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I. CURRENT FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

A. CROP AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN 1996

1. Estimates of crop and livestock production in 1996 indicate growth at the global level of 2.6 percent, close to the rate of 2.4 percent recorded in 1995. However, while the expansion in 1995 reflected strong output expansion in developing countries, taken as a group, and a contraction in developed countries, the increase in 1996 was the result of more similar rates of expansion in the two groups of countries. For the developing countries, as a whole, the 2.9 percent growth in crop and livestock production in 1996 represented a significant slow-down relative to the preceding years (5.2 percent in 1995, 5.0 percent in 1994 and 4.0 percent in 1993). For the developed countries, the increase of 2.4 percent in 1996 represents a recovery after the 1.9 percent decline of the previous year.

2. The expansion in output in the developed countries reflected mainly a recovery in North America from the sharp weather-induced drop the previous year. In the United States, crop and livestock production in 1996 increased by an estimated 5.5 percent, largely recovering from the 6.1 percent fall in 1995. In particular, crop production rebounded by an estimated 12.1 percent after the 15.3 percent drop recorded in 1995 but still remained short (by some 5 percent) of the record production level of 1994. Crop and livestock production also expanded in Canada by a robust 3.1 percent, continuing the upward trend of the previous years. A 3.1 percent increase was recorded in the EU, after 3 years of declining output. Increases of 4.5 percent and 2.7 percent respectively were recorded in Australia and New Zealand, while production in Japan fell by 1.9 percent

3. After the halt to the downward trend in crop and livestock production experienced in 1995, production in the transition countries fell further in 1996, although at a moderate rate, estimated at 1.9 percent. The decline was concentrated mainly in the Eastern European transition countries (- 4.6 percent after the 6.1 percent increase in 1995). Substantial production shortfalls were recorded, in particular, in Bulgaria, Romania and the Yugoslav Federal Republic and Poland. Within the CIS, crop and livestock production in 1996 remained virtually unchanged, but with variations in performance among the republics. In particular, production is estimated to have expanded by 3.8 percent in the Russian Federation and by 1.5 percent in Kazakstan. In both cases, this represents the first year of increasing total agricultural production since the beginning of the reform process. In Ukraine, on the other hand, production fell by a further 1.1 percent continuing the downward trend, although at a slower pace than the preceding years.

4. Among the developing country regions, one of the most encouraging features in 1996 was the positive performance in Africa. In continental Africa, total crop and livestock production is estimated to have increased by 7.5 percent. While this very high growth rate reflected to a large extent the buoyant performances of several countries in the northern part of the continent, sub-Saharan Africa also recorded accelerated growth. In the latter sub-region, crop and livestock production expanded by 4.2 percent, up from 3.0 percent in 1995 and 2.3 percent in 1994. A vast majority of countries participated, to varying degrees, in the expansion in production. Strong growth rates were reported in Angola (+9 percent), Mauritania (+9 percent), Mozambique (+16 percent), Sudan (+11 percent) and Ethiopia (+7 percent). Even more impressive rates of expansion took place in several southern African countries including Lesotho (+22 percent), Swaziland (+11 percent), Zambia (+18 percent) Botswana (+16 percent), Malawi (+7 percent), and Zimbabwe (+42 percent), as improved weather conditions enabled recovery from the disastrous shortfalls the previous year.

5. In Asia and the Pacific, production growth slowed dramatically in 1996 to an estimated 2.4 percent, from rates of around 6 percent each of the three previous years. The slowdown primarily reflected less buoyant performances of the sector in China, where, at 3.4 percent, crops and livestock expanded at the lowest rate since 1989. In India, production growth also fell, to a mere 0.5 percent, well below the rates of the preceding years. Poor performances were experienced in the Philippines, where crop and livestock production virtually stagnated, and in Pakistan, where production actually declined after several years of sustained expansion. On the other hand, generally favourable performances were recorded in Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and, in particular, Myanmar, where output increased by more than 9 percent.

