Social Protection for Food Security: setting the track for the High Level Panel of Experts

Collection of contributions received

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Introduction to the topic

In October 2010 the newly reformed UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) to conduct a study on social protection, and in particular, to assess: “ways to lessen vulnerability through social and productive safety nets programs and policies with respect to food and nutritional security, taking into consideration differing conditions across countries and regions. This should include a review of the impact of existing policies for the improvement of living conditions and resilience of vulnerable populations, especially small scale rural producers, urban and rural poor as well as women and children. It should also take into account benefits for improving local production and livelihoods and promoting better nutrition.”

Final findings are to be presented at the CFS Plenary session in October 2012.

The High Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) now seeks input on the following draft outline/scope to address this mandate. This will be used by the StC to finalize the terms of reference of the HLPE Project Team that will prepare the study and policy recommendations.

Draft Scope of work:
1. Definition of populations vulnerable to chronic and transitory food and nutrition deficiencies – who, where, why
2. Outline of what is necessary for these populations to become less vulnerable: availability, access, and use of food (including economic opportunities, local production and processing, risk management and risk coping strategies, education, health care, etc.)
3. Discussion of how and why existing social safety net programs are useful (with examples of successes and failures from research and impact studies)
4. Recommendations for the design and implementation of specific kinds of programs relevant in specific conditions

The report must include:
- Nutrition needs of vulnerable populations in specific lifecycle frameworks (first 1000 days, puberty, pregnancy and breast feeding, elderly, etc.)
- Creation of programmes that are sustainable from management and budgetary perspectives
- How such programmes could be organized, managed and funded
- Special role of women in insuring adequate nutrition for all (including implementation strategies)
- Methods for feasible measurement of impact

The report does not need to include an exhaustive listing of existing social safety net programs, but should reference lessons learned, positive and negative, from programs throughout the world, including relevant experiences from OECD countries.

This paper is meant to provide implementable policy options for governments, NGOs, local communities, and international organizations.

By this consultation, the HLPE Steering Committee invites you to comment on this outline/scope of work. Please be as specific as possible.

- Do you think it is appropriate?
- Have important elements been omitted or should any of the elements outlined be left out?
- In your opinion, what would be the main aspects that the report should emphasize?
- Are there innovative approaches that you would like to highlight?

To take part in this consultation, channelled through the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN), please visit http://km.fao.org/fsn/discussions/social-protection or send you contribution to fsn-moderator@fao.org
For any information on the HLPE, please visit http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe or send a mail to the Secretariat cfs-hlpe@fao.org

We look forward to your kind response.

Yours sincerely,
Catherine Bertini, Member of the HLPE Steering Committee
On behalf of the Steering Committee of the HLPE
Contributions received

1. Marie Chantal Messier from the World Bank, USA

Dear Ms Bertini,

This topic is highly relevant in the present context of food price volatility.

I would suggest a slight modification to the draft scope of work.

Since there are documented evidence that safety nets mechanisms have limited impact on protecting the nutritional status of the most vulnerable during times of crisis

- Outline of what is necessary for these populations to become less vulnerable: availability, access, and use of food (including economic opportunities, local production and processing, risk management and risk coping strategies, education, health care, etc) - **I would suggest that this point also covers macro and micro-nutrient needs for the vulnerable population**

- Discussion of how and why existing social safety net programs are useful (with examples of successes and failures from research and impact) - **I would like to suggest to enlarge the discussion to englobe areas where SSN might have had limited success in the protection of nutritional status of vulnerable populations, notably in pregnant women and children.**
  - Children in households covered by *Red Solidaria* program in El Salvador had increased stunting levels during the 2008 food crisis but the negligible effects on weight. This suggests that households may still be able to substitute food staples switching to cheaper calories but having an impact on the nutritional content of their food intake. (de Brauw A., Murrugarra, E. How CCTs help sustain human capital during crises? Evidence from *Red Solidaria* in El Salvador during the food price crisis, April, 2009). Similar findings on diet diversity were found by Skoufias & Zaman in 2011 (World Bank publication)

I hope these few comments may help. Should you need clarifications or would need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Marie Chantal

2. George Kent from the University of Hawaii, USA (1st contribution)

Dear Ms Bertini

I am delighted to see this new initiative on Social protection for food security: setting the track for the High Level Panel of Experts. My views are summarized in a chapter on Nutritional Safety Nets in my recently published book on Ending Hunger Worldwide. Its manuscript can be accessed at [http://www2.hawaii.edu/~kent/eh0070SAFETYNETS.doc](http://www2.hawaii.edu/~kent/eh0070SAFETYNETS.doc)

I think the panel should consider what might be called "do-it-yourself safety nets,” such as household food production. Agencies at various levels could do a great deal to enhance the capacities of families to provide for themselves under varying conditions.

I hope the High Level Panel will give attention to the idea of rights-based safety nets, in which people have specific rights to assistance based on their needs.
The duty bearers should include not only local and national governments but the international community as well. There should be a system of nested safety nets. Based on the principle of subsidiarity, those at the highest levels should do what they can to facilitate and back up those at lower levels.

Perhaps the High Level Panel could focus its efforts on designing that sort of nested system, with clear articulation of the roles of agencies at every level.

 Aloha, George Kent

3. Victor Puac from SESAN, Guatemala

English translation

Dear Colleagues,

I hope not to be late for contributing to the discussion on the topic called "social protection in food security." It seems important to me to find a thorough and broad definition of the concept of "social protection". I think it is from such a definition that the different approaches of the study as a whole can be deduced. It is likely that the concept of social protection is interpreted in different ways in different countries and therefore we have to find a common definition that allows us to build on this approach.

Regards

Victor Puac
Consultant
Guatemala

Spanish original

Estimados Colegas,

Espero no llegar tarde a la contribución al debate del presente tema denominado "protección social en seguridad alimentaria". Me parece importante también de poder hacer una detenida y amplia definición acerca del concepto de "protección social". Me parece que a partir de allí es de donde pueden desprenderse los diferentes enfoques para el estudio en su conjunto. Es probable que el concepto de PROTECCION SOCIAL se interprete de diferentes maneras en diferentes Países y por tanto habrá que encontrar una definición que nos permita abundar desde dicho enfoque.

Saludos

Victor Puac
Consultor
Guatemala

4. Constantin Ilie Aprodu from the Romanian Government, Romania

Dear Catherine Bertini,

Member of the HLPE Steering Committee On behalf of the Steering Committee of the HLPE

In order to create programs which are adequate for the set objective and at the same time achievable, it is necessary that the parliaments adopt organic laws that should comprise medium and long term
financially sustainable strategies and that should be implemented by the upcoming governments regardless of their political colour.

As an example I hereby mention:

1. The program for providing children and under 18 teenagers with a corn and a fixed quantity of milk (daily) – about 150 ml, subsidized by the state. This program has been successfully working in Romania for about 8 years. It can be adapted by supplementing other type of products, depending on each country’s possibilities but also on the particularities of its climate and traditions, taking also into account specific state interests in supporting certain segments of food production. Governments play an important role in the success of this program in terms of allocating the necessary funds but at the same time local communities should ensure the supply and distribution of these products.

2. The program for providing fully subsidized milk for infants.

Yours sincerely,

Constantin Ilie Aprodu – Romania

5. Claudia Ann Kinsey from Olympia Raffles College, Malaysia

Dear FSN Staff:

Under line item # 2., the area of availability should include transport/fuel prices. I have found in projects in Myanmar, Laos, Yemen LDC’s that one of the issues that keeps coming up in academic meetings on the issue with ag economists, food safety, nutrition lecturers/researchers is the 1) Lack of transport vehicles 2) Fluctuating fossil fuel prices and access to energy sources 3) Lack of technical advice and equipment on food processing.

For example, in Yemen while assisting on the issue recently we found that the local academics indicated that there was considerable agriculture production in certain areas from Aden to Sana, however, they complained that their farmers could not get transport to move the produce out to many areas, stockpiles of certain crops are stuck in a few areas waiting to go to market, (half of eastern Yemen is mostly dry zones), and there were real issues with transport. As well, a number of refugees are there, 600,000 2010 and during my visit the WFP at the time was not purchasing the fresh local produce for the programs. For example, Bangladesh insists that WFP purchase fresh foods from their local farmers for distribution to UN/NGO supplementary feeding programmes. I would agree with further attention to bio-mas ethanol and other biofuels for countries that are still not diversifying cropping and relying on cash crops for income.

Thank you,

Prof. Claudia Ann Kinsey

6. Thomas Ndive Mokake from Cameroon

Dear Moderator

It appears emphasis is being placed mostly on Public Social Protection, while forgetting the indispensable African and I dare say "third world informal social protection." I suggest we give thought to the informal social protection measures which seem to becoming more relevant as the world economy is getting worse on the verge of another global financial crisis and near collapse. Indeed we should advocate for a blend of both systems.
Best reagrds

Thomas Ndive Mokake
Bueas, Cameroon.

7. Kazi Eliza Islam from CARE, USA

I think in this chapter it is important to include the issue of good governance. Lack of good governance is one of the major barriers in accessing food or any kind of services from social protection programs even in a context when government or others social protection programs are sufficiently available. Corruption, lack of transparency and accountability and power dynamics... all these play a major role in determining who will or will not get access to these services, as a result the most marginalized and vulnerable population who are in great need of these kind of services are either excluded or do not get optimal benefits from social protection programs.

Therefore, projects/program with a goal to address food insecurity through social protection must take into consideration the issues around governance and should have a strategy to address that.

8. Margret Vidar from FAO, Italy and Lidija Knuth from the German Development Institute, Germany

Dear Forum members, and members of the High Level Panel of Experts,

We welcome the opportunity to provide comments on the scope of the proposed report on social safety nets, which is a timely initiative.

In our research in the FAO Legal Office into food and nutrition safety nets from the perspective of the legal empowerment of the poor, we have found that the legal dimension of food safety nets has been neglected by the international community. There are only a few studies that analyze the legal, including the institutional aspects of food safety nets. Therefore we can only plead, similarly to George Kent, for the report to also scrutinize legal aspects of food safety nets, including the procedural and fairness dimensions that arise from recognition and implementation of human rights.

Our study argues that legal standards for food safety nets are empowering for the poor because they provide some clear criteria and provide the possibility of challenging decisions and denials of entitlements with administrative institutions and in courts. These review mechanisms provide the opportunity to improve gaps, work on failings and lacks of the administration and help improving the management of these nets. When food safety nets are legally guaranteed, they constitute more than charity by the state, they are legally guaranteed rights and are consistent with the rights-based approach.

The forthcoming study will be available soon, and we would be pleased to provide an advance copy to the HLPE upon request.

