



# The Challenge of Hunger in Africa

A CALL TO ACTION

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# **The Challenge of Hunger in Africa**

**A CALL TO ACTION**

**The World Bank**

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# FOREWORD

This report outlines a set of actions which, if implemented effectively, could help end hunger in Sub-Saharan Africa. A task force of the World Bank devised this strategy for helping the more than 100 million Africans who do not get enough to eat.

The development of agriculture and food production has long been an important objective of the Bank's work in Africa. Our agricultural projects are focused on producing more food. Our economic adjustment operations are aimed at restoring and maintaining growth — and thus at boosting the income people need to acquire food.

Increasing agricultural production and adjusting economic policies to raise incomes are two keys that can help open the granary door for all Africans. But this report makes clear that a focus on agriculture and economic growth alone will not be enough to end hunger and ensure food security in Africa. Countries enjoying strong growth and surplus food will continue to have millions of people suffering from malnutrition — the sick, the urban unemployed, rural landless laborers, and in general the poorest of the poor.

Thus, while reemphasizing that adjustment and growth are essential links in the food security chain, this report also highlights the need to look beyond growth. It recommends a complementary set of special actions to help reach Africa's poorest and hungriest people, including:

- Preparing specific action programs to promote food security in each Sub-Saharan country.
- Giving priority to projects and policies that raise the incomes of the food insecure and dampen fluctuations in food prices and supplies.
- Strengthening the institutional capabilities of African governments to manage food security programs.
- Increasing the effectiveness of food aid: this includes improving the preparation and coordination of responses to emergency food situations.
- Making more systematic efforts to identify the people at high risk of food insecurity.

None of these proposals is new, and many organizations already have programs that encompass various elements of them. What is new is

that this report calls for a partnership to be formed among donors, nongovernmental organizations, and African governments to support comprehensive policies and programs for food security.

What can the Bank contribute to this partnership? First, we will apply our policy experience, financial resources, and technical expertise to the problems of agricultural production and food security in Africa. Second, we will use our well-established links with African governments and with other donors to offer advice on the best ways to integrate food security initiatives with ongoing programs. Third, we will strengthen even more our institutional commitment to Africa's growth and development.

There are no quick fixes to the problem of hunger, and we must be realistic in our expectations. Rapid population growth, adverse terms of trade, weak administrative capacities, and the extremely low level of economic development in many African countries inevitably will have an effect on the rate of progress.

The World Bank nevertheless is convinced that this report will assist African governments and the international community to understand more about food security and to address the associated problems more consistently and urgently.



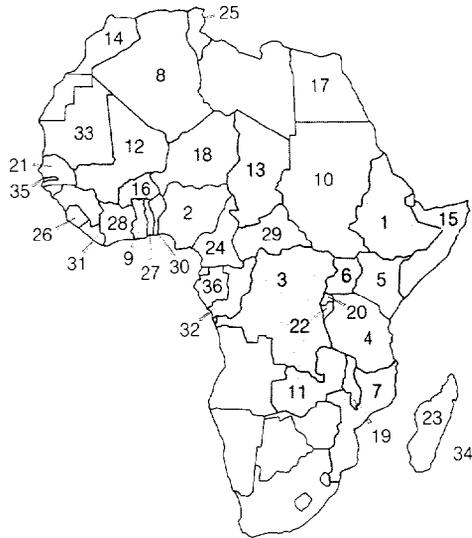
Barber Conable  
President  
The World Bank

# Africa's food insecure

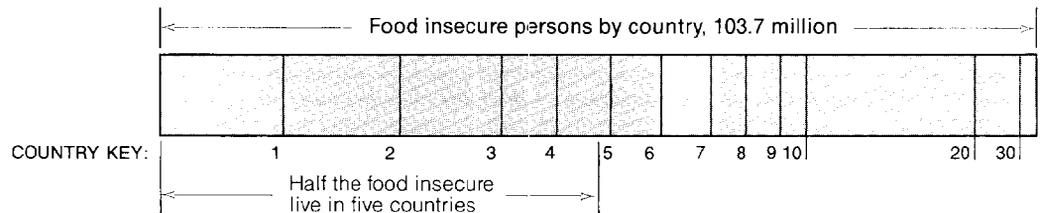
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION

In seven countries, more than 40% of the people are food insecure; in twenty-four countries, more than 20%.

- More than 40%
- 20% to 40%
- Fewer than 20%



NUMBER OF AFRICAN FOOD INSECURE (million)		103.7	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 25%
<b>Countries with 10 million or more food insecure</b>			
1 Ethiopia	14.7		46%
2 Nigeria	13.7		17%
3 Zaire	12.0		42%
<b>Countries with 5 million or more food insecure</b>			
4 Tanzania	6.6		35%
5 Kenya	6.2		37%
6 Uganda	6.1		46%
7 Mozambique	5.9		49%
<b>Countries with 1-5 million food insecure</b>			
8 Algeria	4.1		22%
9 Ghana	4.1		36%
10 Sudan	3.4		18%
11 Zambia	2.7		48%
12 Mali	2.5		35%
13 Chad	2.4		54%
14 Morocco	2.4		12%
15 Somalia	2.3		50%
16 Burkina Faso	2.0		32%
17 Egypt	1.7		4%
18 Niger	1.5		28%
19 Malawi	1.4		24%
20 Rwanda	1.2		24%
21 Senegal	1.2		21%
22 Burundi	1.1		26%
23 Madagascar	1.1		13%
<b>Countries with fewer than 1 million food insecure</b>			
24 Cameroon	0.8		9%
25 Tunisia	0.8		13%
26 Sierra Leone	0.8		23%
27 Togo	0.7		29%
28 Côte d'Ivoire	0.7		8%
29 CAR	0.7		29%
30 Benin	0.6		18%
31 Liberia	0.6		30%
32 Congo	0.4		27%
33 Mauritania	0.4		25%
34 Mauritius	0.1		9%
35 Gambia	0.1		19%
36 Gabon	0.1		7%



The food insecure population is an estimate of the average number of food insecure in these countries over "good" and "bad" years, given the trend line of per capita food consumption in 1980. In some countries, the number of food insecure varies little from year to year. But in others—especially in the Sahel—it fluctuates greatly. The estimates exclude Angola, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Comoros, Seychelles, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, and Sao Tome and Principe.

# FOOD INSECURITY IN AFRICA TODAY

About a quarter of Africa's population — more than 100 million people — do not consume enough food to allow an active working life. Many of these people do not obtain enough energy from their diets to prevent serious health risks or stunted growth. Even more suffer in years when crops fail and food prices rise, as in 1984.

Food insecurity is a problem throughout Africa. It exists in countries with a past record of unsuitable macroeconomic policies and those with economies disrupted as a result of civil disturbances. It exists in large areas with little prospect of economic growth, as in the Sahel. Food insecurity also exists in peaceful middle-income countries that are self-sufficient in food and free of drought. And it even occurs in countries following economic growth policies sound enough to keep them outside the adjustment process.

