plant or grow more food which is good, since it adds to the third dimension of food security which is availability of more food for all. Additionally, with the known natural disaster of floods in Guyana a lot of farmers do not feel encouraged to farm anymore, but what the Government is doing is that during these times there is guaranteed help for farmers such as compensation for any loss.

The Government also took it up a notch, where through the Ministry of Agriculture there is a hotline service offered to farmers whereby they can call and indicate whatever problems they may be encountering. The Ministry of Agriculture would then try to see how they can deal with whatever issues were highlighted. This act by the government has led to better food security in Guyana. Moreover, there is a Programme on National Communications Network (NCN), which allows the entire Guyana with more specific emphasis to farmers, where they can be updated on the activities as it relates to farming. The programme often has experts who educate farmers on better farming practices and pest control methods. Here we clearly see a pro active or preventative approach by the Government to deal with future farming practice or pest control issues and other general farming problems.

This is all for now.

Thank You.

39. Final Year Economics Students (group 3) University of Guyana [second contribution]

Greetings all,

Below are our contributions for Question Two:

“Can you tell us about policies that led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture?”

We all know that policies can either depress or improve economies, to begin with it must be highlighted that in Guyana, Agriculture accounts for 32% of GDP AND 37% of export earnings. Additionally, Guyana is the only CARICOM country that enjoys food security. In our approach to this question we have incorporated a few policies implemented in Guyana that has led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture.

The FAO predicts that agricultural production will have to increase by 70% by 2050 to feed a population of some 9 billion people. And climate models predict a much more uncertain climate in the next several decades. Extreme weather patterns can also become more severe which may lead to the consequences of more volatile food production and food prices. As a result our Region cannot afford to be complacent and has to be more proactive than reactive.

1) As of recent CARICOM has endorsed the Jagdeo Initiative led out of Guyana, which was created to respond to the stabilization of Caribbean food prices and ensuring easy accessibility to sufficient nutrition for the region. And by extension to promote the expansion of the community’s agricultural sector as well as ensure its sustainability. For example, in Guyana the “Grow More Food” campaign has gained prevalence and the Agricultural Ministry has developed a 10 year Food and Nutrition Security that will address availability, affordability, nutrition and stability. This campaign is still ongoing and the Ministry Of Agriculture is encouraging all households to have a kitchen garden in their backyards.

The Ministry has also implemented several other projects aimed at the diversification and modernization of agriculture so as to reduce the sectors’ dependency on traditional crops while enabling the sector to gain global competitiveness.

i. The Agricultural Export Diversification programme (US\$21.9M) - this programme was also launched in 2009 and aims to increase Guyana’s export growth rate and reduce volatility. The programme comprises four main components: promotion of private sector entrepreneurship in agribusiness; improving agribusiness export and facilitation services; strengthening agricultural health and food safety services; and rehabilitation of drainage and irrigation systems.

ii. The Agricultural Support Services Programme (US\$22M) – aims to increase rural incomes by increasing the efficiency of the agricultural production.

iii. Rural Enterprise Development Project (READ) - is a six year project started in 2009. Some objectives include; to strengthen linkages between rural producers and service providers involved in the production and diversification efforts; and to integrate improved technologies in the production and marketing supply chain for agricultural and non-agricultural based enterprises. (US\$6M)

iv. Rice and Beans Project for Hinterland Communities (US0.65M) – the objectives of this programme are to increase rice and beans production in the Hinterland Communities of Guyana. Since the Amerindian Communities have a high incidence of food insecurity, the project directly

targets food security in the area. To date 82 acres of land has been planted with rice and beans and a bond has been constructed for storing equipment, machines and chemicals. A further 75 acres of land is expected to be cultivated by the end of 2010.

2) In 2009 the CARICOM Heads of Government signed the Liliendaal Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security which was in recognition for the vital multi functional role agriculture plays for regional development. Regional action in agriculture is the priority of the Declaration with focus placed on CARICOM Agriculture Policy and Regional Strategic Plan. It focuses particularly on Food and Nutrition Security in the context of the 2007/2008 food crisis which highlighted the urgent need to maximize Regional agricultural production to meet food security and nutrition needs, it also addresses poverty alleviation, income and employment generation and ultimately the Region's need to ensure that Agriculture is seen as the "real" wealth generator.

These are just some Policies/programmes that led to better nutritional status as a result of investment into agriculture and are still ongoing in Guyana.

We Thank You.