6. In Latin America and the Caribbean, growth of crop and livestock production slowed down somewhat in 1996 to an estimated 3.2 percent, compared to the 4.4 percent recorded in 1995 and the 4.9 percent in 1994. The rate of production growth, however, remained above the rate of population growth for the region, ensuring gains in per caput agricultural production for the third consecutive year and confirming the trend towards recovery of the sector at the regional level after a prolonged stagnation in per caput production through the 1980s and 1990s. Among the major countries in the region, estimates point to declines in production in 1996 only in Colombia and Venezuela. Increases in production, both absolutely and in per caput terms, are estimated to have occurred in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Chile, Cuba and Ecuador.

7. In the Near East and North Africa, crop and livestock production rebounded after mediocre performances the preceding years, increasing by 5.1 percent for the region as a whole. The overall high rate of expansion can be largely attributed to vastly improved agricultural conditions in Maghreb countries, more particularly Morocco and Tunisia, where production expanded by around 50 percent, more than offsetting the severe drought-induced shortfall in 1995. Very strong production growth (12 percent) was also recorded in Algeria, following the 15 percent increase in 1995. As well, strong rates of expansion were recorded in Jordan (9 percent) and in Syria (8 percent) continuing the strong upward trend of the previous two years. In the Islamic Republic of Iran and in Turkey, production in 1996 grew at relatively modest rates of 1.9 percent and 1.2 percent respectively, while production remained stagnant in Egypt after the robust 7.4 percent increase recorded in 1995. In Iraq, crop and livestock production continued the decline of the previous two years, contracting by a further estimated 3.6 percent.

B. FOOD SHORTAGES AND EMERGENCIES

8. At mid-1997 no fewer than 29 countries world-wide faced acute food shortages requiring exceptional and/or emergency food assistance, more than half in Africa, where despite a recovery in production in many countries in 1996, large-scale emergency assistance continued to be needed for millions of people affected by natural or man-made disasters.

9. In eastern Africa, in spite of satisfactory main season cereal output in 1996, large numbers of people were suffering from severe food shortages due to failure of the secondary season crop. Emergency food assistance continued to be needed in eastern and north-eastern parts of *Kenya*, in pastoralist southern regions of *Ethiopia*, in northern parts of *Tanzania*, eastern *Uganda* and in *Somalia*. There was also a need for emergency assistance in *Eritrea*, where 1996 grain production was 29 percent below average. In *Burundi*, despite the recent partial relaxation of the economic embargo, the food supply situation remained tight for most products. In *Rwanda*, the huge number of returning refugees and the considerable deterioration of the security situation in areas bordering the *Democratic Republic of Congo (ex-Zaire)*, aggravated the already precarious food supply situation in the country. In *Sudan*, despite an overall satisfactory food supply position, several areas of Darfur and Kordofan states, where cereal harvest was reduced for the second consecutive year, needed to be closely monitored and contingency plans worked out for provision of food assistance. In addition, food aid was required in the southern states affected by prolonged civil war.

10. In western Africa, despite average to above average 1996 harvests in the main producing countries, food supply difficulties were reported in several areas of *Chad*, *Mauritania* and *Niger* due to localized poor harvests and income constraints. The 1997 rainy season started on time and even early in western Sahel. Following several years of civil strife in *Liberia,* the food supply situation remained precarious while in *Sierra Leone* the situation deteriorated significantly following the recent upheaval. Food assistance continued to be required in both countries.

11. In central Africa, the food situation continued to be tight in the eastern *Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Famine conditions faced the tens of thousands of Rwandan refugees in the region whose repatriation back to Rwanda was underway by relief agencies. Civil disturbances in the *Republic of the Congo* affected the food supply situation in Brazzaville and for refugees coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

12. In southern Africa, the 1997 cereal harvest was expected to be much lower than the previous crop year but close to average levels. Substantial food assistance, was needed in *Angola* and *Lesotho* where production was seriously affected by below normal rainfall and reduced planting. In *Mozambique*, despite an overall 11 percent increase in coarse grain output, immediate food assistance was required for some 172 000 people, particularly in central regions, who lost their crops as a result of floods.