More than half of Africa's food insecure live in seven countries — Ethiopia, Nigeria, Zaire, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Mozambique (see the chart). In another (overlapping) group of seven countries, more than 40 percent of the populace is food insecure — in Ethiopia, Zaire, Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia, Chad, and Somalia. And in 24 countries, more than 20 percent of the populace does not get enough to eat.

Food security has two main requirements — one is assuring the availability of food, and the other is assuring the ability of households to acquire food (see the box). Both requirements are difficult to meet in Africa. There is a food availability problem — African economies have failed either to produce food or to generate enough revenue to buy it from the abundant supply on the world market. And there is an income problem — households have low per capita incomes and cannot afford to buy or produce food.

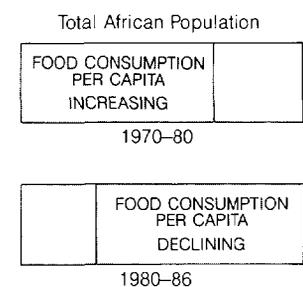
Governments, media, and donors focus much attention on national food production — and on the transitory food insecurity caused by sudden breakdowns. They respond because food shortages cause sharp rises in food prices and prompt acute political reactions, which may in turn derail adjustment programs and cause severe transitory food insecurity. In the process, many of the chronically food insecure may be pushed over the edge to starvation, fleeing their homes and descending on cities and refugee camps. These dramatic migrations are newsworthy, unlike the slow grind of chronic food insecurity, which is practically invisible to the untrained observer.

The attention to transitory food insecurity is not misplaced. Transitory food insecurity is serious and if left unattended can cause political instability and economic mismanagement. But governments and donors need to give more attention to the primary cause of food insecurity — insufficient income. The problem of food insecurity is apparent even in countries where food is abundant, indicating that the problem is not just one of food availability.

Africa's food situation is not only serious — it is continuing to deteriorate. In the 1970s, the proportion of Africans with deficient diets increased slightly while the population increased substantially. In the 1980s, with an adverse economic environment and a deterioration in per capita incomes, both the proportion and the total number of Africans with deficient diets have climbed — and will continue to rise unless special action is taken. As the chart to the right shows, barely a quarter of Africans lived in countries where food consumption per capita was increasing in the 1980s — down considerably from about two-thirds in the 1970s.

The international community should thus give food security a high priority — it is one of the most intractable aspects of poverty in Africa.

**“Africa's food situation is serious — and it is deteriorating.”**



## Principles of Food Security

The 1986 World Bank Policy Study *Poverty and Hunger* concluded that:

- **Food security is access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life.** Food insecurity, by contrast, is lack of access to enough food. Countries that have many people suffering from undernutrition have a national food security problem.

- **Ensuring food security entails meeting two conditions.** One condition is ensuring that there are adequate food supplies available, through domestic production or imports. The other is ensuring that households whose members suffer from undernutrition have the ability to acquire food, either because they produce it themselves or because they have the income to acquire it.

- **Food insecurity is either chronic or transitory.** Chronic food insecurity involves a continuously inadequate diet caused by the persistent inability to acquire food by whatever means — pro-

ducing, buying, bartering, sharing, foraging, and so on. Transitory food insecurity is a temporary decline in a household's access to enough food, arising from instability of food prices, food production, or household incomes.

- **Policies for reducing chronic food insecurity differ from those for reducing transitory food insecurity.**

Policy options for reducing chronic food insecurity include increasing the food supply (through production, imports, or improving market integration), subsidizing consumer prices, and targeting income transfers. Policy options for reducing transitory food insecurity may include stabilizing supplies and prices, and assisting vulnerable groups directly.

- **In any country, the food insecure comprise different subgroups.** Cost-effective programs to improve food security must be tailored to the needs and the circumstances of each group of food insecure.

# REDUCING CHRONIC FOOD INSECURITY

**“Special efforts have to be designed to reach each group most effectively.”**

Chronic food insecurity results from households' lack of resources. Broad-based economic development can increase real incomes to add to the resources of households (see the box opposite). And very often, what is good for economic growth is good for food security and vice versa. That is because:

- In most of Africa, a high proportion of the chronically food insecure still have access to land. Policies that increase the efficiency of agriculture, or shift the terms of trade in favor of agriculture, can improve the incomes of many of the poor and thereby relieve a key cause of food insecurity.

- Properly valued exchange rates generally increase both the incentive to raise crops and the competitiveness of agricultural exports. Realistic exchange rates increase returns to factors of production and spur growth — and so increase the availability of food and the income to acquire it.

- Solvent governments can fund public programs to assist the poor and give them access to more food. Bankrupt governments cannot.

Development strategies thus need many facets, emphasizing more than food. As part of a general development strategy, governments should continue to give appropriate attention to reforming macroeconomic and trade policies, to financing infrastructure, to creating new employ-

ment opportunities, to developing the industrial sector (formal and informal), to protecting the environment, and to developing human resources through health and education. And as part of the strategy for agriculture, governments should greatly enlarge their activities in research. Some aspects of these efforts to speed the growth of per capita incomes are particularly important for food security. In this regard, governments should strengthen their efforts to integrate women in the economy and to slow population growth (see the box on page 4).

But growth in per capita incomes is not enough. Equally, increased food production, though a necessary part of any agricultural strategy, does not on its own assure food security. In some cases, investments in food production have hurt food security. For example, the emphasis by donors and African governments on investments in food production after the 1973-74 drought led to the neglect of export crops, reduced foreign exchange earnings, and lowered the capacity for food imports. As a result, the food security of many farm households — and many countries — fell.

Many African governments thus need to develop more coherent strategies for food security. They need action programs for food security— to define the additional actions required. Such programs will start from better knowledge of the food insecure. Many African governments also need to devise better interventions to improve food security. Because policies and programs affect different groups of the food insecure in different ways, special efforts have to be designed to reach each group most effectively. These concerns deserve more attention in the implementation of adjustment programs.

## Country action programs

Governments should make more systematic efforts to understand who and where their food insecure are, what causes food insecurity, and what can be done to relieve it. A big problem today is that knowledge of these matters for individual countries is spotty.

Another problem is that growth strategies for African agriculture do not automatically target the food insecure. Policies and investments that benefit the food insecure will often be less obvious — and may thus require more imagination to identify and more effort to prepare. Donors will

## Food Self Sufficiency?

In most African economies, economic growth will depend very much on enhanced productivity and expanded production of food crops. And because Africa's comparative advantage typically lies in food crops, it is likely that the reestablishment of per capita growth in many countries will coincide with greater food production and greater self-sufficiency in food supply.

The FAO study, *African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years*, projects that most countries could reverse their declining per capita production of staple crops under a scenario of substantially improved performance by governments and donors. Some 23 countries, under this scenario, would improve their cereal self-sufficiency ratios by 2010.

But national self-sufficiency in

tradable foods is efficient only when a country has a comparative advantage in producing those foods. Moreover, food security is achieved only if households can acquire this food by buying it or producing it. There is thus no necessary link between self-sufficiency and food security. Empirical studies tend to confirm that food self-sufficiency has no intrinsic value for eliminating chronic food insecurity.

