

# **The UN System and Global Food Security:** *A Study of the Right to Food, Policy Advice and Food Aid*

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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06 July 2012

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "The UN System and Global Food Security: A Study of the Right to Food, Policy Advice and Food Aid" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

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# **The UN System and Global Food Security:** *A Study of the Right to Food, Policy Advice and Food Aid*

**ABSTRACT**

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The exceptional rise in international prices of basic food commodities during 2007-2008 brought to fore the inadequacy and fragility of global food security, immediately grabbing media attention with regular headlines and ringing alarm bells for the international community. Persistence of volatile prices increasingly pushed more people into poverty and hunger, igniting looting and food riots in several countries, including Haiti, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Egypt, Niger, Burkina Faso and Senegal. Reports of starvation, farmer suicides and worsening hunger have become regular features of our contemporary life, causing little surprise and a sense of complacency. Hunger is more than the televised images and newspaper pictures of cadaverous bodies or hundreds of hands stretching out for food packets, which are typical during famines or disasters. Millions of people starve to death due to food shortages, poverty, high prices, lack of income and purchasing power and inadequate emergency food distribution arrangements. Many more suffer from malnutrition and hunger, which reduce their health and productivity, and increase their exposure to ill-health.

Problems of hunger and famine have been a constant concern of human history, progressively determining socio-economic and political relationships. Post-World War II world was characterised by food surpluses in few developed countries used to address the situation of food shortage in the developing countries. As traditional channels of production and patterns of consumption were systematically destroyed by forces of globalisation, giving way to market-oriented demand and supply of food and leading to increasing commercialization and control of the food chain and changing food habits, the focus switched to the importance of ensuring access by poor people to the food they needed through increasing employment and purchasing power. Conventionally, the responsibility for addressing issues of food and agriculture was strictly the concern of the individual country governments, dealt with at the domestic and local levels. However, in an increasingly interdependent and globalised world, the emergence and proliferation of powerful actors, including international organisations, international financial institutions, regional mechanisms, large multinational and agribusiness food corporations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, have challenged the established dominance of state governments in food-related spheres.

Food as one of the basic necessities for sustaining human life is a strategic commodity that has political, economic, social and cultural significance and, therefore, is an unconventional security concern; global food security being the cumulative outcome of the actions of each of these numerous actors and agencies. Food crises, especially the ironical co-existence of

hunger with plenty and prosperity, as gross misdistribution and mismanagement prevent food from reaching the neediest, constitute a major cause of global anxiety and a challenge that both national governments and the international community are grappling with.

Food and agricultural issues have garnered international attention since 1945, institutionalised within the United Nations system with the establishment of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Food aid was given a multilateral dimension by the World Food Programme (WFP) since 1963, while the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) factored in investments for agriculture and rural development since 1977. The need for 'global food security', as a multidimensional, multi-sectoral and multifaceted concept, emerged in the international lexicon since the 1970s, dealt within the mainstream discourses of 'development', 'human rights', 'external assistance' and 'security'. As the international institutions attempted to define, measure and estimate hunger and malnourishment and devise policies and strategies to combat the world food problem, global food security made its way among their agendas. Of particular interest is the gradual branching of the World Bank into food, agriculture and nutrition sectors, which were not a part of its original foundational functions.

International institutional anxiety over ascertaining global food security was triggered by the 1973-74 food crisis and the subsequent 1974-World Food Conference, which were the major turning points in the evolution of the understanding of the issue and realising the potential of the UN system to address it, largely in support of state activities. International relations of food and active international diplomacy on food and agricultural issues have generated communication among governments, regional and global inter-governmental organizations, spurring countless international conferences, summits, meetings and seminars. These have been paralleled by equally vocal and manifold non-governmental and civil society activism and think-tanks at national and international levels, farmers' and consumers' unions, covering broad dimensions of food affairs. This enthusiasm, however, quickly turned lukewarm since the world was not threatened by any imminent possibility of food crisis, largely resulting in waning of food as a priority issue among other agendas within the international institutions.

The present crisis occurs despite international institutional engagement with issues of hunger and undernutrition. It is pertinent to ask whether the persistent precarious world food situation is a result of the failure of international institutions to devise an effective food regime, incorporating norms on right to food, policy-making and food aid that can persuade

government policies in the direction of achieving food security. The UN system – FAO, WFP and IFAD – and the World Bank promptly responded to the 2007-2008 food crises with many innovative initiatives and commitments. However, are these simply indicative of a crisis-response or signs of a resolve to undertake enduring efforts to address the root causes of the food problem? How have international institutions framed the issue of food in their agendas? How do the various organizations working on food-related issues coordinate their activities?

The present study analyses the role of one of the key actors, the international institutions, that determine global food and nutrition security, by examining how the UN system (especially its food agencies – FAO, WFP, IFAD, and the World Bank) addresses issues of global food security (right to food, policy-making and food aid). As an international organizational study, the attempt is to understand international institutional approach to global food security, their potential capacity and limitations in the context of world food problem. Though undertaken in the shadow of the 2007-2008 food crisis, this study aims to be more than just a crisis-driven analysis and attempts a deep-rooted understanding of the problems of chronic hunger and undernutrition through a nuanced perspective of the evolution and engagement of the UN system with global food security.

Global food security, determined by availability, accessibility, utilisation and stability, is associated with a multitude of factors, related to processes of development and globalisation, ranging from population growth, food production, agricultural and rural development, poverty, employment, income and purchasing power, role of women, trade liberalisation and food aid. Poverty has been by far the most unanimously agreed reason for hunger. The emerging concerns of climate change and environment, biofuels, agricultural biotechnology and genetically modified crops, have further contributed to compounding the food security predicament. This also renders difficult agreement on ways of achieving food security through effective policy prescription. It is beyond any doubt that a consistent and long-term upward shift is occurring in world food prices, largely superseding the growth in income of several hundred million of the world's poorest people, forcing their purchasing power farther below the level necessary to obtain even the basic minimum adequate amount of food.

The right to food (RTF) has been recognised since the inception of the UN and the adoption of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights*. Subsequently, there has been substantial advocacy at the international summit and conference

level, resulting in declaratory affirmations of the RTF, which has also found mention in numerous human rights treaties, declarations, conventions, protocols and resolutions. General Comment 12 has added substantive content to this right. The UN system in general and FAO have vigorously advocated the RTF, developing its normative content and interpreting the legal obligations emanating for the states and the international community to recognise it. However, situated within the larger debates regarding hierarchy of rights and the non-justiciable nature of socio-economic and cultural rights, RTF lacks specific implementation mechanisms that can hold states and other institutions responsible for violation. International instruments for realising RTF are limited to states' reports, which are far from reflecting the actual situation, and the supervisory and monitoring mechanisms of the UN do not have any enforceable powers. The RTF mainly remains an international standard that is advocated by the UN and FAO, with very few states really featuring it in their constitutional and legislative policies, it has the potential of providing a broad framework for informing policies on food.

Though states have the prerogative of policy-making on food, agriculture and nutrition that ultimately ascertain the food security of their citizens, most national governments have been unable to develop and put into practice comprehensive food and agricultural policy. The international institutions have assumed a critical role in advising the governments on policies through guidelines, disseminating experience and preparing policy framework and strategies. International policy advice has transcended the traditional prescription of increasing food production to incorporate the complexities of distribution, marketing and consumption. There has been a discernable shift towards investment in sustainable agricultural development, along with policy suggestions on: rural development; poverty eradication; increasing income and purchasing power; improving nutritional status; social safety nets; prioritising the role of women; and establishment of emergency finance/food stock reserve, analogous to the dominant understanding of the causal factors of food insecurity. Contemporary concerns regarding climate change, biofuels, and agricultural biotechnology and Genetically Modified Organisms have also resulted in policy advice by the international institutions. The UN system and the World Bank have definitive impact on government decision making in various advisory capacities. While the policy implications of IFAD and the Bank are arguably more, given the financial nature of their functioning, WFP mainly features policy priorities within its operational focus. FAO's technical cooperation and procedural guidelines, though voluntary in nature, inform countries regarding issues of emerging concern related to food and help them in formulating food related policies and programmes reflecting those issues.

Food aid, an immediate response to people and countries suffering from a food crisis, is both complex and contentious measure. While the most acceptable use of food aid is for short-term humanitarian relief in response to emergency, caused by famine and natural calamities or man-made disasters and armed conflicts, probably its most controversial use is for development assistance. Multilateral food aid has undergone dramatic transformations in its purposes, largely under the auspices of WFP. Initially used to promote development, WFP has almost uni-dimensionally shifted its focus to emergency humanitarian relief. This can be largely attributed to the conventional criticisms of bilateral food aid as being motivated by donors' geo-strategic, politico-economic and commercial self-interest, laced with domestic agricultural, foreign, trade and export promotion objectives, causing dependency, blunting incentives for domestic food production, disruption of commercial exports markets and depressing food market prices, overlooking nutritional needs, cultural taste, eating patterns and dietary habits of the people and not targeting people most in need of it, while its potential for addressing poverty and hunger remains doubtful. This does not mean that WFP has relinquished its developmental food aid purposes. Instead it has redefined its purpose as a 'continuum' from emergency relief to development. However, decision making on food aid still remains the prerogative of the donors, though their overt goals get diluted by multilateral delivery of food aid, which also, in a way, ascertains that food aid reaches the right people at the right time in right quantity so that their food security is not jeopardised.

Undoubtedly, the international institutions have, over the decades, made significant attempts to address problems of hunger and undernutrition, re-conceptualising food security as well as shaping the global debates around food-related issues. FAO, WFP, IFAD and the World Bank have evolved and innovatively interpreted their founding purposes, increasingly treading into food-related areas, undergoing profound transformation in terms of organisational structure and expanded operational mandates. This is probably most evident in case of the Bank's progressive incorporation of agriculture, nutrition and social safety sectors within its lending operations, far removed from its traditional infrastructural development lending, as a consequence of the changing perception of development itself. However, the Bank is equally criticised for worsening the food situation for the vulnerable population, by lending for projects that directly impede their livelihood or through structural adjustment loans, which forces the governments to undertake policies that indirectly affect the food security of the poor people. The Bank, as a typical financial institute, is fundamentally different from the UN food agencies in its approach to food security. Though it has explicitly included food



within its lending portfolio, its agendas are neither determined by need nor are human rights based. However, given the immense economic influence it wields over developing countries policies, its enormous financial clout and bureaucratic strength, the Bank contains the potential to address food security in a more effective manner.

IFAD is a much smaller institution compared to the Bank, and is functionally more specific in its lending for agricultural and rural development, a subset of the Bank's lending operations. IFAD's ingenuity lies in penetrating the remotest of locations and targeting the poorest population in addressing food security. It has also expanded its lending mandate to incorporate rural development, promoting productivity of small-scale farmers, emphasising the role of women in agriculture etc., thereby carving out a niche areas for itself. WFP is unique in terms of its mandate and channelisation of multilateral food aid. Over the years, it has made food aid a permanent feature of international policy, has adapted its activities in relation to increasing demands for emergency humanitarian assistance, and has assumed the intermediate role of supporting countries in transiting from emergency situations to overall development. In terms of its procurement and disbursement policies, WFP has incorporated many novel attributes, like local purchases, using technology in food aid, etc. WFP is probably the most visible of all the food organisations having a practical and discernable impact on food security of poor and vulnerable people, when emergency strikes. However, its development role is controversial as is aid effectiveness for overall food security.

FAO is the only international organisation that has a specific food mandate spanning over almost every aspect of the issue. It has incrementally adapted itself by adding newer concerns to its original purposes and functions. Organisationally also FAO has undergone restructuring to make it more streamlined, decentralised, cost-effective, and efficient. It remains unchallenged in terms of information gathering, data analysis and dissemination of knowledge. However, beyond international standard-setting and advising governments on policies, in practical terms it seems to have no authoritative power to undertake concrete food security measures. Apart from its statistics and projections being quoted widely in almost every analysis of the world food problem, it has been accepted as an organisation that has limited impact in terms of ameliorating the food problems, other than suggesting guidelines that are voluntary for governments. Nevertheless, its contribution in generating awareness and international governmental and non-governmental activism cannot be discounted. It is largely because of the efforts of FAO that food has been put in the international agenda, FAO

playing an important role in the establishment of WFP and IFAD, and undertaking collaborative ventures to better address the various dimensions of the food problem.

The UN food agencies and the World Bank definitely represent organisational adaptation vis-à-vis the dominant emerging concern with food security, without really changing the ultimate organisational purpose, instead accommodating emerging concerns within their functional domain to justify their continued existence in a drastically changed world than in which they were founded. However, international attention to global food problem has been incidental, in the face of an imminent crisis, there is a sudden surge of interest in food security, as the urgency diminishes, interest in food-related issues recede to take a backseat. Such a crisis-driven approach contains the inherent risk of ad hoc and inadequate institutional response. Despite many collaborative efforts on areas of common concern, there has been no strategic or institutional attempt to streamline the efforts of the UN food agencies and the World Bank to bring about coherence and cooperation among these varied organisations.

Global food security arena is infested with too many institutional arrangements, directly or indirectly involved in food and nutrition objectives that are fundamentally different in their approach and handling of the food problem. This leads to duplication of responsibilities and overlapping of mandates and functions, frustrating the possibility of achieving a coordinated and coherent institutional response to food insecurity. Given the complicated and interrelated nature of food security itself, strict separation of the causes of the food problem is impossible. None of the UN agencies alone are competent or equipped to address all the aspects of global food security. Consequently, a clear division of labour among these institutions on various issues related to food, nutrition and agriculture has become next to impossible. Strict compartmentalisation of institutional mandates is further rendered difficult since the organisations themselves incrementally adapt their purposes and functions. Nevertheless, each of these organisations does have a clear USP in specific areas, which can be further honed. The key idea is to use the UN system to the best advantage in harmonising the efforts towards right to food, policy advice and food aid to achieve global food security.

Experiences of hunger and undernutrition are more specific at national, community, household and individual levels. The states are primarily responsible for realisation of the RTF, undertaking national policy-making on food, agriculture and nutrition issues, and channelising resources for food aid. No country can morally and strategically permit its poor citizens to die of hunger, in total neglect, without efforts to ascertain adequate availability and

accessibility of food for them. However, the complex of global food security has both given rise to international food organisations and gets, in turn, influenced by them. The conventional responsibility of the states to ascertain food security for its citizens gets nuanced in light of the present study, symptomatic of both globalisation of the food system and multiplicity of actors that have bearing on issues of hunger, agriculture and nutrition. The UN food organizations and the World Bank have been pivotal in the development of global food regime, intersecting with the human rights and international aid regime. They have assumed increasing significance in their own capacity to formulate norms, rules and principles through advocacy, advising and deliverance that impact right to food, policy-making and food aid. These norms, rules and principles inform national food security initiatives as well as get shaped by governments' perspectives.

Food as a non-traditional threat to human security has transcended the territorial confinement to evolve as an agenda of the UN system, yet it is usually accorded secondary status in inter-state discussions, which remain preoccupied with defence and strategic relations. Hence, food security needs prioritisation vis-à-vis other threats and international agendas. States as members of the international institutions determine the overall agenda, direction of activities and budgetary allocations. The state having the highest financial resources under its control wields the strongest voice in determining the direction of these institutions. The UN system food agencies and the World Bank are constrained both by their mandates, and the demands and dominance of member countries. International organisations by themselves cannot lead to a decline in the incidence of hunger. A realistic assessment of international institutional impact on global food security must take into account the multi-dimensionality and complexity of the issue, and recognition of the fact that the UN system is but one player among many actors and factors that together determine food security outcomes. However, within their limited playing-field, FAO, WFP, IFAD and the World Bank can improve the situation through right to food advocacy, policy advice to states and deliverance of food aid. The appropriate approach is not to look at the UN system as a sacred institution that holds the answer to all global predicaments, including hunger and undernutrition, rather to view it as an evolving institutional process that progressively sensitises the international community regarding issues of emerging concern, like food security, and informs the states on ways and means of better dealing with them, in the process transforming the contours of the issue itself.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

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ACC/SCN	Administrative Coordination Committee/Sub-Committee on Nutrition
1974-WFC	World Food Conference
1992-ICN	International Conference on Nutrition
1996-WFS	World Food Summit
2002-WFS+5	World Food Summit: Five years later,
2002-WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
2009-WSFS	World Summit on Food Security
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BMR	Basal Metabolic Rate
BWIs	Bretton Woods Institutions
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CDHR	Centre for Development and Human Rights
CEB	Chief Executives Board Coordination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CFF	Compensatory Financing Facility
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSSD	Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EU	European Union
FAC	Food Aid Convention
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAO/WHO CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
FAO-CCP	Committee on Commodity Problems
FAO-CFS	Committee on Food Security
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
FFW	Food-For-Work
FIAN	FoodFirst Information and Action Network
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity Vulnerability Information and Mapping System
GATT/WTO	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture
GMOs/GM	Genetically Modified Organisms/Genetically Modified Crops
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted poor Countries
HLTF	High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency

IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICARRD	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
ICCPR	International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDA	International Development Association
IEFR	International Emergency Food Reserve
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFIs	International Financing Institutions
IFPRI-GHI	International Food Policy Research Institute-Global Hunger Index
IGC	International Grains Council
IGGs	Intergovernmental Commodity Groups
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INTERFAIS	International Food Aid Information System
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
IRA	Immediate Response Account
IWP	Indicative World Plan
LIFDCs	Low Income Food Deficit Countries
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MNCs/TNCs	Multinational Corporations/Transnational Corporations
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Minimum Support Prices
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NFIs	Non-Food Items
NGOs	Non Government Organizations
NIEO	New International Economic Order
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operations and Development
OED	Operations Evaluation Department
OFID	OPEC Fund for International Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPEC	Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PRROs	Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operations
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation

SFP	School Feeding Programs
SOs	Special Operations
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
SSN	Social Safety Net
UDEHM	Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN-COW	Committee of the Whole
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCTC	United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDHA	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN-INSTRAW	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UNSCN	United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition
UNU	United Nations University
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WBG	World Bank Group
WCARRD	World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO-AoA	World Trade Organization-Agreement on Agriculture

# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

---

*Oh, God! That bread should be so dear,  
And flesh and blood so cheap!*

- **Thomas Hood**, *The Song of the Shirt* (1843)

*Take a barren year of failed harvests when many thousands of men have been carried off by hunger. If at the end of the famine the barns of the rich were searched...enough grain would be found in them to save the lives of all those who died from starvation and disease, if it had been divided equally among them.*

- **Sir Thomas More**, *Utopia* (Quoted in Spitz 1984: 169)

The unprecedented rise in international prices of basic food commodities, staple crops, wheat and rice, and meat, during 2007-2008 brought to fore the inadequacy and fragility of global food security. The crisis that had been brewing since years immediately grabbed media attention with regular headlines and reports. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Price Index, though food prices in international markets had been rising since 2000, but there was a sudden jump in 2008. The 2007-2008 crisis was not an isolated one-time event, as food prices again peaked in February 2011, highest since FAO started monitoring food prices in 1990, and continued to remain high and volatile throughout 2011 (World Bank 2011 November: 1-2). Persistence of volatile prices increasingly pushed more people into poverty and hunger. While the estimated number of undernourished people worldwide rose by 6 million between 1990-92 (842 million) and 2003-05 (848 million) (FAO 2008g: 48), it steeply rose to 923 million in 2007 (FAO 2008g: 2), to 963 million in 2008 (FAO 2008e) and stood at 1.02 billion in 2009 (FAO 2009b: 11).

International panic over soaring food prices, coupled with the depletion of world stocks of cereals, intensified hunger and ignited looting and food riots in almost thirty seven countries, including Haiti, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Egypt, Niger, Burkina Faso and Senegal (Borger 2008), as India, Vietnam and Brazil imposed food export restrictions. A Spanish proverb ‘Civilisation and anarchy are only seven meals apart’ aptly captures the state of affairs. Food revolts in Haiti led to the ousting of the Prime Minister, as ‘mud cakes’, moulded clay and water, became the staple diet for families in the Haitian slum of Cite Soleil (Carroll 2008). Food crisis, long assumed to be a

characteristic of the poorer countries, reached the doorsteps of developed countries as big retailers in the United States (US) began rationing sales, witnessing empty shelves and long food queues for the first time (Clark et al. 2008; Suryanarayan 2008).

In July 2011, devastating drought, combined with continued conflict, led to a humanitarian emergency in the Horn of Africa as more than 12 million people were rendered food insecure. The estimated numbers of people severely affected reached 4.8 million in Ethiopia, 3.7 million each in Somalia and Kenya, and 165,000 in Djibouti, leading the United Nations to officially declare a state of famine in two regions of southern Somalia (the Bakool and the Lowere Shabelle) and three other areas in August, the Middle Shabelle, Afgoye corridor and Mogadishu (World Bank 2011 August: 5-6). Assessment of hunger merely in terms of numbers, depicted in charts, graphs, tables and figures, however, cannot capture the reality of the everyday experience, struggle and anguish of a hungry and undernourished individual.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) noted that food inflation in low-income countries<sup>1</sup> reached 12.7 percent by June 2008, rising from 9.8 percent in March 2008 and 8.9 percent in 2007 (IMF 2008 September: 9). The cereal import bill in the low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDC)<sup>2</sup> increased from US\$ 16,486 million in 2005-06, to US\$ 22,903 million in 2006-08, to further US\$ 27,672 million in 2007-08 (FAO 2010a: 10). According to FAO, 36 countries<sup>3</sup> reported to have critical problems of food insecurity and requiring external assistance, displaying a combination of: exceptional food production/supply shortfall causing lack of food availability; low incomes and high food prices leading to general lack of access to food; and severe localised problems, like influx of refugees or crop failure etc. (FAO 2008b: 2-3). Juxtapose this with 16,196 farmer suicides (male and female) in India in 2008 (National Crime Records Bureau 2008: 201) symptomatic of the underlying agrarian crisis, declining farm produce, forced land acquisitions, and rural and urban evictions.