Margret Vidar
Legal Officer
Development Law Service
FAO

Lidija Knuth
Research Fellow, German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)
Dear Mrs Bertini,

One of the strange things about the way in which most international organizations (other than WFP and UNICEF) and governments approach hunger reduction is that they tend to avoid direct action. A billion people are chronically hungry, not because there is not enough food available in the world for everyone to eat adequately but, in most cases, for the simple reason that they cannot afford to buy it. If someone falls ill in our family, we try to provide them with the appropriate medicine. It seems obvious that, if we really want to enable people who are hungry (and hence prone to illness and premature death, as well as lifelong social exclusion) to eat adequately, we have to either provide them with the necessary food or with the means to buy it. The latter is generally preferable because it does not mess up markets and is logistically much simpler.

In a short book (to be published in Spanish and English in September), entitled How to end hunger in times of crisis – let’s start now!, we argue that, in most situations, a nation-wide targeted social protection programme that provides regular grants to hungry families to enable them to close the gap between their current food consumption and, at the very least, the hunger threshold (food intake equivalent to 120% of their Basic Metabolic Rate) should be the leading component of anti-hunger programmes. It should serve as a foundation onto which other components (such as nutrition education, food supplements for mothers and infants, clean water supplies and sanitation, farmer field schools for subsistence farmers, school meals etc) can be progressively added and linked, in line with growth in national institutional and financial capacities (as well as the response capacities of the beneficiaries). We should not look at social protection as an "optional extra" or a “last resort” but as a central element of multi-component programmes to end hunger as quickly as is humanly possible. With success in protecting vulnerable people from chronic hunger, the number of victims of acute hunger events will fall enormously and the need for very costly emergency interventions will drop correspondingly.

Given that the average depth of hunger per under-nourished person is about 250 to 300 kcal per day, cash transfers equivalent in value to around just 70 grams of cereals per day (or 25 to 30 kg per person per year) would be sufficient to lift a typical individual out of hunger. The cost would be about US$2.50 per month per family member (an amount that needs to be indexed to local food prices and adjusted accordingly in order to assure effective protection when it is most badly needed, should prices rise.). In countries that can afford more, there would be advantages in aiming for higher allowances as this would speed up the rate at which families would emerge from deep poverty and be able to stand on their own feet. The net global annual cost of such “minimalist” transfers would be about US$30 billion per year for the current 1 billion chronically hungry people – a figure that should come down quite quickly as the intervention achieves its intended results. The total amount of food required is equivalent to between 1 and 2% of current global cereal production or roughly 15% to 20% of the avoidable wastage of edible food in industrialised countries, as estimated by a recent FAO study. To the extent, however, that families spend the grants mainly on food purchases (and the evidence from effective social protection programmes suggests that this will be the case), most of this immediately translates into increased local demand for food products and hence into income opportunities for farmers.

People say that we are being over-simplistic and they argue that social protection creates dependencies, and is, therefore, a short-sighted recommendation. Our response is that we are being pragmatic, proposing “smart”, immediately applicable, solutions to the hunger problem, and one that respects every person’s human right to food. And we also argue that no condition of life can create greater dependency than chronic hunger, because the weakness and exposure to illness as well as the anxiety that it provokes exclude all those who suffer from it from participating in the social and economic life of their communities and countries. The ability to learn and work, conferred by adequate nutrition, is a passport to an increasingly independent life.
Others say it is unaffordable. However, it is a lot cheaper and more effective than following conventional approaches to hunger reduction. FAO’s projections show that if we continue to assume that hunger will fall as a result of investment in economic growth and expanded food supplies, we shall have to mobilize massive investments and still have 370 million hungry people in 2050 (even though we shall have increased average per capita food availability by a massive 35%!). Unless purposive targeted action is taken to improve income distribution as a country’s economy grows, extra food availability does not “trickle down” to the poor but is consumed mainly by those of us who already have enough to eat!

As has been shown in Brazil’s Zero Hunger programme, social protection programmes should not be seen as “welfare” but as viable high-return investments. By strengthening human capital, they generate their own streams of economic benefits where they are most needed, in the poorest communities. Zero Hunger also shows that by channeling most transfers through women in the recipient families, grants are used more responsibly and the status of women in the household and the community is also enhanced.

In advocating a leading role for social protection in hunger reduction, we are not denying the need for agricultural development to meet expanding food demand. We see the first big challenge as ending hunger rapidly, but the second is to make a shift to truly sustainable food consumption and production systems, with small-scale farmers playing a key role in the latter. The second half of our book addresses options for attaining food security in a sustainable manner.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew MacMillan and Ignacio Trueba

10. Kay Muir Leresche from South Africa

I would like to strongly support what Kazi Islam and Thomas Mokake were saying about both addressing the governance issues which make a mockery of most social network programmes in many developing countries and also the need to strengthen and support the informal systems which are more reliable than state systems for most people. The informal systems need to be recognised and state interventions should not undermine them.

The state and international foreign aid systems must invest in transparency - it is not a luxury but a necessity. The informal systems would also benefit from good information, from easier communication between people and groups and from being able to access and transport food effectively and more cheaply if possible.

Kay Muir Leresche
South Africa

11. Pradip Dey from Indian Society of Soil Salinity and Water Quality, India

Esteemed Chairman & Members of the Steering Committee of the HLPE, and FSN Members,

Good Day!

First of all, I must say that the scope of the study is appropriate and very timely.

It’s my pleasure to put forth the following points for consideration regarding in my personal capacity and not in Official capacity:
Social protection for food security is essentially a 360° approach—one depends on others performance. It deals with the mode of continuation government initiatives over time with reference to improved practices and behaviours particularly with regard to availability/access. It also includes meaningful participation of government, international organization, civil society in food security for long-term sustenance.

Gender sensitive empowerment is also important for functional social security.

Proper governance is really important for addressing food security in regional/national/global scale. Internal political forces influence strategic choice of social protection vis-à-vis food security issues.

Institutional reforms: This refers to change management in institutional structures/function that support food security and are supported, renewed and sustained over the long term. It will instill accountability and transparency to enhance institutional performance for achieving food security.

Also I do feel that we need to create a sound social framework to address food vulnerability which will ultimate help achieving food security.

With warm regards,
Sincerely,
Pradip Dey

12. George Kent from the University of Hawaii, USA (2nd contribution)

Friends –

Much of this discussion of social protection centers on the families and their inadequate supplies of food and money. We should recognize that hungry people do not have decent opportunities to provide for themselves, whether by producing food directly or producing money with which to buy food.

In some cases the opportunities are lacking because of the configuration of the surrounding physical environment. However, many people find ways to live adequately even in harsh environments such as mountains and dry areas. Often the lack of opportunity arises from the fact that a few powerful people take advantage of local resources and squeeze others out. Thus, many people see no option but to live as poorly paid laborers.

Under these circumstances, short-term subsidies of food or cash would have little lasting impact. The exploited poor would return to their prior misery as soon as their subsidies ended. Some countries respond by providing what amounts to permanent subsidies for the poor. In many places, permanent subsidies lock people into poverty, at great cost to government.

Giving people small cash or food subsidies might make them more productive laborers, but such subsidies are not likely to help them break out of their poverty traps. Perhaps social protection should be provided more in terms of new opportunities for meaningful employment than in terms of cash or food.

Perhaps food specialists focus too narrowly. In his book, Food Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know, Robert Paarlberg says of Africa, “It is the low productivity of their land and labor as farmers that keeps them poor and leaves them vulnerable to hunger. The solution to this problem must include larger public investments in rural development . . . (p. 187).” He does not consider the possibility that too much effort has been made to keep people on farms, and not enough effort has been made to develop alternative sources of livelihood.

If more people in rural areas earned money from other kinds of work, the remaining farmers would be able to charge non-farmers higher prices, and use some of their profits to make investments that
would increase their yields. Contrary to Paarlberg’s argument (p. 188), poor people do not need to do a better job of producing their own food. They need to do a better job of earning money. When they have money, food will show up. Insisting they must all produce their own food could be a way of blocking economic development. A robust economy must be diverse.

Aloha, George Kent
University of Hawai’i

13. Jean Marie Cordier from Les Semences du Jardin Tropical, France

[French original]

La réponse à vos 4 fort pertinentes questions est unique.

Mais ces questions ne doivent pas être posées directement en terme de BOP (Bottom of the pyramid, la strate de la pyramide sociale la plus pauvre, Ed.). En effet, le BOP est réparti sur la totalité des territoires. Or sur ces territoires il y a des habitants qui sont socialement mieux pourvus que le BOP, mais qui n’ont pas pour autant accès aux intrants. Pourtant ces particuliers sont les locomotives potentielles du progrès technique.

L’unique voie pour leur faire parvenir des intrants agricoles est de créer des réseaux commerciaux de distribution descendant jusqu’aux villages. Lorsque les marchandises seront disponibles pour les nantis, elles les seront pour le BOP.

Pour arriver à ce résultat ci après 10 points à considérer:

1- en premier lieu, prendre conscience que la satisfaction des besoins en intrants du BOP, ne peut être fait que par le commerce compte tenu de la masse financière en cause

2- ne pas oublier que les intrants sont utilisés et qu’en conséquence ils devront être régulièrement remplacés.

3- ne pas oublier que les agents (les membres) du réseau ont besoin de revenus, et qu’ils ont le choix d’exercer d’autres activités plus rémunératrices à court terme.

4- ne pas oublier que les agents du réseau ont besoin d’investir (boutique, entrepôts, fond de roulement, déplacements, savoir faire (= formation)

5- ne pas oublier que les agents du réseau forme une chaîne et qu’ils doivent avoir confiance les uns dans les autres pour s’expédition les marchandises en attente du paiement et réciproquement. Ces pratiques ont souvent lieu en l’absence de services adaptés (banque, postes, transport et même téléphone), donc avec des surcoûts.

6- Des problèmes de définition des prix d’échange le long de la chaîne sont nombreux et brouillent le message reçu par l’utilisateur final. Ne pas oublier qu’il faut plusieurs années d’activité pour que les entreprises bénéficient d’économies d’échelle.

7- des pratiques de concurrence aberrantes auxquelles s’ajoutent parfois les comportements tout aussi aberrant des opérateurs de développement (intrants subventionnés, voir gratuits, conseils inadéquats)

8- des administrations qui asphyxient les opérateurs à travers la taxation des produits (intrants) au prétètement qu’ils sont d’importation et dans les mains de commerçants... etc

9- les politiques qui cherchent à produire les intrants localement avant que l’heure ne soit venue, mettent également ces « proto-réseaux » en péril.