13. Elsewhere in the world, agricultural activities throughout *Afghanistan* continued to be hindered by shortages of agricultural inputs, damage to the irrigation system and insecurity. The displaced and destitute people will continue to need food assistance for some time to come. In *Iraq*, the outlook for the 1997 winter crops remains uncertain due to reported low rainfall in all parts of the country and a shortage of inputs and pest infestations. The food situation was expected to improve as a result of the implementation of the oil-for-food deal, but more food was needed.

14. In the *Democratic People's Republic of Korea*, the food situation continued to deteriorate and the outlook for 1997 appears grim. Following severe floods over two consecutive years, domestic supplies of rice and maize were depleted and large-scale food and fertilizer imports were urgently needed to avert human suffering. In *Mongolia*, cereal production declined for the fifth consecutive year in 1996. Dwindling domestic cereal supplies and limited capacity of the country to import sufficient quantities of grain resulted in further deterioration of the country's food security situation.

15. In *Laos*, low and irregular rainfall in June/July 1996 delayed the transplanting of paddy affecting crop growth, whilst typhoons caused flooding in major rice producing areas. Emergency food assistance was needed to meet the needs of 420 000 of the most vulnerable people affected by floods. In *Sri Lanka*, rainfall during the 1996/97 Maha season was low and erratic. As a result, the area cultivated was as low as in the drought-affected year of 1995. Part of the population in the north was unable to practice normal farming due to civil strife and drought conditions.

16. In *Haiti*, despite an improved food supply situation in most parts of the country, serious food problems were being experienced in the North-West Department where almost 70 percent of the crops were lost because of a long severe dry spell seriously affecting about 120 000 people. Food assistance was required for an estimated 350 000 people.

17. In *Bosnia Herzegovina,* although the food supply situation improved with the cessation of hostilities, low purchasing power remained a constraint to food access. The food aid requirement was estimated at 119 000 tons in 1997/98. In *Armenia and Georgia*, the food supply situation continued to improve with good spring rains, increased use of fertiliser and improved availability of fuel. However, emergency food assistance was needed for vulnerable populations. In *Azerbaijan,* some recovery in food production was expected in 1997 but large numbers of vulnerable people were in need of targeted food assistance. In *Tajikistan*, the food situation continues to be precarious and over 600 000 people were in need of relief assistance.

C. WORLD CEREAL SUPPLY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

18. World cereal production in 1996 is estimated to have been 1 872 million tons (including rice in milled terms), about 8.5 percent above 1995. A larger coarse grain crop, particularly in the United States, accounted for the bulk of the increase although outputs of wheat and rice also rose significantly. World wheat output increased by nearly 8 percent following bumper harvests in the major exporters and good crops also among the developing countries. Rice output rose, by some 2 percent in 1996, to a record level.

19. At mid-1997 global cereal stocks for crop years ending in 1997 were forecast to increase to 281 million tons, 9 percent above their reduced opening volume. The combined cereal carryovers held by major exporters were expected to increase for the first time in three years, approaching about 36 percent of the world total, compared to 28 percent at the beginning of the season. Globally, the ratio of end-of season stocks to expected utilization in 1997/98 was indicated to be just over 15 percent, an improvement from 14 percent in the previous season, but still well below the 17-18 percent range the FAO Secretariat considers as the minimum necessary to safeguard world food security.

20. Mid-1997 prospects for cereal crops pointed to another above-trend output of 1 887 million tons (including rice in milled terms). Wheat output was forecast at 583 million tons, marginally down from the previous year but above trend for the second year in succession. World coarse grains output in 1997 was forecast to increase by 2 percent to 926 million tons from the already above-trend crop of 1996. The bulk of the increase was expected in North and South America, but also in the CIS, where production was expected to recover from the reduced crop of last year. Paddy output could be around 562 million tons (377 million tons in milled terms), almost unchanged from the previous year.

21. If mid-1997 forecasts were to materialize, cereal output would be sufficient to meet the expected consumption requirements in 1997/98, and should allow for a further modest replenishment of cereal stocks for the second consecutive year after the sharp draw-down in 1995/96. Nevertheless, the forecast global stock-to-utilization ratio would only reach 16 percent and thus remain below the minimum level considered safe by FAO.

D. EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE TO AGRICULTURE

22. Total commitments made by bilateral and multilateral donors to agriculture[1] amounted to US $10,312 million in 1995, just short of the US $10,345 million level reached in 1994. In real terms, however, this constituted an 8.6 percent decline which indicates the continuation of an overall declining trend in external assistance to agriculture.[2] Indeed, when measured in 1990 prices, total assistance fell by 21.2 percent from US $12,113 million in 1991 to US $9,549 million in 1995. The share of external assistance to agriculture in total development financing declined from 13 percent in 1990 to around 10 percent in recent years.

23. The total decline in 1995 resulted, primarily, from a decrease in multilateral contributions. In particular, commitments by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) fell by 36 percent and those by the Asian and African Development Banks by as much as 60 percent in real terms. However, the level of commitments from the World Bank remained roughly the same in real terms.

24. Total bilateral commitments increased from US $3,792 million in 1994 to US $4,515 in 1995, corresponding to an increase in real terms of 9.2 percent. Half of total bilateral commitments in 1995 came from Japan, which increased its commitment by 48 percent from the previous year. Amongst DAC members, Germany was the second highest donor in 1995, followed by the Netherlands, the United States and France.

25. For 1996, information is available only for lending to the agricultural sector from IBRD and IDA. Assistance to agricultural development from these agencies fell from US $2,752 million in 1995 to US $2,577 million in 1996.

26. Commitments towards environmental development increased substantially, from US $139 million in 1994 to US $1,465 million in 1995, as did commitments towards rural development, from US $875 million in 1994 to US $1,678 million in 1995.

27. While the major share of commitments went towards Africa and Asia, their amount fell from last year’s levels. Latin America and countries in transition, on the other hand, registered increases in external assistance from the previous year. In fact, the share of total external assistance to agriculture in countries in transition has increased steadily over the past five years from 1.4 percent of overall assistance in 1991 to 5 percent in 1995. In per caput terms, however, (with respect to rural and agricultural population), availability of assistance was highest for Latin America followed by Africa and Asia.

E. FOOD AID FLOWS

28. As of May 1997, total cereal food aid shipments under programme, project and emergency food aid in 1996/97 (July/June) were forecast to reach 7.5 million tons, about the same as in 1995/96 and over 2 million tons above the minimum commitments of 5.35 million tons agreed under the 1995 Food Aid Convention (FAC). Aggregate cereal shipments to LIFDCs in 1996/97 were likely to reach 5.9 million tons, almost the same as in 1995/96. Of this total, some 2.5 million tons would be destined for LIFDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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[1] Broadly defined, “agriculture” is generally used to cover agriculture, forestry, fisheries, land and water, agro-industries, environment, manufacturing of agricultural inputs and machineries, regional and river development and rural development.

[2] The deflator used is the UN Unit Value Index of Manufactured Goods Exports of Developed Economies.

29. Global food aid shipments in non-cereal food commodities fell in 1995 (January-December) to about 1.2 million tons, some 460 000 tons, or 28 percent less than in 1994. Reduced shipments of pulses and vegetable oils accounted for most of this decrease. The bulk of the decline occurred mostly in Africa and countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS.

30. Contributions to the World Food Programme (WFP) administrated International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) in 1996 fell to 849 000 for cereals from 908 000 tons in 1995. Contributions were also reduced for non-cereals, to 198 000 tons from 238 000 tons in 1995. Contributions to the 1996 Protracted Refugee Operations (PROs), also directed by the WFP, amounted to 495 000 tons of cereals and 85 000 tons of other food commodities, compared to 535 000 tons and 58 000 tons, respectively, in 1995.

F. INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL PRICES

31. By June 1997, international **wheat** and **maize** prices had dropped by 40 and 43 percent, respectively, from their peaks in the 1995/96 season, largely due to generally improved production, including in major importing countries. Prices for the two cereals were thus back roughly to the average level of 1994. Looking into the 1997/98 marketing season, in the absence of any significant increase in import demand, wheat prices were projected to remain under pressure and become more volatile in the second half of the season due to the relatively small size of stocks, a development which would replicate the situation in the 1996/97 season. The anticipated downward trend in next season's maize prices may prove more pronounced than for wheat prices as demand on the international market for maize is forecast to remain weak while ample supplies among the major exporters may increase competition for market shares and thus reinforce the downward pressure on prices.