40. Emile N. Hougbo, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques Agronomiques de Kétou (ENSTA-Kétou), Benin

English version

The problem that shows this issue is the problem of "pro-poor economic growth". Indeed, when social inequalities are important in the distribution of income, economic growth does not systematically lead to the reduction of poverty indices and in turn to the improvement of the populations' nutritional status. To induce economic growth that ensures at the same time poverty reduction, a pro-poor economic growth, it is necessary to direct investments towards basic infrastructures, the economic sector where there are more poor people in the country and to promote the private sector which is the real wealth creator in almost all countries.

Basic infrastructures

Infrastructures to build concern rural feeder roads, water supply, street lighting, health centers, and, in the best case, the creation of insurance systems for the farmers' health protection. The reason is that rural poverty is reinforced by among others the chronic diseases which destroy the farmers' economical status.

Economic sector to be focused on

In underdeveloped countries such as Benin Republic (West Africa), the agricultural sector should be preferred for the investments we are talking about. In the agricultural sector, emphasis should be placed on seasonal fruits that abound and often roots and tubers which generally have a much higher added value than cereals. In addition, it would be easier and more appropriate to increase domestic consumption of these food products, which will lead to economic growth while improving the nutritional status of the populations.

Support to private sector

It is necessary to promote the measures of governance that facilitate business, say the measures that improve the index of "Doing business", regularly calculated by the World Bank. At this level, appropriate measures must be taken to combat corruption which confines the poor in a vicious circle. It is also necessary to ensure an impartial efficient and fast procedure justice.

Dr Emile N. Hounbo
Agroéconomiste & Spécialiste du Développement Durable,
Université d'Abomey-Calavi (UAC),
Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Sciences et Techniques Agronomiques de Kétou (ENSTA-Kétou),
Chef du Département d'Economie et de Sociologie Rurales

French version

Le problème que pose ce sujet est le problème de « croissance économique pro-pauvres ». En effet, quand les inégalités sociales sont importantes dans la répartition des revenus, la croissance économique ne conduit pas systématiquement à la réduction des indices de pauvreté et par ricochet à l'amélioration de l'état nutritionnel des populations. Pour induire une croissance économique qui assure en même temps la réduction de la pauvreté, soit une croissance économique pro-pauvres, il faut orienter les investissements vers les infrastructures de base, les secteurs où il y a plus de pauvres dans le pays considéré et la promotion du secteur privé qui est le véritable créateur de richesses presque dans tous les pays.

Infrastructures de base

Les infrastructures à construire concernent les pistes de desserte rurale, l'adduction d'eau potable, l'éclairage public, les centres de santé et, dans le meilleur des cas, la création de systèmes d'assurance pour la prise en charge sanitaire des producteurs agricoles. Car, la pauvreté rurale est entre autres renforcée par le poids insupportable que représentent les maladies chroniques qui fragilisent économiquement les producteurs.

Secteur économique à privilégier

Dans les pays sous-développés comme le Bénin (Afrique de l'Ouest), le secteur agricole doit être privilégié pour ces investissements. Dans le secteur agricole, un accent particulier doit être mis sur les fruits de saison qui pullulent souvent et les racines et tubercules qui ont généralement une valeur ajoutée largement plus élevée que celle des céréales. De plus, il serait plus aisé et plus indiqué d'intensifier la consommation intérieure de ces produits vivriers ; ce qui induira la croissance économique tout en améliorant l'état nutritionnel des populations.

Appui au secteur privé

Il s'agit de prendre des mesures de gouvernance qui facilite les affaires ; soit des mesures qui améliorent l'indice de « Doing business » que calcule régulièrement la Banque mondiale. A ce niveau, les mesures idoines doivent être prises pour combattre la corruption qui confine les pauvres dans un cercle vicieux. Il s'agit aussi d'assurer une justice impartiale, efficace et rapide.

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41. Final Year Economics Students (group 3) University of Guyana [third contribution]

Greetings all (again),

Our contributions to the final question:

“How can we mobilize the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities?”