10- Ne pas oublier que si le secteur n’est pas « spontanément » couvert, c’est que l’activité n’est pas « spontanément » rentable.
[English translation]

There is only one answer to your 4 very relevant questions.

However these questions should not be put directly in terms of the BOP (Bottom of the pyramid, the largest, but poorest socio-economic group, Ed.). In fact, the BOP is spread over all the lands. And yet in these countries there are some inhabitants who are socially better off than the BOP, but who for now do not have access to the inputs. However, these private individuals are the potential drivers of technical progress.

The only way to get agricultural inputs to them is to create a commercial distribution network right down to the villages. When the products are available to the well off, they will be for the BOP.

To achieve this result, here are 10 points to consider:

1- Firstly, it should be recognized that the inputs needs of the BOP can only be met by trade on account of the amount of finance in question

2- Remember that the inputs are used and in consequence, they need to be regularly replaced.

3- Remember that the network operators (the members) need incomes, and that they are free to engage in other activities better remunerated in the short term.

4- Remember that network operators need to invest (e.g. shops, warehouses, working capital, travel costs, know how (= training)

5- Remember that the network operators are part of a chain and that they must trust one another in order to send the merchandise and wait for the payments and vice versa. Often these transactions take place without the appropriate services (banks, post office, transport and even telephone) therefore with higher costs.

6- The problems of setting trading prices along the supply chain are numerous and obscure the message conveyed to the final user. We must remember that several years of operation are required in order for businesses to benefit from economies of scale.

7- Unfair competitive trade practices to which are sometimes added the quite erroneous behaviour of the development agencies s (subsidized inputs, free gifts, inadequate advice).

8- Administrations that suffocate operators through taxation of products (inputs) under the pretext that they are imports and in the hands of traders… etc.

9- Policies that seek to produce inputs locally too soon, jeopardizing at the same time these “proto-networks.”

10- Remember that if the sector is not occupied «spontaneously», it means that the activity is not «spontaneously» profitable.

14. Brenda Shenute Namugumya from Uganda

Dear Moderator,

I would like to suggest a slight modification in the report outline, which may or may not influence the scope of work. Under the Nutrition needs of the vulnerable populations in the lifecycle framework, since the distribution of these vulnerable communities is broad, the needs maybe diverse but the
causes will certainly be diverse. Can the report capture details for specific regions or include case studies highlighting this diversity?

Also, many times there is a tendency for programming to always target the women, however, in many traditions in developing countries especially in Africa, men have strong influence on the adoption of certain practices. Whilst considering special roles for women, can we also think about how to have adequate men involvement in programming? In a FANTA-2 study in Northern Uganda, the area was under conflict for 20 years until 2006 and now is in transition from emergency to development strategies, some of the key findings were that inadequate livelihood activities, women workload, gender based violence and substance abuse, frequent and early pregnancies and cultural beliefs contributed substantially to the levels of malnutrition and low adoption and sustainability of interventions. There is a family structure within which interventions should be provided to ensure adequate support of the target beneficiaries. Also in a study in the southern part of the country on agriculture, nutrition and health linkages (still at initial stages of analysis), livelihood and gender issues in the family dynamics are emerging. This consultation should give a highlight on the roles for men in social protection.

Brenda Shenute Namugumya
Public Nutrition Specialist

15. Iljas Baker from Mahidol University, Thailand

I agree with George Kent and I guess robust and sustainable are rough synonyms here. The problem is most governments and World Bank types think of the economy somewhat abstractly to be managed, a longish term project. People need food right away so getting to a robust and diverse economy needs to take that into account and so the eyes have to be on more than just national economic development. There has to be local economic development but also a specific focus on tackling people's needs for food directly in the short term.

Iljas Baker
Mahidol University International College, Thailand.

16. Roger Pearson from UNICEF, Ethiopia

Dear Ms. Bertini,

I am part of the group supporting the Government of Ethiopia in the drafting of their national social protection policy. The dialogue around whether the government here should have such a policy and what it might contain has been proceeding for around 2.5 years since the Africa Union executive council recommended to member states that all members should draft such a policy.

Before working in Ethiopia I was involved in a dialogue with parliamentarians in Kenya, starting in 2002, for three years, over whether the Kenyan state should implement a programme of cash transfers for the families of the poorest Kenyans. Three years of dialogue to a request by the parliamentarians to the civil service to pilot test such a programme and decide, based on the pilot whether the state should budget for and scale-up. In 2011 the action covers around 90 per cent of the country and the main funder is the Kenyan tax payer.

A more complete tale of what happened in Kenya can be found in a workingpaper on the www.unicef.org site "Pearson, R. and Avar, C. Cash Transfers for vulnerable children: From Political Choice to Scal-up".

This is all preamble to say that I think the TOR for the report should emphasize a look at the aspect of political dialogue that goes on in any society regarding the current state of social protection and how
society might be inclined to improve current systems, and possibly look at how international development partners work to support a national and sub-national dialogue.

The current draft reads to me as if the entry point is a look at existing programmes. This risks distorting the complete picture since programmes will have variable degrees of buy-in from the societies in which they operate (the sustainability issue). I’m suggesting that the first step in the analysis of the scene should be a look at the state of the political dialogue, country-by-country, as critical context to lesson learned coming from any particular programme.

Sincerely

Roger Pearson
Senior Social Policy Specialist
UNICEF Ethiopia

17. Bhubaneswor Dhakal from Nepal

Moderetors and other members in FSN Forum,

HLPE has attempted to cover broader areas in the outlines and scope of the work. The success of identification of the most important aspects depends on how deeply and representatively the team explore the problems and opportunities. However, the followings are my comments and advices.

a. SOCIAL PROTECTION IN PRACTICE: I agree on the comment of previous participants that the concept of social protection is very vague. In OECD context the social protection on food security has been mainly considered on providing income support by government to those who have inadequate earning for living. However, there is other root cause of nutritional problem which has got little attention. Many young people are used to living separately from parent as they turn 18 years or so. Many of them can manage income either from work or by government support. Most of the people do not know how to cook healthy food at home. They are used to eat unhealthy foods from fast food sellers (e.g. KFC, Burger King and McDonald). When these people become parent they cannot adequately teach children to prepare and eat healthy food. Their children follow same culture. It has increased obesity problem in society. Current structure of social protection policy has some role to escalate the problem. Therefore the factors access, availability and uses of foods and nutrition are necessary but not sufficient factors for the populations to be less vulnerable. Therefore other factors to reduce the nutrition problem should be explored in the report.

b. GENDER ROLE IN CHANGING SOCIETY: Among the points as stated in “The report must include”, the term women is inappropriate in current context. Society has been changing rapidly. Traditionally women were responsible for managing food and nutrition at household level. Nowadays men are taking household role of cooking and caring people as women got opportunity to work outside home. The trend has been increasing in Asian, African countries and Latin American countries. There are many solo male parents who are taking role of managing and preparing food for family even in OECD countries. To capture the changing gender roles for food security and nutrition it requires broader concept instead of women alone.

c. MANAGEMENT OF COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES: Common property resources (forest, water resources and pasturelands) contribute directly or indirectly on food security of most of the vulnerable population in the world. The resources have a high importance for food security especially to small farmers, indigenous groups and mountain farming communities which are very vulnerable groups. In current environmental political context the international agencies (e.g. IUCN, WWF, World Bank, FAO) and the foreign countries have manipulated national policies and/or influenced on local practices to use the resources for global benefit and reduced uses of the resources for local food security. These agencies have used flash incentives and destroyed traditional institutions and practices of using the local resource management for food security. In the institutionally weak and vulnerable countries the agencies can show many activities for their fund
providers with a small amount of budget. Therefore such activities are increasing over recent years. They agencies often bypass government agencies. For example, ICIMOD (working in South Asia and China) convert some community forests of Nepal under REDD (www.icimod.org/publications/index.php/search/publication/757) by pursuing local elites. The land areas were traditionally contributing to food security for poor mountain households. The work has been done even without taking permission of the Forest Ministry. The agency did this work to please funding agency (the Norwegian government). The Ministerial people of the institutionally weak country could not do anything on the action of the agency except expressing frustrations. In another case international conservation agencies (such as WWF and IUCN) are working to meet their target of making at least 12 percent of global lands into protected areas. It has been easy for the agencies to influence the governments of developing countries and convert the community lands poor communities including indigenous people. Rhetorically the agencies have provided flash incentives and claimed the resources are managed for the local people benefit. In reality the agencies are marginalised the people. It is another form of land grab. The reports of international agencies or commissions have hardly touched on the scope and issue of the common property resources. Therefore there should be special highlights on the problem of managing the common property resources for food security and emerging threat associated with bad international governance.

If the HLPE incorporates the above issues effectively in the report their work could contribute to making some difference for the vulnerable people.

Thank you.

B. Dhakal

18. Graham Riches from the University of British Columbia, Canada

Dear Ms. Bertini,

Please find below my contribution to Discussion No. 72 on Social Protection of Food Security. I hope it is of assistance.

I did have the opportunity in 2004 as lead author of the 'Right to Food Case Study: Canada' to participate in some of the early discussions about the usefulness and implementation of the right to food sponsored by FAO. It is encouraging to see that the concept and debate taking more shape and having influence.

The fundamental importance of income based social protection policies and programmes for overcoming global hunger is well articulated by the contribution of Andrew MacMillan and Ignacio Trueba. Their case is further strengthened by Margaret Vidar and Lidija Knuth's argument in common with that of George Kent supporting rights-based approaches to establishing food and social safety nets. From a historical perspective dating back a century or more such arguments in different ways informed the establishment of welfare states and publicly supported social safety nets which were designed to overcome hunger and poverty in many of today's rich OECD countries. As welfare states took shape in the post World War 11 era hunger was recognized as a political issue and access to food was a matter for government action and social policy. These policies were for the most part remarkably successful with food poverty becoming a thing of the past. Through their governance and led by the Nordic states these societies in varying degrees recognized their moral, legal and political obligations and responsibilities to ensure universal welfare including food security for all. In this context food was regarded, perhaps softly, as a human right.