32. World **rice** prices in the first six months of 1997 were relatively weak compared with the high prices which prevailed in the same period in 1996. The decline in prices was a result of the overall slackening of world import demand following two years of bumper trade. The prices of lower quality rice fell the most while the prices of higher grades were relatively resilient. This was the result of a switch in demand for better qualities in countries that had previously bought lower grades.

33. The decline in the prices of **oils** and **fats** accelerated during the 1995/96 marketing season, with the monthly average FAO price of edible/soap fats and oils falling by nearly 10 percent when compared to the previous season. However, prices remained quite high in historical terms. Refurbished stocks and a good new oilseeds crop were the main contributors to this decline, despite the continued increase in the prices of coconut and palm kernel throughout the season, caused by tight supplies. The decline in oil prices has slowed down considerably since the beginning of the 1996/97. Moreover, since early 1997, the prices of soft oils have strengthened somewhat, reflecting a recovery in demand in certain markets. This upward trend is likely to be maintained until the end of the current season, though not enough to register a significant increase over the entire season when compared to 1995/96.

34. A unique feature of the past two seasons has been the fact that the movements in international prices of **oilcakes** and **meals** have exhibited a tendency opposite to that observed for oils and fats. Thus, the fall in global output coupled with the upward shift in the global demand for oilcakes and meals triggered a substantial draw down of stocks during the 1995/96 season and resulted in a sharp rise in prices of oilcakes and meals of about 38 percent when compared to 1994/95. The rapid rise in the monthly average prices of meals, however, appears to have subsided appreciably since the beginning of this season.

35. Following good harvests and rising stocks, world **sugar** prices have been under downward pressure since the beginning of 1995. However, the decline in world market prices during 1995-96 would possibly have been even greater but for two factors: the supply of high quality white sugar, particularly from the EC, remained tight; and much of the surplus in India

was channelled to re-build stocks rather than being exported. World sugar production for 1996/97 would still result in a surplus, as consumption is not expected to grow significantly, therefore continuing to exert pressure on prices in 1997.

36. **Coffee** prices continued their downward trend in 1996 despite earlier efforts by producers to maintain firm market prices by instituting an export retention scheme. In July 1995, the Association of Coffee Producing Countries (ACPC), agreed to restrict their exports of green beans to 3.6 million tons between mid-1995 and mid-1996, approximately 8 percent less than in the previous 12 months. The goal to lift futures prices in the New York exchange to 180 US cents per pound, was, however, not achieved although prices could have slipped further without the retention scheme. As the ACPC strives to bring supply levels more into line with consumption, prices should gradually firm during 1997. In addition, a likely shortfall in Brazil, due to frost damage, could accelerate the strengthening of prices. Indeed, prices by May 1997 were already nearly 77 percent higher than the 1996 average, but have since retreated.

37. World **cocoa** prices remained relatively firm in 1996. World cocoa consumption, as measured by grindings of cocoa beans, rose in 1995/96 by 6 percent to 2.7 million tons, the highest annual growth rate in 10 years. All major consuming countries recorded increases, notably the Netherlands and the United States. Prospects, however, are for lower rates of growth in consumption during 1996/97.

38. World market prices of **tea** firmed considerably in 1996, averaging $1.76 per kg or 8 percent higher than in 1995 for all teas in London, mainly due to increased demand in the Russian Federation. Prices continued to rise in the first five months of 1997, reflecting prospects for global output in 1997 to fall below the 1996 record harvest. World prices beyond 1997, however, could again be vulnerable to downward pressure given slow growth in demand in importing countries and strong supply potential in major exporting countries.

39. World **cotton** prices by April 1997 were 2 cents/ pound below the 1996 average of 80.5 US cents/ pound, considerably below the peak levels of over 110 cents/pound in early 1995. The International Cotton Advisory Committee expects that, with more modest prices, production in 1996/97 will contract by 6 percent to 18.7 million tonnes.