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<sup>1</sup> See World Bank's classification of countries into low, middle and high categories based on Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications>

<sup>2</sup> The criteria for classification of a country as Low-Income Food-Deficit (LIFDC) and the list for 2012 is available at: <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/lifdc.asp>

<sup>3</sup> 21 Countries in Africa (Lesotho, Somalia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Liberia, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda); 12 countries in Asia (Iraq, Afghanistan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste); and 3 countries in Latin America (Bolivia, Cuba and Haiti).

The surge in food prices was accompanied and affected by the simultaneous spike in oil prices, rising from US\$ 20 per barrel in 2001 to US\$ 30 in early 2003 to around US\$ 140 by June 2008 (IMF 2008 June: 6), causing ‘double jeopardy’ (World Bank 2008a: 1). The combined food and fuel prices accelerated inflation rates, particularly in low-income countries (Ethiopia, Vietnam, Ukraine, Jordan, Pakistan etc.) (IMF 2008 June: 18-20), adversely affected agriculture and the poor, more significantly the urban poor (IMF 2008 June: 20-23; Ivanic and Martin 2008: 414-415; IFPRI 2008: 6-7), further pushing them into poverty and negatively impacting individual and household economies and global stability (World Bank 2008a: 3).

Immediate reasons attributed to the 2007-2008 food crisis were rapid and persistent increase in international grain prices; depleting world stocks; worsening economic situation; speculation in international grains market; and obsession with agro-fuels production, causing depletion in wheat and maize stock, land transfer and land use change due to diversion of food crops for bio fuels production, and farmers switching out of cereals to grow bio-fuel crops, with uncertain benefit for climate change (Mittal 2009; United Nations 2009; Mitchell 2008; IFPRI 2008; World Bank 2008a, 2008b; FAO 2008f, 2009a; FIAN 2008; Oxfam International 2008; OFID 2009; OECD 2008; ODI 2008). Increase in demand for better nutrition and food by the developing countries, especially India and China, due to prosperous middle class (United Nations 2009: 48; Gandhi 2008; Mittal 2009: 5) and rising dominance of agribusiness corporations in food production, marketing and consumption, leading to corporatisation of agriculture were singled out as the most pressing factors (Paul and Wahlberg 2008: 7-8; World Bank 2008b; Braun and Díaz-Bonilla 2008; Cotula et al. 2009; Patel 2008).

Long-term structural causes and policy failures included slowdown in agricultural output (Konandreas et al. 1978; Webb and Braun 1994; Herrmann 2007; Gonzalez 2004), reduction in state’s role in regulating agricultural production and trade, arbitrary opening of agricultural markets by removing tariffs, resulting in import surges, and decreasing investments in agricultural productivity (Fuglie 2008; Mittal 2009). Adverse weather conditions due to climate change and environmental factors have adverse impact on agricultural production and vice versa (Funk and Brown 2009; Parry et al. 1999; Gregory et al. 2005; IPCC 2007; Schmidhuber and Tubiello



2007; FAO 2008a). Causes of hunger encompass a complex mesh of socio-economic, political, cultural, scientific, technological, institutional and policy aspects existing at individual/household to national to international levels, reflecting a misbalance between demand and supply for food (Lappé et al. 1998; Marei 1976; George 1984; Johnson 1980; Dumont and Cohen 1980; Garnsey 1990; Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976; Harle ed. 1978; Brown and Eckholm 1975; Patnaik 2007).

The conventional understanding of inverse relationship between population growth and food supply as aggravating hunger (Malthus 1798; Murdoch 1980; Power and Holenstein 1980), historically proven wrong, was eventually jettisoned as a determinant of world hunger (Poleman 1975; Cochrane 1969; Uvin 1994; George 1976). Though food production has outrun population growth, there has been huge disparity in productivity among developed and developing countries since the end of World War II (Sachs 2005; Huddleston et. al. 1984; Kristensen 1968; Hannah 1977). Agriculture as the primary source of food production, determining supply and availability, has garnered significant attention from scholars as being determinant of world food situation, especially research and technological development in agriculture epitomised by the green revolution that initially raised hopes and subsequently failed to live upto them (Dumont 1975; Pearse 1980; Madeley 2002; Matthews et al. 1990; Borlaug 1975; George 1976; Miljan 1980; Simon and Simon 1973).

Poverty has been unanimously agreed as the single most important cause of food insecurity, especially rural poverty and therefore, income and purchasing power were held as principal determinants of individual or household's access to adequate food and nutrition (Svedberg 1984; FAO 2008g; Simon and Simon 1973; World Bank 1982, 1986a; Reutlinger 1977, 1980, 1981/82; Aziz 1977; Johnson 1975; Kristensen 1975; Grigg 1985; Marchione 1984; Madeley 2002; Gonzalez 2004; George 1984; Bondestam 1978; FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002; UN Millennium Project 2005; IFAD 2001, 2011d; Dias and Paul 1984).

Hunger is also caused by entitlement failure (Drèze and Sen 1993; Sen 1990, 1999, 1981); natural causes related to weather and meteorological phenomena (Walford 1970; Newman et al. 1990; Garnsey 1990); man-made causes of war and conflict (FAO 2000b; Messer 1996a, 1999; Messer and Cohen 2008; Messer et al. 2001); gender inequality (FAO 1997b, 1998, 2010-11; World Bank 2008b; Quisumbing

1994); trade liberalisation (Nützenadel and Trentmann 2008; Rosset 2006; Thompson 1983; Valdés and Castillo 1984), food pricing (Walters 1975; Huddleston et. al. 1984; World Bank 2011) and market mechanisms (Seevers 1978; WFP 2009b; Schuh 1983).

Application of agricultural biotechnology, from ‘green’ to ‘gene’ revolution, has raised several questions regarding biodiversity, consumer health and safety and agricultural sustainability (Whitman 2000; Paarlberg 2005; Mayor and Bindé 2001). Several of these causes are of relatively recent origin, not only complicating food security but, changing the larger context in which hunger and undernourishment are addressed. No country is isolated in its food-related threats or policy-making, international interdependence causes rippling impact of policies in one country on others. For example, when farmers in the US shift towards corn production for biofuels, causing rise in wheat prices, Egyptians struggle to make ends meet since they heavily depend on wheat import from the US for their pita bread. It is beyond doubt that “food and fuel could reshape politics around the developing world as much as nationalism or communism did” (Friedman 2008). Hence, the significance of food is political, economic, social and cultural.

Among the basic necessities of life, food has some distinctive features. Food constitutes a unique bundle of commodities that has a special time dimension because of the need to eat everyday at regular intervals for survival and performance of daily activities. Food has a nutritional dimension because some nutrients are essential part of diet in specific quantities and proportions, if not daily at least over a short period of time. Food also has a socio-cultural dimension, with specific values and construction of local and national identities attached. Food has an economic dimension because most food items consumed are available in the market at a price; food, therefore, has a use-value and an exchange-value in the market. Initiatives towards global integration were fostered by food markets that linked distant areas and cultures of the world, with discernable trends of interactions between global exchange and local practices (Spitz 1984: 170; Nützenadel and Trentmann 2008: 1).

Food has political dimensions, evident in government intervention in food production and distribution, and its use for trade and aid, making it a crucial component of a state or region’s political power. ‘Food power’ is relevant to international relations as governments, regional actors and international organizations use food resources to

influence international developments, and food policies as means of attaining other policy goals. For instance, food assistance is used for humanitarian and emergency purposes, as well as to promote agricultural development in poor countries and to gain allies. In that sense food has been turned into a ‘weapon’ for political pressure (Wallensteen 1978: 47-48; Carey 1981: 1-3) and used as a potential ‘instrument of foreign policy’ (Carey 1981: 3) and ‘instrument of power’ (Bondestam 1978: 257; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 1). “Its control is an opportunity for exploitation ...increasingly food is being transformed from something that is grown to be eaten into something that is bought, sold and manipulated” (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 1). “Food has become a source of profits, a tool of economic and political control; a means of insuring effective domination over the world at large and especially over the ‘wretched of the earth’” (George 1976: 16), ‘agripower’, like other kinds of power, can be used to induce food dependency among poorer nations (George 1976: 272).

Food is not akin to an overt weapon but constitutes a central and contested aspect of international security, understood as ‘the pursuit of freedom from threat’, the bottom line being ‘survival’ (Buzan 1991: 432). In the post-Cold War era, the widening and deepening of the concept of security, characterised by evolution and expansion of the security agenda to incorporate economic, societal and environmental sectors, was symptomatic of the erosion of traditional state-centric perspective, rooted in power politics and obsessed with military and nuclear issues (Buzan 1991, 1997; Buzan et al. 1998). Non-military and ‘existential’ threat (Buzan 1997; Buzan et al. 1998: 21) or non-traditional threats to security in the economic sector refers to ‘basic human needs’, provision of basic necessities for sustaining human life – adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, and education determining the life and death of individuals (Buzan et al. 1998: 103-104).

Food is also a ‘security’ issue in terms of ‘human security’. The 1994 *Human Development Report* (UNDP 1994: 24-25), launched the concept of ‘human security’, equated with people rather than territories, sustainable development rather than armaments, identifying ‘food security’ as one of its seven pillars (others being economic, health, environmental, personal, community and political security). The ‘universal’ and ‘people-centred’ concern of ‘food security’ is one of the

‘interdependent’ components of human security that can be ensured ‘through early prevention than later intervention’ (UNDP 1994: 22-23).

The concept of security has far too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people...Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards (UNDP 1994: 22).

Hunger has been a prevalent and persistent phenomenon of human existence (Newman ed. 1990; Kristensen 1968; Murdoch 1980; Drèze and Sen 1993; Dumont and Cohen 1980). The history of famine, as the most extreme manifestation of hunger and food insecurity, is long and dreadful. One of the earliest historical chronologies of famines listed over 350 famines between 1708 BCE and 1878 CE (Walford 1970: 4-20, originally published in 1879), followed by a list of around 33 authenticated major famines from 436 BCE to 1961 CE, apart from countless minor famines (Masefield 1963). The inter-war economic depression of the 1930s brought to fore the world’s food and agricultural problems and set in motion an international momentum to recognise and address issues of hunger, famine, starvation and malnutrition.

In the post World War II scenario, the scale and complexity of human organization to identify and fight hunger intensified, leading to the emergence of a global food system. Globalisation of food and agriculture, transcending national borders and integrating production, marketing/distribution and consumption, through markets, standardisations, regulations and technologies has been one of the defining trends of the twentieth century. Trade (export and import) in food and agriculture has been the driver of globalisation; increasing food flows via aid links further accentuating integration and interdependency in the international food system. As a result, bad harvest in one part of the world causes grain price rise in another part, starvation and famine in one country generates shipments of food in response from another country or groups of country. Contemporary global food system is characterised by a seamless web of agribusiness corporations that connects agricultural sector and the consumers, mediated by agricultural input, food processing and trading and food retailing industries (Millman et al. 1990; Braun and Díaz-Bonilla 2008; Timmer 1986; Hopkins and Puchala 1978).

While globalisation offers opportunities that can be translated into poverty and hunger alleviation, the poor and vulnerable people have been unable to exploit the opportunities to their advantage. The critical paradox is the co-existence of hunger along with plenty and prosperity; gross misdistribution and mismanagement prevent food from reaching the neediest (Aziz 1975: 44; Murdoch 1980: 95; Sen 1981: 1; Kates and Millman 1990: 3; Drèze and Sen 1993: 4; Lappé et al. 1998: 8; Sridhar 2008:1; Balaam 1981: 208; Shaw 2001: 1).

Issues of food and hunger as global problems have attracted considerable attention. The 1972-74 food crisis resulted in a phenomenal amount of literature identifying the possible causes, analysing the consequences for consumers and producers, and the potential impact of policy responses in the years following the crises (Johnson 1975; De Hoogh et al. 1976; Christensen 1978; Brown and Eckholm 1974; Walters 1975; Arroyo 1977; Austin 1978; Aziz 1975, 1977; Harle 1978; Brown 1973-1974; George 1976, 1979; Hay 1978; IOWA State University 1977; Marei 1976; Poleman 1975, 1977; Power and Holenstein 1976; Reutlinger 1977; Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976; Simons 1976; Abelson 1975; *International Organization*, 32 (3) Summer 1978, and the beginning of publication of *Food Policy* from 1975-1976). Nichole Ball's (1981) bibliography on world hunger had more than 3000 entries! Three issues emerge clearly – the promise of market solution versus advisability of increased public intervention; national versus international responsibility for food security; and the utility of unilateral/bilateral initiatives versus the need for multilateral regulation.

Similarly, the 2007-2008 food crisis led to an explosion of academic and scholarly discussions (Paarlberg 2010; Gerlach 2008; Braun and Díaz-Bonilla 2008; Braun 2008; Headey and Fan 2008, 2010; Dewbre et al. 2008; Ivanic and Martin 2008; Ng and Aksoy 2008; Paul and Wahlberg 2008; Mitchell 2008; Chand 2008; Nützenadel, and Trentmann 2008; Schanbacher 2010; Ravallion et al. 2008; Sridhar 2008; *Agricultural Economics*, 39 (Supplement: Special Issue on the World Food Crisis) 2008; launch of *Food Security: The Science, Sociology and Economics of Food Production and Access to Food* in May 2009, *World Agriculture* in April 2010, and *Global Food Security: Agriculture, Policy, Economics and Environment* in 2012), suitably supplemented by analysis and policy suggestions from international institutions (FAO 2008f, 2008g; CESC 2008; ADB 2008, 2009; HLTF 2010; IMF

2008; UNDP 2011; World Bank 2008a, 2008b). The 2008 crisis caused disturbances within the international institutions, both at regional and global levels, as they were jolted from complacency with the world food situation and confronted with the rude reality of global hunger and chronic undernutrition that had been accumulating over the decades. Interest in food and agricultural issues is incidental, ebbing and flowing with respect to imminent crises. It is only in the most recent past that systematic attempts have been made to study hunger by national governments and international organizations.

Though the persistence of hunger and food insecurity is well accepted, their conceptual underpinnings are far from clear. There exist a protracted and animated discussion among experts, both at academic level and within international institutions, on the definitional contours of food security, hunger, famine, and chronic malnutrition and undernutrition, approaches to quantify the world food problem, and identification of vulnerability to hunger and food insecurity (Sen 1981, 1990, 1995, 1999; United Nations 1975; FAO 1983, 1996a, 1999a; Reutlinger 1977; Løvendal and Knowles 2007; FAO/EU 2008; World Bank 1986a; Grigg 1985; Chen and Kates 1996; Kates 1996; ACC/SCN 2000; UN SCN 2004; Dilley and Boudreau 2001; Downing et al. 1996; Brown and Gentilini 2006; IFPRI-GHI 2008, 2011; Huddleston 1987; FAO/WHO 1973; FAO/WHO/UNU 2004; WHO 1985; Babu and Sanyal 2009; Guha-Khasnobis et al. (eds.) 2007; DeRose et al. 1999; Poleman 1983, 1996; Srinivasan 1980, 1983), ridden by a “bewildering array of opaque terms and peculiar acronyms that can make it a bit difficult for outsiders to comprehend even the board contours, much less the details, of conceptual, policy and operational debates” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 5).

With diffusion of knowledge and technology, food progressively transcended national boundaries to evolve into globalised food systems that link domestic markets with larger global networks, the international community has shown increasing buoyancy towards institutionalisation of multilateralism, reinforced in the issue area of food. Having assumed international dimensions, the food problem has been dealt within the mainstream discourses of ‘development’, ‘human rights’ and ‘security’ and has, therefore, increasingly found prominence among the agendas of international institutions as they attempted to define, measure and estimate hunger and

malnourishment and food security, and attain global food security. International relations of food and active international diplomacy on food and agricultural issues have generated communication among governments, regional and global inter-governmental organizations, spurring countless international conferences, summits, meetings and seminars. These have been paralleled by equally vocal and manifold non-governmental and civil society activism and think-tanks at national and international levels, farmers' and consumers' unions, covering broad dimensions of food affairs. The international directory of organizations and information resources on world food crisis has been expanding since the 1970s (Trzyna 1977).

Global multilateral food governance began and matured under the UN system – funds, agencies and programmes, more aggressively after the 1974-WFC (Hopkins and Puchala 1978; United Nations 1975; Bergesen 1978; George 1976; Thompson 1981; Miljan 1980) in the hope that multilateral approach will enhance the effectiveness of response and minimise negative spillovers' (IMF 2008 June: 4). FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Agriculture and Rural Development Department of the World Bank and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), working for or with food, collectively termed as the 'global food and agriculture institutions' (Shaw 2009) have many common features. 'The four world food agencies in Rome' (FAO, WFP, IFAD, including the erstwhile World Food Council) are faced with the mammoth task of alleviating world hunger (Talbot 1991) and as such these 'agricultural agencies' increasingly encounter pressure to deliver effective solutions to global food problems in a co-ordinated manner, being called upon to mediate between the developed and developing countries as food security issues get sharply defined and obligations of countries are established (Shefrin 1980: 288-290).

FAO, specifically mandated to deal with food, agricultural and nutritional issues, is increasingly being called upon to rejuvenate its policy agenda and assistance activities to address fundamental changes in the world food economy and shifts in location and nature of hunger (Saouma 1993; Abott 1992; Hambidge 1955; FAO 1976, 1980, 1985, 1997a, 2000a, 2001a, 1999b; Phillips 1981). WFP began as an experiment, jointly undertaken by the UN and FAO, to enable use of food surpluses, and eventually gained permanent status to become the largest multilateral food aid agency

for emergency relief, development projects and humanitarian purposes (WFP 1973, 1994a, 1997b, 1999b, 2008, 2010c, 2011a; Shaw 2001, 2009; Charlton 1992; Crawshaw and Shaw 1996; Faaland et al. 2000). IFAD joined the league of international food organisations as an outcome of the 1974-WFC (Hannah 1977; Tansey 1978; Schanbacher 2010; IFAD 1976, 1978, 1993, 2010b, 2011e).

The Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) – IMF and the World Bank, though technically specialised agencies of the UN system, are very different from its other agencies. Despite not featuring food security in their original mandates in the Articles of Agreement, the IMF (Diakosavvas and Green 1998; Kirkpatrick 1985; Huddleston et. al. 1984) and the World Bank have, over the years, impacted the issues of food. The Bank, especially, has adopted specific policies and programmes aimed at agricultural and rural development, improving nutritional status and providing social safety nets for the poor, thereby translating into their food security (Mason and Asher 1973; Kapur et al. 1997; World Bank 1976, 1980, 1982, 1986a, 1986b, 1993, 2006, 2008b, 2009; Lipton and Paarlberg 1990; Cernea 1988; IEG 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Sridhar 2008; Reutlinger and Castillo 1994; Berg 1987; Heaver 2006; Shekar and Lee 2006). Evolution of International trade liberalisation, under multilateral regulation of General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT)/World Trade Organization (WTO), especially trade in agricultural commodities under WTO-Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), had controversial impact on food security and agriculture in developing countries (Gonzalez 2004; Herrmann 2008; Shaw 2007; Clapp 2004).

While FAO provides technical assistance as well as policy and planning advice to governments; collects, analyzes and disseminates information; acts as an international forum for discussion on food and agricultural issues; and coordinates activities with other organizations on similar concerns. WFP is the multilateral agency to channel food aid for immediate emergency relief, long-term development purposes as well as for rehabilitation following protracted crisis. IFAD mobilises additional finance for agriculture projects, subsequently branching to rural development, in low-income and food-deficit countries. The World Bank, apart from lending for agriculture, nutrition and rural development, among many other portfolios, also assists governments in designing sustainable safety nets for the vulnerable, and provides policy options for informed decision-making and country ownership. However, the combined effect of



distorted trade policies, the WTO-AoA, IMF-World Bank conditionalities and structural adjustment lending, and operations of agribusiness corporations, have been devastating for agriculture and food security in developing countries. Farmer suicides, impoverishment and displacement are commonplace, forcing farmers to unite in resistance against the prevailing international food and agricultural policies (Patnaik 2007; Patel 2008; Rosset 2006; Spitz 1984; Uvin 1994; UNICEF 1989).

Coordination within the UN system is particularly difficult, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) being the coordinating mechanisms (Williams 1987; Hill 1966). The General Assembly (2006, 2008, 2009, 2010) has repeatedly emphasised on UN system-wide coherence to strengthen governance of operational activities and evaluation mechanisms. A positively collaborative trend is visible among the Rome-based UN food organisations – FAO, IFAD and WFP – between them and the World Bank and with other UN system agencies. However, the intended outcomes of these collaborative ventures are thwarted inter-organisational turf wars. The Bank's engagement with UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO) has been rather uncomfortable (Mason and Ascher 1973; Shaw 2007; Sridhar 2008), while UN Development Programme (UNDP)-FAO partnership was not cordial either (Saouma 1993; Abbott 1992). FAO-WFP relationship was particularly bitter during the initial years of WFP's establishment (Shaw 2001; Charlton 1992).

There has been no formal attempt at coordinating food-related activities of UN system agencies, most of which impact upon food security directly or indirectly. While the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) attempts to harmonise food and nutrition policy within the UN, the Secretary General's High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on Global Food Security Crisis, established in the wake of the 2007-2008 food crisis and FAO's Committee on World Food Security (FAO-CFS), reformed in 2009, were envisaged as catalytic mechanisms to bring coordination and cohesion in the activities of national governments, international and regional organisations, and CSOs/NGOs on common issues of agriculture, and global food and nutrition security. As the UN system and the BWIs increasingly strive to engage with the global food problem, they assume prominence in their roles of advocating the right to food,

providing food-related policy advice and taking decisions regarding delivering food aid, emerging as decisive actors in the world food system.

Within its mandate for promoting human rights, the UN has sought to ensure food security by advocating the right to food (RTF) through the core instruments of international human rights law, the Charter of the UN and the International Bill of Human Rights – the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (UDHR), the *International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) and the *International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR). Subsequently, there has been substantial advocacy at the international summit and conference level, resulting in declaratory affirmations of the RTF, which has also found mention in numerous human rights treaties, declarations, conventions, protocols and resolutions. General Comment 12 has added substantive content to this right. As a concept the RTF is much older than ‘food security’, contextualised within the broader concept of rights-based approach to development (Mechlem 2004).

