



Getting it right – united against hunger: a manifesto for change

What policies and partnerships are needed from governments, donors and global institutions to strengthen the world food system and eradicate hunger and malnutrition? At the outset, a key issue is to involve marginalized people, especially small farmers, in shaping policies. Too much decision-making aimed at eradicating hunger and malnutrition is simply top-down. As a result, agricultural development often focuses narrowly on increasing productivity rather than on the broader food and nutritional security of people.

Aid donors from high-income countries are often little better than low- and middle-income country governments in their policies on aid provision; many aid projects ensure greater accountability to the donor than to actual beneficiaries. Yet such aid is critical – it amounts to one-third to one-half of the agricultural budgets of many of the poorest countries, and thus has a huge influence on those countries' government policies. A 2008 report by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development states bluntly that “farmers and rural communities have been largely excluded from agricultural policy processes” such as donor joint assistance strategies and sector-wide approaches (which bring together governments and donors in promoting an agricultural sector strategy). Governments, donors and global institutions need to stop paying lip service to peoples' participation and actually promote it instead. Agriculture policy-making needs to be a genuinely multi-stakeholder, and transparent, process.

What should low- and middle-income country governments do?

Invest more in agriculture and social protection

First, most countries need to spend much more on both agriculture and social protection. As noted in Chapter 4, despite African governments' commitment in 2003 to allocate 10 per cent of their national budgets to agriculture, fewer than 10 out of 53 are doing so. At the same time, inadequate government policies have resulted in only 20 per cent of the world's population having access to formal social protection (FAO, 2010).

Many policy-makers need reminding (tragically) that not only is ending hunger a moral imperative, but investing in agriculture and social protection also makes good economic sense. Of the seven African countries that spent more than 10 per cent of their budgets on agriculture during 2004–2007, all achieved reductions in the proportion of hungry people over the previous decade; for example, in Ethiopia, the

Photo opposite page: In 2009, the number of hungry people in the world exceeded 1 billion – one-sixth of humanity – for the first time in history. Activists from La Via Campesina took part in a demonstration outside the Rome headquarters of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization during the World Food Summit.

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proportion dropped from 63 to 46 per cent and, in Malawi, from 45 to 29 per cent. Conversely, of the 18 countries spending less than 5 per cent, seven saw *increases* in the proportion of the population that is undernourished, while seven saw reductions (one experienced no change, while hunger figures are not available for the other three). What hinders sufficient investment is not so much lack of financial resources as the absence of political will. Policy-makers at all levels need to be pushed or encouraged to invest adequately in programmes to combat hunger (see Box 6.1).

Box 6.1 National Societies' work to improve food security

Food security is a key issue for Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in many parts of the world. The Red Cross Red Crescent's food security activities are related to vulnerability reduction, disaster response and recovery, and risk reduction is central to these activities.

Across Africa, a large number of National Societies are engaged in initiatives to improve food insecurity. Around half of the sub-Saharan African National Societies have so far implemented food security programmes, designed to improve the availability, access and utilization of food in communities.

In 2009 and 2010, small-, medium- and large-scale food security programmes and projects with a focus on building resilience were implemented by National Societies in 18 African countries.

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Each year, on average, more than 10 million people – out of a population of almost 83 million – have problems in getting enough food for themselves and their families. In Tigray, the country's northern-most state, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, in cooperation with the IFRC and the Swedish Red Cross, has set up a programme to enhance the food security of 2,259 vulnerable households, with a focus on improving alternative agricultural production and reducing vulnerability in the four years from 2009 to 2012.

The programme's activities include supplying funding and technical training in, for example, dairy farming, cattle-fattening and bee-keeping. After training, people can join a saving and credit scheme and are given some money to purchase livestock, for example. Amina Haji, a divorced woman with five children, is a beneficiary of the project. The Red Cross trained her to manage cattle-fattening, the feeding and marketing of animals. She has also benefited from becoming a member of the project's saving and credit cooperative. She has found that cattle-fattening is a "profitable activity" and her annual income has almost doubled. The result: she saves money on a monthly basis, sends all of her school-age children to school and is able to feed her family three times a day. "Being a beneficiary of the project has changed my life completely," she says.

The Malawi Red Cross Society is implementing an integrated food security project in a number of villages, with funding from the Finnish Red Cross. A group of ten farmers have benefited from the sales of their surplus crops. Originally the group did not produce enough crops to meet their food needs but, with technical assistance from the Red Cross food security officer and agricultural extension officers, they were able to make major improvements. These included irrigating a large area of land, using the seeds and tread pumps they were given.

They have managed to achieve bumper yields. "Irrigation farming has really helped me and my family, I am now able to feed them three meals a day," says Jenipher Frank, one of the farmers.

National Society food security activities often combine providing food following an emergency with programmes to build communities' capacity and promote long-term food security through, for example, financial and technical support to farmers. In March 2010, the Qatar Red Crescent Society and the Islamic Development Bank signed an agreement with the government of Niger to provide emergency aid to victims of the food crisis following a year of shortfall in agricultural products and animal fodder. Grain was distributed to the most vulnerable households (some 115,000 people) and, in June 2010, food baskets were given to people affected by the floods in the capital Niamey. The project also provides seeds, agricultural equipment, pesticides, fertilizers and structural support such as pumps and irrigation systems to 100 vulnerable farmers.

There is also a nutrition component to the programme. Following the severe drought in 2005–2006, the Niger Red Cross and Qatar Red Crescent set up two therapeutic feeding centres and 31 supplementary feeding centres. They provide supplementary food items and healthcare services to malnourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers, and have trained Niger Red Cross volunteers in running nutrition and malaria programmes. The French Red Cross also provides support in three regions of the country.

Through its integrated primary healthcare programmes, the Somali Red Crescent Society aims to promote growth and prevent acute malnutrition among infants and young children. It does this through providing children aged between six and 36 months with Plumpy'nut doses (ready-to-use therapeutic food); treating children

with severe malnutrition; providing supplementary feeding to children and mothers; and promoting breastfeeding. Staff and volunteers are trained in providing these programmes and promoting good nutrition practices.

But it is not only in Africa where National Societies are promoting food security. Small-scale food security programmes are operating in six countries in the Americas (Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay) where high rates of poverty have caused hunger and severe malnutrition among the populations. Currently the IFRC's Americas office is developing a food security and livelihoods strategic plan to further explore possibilities of scaling up National Society programming efforts.

And in Jamaica, the Jamaica Red Cross 'meals-on-wheels' project, which was established in the early 1950s, continues to provide a valuable service, mainly for elderly and infirm people but also for others made vulnerable by the effects of the global recession. Red Cross branches across the island have developed some version of the feeding programme, providing meals or groceries. Many of the beneficiaries say they would not be alive today without the daily meal they receive. A nurse at a care home for elderly people said the meals are "definitely a benefit because we need so much help to make sure the residents receive all the nutrients they need each day."