However, since the early 1980s there has been mounting evidence that the publicly funded social safety nets of the majority of OECD countries have been failing with growing numbers of desperate and vulnerable people falling through the cracks – food poverty and homelessness have shown alarming increases. Significant indicators lie not only in deepening and widening inequality and social spending cutbacks but in the consequent and relentless rise of emergency charitable food
banks. For a generation food banks have become the symptoms and symbols of the welfare state in crisis. They are clear markers of the fact that governments have been neglecting their human rights obligations under the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)* to ‘respect, protect and promote’ the human right to adequate food. Domestic hunger is no longer a question of political debate as it has now become the preserve of corporate food charity. This is surely well known to the members of HLPE. Yet it does raise some important public policy questions which in my view are very much related to the GFFSN’s topic of social protection for food security in a global context and the analysis which needs to be undertaken. Three such questions are suggested here which might help frame this discussion:

**Firstly, what explains governments of wealthy countries increasingly neglecting their domestic obligations, ratified under international law, to advance the human right to adequate food and nutrition as a means to achieving food and nutrition security for all by ensuring adequately funded income, food and social safety net programmes?**

Of course the answers to this question are complex and deep rooted in the political economies of different states, the workings of global and domestic markets and the tensions between the private sector and the role of government in financing and supporting the common good, e.g., health, education and social welfare. Given the increase of food poverty or food insecurity in OECD countries, I would argue that governments have increasingly left the task of providing and effective and supportive social safety net for the poorest to charity and private welfare.

What we have witnessed over the last thirty years or more is the social construction of hunger and food poverty as a matter for charity and not governments. Food banks which have become institutionalised and corporatized are the symptoms and symbols of this approach which has now become publicly and culturally accepted. Corporate food charity has become publicly legitimized and the accepted norm. Supported by the media, professional sports, rock stars and corporate food giants the public has become persuaded that the task of ameliorating and even overcoming food poverty is better left to charity and the ‘efficient’ private sector. Yet, the facts speak otherwise as food banks run out of food, are unable to guarantee nutritious food, depend on the uncertainties of volunteer labour, deny choice, and create stigma to say nothing of the ethics of recycling wasted supermarket foods which the poor cannot afford. Meanwhile in the absence of well established and well funded and coordinated programs of social protection food poverty continues to increase.

**Secondly, how might one attract the priority attention of the cabinets of governments in the world’s wealthiest societies to once again understand hunger and equitable food distribution as political questions and human rights issues which demand their full attention?**

Perhaps this is the most important and most difficult question as it raises the issue of the lack of political will. It is the question to which all those who write about the topic of hunger always return. There is no easy answer. One step forward would be if the corporate food bank industry, the rock stars and professional sports teams as well as advocating for food donations at the same time educated the public about the reasons for increasing food poverty and advocated for the importance of social protection policies and programs – the point being that the solution to hunger and food poverty lies in thinking and acting outside the charitable food aid box. Food banks and their partners are in a very good position to do this given the strong public legitimacy which they enjoy and as such are in a strong position to put pressure on governments and their cabinets.

**And, thirdly why might answers to the two preceding questions concerning food poverty within OECD countries provide a basis for thinking and acting about hunger and food insecurity in the South? In particular are there lessons to be learned from how corporate food charity today is failing to provide an adequate response to domestic hunger and broken social safety nets in the North?**
The relevance of policy responses to food poverty in the North to framing solutions to hunger in the South are clear:

- The importance of social protection and social welfare measures including income support, employment development, social housing and child care, public health and education; and a central, strategic and coordinating role for governments underlining the significance of governance (always the crucial starting point). These policies and programmes provided the basic public infrastructure for addressing hunger and food poverty in the past. If such social protection is neglected, as it has been in the North, hunger and food poverty will grow.

- Corporate food charity is not enough and is in fact part of the problem. It masks the problem of food poverty and allows governments to get off the hook. We need more from the corporate boosters and sponsors in terms of public education and advocacy regarding the causes of hunger and the solutions many of which lie outside the charitable food aid box.

- The human right to adequate food must become part of mainstream public and political discourse in the rich and poor world if food poverty and global hunger are to be successfully challenged and overcome. The right to food is not about government doing everything for people nor is it about giving away free food to hungry people. It is about framing the hunger issue in ways which connect the dots between social protection policies and 'joined-up' food and nutrition security policies and programmes. Coupled with the justiciability of the right to food these ensure human dignity and reduce the need for charitable food relief which has now become more a part of the problem than the solution to hunger.

See Riches, G (2011) Thinking and acting outside the charitable food box: hunger and the right to food in rich societies. Development in Practice 21: 4-5, 768-775
http:www.tandfonline.com/loi/cdip20

Graham Riches
Professor Emeritus
School of Social Work
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

19. Claudio Schuftan from Vietnam

Responses of the kind proposed in the ‘Adjustment with a Human Face’ approach are clearly neither sufficient nor acceptable any longer, particularly since 1997, given the devastating multi-centric economic crises the world faced. Safety nets leak and have just not worked for the poorest. The poverty and equity (as well as international debt) issues have to be tackled frontally --, once and for all and now.

But drawing renewed attention to poverty AND equity at high level brown-bag lunches and face-to-face and electronic meetings anywhere is not enough. The poor need action. They need to begin seeing deeds. Bringing equity to the center of our attention without incorporating representatives of poor people into our deliberations, as said, assures yet another fiasco, one we can no longer afford.

EQUITY AND ‘TARGETERY’

Many of us also think it is a fallacy to propose targeting (i.e., safety nets) as an alternative to actions that strengthen food sovereignty. In a way, individual targeting is a new variant of a selective food security approach: "Go for the worst cases, fix them, and improve the statistics". But where are the sustainable changes to avoid the recurrence of the same problems being addressed? Unfortunately,
individual targeting is seen as central among the alternatives being proposed by the World Bank and other major funding agencies (together with geographical and other types of targeting). In an era of service delivery systems promoted by free-market proponents, one of the key issues for individual targeting to keep a semblance of equity seems to be the exemption from any user fees for the poor. These fee exemption schemes are often implemented insincerely, only as a political maneuver to make user fees more palatable to the population when first introduced.

In short, to many of us, individual targeting cannot be made to work equitably and effectively -- and weeding-out and providing the needed services to the target individuals or groups is definitely a costly alternative for what one can potentially get. Moreover, targeting can and does stigmatize people by creating a clientele of second-class citizens who can be easily manipulated by those in power. Targeting simply cannot be a full substitute for redistributive public policy. (See UNRISD News, No. 20, "Follow-up to the Social Summit", summer 1999, p.7).

Geographical targeting/safety nets have probably more potential if well directed. Nevertheless, one has to keep in mind that poor areas have little political clout to fight for their share and are also usually administratively weak to implement the needed changes. Even at somewhat higher costs, this type of geographical zeroing-in on the poorest makes sense in terms of equity.

Starting with safety net interventions as the central thrust to achieve equity (no matter how carefully designed) thus seems the wrong approach to put most of our efforts in. It is a dangerous and wholly insufficient path to follow; it pursues what rather is a 'mirage of equity' that basically leaves the perennial determinants of the rich-poor gap untouched. It tacitly blames the most vulnerable for being where they are and then tends them a rescuing hand.

What we desperately need at this time is to compare the effects on nutrition indicators AND on long-term equity of selected individual targeting interventions and of a host of already tried direct poverty alleviation (disparity reduction) measures.

**SO WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?**

Because overall disparity reduction is a theme getting growing attention these days, food and nutrition professionals have a golden opportunity to work harder to influence overall development strategies towards equity in these fields. We should not 'leave it up to the Joneses' again and miss this unique opportunity. The sense of urgency is heightened when we accept the fact that the food and nutrition sector cannot, by its technical actions alone, make significant long-lasting improvements in the economic and nutrition condition of the poor.

Breaking down food and nutrition data by income quintiles is a welcome first step to consolidate a credible international database that can be used to track equity issues. Results from the analysis of these data should be published annually in a publication of the type and stature of UNICEF's former "The Progress of Nations" or UNDP's "World Development Report" where countries are ranked according to their respective performance. The publication would further analyze existing gaps and targets would be set for individual countries' improvements for the following year.

But actually using these data to tackle the inequities at national, sub-national and especially the local level is where the real challenge lies. Donor agencies will have to more forcefully advocate for equity-promoting, participatory, bottom-centered interventions, as well as being more responsive to low income countries' government-initiated requests for funding to prepare and execute policies specifically addressing the central equity issue.

Governments and donors will have to enter into binding commitments (with signed memoranda of understanding) to move in the direction of poverty alleviation and greater equity including the close monitoring of progress. These binding commitments will be needed as a precondition for continued support. Funds would then be released in tranches based on the achievement of negotiated verifiable indicators of progress along the line of project implementation. A donor-NGO/civil society link and funding window should be developed concomitantly along the same lines. In the case of non-
responsive or non-performing governments, donor funding earmarked for use by the latter should be progressively reallocated to the NGO/civil society sector. Non-performing NGOs should be dropped under the same guise. [See Schuftan. C., "Foreign aid: Giving conditionalities a good name (A development ethics with a South perspective)", D+C Development and Cooperation, No.4/1988].

All this may only add up to a start – and from the top at that. But it is a start in the right direction. The road ahead will, for sure, require our greatest boldness ever.

For a change, let the more creative inputs on ways out of the dead-end street of non-inequity-redressing individual targeting schemes come from the more directly affected themselves. Devoting most of our energies to facilitate just that process, will, by itself, be a big leap forward.

Claudio Schuftan, Ho Chi Minh City

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20. Stefan Hagelueken, World Vision Deutschland, Germany

Dear Mrs. Bertini,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide some thinking to the drafting of the TORs.

In general, we consider the scope appropriate, but would like to take this opportunity to consider some additional thoughts and their incorporation into the study:

As we all know, there is a human right to social security in International Law. In many states, in fact also in the global South, increasingly social security schemes are introduced. While governments have the main responsibility to ensure this right for their people, it is well-known that in many states especially the most vulnerable people (e.g. the "ultra-poor") do not benefit from such schemes due to various factors incl. lack of knowledge or access, lack of "a voice" to articulate their most pressing needs and overcome their limiting factors.

Commercial providers of social security schemes reach the most vulnerable groups even less, since they are rarely seen as "commercially interesting target groups". Supporting Margret Vilar and Lidija Knuth, this is talking about "the need for empowering the poor".

The question thus is how to enable especially the most vulnerable and poorest population-segments to have access to and benefit from social protection. In other words: we are talking about examining examples and best practices, but also limitations to the "inclusion" of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people and groups.

As Thomas M. Mokake and others already mentioned, the informal sector is of considerable importance in this respect and should be included appropriately into the scope of the study. Such support (and security) schemes could be based inter alia on kinship, neighbourhood, peer group-relations, gender, profession, or simply locality. Maybe such informal (and community-based) structures could well be built upon and strengthened by training and other means to especially reach those population segments, which so often are forgotten and left out by commercial, but even governmental schemes.