The conceptual development of a precise definition of what the RTF is (Sen 1984; Ziegler 2008; Eide, W.B. 2000; Goonatilake 1984; Schatan and Gussow 1984; *Food Policy* 21 (1) March 1996) and the evolution of its normative content over the years through interpretation, especially by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (Eide 1983, 1987, 1999; Ziegler 2001-2008; Schutter 2008, 2009), were based on the parallel trends of infusing the human rights-based approach to the changing development discourse (Klaff 1998; Tomaševski 1984; Alston and Robinson 2005; Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004; Sen 1999; Haq 2002; CDHR 2004; United Nations 1991), and the gradual rapprochement of civil and political with economic social and cultural rights (General Assembly 1977; Sengupta 1999). The two mutually exclusive groups of human rights experts and food and nutrition developmentalists were brought together to lay “the foundations for a bridge between food and nutrition development concerns and goals, on the one hand, and the system of human rights norms and implementation on the other” (Eide, W.B. 2000: 332).

The debates on justiciability and enforcement of socio-economic and cultural rights raise pertinent issues for the realisation of RTF, corresponding duties and obligations of states and the international community (Eide 1984, 1987; Ziegler 2002; Gaiha 2006; Vierdag 1978; Hoof 1984; Alston 1984; Tomaševski 1984). The responsibility

of FAO (Traylor 1984; Eide, W.B. 2000; FAO 2005; Plant 1984) and the international financial institutions (IFIs) – IMF and World Bank, and the Transnational Corporations (TNCs) (Narula 2006; Ziegler 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Skogly 2001), along with mechanisms for implementing the RTF (Westerveen 1984; ECOSOC 2001; CESCRC 1999, 2009; Ziegler 2003, 2004) and its advocacy (Marchione 1984) are pertinent for operationalisation of the RTF. However, a visible gap remains between the normative standards of the RTF and their actual implementation through food policy and food aid, resulting in the harsh reality of widespread food insecurity.

Despite being the primary responsibility bearer for policy formulation and implementation, most national governments have been unable to develop and put into practice comprehensive food and agricultural policy. The UN provides policy advice to countries through guidelines, disseminating experience and preparing policy framework and strategies. International policy advice has traditionally focussed on increasing available food supplies through agricultural production and renewed agricultural investment. However, overwhelming policy concern with increasing production often tends to obscure the complexities of distribution, marketing and consumption. Other important policy suggestions include: rural development; poverty eradication and increasing income and purchasing power; improving nutritional status; social safety nets; and establishment of emergency finance/food stock reserve (George 1976, 1979, 1984; Johnson 1975, 1981, Timmer 1986; Underwood 1977; Berg 1986, 1987; Tansey and Worsley 2000; Bergesen 1978; Barker et al. 1981; Mensah 1977; Leathers and Foster 2005, Miljan 1980; Bondestam 1978; Konandreas et al. 1987; Lele and Candler 1981; General Assembly 1952, 1954, 1957; United Nations 1974b, 1975; ACC/SCN 2000; UNSCN 2004; CESCRC 2008; HLTF 2010; FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002; High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition 2011; FAO 1979, 1980, 1985, 2004, 2009b; WFP 2004; 2008, 2010a, 2010c, 2012; IFAD 1976, 1993, 2004, 2006b, 2011e; World Bank 1980, 1986a, 1990, 2006, 2011).

In addition, almost all international institutions emphasise on promoting gender equality and prioritising the role of women (FAO/IFAD/ILO 2010; World Bank 1990, 2008b; FAO 1997b, 1998, 2010-11, 2011a; IFAD 2011f), while devising regulations to deal with newer challenges of biotechnology and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) (World Bank 1991; Millstone and Zwanenberg 2003; Bobo 2007; Codex

Alimentarium Commission 2001; FAO 2001b) and environment and climate change (FAO 2007, 2008a; IPCC 1995, 2007; IFAD 2010a). Though it is debatable whether national policies are more effective than international policies in addressing hunger, certain best practices to improve food security can be emulated across borders. An appropriate approach is to identify global policy trends and align national policy objectives with them to achieve comprehensive outcomes.

Food aid, an immediate response to provide security to people and countries suffering from a food crisis, is both complex and contentious measure. While the most acceptable use of food aid is for short-term humanitarian relief in response to emergency, caused by famine and natural calamities or man-made disasters and armed conflicts, probably its most controversial use is for development assistance, transferred as programme or project food aid. The relative advantage of food aid over cash or cheque and monetisation of in-kind food aid as an effective tool have also generated substantial debate (Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Hoddinott et al. 2007; Singer et al. 1987; FAO 2006; Gustafsson 1978; Tarrant 1980; Clay and Stokke ed. 2000; Raikes 1988; Cathie 1982; Gentilini 2007; ACC/SCN 1993). Aid effectiveness, in general, is a disputable aspect of international policy (Dollar and Pritchett 1998; Morgenthau 1962; Burnside and Dollar 2000; Alesina and Dollar 2000; Dollar and Pritchett 1998; Sachs 2005).

Beginning as a bilateral means for disposal of agricultural surpluses, in the post-World War II period, when substantial American economic assistance to Europe's recovery was in the form of food (Stevens 1979; Cathie 1982; Gustafsson 1978; Raikes 1988; George 1976; Wallenstein 1978; Bondestam 1978), food aid evolved as a multilateral channel of disbursement of assistance, institutionalised by the WFP (Cathie 1982; Charlton 1992, 1997; Abbott 1992; Clay 2003; WFP 1973, 1994a, 1997a, 1997b, 1999b) and internationally governed by the Food Aid Convention (FAC) (Benson 2000; Hoddinott et al. 2007; Braun et al. 2008) to become a permanent attribute of international assistance to the developing countries and a defining feature of food security, especially in emergency situations, and also in addressing long-term problems of the poor and hungry by encouraging labour-intensive programmes that generate income, simultaneously improving infrastructure

(Shaw 2001; ACC/SCN 1993; Lewis 1977), freeing up scarce resources for developmental projects (Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Tarrant 1980; Hannah 1977).

However, food aid is criticised as being motivated by donors' geo-strategic, politico-economic and commercial self-interest, laced with domestic agricultural, foreign, trade and export promotion objectives, causing dependency, blunting incentives for domestic food production, disruption of commercial exports markets and depressing food market prices, overlooking nutritional needs, cultural taste, eating patterns and dietary habits of the people and not targeting people most in need of it, while its potential for addressing poverty and hunger remains doubtful (Uvin 1994; Schneider 1978; Schubert 1986; Wallensteen 1978; Barrett and Maxwell 2005; Gustafsson 1978; Murdoch 1980; Tuomi 1978; Srinivasan 1989; Pillai 2000; Shoham et al. 2000; ACC/SCN 1993; Dumont and Cohen 1980; George 1984; Bondestam 1978). While efficiency of food aid can be enhanced by contextualising it within the recipient country's overall development strategy, tying it with growth-promoting policies and distribution conditionalities and properly managing it within clearly defined circumstances, it cannot replace domestic agricultural development. Whether food aid can actually address the root causes of hunger and poverty is doubtful and its ability to ascertain global food security remains elusive.

Since end of World War II, international diplomacy has progressively attempted to address problems of hunger and undernutrition, institutionalised through a proliferation of inter-governmental organisations. While "international institutions provide an established, focused, and continuing arena within which the politics of food can be played out" (Thompson 1981: 204), adequate and coherent measures to tackle food crises remain a far cry, requiring a serious and consistent engagement. The interrelated dimensions of food issues sometimes lead to overlapping, agendas and functions, defying attempts at achieving coordination and coherence among international institutions' response to food insecurity. It has been suggested that these institutions can declare a common initiative on world hunger to demonstrate solidarity towards establishing coordination and share common services to reduce costs (Shaw 2009: 214). There is conspicuous absence of a systematic study that looks at the engagement of different parts of the UN system with food and agriculture issues. A detailed and critical study of their involvement with different aspects of food and

agriculture will help in assessing the responses of the international institutions to the global food problem and their contribution in attaining food security.

While literature on problems of food security is overwhelmingly abundant, attention to international institutions' engagement with food security has been scattered and partial. Most of the analysis is scientific-economic in approach, extremely technical and empirical, largely data-driven, loaded with illustrative graphs and tables. However, the mere assessment of food insecurity in terms of numbers does not capture the reality of the actual experience, struggle and anguish of the hungry and undernourished individual. The entire spectrum of food analysis fails to address how it is rated among the agendas of the UN system in terms of priority of efforts, particularly in case of the BWIs, where food has progressively competed with other issues to gain attention and importance. An important by-product of the lack of any comprehensive study detailing the UN system's involvement with food issues is that its activities and policies have remained bereft of an over-arching assessment, thereby limiting the possibility of improving the food situation through them. This is where the present study intercedes to address the gaps in the existing literature by systematically assessing the role of the UN system in promoting food security.

The 2007-2008 global food crisis that occurs despite the progressive engagement of the international institutional architecture with issues of hunger and undernutrition triggers questions relating to the persistence and recurrence of crises situations. In an increasingly globalised and interdependent world, with proliferation of actors other than nation states, international organisations, IFIs, regional mechanisms, TNCs, CSOs/NGOs, global food security is the cumulative outcome of the actions of each of these agencies. The present study broadly analyses the role of one of the key determinants, the international institutions, of global food and nutrition security, by exploring select issues associated with the global food problem and assessing the responses of select international institutions.

While the overarching institutional architecture relating to the food is identified and explained, including inter-governmental international and regional institutions and non-governmental initiatives, the study focuses on the responses and contribution of the UN system, specifically FAO, WFP, IFAD (Rome-based food agencies), and the World Bank. Within the broad dynamics of global food security, the present study

engages with three particular issues, the right to adequate food; policy-making pertaining to food-related issues; and food aid. The differences in mandate, approach and functioning of each of the identified organisations to these issues are analyzed in detail. The relationship among these institutions and their collaborative efforts pertaining to the identified issue areas constitute essential dimensions of the study with the aim of understanding the nuances of effective coordination and cohesion of approach and action. The endeavour is to achieve both descriptive survey of the existing trends of institutional involvement and an analytical synthesis of the outcome of such efforts for comprehending the contemporary global food security.

Considering the vast expanse of both the dynamics of global food security and the international institutional architecture, it is important to delineate the scope of the present study. Though the mandate and operations of many UN specialised agencies, like WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, etc., and that of the WTO, have direct and indirect bearing upon food-related issues, they are not discussed in detail in the present work. Many pertinent issues, like regulatory framework in the global food system; food safety standards; food quality; human health hazards; animal and plant pests and diseases; rise of super-markets; food processing, retailing and labelling; commodity trade; agricultural health standards etc., which constitute important dimensions of the global food equation, have been kept out of the scope of the present study.

The basic premise of the study is that the global food problem is as much a result of failure of international institutions as it is the failure of government policy-making. Food, as an unconventional security concern, has not been awarded the requisite urgency and priority in the agendas of the UN system, the nature of their engagement being ad hoc and inadequate. The differences in the approach and handling of food issues by the UN and the BWIs undercut the possibility of a coherent and coordinated institutional strategy to strengthen international food security.

The study is organised in seven chapters, thematically based on the identified issues pertaining to global food security. The introductory chapter at hand initiates the overall discussion by laying down the background, description, justification, scope and design of the study. *Chapter II: Dynamics of Global Food Security* examines the endemic nature and expanding magnitude of the world food problem, in historical and globalised perspectives, and the wide array of reason that impact upon hunger and

undernutrition. The focus of enquiry revolves around the debates on definitional, measurement, vulnerability and causal dimensions of global food security.

*Chapter III* provides an *Overview of the International Institutional Architecture of Food*, the interplay of institutional responses and multilateral governance of food. The organisational and functional evolution of the UN food agencies, the BWIs and the WTO are analysed, along with inter-governmental regional and CSO/NGO initiatives. While mapping the overarching engagement of international institutions with food issues, the differences in their mandate and approach, relative priority accorded to food in their agendas, economic and political concerns behind decision-making and their impact, and strategies and programmes to address food crises, are examined. Coordination within the UN system is discussed in detail, highlighting inter-organizational cooperative and collaborative efforts along with bureaucratic infighting. It is interesting to note that the BWIs are progressively treading the domain of food and the World Bank has joined with IFAD to channelise funds for agriculture, nutrition and rural development. The UN system and its most specific food agency, FAO, have broadened their mandate and increasingly adopted a right-based approach to food. While all the identified institutions have pivotal policy advisory role, the WFP has innovatively decided and delivered food aid for humanitarian relief in emergencies along with promoting longer-term development.

The following three chapters deal with the identified areas pertaining to food security, viz., (i) the right to food, (ii) policy-making and (iii) food aid, and the involvement of the select international institutions in their respective capacities. *Chapter IV: Advocating the Right to Food* captures the evolving normative content of the RTF, situating it within the broad UN system human rights paradigm and international human rights instruments and the debates regarding justiciability and enforcement mechanisms. While UN advocacy of the RTF generates global awareness, recognising food as a human right informs food policies and food aid and establishes concomitant responsibility of the states and the international institutions to operationalise it, thereby profoundly influencing global food security.

*Chapter V: Advising on Food-Related Policies* encapsulates international policy prescriptions in the context of the changing understanding of food security and analyses how food-related standards-setting, information dissemination and capacity



building by the UN system has facilitated attainment of global food security. While states remain the primary decision-makers at national policy level, broad trends in international institutional policy priorities, like shift from the one-point agenda of increasing production to agricultural and rural development, improving purchasing power and nutrition, and regulating biofuels and biotechnology etc., serves to highlight the pertinent issues and inform national policy making.

*Chapter VI: Deciding and Delivering Food Aid* delves into the debates surrounding effectiveness and efficacy of food aid for humanitarian relief and to promote development, by looking at the various aspects of food aid and the functioning of the WFP, as the multilateral food aid agency of the UN, vis-à-vis changing perceptions and requirements of food aid. Despite numerous criticisms, food aid has been accepted as a permanent feature of international food policy, especially justified for emergencies. Food aid has also assumed a vital role in assisting transition of countries from an immediate crisis situation to long-term development. Factors influencing decisions and nature of delivery of food aid increasingly support multilateral food aid.

*Chapter VII: Conclusion* is divided into two parts. The first part is an analytical synthesis of various arguments and assertion regarding the efficacy of the UN system food agencies in the context of food as an issue of complex interdependence and establishment of food regimes in international relations, their relevance in ensuring global food security, and the problems and prospects of cooperation in the UN system. The second part summarises the findings of the study to assess the impact of international institutions on global food security and the possibility of enhancing cooperation, coordination and coherence in handling of food-related issues among these largely dissimilar institutions to arrive at an agreed international institutional strategy to strengthen global food security.

The broad mandate of the present study is to investigate international institutional approach to problems of hunger and undernutrition by examining how the UN system (FAO, WFP, IFAD, and World Bank) addresses issues of global food security (right to food, policy-making and food aid). Clearly, the UN system is the independent variable here, impacting upon the dependent variable, global food security. The study is inductive in nature – particular instances of the UN system’s engagement with food-related issues are tested to arrive at a generalised conclusion regarding the

potential role of international institutionalised cooperation and coordination in strengthening global food security. The study assesses the original mandates of the selected institutions, along with a descriptive narrative of their functional evolution vis-à-vis the selected issues.

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Institutional documents, Articles of Agreement, legal texts, treaties, policies, programmes, reports, resolutions, conventions and protocols, have been thoroughly examined, complemented by consultation of books, journals and research papers. A more nuanced perception has been facilitated by the field study, conducted at the UN Headquarters (New York) and the World Bank office (Washington, DC), between 25 March and 29 April 2011. The archives of both the institutions yielded many relevant documents, while discussions with their officials provided enriching perceptions. Visits made to many food-related non-profit organisations and think-tanks added an alternative perspective to a holistic understanding of the issues involved (see Annexure II).

As an international organizational study, the attempt here is to analyse the potential capacity and limitations of international institutions in the context of world food problem. Though undertaken in the shadow of the 2007-2008 food crisis, this study aims to be more than just a crisis-driven analysis and attempts a deep-rooted understanding of the problems of chronic hunger and undernutrition through a nuanced perspective of the evolution and engagement of the UN system with global food security.

## CHAPTER II

# Dynamics of Global Food Security

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*We recognise that globally there is enough food for all and that inequitable access is the main problem.*

- **World Declaration on Nutrition**, International Conference on Nutrition,  
Rome, 11 December 1992

*The problem is not simply technical. It is a political and social problem. It is a problem of access to food supplies, of distribution, and of entitlements. Above all, it is a problem of political will.*

- **Boutros Boutros-Ghali**, Conference on Overcoming Global Hunger,  
Washington, DC, 30 November 1993<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Food crises constitute a major cause of global concern and anxiety, and a challenge that both national governments and the international community are grappling with. Reports of starvation, farmer suicides and worsening hunger have become regular features of our contemporary life, causing little surprise and a sense of complacency. Large-scale poverty, hunger and malnutrition in a world of abundant resources, technological advancement and even opulence is inexplicable. While a substantial portion of the population desperately searches for food for mere survival, the other half of humanity frantically fights obesity and counts calories, substantiating the assertion that “Hunger is not a scrounge but a scandal” (George 1976: 23).

Hunger is more than the televised images and newspaper pictures of cadaverous bodies or hundreds of hands stretching out for food packets, which are typical during famines or disasters. These extreme visuals of starvation do not adequately capture the everyday global, chronic and hidden hunger that kills silently, without inviting the attention that a natural disaster or terrorist attack does. Millions of people starve to death due to food shortages, poverty, high prices, lack of income and purchasing power and inadequate emergency food distribution arrangements. Many more suffer from malnutrition and hunger, which reduce their health and productivity, and

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<sup>1</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s special address “Ending Hunger: A Global Concern”, as quoted in Serageldig and Landell-Mills 1994: 79.

increase their exposure to ill-health. Chronic hunger has been on the rise since 1990s, reaching a peak of 1.02 billion people in the world (See Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1).

**Table 2.1: Increasing Chronic Hunger since 1990s**

WORLD Region/subregion/country	Total population		Number of people undernourished			
	2006-08	1990-92	1995-97	2000-02	2006-08	Change so far
	(millions)	(millions)				(%)
<b>WORLD</b>	<b>6 652.5</b>	<b>848.4</b>	<b>791.5</b>	<b>836.2</b>	<b>850.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Developed regions	1 231.3	15.3	17.5	15.4	10.6	-30.8
Developing regions	5 420.2	833.2	774.0	820.8	839.4	0.8
Least-developed countries	796.7	211.2	249.4	244.7	263.8	24.9
Landlocked developing countries	382.8	90.2	101.6	102.5	98.3	8.9
Small island developing states	52.2	9.6	10.9	9.7	10.7	11.8

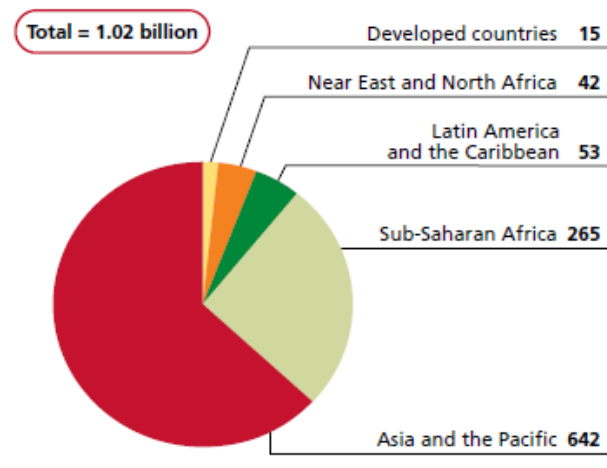
**Least-developed countries:** Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.

**Landlocked developing countries:** Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Macedonia (The former Yugoslav Republic), Malawi, Mali, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Paraguay, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**Small island Developing states:** Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cape Verde, Comoros, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kiribati, Maldives, Mauritius, Netherlands Antilles, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent/Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu.

Source: FAO 2011c: 44, Annex Table

**Figure 2.1: Undernourishment in 2009 by Region (millions)**



Source: FAO 2009b: 11, Figure 4

Infant and under-five mortality rates are telling; those who do manage to survive are severely undernourished, suffering from low birthweight, underweight, wasting and stunting (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3).

**Table 2.2: Mortality Rates among Infants and Under-five Children, 1990-2005**      **Table 2.3: Nutritional Status among Infants and Children, 2003-2008**

	Under-five Mortality Rate		Infant Mortality Rate		Neonatal Mortality Rate
	1990	2005	1990	2005	2005
Sub-Saharan Africa	188	169	112	101	44
Eastern and Southern Africa	166	146	104	93	40
West and Central Africa	209	190	119	108	48
Middle East and North Africa	81	54	59	43	26
South Asia	129	84	89	63	44
East Asia and Pacific	58	33	43	26	20
Latin America and Caribbean	54	31	43	26	15
CEE/CIS	53	35	43	29	18
Industrialized Countries*	10	6	9	5	4
Developing Countries*	105	83	71	57	33
Least Developed Countries*	182	153	115	97	43
World	95	76	65	52	30

\* Also includes territories within each country category or regional group.  
 Under-5 Mortality Rate: Probability of dying between birth and exactly five years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births  
 Infant Mortality Rate: Probability of dying between birth and exactly one year of age, expressed per 1,000 live births  
 Neonatal Mortality Rate: Probability of dying during the first 28 completed days of life expressed per 1,000 live births  
 Source: Compiled from UNICEF – *Table 1: Under-Five Mortality Rankings*, available at: [http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/sowc07\\_table\\_1.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/sowc07_table_1.pdf)

	Percentage of Infants with Low Birthweight 2003-2008*	Percentage of under-five (2003-2008*) Suffering from			
		Underweight (WHO)		Wasting (WHO)	Stunting (WHO)
		Moderate & Severe	Severe	Moderate & Severe	Moderate & Severe
Sub-Saharan Africa	15	23	8	10	42
Eastern and Southern Africa	14	23	7	8	45
West and Central Africa	16	22	8	11	40
Middle East and North Africa	11	14	5	10	32
South Asia	27	42	15	19	48
East Asia and Pacific	6	11	-	-	22
Latin America and Caribbean	9	4	-	2	14
CEE/CIS	6	-	-	-	-
Industrialized Countries**	-	-	-	-	-
Developing Countries**	16	23	10	13	34
Least Developed Countries**	17	28	9	11	45
World	16	23	10	13	34

\* Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the column heading  
 \*\* Includes territories within each country category or regional group  
 Low Birthweight: Percentage of infants weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth  
 Underweight (WHO): Moderate and severe – Percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median weight for age of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards. Severe – Percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus three standard deviations from median weight for age of the WHO Child Growth Standards  
 Wasting (WHO): Moderate and severe – Percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median weight for height of the WHO Child Growth Standards  
 Stunting (WHO): Moderate and severe – Percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median height for age of the WHO Child Growth Standards  
 Source: Compiled from UNICEF – *Table 2: Nutrition*, available at: [http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_statistics.html)

Hunger related deaths occur all over the world on a daily basis, more in developing and least developed countries, quietly and largely unattended, without stirring outrage or purposive resolve; “The world hunger problem is too pervasive, too commonplace, too remote from our own experience, too hopeless” (Leathers and Foster 2005: 2). Mere statistical representation does not capture the essence of hunger in terms of human emotions, anguish, grief, humiliation and fear, ‘the ultimate symbol of powerlessness’ (Lappé et al. 1998: 3). Human beings, throughout the world and history, have been haunted by hunger and starvation in varying scales and intensities. Although hunger is not a ‘modern malady’ or a ‘new affliction’, (Newman 1990: vii; Kristensen 1968: 9; Murdoch 1980: 95; Drèze and Sen 1993: 3), the term ‘food security’, is of relatively recent origin and has gained popular usage since the 1970s.