Food insecurity is not unknown in the richer world. It is estimated that some 43 million people in the European Union (EU) – or about 9 per cent of the whole population – are at risk of food poverty (EU website). A number of European National Societies, through their thousands of volunteers and with the support of the EU, are involved in providing food aid, notably in Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia, to around 1–2 million people.

Globally, the world needs to find more financial resources – Oxfam estimates that an annual increase of US\$ 75 billion is needed to invest in agriculture and social protection to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving hunger (Oxfam, 2010). Save the Children says that the costs of a package to address undernutrition for the eight countries where half the world's malnourished children live comes to just US\$ 8.8 billion (Save the Children, 2009). A 2008 meeting convened by the African Union recommended that states commit to spending at least 2 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on social protection (FAO, 2010).

All governments should commit to developing well-costed, national action plans to address hunger and undernutrition. Yet many governments still need to commit to even promoting social protection programmes, which is especially vital in the 20 countries of the world where 80 per cent of stunted children live. It is often forgotten that social protection is a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Countries that have successfully reduced hunger have tended to do so by combining the promotion of equitable economic growth with social protection schemes (see Chapter 4). There are about 20 social protection programmes operating around the world that attach conditions (such as attending health centres or schools) to those people receiving support, and many others that are unconditional. Employment guarantee schemes can also be successful. India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme, which was passed into law in 2005 and guarantees 100 days' work to each rural household, was the first national social security legislation explicitly to protect the legal entitlement to work. Although the programme is not without its problems, by 2009–2010 it was providing work to one-third of India's rural population, half of whom belong to the most impoverished communities such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (IFSN, 2011).

Gradually, more and more countries are realizing that social protection is not so much a cost as an investment – not only in peoples' welfare but also in economic growth and reducing the likelihood of social conflict – and that it tends to be cost-effective. The annual budget for India's employment guarantee scheme of around US\$ 9 billion represents less than 0.75 per cent of GDP and 4 per cent of the 2009–2010 national budget, even though it covers the whole country. Brazil's Zero Hunger programme, which has strikingly reduced hunger levels, amounts to just 1 per cent of the national budget.

Governments need to learn the lessons from other countries' programmes. Social protection tends to be successful when governments demonstrate strong political will for them to succeed, often after civil society groups exert pressure on them to introduce and sustain those programmes – and even more when such groups participate in them, as in Brazil.

Decentralized implementation, and democracy, can also be important. India's experience is that a functional democracy helps ensure that legal entitlements, which might

only exist on paper, translate into actual employment guarantees. The technical details of programmes are also crucial, either to better target beneficiaries and/or to ensure programmes are implemented with few delays and bureaucracy (common problems in such schemes). Further evidence suggests that cash transfer programmes work best when such transfers are guaranteed, predictable and regular, thus performing an effective insurance function.

It is important to recognize the limits to social protection programmes. By themselves, few are magic bullets to ending hunger and they must be complemented by broader policy changes. In Brazil, for example, truly eradicating hunger requires reducing the country's vast inequalities in income distribution and land ownership that successive governments have repeatedly refused to address seriously.

In Malawi, the government's inputs subsidy programme has massively boosted food production. Yet unequal land tenure remains unaddressed while farmers may be building a dependence on chemical fertilizers in the absence of good extension or credit services that would help them in the long term. Corruption and weak local governance, which stalk many social protection programmes and hinder their effectiveness, must also be addressed (IFSN, 2011).

Various debates prevail on social protection, such as whether programmes should be universal or targeted (and, if so, at whom – the poorest or the slightly less poor?), whether food aid should be in the form of cash or kind (and whether sourced locally or imported) and whether programmes should be conditional or unconditional. Recent evidence suggests that targeted programmes tend to perform better than untargeted subsidies. It also shows that who is targeted is critical; many public health subsidy programmes, for example, end up benefiting the relatively well-off and are biased towards inpatient hospital care (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2009).

Moving from food aid to locally sourced food and cash

As regards food aid, evidence is strong that locally sourced food creates positive ripple effects in the local economy whereas imported food can undermine local producers. Cash transfers are likely to have more positive multiplier effects than food aid. The money received is spent on purchasing goods and services which, in turn, creates employment and income for the providers of those services. The evidence on conditionality is more mixed, but there are strong arguments that compulsory attendance at health facilities, for example, should be avoided in low-income countries where the supply of services is often weak and where evidence proving the beneficial impact of imposing such conditions is absent (Save the Children, 2009).

When it comes to nutrition, cash transfers should aim to reach children early, prioritizing children under the age of 5 and pregnant women in the form of child and maternity benefit. A major problem is lack of basic information about hunger. Governments

need to ensure that families receive good education about nutrition, including on how to prepare food and feed their families safely. Indeed, such nutrition messages need to be incorporated into agriculture policy since increasing food production by itself does not guarantee adequate family nutrition.

Farmers need cheap loans to invest in future production, savings to respond to external shocks and, ideally, access to insurance services. Yet if there is a credit crunch in high-income nations, there exists a full-blown credit crisis in rural areas of low- and middle-income countries. Under pressure from donors over the past two decades, many governments have largely withdrawn from providing or underwriting financial services, seeing the private sector as the legitimate actor or relying on often patchy micro-finance initiatives. Yet private banks tend to regard small farmers as too risky and make few loans to agriculture.

The same governments that say they are promoting 'farming as a business' deny farmers access to capital to extend their businesses, thus locking them into a poverty trap. Governments need to revisit the notion that credit is simply a 'private good' to be supplied by the private sector; they should increase their support for loan guarantee schemes, subsidized credit or the provision of capital for banks with a government shareholding.

Reforming agricultural policy and institutions

Often, simply increasing resources is not sufficient and this is particularly true in agricultural policy. Ministries of agriculture are sometimes so inefficient that increased funds can easily go to waste or are just not spent. In Uganda, for example, around one-third of the agriculture budget is left unspent every year. In other countries, so much of the budget is allocated to salaries that little money remains for capital or investment projects. Institutional reform is vital, especially to engender a more results-oriented (rather than outputs-oriented) culture among officials, to empower marginalized women officials and gender units and – returning to the issue highlighted at the outset – to set up processes that entail really listening to farmers in shaping policies.

Corruption is also a major problem in agriculture spending; the author's research suggests that up to one-third of agriculture budgets simply go missing in some countries.

Box 6.2 Monitoring with new technology

A nutrition information system (NIS) is devoted to the continuous monitoring of a nutritional situation, to early warning or to programme management. One system can support all

three. The system is designed to use different sources of information such as nutrition surveys, sentinel sites or feeding or health centre databases.

Nutrition information systems are built as chains through which information is transferred. At one end of the chain, field workers collect the relevant data in their village or in the health or feeding centre they are supervising. They then analyse the data to make decisions about their own programme. At the other end, decision-makers analyse the data provided and adjust their decisions accordingly, often on a larger scale.