In some countries, an excessive emphasis on food self-sufficiency has led to costly and uneconomic investments. These investments have tended to undermine not only per capita income growth and food security but also food self-sufficiency itself — by diverting substantial resources for capital and recurrent spending from productive investments.

thus have to focus more sharply on the most serious food security problems in Africa.

Governments should, with donor assistance, prepare food security action programs to provide a comprehensive analytical framework for each country — showing the links to macroeconomic and trade policy, to income generation and employment, and to such social sectors as health, water, sanitation, education, and family planning. These programs should also include specific government and donor actions to ensure that food security is a part of all development policies and programs.

Governments may wish to draw on the program for the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) — sponsored by the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and other donors. The program will contribute to this work in three specific ways. The first is through permanent household surveys, using basic indicators to build nutritional profiles of the various population groups. The second is through policy studies on nutrition and food security. The third is through the identification, appraisal, and implementation of food security interventions for vulnerable groups in conjunction with structural and sectoral adjustment loans.

Governments will also wish to make use of other country-specific contributions by donors (see the annex). As part of this effort, more analysis should be carried out on the impacts of the various interventions now under way or planned. The chart on page 5 shows the effects of different policy options on subgroups of the food insecure.

### **Food security interventions**

Food security action programs would have elements (1) that reinforce both economic growth and food security and (2) that involve some trade-offs between economic growth and food security. In most African countries, reliance on economic growth alone is not an adequate solution because growth takes time and remedial action must be prompt. Moreover, economic growth may not benefit disadvantaged groups, such as the urban poor, the sick, or the elderly.

Food security is a critical input for economic growth as well as a principal product of that growth. Undernourished people cannot form the productive work force needed for economic growth. Nor is it likely that development strategies unconcerned with this problem will be perceived as morally sound and thus be sustained.

## ***Agricultural Production and World Bank Programs***

Agriculture is the dominant productive sector in Africa, contributing an average 34 percent of GDP, compared with 20 percent in all developing countries. It provides 75 percent of employment and 30 percent of exports. Stimulating agricultural growth will therefore be the major instrument for increasing the resources of nations and households in Africa, resources for importing and buying food.

### **The Bank's programs in agriculture**

Over the next five years, the Bank will lend about \$21 billion to Sub-Saharan Africa. Almost as much in cofinancing will also be mobilized. The total resources transferred will be about \$35 billion. Of this, 30 percent, or \$10 billion, will be for adjustment — and will have as a principal objective shifting the terms of trade in favor of agriculture and creating conditions in which food production can flourish. Of the lending to Sub-Saharan Africa, around 20 percent, or \$7 billion, will be for agriculture.

This lending will differ from the rural development projects of the 1970s in the following ways:

- Attention will be given to the policy environment under adjustment programs.
- Irrigation and mitigating the effects of drought will be major components of the effort, half a billion dollars over the five years.
- The Benor initiative, to be operational in 34 countries by the end of 1988, will draw on \$3-4 billion in lending resources.

### **The Benor initiative**

Based on the Bank's experience in African agriculture, this initiative is being launched to increase significantly the productivity and income of farmers. The initiative responds to the urgent need for an increase in agricultural productivity and the considerable untapped potential for such an increase.

The initiative is named for Daniel Benor, who developed the training-and-visit (T&V) system in India in the early 1970s. Under this system, trained extension workers visit contact farmers every two weeks to provide information tailored to local conditions. The

contact farmers then pass the lessons on to other farmers. The system has been adapted to Africa through pilot programs in Kenya, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso.

Distinguishing this initiative is that:

- It will develop essential agriculture services on a national basis, rather than a project or regional basis. It will channel donor resources into national programs and national institutions, and so increase government interest to sustain their investments.
- It will improve local management of services, rather than rely on foreign management. Training and preparing local staff, from the beginning, to manage national institutions will be critical to success.
- All of the agricultural services will focus on direct contact with farmers — and on what farmers need for technology, for demonstration, for inputs. Field staff and their managers should work directly with farmers.
- Services will have a long-term perspective. The Bank will support these services institutions until they are solidly established, in many cases for 15 to 20 years.
- Aid coordination, elusive in the past, will be greatly improved if interested donors cofinance national systems, rather than continuing to create their own parallel services in each country.

These national programs of agricultural services will complement the Bank's other initiatives, such as structural and sectoral adjustment lending.

### **Research**

The Bank chairs the Special Program for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR), which coordinates the activities of donors that support national research systems in Africa. The donor members of SPAAR provide an estimated \$300 million in loans and grants annually for agricultural research.

The Bank also cosponsors and chairs the 40 donor Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which is expected to spend \$600 million in grants over the next five years for research by international centers cooperating with national systems in Africa to increase agricultural production across the continent.

## ***Women and Population Growth: Two Neglected Elements of Food Security***

Women are central to Africa's food security for four reasons. First, most African farmers are women, and increasing their productivity will determine the agricultural performance and rural incomes. Second, women support children, mostly through subsistence farming and petty trade, and head many of the households at risk of food insecurity. Third, women are more likely to suffer undernutrition during pregnancy and carrying out such arduous and time-consuming tasks as fetching water. Fourth, women's nutritional status largely determines the status of their children. Specific efforts are needed to reorient government programs to serve women better, particularly in agriculture. These efforts should include:

- *Lifting the constraints on women's labor.* Programs and technologies should be adopted to reduce the time women spend processing and preparing food (particularly staples), finding and carrying water and fuelwood, and doing household chores. Technologies do exist for reducing the time needed to process staples (for example, the work of the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture in Nigeria), but the technologies have to be improved and disseminated in other African countries. Similarly, some community-based efforts to improve the supply of rural water have been very successful and should be tested and replicated elsewhere.

- *Conducting more research on farming systems.* Research is needed on several questions. How does modern land registration affect women's income, their farming practices, their incentive to invest, and their practical control over land? How do incentives affect women farmers in different cultural groups — that is, what they grow, how they farm, and how much they market? How does improved access to inputs, credit, and extension affect agricultural production among cultural groups (men or women) with different levels of education and land holdings?

- *Extension.* There should be more female extension workers, communicat-

ing directly with women's groups. Kenya, for example, set up a national agricultural extension service that reaches men and women farmers.

- *Credit.* Women need to save and borrow in the formal financial sector. But the flow of formal credit to women farmers is minimal, because credit systems are not geared to small farmers generally and women lack title to land or other assets to pledge as collateral. Several African countries have small-scale credit programs under way to provide credit with less reliance on land as collateral and more on peer pressure and the ability to pay. Additional experiments should identify, refine, and replicate the most promising approaches.

- *Land tenure.* Adjustments should be explored in land tenure, including joint tenure for wives and husbands and more individual tenure for women.

While agricultural production and economic growth determine how much food and income there is to go around, population growth affects how many mouths there are to feed. The population of Sub-Saharan Africa, now around 500 million, will exceed 700 million by the year 2000. At no time in history has any group of nations faced the challenge of increasing incomes and achieving food security in a situation of such rapid population growth.

With such a high rate of population growth, countries will find it very difficult for the economy and for agriculture to keep pace and to generate the growth in incomes needed to enhance food security. Rapid population growth is also changing the structure of the household, which in turn is changing the dynamic of decisions on the acquisition and distribution of food within the household.