Achieving a world free from hunger and starvation has eluded humanity for thousands of years; the hope of assured food supply generated by the discovery of agriculture and subsequent developments in technological innovation has never been realised. Competition for available food resources has remained fundamental to the struggle for survival (Pearse 1980: 219; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 12). Persistence of hunger in many parts of the world juxtaposed with food surpluses and stocks, represents both an ethical dilemma as well as an economic and political policy failure. Since hunger and malnourishment have haunted human beings since prehistoric times, a vast amount of literature is available on issues related to the global food problem from the perspectives of history, anthropology, economics, politics, policy-making, etc. However, the food problem and hunger have not only become global in scope but have also acquired new dimensions in an ever-changing context, providing a continued possibility to explore and examine the problems and its potential solutions.

The present chapter attempts to map the nature and magnitude of the global food problem that afflicts the world and the elements of global food security. The main objectives are to understand the anatomy of food security and hunger, their determination and quantification, various manifestations on different groups of people and regions, and causal factors. The endeavour is to draw out general trends and provide a holistic picture encapsulating the dynamics of global food security. The next two sections set the tone of the broader discussion by historically contextualising hunger and exploring its changing contours in an increasingly globalised world.

### **Is Hunger a Modern Malady?: Historical Contextualisation of the Food Problem**

The history of hunger can be traced to the ‘prehistoric period’, when life was a constant quest for food as man survived as a predatory hunter and gatherer of fruits, nuts and berries (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 19). Subsequently, the expansion of the human species consisted of a series of social and economic revolutions through which small, nomadic and independent hunter-gatherers expanded their range of foraging activities and transited into settled and sedentary community living. Pastoralism developed with domestication of animals and plants for improving accessibility to sources of food. This impacted broader human economy and social organisation as communities grew in size, producing their own food and trading as a means to increase dietary variety, check seasonal fluctuations in food supply and mitigate local famine, leading to what came to be known as ‘civilization’, characterised by larger networks of alliances, trade, exchange and interdependence. It is difficult to analyse patterns of hunger during these transitory periods because they were not accompanied by any written records. Therefore, prehistoric patterns of hunger and starvation are studied by triangulating two contemporary sources of data: ethnographic health records of hunter-gatherers and archaeological evidence of malnutrition and starvation in ancient skeletons. Both these sources suggest that nutrition intake in the earliest human societies was relatively good; although under-nutrition was common and malnutrition was relatively rare. Hunger and starvation occurred primarily in extreme environmental conditions, like deserts or the arctic regions (Cohen 1990: 56-78).

Increases in population created pressures to develop new methods for providing food. As hunter-gatherers and pastoral communities transited to agricultural societies, facilitated by innovations such as irrigation, that expanded food producing capacity of the earth (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 19-20), larger and less mobile population were in need of regular supply of foodstuffs throughout the year and reserves for lean periods (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 15). While settled living, production, storage and trade of food relieved humans from the need for daily procurement of food, however, there is no reason to assume that these transitions necessarily represented improvements in the quality or reliability of food supply or reduced the frequency of famines (Cohen 1990: 57-59). It may simply mean the substitution of the uncertainty of the hunt by the vicissitudes of the weather (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 19).

The prehistoric period was followed by the 'millennial era', which encompassed intensification of agriculture, proliferation of permanent settlements, emergence of city-states, development of hierarchical social structure and expansion of trade. Many sources of evidence – written inscriptions; material sources, such as excavated walled cities, sculptures, monuments; human burials; stored grains and food substances; remains of irrigation structures and domesticated animals – provide information about hunger in this period. Progress of civilisation was accompanied by accumulation of population in one place, specialisation of human functions and emergence of urban and rural settlements, requiring attention to be focussed on food production, storage, distribution and, during scarcity, trade and import from external sources (Newman et al. 1990: 101-102). Such economic transformation, facilitated surplus production of food, growth of non-agricultural labour and support for non-producers of food, but also increasingly led to people losing control over their food supplies and depending on economic and political channels to obtain food, opening the doors for control by groups of people who were economically and politically dominant (Cohen 1990: 59).

Early Greeks, like Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Demosthenes and Galen, while describing hunger and plenty, suggested that though sometimes hunger occurred due to climatic forces, water shortage or crop failure, it was largely attributable to human activities (Newman et al. 1990: 102). The explanations of the processes that may have led to a situation of unequal distribution and access of available supplies of food, evident between and within countries, between social groups and even at the family level, lie in both the economic and political structures (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 27). In the historical context, long-term adaptations to coping with hunger comprised irrigation, storage, redistribution, exploring and protecting new trade routes for food, colonisation in search for greener pastures, and social organisation to facilitate these, along with population management. Short-term changes included extraordinary measures, such as warfare to secure and protect alternative sources of food, limiting the number of children by parents or selling children, mostly girls, into slavery to limit the number of mouths to be fed (Newman et al. 1990: 103-120).

Initially there were no real technical advances in agricultural practice. The agricultural revolution which followed, involving a varying mix of technical and radical social changes, began in Europe with the rest of the countries experiencing such movements



at different times. Subsequently, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, those countries with control over better systems of communications and cheaper, more efficient transport were able to become independent of their own agricultural production. Colonial structures significantly shaped the relations between contrasting regions of hunger and relative plenty, working in the interest of the colonizing countries and impoverishing the colonies (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 20-27). Agricultural production in the colonies was export-oriented to feed the economic growth process of the colonial centres, while food production for the daily needs of the population of the colonies was poorly developed (Tuomi 1978: 1-2).

The same period witnessed technological modernisation, new farming techniques, inventions of machines and fertilisers, which increased agricultural production. Better transportation and distribution networks were established as governments realised that to retain power they must develop mechanisms for food distribution and prevention of hunger, starvation and famines. Increased governmental action on food-related issues was mainly in response to hunger or food riots, public demonstrations of discontent as a result of actual, anticipated or rumoured food shortages. Thus, a 'public sphere' for debate on issues of everyday importance emerged and reflected certain public expectations regarding availability of adequate food supply at reasonable prices. The transition from a feudal or pre-capitalist market system also witnessed an increasing role of the citizen in public affairs (Crossgrove 1990: 216-235).

### **Globalisation of Hunger and Food Crises**

The contemporary 'global food system' is made up of a "set of processes by which agricultural commodities are produced on farms, transformed into foods in the marketing sector, and sold to consumers to satisfy nutritional as well as aesthetic and social needs" (Timmer 1986: 17). It includes centres of production and centres of consumption (typically countries and regions), connected by channels of exchange and distribution (which could be commercial and concessional, public and private). At a given time, the patterns and structures of production, distribution and consumption are determined and functionally interconnected by means of transactions, which initiate international, regional or national flows of commodities, capital, information, technology and personnel. Even when it appears that food production, distribution and consumption patterns take place at the national level, they are typically affected by

international transactions. The global food system is characterised by a division between surplus (exporting) and deficit (importing) countries, the dependency of the latter on the former, and networks of transactions linking producing and consuming countries, commercial networks of sellers and buyers, and concessional networks of donors and recipients (Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 597-600).

It has been rightly noted, though in the context of armed conflicts, that “globalization of the economy, of communications, and of governance by their very nature creates new threats and challenges, as well as opportunities” (Marshall and Gurr 2003: 2). The functioning of the global food system – production, distribution/marketing and consumption that transfers food from fields to plates makes the contradiction of the ‘stuffed and the starved’ increasingly acute (Patel 2008: 1-3). Due to the innately complicated network of connections that determine employment and income, and prices of food and other goods and services in the global food system, many of the poor are left inadequately fed (Timmer 1986: 17). The contemporary food situation can be placed in perspective as an exaggeration of historical trends compounded by uneven progress in the development of techniques to produce food and the ways of its access and distribution (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 12).

Johnson (1975: 7-12) has identifies four distinct phases of a food crisis spanning over the period of one century. The earliest of these was towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when England’s supply of wheat, the major component of their food, was almost static in the face of continuing growth of demand, accompanied by bleak prospects of increasing yields and decline in available imported supplies. There seemed little possibility of increasing the world wheat supply as US diverted more grains for domestic consumption. The second period of impending crisis was in the early 1920s with concern about the capacity of US to feed a population of 150 million as supplies were not increasing fast enough to meet demand

The next major crisis occurring in mid the 1960s was felt worldwide and involved the centrally planned economies of China and former Soviet Union. There was a significant decline in per capita food production in the developing countries their dependence upon grain imports increased. Following a poor grain crop in 1960, China became a major importer of wheat. The former Soviet Union, which was a net grain exporter, became a net grain importer, following poor grain crops in 1963 and 1965.

Poor harvests in India during 1965-1966 necessitated massive shipments of grains to prevent starvation. The total stocks of grain of the five major exporters (US, Canada, Argentina, Australia and the European Community) declined from 150 million tons in 1961 to 80 million tons in 1967 (Johnson 1975: 2).

The beginning of the 1970s ushered in ‘a new era of food shortage’ (Tarrant 1980: 278). The 1973-74 food crisis was the result of many factors that “came together in a chain reaction” (Shaw 2007: 115), causing sharp deterioration in the world balance of supply and demand. On the one hand, world food and grain production declined during 1972-1973 because of adverse weather over large areas of the world, resulting in relatively poor crops in South Asia, the former Soviet Union and North America. The Soviet import of about 28 million tons of grains at concessional prices, mainly from the US, sharply reducing the carry-over stocks in the main exporting countries. At the same time, the petroleum exporting countries raised oil prices, thereby increasing the cost of fertiliser production and transportation of food (Shaw 2007: 116; Johnson 1975: 1-2). Government policies in many countries prevented the price system from rationing the available supplies, leading to price rise in the international markets, despite which grain consumption in most industrial countries was greater during this period, causing uneven distribution and very little sharing of the shortfall in production among the world’s population (Johnson 1975: 1-2).

Following the 1970s food crisis, scholars like Lester R. Brown (1973-74: 3) saw food scarcity as becoming a permanent situation, “several factors suggest that the world food economy is undergoing a fundamental transformation, and that food scarcity is becoming chronic”. However, ‘cautionary’ optimists like D. Gale Johnson (1975: 62; 1983: 7) did not subscribe to the ‘conventional wisdom’ (Johnson 1975: 11) of ‘things are getting worse’ scenario (Johnson 1983: 2) and rather believed in ‘things are improving slowly’ scenario (Johnson 1983: 5). He treated global food scarcity as a temporary phenomenon seeing, “nothing in the events of 1973 and 1974 that will result in a significant reversal of the long-run trend toward lower grain prices” (Johnson 1975: 43) and “that the per capita food supplies of the world’s poorer people can be improved” (Johnson 1975: 62). There has been no major food crisis since the 1970s till the 2008 price shock, however, the number of undernourished kept increasing. The 2008 food crisis bears some remarkable similarities with the food

crisis of 1974, lending credence to the hypothesis that the causes of these crises relate to some deeper failings of the global food system (Headey and Fan 2010: 2).

The earliest food crisis was not in the developing countries as has been the case during subsequent crises. Till the 1930s, problems of hunger and malnutrition were as much a concern for Europe and North America as they were for Africa, Asia or Latin America. The depression of the 1930s and the huge number of unemployed drew attention to these problems. Since the end of World War II, hunger ceased to be a major problem in Europe and the US and rapidly engulfed the developing world, as malnutrition increasingly became almost exclusively confined to Africa, Asia and Latin America, and linked with their economic relations with the wealthy countries (Kristensen 1968: 10; Grigg 1985: 53). The world that emerged after World War II, adherent to the colonial patterns of power, gave North America and Europe (including former Soviet Union) the majority of the world's economic and military power, with substantially less population to sustain. The equation was entirely reverse in case of the developing countries. Little change has occurred since then, as the developed countries continue to control the vast majority of world's wealth, while the majority of the world's population remain concentrated in the developing countries. Although 2008 crisis was felt by the developed countries as well, it was less severe.

Any attempt to address the global food problem through appropriate policies and programmes requires an understanding of how concepts are defined; what is the magnitude of hunger and how can it be measured; who are the most vulnerable, in terms of groups of population and geographical region; and finally what are the factors causing malnourishment. The subsequent sections engage in detail with each of these aspects of global food security and the related debates.

### **What is Global Food Security?: Definitional Issues**

Explanations of the global food problem are numerous, resulting in no universally accepted definition of 'food security'. In fact, the use of the term 'food' itself is replete with controversy. While some scholars use it synonymously with quantitative and calorie/energy intake of grains – wheat, rice, corn (or maize), others emphasise that vegetables, fruits, nuts, sugar, dairy products, livestock products, animal fats, fish etc. contribute to substantial qualitative and nutritional aspects of food. The concepts

of hunger, famine, and chronic undernourishment constitute dimensions and manifestations of food security. These terms are rather loosely interpreted to mean different things, based on the background and purpose of the analyst, and implicitly contain certain vagueness associated with multiple connotation in common usage.

Hunger is a symptom as well as a cause of the broader problems of food insecurity but not synonymous with it. Hunger is primarily a biological and metabolic condition arising due to insufficient intake of food in terms of calories and nutrients for a healthy and active life. It is global and endemic in nature, a recurring feature of poverty, with long-term (chronic), short-term (acute) and seasonal (transitory) dimensions, manifested by starvation and famine in its most extreme form. Food insecurity leads to and is characterised by hunger, but elimination of hunger alone does not signify attainment of food security (Webb and Braun 1994: 203-204).

Food scarcity is a short-term reduction in the amount of available foodstuffs, indicated by rising prices, popular discontent, hunger and, in the worst cases, starvation. A famine is mostly localised and temporary, accompanied by a critical shortage of essential foodstuffs, and resulting from a confluence of causes, including natural disaster and poor policy response. The impacts of famine include hunger, leading to acute starvation and substantially increased mortality rate in a community or region, along with severe food price inflation; dramatic action by the government, like food rationing; and drastic reaction and extreme behaviour among ordinary people, like hoarding, stealing, migration, suicide, murder and cannibalism, sale of children and consumption of strange foods (Garnsey 1990: 126-127; Brown and Eckholm 1974: 26; Leathers and Foster 2005: 9). Observed as affecting poor and rural populations in underdeveloped and developing countries, famines are contended to be on the decline except in zones of armed conflict (Messer and Uvin 1996: xiii).

Famines are distinct from the long-term and protracted problems of hunger and malnutrition that chronically afflict a sizeable portion of the world population, particularly in developing countries. Famines imply starvation, the vice versa is not true; starvation relates to endemic hunger involving sustained and persistent nutritional deprivation, while famine is its severe and extreme manifestation (Bennett 1972: 322; Sen 1981: 39-40, 1995: 7, 1990: 375-376). Also, since different groups typically have different commanding power over food, starvation and famines do not

equally affect all groups. Famine is relatively uncomplicated to diagnose, requires immediate and speedy intervention, and is easier to eradicate. However, chronic hunger and endemic undernutrition is comparatively less obvious, involving complex and deep-rooted social and economic conditions and can be addressed only through long-term institutional and policy reforms.

Apart from famine, food crises can be classified into four categories. Contingent crisis, created by the sudden disruption of food imports as a result of war or some catastrophe, for example, the precarious food situation in the aftermath of World War II. Cyclical crisis, caused by decreasing food supplies and escalating prices due to poor harvests caused by unfavourable weather, like the 1973-1974 world food crisis. Political crisis, caused due to embargo by exporters for diplomatic and foreign policy considerations, for example, the US embargo of grains against erstwhile Soviet Union (January 1980-April 1981), as a sanction against the latter's invasion of Afghanistan. Finally the Malthusian crisis, resulting from declining food supply in relation to population growth, which so far has not materialised in reality (Hayami 2000: 11-17).

The term 'food security' is of recent origin, introduced to economic and policy-making literature for the first time by the 1974 World Food Conference (1974-WFC). Since then the concept of food security has "evolved, developed, multiplied and diversified...From its simple beginnings, food security has become...a cornucopia of ideas" (Maxwell, S. 1996: 155). Food security literature makes constant references to conditions of malnutrition, undernutrition and undernourishment, which are recognised as interrelated, yet distinct in terms of quality and quantity of diet, energy/calorie versus essential nutrients and micronutrient intake (see Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4: Definitions – Malnutrition, Undernutrition and Undernourishment**

Malnutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• results from overconsumption or underconsumption of one or more essential nutrients (Leathers and Foster 2005: 25), protein, vitamins, and minerals etc.</li> <li>• refers to a range of conditions that hinder good health, caused by inadequate or unbalanced food intake or from poor absorption of food consumed, including both undernutrition (food deprivation) and overnutrition (excessive food intake in relation to energy requirements) (<a href="http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/">http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/</a>)</li> <li>• is measured through anthropometric indicators to see the</li> </ul>
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	impact on human bodies (FAO 1999a: 11), primarily used to measure nutritional status of young children
Undernutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• results from prolonged low levels of food intake and/or low absorption of food consumed and is generally applied to energy (or protein and energy) deficiency, but it may also relate to vitamin and mineral deficiencies (<a href="http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/">http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/</a>)</li> <li>• manifested through stunting or underweight, reduced cognitive ability etc.</li> <li>• is determined from data on measurement of weight, height, age and sex of people and the ratios calculated from them, which indicate the outcome of inadequate food intake as well as of poor health and sanitation conditions that may prevent people from deriving full nutritional benefit from their food (FAO 1999a: 6)</li> </ul>
Undernourishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• signifies chronic hunger or food insecurity, referring to the status of persons whose food intake regularly provides less than their minimum energy requirements on a continuous basis (<a href="http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/">http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/</a>), meaning a shortfall in caloric intake such that a person cannot maintain normal bodily activity without losing weight</li> <li>• is measured for a total population by comparing the amount of food available to them with food intake data specific to country food need strategies, determined by age-sex and height-weight indicators for energy requirements (FAO 1999a: 11)</li> </ul>

*Source: Compiled from various FAO publications*

Undernutrition (inadequacy of food available to an individual) continued over a long period of time causes undernourishment, leading to weight loss, disease and reduction in energy levels to maintain physical activity. Malnutrition relates to the quality of diet, essential nutrients and micronutrients needed to enhance a healthy human life, “a malnourished person may or may not be undernourished. People who are undernourished are, however, very likely to be malnourished. Both are hungry” (Simon and Simon 1973: xvi).

The definition of food security has been continuously modified and broadened to reflect and respond to the dominant international concerns regarding the food problem. The 1972-74 food crisis brought to fore the shortage in availability of food supplies and fluctuations in consumption of the developing countries, leading to concerns of national self-sufficiency and proposals for world food stocks and import stabilization. In this context, the 1974-WFC understood food security to mean “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic food-stuffs...to

sustain a steady expansion of food consumption in countries with low levels of per capita intake and to offset fluctuations in production and prices (United Nations 1975: 14). Shlomo Reutlinger (1977: Abstract) gave an operational definition to food insecurity as “the probability of food grain consumption in developing countries falling below desired level due to a fixed upper limit of the food import bill they can afford and an unfavorable combination of poor harvests and world food grain prices.”

In the early 1980s, Amartya Sen (1990: 374) provided an entirely novel perspective on food security by shifting the focus from ‘decline in food availability’ arguments. He viewed hunger not just as a problem of food production but as an “economic” phenomenon resulting from a dysfunction of the link that connect producers, markets, purchasers and consumers. Sen (1981: 159) places starvation within the ‘ownership relations’ as part of the ‘entitlement system’ and “the food problem as a relation between people and food in terms of a network of entitlement relations”. His analysis of hunger involved expanding ‘substantive freedom’, including “freedom to satisfy hunger, or to achieve sufficient nutrition” (Sen 1999: 4), “of the individual and the family to establish ownership over an adequate amount of food” (Sen 1999: 161).

What people eat depends on what they are able to acquire; the mere presence of food in the market does not entitle a person to consume it. The entitlement of a person constitutes a set of different alternative commodity bundles including food, over which he is able to establish command, given the prevailing social structure, legal, political and economic arrangements. The starving person who does not have means to command food is suffering from an ‘entitlement failure’, the causal antecedents of which may lie in factors other than food production. Every society has legal channels, market mechanisms and mechanisms for the operations of rights that determine people’s entitlements. In a market economy, different sections of the population establish command over food based on their ‘endowment position’, which is determined by production options, trade opportunities or ‘exchange opportunities’, claims vis-à-vis the state and other methods of acquiring food (Sen 1981: 3, 45; 1990: 375; 1995: 52; 1999: 162-163; Drèze and Sen 1993: 9).