We also support very much, what Andrew McMillan and Ignacio Trueba stated regarding social protection being the "last resort" and should be seen as a "central element of multi-component programmes to end hunger". Therefore, a social protection scheme could and should only be one element - even if important and with the potential of a "good return-of-investment-approach" - in a broader and more comprehensive strategy including e.g. questions of income diversification and economic diversity, access to markets and basic infrastructures, knowledge and organising oneself to be better heard in one's (legitimate) interests.
Last but not least, especially if talking about agricultural and food production, as mentioned by others, questions of (good) governance are crucial and one important aspect here is the access to land and other natural resources. We therefore would appreciate if issues such as the distribution of power over and access to such resources and the influence of its handling were included into the scope of the study.

Stefan Hagelueken  
WFP/FA/FS-Coordinator  
World Vision Deutschland  
Germany

21. Andrew MacMillan from Italy

Dear Ms. Bertini,

I was somewhat surprised by George Kent’s intervention because it betrays a skepticism about the utility and impact of social protection programmes that seems to contrast with his own recent assessment of safety nets!

I hope, however, that he will forgive me for quoting from his excellent book, entitled Ending Hunger Worldwide (published by Paradigm in 2010), in which (p. 109), he lists 7 features of safety nets as follows:

"1. By definition, safety net programs establish a lower limit on how far people are allowed to fall by providing services to those who are most needy.  
2. Safety net programs should focus sharply on the most needy.  
3. Safety net programs should provide strong guarantees to prevent anyone from falling to a lower quality of life.  
4. All countries, rich and poor, need effective nutritional safety nets to back up their other food and nutritional programs.  
5. A guaranteed safety net is one for which there is a clear entitlement, enforced by institutional arrangements that help ensure people in fact get that to which they are entitled. Thus it is a rights-based program.  
6. A need exists for a guaranteed global nutritional safety net, and arguably, under human rights law there is an obligation to provide one.  
7. Guidelines are needed to ensure that nutritional safety nets are managed in ways that protect the legitimate interests of all who are involved."

Nutritional safety nets can be seen, I believe, as an essential element of the social protection programmes on which this discussion focuses.

In his intervention, George says “Giving people small cash or food subsidies might make them more productive laborers, but such subsidies are not likely to help them break out of their poverty traps. Perhaps social protection should be provided more in terms of new opportunities for meaningful employment than in terms of cash or food.”

I fully subscribe to the aspiration of providing “new opportunities for employment”, but as we can see from what is now happening in Spain or the US, this is easier said than done even in relatively rich countries. And, even if a country is successful in generating greater employment opportunities, these are not going to help people who are excluded, because of their malnutrition, from being able to do a full day’s work.

One can argue for ever about whether the chicken or egg came first, but it seems abundantly clear that if the world is committed to reducing hunger, the first step is to ensure that all people are in a position to have access to adequate food. My own conviction, reinforced by what we are seeing in Brazil and other countries, is that adequate nutrition, in itself, stimulates economic growth, including growing employment opportunities and greater labour force participation amongst those who are
emerging from chronic hunger. It also helps to emancipate people from what George refers to as being "locked into poverty", enables them to retain and, often, build up productive assets, and gives them greater resilience to shocks.

Historically, in the industrialized countries, there has been a long-term correlation between better nutrition, physical stature, energy available for work, and economic growth (see R.W. Fogel, The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100: Europe, America and the Third World, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, ISBN 0-521-00488-8). There is no reason to believe that improved nutrition will not serve as a stimulus to growth in developing countries in which there is a high incidence of hunger nowadays.

For these reasons, I am convinced that social protection/safety nets must be a central element of any serious hunger reduction programme.

Andrew MacMillan

22. Shewli Kumar from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

Dear All

It is imperative to look at food security in conjunction with livelihoods and social security provisions. Using a gender lens enables us to evaluate how in today's developing nations more women are working out of sheer need in the informal sector, where there are very few legal or policy frameworks to provide for maternity benefits, care for elderly and creche facilities for children. Social security measures do not extend to these women. This in turn only increases their burden of work and mortality. Also the specific food requirements of pregnant, lactating mothers and adolescent girls are hardly taken into consideration when food security issues are addressed.

Another critical dimension is the nutritive values of local foods which are increasingly disappearing due to introduction in agriculture of single crops for commercial value. With precedence being given to marketability of crops over consumption needs of local population, traditional agricultural practices are being replaced by input intensive methods. This too has led to agricultural communities and indigenous communities becoming food insecure.

There is a definite need to locate all discourses on food security through a gender lens and also address community specific needs. A good way would be to look at diversifying livelihoods as also to examine agricultural production from a diverse perspective. Investments in agriculture and rural development needs to be increased as also new forms of alternative livelihoods created and reclaimed to enable people to come out of poverty.

Shewli Kumar
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
India

23. Stuart Clark from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Canada

1. For the most part, the current safety net programs have been initiated by governments with the assistance of donors with very little participation in the planning and implementation by those who should be benefiting. It would be very valuable for the HLPE to obtain the perspective of those who currently benefit from these programs. How do they perceive such programs in comparison to the intention of the designers?

2. The existence of safety nets assumes some process for defining who is included. In the case of food security, this task has been achieved largely by looking at those who are chronically food insecure. However, with newer shocks such as food price volatility, the identification of the 'newly food insecure' will require new approaches that allow for the rapid identification of these vulnerable
people. It would be valuable for the HLPE to look at what practical approaches are available for rapid identification of these people if a safety net approach is to meet this new challenge.

Stuart Clark

24. Lizzy Igbine, Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association, Nigeria

Dear colleagues,

Social protection is the prerequisites of the government, so I am in support of the earlier contributors. Good Governance is the key to having social security therefore social protection and good governance are the keys to articulation and coordination of a process towards achieving food security. Transparency and honesty is the dose of goodwill that will make the process to work. Above all farmer’s representation and working with the farmers will pilot the process to success as subsequent actions and interventions failed due to lack of Coordination and neglect of the wisdom of practitioners who are the Farmers. Finally commitment gives impetuous and integrity required to drive the process into conclusion.

lizzy Igbine (mrs)
Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association.
wrote in a hurry.

25. Suman K A., Change Planet Partners Climate Innovation Foundation, India

Dear Moderator

Thank you for this important post and the opportunity to contribute.

1) In my view, adaptive social protection instruments lie at the intersection of Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and Development considerations. Such instruments necessarily have to address both reduction in vulnerabilities and enhancing the resilience of the specific types of populations. This calls for a comprehensive mapping of vulnerabilities across all dimensions (social, political, institutional, economic, ecological). Further, large data sets to map the disaster patterns will have to be combined with future climate projections and at a specific geographic location. This clearly implies there are four important components that need attention. Definitions, Datasets, Classifications, Geographic (location) contexts. The scope of work, therefore may have to factor these considerations into an appropriate ASP framework that is generic enough yet provides flexibility to evolve appropriate options at the scale in which it will be applied.

2) The draft scope of work could, in addition, factor ‘what needs to be measured ’ for the safety net programmes to be considered impactful and ‘how have the gender dimensions been incorporated ’ into the safety net programmes.

3) Against the specific programme design and implementation recommendations, what might be more useful would be, ‘Research-Into-Use’ kind of frames so that specific actors could use these frames to evolve solutions/options that fit the scale, budget, implementation constraints and other considerations suitable to the context.

4) The report outputs need to be in line with the draft scope of work.

I do hope the inputs prove useful.
Beyond emergency aid: the need for multi-annual safety nets

By reducing the food consumption of poor households, price surges may lead to major food security problems.

For many years, food aid was thought to be the solution. Food crises were supposed to be managed by providing emergency aid distributed free of charge or sold at a low cost, with efforts made to target precisely those areas or households suffering from food insecurity.

Two factors have contributed to a gradual change in thinking: increased awareness that aid may have perverse effects (if aid forces down prices, this will harm producers) and increasing recourse to a definition of food security that goes beyond the question of physical availability to encompass problems of access to food. This has led to a diversification of aid mechanisms with aid no longer necessarily being made up of food but also sometimes of money or food stamps.

The 2005 crisis in the Sahel countries (and more particularly in Niger) highlighted a new dimension to the problem: the decapitalization of households (weakened by successive crises) that reduces their capacity to respond to shocks: reduced savings, decreased productive capital and reduced human capital through under-nutrition which is detrimental to the health of household members.

Emergency aid (activated only in times of crisis) is therefore insufficient. Structural medium-term aid is necessary to recapitalize vulnerable households and thus increase their resilience. This could be done by using safety nets whereby every year assets are transferred over a determined period to a number of households.

This kind of program is already used in some countries (see for example the Social Cash Transfers program in Malawi and the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia). But few programs of this type are in operation and those that do exist could advantageously be extended in terms of the number of households covered and the assets transferred. These programs have proved to be effective but their cost has prevented many developing countries from setting them up or giving them sufficient breadth. Help from the international community in setting up these programs is therefore vital.

26. Franck Galtier from Cirad - Umr Moisa, France

Au-delà de l’aide d’urgence : la nécessité de filets de sécurité pluriannuels

Les flambées de prix, en provoquant une réduction de la consommation des ménages pauvres, peuvent conduire à des problèmes majeurs de sécurité alimentaire.

La réponse à ce problème a longtemps été pensée à travers le prisme de l’aide alimentaire. Il s’agissait de gérer les crises alimentaires au travers d’aides d’urgence distribuées gratuitement ou vendues à bas prix en essayant de cibler les zones ou les ménages en situation d’insécurité alimentaire.
La réflexion a progressivement évoluée du fait de deux facteurs : la mise en évidence des effets pervers de l'aide (baisses de prix pénalisant les producteurs) et le recours croissant à une définition de la sécurité alimentaire dépassant la question de la disponibilité physique pour englober les problèmes d'accès à la nourriture. Ceci a conduit à la diversification des mécanismes d'aide, l'aide n'étant plus forcément constituée de biens alimentaires mais aussi parfois d'argent ou de bons alimentaires.


L'aide d'urgence (activée seulement en temps de crise) ne suffit donc pas. Une aide structurelle de moyen terme est nécessaire pour recapitaliser les ménages vulnérables et augmenter ainsi leur capacité de résilience. Ceci peut se faire au travers de filets de sécurité transférant chaque année des actifs à un ensemble de ménages sur une période de temps déterminée.

Des programmes de ce type existent déjà dans certains pays (cf. par exemple le programme Social Cash Transfers du Malawi et le Productive Safety Net Programme d'Éthiopie). Néanmoins, ces programmes sont rares et ceux qui existent gagneraient à être étendus (en termes de nombre de ménages couverts et en termes d'amplitude des transferts). L'efficacité de ces programmes est prouvée mais leur coût empêche beaucoup de pays en développement de les mettre en place ou de leur donner une ampleur suffisante. L'aide de la communauté internationale est donc indispensable pour permettre la mise en place de tels filets de sécurité.