Population growth is thus an overriding concern not only for development but for food security. Governments and donors should therefore continue to strengthen their programs in population and family planning — promoting family planning, encouraging breastfeeding and later ages of marriage, and spreading information about the advantages of planning family size.

The dilemma is that there is no blueprint for what should be done.

A pragmatic approach would include five steps:

1. Identify the food insecure — their location, their condition, and the causes of their food insecurity.

2. Look for sustainable high-return interventions that generate real income for the food insecure.

3. Alternatively, look for the least-cost scheme to generate or provide income or food for those at risk.

4. If the country cannot afford the intervention, provide appropriate support and assistance.

5. If the cost to the government jeopardizes the pace of growth and adjustment, identify another affordable cost-effective alternative or find more funds.

The programs that emerge from such an analytical process will include growth-promoting projects, subsidy schemes (for production or consumption), and policy actions to relieve the main constraints on achieving food security. Here are some examples:

- Investments in agriculture that increase incomes and food production for family consumption in farming households that are at risk of malnourishment.

- Subsidized employment schemes that selectively raise the incomes (in cash or in kind) of the food insecure.

- Subsidized food — for example, food stamps, food ration shops, and supplementary feeding in schools and health centers.

- Public services that improve nutrition in other ways. Because frequent diarrheal infection and poorly constituted diets can cause malnutrition, increasing access to nutrition education, health services, and safe water may be the most cost-effective interventions.

- Institutional changes, such as rescinding laws that prevent women from owning land or that encourage tenancy and discourage permanent land tenure. These might also include promoting village-level management of common property resources like grazing land, forests, and water supplies — and establishing unions and cooperatives for women farmers.

More country-specific work would help planners understand what the various options might mean. This work should include governments, bilateral agencies, and NGOs familiar with the local context.

*Learning by doing.* Because there have been few successful food security interventions in Af-

rica, there are few reliable designs. The route forward is to learn by doing and to learn from experience in other parts of the world. The Tamil Nadu Nutrition Project involved targeted feeding for malnourished children and nutritional education for the mothers. Although the social and institutional context in India is very different from Africa's, some of the principles responsible for the project's success are applicable. Analogous interventions in some African countries — such as Ghana's Program of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment — should be closely monitored for applications to other countries.

**Effectiveness.** Many investments proposed in the name of food security have little prospect of improving the situation. Typical examples include schemes to produce rice at a cost several times that of imported rice — and subsidies for foods consumed by politically vocal groups that live in urban areas and already are well nourished. Equally, programs that lead to negative secondary effects, such as dependence, are unlikely to help food security. Planners should avoid prejudging and instead draw on relevant experience to determine whether a policy intervention will relieve food insecurity.

**Cost-effectiveness.** Of the several interventions to improve food security, planners should choose the most cost-effective ones. In some circumstances, as in some arid areas of Kenya, risky agricultural projects in environmentally poor regions may cost less than subsidized migration. But in other areas, like northern Burkina Faso, the reverse may be true. Governments should not set up low-return rural development projects in marginal areas under the guise of promoting economic growth — unless these projects are generally the least-cost way of relieving chronic malnourishment, and then they should be undertaken explicitly on these grounds.

**Targeting.** Targeting resources, often the key to cost-effectiveness, can reduce costly general subsidies. Yet targeting by income is difficult in poor countries with weak administrations and no established social security systems. In parts of Africa, such targeted programs to raise food security may be inappropriate or impracticable. These areas have traditional social arrangements where purely economic measures of income may not be good indicators of an individual's food insecurity. In some settings, seasonal or regional targeting may be appropriate, and certain types of food may be self-targeting. In each case it is important to examine the social and institutional forces at work.

**Affordability.** Even cost-effective food secu-

ity interventions may be extremely expensive. An important issue is whether intervention jeopardizes the country's long-run goal of raising per capita incomes. What is affordable depends on local and foreign resources — from both official assistance and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Donors have recently begun to stress social components in adjustment programs — a trend the Bank supports.

**Sustainability.** Food security interventions should be sustainable. But in some of the poorest countries under tight adjustment, no sustainable interventions may be identifiable. In these cases, stop-gap schemes are likely to be the best that can be developed. Where support is unpredictable, long-run sustainability is too much to expect. Instead, governments and donors should accept any cost-effective approach for which resources are available.

**Efficiency.** Although every effort must be made to limit waste and encourage accountability of funds in food security interventions, realism must prevail in evaluating accomplishments. Many operations will be difficult to administer and will entail a very high risk. In such circumstances, a program should be regarded as a success if a substantial part of the resources reach the food insecure. But an operation should stop

**“Each program should be country-specific, closely monitored, and regularly evaluated.”**

### How Different Policies Affect Different Groups

	Effect on food prices	Effect on real income in short/medium term			
		Urban poor	Rural landless	Subsistence farmers	Small farmers with surplus
Reducing imports of food	△	▼	▼	○	
Expanding imports of food	▼	△	△	○	▼
Subsidize food production:					
Foods not traded internationally	▼	△	△	△	△
Foods traded internationally	○	○	△	△	△
Reduce subsidies on food production:					
Foods not traded internationally	△	▼	▼	▼	▼
Foods traded internationally	○	○	▼	▼	▼
Subsidize food prices for consumers, maintain producer prices	▼	△	△	○	○
Augmenting incomes targeted or market-wide	○	△	△	△	△

Improvement △      No effect ○      Moderate deterioration ▼  
 Moderate improvement △      Deterioration ▼

*“... the challenge is to promote long-term economic growth while protecting the short-term food security of those at greatest risk.”*

the food insecure. But an operation should stop when too few resources reach the intended beneficiaries.

Each program should be country-specific and, given the risks, should be closely monitored and regularly evaluated.

#### **Food security and economic adjustment**

It is necessary to monitor adjustment operations and keep the priorities balanced to ensure that adjustment does not increase the food insecurity and malnutrition of some groups, particularly but not exclusively in urban areas. Concern for the short-term food supplies of a relatively small part of the population should not, however, be a pretext to stall the whole adjustment process. To do that could hold down growth and endanger the food security of a much larger part of the population, possibly for generations to come.

Food security must be a complement to economic adjustment. For most African countries, adjustment means shifting rural-urban terms of trade in favor of agriculture — and thus in favor of most of the food insecure. This can be a powerful justification for change.

The impacts of adjustment programs should be synchronized. Actions like devaluing exchange rates or reducing subsidies can, in the short term, increase the food insecurity of some groups. Meanwhile, actions that might have positive effects (increasing access to credit or expanding private sector activities) can take much longer. If these measures are not synchronized, the burden

on the food insecure may be excessive. For example, reduced input subsidies should in principle be offset by increased credit. If in practice credit for small farmers dries up, their position would deteriorate in the short term.

The question of affordability makes the relationship between adjustment and food security uneasy. The challenge is to design adjustment-motivated changes without risking greater food insecurity and yet to remain within the available funding. If substantial funding is needed for the food security programs, it may be difficult for governments to assure that there will be enough “adjustment” left in the package to stabilize the economy and reestablish economic growth. Governments must thus make realistic tradeoffs between adjustment and food security.

