



**Global
Forum**
on Food Security
and Nutrition

From economic growth to food security and better nutrition

Summary of discussion no. 84
From 30 October to 13 November 2012



Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition

About the Document

This document summarizes the results of the online discussion "*From economic growth to food security and better nutrition*" held on the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum>) from 30 October to 13 November 2012.

The following summary aims at providing readers with a general overview of the discussion, including the list of all references shared.

For the full text of all contributions and further background information please refer to the discussion page:

http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/From_economic_growth_to_FSN

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I. Overview

The discussion *From economic growth to food security and better nutrition* was held on the FSN Forum (<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum>) from the 30 October to the 13 November 2012

Inspired by the finding of the 2012 report on State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) published by FAO, WFP and IFAD FAO's Juan Carlos Garcia y Cebolla and Mauricio Rosales asked participants to reflect and to share information on how economic growth can be translated into improved food security and nutrition and on the role social protection mechanisms play in this regard.

42 contributions were shared by participants from 18 countries.

This summary provides an overview on the view and inputs shared by the participants.

For the topic introduction, the questions posed and full text of all contributions received please refer to the proceedings: http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/files/84_Growth_to_FSN/PROCEEDINGS_84_From_Economic_growth_to_FSN.doc

The majority of contributors were sent from Latin America (44%) with a very active participation of the Final Year Economics Students of the University of Guyana.

Other comments were received from Africa (15%), Asia (20%), Europe (10%), North America (10%) and Southwest Pacific (2%).

II. Facilitating the translation of economic growth into improved food security and nutrition

Participants to the discussion shared information on policies that allowed countries to successfully translate the economic growth experienced during the past years into food security and improved nutrition for their local communities.

In most cases it was argued that these successful experiences have been able to leverage and take full advantage of social protection mechanisms and were supported by a governance determined to increase the wellbeing of their citizens (good governance).

Participants argued that in the countries where improvements of the food security situation have not been achieved despite economic growth, this is mainly due to food security and nutrition not being high enough on the decision makers agendas. Others blamed wrong or uninformed policies for not being able to tackle the problem correctly or even for aggravating the situation. Lacking information was mentioned as one of the reasons for insufficient government action but participants also hinted to an apparent lack of willingness by some governments to change a status quo which they might perceive as favorable.

In order to be successful, contributors advocated an approach that focuses on the regional or sub regional level. Change is more easily achieved when it comes from the micro-level and governments can have the most positive impact when playing the role of facilitators between national, regional and local actors rather than trying to impose one-size-fits-all solutions from above. A greater emphasis on local food policy was proposed and central governments should encourage local exchanges of information on farming practices, marketing, household food production and nutrition education. Many different kinds of food and nutrition projects could be implemented and managed locally through programs that would expand or build local capacities.

In order to increase government commitment, participants mentioned social mobilization as a means to apply pressure to tackle hunger and malnutrition.

In this regard alternative policies and approaches were also mentioned and advocated by participants. These included: 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 to the production end. Participants also mentioned a thriving private sector, not hampered by corruption or inadequate infrastructure, as being a vital player for making sure that economic growth reaches the poor.

III. Examples shared

Participants shared examples and case studies that led to improved food security and nutrition in their countries, as a result of increased investments in agriculture and/ or stronger and well informed governance.



Guyana

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

The region produced about 15 t of peanuts, and women had very little prospect of employment, while at the same time the country imported 500 tons of nuts.

At the start of the project the schools of the remote Rupununi Region were provided milk and biscuits transported from the coast for children; however there was little use of this resource due to widespread lactose intolerance.

The project increased local peanut production in order to replace the unused milk/biscuits feeding program with a locally provisioned peanut butter/cassava bread/fruit juice snack. This provided farmers with a local market, employment for women making peanut butter and a improved Nutrition and greater school attendance for the children.



ECOWAS

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.



CARICOM

As of recent CARICOM has endorsed the Jagdeo Initiative, which was created to respond to the stabilization of Caribbean food prices and ensuring easy accessibility to sufficient nutrition for the region and to promote the expansion of the community's agricultural sector as well as ensure its sustainability.

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.



Bangladesh

The North Western region of Bangladesh, was stricken by severe poverty 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 a DFID funded project to reduce this seasonal crisis of the households.

This program included providing flexible microcredit, supporting income generating activities (IGA), agricultural loans, training for IGA, primary health service.

The impact was substantial and the vulnerable people become self-dependent and managed to escape from chronic poverty.

The success of this program was due to the proper scrutinizing of the member households and by involving the community.



India

In India the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Studies conducted show that MGNREGA has sufficiently added to household income and that the earnings from Mahatma Gandhi NREGA are used as a supplementary income source during non-agricultural seasons.

Due to MGNREGS, women have also started to appear more actively in the rural public sphere as they take up their work and responsibilities in decision making. Beneficiaries have also been able to construct house on their own land due to additional income.

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