Data can inform programmatic decisions such as whether to increase or reduce the amounts of therapeutic nutritional supplies required for feeding centres or whether to adjust the support to infants in vulnerable areas. An NIS can inform the analysis of global trends of the various forms of malnutrition, allowing for an expanded response where necessary and highlighting possible preventive steps. In the case of early warning, if the system integrates food security information, it will support the timely identification of a crisis and therefore allow for a rapid response to be provided to the population in danger.

In all cases, information systems require the same set of core features: data should be of good quality, easily collected and accessed in a timely fashion.

Strong capacity building at the level of local teams ensures the quality of data. Rapid staff turnover and overly complex questionnaires can cause inconsistency in the quality of the data collected. Once an NIS is in place, it is always tempting to add additional questions, thereby lengthening the questionnaire, adding to data collection time and often adversely affecting quality.

The issue of time is closely linked to that of access. In many cases, data may be collected on the ground but never reach the other end of the information chain. Between the field worker writing answers on a clipboard

and the information manager receiving the reports in the capital city (sometimes hundreds of kilometres away), there are typically various intermediate steps. Whether they are logistic (transport of the questionnaires or reports) or supervisory (local office to district, province, etc.), at each step there is a risk that data are lost or stay on someone's desk. In consequence, the information system ends up providing a late and incomplete picture of the nutritional situation of the targeted area. Decision-making processes are thus also delayed. The risks of taking the wrong decision increase proportionally with the quantity of data lost on the way through the information chain.

Things are changing, however, thanks to the development of information technologies. Most malnourished children live in low- and middle-income countries that are now covered by mobile phone networks. Even the most remote area of these countries quickly gets coverage.

In order to use the benefits of new technology fully, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has linked up with entrepreneurs from the private sector, academics, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and various ministries in several countries to launch a pilot NIS scheme based on the use of SMS (short message service) technology. No more clipboards, no more handwriting and no more chain of information.

The NIS questionnaires, in their most advanced design, are already in mobile phones provided to field workers, who simply need to enter the data required in the right cells. They then send the questionnaires in the form of an SMS directly to a server, usually in the capital city. The server will immediately determine whether the questionnaire or report has been completed properly and send a message to field staff notifying them that the data have

been received and requesting that any mistakes be corrected.

The use of SMS helps improve the quality of the data collected and considerably reduces the time for the data to reach their final destination. Projects are under way in several countries, including Malawi and Uganda, and evaluations to date show that the use of SMS technology for an NIS has great potential.

Depending on the type of information system implemented, data can be collected directly in the communities or in health or nutrition facilities. Data can be as simple as the number of admissions to feeding centres and/or also consist of the age, sex, weight and height of children attending health facilities or randomly selected in communities. Such measures allow for the monitoring of the nutritional situation in the selected areas, as the server automatically calculates the most important indicators of the nutritional status of each child. Field workers also benefit directly from the system as such calculations can be sent

back to them, allowing them to make immediate decisions about the referral of a child to seek health and nutrition care.

The successful use of new technologies offers great hope for the improvement and scaling-up of NIS in many areas where undernutrition is still not as well monitored as it should be. Access to data remains a major challenge in regions known for having the highest number of undernourished children. Global and national figures are often available only at intervals of three-to-five years, but decision-makers and practitioners need detailed data to be available more regularly, preferably at a suitably disaggregated level to reach the most vulnerable children. The main problem is that financial resources are wholly insufficient for NIS, as efforts are mainly geared toward reactive, life-saving activities. In order for life-saving resources to be provided, undernourished children must first be located. Only representative and effective information systems can do this.

Despite a trend over the past decade to decentralize government spending in many countries, excessive agriculture expenditure often still takes place at headquarters – more than 85 per cent in Malawi and Zambia, for example – leaving little to be spent at field level.

Agriculture spending must be refocused towards the services that really matter to the small farmers who constitute half of the world's hungry people. Both governments and donors have failed to invest sufficiently, for example, in extension services and the provision of rural credit. Public extension services have, mainly because of massive underinvestment, virtually collapsed in many countries; it is now common to find less than one in five farming households that has ever seen an extension agent.

Investing in agricultural research

There is a broad consensus around the world that governments should invest more in agricultural research to improve crop varieties that increase yield (among other things). All but forgotten, however, is that the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, established in 2003, committed African countries to *doubling* their annual spending on agricultural research within ten years. Although there are no figures assessing overall progress towards this goal (it appears not even to have been

monitored), country analysis suggests it is simply being ignored. Rather, agriculture research spending is falling as a proportion of agriculture budgets, in countries such as Kenya and Uganda, for example. Numerous studies show that such spending provides good returns. The International Food Policy Research Institute notes that in Kenya, for every million shillings spent on agricultural research, an additional 103 people can be lifted above the poverty line (Thurlow et al., 2007).

Box 6.3 La Via Campesina and food sovereignty

La Via Campesina (LVC) – which means, literally, 'the peasant road' – currently has more than 200 million members in 70 countries across nine regions of Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe.

From its humble beginnings at the 1992 congress of Nicaraguan National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), where its Managua Declaration called for 'economic democracy' (Blokland, 1993), LVC has become a serious actor on the international scene. It regularly engages with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council. Its local chapters have helped to mastermind the annual World Social Forum and other global civil society events.

Members of LVC range from subsistence farmers to migrant labourers, from organizations of indigenous peoples to landless peasants, from producer cooperatives, pastoralist or range farming and fishing communities to food-rights and consumer activists. They are united by their own experience that the neoliberal global economy depends on trade rules that protect United States and European Union (EU) agricultural subsidies and agribusiness at the expense of food sovereignty. LVC holds that the interests of corporate shareholders and subsidized agro-industry are inherently incompatible with the universal right to food, the rights of small producers, the capacity of

governments to protect national food sovereignty and the global imperative to preserve the ecosystem and biodiversity as common goods.

At the 1996 World Food Summit, therefore, LVC called for 'food sovereignty' to be at the heart of global governance. In its own words:

"Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It develops a model of small-scale sustainable production benefiting communities and their environment. It puts the aspirations, needs and livelihoods of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.

Food sovereignty prioritises local food production and consumption. It gives a country the right to protect its local producers from cheap imports and to control production. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, water, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those who produce food and not of the corporate sector. Therefore the implementation of genuine agrarian reform is one of the top priorities of the farmer's movement" (LVC, 2006).

Addressing the parallel 'Land, Territory and Dignity Forum', LVC general coordinator, Henry Saragih, himself an Indonesian small farmer, underlined that comprehensive agrarian reform is the only way to eradicate hunger and misery in the rural areas:

"...peasant-based food production, artisanal fisheries, pastoralism and the management of natural resources by communities and indigenous people are also severely threatened by the expansion of corporate-based development and the neo-liberal policies of the World Bank, IMF [International Monetary Fund] and WTO [World Trade Organization]. Therefore it is crucial to maintain and strengthen the control by communities over these resources based on the principle of food sovereignty... FAO's mission is to eradicate hunger and poverty in the rural areas. Therefore we expect a strong commitment of FAO on this issue" (LVC, 2006).