In the medium to long term, economic growth should increase food security. Cost-effective interventions for food security are also likely to be sound investments in human capital. But there may be tradeoffs in the short run, if governments and donors focus too much on food security and less on other key development issues. No one should be under the illusion that all of the food insecure can be protected from all the adverse impacts of every adjustment measure.

If there are tradeoffs between adjustment and food security, the challenge is to promote long-term economic growth while protecting the short-term food security of those at greatest risk for whom nutritional deterioration would constitute a serious health risk.

# REDUCING TRANSITORY FOOD INSECURITY

Fluctuations in nominal incomes and in food prices are two sources of transitory food insecurity. Nominal incomes fluctuate because of wide swings in agricultural and food production caused by changes in the weather and in the export prices of agricultural products and other primary commodities. This instability is greatest in countries that depend on only a few commodities. Food prices fluctuate because of shifts in domestic and international prices. The problem obviously differs for producers and consumers. A country has little control over the international prices of food imports or primary exports, but it can do something to reduce (but not eliminate) the fluctuations in domestic agricultural output.

Donors should support actions to prevent transitory food insecurity. Measures to help drought-prone countries, include promoting drought-resistant crops and developing low-cost technologies that retain soil moisture. Measures to expand agricultural research and extension and to introduce nonagricultural income-earning enterprises to the farming population should also be supported. These measures overlap in large part with the general development of agriculture.

Where transitory food insecurity cannot be prevented, donors should help governments cope with it. A major issue is keeping food prices reasonably stable between seasons and from one year to the next. Abnormally high food prices mean that many people will not be able to buy food. Abnormally low food prices reduce farmers' incomes and limit their ability to plant new crops. At the same time, there is a risk that some attempts to stabilize prices will be counterproductive and make prices even more unstable. Governments too often pile intervention on top of intervention, some of which undo others. But completely stable prices are neither desirable nor feasible. And even stable prices cannot remedy transitory food insecurity.

A rational approach entails understanding how much instability there would be without intervention. When a government does not intervene in trade, there are three causes of unstable food prices — international prices, the effective exchange rate, and the instability of domestic supply and demand. In most of Africa, exchange rates fluctuate because unstable revenues from agricultural exports supply the country's foreign exchange, and the demand for foreign exchange fluctuates with the demand for imports.

One way to reduce price instability for traded

food is to modify the explicit or implicit border price. If the border price rises (whether due to the instability of the international price, the equilibrium exchange rate, or both), governments can subsidize imports. And if the border price is below normal, they can tax imports. But it may be difficult to determine what the normal border price should be in practice. With or without stable border prices, domestic food prices may be more stable when there are no restrictions on trade than when food imports or the food import bill are held inflexible between one year and the next — a policy that African governments often pursue.

Stabilization through trade has costs. The cost of stabilizing prices by varying imports is a more unstable exchange rate or, alternatively, the cost of holding larger foreign exchange reserves. Yet this cost is normally much less than that of using large buffer stocks.

Buffer stock operations should thus be analyzed carefully from the point of view of cost-effectiveness. Storage should be seen as one of several instruments — often a high cost one — that can contribute to price stabilization. Large-scale buffer stock operations will rarely be a cost-effective alternative. Storage facilities should be sufficient to remove and inject enough food into the market for a short period until the supply can be realistically stabilized through trade.

Liberalizing trade — not only for growth, but also for food supply and price stability — is better than controlling imports and foreign exchange in ways that often do not reflect food supply and demand conditions. But this may not be enough. Where international prices are volatile, a tariff structure can stabilize the domestic price within acceptable limits. Governments can subsidize imports or tax exports when prices are too high — and tax imports or subsidize exports when prices are too low. Such levies will work only when the country can administer them and can prevent abuse for purposes other than food security.

Many countries will find it difficult or impossible to stabilize food supplies without international assistance. Further, governments often find it politically difficult to hold on to the financial reserves needed to assure adequate food in severe circumstances.

Donors should thus review whether existing international safety nets are adequate or should be expanded. Food aid that often can expand and

*“A major issue is keeping food prices stable between seasons and from one year to the next.”*

## Storing Cereals

A difficult issue facing many governments is cereal storage. In most countries, the bulk of storage capacity is in the hands of producers, consumers, and traders. This usually is an appropriate situation, as small-scale traditional on-farm storage is often cheap and cost-effective. And private sector traders are often more efficient than governments in handling cereal marketing. Storage capacity will need to expand steadily as agricultural production expands, and the private sector normally can accomplish this expansion efficiently. There are three types of food stocks: working, emergency, and buffer stocks.

### Working stocks

Working stocks are normally held by producers, consumers and traders at the state, region, village, and household levels. When there is only one harvest a year, working stocks might amount to as much as total annual consumption or production.

The more varied the foods in the production-consumption basket, the less the demand for storage. If the cost of storage is high, people will prefer to switch to other foods that might be harvested at different times of the year. Low working stocks may be the consequence of high storage costs, including the cost of holding inventory (credit). If there is hunger (seasonal food insecurity) as a consequence, public intervention to increase this private storage activity may be effective.

When there are different views concerning the requirements for public stocks, the debate is often about the need for working stocks and indirectly about the role of parastatals in grain trade. If an African government monopolizes the grain trade, an appropriate working stock might be about 15 to 30 percent of annual production, or the size of the marketed surplus. If the government plays no role in grain trading under normal circumstances, it obviously would not hold a working stock.

### Emergency stocks

Emergency stocks are insurance against catastrophe. One clear example

is the unexpected destruction of a food supply that cannot be replaced from another source. The protection of the food supply has a clear time and place dimension. The emergency stock has to be maintained at a constant level and replenished as soon as it is depleted.

The infrastructure and administrative capacity for handling emergencies has a lot to do with the required size of an emergency stock. There are no objective criteria for determining the size of an emergency stock. There may be cheaper alternatives for obtaining an equal level of protection. But the tolerance for suffering a catastrophe and the willingness to pay for protection are subjective.

### Buffer or stabilization stocks

The size of stocks required for stabilizing supplies from one year to the next is widely debated. In most cases neither the advocates of large or small buffer stocks have enough evidence to support their positions. But there is good cause to suspect that large buffer stocks are overly ambitious. The reasons are:

- Calculations are often inspired by extreme but rare events: a good or bad harvest. Yet, costs for buffer stocks are incurred in all years while the benefits accrue only in some years. Without an assessment of the probabilities of good, normal, and bad harvests, the cost-effectiveness of a buffer stock may be overestimated.

- The advocates of large buffer stocks fail to consider and appreciate alternative ways of stabilizing marketed supplies and prices. Sometimes the same agencies advocating large stocks condone constraints on trade, even as unencumbered trade would lead to greater stability from year to year. There are other possible interventions (variable tariffs or diversified cropping) that have costs, yet may be more cost-effective than stocks.