Starvation results from the inability of people to establish command over adequate food because of ‘ownership patterns’ and ‘exchange entitlements’ (Drèze and Sen 1993: 22). Eradicating starvation implies an entitlement system that has social



security programmes as well as legal rights of guaranteed employment at adequate wages (Sen 1981: 4, 6-7). Entitlement analysis must take note of the institutional structure – legal, political and economic – that determine a person ability to avoid undernourishment (Sen 1990: 375). With the entitlement approach to starvation and famines, Sen moved food security out of a purely agricultural sector concern into the broader area of poverty and development. Food security began to be viewed as “the eye of the storm of interlocking national and global concerns” (Shaw 2007: 383) and the ‘entitlement’ concept placed hunger at the intersection between economic, social, biological and political factors (Uvin 1994: 62).

Utsa Patnaik (1999: 323), however, contends that though the concept of ‘exchange entitlements’ was advanced totally as a new concept, it “is not different in its essence from purchasing power in the broadest sense...”. She argues that Sen’s ‘food availability decline’ is narrowly defined, in terms of random weather-induced fluctuations, and refers only to the short term effects of droughts, cyclones etc., completely ignoring the longer-term structural changes and socio-economic forces. For example, changes such as substituting commercial crops for foodgrains in underdeveloped countries, or adopting export policies that might lead to foodgrains availability decline in rural areas (Patnaik 2007: 30; 1999: 324-325). According to Amitava Mukherjee (2002: 13-26), it is incomplete to define a right to food only in terms of entitlements, without factoring in conditions such as institutional sanctions to access food, individual’s exercise of choice and the existence of alternative food systems, available from forests, common property and micro-environments.

In 1983, FAO (1983: 9) accepted “The elimination of chronic malnutrition and hunger...as the ultimate goal of a strategy for food security”. The concept of world food security was redefined as ensuring “...that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need”, with three specific aims of “ensuring production of adequate food supplies; maximizing stability in the flow of supplies; and securing access to available supplies on the part of those who need them”. The World Bank (1986a: 1) continued in the same trail to define food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Its essential elements are the availability of food and the ability to acquire it”.

Food security may be defined as the ability of food-deficit countries, or regions, or households within these countries, to meet “target levels” of consumption on a

year-to-year basis. In other words, the degree of food insecurity is the degree to which the target food supply to a population or a segment of a population is at risk, through either economic or physical inaccessibility. Hence, food security has three dimensions. The first concerns the adequacy of the aggregate food supply to meet the needs of the population. The second aspect is stability, i.e., whether the uninterrupted availability of food can be assured. The third is related to the distribution, i.e., whether the food supply is available to all segments of the population (Valdés and Castillo 1984: 3).

The 1996 World Food Summit (1996-WFS) adopted the widest possible approach, “food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels... exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life...” (FAO 1996a: 3). This definition, subsequently endorsed at the 2002 World Food Summit: Five Years Later (2002-WFS), integrates four dimensions of food security: availability, accessibility, utilisation and stability (see Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2: Four Dimensions of Food Security**



*Source: Compiled from FAO/EU 2008: 1; and Løvendal and Knowles 2007: 64*

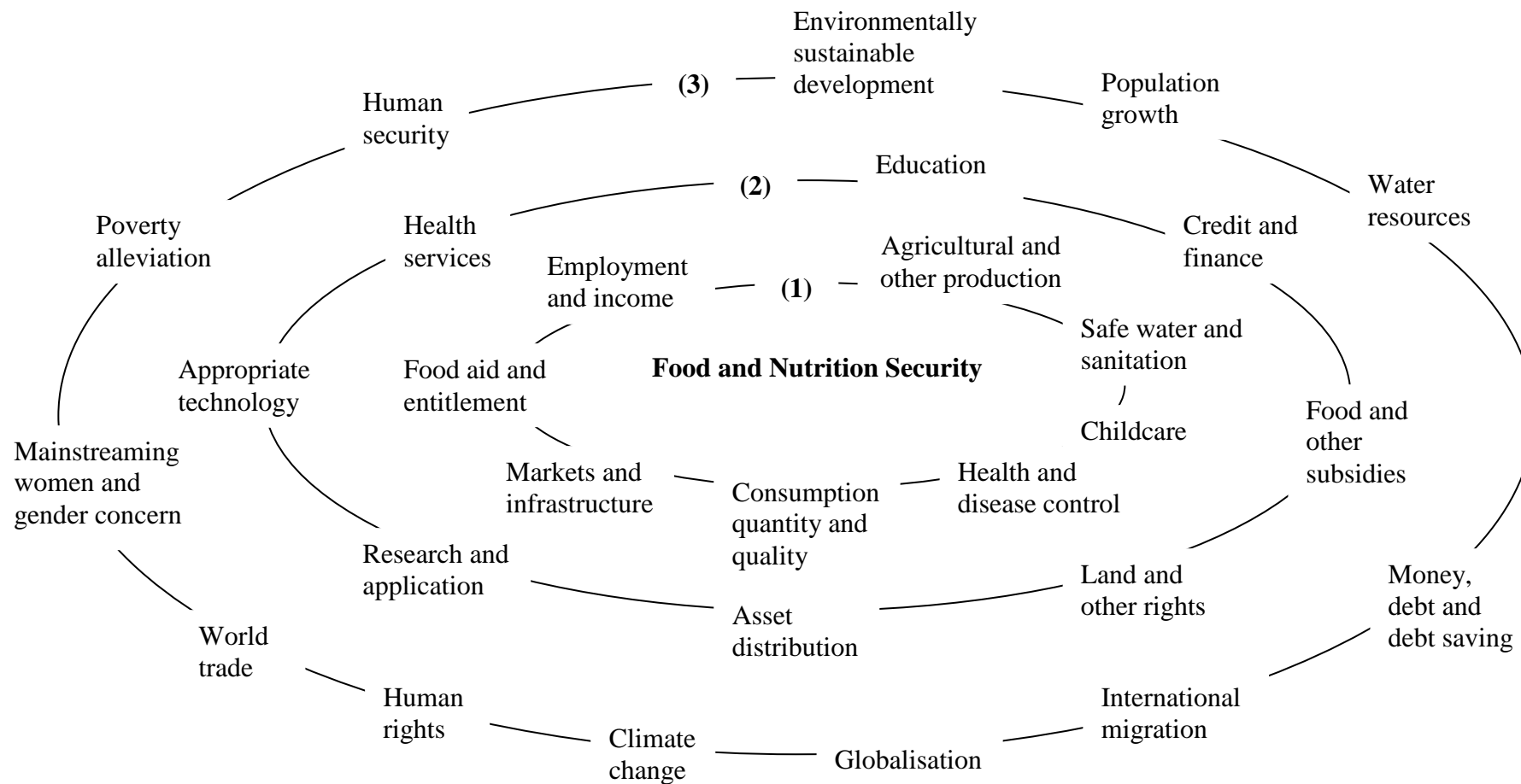
The definition of food security was broadened from comparing requirement with national availability of food and supply shortfall, to include consumption, entitlement and accessibility. Opinion remained fractured, however, on the unit of analysis – whether to focus on household (intra-household resource allocation) or individuals within the domain of food security. It was observed that individuals' access to food

depended on their control over household resources and income, which had varying outcomes, especially for women and children. Subsequent definitions have stressed on the interlinkages between individual, household, community, local, national, regional and international dimensions of food security (Pinstrup-Andersen 2009: 6; Maxwell, D. G. 1996: 291, Maxwell, S. 1996: 157).

The evolution of thinking about food security, since the 1974-WFC, represents three overlapping paradigm shifts in its definition from: the global and the national to the household and the individual; a 'food first' to a livelihood perspective; and objective indicators of targets and measurements of nutritional status to subjective perceptions of active and healthy life, beyond mere survival (Maxwell, S. 1996: 155-156) (explained in the next section). The broadened concept of world food security is a manifestation of the evolving views on development theory and practice (Shaw 2007: 385). Graphically depicted in three concentric circles (see Figure 2.3), the innermost circle includes a series of interlocking food and nutrition security concerns, whose relative importance varies from place to place. The wider national and regional concerns that surround the local concern impact on how the latter work out. These in turn are affected by an overarching circle of major global concerns, which penetrate and affect the concerns in the two inner circles (Shaw 2007: 383-384).

From the post-World War II situation of using developed countries' food surpluses for addressing food shortages in the developing countries, attention shifted to efforts that ensure poor people's access to required food through increasing purchasing power and employment. In the 1960s, recognition of the importance of the human factor in development made people, not money or wealth, the starting point of any development activity. In the 1970s, equity in development was emphasised, debunking the 'trickle-down' effects of the benefits of development to the poorest, and replaced by the 'basic needs' strategy, focussing on the implementation of direct measures to benefit the poorest and redistribution of benefits of growth. During the world economic recession of the 1980s, the poor were marginalised and forced to bear the social costs of economic adjustment programmes, imposed on the developing countries by the IFIs. Again in the 1990s, the importance of human development was rediscovered, epitomised in the annual UNDP-HDR and the mainstreaming of women and gender issues into development (Shaw 2007: 385).

**Figure 2.3: The Broad Concept of Food and Nutrition Security**


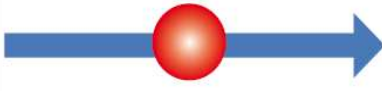


- (1) Interlocking local food and nutrition security;
- (2) Basic services, technology, assets and rights; and
- (3) Overarching major concerns.

Source: Shaw 2007: 384, Figure 40.1

The World Bank (1986a: 1) distinguished between ‘chronic food insecurity’, implying continuous inadequate diet due to a household’s persistent inability to acquire (either produce or buy) enough food, and ‘transitory food insecurity’, implying temporary decline in a household’s access to food due to fluctuation in food prices, food production or household incomes, its worst form being famine (see Table 2.5). The distinction between chronic and transitory food insecurity must factor explicitly in food security assessment, policy decisions and operational application, and the size and characteristics of vulnerable groups. ‘Seasonal food security’, falling between these two categories, relates to ‘cyclical pattern’ of inadequate food availability and accessibility due to seasonal weather fluctuation, cropping pattern, work opportunities and disease. It is usually predictable and is consequent to a sequence of known events and, therefore, similar to chronic food insecurity, while being of limited durations it can be perceived as recurrent transitory food insecurity (FAO/EU 2008: 1).

**Table 2.5: Types of Food Insecurity**

	CHRONIC FOOD INSECURITY	TRANSITORY FOOD INSECURITY
		
<b>is...</b>	long-term or persistent.	short-term and temporary.
<b>occurs when...</b>	people are unable to meet their minimum food requirements over a sustained period of time.	there is a sudden drop in the ability to produce or access enough food to maintain a good nutritional status.
<b>results from...</b>	extended periods of poverty, lack of assets and inadequate access to productive or financial resources.	short-term shocks and fluctuations in food availability and food access, including year-to-year variations in domestic food production, food prices and household incomes.
<b>can be overcome with...</b>	typical long term development measures also used to address poverty, such as education or access to productive resources, such as credit. They may also need more direct access to food to enable them to raise their productive capacity.	transitory food insecurity is relatively unpredictable and can emerge suddenly. This makes planning and programming more difficult and requires different capacities and types of intervention, including early warning capacity and safety net programmes ( see Box 1).

Source: FAO/EU 2008: 1

The easiest way to discern food insecurity is by observing hunger in its many guises: undernutrition, nutrient-depleting illnesses, less evident micronutrient deficiencies, and the extreme and most visible manifestation of famine, often leading to death by starvation. Hence, global food security signifies absence of these four dimensions of hunger and requires international implementation of the RTF as a norm of social behaviour; sustainable food availability through increased production and supplies

exceeding the growing population; adequate household income; institutionalisation of international and regional welfare schemes and safety nets for famine prevention, emergency assistance, maintenance and supplementation of entitlements, and special needs programs for vulnerable groups; and exploring new capabilities to cope with future surprise (Chen and Kates 1996: 23; 32; Kates 1996: 234-242).

There is a distinction between food security and nutrition security, though they are interchangeably used in most literature. According to the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN 2004: 7), “Nutrition is both the outcome and the process of providing the nutrients needed for health, growth, development and survival. Although food – as a source of these nutrients – is an important part of this process, it is not by itself sufficient. Other necessary inputs include good caring practices and health services”. On the same lines, the World Bank (2006: 66) points out that while food security is concerned with “physical and economic access to food of sufficient quality and quantity in a socially and culturally acceptable manner”, nutrition security “is an outcome of good health, a healthy environment, and good caring practices in addition to household-level food security...Nutrition security is achieved for a household when secure access to food is coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services, and knowledgeable care to ensure a healthy life for all household members”. Hence, food security is a necessary but not sufficient condition for improved nutrition outcomes.

Food security is a ‘flexible concept’ (Clay 2002:1), which under the rubric of globalisation, has been associated with the interconnected domains of human rights, agriculture, population, health and nutrition, poverty, economic growth, rural development, income/employment, socio-political and cultural influences, climate and environment, biotechnology, marketing, distribution, and aid and trade flows,. Despite being crucial for millions of people worldwide, defining food security and the ways of improving it are “widely debated and much-confused” issues (Braun et al. 1992: 5).

### **How Many People Go Hungry?: Measurement Issues**

It might not be difficult to recognise starvation or identify a hungry person, but consensus has eluded on the criteria to be used to measure individual, household, national and international levels of hunger. Classical economic analysis of hunger

include the thesis of Thomas Malthus on the relation of resource and population, Karl Marx on exploitation, Ester Boserup on the role of population increase in stimulating technological innovation and Amartya Sen on the concept of entitlement. The causes of hunger are seen as food system breakdown, entitlement failure and environmental hazard (Kates and Millman 1990: 1). More contemporary measurement efforts focus either on available food supplies, calculations of dietary intake or hunger outcomes or symptoms. These are combined with assumptions regarding crop production, distribution of food, food prices, consumption patterns, and income/purchasing power. This section looks at the extent and magnitude of the global food problem, focussing on the techniques of determining and counting the hungry.

In relation to the first dimension of food security, food availability, hunger can be estimated by calculating the annual amount of food available in a country/region and per capita food supply at household and individual levels, and to express these in terms of calories per capita per day. The concepts of ‘food shortage’, ‘food poverty’ and ‘food deprivation’, determined by comparing food availability in relation to a predetermined standardised nutrient requirement, are applied to estimate the number of people affected by hunger and the extent of undernourishment at different levels of human aggregation. Food shortage occurs due to shortfall in total food supplies within a designated area – regions, countries, continents or the world as a whole – to meet the needs of the population living in that area. Food poverty is the household’s inability to meet adequate dietary needs of its members. Food deprivation relates to individual inability to obtain sufficient food to meet the nutrition requirements, either due to overall food shortage or household food poverty or special dietary needs (Newman et al. 1990: 106; Kates and Millman 1990: 11-15; Chen and Kates 1996: 26-27; Uvin 1996: 1; DeRose et al. 1999: 1).

Maxwell uses ‘coping strategies’ as indicators to measure food security. He identifies a range of short-term, food-based individual coping mechanisms, including: eating less preferred foods; reducing portion size; borrowing food or money to buy food; maternal buffering (mother deliberately limiting her intake to ensure that children get enough food); skipping meals; and skipping eating throughout days. The primary responsibility bearer of provisioning for food in a household uses one or more of these strategies (ranging from small to drastic changes) when faced with insufficient food,

depending on the household income. This approach to measure food insecurity moves away from food production and purchase and focuses on food preparation and distribution, taking into account human intentional responses based on subjective judgements, when faced with food insufficiency (Maxwell, D. G. 1996: 294-300).

Another method of estimating the number of people suffering from hunger is by counting the numbers with symptoms of nutritional deficiency diseases. However, it is difficult to organise such surveys because information about the prevalence of deficiency diseases is sporadic and teams of nutritional experts capable of undertaking such inquiries are not available in most developing countries. Furthermore, such surveys rarely cover the entire year, may not be representative of the total population of the country and their result vary widely depending on whether they were undertaken during periods of food crisis or under normal conditions and, therefore, may not be representative of the actual situation (Grigg 1985: 11-15).

The most widely used approach to assess global hunger and its variations across countries, is to measure the amount and quality of food consumed by individuals (households or groups), and to compare this with an average estimate of the minimum energy and nutrient requirement needed to avoid malnutrition and under-nutrition. This relates to the third dimension, utilization of food security. The constituents of an 'adequate' diet is open to cultural and habitual interpretation, however, for academic and policy purposes, it is nutritionally and medically defined and measured based on the calorie/energy (including micronutrient) content of food needed to maintain a healthy, working life. Such nutritional standards are used to assess the adequacy of and national food supplies; inform national production and consumption policies and planning of programmes for equitable distribution of food supplies; and as reference point for epidemiological study of nutritional deficiencies (FAO/WHO 1973: 7).

Expert Groups were convened by FAO on energy requirements in 1949 and 1956 and on protein requirements in 1955; FAO and WHO jointly convened expert groups on protein requirements in 1963, on calcium requirement, on requirements of Vitamin A, Thiamine, Riboflavin and Niacin, and on Ascorbic acid, Vitamin D, Vitamin B12, Folate and Iron to define general principles of energy and protein requirements, based on scientific knowledge, and recommend means of integration of requirement scaled for different people in different parts of the world. In 1973, the FAO set the



nutritional requirement for a 'reference man' at 3000 kilocalorie/day and a 'reference woman' at 2200 kilocalorie/day (FAO/WHO 1973: 28).<sup>2</sup> Further, the energy needs of an adult male were estimated to be a constant of 2600 kcal/day for maintenance and 100 kcal/day for light activity, 400 kcal/day for moderate activity, and 900 kcal/day for very high activity (FAO/WHO 1973: 38). The recommended energy requirement of individuals depended on age; body size and composition; physical activity; and climate and other ecological factors (FAO/WHO 1973: 22), varied for infants, children and adolescents (FAO/WHO 1973: 32-34) and for pregnant and lactating women (FAO/WHO 1973: 34-36). Anthropometric data (measurement of physical dimensions, height or weight or age, of the human individual) was considered as reliable for clinical measurement of protein/calorie deficiency among school children, height and weight being the indicators, and helpful in elucidating the nature of the problem of undernourishment (FAO/WHO 1973: 89; Pinstруп-Andersen 2009: 5).

Since relying only on protein consumption is an unreliable indicator of malnutrition (Reutlinger and Selowski 1976: 2-9; Chen and Kates 1996: 27) and measurement of calorie intake alone does not present the true picture of malnutrition, a protein-calorie (or protein-energy) approach was adopted to estimate energy requirement (Poleman 1975: 511, 1983: 47; United Nations 1974a: 56). In addition to nutrient shortage (calorie/protein deficiency), income deficiency constitutes a more obstinate dimension of hunger as low income can be a major source of undernourishment. Interpersonal and intrapersonal variations in calorie/protein intake and nutritional requirement of people must also be factored in. The most reasonable estimate of calorie deficits in developing countries can be made by referring to unequal distribution of calorie consumption among income groups, by using estimates of calorie-income relation and income distribution data for different regions (Simon and Simon 1973: 28; Reutlinger and Selowski 1976: 11-15; Sen 1999: 19; Brown and Eckholm 1974: 28).

It has been pointed out that the fixed nutritional requirement used by FAO, implying that undernutrition is caused by inadequate calorie intake, actually represents an

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<sup>2</sup> A 'reference man' is between 20-39 years of age, weighs 65 kgs, employed for 8 hours in an occupation involving moderate activity, spends 8 hours in bed, 4-6 hours sitting or in very light activity, and 2 hours in walking, active recreation or in household duties. A 'reference woman' is between 20-39 years of age, weighs 55 kgs, engaged for 8 hours in moderate activity involving general housework or in light industry, spends 8 hours in bed, 4-6 hours sitting or in very light activity, and 2 hours in walking, active recreation or in household duties (FAO/WHO 1973: 12)

average requirement and does not take into account inter-individual variability. Such recommended requirements are influenced by cultural and regional dietary composition and cannot be used to examine the nutritional status of a community or group without corroborating with clinical or bio-chemical evidence. An alternative to determining poverty level or undernourishment through income-calorie relationship is suggested by Srinivasan (1980: 1-2; 1983: 77-79), taking into account individual preferences, tastes, prices and income and “several related aspects of food: share of food in consumption expenditure, marginal propensity to spend more on food due to increased total expenditures and consumption of food, in particular the shares of starchy staples, fats, meat, fish and eggs” to identify subgroups with inadequate food intake. “At very low levels of per capita income (or total consumption expenditure), a household spends very high proportion of its income on food...As income increases, the average propensity to spend on food reaches a maximum equal to the marginal propensity at that level of income and then declines” (Srinivasan 1983: 92).