G. FISHERIES: CATCH, DISPOSITION AND TRADE

40. Fish supplies have expanded rapidly in recent years, reaching 110.5 million tonnes in 1994, and an estimated new peak of 112.9 million tonnes in 1995, latest year for which complete data are available. The increase reflected mainly continued rapid growth in aquaculture production, particularly in China, and rapid expansion of highly fluctuating harvestable stocks of pelagic species off the West Coast of South America. As a result, both fish meal production and fish supplies for human consumption reached record levels.

41. Aggregate fishery production in developing countries continued expanding in 1995 although at a slower rate (2.6 percent) than in the preceding years. Over the five-year period 1990-1995, production rose by a cumulative 39 percent in the developing countries, but fell by 18 percent in the developed countries. The developing country share in total fishery production increased from 58 percent in 1990 to 70 percent in 1995.

42. In 1995, total landings by capture fisheries were estimated at about 92 million tonnes, the same level as in 1994. Provisional estimates for marine and inland aquaculture show an increase from 18.4 million tonnes in 1994 to 20.9 million tonnes in 1995.

43. The rapid growth in aquaculture production reflected expansion of carp species, primarily in Asia. Five Asian countries (China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Philippines) accounted for 80 percent of the volume of aquaculture produce in 1995.

44. Of the estimated 112.9 million tonnes of total fishery production in 1995, 31.8 million tonnes were used for reduction. Fish available for direct human consumption in 1995 was estimated at 81.1 million tonnes, 5.3 million tonnes more than in 1994. The average annual *per caput* availability of food fish increased to 14.3 kg.

45. The value of international fish trade increased steadily, from US$ 17 billion in 1985 to US$ 35.7 billion in 1990 and US$ 47.4 billion in 1994. The increase in 1994 was associated with higher trade in low-value commodities such as fishmeal. Estimates for 1995 indicated an increase in the value of trade, to US$ 51.7 billion, mainly due to higher prices.

H. PRODUCTION AND TRADE OF FOREST PRODUCTS

46. The 1996 year witnessed the interruption of a long-dated ascending trend in world production of paper and paperboard. World paper production had, in fact, grown steadily since 1983. Pulp and paper products were in oversupply in major markets during most of 1996, as a result of weakened demand and increased industrial capacity.

47. The small overall decline (from 286 to 283 million m3) reflected a fall in production in the main developed country producers, (except Japan and USA, where production grew marginally). By contrast, pulp and paper production rose by an estimated 8 percent in developing countries. As in the past, countries in the Far East and South-East Asia recorded the strongest growth.

48. After reaching an all time high in October 1995, prices of pulp and paper fell sharply during 1996, but tended to stabilise late in the year as signs of recovery began to appear in major paper markets. Weakening pulp and paper prices resulted in a decline, estimated at 14 percent, in the value of world forest product trade. Trade in wood pulp and paper and paperboard fell by 22 percent.

49. World roundwood production in 1996 remained at about the previous year's low level of 3.4 billion m3 (fuelwood + 2 percent, reflecting growing demand from developing countries' rural populations , but industrial roundwood - 2 percent). Pulpwood removals declined sharply in developed countries (- 6 percent), reflecting weak pulpwood demand by European industries. World production of coniferous logs also declined, albeit less markedly.

50. Production of tropical logs is estimated to have remained at the previous year's level. Many tropical countries have introduced harvesting restrictions and log export bans, in order to protect their natural forests.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN WORLD FOOD SECURITY

51. The FAO Sixth World Food Survey[3], issued at the time of the World Food Summit (WFS), concluded that remarkable progress has been achieved in global food security during the past decades. Twenty percent of the population of the developing countries had inadequate access to food in 1990-92 compared with 35 percent two decades earlier. Even more remarkably, the absolute number of people with inadequate access to food had declined from 920 million in 1969-71 to 840 million in 1990-92. As was forcefully pointed out during the WFS, however, the latter is still an unacceptably high figure, implying that about one out of five people in the developing world was facing food inadequacy in 1990-92.