From the question indicated above it's understood that the politicians have not placed hunger reduction and improved nutrition on their “higher” list of political priorities. Given this scenario and assuming the politicians are aware of both issues being a major concern for the nation then it's shocking to know they've not chosen for it to be of higher importance. So as citizens of the country in which such an injustice occur, the only options we have are:

- 1) Publicize our concerns for these issues at an international level because only then will mobilization of the political will necessary to put these policies at a higher level occur. And this is so because no politician wants bad publicity especially at the global level.
- 2) Citizens of the country can also form a strong group among themselves to personally deal with recruiting people to join their quest for the change in the political priorities of those in charge. The residents of the nation can have peaceful protests displaying their discomforts with the current issues that are addressed as opposed to what they feel should be addressed (especially if it's a Democratic Country).
- 3) From inception the citizens should've looked more closely at the politicians' campaign to get a better understanding as to what these political parties feel the need to prioritize so as to make a better or the best choice on elections day.

The bitter truth is that Mobilizing political will towards hunger reduction and improved nutrition is often difficult unless the politicians themselves also gain from the policies. In developing countries, power struggles are present in light of corruption and self interest. Developed nations, also present with high poverty rates, hunger and malnourished population need to give attention to the critical problems.

Political parties capturing votes from the hungry and malnourished citizens by implementing the policies to deal with these issues will benefit both parties (politicians and the citizens). In developing nations, the poor and hungry accounts for huge sum of the population. Implementing the policies or programmes and investing in hunger reduction and improved nutrition (and at same time insuring food security) for the mass groups affected by both issues will be recuperated by voting increase and support of the political parties fulfilling the nation's needs.

Former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil contested elections 3 times before being elected in 2002 for his fourth time contesting. He went after the working poor, low income, hunger stricken and under nourished citizens through his campaigning, building his support and manifesting policies investing in social protection and hunger alleviation. In his early years of office in 2003 to 2005, indications were already there to show his policies for hunger reduction. Eradication programmes such as Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) and Bolsa Familia which were the centre piece of his time in office. Fome Zero brought a series of policies together to ending hunger in Brazil. Fome Zero venture highly into agricultural production in family agriculture and distribution of food to the hungry. Former President was re elected in 2006 mainly from these policies.

In mobilizing the political will necessary to put policies for hunger reduction and improved nutrition higher on the list of political priorities, a solution of voting benefits to the political parties who promote these policies and benefits to the hungry and malnourished will be realized.

However, a lot of advocacy has gone down the drain without any significant change. So the overall solution may very well be to empower and better educate the nation on why better nutrition and hunger reduction is essential to them and ways and means how they can improve same. Also, we feel that the KEY here is that people need to vote for betterment and pay more emphasis on what

they want and which political party can give them that (of course in keeping with what will be beneficial for the nation as a whole).

42. Lizzy Igbine, NIWAAF, Nigeria

Dear All.

Economic growth really leads to Food Security and better Nutrition, Economic growth means access to purchasing power and this gives better opportunity to purchase farm lands, acquire or lease farm land, buy improved seeds, pay for labour, buy mechanised equipments and do improved Agriculture. on the other hand, Fishery farmers, Animal farmers, horticulture and crop farmers will improve on their farm inputs and will give better output. Agriculture thrives well when there is enough investment and better management of the farms. This is critical.

Those that need empowerment are the farmers themselves, whose job is to till the ground and produce food for the Country. This group are called farmers or better food growers.

In Nigeria, the population has as farmers, 70% of its population. This population also has 70% as Women this is also critical and a very important information. It is also interesting to know that Nigeria has 70% of its population as being poor.

This shows that Nigeria's Poor population percentage is the farmers group and more the women farmers who double as 70% farmers. This is indicting to both the Government and the political management of the Agriculture Ministry and funds.

As we are in support of advocacy for funding of Agriculture because Nigeria falls into the Country, that have not met the Maputu declaration. it is pertinent that our cry that farmers be reached and empowered be key in our advocacy.

Nigeria have good and supportive farming population and have the strength and Oil money to fund Agriculture. But the question has it been properly applied..

Two three years back Nigeria was at the verge of meeting its food security target, this has been mismanaged by lack of focus and wrong application of power,

Our Agriculture Ministry is over burdened with idle Consultants and technical assistants some of them could be better be qualified as house helps. This is not a good investment.

There is much publicity and Government hijack of farmers leadership as the government elect their candidates to lead against the Natural farmers leadership and much funds are used for press propaganda.

This funds will really do well as farmers investment and Natural group leaders will better protect the interest of farmers and farmers funds as well as being credible and respected than Government agents who syphon funds.

There is great need to advocate the increase Agric funding and there is much need for proper application of the funds to farmers capital as investment funds.

Farmers will be empowered and food production will be increased and Nutrition will be available to all including the farmers.

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