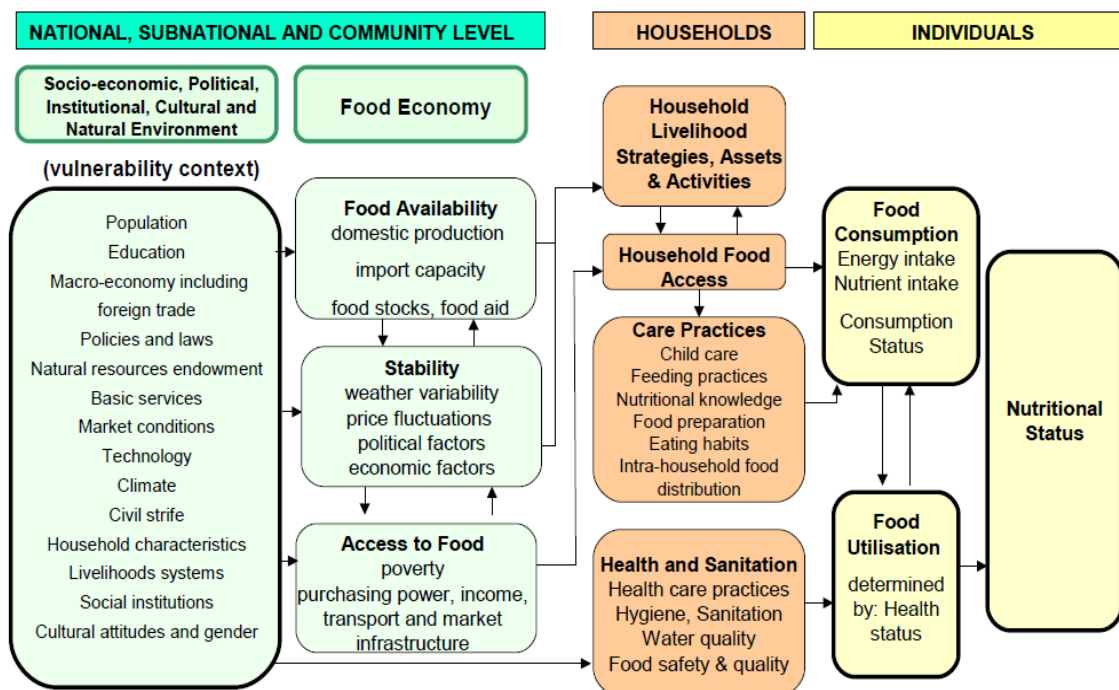
In response to criticisms regarding the restrictive nature of the ‘reference man/woman’, and recognition of a wide range in body size and patterns of physical activity, FAO, WHO and the United Nations University convened an Expert Consultation in 1985 to revise desirable energy requirement (WHO 1985: 10). Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR), the largest component of energy expenditure, through which it is possible to accurately measure energy requirement under standardized conditions, was adopted in calculating all components of total energy expenditure, derived as multiples of BMR. Though the BMR of an individual is determined by body size, body composition and age, the body weight and height is the most useful index to calculate BMR (WHO 1985: 35-36) and the level of physical activity and metabolic rate of individuals are most critical in assessment of energy needs (WHO 1985: 40-42). Energy requirements were also calculated separately during pregnancy and lactation and for infants, children and adolescents (WHO 1985: 84-98). The daily average energy requirement of man with light to moderate occupation work was estimated at 1.55 to 1.78 times his BMR and for a woman with light to moderate occupation work was estimated at 1.56 to 1.64 times her BMR (WHO 1985: 78).

Under the Food Insecurity Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS), launched in 1997 as an outcome of the 1996-WFS, FAO explored various methods for

measurement and assessment of food deprivation and undernutrition, including estimation of energy requirement through individual food intake surveys, inequality of income distribution through household expenditure surveys, nutritional status through anthropometric survey, and qualitative measures of food insecurity and hunger (see Figure 2.4).<sup>3</sup> The FAO/WHO/UNU report on *Human Energy Requirements* (2004) made comprehensive recommendations for energy requirement through a life-cycle approach, including infants from birth to 12 months (based on breastfed and formula-fed), children and adolescents (boys and girls), adult male and females (based on energy cost of activities), and during pregnancy and lactation and defined energy requirement as:

the amount of food energy needed to balance energy expenditure in order to maintain body size, body composition and a level of necessary and desirable physical activity consistent with long-term good health. This includes the energy needed for the optimal growth and development of children, for the deposition of tissues during pregnancy, and for the secretion of milk during lactation consistent with the good health of mother and child (FAO/WHO/UNU 2004: 4).

**Figure 2.4: FAO/FIVIMS Framework: Linking Food Economy, Household and Individual Measures of Food Security to Overall Economic Development**



Source: FIVIMS Conceptual Framework, available at:

[http://www.fivims.org/index2.php?option=com\\_sobi2&sobi2Task=dd\\_download&fid=17&no\\_html=1](http://www.fivims.org/index2.php?option=com_sobi2&sobi2Task=dd_download&fid=17&no_html=1)

<sup>3</sup> For details, see Food and Agriculture Organization (2003), *Measurement and Assessment of Food Deprivation and Undernutrition*, Proceedings on International Scientific Symposium, 26-28 June 2002, Rome, convened by the Agriculture and Economic Development Analysis Division of FAO.

The FAO has been responsible for most of the global food assessments carried out since the end of World War II, indicating the trend in the numbers of malnourished in the developing world. The *First World Food Survey* (1946) estimated that more than one-half of the world's population were inadequately nourished, based on the calorie requirement criterion of 2600 kcal/day per person. This report, however, did not include most of tropical Africa and a number of Asian countries (Poleman 1975: 511). The *Second World Food Survey* (1952), incorporated greater concern in allowing regional differences and body size, age-sex structure and physical activity of the population in different environments and estimated that 59.5 per cent of the population lived in countries with daily food supplies of less than 2200 kcal/day (Regional allowances for Far East was 2230-2300 kcal/day; Africa was 2400-2430 kcal/day; and Latin America was 2440-2600 kcal/day) (Poleman 1975: 511, 1977: 384). While the first two surveys defined the nutritional problems of the less-developed countries in terms of energy shortfalls and undernourishment, the *Third World Food Survey* (1963) highlighted insufficient protein availabilities and malnourishment. It noted that 60 per cent of the population of the developing countries (two-thirds of the world's population) suffered from undernourishment or malnourishment or both (Poleman 1975: 512, 1977: 384, 1996: 554).

Poleman (1975: 512, 1977: 385, 1983: 47; 1996: 555) asserted that based on the understated food availability figures and overstated food requirement estimates the early food surveys concluded a gloomy picture of world hunger, where the world will be unable to feed its rapidly growing population. FAO was accused of overstating the magnitude of the world food problem and its conclusions were in serious distortion of reality. Though the methodological underpinnings of FAO's early studies have been discredited, the message remains durable. The period following the 1963 survey witnessed a series of technological innovations and the promise of green revolution led to a cheerful evaluation of the global picture, marked by agricultural surpluses rather than shortage (Poleman 1975: 512-513).

However, in the backdrop of the 1972-74 food crisis, the 1974-WFC estimated that 61 out of 97 developing countries had a deficit in food energy supplies and 25-30 percent of the population in the Far East and Africa suffered from significant undernutrition (United Nations 1974a: 5). Based on the nutritional requirement of the FAO/WHO

1973 report, and using the BMR criterion for minimum energy needs for the first time, 462 million people in the world (excluding the centrally planned economies of Asia) were estimated to be affected by insufficient protein-calorie intake (United Nations 1974a: 66). Reutlinger and Selowski (1976: 2) on behalf of the World Bank estimated that 56 percent of the population in developing countries (some 840 million people) had calorie-deficient diets in excess of 250 calories a day, while another 19 percent (some 290 million people) had deficits of less than 250 calories a day.

The *Fourth World Food Survey* (1977), on the other hand, found that 455 million people were suffering from under-nutrition in the non-communist developing countries, if estimates of the communist countries are added, the total stood at 630 million (about 15 per cent of the world's population). The explicit incongruity in these surveys and assessment of the proportion and number of hungry people is due to the different ways in which hunger was defined by each organisation and methodologies employed for measurement, containing built-in biases favouring exaggeration (Poleman 1983: 52-53; 1996: 545).<sup>4</sup>

Though both FAO and the World Bank have common accepted standards and concur that the number of hungry people is increasing, they cannot agree on the thresholds of undernutrition and the basis of counting hungry people, regularly readjusting their methodologies and differing in their estimates by huge margins. These estimates of the size of the world population suffering from hunger are limited by uncertainty of data and lack of conceptual clarity. Some of the arbitrariness is more a result of political decision than of research (Poleman 1996: 559). The computation in early methodology overlooked the aspect that nutritional deprivation and hunger are experienced by individuals, not countries, and average country data do not provide such information. Since global supplies, if equitably distributed, can feed the population, the need for continued efforts to increase agricultural production in the

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Svedberg captures the standard method employed by the FAO and World Bank for estimating the chronically undernourished in a four-stage procedure.

The first step is to establish a norm for "recommended" calorie intakes. Two such norms are used by the FAO. One is the "maintenance cost of energy", which allows for "minimum" activity on behalf of the individual. The other is the "required" calorie intake when "normal" activity is allowed for. The second step is to estimate the per capita actual calorie intake in the population, usually from a national "food balance sheet". The third step is to derive the distribution of the intake on the basis of estimated...elasticities of calorie consumption with respect to income and cross-sectional data on income distribution. Finally, the estimated frequency distribution of the actual calorie intake is related to the "norm" (Svedberg 1984: 10).

developing countries was stressed. However, everybody within a county does not have equal access to existing supplies. Hence, the income/employment dimension is important along with assisting the nutritionally vulnerable through food fortification, aid, subsidy schemes and safety-nets.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)-Global Hunger Index (GHI), published since 2006, attempts to capture the multidimensional character of hunger through the combination of three weighted indicators: percentage of undernourished in the population (energy/calorie deficiency), prevalence of underweight in children under five and under-five child mortality. The GHI aids in understanding regional and country variations in hunger trends by taking into account the nutrition situation of the population as a whole as well as of a vulnerable group, children. According to 2011 GHI, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia made least progress between 1999-2011. The hunger situation in Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Chad, and Eritrea (all in Sub-Saharan Africa) was 'extremely alarming', while Haiti, Sierra Leone, India, Liberia, Niger, Central African Republic, Angola, Togo, Sudan, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Bangladesh and People's Democratic Republic of Lao (mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia) had 'alarming' hunger levels (IFPRI-GHI 2011: 11-19).

The assessment of nutritional adequacy through protein/calorie/income indicators are necessary but not sufficient conditions of food security. The quantitative entitlement of food must be accompanied by qualitative aspects, consistency with local food habits, cultural acceptability, nutritional value, acquisition of food in socially acceptable manner etc. Moreover, since protein-calorie intake does not automatically guarantee adequate intake of micronutrients (vitamins, minerals etc.), relying only on protein-calorie indicators that do not include micronutrient deficiency, called 'hidden hunger' (Cohen et al. 2008: 14-17; Cohen 2007: 5-6), cannot provide a correct assessment of world food security. In addition, measurement and quantification of hunger and food security are thwarted by the absence of universally accepted criteria and a reliable authority, resulting in statistical variations and divergent data output. Though the advantage of accurate estimation of food deprived people cannot be negated owing to the fact that allocation of resources and anti-poverty policies are contingent upon precise evaluation.

## **Who and Where Are the Hungry?: Vulnerability Issues**

The concern with ensuring food security is global, however, the problem of hunger and undernutrition is specific to some groups and communities of people in particular locations, who are more vulnerable to experiencing greater food insecurity. Their explicit identification is a prerequisite to devise and undertake targeted policy measures. While mainly the poor are susceptible to hunger and food insecurity, not all poor are equally vulnerable. It has been rightly observed that discussion on famine “has been largely of an *ex post* nature; actual experiences of famines are analysed after they have taken place” (Patnaik 1999: 323). In order to take preventive actions, it is essential to identify the social groups that are vulnerable to starvation-producing decline in purchasing power and the conditions under which such decline could take place (Patnaik 1999: 324-327).

The concept of vulnerability is employed to evaluate “the susceptibility of a population to explicitly-identified exogenous events or shocks” that can lead to food insecurity, hunger and famine (Dilley and Boudreau 2001: 229). However, the meaning of vulnerability and how it informs identification and measurement methods has been widely debated, resulting in inhibiting the conceptualisation of food security and hindering appropriate policy response. The social dimension of vulnerability is defined by an aggregate measure of human welfare that integrates political, economic, institutional, human ecology and entitlement capabilities of people, exposed to a range of potentially harmful threats, in specific temporal and geographic variability. The income-consumption framework identifies those who have income below a certain accepted minimum level, preventing them from consuming an adequate diet (Løvendal and Knowles 2007: 62-63; Downing et al. 1996: 183).

Vulnerability can be used in two different connotations. It can be short-term defencelessness due to emergency events or risks (natural hazards, like drought) addressed by humanitarian aid targeting the affected people. Vulnerability is also viewed in terms of unfavourable future outcome following a harmful event (like hunger and famine) and is concerned with long-term measures to cope with them and guarantee minimum welfare threshold for food security etc. (Løvendal and Knowles 2007: 64; Dilley and Boudreau 2001: 231-234). Vulnerable groups are pushed towards increasing food security in varying degrees of predictability depending on

magnitude, timing and duration of the crisis (Dilley and Boudreau 2001: 235). “The probability of becoming food insecure at a future point in time is determined by present condition, the risks potentially occurring within a period defined and the capacity to manage risks” (Løvendal and Knowles 2007: 66). Present conditions refer to the context in which people are embedded, asset portfolio and livelihood-related practices. Risks, defined by type, level, frequency, timing and severity, are events, trends and structural factors that threaten food supply, access and utilisation. Vulnerability can be identified as risk of: exposure to crisis, stress and shocks; insufficient capabilities to cope with them; and severe consequences of slow or limited recovery from them (Downing et al. 1996: 183-186). Moreover, food insecure and vulnerable populations do not constitute a homogenous group, differing from being chronically to transitory to seasonally food insecure, for varying reasons (Løvendal and Knowles 2007: 66).

Risk management strategies are broadly classified into preventing, mitigating and coping instruments, implemented before, during or after risks materialise. While prevention and mitigation are *ex ante* (undertaken before the risk materialises), coping strategies are *ex post* or reactive, undertaken to relieve the impact of shock after they occur. In relation to food security, coping strategies aim at relieving immediate food needs. The same risk can be addressed by different strategies at different points in time. The effectiveness of such risk management instruments depends on their suitability to the specific risk that they aim to address and the environmental, political, social and economic conditions of the country or region that faces the risk (Brown and Gentilini 2006: 5-7; Løvendal and Knowles 2007:17-22).

The FAO-FIVIMS identifies groups and households that are vulnerable to food security, along with the causes, incidence and spatial location, in collaboration with WFP’s Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) system. FIVIMS provides general norms and standards to guide national information and mapping systems, which is applied by VAM at the country level. Based on livelihood, vulnerable groups include rural smallholder agriculturalists, pastoralists, rural wage labourers, urban poor and informal sector, refugees and displaced people, and destitute groups. Intersecting with livelihoods, are particular sections of population who are vulnerable due to their special nutrition needs or physical status: women (rural, pregnant,



lactating), malnourished infants and children, infirm and differently-abled people, and elderly people. Based on these broad categories, the FAO (1999a: 15) has developed a generic classification of people particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and categorised them into the following six broad groups (see Figure 2.5):

**Figure 2.5: Six Broad Vulnerable Groups to Food Insecurity**

<p><b>Victims of conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internally displaced people</li> <li>• refugees</li> <li>• landless returnees</li> <li>• landmine disabled</li> <li>• war invalids</li> <li>• war widows and orphans</li> </ul> <p><b>Migrant workers and their families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• migrant herders tending herds of others</li> <li>• migrant labourers seeking seasonal work</li> <li>• female-headed households left behind by migrant male labourers</li> </ul> <p><b>Marginal populations in urban areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school dropouts</li> <li>• unemployed</li> <li>• rickshaw and motorcycle taxi drivers</li> <li>• recently arrived migrants</li> <li>• people living in slums in urban periphery</li> <li>• dockworkers and porters</li> <li>• construction workers</li> <li>• workers in the informal sector</li> <li>• homeless people</li> <li>• orphans</li> <li>• street children</li> <li>• people living alone on small fixed incomes or without support (elderly, pensioners, widows and widowers, divorcees, invalids, handicapped people)</li> <li>• beggars</li> </ul>	<p><b>People belonging to at-risk social groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• indigenous people</li> <li>• ethnic minorities</li> <li>• illiterate households</li> </ul> <p><b>Some or all members of low-income households within vulnerable livelihood systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subsistence or small-scale farmers</li> <li>• female-headed farming households</li> <li>• landless peasants</li> <li>• agricultural labourers</li> <li>• fishers</li> <li>• nomadic pastoralists</li> <li>• sedentary herders, small-scale livestock producers and agro-pastoralists</li> <li>• forest dwellers</li> <li>• peri-urban small-scale agricultural producers and market gardeners</li> <li>• day or contract labourers</li> </ul> <p><b>Dependent people living alone or in low-income households with large family size</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• elderly</li> <li>• women of childbearing age, especially pregnant and nursing mothers</li> <li>• children under five years old, especially infants</li> <li>• disabled and ill</li> </ul>
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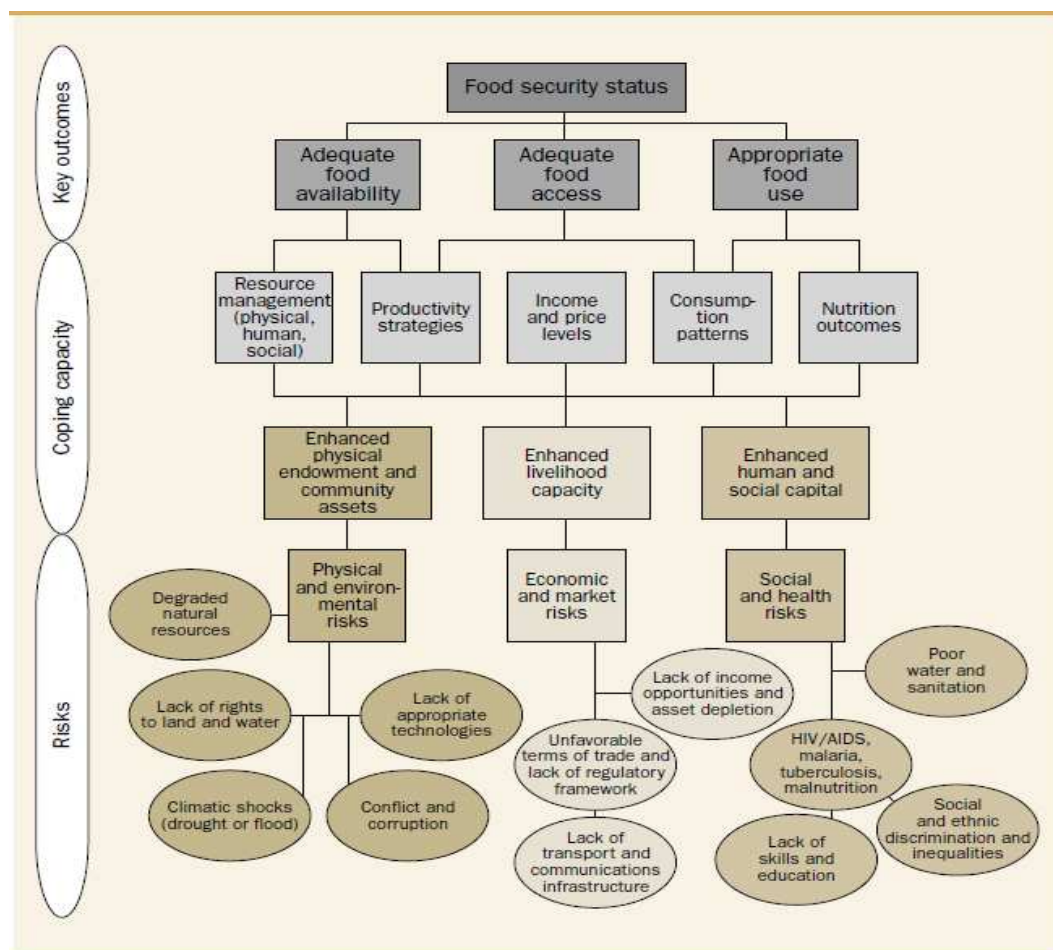
*Source: FAO 1999a: 15*

The FAO (1980: 17) identified landless labourers and subsistence farmers and their families as the most vulnerable groups in the rural setting, while in urban areas, the jobless, underemployed and new migrants are most at risk. IFAD (2001: 20-22) identified groups of poor people regional terms as being particularly prone to food insecurity, some of them overlapping with FAO categorisation. Wage labourers, landless or casually employed farm-workers are most likely to be poor and hungry almost everywhere, along with children, women and female-headed households, who constitute the most vulnerable groups. Other high-risk groups include, smallholders living in dryland areas in West and Central Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean; pastoralists in Near East, North Africa, Asia and the

Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean; isolated indigenous people (scheduled casts and tribes), living in highlands and rainforests of Latin America and the Caribbean and mountainous areas of Near East, North Africa and Asia and the Pacific; and artisanal fishermen, who have to diversify and supplement their incomes. In broad perspective, the number of chronically undernourished has steadily increased in Africa, with Sub-Saharan Africa being the only region where prospects of per caput food supplies will continue to remain low (Alexandratos 1995: 7).

The Task Force on Hunger (2005: 66-68) developed a vulnerability and food insecurity framework (see Figure 2.6) indicating the range of potential risks to which vulnerable households are exposed, the array of coping strategies at their disposal and the resultant outcomes from the interaction of risks and coping strategies.

**Figure 2.6: Vulnerability and Food Insecurity Framework**



Source: UN Millennium Project 2005: 67

It is amply evident that it is rather difficult to estimate the number suffering from hunger. Counting the number of poor and hungry and detailed statistical knowledge is

of little importance unless the demand for the right to food is voiced more forcefully, “People who are starving for lack of food do not need to be told how many calories and proteins they should have...people’s right to food is, first and foremost the right to resist those who are depriving them of food” (Spitz 1984: 177). The next section attempts to put the severity of the problem in perspective by exploring the reasons that influence the occurrence of hunger and food insecurity.

### **Why Global Food Problem and Hunger?: Causal Issues**

The major cause of hunger is the inability of people to produce enough food to feed themselves or have sufficient income/purchasing power to buy the food they require. Similarly, countries are food insecure either because they do not have the capacity to grow sufficient food at home or do not have the foreign exchange to import necessary food (Herrmann 2007: 231) or are dependent on one or two export commodities for substantial share of foreign exchange earnings (Gonzalez 2004: 430). Food insecurity in developing countries can be caused by temporary reduction in domestic food production or increase in international food prices (Konandreas et al. 1978: 18).

The causes of hunger and famine have ranged from natural causes, those beyond human control (drought, rain, flood, frost, earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, insects and pests, and other meteorological phenomena or natural disasters that curtail food production), to artificial causes, those within human control (war, piracy, lack of agricultural technology, ineffective transport and trade, legislative interference, currency restriction, speculation and misappropriation of grains). These are closely linked to hierarchical social structure, with its rules of inclusion and exclusion that limit the distribution of resources, food and wealth through ownership, production or exchange. A common cause of famine has been lack of adequate relief or complete absence of response from outside as a result of, for example, poor information, inadequate transport, civil disturbances or poverty. The consequences being hoarding, attempts to restrain food supply, and, in extreme cases, food riots, raids, warfare against those who possess or control the resources (Walford 1970: 20; Newman et al. 1990: 111-121; Garnsey 1990: 126; Kristensen 1975: 27).