Today, the global response to that urgent call for action back in 1996 seems further away and yet more pressing than ever. To take just one example, some 150,000 small farmers in India committed suicide between 1999 and 2009, unable to struggle with the toxic combination of the increased cost of chemical inputs, poor yields, low market prices and rising debt. Many of these farmers died by drinking the now useless pesticides (Paul, 2011).

The vulnerability of farmers and consumers to forces beyond their control is illustrated by the case of southern Mexico, where small producers supply organic, bio-friendly and fair-trade coffee to specialty outlets. But decisions made far away on the international stock exchanges and commodity markets mean that they sometimes sell at below production cost (Pérez-Grovas et al., 2001). Although consumers value their product, such volatility is likely to push some farmers out of business.

Short-sighted policy decisions, unjust trade regimes and poorly regulated corporate interests can ruin local food production, farming communities, dietary habits and cultural traditions that have sustained peoples and ways of life for generations. The figures speak for themselves. In a statement prepared for the March 2011 session of Human Rights Council, the LVC-FIAN (FoodFirst Information and Action Network) spokesperson pointed out that:

- 1 billion people are undernourished worldwide
- 75 per cent of these people are peasant farmers, smallholders, landless and rural workers, who depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihoods, yet lack sufficient access to productive resources
- peasant farmers and rural workers need to be at the very core of efforts to ensure the universal right to food (LVC, 2011).

Drawing the links between hunger and sovereignty, the World Food Programme (WFP) representative in Honduras stated in February 2011: "A country in which 27 per cent of its children suffer chronic malnutrition is not only a problem of development but also of security" (*Honduras Weekly*, 2011).

The coordinator of the Land Research Action Network underlines that small farmers not only produce most of the world's food, but that, contrary to popular myth, they are also efficient. With only 30 per cent of the cultivated area and 25 per cent of farm credit, family farms in Brazil produce 40 per cent of the total national value of production and generate 77 per cent of the nation's agricultural jobs, thus ensuring employment in rural areas (Rosset, 2011).

Food sovereignty depends on equitable access to productive resources. Yet many countries, from Brazil to Bangladesh, have criminalized the struggle for agrarian reform. Challenging powerful interests can be a dangerous matter. Faustino Torres, who works on

the LVC Global Campaign for Agrarian Reform, reports that in 2010 two Guatemalan community leaders, one of them a teacher, were shot dead during a demonstration against foreign companies prospecting on their land, and a Mayan Indian defence lawyer was assassinated (Torres, 2011).

How does the choice get made to privilege luxury export crops over national food sovereignty? How do the resources of land, water and energy that are used, for instance, to supply asparagus and strawberries to the

supermarkets of London or Paris in December affect local food producers in Chile or Mexico? Do Kenyan and Ecuadorean workers in the cut-flower industry enjoy decent and secure employment? When the market collapses, unemployed labourers can perhaps survive for a while on unsold grapes or avocados, but they cannot eat roses.

Food sovereignty is grounded in rights. La Via Campesina believes that only a rights-based approach can address the complex food, poverty and climate crises now confronting humanity.

Respecting the importance of gender

The issue of gender is fundamental, and nothing less than policy transformations are required. Although women constitute most of the hungry and, indeed, in Africa most farmers, you would never guess this by looking at low- and middle-income countries' agricultural budgets or policies, which usually assume that farmers are men. Nowhere in Zambia's agriculture budget – all 5,000 lines of it – are women included as an explicit focus of spending, to give just one example. Donors are little better: women receive just 7 per cent of all aid to agriculture (Oxfam, 2010). Research suggests that if African women farmers had the same control over resources such as land, seed and fertilizer as men, farm productivity could increase by up to 20 per cent (IFAD et al., 2009). Eradicating gender discrimination, therefore, would increase the supply of food on small farms, especially in Africa.

Much (but not all) agricultural policy needs to be different to support women. Governments must consider improving the public financing of childcare services to address the huge amount of time women farmers (and agricultural labourers) spend looking after children. Improved investments in infrastructure are needed to address the long hours women spend collecting water and fuel as well as to increase access to simple labour-saving technologies to improve farm productivity and processing activities. Agricultural research must be refocused on developing improved varieties of the crops grown by women and extension services need to be retargeted specifically to reach women (untargeted services will benefit men). There are also strong reasons to target input subsidy programmes at women farmers.

Investments in nutrition, education and health programmes directed at women can also bring enormous returns in terms of family well-being. Considerable evidence suggests that targeting women in cash transfer programmes produces larger benefits; men

have a higher propensity to spend incremental income on themselves, while women tend to allocate food or cash to their families, especially their children.

Addressing climate change and sustainability

Climate change and sustainable agriculture are further issues to which governments pay much lip service. But the reality is that in most countries, ‘high-input’ agriculture, based on increasing use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides, is still seen as the solution to increasing food production. Similarly with donors – for example, the much-vaunted Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa, backed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development, represents a new big push to get ever more chemicals to farmers, notably through rural agro-dealer networks.

The author’s experience is that farmers often say they want chemicals, which can certainly increase yields, so any ideological opposition to chemical fertilizer or pesticide would be wrong. Yet, as the report by the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) notes, “technologies such as high-yielding crop varieties, agro-chemicals and mechanisation have primarily benefitted the better resourced groups in society and transnational corporations, rather than the most vulnerable ones” (IAASTD, 2008). And to promote high-input farming as the dominant model of agriculture is hugely costly in environmental terms.

Agriculture’s most important contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is through the production and application of nitrogen fertilizers. A major World Bank-sponsored sourcebook states that “the use of agricultural methods that rely heavily on external inputs has caused 38 per cent of agricultural land to be lost to soil erosion and depletion” (IFAD et al., 2009). At the same time, the excessive use of chemical pesticides has often led to water pollution, thousands of farmers being poisoned and beneficial insects – ‘natural’ pesticides – being killed along with pests.

As the UK government-sponsored Foresight Project concludes: “Nothing less is required than a redesign of the whole food system to bring sustainability to the fore” (Foresight Project, 2011). Tackling global warming requires prioritizing ‘low-input’ agriculture, involving techniques such as no-till farming, water harvesting and recycling, organic farming and agro-forestry, which can help avoid land degradation and sustain ecosystems and livelihoods. Ways to reduce emissions in the food system include creating market incentives to reduce reductions through grants, subsidies or carbon taxes and introducing mandatory emissions standards or limits by direct regulation. Most importantly, the big push to use chemicals – backed by a global industry of transnational corporation manufacturers and marketers of fertilizers and pesticides – must be ended.

Most governments still spend very little on addressing climate change. Few have made significant policy shifts towards sustainable agriculture and even fewer have active strategies to promote organic farming. Many farmers do, of course, practise *de facto* low-input farming because they cannot afford expensive external inputs. Yet most need advice and information on improved techniques to maximize yield, which are likely to come from (currently underfunded and often poor-quality) extension services. For farmers already using chemical inputs, the shift to low-input farming may not be an easy one to make. Again, greatly improved extension services are critical to impart new knowledge, while governments also need to ensure that farmers have more secure land tenure, otherwise they will not invest in new techniques that provide dividends over the longer term.

