



Food Security Policy in Southern Sudan: Challenges and the Way Forward

1. Background

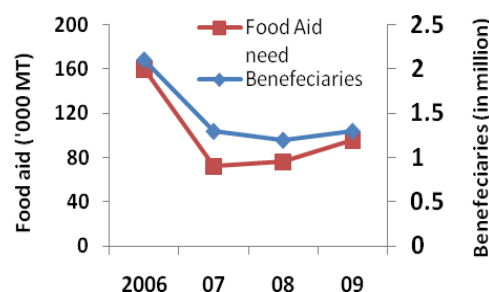
This policy brief is prepared based on the findings of the recently concluded food security related sectoral policy review work which was supported by the Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action Project (SIFSIA). The main objective of the review was to review and analyse food security related policies, strategic plans and other programme documents developed by line Ministries of the Government of Southern Sudan. Nine policy and strategy documents were covered in the review process¹. The review employed FAO's twin track approach to identify policy gaps related to food security interventions considering rural development measures (track 1) and social protection mechanisms (track 2). The policies were also reviewed against the four pillars of food security, namely availability, access, utilisation and stability. The review not only identified major policy gaps in each policy or strategy but also made recommendations to address them.

2. Food insecurity and the need for appropriate policy.

Southern Sudan is one of the structurally food deficit part of Sudan. The food insecurity situation is characterized mainly by recurrent drought; prices fluctuations attributed to heavy dependence on imported food commodities from neighbouring countries; civil insecurity; and lack of infrastructure. Moreover, limited

capacity for rural service delivery, shortage of productivity enhancing inputs, lack of research and adaptable technology are structural problems that affect food security in Southern Sudan. Despite its high agricultural potential, over the past several years large numbers of vulnerable people have been receiving some forms of food aid (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Estimated number of food aid beneficiaries and food aid need (2006-09)



Source: FAO/WFP CFSAM reports, (Feb 06, Jan 07, Feb 09)

According to the 2009 National Household Survey results, the magnitude of hunger in Southern Sudan, as measured by the prevalence of food deprivation², was 47 percent of the population³. As per FAO's severity of undernourishment scale, this rate is considered very high. The alarmingly high rates of undernourishment means that there is still a long way for the country to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets in relation to hunger.

¹ Food and Agricultural Policy Frame Work and Strategic Plan and Forestry Policy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Animal Resource Policy and Strategic Plan (2006 –2011), and Fishery Policy of Ministry of Animal Resources and Fishery, Trade and Industry Policy Framework of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Water Resource Policy of Ministry of Water Resources Irrigation, Cooperative and Rural Development Policy of Ministry of Rural development and Cooperatives, Nutrition Health Policy of Ministry of Health, Transport Sector Policy of the Ministry of Road and Transport.

Link to the report :

www.fao.org/.../1_food%20security%20sector%20policy%20review%20revised%20doc

² FAO's measure for food deprivation, which referred as the prevalence of undernourishment, is based comparison of usual food consumption expressed in terms of dietary energy with certain energy requirement norms. The part of the population below the energy requirement norm is considered as undernourished (underfed).

www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4249e/ey4249e/06.htm.005

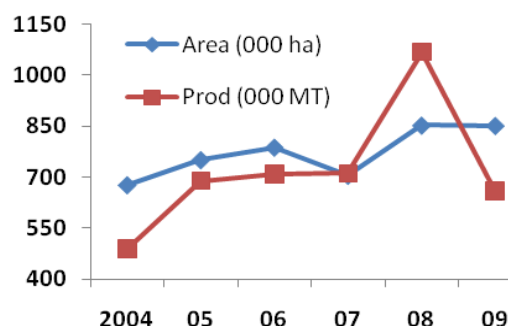
³ Food and Nutrition Assessment In Sudan: Analysis of 2009 Household Survey, Central Bureau of Statistic (CBS) and Southern Sudan Centre for Census Statistics and Evaluation with support from SIFSIA

www.fao.org/fileadmin/userupload/sifsia/docs1_sudan_food_insecurityassessmentnt_NBHS_July09pdf



Rate of malnutrition in Southern Sudan have been consistently higher than any other country in sub-Saharan Africa, more than twice the average reported for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The prevalence of malnutrition in preschool children is extraordinary high at around 22 percent, consistently and substantially higher than the World Health Organisation (WHO) cut-off for nutrition emergencies of 15 percent⁴.