27. Alexandre Meybeck, FAO, Italy

Dear FSN moderator,

1) This study is very timely as it could contribute to precise the potential role of safety nets for reducing vulnerability and improve food security and nutrition. The proposed outline seems appropriate.

2) Some points could deserve more emphasis:

- The definition of vulnerable populations would deserve more emphasis on nutrition deficiencies. The adjunction of a "what" could do so. For instance, what is the impact of price volatility on malnutrition?

- Among what is necessary to reduce vulnerability, there is no mention of tools to manage traditional farming risks such as plant pests and diseases, livestock diseases. Proper monitoring, early warning and quick intervention can a long way in reducing the impact of such risks. Neither is there mention of availability and access of inputs for smallholders (seeds for instance). Neither is there any mention of enhancing ecosystems' resilience.

- Even if the report does not need to include an exhaustive list of programs, there is a need for definition of types of safety nets, including, as pointed out by many contributors, traditional safety nets (family, community). Such a typology shall also help clarify the origin of various tools (community-owned, state driven, etc) and its targets (what kind of populations, urban, rural, poor, malnourished etc). It should consider the way traditional safety nets are evolving and how they could be strengthened. Also it should include what would be needed to support national safety nets.

- The evaluation of the impact of programs should include, as requested by CSA, “benefits for improving local production and promoting better nutrition".
3) The main aspects that the report should emphasize is the potential role of safety nets in the broader perspective of reducing vulnerability and improving food security and nutrition. How they can complement other policies or be used to enhance them. What tools for what situation?

4) The impact on nutrition of the various programs should be assessed, in particular as regard food based approaches to nutrition and how agricultural practices could improve nutrition including through diversification of production (small livestock for instance), improved rotations (introduction of legumes for instance) and better valorization of agrobiodiversity, including varieties particularly reach in micronutrients.

Best regards

Alexandre Meybeck
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
FAO

28. Shambhu Ghatak, Inclusive Media for Change, India

There was a time when a universal Public Distribution System (PDS) existed in India. Economists doing research during the 1980s and 1990s found that PDS outreach to the economically poor and rural areas was low. Leakages and corruption prompted the Government of India to move first towards a revamped PDS and then towards a targeted PDS i.e. TPDS. The TPDS was unable to end leakages since it gave rise to huge differences between open market and administered prices, which provided the incentive to dealers/ ration or fair price shop owners to divert and sell foodgrains meant for PDS in the market. Overtime the PDS stopped delivering local coarse grains (which it used to supply earlier in many states) and specialized in selling mainly rice and wheat. The TPDS created price dichotomy in foodgrains sold to above poverty line (APL) and below poverty line population (BPL), which affected the purchase of grain, as shown by some studies. Poor quality of grain supplied in the APL quota and unavailability of non-grain commodities too affected purchases made from the PDS.

Targeting the BPL population led to inclusion and exclusion errors. In order to know the extent of leakages and inclusion and exclusion errors based on 2004-05 National Sample Survey (NSS) data, please refer to the study entitled “How Can Food Subsidies Work Better? Answers from India and the Philippines” by Shikha Jha and Bharat Ramaswami, No. 221, September 2010, Asian Development Bank,


The Government of India has constituted a task force headed by Nandan Nilekani to work out the modalities for the proposed system of direct transfer of subsidy. In order to ensure greater efficiency, cost effectiveness and better delivery, the Central Government is shifting towards direct transfer of cash subsidy to BPL households in a phased manner. The task force under Nilekani is now planning to look into the possibility of cash transfers of food and kerosene subsidies with the aid of Aadhar identity cards. Many states have decided to replace the PDS with cash transfers.

Please check the attached document in order to get an idea whether people prefer cash transfers over PDS or vice versa.

The key findings of the study done by Khera and Dreze (2011) could be found below (also attached): Public Distribution System: Evidence from Secondary Data and the Field


The study done by Dreze and Khera is definitely a critique to the policy prescription to move towards a system of cash transfers.
Best,

Shambhu Ghatak
Inclusive Media for Change (www.im4change.org)
Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)
Delhi, India

29. Lavinia Gasperini from FAO, Italy

Dear Colleagues of the FNS Forum,

I take this very interesting opportunity to ask you to stress in your Report the importance of education and training services to strengthen the capacity of populations vulnerable to chronic and transitory food and nutrition deficiencies, to achieve food security. This is an important public good and a long term investment that the report could emphasize based in current literature, research and good practices. (See below: background documents). Some of the aspect identified by FAO as key policy consideration in need for action are the following:

>> Redefining agricultural education. There is a need to expand beyond the past approach whereby agricultural education for farmers was the primary focus of education in rural areas. Today, a broader view of the life and economic skills necessary to thrive in rural areas has emerged. There is a need to broaden the agricultural education paradigm to a paradigm of developing rural communities’ capacity to promote sustainable rural development. Enhanced human capital and capacities in the rural space can be trained for increased onfarm productivity and for off-farm employment opportunities as well as learning that leads to improved social well-being, social capital formation and satisfactory livelihoods.

>> Needs-based approach. The “one size fits all” standardized education strategy is not effective in reaching rural people. At the national level, the hallmark of the implementation will be a systemic needs-based approach. Mapping education and training (including extension) diversified needs of rural people and targeted interventions for expanding access and improving quality of education and training for all children, youth and adults through relevant curricula in life skills, agricultural education, to include nutrition education, health and population education, right to food education, etc are crucial to success. Moreover, since the Paris Declaration in 2005, the idea has emerged that capacity development is largely an internally driven, endogenous process that can be stimulated but not directed from outside.

>> Sharing policy lessons. There are a number of policy alternatives to build rural people’s capacity, self-esteem and resilience to address change and crises, many of which have been successfully implemented in various countries around the world. Dissemination of these lessons learned, best practices and research is important to develop the capacity at national and regional levels to plan and implement effective policies. There is a lot of on going work in FAO on this and it could be useful to give it more visibility and support.

>> Rural girls and women. Rural girls and women suffer geographical and gender discrimination. Strategies to boost rural girls’ participation in education and female literacy include removing cost barriers, strengthening rural schools as gender-sensitive centres of quality learning, developing gender-sensitive learning content and developing school and training centre facilities that take into account the needs of girls and women.

As recent key background documents on such topic please refer, for example, to the IFAD 2011 Rural Poverty Report (to which also FAO contributed), which gives a lot of emphasis to education and training for rural poverty reduction; the 2007 research of the University of Rome 3 and FAO on “Education for Rural People and Food Security, A Cross-Country Analysis” http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a1434e/a1434e00.htm; and the book presented by FAO at the

Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition
http://km.fao.org/fsn
2009 G9 meeting, on “Education for Rural People. The role of education, training and capacity development in poverty reduction and food security”.

I wish you a successful continuation of your endeavor. With kindest regards,

Lavinia Gasperini, Senior Officer, Agricultural Education, OEKD, FAO

30. Ilse Köhler-Rollefson, League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development, Germany

The best way of supporting food security, i.e. of establishing a safety net in rural areas, is by protecting the commons. Ever wondered how so many people living of less than a dollar per day are actually surviving? Well, they usually have livestock - cattle, sheep, goats, buffaloes, camels, or even ducks, swine or poultry. These locally adapted animals can provide regular cash income, act as savings, and produce food, fibre, fertilizer and other raw materials. Some of them, such as yaks and camels, can provide for practically all human needs - food, housing, clothing, transportation, fuel, medicines, etc., even social status (although that equation is unfortunately declining). Basically by keeping animals, "poor people" can even exist outside the cash economy. However, what they do need is access to land that supports their livestock - so called common property resources (CPRs). Especially for women - who compose the majority of the poor and are much less likely to own land than men - access to the commons can make the difference between destitution and survival. We have some nice studies from India which show how important the commons is for rural people. There is also evidence that in states where the commons is maintained (even if insufficiently), India’s infamous farmer suicides do not occur. The other component of the rural safety net is livestock itself - but not the high yielding livestock that is promoted by mainstream development, which actually makes people much more vulnerable, because they become dependent on outside inputs. It is the locally adapted livestock that has the capacity to go out and forage for itself on the common property resources that act as an insurance and safety net for people, and also as a bank account. So, in summary, for the rural people in the most vulnerable areas, there is still no better safety net than CPRs and livestock - therefore stop the land-grabbing!

Ilse Köhler-Rollefson,

League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development, Germany

31. Walter Mwasaa, Productive Safety Net Project (PSNP), Ethiopia

Greetings

I would like to throw in a little frustration about social protection and food security. In most of developing world and Africa in particular it is very clear that most people are living below poverty lines. That said then the rapid shift in focus from investing in food security to social protection presents an anathema to me. Have we in a sense accepted that these communities are unlikely to move out of food insecurity and thus we implement social protection programs that only cushion them from falling further into greater food and livelihood insecurity?

Having been involved in food security intervention in war-torn and drought prone situations this can not be more elaborate. Local efforts get wiped out by natural and man-made calamities and often lead to destitution and lost efforts. I have seen communities begin to look at emergency food supplies
as their “cushions”. This is obviously not leading towards any food security but in many cases results in sustained need for emergency supplies.

My challenge to policy is:

- Refocus social protection to only those communities that can in “normal times” sustain their food and livelihood needs.

- Take a step back and accept that in other communities unless a “push” upwards towards food and livelihood security then the social protection interventions and programs do not achieve much. The challenge is to development practitioners to define a clear line of what is the poverty line for food and livelihood security with a (set of) clear indicator(s) similar or parallel to the ones that are defined for poverty. Communities falling below these indicator(s) will receive or be supported to coming to that level before social protection is done. Basic rights to food will then need to be upheld in the stride to achieve this food security level.

From my experience a mix of both food security and social protection has often tilted either way and for the second group of people/communities food security has taken the backstage.

Walter Mwasaa  
Chief of Party, PSNP  
Ethiopia

32. Muhammad Ayaz Keerio from Pakistan

In my opinion social protection for security is possibly when no one suffers hunger.  
Let me share the recent scenario of flood in Pakistan.

Recent heavy rainfall catastrophically hit the central and southern Sindh province million of the people IDPs (Internally Displaced People) and million of acres of the agricultural land damaged due to rain and saline water.  
The shortage of food and specially the people hit by the flood may cause malnutrients as well as problem of hunger, and health problems especially malaria and diachronic in man, women and children. So please share this comments to all the funding malaria and donor agencies to support the children of the Sindh and save the life of the people of the areas.