- Stabilization stocks, like working stocks, are most valuable when they are an integral part of a flexible and responsive food marketing system. Too often there is no clear perception about the rules that govern the accumulation and release of stocks.

contract directly with a country's requirements is one such safety net. But food aid is not much help when the global food bill rises. If prices are up everywhere, total food aid does not increase or may even decrease — just when it is most needed. The IMF's Compensatory Financing Facility is another safety net. It provides credit when general export earnings decline or food import bills rise. Finally, all official development assistance to individual countries is mildly responsive to fluctuations in balance of payment conditions. While the Bank sees no need for any new international stabilization funds, it does support using food aid to stabilize domestic food prices. Governments could set aside counterpart funds from sales of food aid. These revenues would provide budget support for subsidizing imports or exports to defend floor or ceiling target prices. This solution should be considered only if countries find it difficult to save for a bad year. In countries with strict fiscal discipline, governments should avoid earmarking revenues for specific purposes.

One key to handling food aid flexibly is having enough storage to cope with predictable but unprogrammed flows of food aid (see the box). Recipients cannot plan well if they are uncertain about shipment arrivals. When food aid arrives late or when it is not needed, it destabilizes prices. These problems are greatest in countries where food aid constitutes most of the food imported. Donors should try to make food aid flows more responsive to recipients' needs — and easier to program. But such reforms will take time and may only work in the long run. One option is to rely less on food aid. A better option may be to store food when it is plentiful and use it as needed. Countries that depend on food imports could develop the capacity to store as much as about a quarter of their average annual food aid shipments. This would not cost too much — and could help stabilize prices and save potential foreign exchange for commercial imports.

### Responding to natural disaster

In the last 20 years Africa has been hit by a series of droughts. Accurate and timely information on the status of agricultural crops and rangelands should help combat these onslaughts. There are four stages in handling natural disasters: warning, decision, response, and rehabilitation. All need strengthening.

*Warning.* In 1985 the Bonn Summit called on the EEC and the United States to develop a more effective system to monitor conditions in

the Sahel. The idea was to anticipate famine conditions and to mobilize assistance quickly. As a result, there are now national, regional, and international early warning systems (EWSs) in operation. An EWS collects data on climatic conditions, yield forecasts, markets, nutritional status, food prices, and pest invasions. The system uses satellite data on cropping areas, rainfall, and vegetation growth. As yet, not all potential users rely on this information, because of confusion over the indicators, differences between systems, and questions about the reliability of the data.

The systems have nevertheless made great progress and continue to improve. FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System receives regular reports from all countries — and from the Sahel every 10 days during the growing season. FAO is assisting more countries to establish Natural Early Warning Systems to improve ground information. It is also setting up Regional Remote Sensing Centers and may establish one in West Africa. FAO will soon have an advanced satellite monitoring system that will receive hourly cloud temperature readings over Africa directly from Meteosat, the European space agencies' weather satellite. And the system will receive data on crops over 10-day periods from a U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellite.

FAO will combine these data to monitor rainfall and vegetation. Other data bases will support this system and include climatic statistics, a 10-day and monthly index compiled over eight years, and a five-class listing of desert-locust habitats. FAO can compare these data with satellite information and produce maps that highlight abnormal rainfall patterns and suspected locust breeding areas. In addition, the U.S.-financed Famine Early Warning System provides information on food shortages in a few countries where the United States provides food aid.

The performance of early warning systems will improve as operators minimize duplication and coordinate their activities. In addition, broadly based agreements to improve technology will strengthen the system and integrate the EWS centers. The FAO is already pursuing these actions.

*Decision.* Early warning information is only one system that can detect drought and predict critical food shortages. Despite recent progress, decisionmaking needs stronger management. The relevant agencies — the World Food Program (WFP), bilateral donors, and voluntary organizations — should provide resources to help create this management. Governments can set up institutions to handle relief and provide them with adequate funds. With these groups in place, they can estimate the size of the problem and the need for emergency relief. On-site verification should occur as soon as possible so that short-term famine relief and long-term development policies are coordinated.

*Response.* In moving food to recipients the ports, roads, and railways for transporting shipments are critical. Contingency plans should be available when transport corridors cannot be used. Because emergency food often has to travel through neighboring countries, their transport facilities must be adequate. Regional bodies — such as the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) — are assisting in cooperation.

*Rehabilitation.* Deforestation and changes in weather patterns often lead to cumulative disasters and further requirements for disaster relief. More research is needed to measure these changes, get agreements on their effects on agriculture, and prepare long-term responses. Already the EWS has some tools for measuring longer term degradation in Africa.

***“Donors should try to make food aid flows more responsive to recipients’ needs.”***

# FOOD AID AND FOOD SECURITY

*“Food aid, if properly managed, can have a very positive impact on food security.”*

From 1982 to 1985 Sub-Saharan Africa received about 3.5 million tons of food aid a year, or more than a third of its annual cereal imports of 9.5 million tons. The annual value to the recipient countries was about \$750 million. The shipping cost to the donors was about \$250-300 million; the balance represents the market value of food withdrawn from “surplus” stocks.

Food aid does not always have much to do with food security. Its immediate impact benefits the urban poor and landless rural population. It has little effect on subsistence farmers. The weaknesses of food aid in assisting development are well known. Sustained food aid can make countries dependent on international handouts.

When it arrives late, it can destabilize prices and reduce incentives for local production. As mentioned above, this can be avoided if donors provide reliable flows so that recipient governments can include the aid in their planning. In addition, it is important to supply commodities that meet local needs. Program food aid is often sold on local markets. If the government uses the proceeds to subsidize unproductive public or private enterprises, it contributes little or nothing to the economy. Project food aid often delivers food at a high cost to those who need it when it would be more efficient to give cash.

At the same time, the adverse effects of food aid can be counteracted, so that food aid, if properly managed, can have a very positive impact on food security. Decisionmaking on program food aid is provided bilaterally by the five main donors — Australia, Canada, the EEC, Japan, and the United States. They recently have carried out comprehensive reviews of their food aid policies and programs with a view to strengthening the contribution of food aid to development.

The Bank and the WFP are carrying out a comprehensive review of food aid in Africa to find out how food aid contributes to development and to food security — and to integrate it with financial aid. The WFP has unmatched expertise in handling project food aid and helps bilateral donors coordinate program and emergency aid. The WFP also has a field presence and information network that, after upgrading, would allow it to play a much larger coordinating role.

The Bank and the WFP will be exploring a trial collaboration in one or two countries. (The WFP has already suggested Chad, Ghana, Sudan, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mozambique, and Tanzania). The collaboration will involve reviewing existing and proposed food security projects to make them more cost effective — and finding ways to substitute food aid for resources that are needed elsewhere in the economy. The WFP, NGOs, and governments would work on developing new food security projects with a large food aid component.

The trend toward greater international collaboration is strong in Africa. In December 1987 the Special Program of Assistance was established for the low-income debt-distressed countries of Africa. In addition, bilateral donors have shown a willingness to coordinate their financial aid with the Bank's adjustment programs in Africa. So the time is ripe for donors to explore similar arrangements for food aid.