52. Assessing more recent developments in food security presents a number of difficulties, given data limitations for a large number of countries. The interpretation of short-term changes in indicators underlying food security should also be subject to caution, as such changes may reflect,

[3] FAO, *The Sixth World Food Survey*, Rome, 1996.

for the countries concerned, transient factors with limited significance for food security trends. Nevertheless, recent available data do present a number of distinct patterns that enable tentative conclusions.

53. Table 1 presents selected indicators relating to food availability, stability and access in developing countries. The countries are grouped according to average levels of dietary energy supply (DES) in 1993-95 (column 4). A close relationship between the various indicators is evident from the table. In particular, the higher the average per caput income (as shown in column 11), the lower the proportion of undernourished population (column 6) and the higher the ability to finance food imports (columns 13, 14, 15 and 16). As regards recent trends, the following main features can be observed.

54. For most indicators relating to food security, the overall pattern seems to be one of a growing gap between the countries at relatively high, and those at relatively low, levels of average food intake. Indeed, average levels of **dietary energy supply** declined between 1989-91 and 1993-95 in the countries where such levels were already initially very low; and rose significantly in a majority of countries where DES were already relatively high. Whereas the average per caput DES of the 20 countries with lowest DES in 1989-91 was 1 941 kcal per caput/day, it had declined to a mere 1 853 in 1993-95, indicating more widespread and deeper food insecurity in the latter period. Nevertheless, on a positive note, countries that recorded higher DES levels included some of the most populous countries in each region: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico in Latin America; Nigeria in Africa; China, India and Indonesia in Asia; and Egypt, Iran, Morocco, Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey in the Near East.

55. Whereas only 14 countries had per caput DES of less than 2000 in 1989-91, the number of such countries increased to 20 in 1993-95, further evidence of a worsening situation at the lower end of the food security scale. Moreover, at least two of the countries with below 2000 DES in 1993-95 (Mongolia and Togo) had been at levels of DES above 2200 in 1989-91. Despite limited progress in a few countries, only one, Rwanda, had graduated from the under- 2000 category. However, more recent data for this country would probably have shown a marked deterioration of the situation, as a consequence of civil strife and poor production and trade performances.

56. Underlining the close correlation between domestic supply performances and food intake levels, the largest gains in **per caput food production** during 1991-96 took place, again, in countries with already high levels of DES. Food production increased at particularly robust rates in countries with DES above 3000 (those in North Africa, except the Libyan Arab Jamahiria, being among the highest), and moderately in those with DES between 2500 and 3000 (although China, Ghana and Myanmar achieved major gains in per caput food production). By contrast, no progress, and even some deterioration, was recorded in the countries with DES below 2000. Among the 20 countries in the latter group, only Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent Angola, Cambodia, Chad, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, achieved a significant gain in per caput food production during 1991-96.

Table 1. Selected Indicators relating to Food Security in Developing Countries by classes of DES

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Country classes by DES levels in 1993-95	No. of countries	DES (cal.p.c./day)			% of under-nourished population average 1990-92	Food production per caput (annual changes in %)				Real GDP per caput (US$ 1987)		Share of food imports/total exports		Share of food imports/total imports	
		1989-91 average	1993-95 average	% change 1989/91-1993/95		1994	1995	1996	1991-96 average	1993-95	% Average annual change 1990-94	1989-91 %	1993-95 %	1989-91 %	1993-95 %
<2000	20	1941	1853	-4.5	52	-1.3	-1.4	3.1	0.0	343	-4.2	40	55	20	25
2001-2300	21	2213	2158	-2.5	34	0.3	-2.2	0.3	-0.6	603	0.5	36	44	15	16
2301-2500	22	2406	2397	-0.4	23	-0.1	2.2	-0.3	0.0	1573	-0.5	24	26	12	14
2501-2800	18	2548	2653	4.1	18	1.5	1.8	-0.1	1.2	1740	2.9	12	13	11	11
2801-3000	8	2787	2888	3.6	9	-0.1	0.5	1.3	1.0	4000	1.4	15	16	13	13
>3000	14	3135	3234	3.2	6	0.1	2.0	8.1	4.3	4736	2.5	19	19	11	11

Note: This review focuses on experiences at the country level. Therefore, all country group averages are simple arithmetic averages, which give all the countries equal weight. Population-weighted averages were inappropriate for the purposes of this review, since a few countries dominate in population in each of the country groups. It may be noted, nevertheless, that the percentages of undernourished population in the different groups, as shown in column 6, are very close to population-weighted averages.