New cropping patterns were identified as causing localised hunger if they increased the uncertainty of food supply or decreased poor people’s access to food. For

example, the Irish potato famine of 1846-1847, where exclusive reliance on a single and new food crop resulted in a food shortage (Patnaik 2007: 26-27; Crossgrove 1990: 228-229; Leathers and Foster 2005: 9-12). Steep decline in the annual world food reserves (the sum total of global reserve stocks in the principal exporting countries and the potential grain production of idle cropland) is also held responsible for growing global food insecurity. Low global food reserve capability diminishes the capacity of the international community to provide relief in response to emergencies arising out of droughts and crop failures (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 59-62). People's access to food may be reduced as a result of taxation, which reduces their entitlement to the factors of production, loss of land, and products of their labour, increasing crop prices, that do not allow enough income to procure food (Crossgrove 1990: 229).

Extending the concept of 'entitlement' to various famines, the Bengal famine (India, 1943), the Wollo famine (Ethiopia, 1973), and the Bangladesh famine (1974),<sup>5</sup> Sen observed that acute food shortage among poor people was not caused by inadequate availability of national and regional food supplies, but due to 'entitlement failure' (Drèze and Sen 1993: 22; Sen 1999: 164) – lack of adequate resources to obtain sufficient food, especially by poor people, owing to the values and legal systems of countries affected by famines. Thus, famine could exist even without a general decline in food availability.<sup>6</sup> Hence, examining the entitlements of a particular occupational group is significant to understanding the cause of famines. A breakdown in entitlement could be the result of either decline in initial ownership or endowment or worsening of exchange possibilities, like increasing landlessness, decline in employment opportunities, fall in wages causing shortage of income and purchasing power or rise in food prices (Sen 1981: 154-155; Drèze and Sen 1993: 23).<sup>7</sup> Famines are seen to have been absent in a functioning democracy, whether economically rich

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<sup>5</sup> See, Amartya Sen (1977), "Starvation and Exchange Entitlement: A General Approach and its Application to the Great Bengal Famine", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1 (1) March: 33-59.

<sup>6</sup> Studies have suggested that huge quantities of food were exported during the Irish famine of 1840s and the Bengal famine of 1940s, while people were dying of starvation. See Cecil Woodham-Smith (1962), *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-9*, London: Hamish Hamilton and C. Ghosh (1944), *Famines in Bengal 1770-1943*, Calcutta: Indian Association Publishing.

<sup>7</sup> Utsa Patnaik (1999: 326-327) postulates that to identify the antecedents of a famine with the purpose of pre-emptive aversion of famine outbreak, tracking long-term food production trends and per head availability is imperative, particularly in developing countries where commercialisation of agriculture and resource transfer has physically reduced the food availability for rural poor. It is also important to consider that different groups of rural population (distinguished by their command over means of production and general assets, along with associated pattern of labour use) are affected in very different ways by changes in price trends of essential commodities.

(modern Western Europe or North America) or relatively poor (post-independence India, Botswana or Zimbabwe). While democratic governments, having to garner public support for electoral victory, have strong motivations to undertake measures to avert famine, authoritarian governments lack the incentive to take preventive measures. Famines have tended to occur in colonial territories (British-ruled India), one-party states (Ukraine in the 1930s, China during 1958-1961, and Cambodia in the 1970s), and in military dictatorships (Ethiopia, Somalia and Sahel) (Sen 1999: 16).

In the context of the 1972-74 food crisis, a combination of long-term problems along with sudden emergence of temporary set-backs have been identified as causes. In the early 1970s, agricultural production in several parts of the world was simultaneously affected by unfavourable weather conditions along with a fall in world cereal output (wheat, coarse grains and rice) that resulted in short supplies and increased prices. The supply problem was aggravated by major grain imports by erstwhile Soviet Union, following a disastrous food harvest in 1972. Canada and the US were struggling with measures designed to bring down their large food surpluses. The simultaneous rise in petroleum prices to unprecedented levels led to increasing the cost of fertiliser production and transportation. These events combined created a grave financing situation for the food-deficit developing countries, worsened by parallel cutback in food supplies. In the developing countries the rate of growth in demand for food was much higher mainly due to faster population growth. Consequently, the need for food imports rose in developing countries, while their ability to purchase them on commercial terms did not increase commensurately (Shaw 2007: 115-118).

On the demand side, the combined effect of rapid population growth in the developing countries and rising affluence – relatively high per capita income – in the industrial countries spurred the demand for food and contributed to the inability of the world to feed itself (Johnson 1975: 2-3; Brown 1973-74: 3; 1975: 11; Brown and Eckholm 1975: 35-44). On the supply side, apart from weather, food production is affected by factors like cost of agricultural inputs, like fertilisers and land (area under cultivation), high prices (Marei 1976: 21), ecological undermining of major food-producing systems and inability to achieve technological breakthroughs in critical areas (Brown 1975: 11; Brown and Eckholm 1975: 7-11). Food crises also occur as individuals and institutions (local, national and international) make production, distribution and

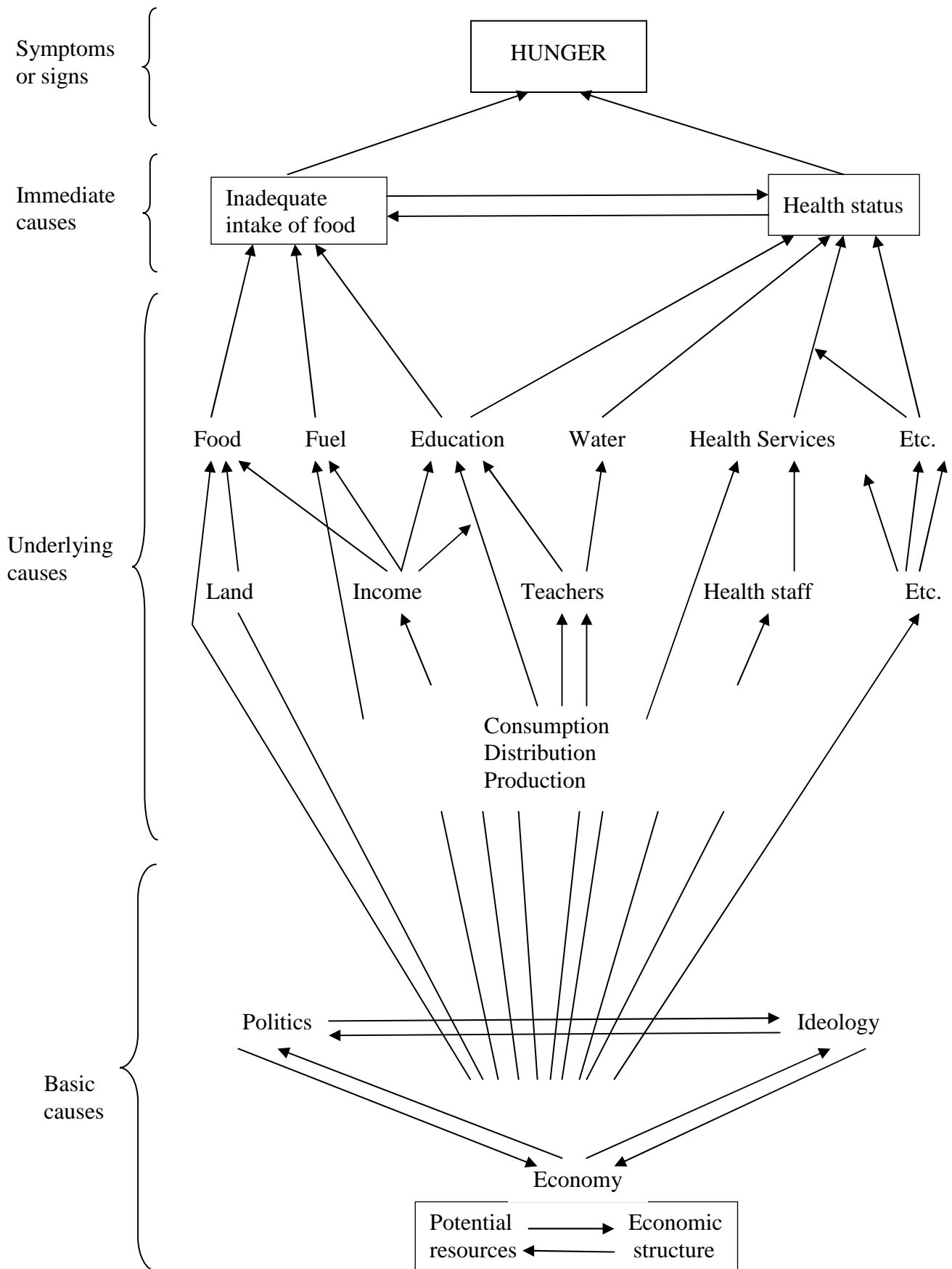
consumption decisions in accordance with their specific motivation and the prevailing and accepted norms that lend them legitimacy (Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 598).

According to some analysts, the root cause of food insecurity is not the scarcity of food, land or natural or man-made disasters, nor is it a scientific, technical or organizational problem. Rather hunger is symptomatic of ‘scarcity of democracy’, understood in terms of the principle of accountability (Lappé et al. 1998: 4) and “anti-democratic concentration of power over economic resources, especially land and food” (Lappé et. al 1998: 173), “ultimately linked with political stability” (Marei 1976: 26). The inability to achieve international food security is, therefore, a political problem of power and will (George 1984: 5), resting with men who influence decisions that affect production, prices and trade of food (Johnson 1980: 183-185).

Utsa Patnaik (2007: 96-99) argues that the contemporary problem of hunger stalking the world is caused not by a ‘deficiency of supply’, but by a massive ‘deficiency of demand’. The distribution of food in developing societies is highly skewed, just like the distribution of incomes, and this disparity has increased as reform policies have tended to favour the elites. The global food problem is an outcome of the relationships of the poor and hungry to the society, particularly to its powerful members (George 1984: 5). The ‘accentuated pathology of hunger and starvation’ is ‘primarily as a manifestation of social injustice’ (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 2). The poor starve not because food is unavailable but because they are unable to afford the price of the food. The socio-economic and political dimensions of who will get to eat – how much and when, have been recurrently emphasised as the real causes of food crisis and hunger (Dumont 1975: 28-29; George 1976: 15). Hence, the hunger is essentially a problem of overall development (Oluwasanmi 1977: 87) that can be solved through successful general development (Cochrane 1969: 300).

Hunger is actually a symptom of a complex social disorder, better understood in relation to historical, ecological, economic, cultural and political contexts (Jonsson 1984: 31). Most hunger related research focuses on symptoms and immediate causes rather than concentrating on the role of politics and ideology. A multi-level analysis facilitates identification of appropriate methods of addressing hunger at different depths of analysis and levels of society as well as feasible and potentially effective models of intervention in a social context (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Different Levels of Causes of Hunger



Source: Jonsson 1984: 30, Fig. 2

Any discussion on hunger remains incomplete without consideration of socio-economic, political, technological, scientific, and administrative aspects. In the contemporary globalised context, consider any food item, say a fruit/vegetable or grains, picked up by consumers from the shelf of a supermarket. It has been grown on a huge mechanised plantation on land or acquired from an indigenous farmer; using TNC produced fertilizer, pesticide, hybrid or GM seeds, farm and irrigation equipments; picked, ripened, packed and shipped over continents, via international shipping companies, port authorities and distributional networks; brought to the consumer through retailing giants and competitive advertisements (Rosset 2006: 8). The channels through which a particular food item goes through increases the potential causes of food insecurity arising thereof. Discussed at greater length below are the traditional causes as well as new challenges to food security.

### ***Population Growth***

The inversely proportional relationship between the two variables determining the world food situation, amount of food produced and the number of people required to be fed, has been a subject of considerable academic and policy discussion. The majority of assessment of the world food situation since the end of World War II is dominated by the fundamental appeal of ‘Malthusian pessimism’. Malthus in *An Essay on the Principle of Population* painted a rather gloomy picture of the world, where population increases in a geometrical progression and food supply in an arithmetic progression, giving rise to the danger of population growth inevitably outstripping growth in food production and supply (Malthus 1798: 4). One of the ‘positive checks’ on natural increase of population was “the actual distresses of some of the lower classes, by which they are disabled from giving proper food...to their children” (Malthus 1798: 20). As too many people press against finite resources, population growth gets squarely placed at the core of the world food problem, ‘inextricably intertwined’ with it (Marei 1976: 22). The outcome of the race between population and food supply determining the cause of hunger (Murdoch 1980: 1-6).

Population explosion has almost entirely been a phenomenon of the developing countries. Though the growth of world food production was greater than that of population till the 1960s, population growth in developing countries was much higher in comparison to developed countries, which witnessed a slow down in population



growth (Murdoch 1980: 1). The general trend has been that the countries which industrialised earlier and, therefore, are richer, show less rapid increases of population than those subsisting on agriculture – North Africa, South East Asia, and South America. The desired balance between the size of population and the available resources to feed remain elusive (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 53). As a result, though food production has increased at a faster pace, the increase per person has been much smaller in developing countries after the 1960s.

However, Taking Malthus' proposition seriously now carries the risk of historical incorrectness. In the years since Malthus' prophecy, population all over the world has increased dramatically, while the incidence of famines has declined during each century, as food supply has steadily increased to meet demand. Clearly, in the race between population growth and agricultural production, Malthusian prediction of apocalypse has been proven wrong, not so much due to population control, but due to worldwide expansion of food production. Countries emerged from World War II with concerns of surplus disposal. Given the technological advancements, prospects for vastly improved farm yield and significant increase in per capita food production are even stronger (Poleman 1975: 510; Cochrane 1969: 13-35; Uvin 1994: 75; World Bank 1986a: 1; Sachs 2005: 28; George 1976: 59; Lappé et al. 1998: 28).

An important aspect is the radical change in the distribution of population. While in the 1950s, the bulk of the population of the developing countries lived in rural areas and was dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, by the 1980s, cities and towns had grown rapidly and so had the proportion of the population living in these urban centres, with people migrating from rural areas due to better employment opportunities, social and medical facilities. This has affected the food scenario in two ways – proportion of people engaged in agriculture has substantially reduced and has, therefore, increased the proportion of food that has to be moved to urban areas, increasing the difficulties of supplying food at reasonable price (Grigg 1985: 62-63).

China and India, with the largest populations in the world, are routinely blamed for the impending food apocalypse. However, “the charge of ‘overpopulation’ heaped on the poor countries is very useful for those rich countries who through their life-styles actually exercise immense pressure on global resources” (Patnaik 2007: 13). The ‘population growth is inversely related to food supply’ argument is primarily an

attempt by the richer countries to shift the responsibility of the food problem to the poorer countries. It plays down the role of other determinants such as unequal distribution of food resources, of income and purchasing power, agricultural development, technological advancement, environmental constraints and repressive economic and political structures (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 54).

As the world population reached the seven billion mark on 31 October 2011, the biggest challenge remains providing equal access to adequate food, water, shelter, sanitation, health, education and employment, in the context of scarce resources, economic uncertainty, environmental degradation and climate change. The dilemma has always ranged between enlarging the pie or reducing the number of hands competing for a share (Editorial 2011). It is argued that enough food is produced in the world to feed everyone, the crucial aspect for persistence of hunger being equitable distribution and making it accessible by those in need.

### ***Food Production***

Apart from population growth, insufficient production and agricultural productivity is the traditional cause attributed to food shortage. Food production is critical both as a source of supplying vital food commodities, and as a source of providing income and entitlements, especially for the rural population. While food output provides direct entitlement for the peasants who grow them, the production and availability of food in the economy influence the price, determining people's ability to command over food. Food production facilitates a readily available food stock that can be used to combat hunger, either through directly distributing food or adding food supplies to the market to bring down prices. Hence, expansion of food production is crucial for enhancing entitlements of the deprived and vulnerable groups (Sen 1990: 377-378; 382).

The growing imbalance between food overproduction in developed countries and food shortage in developing countries has characterised the world food situation post-World War II. Food production in developing countries was not able to keep pace with increasing demands, forcing them to resort to importing food from the developed countries, where capital intensive agricultural techniques resulted in the general trend of production exceeding demand, giving rise to large stocks of accumulated grains. However, increasing food imports cause shortage of foreign exchange and heavy

burden on the balance of payments in the developing countries (Hannah 1977: 105; Kristensen 1968: 9). In developing countries, while there is overproduction in export-oriented agriculture, agricultural goods for domestic consumption are underproduced, further intensifying the disparity between the developed countries and the less-developed countries (Harle 1978: 266). The challenge of the world food problem involves the following facets: increasing food production capacity of the developing countries; ensuring that increased food supplies actually reach the neediest people; and developing an adequate food security system through food stocks that can secure the world against calamities of nature and man (Hannah 1977: 105-107).

### ***Agriculture***

Agriculture is both an important determinant of food as well as a livelihood means that provides employment and income to the most vulnerable rural poor (Madeley 2002: 160). One bad harvest in a particular region could mean food shortage and consecutive bad harvests could mean disaster, despite contemporary improved storage and transportation facilities, which are inadequate in many developing countries (Kristensen 1968: 9). Agriculture is the backbone of the economies of the developing countries, “accounting for 30 to 60 per cent of Gross Domestic Product and employing as much as 70 per cent or more of workforce” (Swaminathan and Nwanze 2011). The majority of the people vulnerable to hunger are poor and live in rural areas, where agriculture is a critical livelihood component. However, the agricultural system itself is vulnerable to the vagaries of weather, rainfall, soil, seeds, irrigation, and other adversities, while lack of requisite funds for agricultural development in developing countries is a major factor in the world food crisis (Marei 1976: 30).

Immediately after World War II, the developing nations primarily concerned with industrialisation and economic growth, gave little attention to agriculture, relegating it to the lowest rung of the social, economic and political scale, resulting in unwise agricultural policy (Borlaug 1975: 16-17). Agriculture, as practised in the developed countries, was imposed on the rest of the world as a development model to be emulated. Being a highly sophisticated, energy-intensive system that transformed certain industrial products into another set of edible industrial products, such a model of agricultural development was unsuited for the developing countries (George 1976: 25), where the agrarian economy is characterised by the contradiction between those

who monopolise landed property and those who derive a livelihood from the land (Patnaik 2007: 17). Undoubtedly, industrialisation is inevitable for the growth and development of the underdeveloped countries but the solution does not lie in choosing industry over agriculture or vice-versa. They are complementary, agriculture provides the needed food and raw materials, and is a source of demand for industrial products (Simon and Simon 1973: 98-99; George 1976: 285-286; Marei 1976: 40-41).

In the contemporary global food system, heavily dominated by the Multinational corporations (MNCs)/TNCs, transformation of food and agricultural products into commodities for profit has several implications for global food security and hunger. The staple food crops get displaced by exotic produce such as coffee, sugar, tea etc., with inflated international prices as compared with their basic nutritional value. Such switch in production, unrelated to local demands, reduces the range and amount of locally available essential foods (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 43). Scientific research and technological advancement in agriculture has been postulated as the main route to increase agricultural productivity. The most dramatic and controversial techno-scientific agricultural innovation was the 'Green Revolution'.

### ***Green Revolution***

The term 'Green Revolution' was coined in the 1960s to refer to a package deal involving the introduction of high-yielding seeds and modern agricultural techniques. Dramatic breakthroughs were made by scientists in the breeding of new varieties of wheat and rice, the two most important food crops, which radically increased yield as they were more responsive to controlled irrigation, petro-chemical fertilisers and pesticides (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 166-167). By the 1970s green revolution seeds had replaced the traditional farming practices, with the greatest use found in Asia, followed by Latin America, but with fewer inroads in Africa (Lappé et al. 1998: 59).

Proponents of the Green Revolution claimed that traditional agriculture had failed to meet the increasing demands of food production, while the high yield varieties of cereals were responsible for increasing food production and in making food available to millions who would have otherwise gone hungry (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 168-174; Lappé et al. 1998: 59). In the late 1960s and the 1970s, there was widespread optimism about the world food situation as Green Revolution technology resulted in

impressive harvests. Significant impacts were registered in India, Pakistan, Turkey, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka due to the rapid spread of the high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice as these countries were able to achieve considerably higher yields. In India, from 1965 to 1972, wheat production expanded from 11 million to 26 million tons, resulting in the accumulation of unprecedented cereal reserves, temporary attainment of economic self-sufficiency in cereals and elimination of the need for imports (Brown and Eckholm 1975: 137-139).

However, this is not to suggest that Green Revolution had solved the world's food problem. Despite spanning over two decades of major agricultural advances, there was an estimated 786 billion hungry people in the world in the 1990s. Asia, where green revolution seeds had supposedly contributed to highest production, remained home to roughly two-thirds of the undernourished in the entire world (Lappé et al. 1998: 59-61). ). Within India, hailed as the success experiment of Green Revolution, while the North West region of Punjab witnessed rapid agricultural growth, provinces like Bihar and those in the South had little success with it (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 170). In many countries production declined steeply, leading to serious droughts in Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta, which eventually spread to Nigeria, northern Cameroon and parts of Kenya and Tanzania (Marei 1976: 19).