## *Three Types of Food Aid*

Between June 1985 and July 1986, food aid for Sub-Saharan Africa amounted to \$750 million. About 35 percent of this aid was provided as program food aid, 15 percent as project food aid, and 50 percent as emergency food aid. Each type is distinct.

### **Program**

Program food aid is a straightforward substitute for financial aid. Some donors, such as the United States, ensure that food aid is sold at market prices and that the proceeds are used for development purposes. Other donors have flexible approaches.

The effect of program aid on food security is similar to that of financial aid. It raises the prospects for increased current and future consumption. Its success in contributing to food security depends on how well additional resources are used to stimulate economic growth and provide minimal diets for food insecure households.

### **Project**

About 15 percent of the food aid to Sub-Saharan Africa — amounting to more than half a million tons and valued at about \$150 million — was used in development and nutrition projects. About half these projects are administered through the World Food Program, the rest through the main international NGOs. The total value of the

projects is twice the value of the food aid component.

### **Emergency**

Most emergency food aid has done much to combat transitory food insecurity. When such aid arrives on time, it usually is distributed directly to the affected population — and saves many lives. Even if the food is injected into the market, it helps food security because it is provided at a time when foreign exchange reserves are low and governments have to curb food and other imports.

Donors have tried to deliver emergency food aid on time and at low cost by borrowing food from other food stocks and purchasing food in stricken countries or from neighboring countries.

### **Triangular Transactions**

In recent years, another kind of program food aid has become popular, the “triangular transaction.” This transaction involves donor country A acquiring food in country B and delivering it to country C. The food is bought with cash or in exchange for a food that country B needs and country A has a surplus of. Even critics of food aid often advocate this triangular food aid because it promotes South-South trade. But this kind of food aid has drawbacks, particularly when the food is purchased with financial aid.

# INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

The proposals for action can work only if governments, NGOs, and bilateral and multilateral aid agencies can implement them. This implementation in turn requires coordinating objectives and programs.

## Government agencies

Government organizations must improve their ability to handle food security issues in three main areas:

*Planning, preparation, and evaluation.* Governments should develop a planning capacity for food security (and food aid). Traditionally, ministries of agriculture handle these issues. Often, however, officials lack the background or inclination to deal with the difficult distribution issues of food security. Health ministries, which are often responsible for nutrition issues, sometimes see food security as feeding programs. Planning ministries, by contrast, can give a balanced national perspective.

*Handling food aid.* Many governments need to develop better ways to handle food aid. Sometimes, food aid falls under agriculture, sometimes finance or interior, and sometimes one or more parastatals. When several agencies have overlapping mandates, there is no clear accountability – and no audits to verify how resources are used. Responsibilities should be clear, and governments should set procedures to help planners administer food aid, so that the food on local markets does not overwhelm local production. Food aid agencies must also be able to hold auctions and to store food aid that arrives in sudden spurts.

*Building institutional capabilities.* Many countries need new institution-building activities. Agriculture officials should be in a position to prepare and implement projects that help the poor. Planning and health ministries need to increase their collaboration in handling these issues. And in drought-prone countries, they will have to put more emphasis on techniques to combat droughts. They should also strengthen their capacity to cope with the urban food insecure. Donors, meanwhile, should continue their efforts to develop institutions to handle health, family

planning, and nutrition programs (including monitoring, treatment, feeding, and nutrition education). Because these activities may not fit easily within existing sectoral operations, bilateral donors and NGOs with field experience should collaborate with governments. Where possible, free-standing food security operations should provide more funds.

## Nongovernmental organizations

Donors can learn much from the experience of NGOs. In turn, the donors can advise on which food security actions governments will support, help finance an expansion of the program, and experiment with new institutional approaches (to credit and to community works programs).

Donors should find out more about NGOs' work in food security and give special priority to NGOs that increase economic opportunities for small farmers, particularly women. It would be useful to organize meetings on food security with NGOs, donors, and government representatives. Major food aid NGOs should participate in the proposed Bank-WFP evaluation of food aid. And there should be in-country seminars with representatives of government, donors, and NGOs. Each should help develop and prepare specific country strategies for food security.

## African organizations

African regional organizations should also play a greater role in food security.

- There should be a one-year curriculum in food security planning in at least two African universities, one anglophone and one francophone. The Bank should seek funds for this from a bilateral donor or international NGO.

- Regional bodies — such as SADCC, IGADD, and CILSS — should expand efforts to improve transport facilities between countries and so ensure transport of emergency food aid.

- Donors should collaborate with the regional organizations to understand how economic integration can help food security. This will help donors take specific cost-effective actions to speed economic integration.

*“Donors can learn much from NGOs.”*

# ACTION PROGRAM FOR THE BANK

*“...a new urgency in implementation, a sharper focus where food insecurity is most severe.”*

Hunger in Africa is a huge, intractable problem. There are no quick fixes, no easy answers, no simple short cuts. Only large-scale actions, pursued persistently over many years with adequate resources and skilled personnel, will dent the problem. Even so, the risks are considerable in the face of unfavorable world economic conditions. Fiscal possibilities are restricted, programs are stretched to the limit, external aid funding is tight, and donor administrative budgets are under pressure.

To respond to the challenge, the Bank is taking action in four areas.

## **Building the foundation**

First, the Bank will build the foundation for long-term food security through a more vigorous application of ongoing approaches to growth and adjustment. In addition, the Bank will:

- Strengthen its efforts to raise the agricultural production of farmers at risk of food insecurity – for example, low-income smallholders and women farmers.
- Continue and expand its work in population and family planning programs.
- Use the opportunity of adjustment operations to help protect and support the undernourished.
- Conduct reviews of public investment and expenditure programs to ensure that they fund growth-oriented projects that can help undernourished people, subsidized schemes that support the food insecure, and programs in family planning, health, and nutrition.
- Increase measures to control famine and mitigate the effects of drought under ongoing operations.
- Incorporate environmental concerns into development policy and programs.
- Coordinate the use of food aid with financial assistance.
- Strengthen efforts through SPAAR to improve the effectiveness of donor support to national agricultural research, and encourage the donors of CGIAR to sustain and enhance the focus of international agricultural research centers on the needs of Africa.

## **Preparing country programs**

Second, the Bank will be pursuing a new set of country-specific actions. These actions will form a more intensive, organized, and systematic approach to the problem of hunger in Africa.

These actions will need more staff, but can be implemented within the framework of existing aid. Specifically, the Bank will:

- Prepare food security action programs for a number of African countries each year, starting in fiscal 1989. After five years, these programs are expected to cover the African countries with the greatest number of food insecure.
- Identify, prepare, and finance growth-oriented projects that benefit undernourished people and cost-effective interventions that improve the food security of the undernourished.
- Build the institutional capacity of African governments to handle food security issues.
- Strengthen actions to cope with transitory food insecurity, and in some cases, support actions to reduce large fluctuations in food prices and finance more storage capacity to manage food aid better.