33. George Kent from the University of Hawai’I, USA (3rd contribution)

Friends –
Andrew MacMillan’s response to my comments of August 29 gives me a welcome opportunity to clarify my views.

In discussions of the human right to adequate food we distinguish various levels of obligation: respect, protect, and fulfill. Fulfill is divided into two categories: facilitate and provide. Facilitate is about helping people to help themselves, while providing is about giving people what they need directly. This is discussed in Chapter 6 of my Freedom from Want: The Human Right to Adequate Food (available as a no-cost download at http://press.georgetown.edu/sites/default/files/978-1-58901-055-0%20w%20CC%20license.pdf).

I said there:
“The obligation to fulfill by the government’s directly providing what is needed is a kind of residual category, becoming operational when respect, protect, and facilitate prove inadequate. The government is the provider of last resort, but only for certain categories of people in certain kinds of extreme conditions. The government does not have the obligation to fulfill the needs of those who are healthy and have reasonable access to employment or to productive resources (e.g., land, fishing opportunities) and thus should be expected to provide for themselves. Governments must do some things to prevent food inadequacies; they don’t have to do everything.”

The first objective of agencies that wish to help people who are hungry is to help them find decent opportunities to provide for themselves. They need to find ways to either produce food for themselves, or find decent work that allows them to purchase food and other requirements of an adequate livelihood. This corresponds to “facilitate”.

There is an obligation to provide food directly to people who cannot provide for themselves through no fault of their own. Where facilitation fails or is inadequate, there is an obligation to provide.

Much too often, programs that promise free food so long as you can prove you are poor encourage people to stay poor. Assistance programs should not reward poverty; they should reward the climb out of poverty.

Programs of assistance should emphasize facilitation, which is the more empowering approach. However, it is clear that under some circumstances there is a need to provide directly. To the extent feasible, this should be done in ways that are empowering. Measures such as putting time limits on direct assistance can motivate people to find ways to climb out of their poverty.

So long as hunger and poverty exist, I think social protection programs are absolutely necessary. I am not skeptical about their utility and impact. My point is that we should distinguish carefully between types of safety net programs, and favor those that are empowering.

Aloha, George Kent

34. Per Mogstad from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

1. Do you think it is appropriate?

RESPONSE: Yes, the study is appropriate and timely. Appropriate because the access element of food security is interlinked with social policies and social security. Thus, we welcome a study of this kind to get updated and documented examples of what works and what does not work. It is timely because the lasting situation with high and volatile food prices impacts directly on the most food insecure and the poorest in any given community. Good social safety nets are therefore necessary to provide these groups with a buffer against this situation.

2. Have important elements been omitted or should any of the elements outlined be left out?

RESPONSE. It is important that the study also shows how food security can be assured through the use of safety nets irrespective of development level. The needs in an acute hunger situation will differ from the ones present in a society where there is enough food available, but poverty is widespread.

3. In your opinion, what would be the main aspects that the report should emphasize?

RESPONSE: The report should, as indicated, present the good solutions. It must show why these work and how they can be put to use in other communities. The emphasis should be on governance and systems to ensure long term development through sustainable use of natural resources. The idea must be to show that food security is dependent on a good mix of policy measures.

4. Are there innovative approaches that you would like to highlight?
RESPONSE: The right to food-based policies in Brazil could be an example. They have based their policies on food security firmly on a human rights approach and has managed to raise a considerable number of citizens out of hunger.

Per Mogstad
Senior Adviser
Section for UN Policy and Gender Equality
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

35. Frédéric Deve from FAO, Italy

Dear Forum members, and members of the High Level of Experts,

I would like to strongly support the contribution made by Andrew Mac Millan and Ignacio Trueba.

The benefits deriving from nation-wide targeted social protection programmes – the commonly called social cash transfers - have already been the object of evaluation. Cash transfers get people out of the holes they are stuck in and help to expand local markets with extremely significant and positive multiplier effects (on local food production, as Andrew Mac Millan and Ignacio Trueba rightly highlight it, but also on growth, social cohesion, State security, development of human capital, resistance and resilience to downturns at the level of both household and national economies, expansion of local labor markets, increases in investments1, etc.). Moreover, they create a terrain that is propitious also to other development aid programs. Such initiatives make financial aid reach the populations who need it most in an effective and direct manner. A good organization can ensure that misappropriation and corruption are kept under control, and this can be accomplished in a number of instances more easily than when classical forms of aid are employed.

The summits at l'Aquila (G8) and Pittsburgh (G20) have manifested the willingness of world leaders to consider “all options” and “all proposals” aimed at reducing food insecurity in the world. Social protection through cash transfers for food security is on the table as a valid option and proposal, but the attention it has received so far is much beyond what is needed.

The arguments against the solution? None of them hold up.

The first argument: “It is too expensive.” This objection does not hold up if one looks at the volume of liquid assets that are traded each day on the world markets for purely speculative purposes, i.e. without any direct relation to the creation or provision of “real” goods or services. Two thousand billion dollars were traded every day (back in 2001). OECD countries, emerging economies and even developing countries cannot today afford together to mobilize US$30 billions (as suggested by Mac Millan and Trueba) for the task at hand?! The only thing we are missing is the political will to do so: it is plain that we could find the necessary sources of financing by applying a very low rate of taxation (0.05 %) to the financial markets—it would not be a question of placing any further burden upon taxpayers. But let us take a closer look at what the costs would be were no such action to be undertaken. The sum of the financial, social, political, moral, and environmental costs of a continuation of the current situation amounts to an unbearable onus, one that would soon become far greater than the cost of the course of action here being proposed! These would be the costs: food crises, hunger riots and conflicts, refugees, sociopolitical instability and unrest, national and

2 « $2 trillion are traded per day in foreign exchange markets, 100 times more than the trading volume of all the stock markets of the world combined. Only 2% of these foreign exchange transactions relate to the "real" economy reflecting movements of real goods and services in the world, and 98% are purely speculative. » Bernar Lietaer in « The Future of Money: Creating New Wealth, Work and a Wiser World, 2001 » http://www.transaction.net/money/book/
international emergencies, epidemics and increasing health-care expenses, chaotic migration, wild urbanization, criminality, the spreading and “cleansing” of ghettos of the poor, loss of human capital to disease, death, and insufficient education, decreases in the productivity of labor, environmental degradation as a result of the pressure exerted upon natural resources as last opportunities for survival—deforestation, over-exploitation of the soil and water resources ... And, just as the right to nutrition would continue to be denied to one-sixth of humanity, so would the right to life become a farcical notion in a regime of permanent collective suffocation: one person dying of hunger every second, that is where we are; what is the cost, what is the price of that?

The second argument: “The perverse effects of aid”3. Let us assume here that the industrialized countries would contribute through their aid programs to a significant share of the sums required. Among the commonly cited perverse effects of aid, let us mention, in general, on the economic plane, a reduction in competitiveness of productive sectors and export capacity, and disincentives to local populations (not least to farmers). Let us also mention significant institutional diversions and corruption (the monies do not reach the beneficiaries), the “dependence” of beneficiaries, the support afforded to iniquitous political regimes, and, finally, the transformation of dignified, solidarity, and convivial forms of poverty into crushing destitution. But let us observe and retort: first, that criticisms of economic inefficiency concern, above all, conventional forms of aid practiced in the course of the last fifty years (including the provision of foodstuffs), not the massive monetary transfers we are here hypothesizing, which recent experiences have instead shown would produce extremely positive micro- and macro-economic effects. No dis-incentivation of actors has been observed: on the contrary, they become part of the economic fabric in the wake of the fulfillment of their basic needs—first and foremost amongst which is a nutritional regime that enables them to carry on a healthy, active life, the necessary precondition to taking initiatives, searching for employment, and favoring increases in productivity and investment. Second, these recent experiences have also proven that the use of centralized registries of names (of beneficiaries) and possibilities of recourse in the case of defaults in payment allow for the circumscription of fraud and corruption, which instead find in conventional forms of aid a more propitious, less transparent environment. Third, “dependence” is a debatable notion: let us reply that a transfer that is anchored in Law replaces the idea of dependence with that of reliable guarantee, and that such an assurance is a founding element of independence.

The social cash transfers at issue here have become technically far more simple to enact, less costly, less risk-laden, and more practical than ever. The main obstacle is the huge insufficiency of funds dedicated to their implementation.

What we need is a break with the past, a drastic leap in our vision of affairs, a change of scale.

It is not only a few tens or even hundreds of millions of persons who are in urgent need of aid (as a result of tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, refugees...): as we know they are one billion individuals, three-fourths of whom are poor farm workers that classic development aid has failed to help find their way out of the dead end they are stuck in. Where is our sense of realism, where our Realpolitik? Where is the courage we need? In the status quo and business as usual of conventional development aid? Or, rather, in the decision to transfer 30 billion dollars a year which will not be a cure-all but simply an intelligent and substantial investment, a decent base upon which to make a bit of room for hope, and a springboard that finally and, perhaps even sustainably, will enable the positive effects of other forms of aid to emerge?4

Dambisa Moyo, Dead Aid, 2009.
Majid Rahnema, Quand la misère chasse la pauvreté, 2003, Fayard/Acte Sud.
Michael Samson, op.cit.

4 Whether in the form of gifts or loans, reforming of institutions, promotion of good governance, support to economic policies and their implementation, investment in infrastructures, human capital or organization, transfers of technology or of humanitarian aid through the NGO channel, bilateral and multilateral aid, etc. the need for investment in the developing countries to feed 9.2 billion human beings in 2050 is estimated by FAO to be of the order of 83 billion US dollars annually—see
I fully agree with the conclusion of Mac Millan and Trueba: « in advocating a leading role for social protection in hunger reduction, we are not denying the need for agricultural development to meet expanding food demand. We see the first big challenge as ending hunger rapidly, but the second is to make a shift to truly sustainable food consumption and production systems, with small-scale farmers playing a key role in the latter ».

Frédéric DEVE  
Consultant, FAO

36. Elisenda Estruch-Puertas and Cristina Rapone from FAO, Italy

Dear Mrs. Bertini and members of the High Level Panel of Experts,

We welcome the opportunity to provide comments on the scope of this report on "Social Protection for Food Security", which we regard as a very appropriate and timely initiative.

Following previous comments, we would like to take the opportunity to emphasise some aspects that have already been mentioned, as well as point out important elements that we suggest to consider in the study:

1. It is necessary to find a commonly agreed definition of social protection, and clarify possible differences which may arise between the broader term "social protection" and "social safety nets".