Source: FAO and World Bank.

57. The strongest gains in **per caput GDP** accrued to countries where DES levels were above 2500. In the group of countries with DES above 3000, significant gains in per caput income between 1990-92 and 1993-95 were recorded in particular in Argentina , Korea Republic and Syrian Arab Republic. Asian countries in the 2500-3000 DES bracket such as China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet-Nam, also recorded strong growth in per caput income. Other examples of rapidly expanding economies with relatively high levels of DES included those of Chile and Uruguay. In stark contrast, countries at the lowest levels of DES actually saw declines in per caput GDP. Such declines were dramatic in Haiti, Angola, Mongolia and Sierra Leone, but all other countries in the group below 2000 DES except Mozambique and Cambodia experienced falling or stagnating per caput incomes. Tentative data for Afghanistan points to a particularly disquieting situation, as its average food consumption level was the lowest of all (1 456 DES in 1993-95, 24 percent less than in 1989-91). Furthermore, Afghanistan's per caput food production fell significantly during 1991-95 and collapsed in 1996 due to a combination of civil strife, resultant large-scale population displacements and a shortage of inputs as foreign exchange was diverted to import food for current consumption.

58. Indicators of the **financial weight of food imports**, (food imports/ total imports, and food imports/ total exports, ratios), suggest a similarly unfortunate turn of events. Not only do food imports represent a large share of total trade in countries with low DES (over 50 percent of the value of total exports in those below 2000 DES in recent years), but the relative weight of such imports appears to be growing. By contrast, the ratios remained relatively constant in the countries at higher levels of DES. For several countries in the <2300 groups, including Mozambique, Haiti, Comoros, Rwanda, Gambia and Sierra Leone (and few others in higher DES classes), the value of food imports exceeded that of total export earnings . An extreme case was that of Iraq, where the trade sanctions following the Gulf war brought the food import/ total exports ratio from 57 percent in 1989-91 to 189 percent in 1993-95. While these situations implied in some cases the availability of other sources of import financing, such as tourism and remittances, in most cases they were explained by grave shortcomings of the export sector and strong dependence on food aid or various forms of concessional financing.

59. Of the twenty countries with per caput DES of less than 2 000 kcal/day in 1993-95, sixteen are in Africa. (three - Afghanistan, Cambodia and Mongolia - are in Asia, and one - Haiti - in Latin America and the Caribbean). And, in ten of those sixteen African countries, the precarious food intake situation in 1989-91 further deteriorated in 1993-95. The steepest declines in DES (of 7 percent or greater) in Africa in the <2000 kcal/day category were found in Togo, Tanzania, Liberia, Somalia, Zaire and Zimbabwe. Such gravely deteriorating situations resulted from a variety of factors, including adverse climatic conditions and problems of transition, as economies shifted from strong government control to a liberalised environment. However, the worst deteriorations were often associated with civil strife and political instability. In particular, the civil war in Somalia, combined with natural disasters, resulted in a dismal food security situation that has tended to worsen in recent years. With a per caput DES of only 1 727 already in 1989-91, the country faced further declines in food production (by 1.7 per cent per annum in the 1991-96 period), large population displacements associated with the civil strife, and destruction of economic infrastructure during the war. The worsening food security situation in Liberia is also mostly a result of civil strife; and the breakdown of economic and administrative infrastructure were at the root of a marked deterioration of food security conditions in Zaire.

60. Despite the apparent growing polarization between countries at the high and low ends of the income and food security scales since the early 1990s, the most recent years have seen a number of encouraging developments. The good news came mainly from the Africa region. As reviewed above, sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has seen its crop and livestock production expand significantly in 1995 and more markedly in 1996, with a majority of countries sharing in the expansion. Further, the economic upturn that took place in sub-Saharan Africa in 1994-95 broadened in 1996, bringing the region's GDP growth rate the latter year to about 5 percent, the highest in two decades.