## **Mobilizing an effective partnership**

Third, the Bank will take steps to mobilize an effective partnership of all concerned donors. Such a collaborative effort will minimize duplication, add to staff expertise, and mobilize more funds. There are three specific recommendations in this regard:

- Donor coordination would focus mainly on the individual country level. Where possible, the Bank should use existing informal forums, such as consultative groups and round tables.
- The Bank will develop ways to keep other donors informed about the progress of the African food security initiative.
- NGOs should join forces with official multilateral and bilateral donors. The Bank can help bring governments and NGOs together to meet common objectives. The needed actions include experimenting with new institutional approaches through NGOs, promoting women's cooperatives, having NGOs take part in preparing specific food security strategies, and organizing trilateral meetings with NGOs, governments, and donors.

## **Stepping up applied research**

A fourth set of actions being undertaken by the Bank will involve applied research. These actions include:

- Carrying out, jointly with the WFP, a review of African food aid that points to future changes in this area.
- Exploring ways for greater collaboration in early warning systems.

- Finding ways to integrate women farmers with the development process.
- Encouraging regional integration that will improve food security. The Bank will study how regional integration can increase food security.

The Bank's action program will comprise actions that are not so much new in themselves but will have a new urgency in implementation, a clearer consistency with existing programs, and a sharper focus on countries where food insecurity is most severe. The Bank's action program can help increase the understanding of the causes of hunger in Africa and channel the resources to actions that can reduce hunger. The following should be accomplished in five years:

- Ongoing food security action programs will cover the majority of Africa's food insecure.
- Food security will be a central theme in African government policy and donor assistance.
- Donor assistance will, through greater collaboration, have a greater effect.
- Programs will be under way for food aid, NGOs, women farmers, and regional approaches to food security.

# ANNEX: ACTIVITIES OF OTHER AGENCIES IN FOOD SECURITY

Given the pervasiveness of the food security problem, almost all international agencies are involved to varying degrees in actions that bear on it. Described here, in a selective and summary fashion, are some of the main global programs.

## **Food and Agriculture Organization**

The FAO has made three major contributions in focusing world attention on the issue of food security. First, the FAO-sponsored World Food Conference in 1974 established the Committee on Food Security (CFS). The CFS has a large rotating membership of countries that meets annually and passes advisory resolutions for food security. The CFS initially focused on issues related to the scarcity of food supply, and food storage technology and requirements. Now the CFS has shifted its focus to transfers of food (often on food aid terms) and to increasing the poor's economic access to food.

Second, in 1976, the FAO set up its Food Security Assistance Scheme. This program has spent \$84 million in developing countries for investments in food storage and marketing operations, technical assistance, food information, and training. The largest donors to the scheme have been the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, and Germany.

Third, the FAO's Global Early Warning System to predict impending shortfalls in food supplies has had considerable success with in-country early warning and response systems.

## **Administrative Committee on Coordination and Subcommittee on Nutrition**

The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) established the Subcommittee on Nutrition (SCN). It is the focal point for international nutrition in the UN system. A number of bilateral assistance agencies also participate. The SCN serves as a coordinating mechanism, exchanges information and technical guidance, and helps the UN respond to nutrition problems. These problems include the nutrition consequences of adjustment, better use of food aid, the nutrition effects of shifting from subsistence to cash crops, and the integration of nutrition goals in the work of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research.

## **The Interagency Food and Nutrition Surveillance Program**

The IFNS — a program sponsored by WHO, UNICEF, the FAO, and the ACC-SCN — aims to strengthen food and nutrition surveillance systems. It was established in 1975 in response to a resolution of the 1974 World Food Conference. By 1981, some 20 countries, supported independently by the respective UN agencies, were operating some type of food and nutrition surveillance system for the purpose of policy, program planning, and advocacy.

The practical aim of the IFNS is to extend this interagency support for food and nutrition surveillance activities to many more countries in an actively collaborative manner. The program's short-term objectives are to produce and analyze existing information in trends of human nutrition at national and subnational levels for 20 to 40 countries by mid-1988, and to promote recognition and use of this information at regional and country levels. The IFNS is working closely with the Bank in a number of countries, often in collaboration with the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) project.

## **The World Food Council**

The World Food Council was created by the 1974 World Food Conference to implement its resolutions, many of which relate directly to food security and hunger concerns. An early achievement of the Council was the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Council has initiated National Food Strategies in a number of countries — mostly in Africa — assisted by the World Bank and bilateral agencies. The Council also helped set up the International Emergency Food Reserve and other food security initiatives, such as the IMF's Special Food Facility. The lack of an international consensus has hampered the Council's role as a catalyst in the area of food initiatives.

## **International Fund for Agricultural Development**

Established in 1977, IFAD helps finance highly concessional loans for projects to improve food production and generate income earning opportunities for the poorest groups in the rural

population. IFAD's experience is especially relevant to the alleviation of food insecurity. The World Bank and IFAD already cooperate closely to prepare, appraise, and cofinance projects to improve food security.

#### **World Food Program**

The WFP was established in parallel with the IDA in 1961 and began operations in 1963. It is governed by the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programs (CFA), which meets twice a year and coordinates bilateral and multilateral food aid, particularly emergency aid. The WFP uses voluntary contributions of food and cash from governments for projects to alleviate hunger. The project's dual objectives are, first, to meet the immediate nutritional needs of the hungry and malnourished and, second, to produce a lasting impact on economic development, particularly through food-for-work projects. In 1986, for instance, the WFP committed more than \$600 million for new projects in 43 countries and another \$179 million for the victims of war, famine, and natural disaster.

#### **UNICEF**

UNICEF plays a major role in the interagency nutrition surveillance program and concentrates on Africa. UNICEF deals with issues concerning

the health environment and behavioral change. Its operations include immunization, oral rehydration, and (to a lesser extent) growth monitoring and breast-feeding. UNICEF's "Adjustment with a Human Face" advocates more research and concern about the social effects of adjustment.

#### **European Economic Community**

The cornerstone of the EEC's food security action program is to support National Food Strategies in several African countries. Under its Action Plan to Combat Hunger, the EEC entered a "mutual commitment" with the governments of Kenya, Mali, Zambia, and Rwanda to improve the production and distribution of food and food aid. The commitment now covers most African countries and helps arrange a fiscal safety net during critical policy transition periods. The EEC's National Food Strategies are similar to the Bank's agricultural policies under structural adjustment. These include improving incentives for farmers and liberalizing markets. The EEC's food security programs have shifted from food self-sufficiency to the "demand side" of food insecurity. The Bank's food security strategy is learning from, and building on, the EEC's experience — and close collaboration is expected in the implementation phase.

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**The World Bank**

**Headquarters**

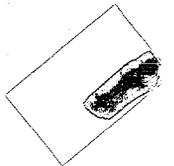
1818 H Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20433, U.S.A.  
Telephone: (202) 477-1234  
Telex: WUI 64145 WORLDBANK  
RCA 248423 WORLDBK  
Cable: INTBAFRAD  
WASHINGTONDC

**European Office**

66, avenue d'Iéna  
75116 Paris, France  
Telephone: (1) 47.23.54.21  
Telex: 842-620628

**Tokyo Office**

Kokusai Building  
1-1 Marunouchi 3-chome  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan  
Telephone: (03) 214-5001  
Telex: 781-26838



18-1099 3