2. It is important to take into consideration the differences between emergency response programmes and long-term social protection programmes (UN 2008 http://www.un.org/issues/food/taskforce/Documentation/CFA%20Web.pdf). It is beneficial to make short term social protection measures accessible to meet immediate needs of vulnerable households and improve their access to food and nutrition support. However, in order to build long term resilience, to improve food stability and fully address the root causes of food insecurity, it is necessary to develop long-term transformative interventions, which include developmental objectives, promote women and youth engagement, and foster group cooperation. Furthermore, it is important to consider the interactions between safety nets and agricultural and rural development interventions, to build on potential synergies and to avoid having either type of intervention undermine the other. It might be useful in this context to also refer to the Social Protection Floor initiative lead by the United Nations.

3. It is fundamental to emphasise the importance of employment, particularly of decent rural employment for food and nutrition security. Since labour is usually the sole asset poor people can rely on and low returns is one the main causes of people's vulnerability, decent work is a compulsory step for any strategy to improve household resilience and enhance their capacity to manage risks. Social protection constitutes one of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda (http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm), and promoting decent rural employment therefore implies extending social protection to rural workers. The current lack of adequate access to social services is reinforced by the prevalence of informal and non–regular employment arrangements in rural areas. Furthermore, the lack of social infrastructure and reward for unpaid care work undertaken mainly by women and young girls increase gender inequalities...

http://www.fao.org/wsfs/forum2050/wsfs-background-documents/hlef-issues-briefs/fr It is imperative that these needs be satisfied, but that won’t suffice to stop the massacre which we are witnessing today. In order for such investments to be effective, we believe, they must be accompanied by an immediate doubling of the revenue of the poorest by way of a massive and sustained redistribution of revenue for the time span of a whole generation—instead of waiting for investments that are slow in coming and the hypothetical cascade effects of economic growth to begin to actually reduce poverty (this having been the dominant trend of thought before the onset of the current crisis...).
hampering their participation in the labour market and therefore their contribution to agricultural production and food security.

In this context, more information are needed on the impacts of social protection programmes on employment creation, and specifically on the impacts of public employment programmes, including employment guarantee schemes vis-à-vis public works. Concerning public employment programmes, it would also be very important to analyse the nutritional impacts of these programmes, possibly through a gender lens, as there is very little knowledge on this aspect.

4. Linked to promoting decent work standards for all, we would like to emphasise the fundamental importance of adopting a right-based approach to social protection, based on strong guarantees and clear entitlements. In this regard, it is important to look at vulnerable categories and their access to social protection, including youth; women; migrant workers; and children, as a way to prevent and reduce child labour.

5. Finally, in the discussion about successes and failures of existing programmes, we would also recommend to concentrate on lessons learnt in the context of high food prices and food price volatility, and analyse the different options and beneficiaries’ preferences between cash and in-kind transfers.

We hope that these comments might help.
If you need any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind Regards,
Elisenda Estruch-Puertas and Cristina Rapone
Rural Employment Team
Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

37. Grow up free from Poverty NGOs coalition

We welcome the High Level Panel of Experts’ proposal to conduct a study on social protection for food security and would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the scope and emphasis of the report.

Outline/scope of work

We welcome the scope of work, especially;

- The aim to better understand how and why populations are vulnerable as well as what is needed to make these populations less vulnerable, including good practice and lessons learnt from existing programmes.
- That study will explore implications for design and implementation and questions on funding and sustainability

In particular, we welcome the focus on vulnerability across the lifecycle (first 1000 days, pregnancy and breastfeeding, elderly, puberty) and the acknowledgement of the role of women in ensuring adequate nutrition.

However, the scope of the work should focus on comprehensive social protection that ensures a commitment to long-term, chronic poverty reduction, and consequently greater food security, with safety nets as one component of this.
The scope of work should also develop a better understanding of political economy aspects of how and why social protection policies are developed, implemented and sustained as well as the role and potential of citizen demand in generating the political will. In addition, the study should examine the roles of different actors in design and implementation, including Government, Civil society, the private sector and development partners. Lastly, in addition to looking at the design, implementation and measurement of impact the study should develop a better understanding of monitoring and accountability mechanisms that ensure the effective implementation of social protection programmes.

Main aspects and innovative approaches for the report to emphasise

The report should highlight:

- The need for context-specific, nationally-owned social protection systems that protect vulnerable people at key stages of the life cycle
- The importance of long-term social protection aimed at reducing poverty and ensuring food security
- The importance of the political economy and roles of different actors

In order to have notable impacts on reducing vulnerability and improving food security, particular attention should be given to:

- The challenge of seasonality and food price rises. Consequently, social protection policies need to be context-specific and flexible, with particular attention given to how to deal with these challenges (such as indexing to inflation, complementing with food/micronutrient transfers)
- The value of transfer and whether it is sufficient to meets the cost of a nutritious diet, beyond a focus on staple foods and including the cost and availability of other foods that are vital for a nutritious diet, which are often neglected
- The importance of linking to broad and inclusive social and economic policies and on ensuring complementary policies focused on nutrition, livelihoods and health

Nicola Hypher
Social Protection Policy Adviser
Save the Children

On behalf of Grow up free from Poverty coalition of NGOs.

38. S. Edison from India

Dear Sir,

I am of the opinion that the e-consultation is an excellent opportunity to air our views freely. Accordingly, I may be permitted to offer the following comments on all the 4 issues flagged ::

On point (1)::: The exercise is quite appropriate and politically important.
On point (2)::: The de-notified tribal population, the coastal population and those who live in inaccessible hills could form nearly half the targeted populace. A mechanism must be worked to develop a blue-print and enable an "inclusive growth", considering their inaccessibility to food, unawareness of health-risk issues. Serious insect transmitted diseases threaten their lives and it results in their social exclusion. Some of them have access to ITK of rare herbs and there is a need for their social protection and utilize the vast traditional knowledge for welfare of the urban folks. In a way, they are food-secure but not nutritionally-secure.

On point (3)::: The report could even emphasize the role of excessive consumption of liquor, lack of enough cash-on-hand among the less-privileged people. Mass education and awareness campaigns relegating to social protection offers a new goal. The report could dwell upon the nutritional needs at say, 100 days/300 days / 1000 days etc. and also guide "how to make it sustainable in the long run". Items like "Farmer's Field Schools" deserve a thought-process.

On point (4)::: Funding must obviously come from the local/self Govt. Institutions like Municipalities / Village Councils etc., and this will bear @ 50 % of the cost; the rest must come from WFP, IFAD, NGOs etc., A strong political will and administrative decision is badly needed. The monitoring team to study the Project’s impact must have 2/3rd of members/Experts from LDCs.

Thank you for the patience in listening to me and ensuring my participation in e-consultation on Discussion paper No. 72.

With kind regards.

Dr. S.Edison.

Dr. S. EDISON, Ph.D.,
Fmr. Director, CTCRI (ICAR) Govt of India.
FAO/UNDP Expert/ Consultant - Spices & Tuber Crops
Ex-Member, Board of Trustees, CIP/CGIAR, Lima, Peru.

39. Lia van Wesenbeeck, Centre for World Food Studies, Amsterdam (SOW-VU)

In the last weeks, many comments have been given on the draft outline for the study on social protection for food security. Although the online consultation is now officially closed, I would like to use the opportunity offered by the moderator to offer some comments still.

Many suggestions have been made already to improve the outline, stressing important elements of social protection that are not included in the draft. Remarks vary from specific points on how to improve the measurement and definition to general concerns on dimensions of social protection that are currently not addressed, including governance, quality of institutions, and ownership of interventions.

It is clear that the current outline can be improved by taking specific points raised on board, such as providing an operational definition of "vulnerability" before identification and characterization starts; taking a broad view on possible measures to decrease vulnerability, including household level systems; paying due attention to the issues of targeting and ownership in discussing management structures for interventions and, finally, acknowledging the statistical difficulties of measuring impacts of interventions.
However, as many other comments also reveal, the interpretation of the topic in the outline of the study seems to be very narrow. The title of the study suggests a very broad scope of research, since social protection covers many different fields, including the issues of land tenure arrangements and protection against volatile food prices, which have been the topics of earlier studies for the HLPE. It is, therefore, remarkable that this study is only commissioned now, which gives the impression that the planning of studies seems guided by the actuality of the day instead of being part of a research program that would lead to a better understanding of the prevalence and causes of undernutrition with the aim of providing guidelines for international and national policies to enhance food security.

Nonetheless, the anticipated study on social protection now provides all opportunity to build on conclusions from the earlier two studies and to integrate policy recommendations from the upcoming plenary session of the CFS. Moreover, the study’s deadline allows for a broader scope, to turn it into more than merely one of the studies in the row, and to serve as setting the agenda for what comes next. For example, clarifying the concept of vulnerability itself may suggest further studies on specific dimensions of vulnerability, e.g. employment, schooling, health, or studies that focus on vulnerabilities against specific type of external shocks.

A more fundamental and in our view necessary broadening of scope would be to include a review of procedures and principles for selection of countries, regions or populations eligible for international assistance in promoting food security. Given a limited budget, it is obvious that choices have to made with respect to who is entitled to receiving support and who is not. This is particularly important for emergency aid, as the urgency of the needs leave no time for debate, but where the donor community should not become the hostage of time pressure, whereby a large part of the funding may end up in the wrong hands.

Ethical dilemmas exist in all donor-recipient relationship but they are presumably most salient in emergency situations, with questions such as: “should selection be guided by cost-efficiency (focusing on large populations that are relatively easy to reach and only need limited support) or by a desire to help those most in need (which most likely implies high costs for transport and specific food items, and hence restricts the number of people who can be reached)?”, “How to balance the need for media coverage to secure funding versus being guided by media attention for specific events and regions?”, “How to operate in environments where food insecurity is to some extent attributable to deliberate actions by authorities or local factions?”. Help building a renewed consensus around these issues is in our view badly needed, and would give the present study more “teeth” in guiding and feeding the October 2012 CFS plenary session.

40. Syed Md. Zainul Abedin from the Department of Agriculture Extension, Bangladesh

Dear Moderator,


The seminar was organized by FPMU and presented by Laura B. Rawlings, Lead Specialist, World Bank. This seminar is part of the wider consultation process the World Bank is undertaking with all its stakeholders for finalizing a new global Social Protection and Labor (SP&L) Strategy, which is scheduled for discussion by the World Bank Group Board of Executive Directors in early 2012.
The new strategy will address how the World Bank Group can help developing countries achieve their social protection and labor goals.
I gathered an impression from this seminar that it is the high time to incorporate the street food issue in the Social Protection and Labor Strategy of the World Bank. I request the moderator to kindly examine the draft document and decide how this important issue may be integrated with the strategies of the World Bank.
Best regards,

Dr. Syed Md. Zainul Abedin