How should aid donors reform?

In recent years, mainly as a result of the food price crisis of 2008, donors have refocused their attention on agriculture after two decades in which the sector was not only massively underfunded but, moreover, undermined by extensive liberalization and privatization policies. These left numerous countries worse off and also marginalized small farmers. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food noted in 2005, for example, that: “Far from improving food security for the most vulnerable populations, these programmes [i.e., liberalization reforms] have often resulted in a deterioration of food security among the poorest” (Ziegler, 2006).

Sapna Rani Roy serves primary-school children in Lakhichap, Bangladesh. She is a member of a collective of 26 mothers who run the school and take turns to prepare the children’s midday meal. The collective also leases land to cultivate rice.

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Most donors have now withdrawn their previous blanket opposition, for example, to input subsidy schemes, stressing instead the need to promote the correct *sequencing* of liberalization reforms. Yet, although donors now recognize the ‘enabling’ role of the state, they still eschew a much greater interventionist role for it. This is despite evidence that where agricultural reforms have led to widespread growth, as in much of Asia during the 1970s and 1980s, such reforms have tended to involve substantial state-led investment not only in infrastructure and research (with which donors would currently agree) but also in extension systems, price stabilization and financial services (which donors continue to largely oppose).

Despite years of lobbying and numerous reports by NGOs on the shortfalls of market-led agriculture policy, and despite some encouraging nuancing of donor policy in recent years, the fundamental belief of donors that the private sector is the key to rural development appears unshakeable. Added to such a belief is the sheer hypocrisy of ongoing massive state intervention by the European Union, the United States and Japan in providing huge domestic agricultural subsidies to their own farmers that keep poorer producers out of global markets.

Numerous other problems remain with donor policies. As the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) notes: “The current global aid architecture in general, and the aid effectiveness agenda specifically, have not yet shown great success in the agricultural sector or in reducing poverty” (IFAD, 2011). One reason for this lack of success is that, although joint government–donor ‘aid harmonization’ groups have been established in several countries, agricultural aid is often still poorly coordinated among donors with too many individual projects. In Kenya, for example, donors are funding more than 30 separate agriculture projects, in Zambia more than 60. The Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security, which are designed to ensure developing country leadership, coordination and predictable funding from donors, are far from being implemented in the field. Donors have hardly changed the way they work since the Rome Principles were established in 2009 and many aid agencies remain reluctant to join national and regional plans set by governments (Oxfam, 2010).

Actual donor spending on agriculture and food security has been increasing since 2006 but is often less than trumpeted. At the 2009 G8 meeting in Italy, donors pledged to provide US\$ 22 billion but by late 2010 this had translated into just US\$ 4 billion of new funds (Oxfam, 2010). Oxfam has called on donors to increase spending on agriculture and social protection by US\$ 37.5 billion a year – half the total required amount of US\$ 75 billion (Oxfam, 2010).

More encouraging is that in the past decade, donors have begun to contribute funding to cash transfer social protection programmes that previously were largely anathema to them. However, donor funding for direct nutrition interventions remains low and,

as noted by the updated Comprehensive Framework for Action, is not well targeted towards countries with the highest rates of malnutrition (UN, 2010c).

Some donor-funded social protection programmes have flown in the face of national or community preferences, notably those encouraging private health insurance; these have been unpopular and unfeasible in low-income countries. Donors must ensure their aid is consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005), that it is aligned with country objectives and provides long-term, predictable funding enabling countries to build effective social protection systems. Country ownership and leadership are vital, otherwise there is a danger that aid-funded social protection can make safety nets dependent on the largesse of donors rather than being a right of citizenship.

Corporate power in the food system

Excessive corporate power in the global food system, mentioned in several chapters of this report, is regularly discussed in NGO and academic circles but remains virtually taboo among donors. Past years have witnessed the increasing domination of a small number of very large transnational corporations (TNCs) in agribusiness, food processing and retail. At present, three companies process 40 per cent of the world’s cocoa while six firms account for two-thirds of the world sugar trade. The small-scale growers of those commodities earn a fraction of the retail price, yet some cash-crop farmers are among the world’s hungry people. Supermarkets, which account for over half of retail sales in many countries, usually source from large firms or farms rather than small farmers (although there are exceptions). Small farmers often cannot meet supermarkets’ exacting standards, notably for consistency of supply and volume. At the same time, powerful marketing by TNCs can hinder nutrition by, for example, contributing to lowering breastfeeding rates or by advertising foods contributing to obesity. The dominant role played by agribusiness in the global food system needs to be finally addressed rather than ignored by policy-makers (see Chapter 1 for a fuller discussion).

The private sector could play a positive role in supporting staple food fortification and developing nutrient-rich products that prevent undernutrition and ensure these reach the poorest people. They could also promote affordable, indexed weather insurance and agricultural training – including for women farmers. Companies could do much more to apply fair-trade practices to all their trade with producers in low- and middle-income countries and widen their supply bases to include more small farmers. Improved public–private partnerships – with governments playing a better coordination role – should be developed to bring infrastructure into more remote areas along with improved services such as finance for farmers (see Box 6.4).

But for private companies to play a transformative role in the world food system, a significant policy leap is needed from decision-makers, especially those in TNCs’ home countries – moving from relying on voluntary corporate social responsibility (CSR)

by companies to formally regulating them to work much more in the public interest. Currently, the domestic legal framework in high-income countries makes it rare for companies based there to be held liable for violations of human rights, environmental, labour or other standards committed abroad by their foreign subsidiaries. Stronger legal enforcement mechanisms need to be developed. Equally, companies need to be obliged under the law to ensure that actors in their supply chains – even those not formally part of the company group – promote human rights, environmental and other standards.

As noted elsewhere in this report, a new approach to food security is needed that emphasizes local control of food systems, building on the knowledge of the world's main food providers – small farmers – and that defends and enhances their production systems and the environment in which they work.

Global and national policy-makers need to ensure that more effective competition policies are established and implemented to manage anti-competitive practices. Governments also need to do more to enforce existing national regulations to ensure that agribusinesses do not flout environmental or social legislation. At the same time, governments in high-income countries need to strengthen legislation to hold companies legally liable for their activities abroad. Low- and middle-income countries also need to find a better balance between providing an attractive climate for foreign investment and implementing policies to regulate those investments, to ensure foreign firms do not occupy monopolistic market positions and undermine national companies that could contribute more to development. In turn, this requires rich countries to stop limiting the 'policy space' that low- and middle-income countries need to promote national development objectives.