Figure 2: Cereal area and production data for Southern Sudan (2004-09)



Sources: FAO/WFP CFSAM reports (2004-09)

Although agricultural production has shown some improvements over the past few years (Figure 2), due to the relative peace witnessed after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), large numbers of Southern Sudanese are still highly vulnerable to food insecurity.

In spite of the current wide spread food insecurity problems, Southern Sudan has an immense potential for sustainable economic development and improved food security with its vast natural resources and favourable agro-ecology. Appropriate policies addressing major food security issues are of paramount importance for the Government to tackle the prevailing food insecurity problems. The policies need to address the multifaceted dimensions of food security that range from food production to market access and the nutrition wellbeing of Southern Sudanese. It also needs to address the stability dimension, i.e. availability and accessibility of food at all times through emergency preparedness measures in particular.

3. Current Food Security related policies.

The Government of Southern Sudan has developed a number of sectoral policies with significant food

security bearings such as the Food and Agricultural Policy Framework and Strategic Plan, Animal Resources Sector policy and Strategic Plan, Fisheries policy, Trade and Industry policy, Transport Sector policy, and Health Nutrition Policy. This is in line with the CPA which gave GOSS a full autonomy in developing policies that are specific to the Southern Sudan. The documents reflect GOSS key priorities with regard to rural development, poverty reduction and food security. This section of the policy brief summarizes the findings of the review work focusing on selected and most relevant sector policy documents.

The Food and Agricultural Policy Framework: (FAPF) (2006). The FAPF indicated a number of programmes and activities directly related to food security. The availability, access and stability dimensions are better addressed than the utilization dimension. It is reasonably safe to say that this policy has addressed the issue of food availability mainly through promoting improved agricultural practices. However, it lacks quantitative and qualitative production target (projection of domestic food production target both in quantitative and qualitative terms) during the lifetime of the framework. Indeed, progress on implementation of policy objectives can only be measured partially if there are no target production levels that can be compared to the actual measurement of production. Moreover, institutional arrangements for implementing most of the policy objectives and programmes are the least developed part of the FAPF. Therefore, it is important that the policy document, when revised, incorporate appropriate institutional arrangement that include inter and inter-ministerial coordination and linkages with non-governmental development partners including the private sector.

The Animal Resources Policy framework (ARPF) (2006): The ARPF has systematically identifies the constraints of the sector, policy strategic objectives and policy measures. Inter-ministerial institutional arrangements for implementing strategic objectives proposed in the Strategic Plan are indicated. The main gaps in the animal resource strategic plan are lack of time frame for the implementation of most policy objectives and the lack of budgetary allocation and funding arrangements for the various policy objectives and interventions. The policy

⁴: www.A2Zproject.org/pdf/A2Z-southern-sudan_Doc_MEH_edits_092308.pdf

document has indicated the importance of early warning system for forecasting disease outbreaks and to respond with free services for diseases that are socially and economically important. More emergency response related objectives need to be included in the policy to assist the pastoralist communities whose food security situations are frequently affected due to various manmade and natural disasters. Addressing emergency responses in the face of natural disasters or insecurity by way of introducing safety net programmes and other emergency responses are crucial to address food insecurity problem of pastoralists during crisis.

The Fishery Policy Framework (2006): This policy has documented the sector's potential for food security and poverty alleviation. It has also identified key constraints, and proposed relevant objectives, programmes and activities to realize its vision, goals and objectives. In general, the programme areas covered under the Policy Framework contribute to food security including through increased fish production, income generation from fish marketing, infrastructure development, research and training, and aquaculture development, among others. The Policy Framework has indicated the need to increase protein requirement through fish production to a level of 150 000 tonnes per year, though the baseline or the level of production during the time of the strategic plan development is not clearly indicated. This hampers the monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation. The disaster preparedness issues is not well addressed and need to be considered while revising the Fishery Policy framework in the future.