Box 6.4 The role of the private sector in preventing hunger and malnutrition

The concept of corporate social responsibility emerged several decades ago as businesses sought to build public interest or environmental sustainability into their decision-making. However, CSR has always had its critics and was often viewed as little more than public relations spin designed to shine a favourable light on organizations that prioritize profit at the expense of everything else. Increasingly, though, there are signs that this is changing and that

companies are making CSR principles part of the way they operate – not because they want to look good, but because doing so is simply better for business.

More and more businesses recognize that a long-term outlook is crucial and that outmoded thinking about the poor sectors of society must change if companies are to survive and thrive. For example, Oxfam argues that the long-held belief that smallholder farmers do not

respond to market opportunities is unfounded. Although the main priority for many poor farmers is feeding their families, they remain motivated to produce and market surplus crops. Oxfam has a successful history of working with the private sector to bring smallholders into markets. One example is collaboration with a Sri Lankan company, Plenty Foods, which is integrating 1,500 farmers into its supply chain. The company estimates that sourcing supplies from smallholders has been a key factor in its annual growth of 30 per cent for the past four years. At the same time, the farmers have better access to land, credit and technical support – as well as markets – and their incomes have increased accordingly (Bailey, 2011).

Another success in this area comes from a partnership between the Bangladeshi microfinance institution Grameen Bank and Groupe Danone, a French food company. In 2006, the two organizations formed a new company, Grameen Danone Foods Ltd. Two years later, Grameen Danone had developed and began selling a nutritionally fortified yoghurt product named *Shokti Doi* (energy yoghurt). At the equivalent price of US\$ 0.08, a 60-gram tub costs substantially less than comparable products and contains up to 30 per cent of a child's daily nutrient requirements.

A local supply chain helped to keep costs low and promote local employment. Working with NGOs to train farmers, Grameen Danone set up small dairy farms and a milk-processing factory that favoured human labour over technology. The company also emphasized environmental sustainability, with the yoghurt cups manufactured from biodegradable corn-flour, the milk collected locally and the factory exploiting rainwater, solar power and biogas. Grameen Danone also trained so-called 'Grameen ladies' to sell *Shokti Doi* door-to-

door, with around 1,600 women currently earning a living in this way (WEF, 2009).

The 'golden rice' project, which began in the 1980s as a Rockefeller Foundation initiative, provides an example of a different role for the private sector in preventing hunger and malnutrition. Golden rice has been genetically modified to carry the beta-carotene – which occurs naturally in some plant species, but is absent in white rice – that the human body uses to synthesize vitamin A. Some 19 million pregnant women and 190 million children are estimated to suffer from vitamin A deficiency globally (WHO, 2009), many of whom live in South and South-East Asia, where rice is the dominant staple.

After teaming up with golden rice's inventors, Ingo Potrykus and Peter Beyer, the Swiss company Syngenta further developed golden rice for commercialization in high-income countries. After deciding that this market was not worth pursuing, rather than let their proprietary technology languish, the company donated it along with technology, data, patent licences and the most promising golden rice breeding lines to the project, which is guided by the Golden Rice Humanitarian Board. Golden rice varieties, developed at the International Rice Research Institute and fine-tuned for local use by public agricultural research centres in target countries, will be made available free of charge to government institutions. From there, farmers will have access to seed through their own supply and exchange networks, and will be able to grow, save and sell their harvest as usual, ensuring that they are not tied by any contractual obligations. Syngenta continues to support the project by offering expertise in a range of areas including regulatory affairs, biotechnology research, product development, intellectual property management and training (Golden Rice Humanitarian Board, 2009).

Similarly, the food company Mars is collaborating with IBM and the United States Department of Agriculture to sequence and make publicly available the genome of the cacao tree. The rationale is that the benefits that may result from this knowledge will contribute to more sustainable cocoa production and thus help both the smallholder farmers, responsible for most of the world's cocoa, and the private sector (Bailey, 2011).

In another effort to tackle nutrient deficiency, Unilever teamed up with UNICEF and Ghana's health service to develop and market affordable iodine-fortified salt in Ghana. Iodine deficiency affects more than 700 million people worldwide and, untreated, can stunt the physical and mental development of children. Annapurna iodized salt was launched in Ghana in 2001 and, within three years, half of the population had switched to iodized salt, up from just over a quarter before Annapurna entered the market. The initiative has yielded both health and commercial benefits and has been launched in Nigeria with plans for other African countries in the future (UN, 2005).

Through its Creating Shared Value programme, Nestlé seeks to benefit both shareholders and society through initiatives in the areas of nutrition, water, environmental sustainability and rural development. One example is *Nido Dayem*, affordable iron-enriched milk aimed at mothers from low-income families in northern Africa, where one-third of pre-school children suffer from iron deficiency. Working with the paediatric association of Morocco and

the media, the company combined marketing *Nido Dayem* – two glasses of which provide more than half of a child's daily iron requirements – with increasing awareness of iron deficiency and anaemia (Nestlé, 2010).

Given the complexity and scale of the causes of and solutions to hunger and malnutrition, no single entity is capable of overcoming the problem on its own. It is no surprise, then, that many 'win-win' cases are examples of public-private partnerships that involve businesses collaborating with governments, non-governmental and civil society organizations, farmers, consumers and entrepreneurs. In such cases, the private sector catalyses development while government and other organizations tend to take on an enabling role. Successful public-private partnerships will be a key strategy for preventing hunger and malnutrition.

Many initiatives that began as public relations-driven CSR projects a decade or more ago have become part of mainstream business operations. The accelerating interconnectedness of the world is one reason for this. It is harder now than ever before to hide if things go wrong. If a company uses its money and power to divert water from local farms to run its factory, it is much easier for people to find out.

Most compellingly, though, is the concept of 'the next billions'. With the rapid development of so many emerging economies, today's poor represent the middle-class market of tomorrow. Helping them to raise themselves out of poverty and to increase their buying power will help swell bottom lines for decades, even centuries, to come.

What reforms are needed at the global level?

The UN's Committee on World Food Security (CWFS), meeting in October 2010, concluded that: "In spite of good intentions and considerable allocations of money, time, energy and political support, achievements in the fight against hunger and malnutrition have not met stated goals and objectives" (UN, 2010b). The reason is not that the world lacks anti-hunger initiatives but, in part, because some policies

are misplaced and because stakeholders have been working in isolation. A plethora of acronyms has emerged to combat hunger since 2008, when the HLTF (High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis) was set up to tackle the food crisis, calling for a CFA (Comprehensive Framework for Action) that proposed, among other things, an increase in annual world spending of US\$ 25–40 billion for agriculture and social protection. In 2009, an HLM (High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All) in Madrid established a GPAFSN (Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition), while the G8 meeting in Italy gave rise to the AFSI (L'Aquila Food Security Initiative) that pledged increased aid contributions. The same year saw a lacklustre WFS (World Food Summit) nevertheless agree to reform of the CWFS and to adopting the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security. In early 2010, a new fund, the GAFSP (Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme), was established as an element of the AFSI. This is not to mention the establishment by ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council) of the UNSCN (UN Standing Committee on Nutrition), REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger) and SUN (the Scaling-Up Nutrition initiative).

The most significant proposal emerged in late 2010 for a Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF). The idea behind this acronym is to enhance the role of a reformed CWFS in catalysing coherent global anti-hunger partnerships. The hope is that the GSF will urgently end the 'silo' approach to combating hunger. Hitherto, there has been duplication or even competition between different institutions promoting policies to address hunger and sometimes differences in perspective between humanitarian actions focused on immediate needs and development policies prioritizing the longer term. Indeed, the CWFS, established in 1974 and based at the FAO in Rome, should be the key forum of global food governance. Its own process of reform, which took place during 2009, has produced a multi-stakeholder structure (involving civil society groups and the private sector alongside governments and international institutions) that should permit it to coordinate a global approach to food security. Its mandate now covers the full spectrum of food security from agriculture to food markets to nutrition to safety nets to emergency action.

Yet, there are concerns about whether the CWFS will meet the bureaucratic challenge of coordinating distinct initiatives and also whether high-income countries such as the United States will give the CWFS sufficient high-level political backing. Traditionally, high-income countries have failed to firmly support the CWFS, seeing it as a one member-one vote institution that is insufficiently pliable. More recently, the signs have been mixed – on the one hand, high-income countries have encouraged low- and middle-income countries to establish their own national anti-hunger plans but, on the other, rich countries have been keen to impose policy conditions and governance mechanisms of their own rather than through the reformed CWFS. The success or otherwise of the CWFS is partly dependent on high-income countries allowing it to work, but also on the CWFS

itself – although its strength is its inclusiveness, which gives it legitimacy, its decision-making processes are often cumbersome, making rapid reaction to global crises difficult.

The nutrition sector has similarly been encumbered by a variety of often disconnected initiatives. Encouragingly, various organizations have recently launched new nutrition strategies, including the Economic Community of West African States, the New Partnership for African Development, the European Commission, the World Bank and several bilateral donors. But for a long time there has been a need for a global mechanism to ensure that nutrition becomes a priority for all governments and that aid is provided in a way that complies with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The multi-stakeholder SUN initiative has, encouragingly, recently produced a road map to tackle global undernutrition but it remains to be seen how effective it will be. The road map estimates that initiatives in the 36 highest-burden countries will cost around US\$ 12 billion – a relatively small amount to be funded mainly by national governments but also, not encouragingly, from within “existing donor programmes” (UN, 2010e).

The Food Aid Convention (FAC), which is supposed to guarantee predictable disbursements of food aid (see Box 6.5), has been largely ineffective during its four decades of existence. There is no mechanism to ensure that the resources allocated under the FAC are prioritized for the neediest countries or are of the right kind, or that donors meet their commitments. The FAC should be reformed to ensure the provision of long-term, predictable and untied resources to support emergency food assistance and hunger safety net programmes.

Another key need is to promote stronger constituencies for reducing undernutrition and promoting ‘champions’ for an anti-hunger movement. States such as Brazil, whose former president Ignacio Lula da Silva personally campaigned for a broad anti-hunger movement in the country, have shown what can be achieved when political will is present. Some crucial though neglected aspects of the anti-hunger agenda need particular global spotlighting. The UK government-sponsored Foresight Project, for example, calls for an international body to champion the reduction of waste in the global food system (Foresight Project, 2011).

Equally important is the need to strengthen the global effort to promote the right to food. Governments need to be held accountable for failing to eradicate hunger. The 156 states that have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are legally bound to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food. According to reports by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, this duty to uphold the right to food also applies to private sector corporations (Ziegler, 2006). Despite the fact that some states have recently introduced new legislation, only 23 countries included the right to food in their constitutions as of late 2010. A mere 13 countries recognized the right to food as a directive principle of state policy (FAO, 2010).

Box 6.5 Renegotiating the Food Aid Convention

The Food Aid Convention (FAC) expires in June 2011 and the main OECD (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development) donor countries are negotiating under the chairmanship of Canada to hammer out details of a new agreement. Should we care about the outcome of these negotiations on a treaty that few people have heard of and that some argue has outlived its usefulness as a relic of the era of international food aid as surplus disposal?

The FAC is an international treaty dating back to 1967 under which a group of donors and grain exporters (see Table 6.1) pledge a minimum annual amount of food aid, a formal *risk transfer arrangement* in a volatile global economy. Operational agencies – WFP and NGOs – argue that *indirectly* the FAC provides minimum levels of predictable funding to food-based and humanitarian actions. This is because signatories, and especially European aid agencies which are party to the EU’s commitment and responsible for a few thousand tonnes, direct most of these resources to WFP and NGOs in a highly flexible way.

The FAC is a stand-alone agreement housed in the International Grains Council in London and supervised by a committee of signatory donors only. So it is tenuously linked to the Rome-based food security architecture or to humanitarian and development aid more broadly under the OECD and the UN, where other stakeholders are represented.

Last renegotiated in 1999, the FAC has been extended pending the outcome of the Doha Development Round, which would include new rules on food aid. Finally, with the Doha Round stalled and continued food price volatility exposing the inadequacies of the present agreement, the G8 development ministers agreed in

April 2010 that they “believe in a Food Aid Convention for the 21st Century that focuses on providing appropriate and effective *food assistance to vulnerable populations*” (Government of Canada, 2010; emphasis added).

Counting commitments: Currently signatories commit between 4.9 and 5.4 million tonnes of *wheat equivalent food aid*, depending on how cash contributions by the EU are counted. The United States meets about half the total commitment, reflecting its historic role as chief supplier of surplus food as aid. Donors and agencies have provided food assistance in increasingly diverse ways and the FAC, as periodically renegotiated, has sought to accommodate this growing diversity – tied aid in-kind, especially from the US, a wider range of foods including nutritionally fortified products and local and regional food procurement funded especially by European agencies, all according to a complex and arcane formula.

The need to reconsider the whole basis of FAC commitments is underscored by the increasing divergence between food aid deliveries and reporting by donors of their contributions under the convention. During the 2007–2008 food crisis, food aid donations dropped precipitously to post-Second World War lows. In 2008, FAC signatories delivered less than 5.2 million tonnes of food aid, including both cereals and non-cereals, and less than 5 million tonnes in 2009. However, they reported 7.9 million tonnes of food aid and financing for food and its delivery in wheat equivalent between July 2008 and June 2009. But what should replace this opaque and dubious formula?