The Transport Sector Policy (2007): It has been highlighted in the GOSS transport policy that prioritization of road investments should be based on the level of economic and social benefits expected from those investments. The policy indicated that during the immediate recovery period, project prioritization should be based on the social criteria whose objectives are geared, among others, to increased mobility; peace building, security and facilitating administration; facilitating the return of internally displaced persons, resettlement and distribution of relief goods; maximization of access to social services; creation of employment and poverty reduction; and increased food security through increased production. These criteria directly or indirectly address the availability and access dimension of

food security. The contribution that the road sector could have in linking surplus areas to market centres for ensuring food supplies need to be well articulated as major policy objective. The policy framework and the strategic plan lack institutional coordination with major food security stakeholders such as Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries, and Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This need to be considered when the policy is revised in the future.

The Trade and Industry Policy (2009): A number of good and innovative ideas, statements, and interventions which can potentially contribute to food security are described in the Trade and Industry policy. To be improved the document only needs systematic realignment of those descriptions and an appropriate articulation of policy objectives contributing to food security. The intention of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI) to eliminate multiple taxes, provision of land conversion rebates, etc. if enforced through legislation could greatly help in improving access to food and stabilizing prices. However, a policy statement on the position of the Ministry in relation to food aid imports should be included in the next policy review/development process. The trade and industry policy also proposes the promotion of marketing agricultural products through land conversion tax. It also indicated that inter- and intra-state trade be strengthened to ensure that surplus food crops are sold to deficit areas while food deficit areas may sell other surplus resources such as (cattle) to other areas. It further states that MCI will encourage the production of (i) subsistence crops for domestic consumption and, (ii) working with the Food Security Council and other stakeholders to introduce and accelerate mechanized agriculture in an effort to boost agricultural productivity for export crops.

4. Policy gaps

Major common gaps have been identified in most policy documents:

- Absences of national/GOSS food security strategy for guiding and streamlining food security objectives in sector policies. This is considered as major constraint that hindered alignment of food security concerns in sector policies.
- Lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework

including inadequate benchmarks and associated indicators was a major gap that limits effective monitoring of policy implementation.

- Most sector policy and strategy documents do not have a framework for periodical reviewing of policies such as mid-term evaluation of policy implementation process. Without timely review of the implementation process, it would be difficult to trace if the measures identified to achieve policy objectives have been appropriately taken.
- Another serious gap common to most sector policies and strategies is lack of proper Institutional arrangements for policy/strategy implementation. This gap is particularly critical with respect to the coordination of relevant stakeholders including States.
- Very often, budgetary considerations regarding policy implementation and monitoring were not included in the policy documents.
- Some policy documents have set targets to be achieved at the end of policy implementation period. However, baseline data necessary to compare future observations or targets were not properly indicated in the policy documents.
- Most policy documents have been developmental in nature and give little emphasis to short term transitory food insecurity issues that include lack of appropriate disaster reduction and response measures during emergency situation.

5. The way forward

In order to address the gaps indicated above, GOSS in collaboration with development partners need to take appropriate short and long term action which mainly focus on the following points:

- GOSS proposes to define and implement policy benchmarking approach that aims to achieve the best policy performance for food security based on a vision and the adoption of best practices coming either from in-country experience or from abroad.

- GOSS considers developing a comprehensive food Security strategy which will provide direction and clear guidance for developing and updating relevant sector policies and strategies in the future. GOSS also assess another option which would consist in streamlining food security objectives and measures in all relevant sector policies and national poverty reduction strategy. In all cases, the Food Security Council needs to take leadership and overall guidance in food security strategy development and streamlining.
- Appropriate units or task force that deals with policy issues need to be established in sector ministries and actions need to be taken to ensure proper linkage and harmonization with States.
- In order to enhance the capacity at sector ministries there is a need for more capacity building support that targets proper institutional setup and human resource capacity development through short and medium term training.
- In revising the policies, attention should be given to M & E framework which should be incorporated in sector policies and overall food security strategy

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Disclaimer: the information in this policy brief does not necessarily represent the official views or positions of SSCSE/FSTS, FAO, and EU.