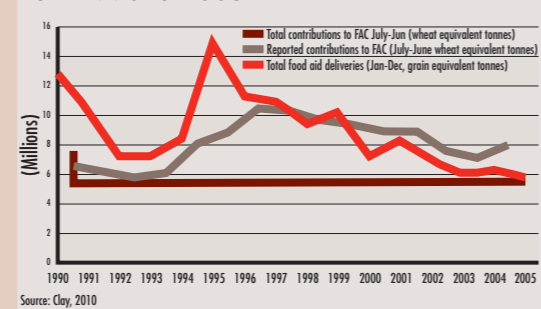
Some would prefer to retain a commodity-based commitment, such as the US makes under domestic legislation to provide 2.5 million

tonnes of domestically sourced food aid every year. Some donors, especially Europeans, are keen to measure their commitments in monetary terms, allowing a greater flexibility in support of both food-based and other forms of food assistance including cash and tokens, livestock support and inputs for recovery of production. This change would both widen the scope of the FAC and shift the 'price risk' from the donor to the recipient unless commitments were explicitly recalculated every year to take account of volatile food and fuel prices and exchange rates.

The Transatlantic Food Assistance Dialogue, an NGO coalition, has instead proposed measuring FAC commitments in terms of assisting a minimum number (20 or 25 million people affected by disasters and other humanitarian crises) to meet their food needs. Such a collective commitment would maintain the minimum floor of assistance, keep the price risk with the donor and, pragmatically, could allow donors to contribute in different ways – commodity aid or cash – to a common overall objective. Should the commitments be limited to providing emergency and recovery assistance?

Governance: Even as a donor agreement and club, the FAC and its supervisory committee are an anachronism. Should the FAC continue as a stand-alone and inevitably weakly administered agreement? Would it be better part of the Paris-based aid institutional architecture or part of the Rome food security arrangements? Fulfilling commitments is voluntary, reporting is declaratory and there is no formal independent monitoring or evaluation. The European Commission technically represents the whole EU because the FAC began life as a trade rather than an aid agreement. In

Figure 6.1 Total food aid in grain equivalent and contributions to FAC in wheat equivalent from 1990 to 2005



consequence, EU bilateral donors do not have either direct commitments or a responsibility to be accountable. But because food aid is only a small part of their humanitarian aid, would they want either greater supervisory involvement in or accountability to the FAC?

Newer donor countries such as China, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia and South Africa as a key source of food aid are not signatories. Under what terms would they see it as in their interest and as part of their international responsibility to accede to a new treaty of donors?

Unless these issues are seriously addressed, then are the FAC negotiators merely seeking a face-saving formula for allowing donors to do what they would do anyway? To address these issues is a real challenge and will require imagination and lateral thinking as well as a genuine commitment to succeed. Otherwise, it might be better to allow the convention to lapse and for donors, together with others in the international community, to address assuring the food needs of crisis-affected people and global food insecurity in ways that are more appropriate to today's different and rapidly changing physical environmental, political and economic circumstances.

There are numerous policy areas on which the global community needs to take urgent action, some of which are mentioned above. One further area is that of price volatility and commodity speculation (see Chapter 3), whose effects have been brought into sharp

Table 6.1 FAC contributions and reported food aid in 2008–2009 (thousand tonnes)

Food aid donor	FAC contributions	FAC reported contributions in 2008–2009 (WE)	Food aid deliveries in 2008 (GE)	Food aid deliveries in 2009 (GE)
Australia	250	164	91	81
Canada	420	551	259	238
European Union (Incl. €130 million)	1,320 (1,908)	2,263	1,184	980
Japan	300	556	374	403
Norway	30	89	49	15
Switzerland	40	59	28	19
United States	2,500	4,257	3,216	2,915
Argentina*	35	0	0	0
Total DAC	5,483	7,940	5,200	4,651
Non-FAC donors			1,072	1,071
Total, all donors			6,272	5,722

Source: Clay, 2010, from WFP and International Grains Council data

Note: WE = wheat equivalent; GE = grain equivalent; DAC = members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee

* Argentina made a contribution to the FAC but never reported providing any food aid

focus in recent years but where global governance (or, rather, the lack of it) remains an anachronism. Financial regulations must be enacted to curb the ability of speculators to exert such market power. Priority should be given to protecting the most vulnerable groups from sharp food price rises by trying to influence market prices nationally and by providing safety nets designed to stabilize incomes. One idea is to establish an emergency food reserve and financing facility for the WFP in order to help low-income countries facing sudden increases in food import bills when price spikes occur.

Finally, it is universally recognized that there is a need for better, more accurate information on, and monitoring of, hunger and malnutrition. Data on the extent of hunger in low- and middle-income countries provided by the FAO give an inaccurate picture and have been described as an "anachronism from the mid 20th century". In some countries, household surveys suggest that FAO's data underestimate the number of hungry people by a factor of three. The world needs a global, open-source database for the analysis of agriculture, the food system and the environment (Foresight Project, 2011). Mobile phone and GPS technologies can also help governments identify who and where the hungry are (see Box 6.2).

It would also be useful to have an internationally recognized global hunger index for measuring governmental commitment to hunger reduction, such as the HungerFREE index recently developed by the international NGO, ActionAid (ActionAid, 2010a). This index lists weighted indicators that measure governments' legal commitments (such as any constitutional guarantees to the right to food) and the extent of social

protection programmes, among other areas, and compares countries against each other. It also compares the performance of high-income countries, measuring their aid to agriculture, their commitment to sustainable agriculture and their performance against global targets related to climate change.

When considering what policies are needed at all levels, it is useful to distinguish between areas of general consensus and areas of contention. For example, there is widespread agreement on the need for greater investments in agriculture and social protection, the urgent need to shape improved and joined-up global institutions, the necessity of finding hunger ‘champions’ and the need to produce more up-to-date data. Implementing these policies is another matter, dependent on political will, although the policies themselves are rarely disputed. These are essentially *technical* matters and should be relatively easy for the world to address.

More problematic are several areas of agricultural policy on which there has never been any global consensus and which can take countries in very different directions. These include some issues mentioned above – notably sustainable agriculture and the role of the state, market and the private sector. But there are many more, such as the debates over biofuels, ‘land grabs’, trade liberalization, large versus small farms, export-led agriculture versus production for domestic markets, genetically modified organisms and biotechnology. These are essentially political rather than technical issues and cannot be avoided in discussions about ending hunger.

Yet too much of the current debate assumes that ending hunger is mainly a technical issue on which there is largely consensus. The global institutions must ensure that their analysis and policy reflect divergent and critical views on these areas of contention from around the world, especially those most affected by them, and do not overly reflect the interests of the developed countries.

In conclusion, various changed policies and deepened partnerships, mentioned throughout these chapters, are needed if governments, donors and global institutions are to end hunger. To ensure this requires, in part, that those in power are held more responsible for their actions and inactions. The areas of agriculture, hunger and nutrition are littered with broken promises and plans that are never implemented, as are other global policy issues.

The world’s decision-makers need to know that their policies and spending related to hunger are being ever more scrutinized. This means increased efforts to do so by civil society organizations, many of whom are stepping up their monitoring of government budgets and establishing national networks to hold governments to greater account for their spending pledges. Community groups (see Box 6.3) are especially well-placed to monitor official policies at village level and need to be funded and supported. Social movements must act as the vanguard for broader change to ensure that the hitherto voiceless and powerless are able to realize an end to the scourge of hunger.

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