The Green Revolution strategy began to lose momentum as the negative aspects and major stumbling blocks became evident. It reflected a text-book case of the industrial input-intensive method of agricultural production, relying mainly on external inputs, fuel for irrigation pumps, chemical fertilisers, herbicides, tractors and expensive seeds that required large cash outlays. Therefore, it could reach only a minority of relatively dynamic and rich farmers, who had access to official credit and good irrigated lands. Heavy investments needed in production, education, research and distribution were out of the reach of poor farmers, without sufficient credit facilities, denying them the chance to use these agricultural methods. Small producers increasingly found themselves at a competitive disadvantage, resorting to private moneylenders despite crippling rates of repayment in cash, which in turn led to their indebtedness and food production far below the anticipated levels. Technological intensification of farming led to rural unemployment and the loss of jobs for labourers and rural dispossession intensified. As a result, proportionally few wealthiest producers were able to prosper

at the expense of millions of small peasants and landless labourers who were increasingly deprived of the means of production or income to buy enough food to meet their minimum needs (George 1984: 29; 55; Dumont 1975: 29; 32; Marei 1976: 89; Brown and Eckholm 1975: 140; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 168-174)

Green Revolution is criticised for its failure to alter the skewed distribution of economic power, access to land and purchasing power. Introducing a new agricultural technology in a social system without addressing questions of access to its benefits can potentially lead, in the long run, to an ever greater concentration of rewards from agriculture in favour of the rich and against the poor (Lappé et al. 1998: 59-60). What is required is a technology that is relevant to the socio-economic and agro-ecological condition of a place (Swaminathan 1975: 83-84). An 'alternative agriculture' model was espoused that would improve outputs per hectare with fewer energy inputs, like biologically correct rotation of crops, judicious utilisation of organic fertilisers and waste products, improving storing techniques, development of irrigation, drainage and water resources etc. (Power and Holenstein: 1980: 28-29). 'Peasant-based' strategies have been suggested for promoting steady advance in yields and cropping intensity, while maintaining rural employment and improving rural livelihood (Pearse 1980: 238). Despite universal recognition, that technology-dependent growth models have not worked, at least at rhetorical level, governments persist to superimpose technical modernisation of agricultural rather than promoting indigenous patterns of cultivation.

Any assessment of the root causes of hunger and malnutrition is likely to be lopsided without an explicit understanding of food distribution, which remains skewed among different groups of population, from both geographical and social perspectives (Mayor and Bindé 2001: 220-221; Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976: xi). Hence, an orderly system of food/land/income distribution, either through an international agreed framework or a combination of national policies is indispensable to address hunger, especially evolving a development pattern involves small farmers and the landless labourers in production and distribution processes (Aziz 1977: 23-24).

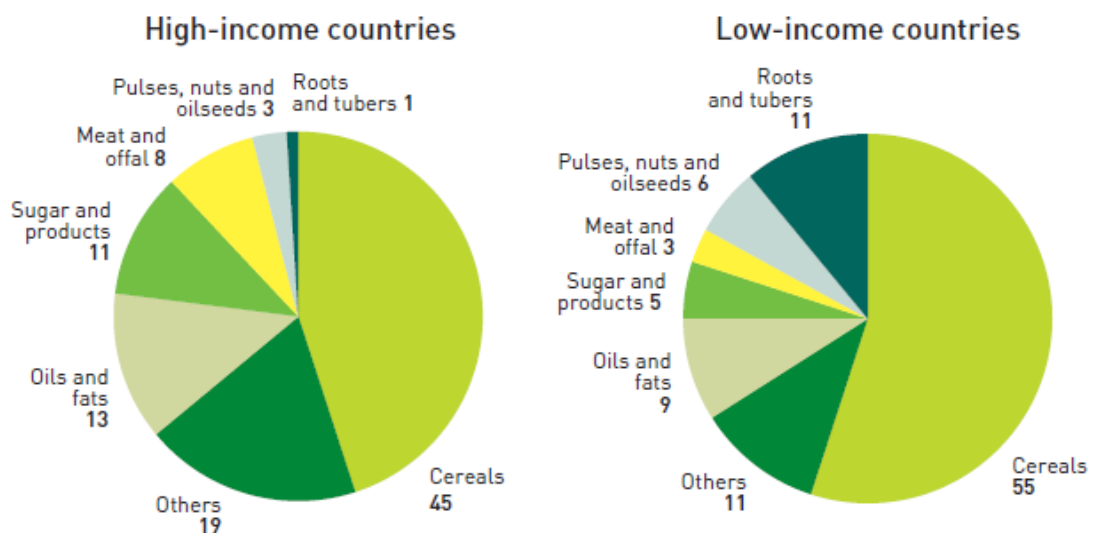
### ***Income and Purchasing power***

Food insecurity, understood as an individual or household concern, is principally determined by income/purchasing power adjusted for the price of food commodities.

Access to a healthy and diverse diet, including staple grains (for calories) and other components, such as fruits, vegetables, pulses, fish/meat etc. (for micronutrients), is essentially a matter of income available for expenditure on food and food prices. The effect of income distribution is critical for hunger and undernutrition because it determines the purchasing power and thereby the demand for food. Hunger is typically experienced by the poor, who spend the largest fraction of their income on food. Maldistribution of income is a function of maldistribution of wealth in the society and misappropriation of human and physical resources (George 1984: 47).

It has been empirically established that income exerts decisive influence on food choice. At low income level, most of it is spent on inexpensive and typically calorie-rich food like, cereals, roots, tubers and pulses, consuming fewer quantity of meat and dairy products, oils and fats, and fruits and vegetables, which are more expensive but are concentrated source of many nutrients. With higher per capita income, demand for calorie levels off and that for taste and variety increases, therefore, meat, fish, fruits and vegetables, oils, sugar have high income elasticity of demand (see Figure 2.8). The first response of households to high food price is buying less food or switching to cheaper foods (Svedberg 1984: 4; FAO 2008g: 29; Brown and Eckholm 1975: 24).

**Figure 2.8: Dietary Diversity by Source of Dietary Energy (percentage)**



Source: FAO 2008g: 29

The real problem is not the inability to produce food, but the inability of the poor to purchase it (Simon and Simon 1973: 43). Despite ample food production in the world, “many poor countries and hundreds of millions of poor people do not share in this

abundance...They suffer from a lack of food security, caused mainly by a lack of purchasing power” (World Bank 1986a: 1). Hence, insufficient and fluctuating incomes of households and the national economy constitute the root cause of hunger problems in developing countries.<sup>8</sup> Shlomo Reutlinger (1977; 1980; 1981/82) shifted the attention from food-supply-based analysis of hunger and malnutrition to an income-centred view. Since income growth directly influences dietary improvement, income levels of people and food prices are more suitable determinants of hunger and malnourishment. Per capita food consumption (calorie deficiency) of different income groups is estimated by using the data on per capita food consumption of the total population of the country and income distribution data, compared with an average standard required for each income group (Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976: 2; 11-29).

The relationship between affluence in some countries and hunger in others has been advanced as another aspect of international distribution of food. It is argued that over-consumption in rich countries is an important cause of hunger and malnutrition, given that the available food supply is distributed according to commercial demands rather than nutritional needs (Aziz 1977: 23). Susan George (1976: 15-18) points to the role of the affluent nations, their governments, agribusiness corporations and international institutions largely controlled by them, in the global food crisis and keeping people hungry by imposing a near universal economic system on the rest of the planet.<sup>9</sup>

The affluence argument has taken two forms.<sup>10</sup> One view that was commonplace during 1973-1975 was that increasing per capita income, in the industrial countries, like US and Canada, would result in higher per capita consumption of livestock products and an important increase in the feed use of scarce grains, reducing the amount of grain available for developing countries (Johnson 1975: 2-3), where the much less available cereal is directly used to satisfy minimum energy requirements (Power and Holenstein 1980: 16). Therefore, the high-income countries were urged to reduce their consumption in order to build grain reserve. On the other hand, it is

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<sup>8</sup> It is pertinent to note that income or purchasing power is not the sole determinant of food security of the individual or the country. Other accompanying factors could be one or combination of more than one of the following: world price instability; country's import capacity; import constraints; assured access to foreign food supplies; availability of domestic food stocks; and internal distribution (Valdés and Castillo 1984: 2).

<sup>9</sup> See, Keith E. Sealing (2007), “Attack of the Ballon People: How America's Food Culture and Agricultural Policies Threatens the Food Security of the Poor Farmers and Indigenous Peoples of the Worlds”, *Vanderbilt Journal of International Law*, 40 (4) October: 1015-1037.

<sup>10</sup> See Ben Fine (1996), *Consumption in the Age of Affluence: The World of Food*, London: Routledge.



argued that reduction of grain consumption by the high-income industrial countries would, in the longer-run, lead to much less grain production and smaller reserve stocks (Johnson 1975: 35-36). Hence, “the effects of affluence on food must be viewed in terms of total effects, not just the effects on demand” since it “is associated with a variety of factors that result in relatively high output of food per unit of land, capital, and labour” (Johnson 1975: 3).

### ***Poverty***

The causes of hunger are rooted in poverty – the lack of sufficient land, income or employment opportunities (Grigg 1985: 55). “Hunger...stands within the shadow of poverty” (Simon and Simon 1973: 44), “almost inseparable from poverty” (Jonsson 1984: 22). Poor people lack access to enough food because they do not have resources to grow it, or do not have enough purchasing power to exercise effective demand in the market (Marchione 1984: 124-125; Madeley 2002: 32). “Food finds its way to the one who can pay for it, which rarely is the same as the one in most need of it” (Bondestam 1978: 250), hunger and undernutrition being functions of poverty (Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976: 2; Gonzalez 2004: 422; George 1984: 47).

Food insecurity is the visible manifestation of extreme poverty. Hunger is both an important cause as well as an effect of poverty, holding back economic growth and limiting progress in reducing poverty (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 4; UN Millennium Project 2005: 1), affecting the productive capabilities of individuals attempting to escape poverty, “Chronically undernourished people are, therefore, caught in a hunger trap of low productivity, chronic poverty and hunger” (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 10). While the affluent can and do adjust to increase in food prices or decline in family employment by decreasing their consumption of expensive food items or other goods and services, the poor do not have that option (Mellor 1981: xv).

However, the reasons for and the manner of experiencing hunger by the rural poor, with insufficient land, are markedly different from that of the urban poor, with insufficient purchasing power. The greatest incidence of poverty and food insecurity is in the rural areas, where the majority of the absolute poor in developing countries live and work, dependent, either directly or indirectly, on agriculture. Most of the rural poor include small farmers who own or lease their land, tenants and

sharecroppers, at the edge of survival, and the remaining are landless, whose livelihood are particularly precarious. Employed as livestock raisers, fishermen, craftsmen, they have some means of production but do not produce enough food for their families, cannot make ends meet by selling their products and have to buy staple food and supplement family income by sporadic wage earnings. Expansion of rural income and employment, both farm and non-farm, is directly linked to agricultural growth and land reform (World Bank 1982: 78-79; Thompson 1983: 228; Shaw 2007: 393; FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 4, 12-13; Spitz 1984: 180; IFAD 2001, 2011d). The urban poor, as non-producers of food depend completely on food availability through distribution and food accessibility through their purchasing power, which is insufficient and inconsistent (Spitz 1984: 183).

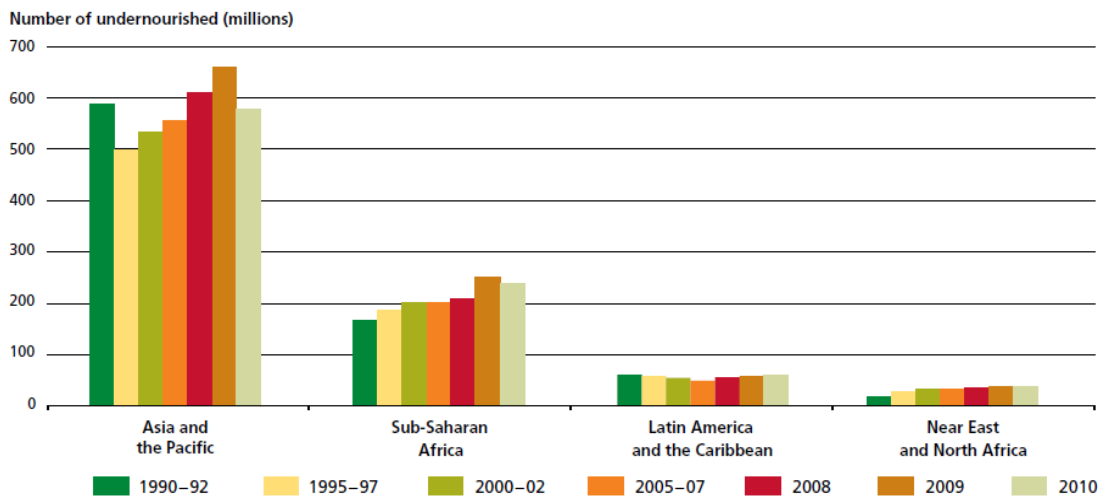
The World Bank estimates the international absolute poverty line, based on consumption expenditure or income level at which a person's typical food-energy intake is sufficient to meet predetermined requirement.<sup>11</sup> Since 1991, the international poverty line has been accepted at US\$ 1 per day (precisely US\$ 1.02 per day) at 1985 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) (currency conversion rate to assure common purchasing power over a consumption basket), updated to US\$ 1.08 per day at 1993 PPP (Chen and Ravallion 2004, 2007) and US\$ 1.25 per day at 2005 PPP (Ravallion et al. 2008). It was estimated in 2002, on the basis of the 'one-dollar-a-day threshold', that there are 1.2 billion poor people in the developing countries, 780 million of whom suffer from chronic hunger, meaning their daily intake of calories is insufficient for active and healthy lives (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 8). Chen and Ravallion (2007: 21-22) estimated that taking the US\$ 2 a day (PPP), number of poor people increased from 2452.47 million (1981) to 2547.94 million (2004), however, taking the US\$ 1 a day (PPP), number of poor people marginally decreased from 1470.28 million (1981) to 969.48 million (2004).

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<sup>11</sup> See Martin Ravallion et al. (1991), "Qualifying Absolute Poverty in the Developing World", *Review of Income and Wealth*, 37 (4): 345-61; Martin Ravallion (1992), *Poverty Comparisons: A Guide to Concepts and Methods*, Living Standards Measurement Study, Working Paper no. 88; Martin Ravallion and Benu Bidani (1994), "How Robust is a Poverty Profile?", *The World Bank Economic Review*, 8 (1) January: 75-102; Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion (2001), "How Did the World's Poor Fare in the 1990s?", *Review of Income and Wealth*, 47 (3): 283-300; Aline Coudouel et al. (2002), "Chapter 1: Poverty Measurement and Analysis", in Jeni Kligman (ed.), *Volume 1: Core Techniques and Cross-Cutting Issues*, A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies, Washington, DC: The World Bank; World Bank (2002), *Globalization, Growth and Poverty: Building an Inclusive World Economy*, World Bank Policy Research Report, January, Washington, DC; New York: Co-published by the World Bank and Oxford University Press.

The IFPRI-GHI has further divided the population living on less than US\$ 1 a day into three categories: the subjacent poor (living on between US\$ 0.75 and US\$ 1 a day); the medial poor (living on between US\$ 0.50 and US\$ 0.75 a day); and the ultra poor (living on less than US\$ 0.50 a day). Based on these sub-lines, 485 million people were subjacent poor, 323 million people were medial poor and 162 million people were ultra poor, mostly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, totalling about 969 million poor people in the developing countries in 2008 (IFPRI-GHI 2008: 19-21). The Human Development Index (HDI), annually published in the UNDP-*Human Development Report*, rates (187) countries on criteria of expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling and gross per capita national income. Interestingly, the countries scoring lowest in HDI (UNDP 2011: 127-130), Chad (rank 183), Burundi (rank 185) and Democratic Republic of Congo (rank 187) were also the countries with ‘extremely alarming’ hunger situation in IFPRI-GHI (2011: 11-19). The regions most affected by food insecurity are typically the least developed and developing countries of East and Southeast Asia, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, which are also characterised by a general level of extreme poverty (see Figure 2.9).

**Figure 2.9: Regional trends in the number of undernourished, 1990/92-2010**



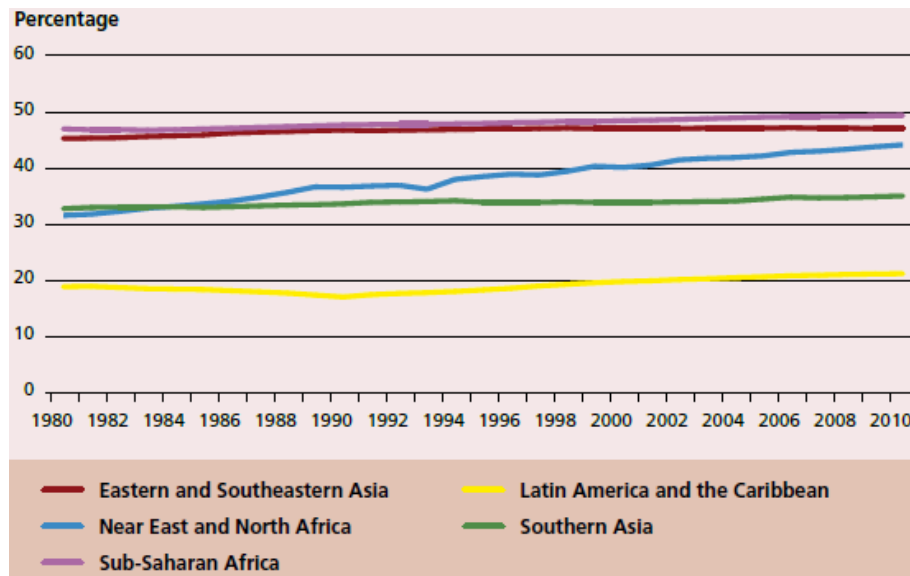
Source: FAO 2010c: 11, Figure 6

### ***Gender and Role of Women***

Women produce between 60 to 80 percent of food in most developing countries, responsible for half the world’s food production (FAO 1997b). If not by producing, women provide food by earning income for its purchase and are near universally

responsible for preparing food for their families (FAO 1998). Though varying widely among regions, agriculture is the most important source of employment for rural women, comprising 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to almost 50 percent in Eastern and Southeastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO 2010-11: 22) (see Figure 2.10).

**Figure 2.10: Women’s Share of the Agricultural Labour Force**



Source: FAO 2010-11: 10, Figure 1

Yet, women have long been the invisible component of food security, despite their multiple roles in agriculture, food production, processing and sometimes even selling or marketing. Neglecting women’s crucial role in rural development, smallholder agriculture, farm and wage labour force, and daily family subsistence as well as preservers and managers of agro-biological resources inhibits the achievement of food security goals. It has been observed that, “Where women are the majority of smallholder farmers, failure to release their full potential in agriculture is a contributing factor to low growth and food insecurity” (World Bank 2008b: 7). Women relatively tend to spend higher proportion of incomes on food for the family, disproportionately on children’s health and nutrition and contribute to better food distribution within the household (FAO/IFAD/ILO 2010: 20-22; Quisumbing et al. 1995: 9-12).

A series of rigid traditional, social, economic and cultural patterns, has relegated women to a subordinate role in the development process and productive engagements in agriculture. Women undertake unpaid agricultural work on family farms, which is under-recorded and undervalued in quantitative terms in the national accounts.

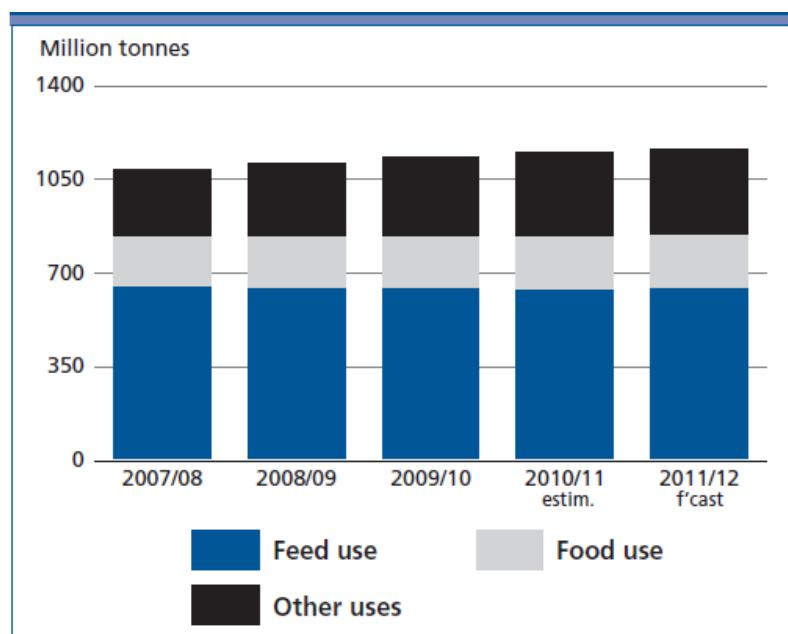
Women lack sufficient purchasing power and face more difficulties in comparison to men in gaining access to productive resources. They are rarely members of cooperatives or farmers' organisations and seldom gain a voice in decision-making, resulting in their needs and interests not being reflected in policies. Women are also in disadvantageous position in terms of wages, generally paid less than the men. Lack of land security tenure is one of the most serious obstacles impairing rural women's agricultural productivity and income. Women-headed households are excluded from land entitlement schemes or allowed very low land allocations (FAO/IFAD/ILO 2010: 2; Quisumbing et al. 1995: 2-3; Quisumbing 1994: 17-23; FAO 1997b; FAO 1998). Thus, constraints faced by women can be 'gender-specific', attributed to gender relations themselves, or 'gender-intensified', reflection of asymmetric distribution of resources among groups that limits opportunities of both men and women but affects women disproportionately (FAO/IFAD/ILO 2010: 34).

The trend towards 'feminization of agriculture' (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2006; FAO 1998) has gained momentum since the 1990s, referring broadly "to women's increasing presence (or visibility) in the agricultural labour force, whether as agricultural wage workers, independent producers or unremunerated family workers" (FAO/IFAD/ILO 2010: 30). Though women are increasing their on-farm and off-farm activities, there is little change in the gender division of labour within the household and control over income (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2006: 12-13). To ensure women's participation in food security it is important to understand the difference in the role of men and women in crop production and their differential financial and managerial control over marketing and storage of agricultural products, which is possible through gender disaggregated data (FAO 1997b; Lastarria-Cornhiel 2006: 15-16). National surveys are not competent in reflecting women's engagement in agriculture and rural employment, with huge numbers of unreported cases and missing data, leading to 'gender blindness' and 'invisibility' of women's contributions to food security (FAO 1998). It is important to improve data collection on women's unremunerated work and non-market production activities. Attainment of equality in access to resources by women to produce food, and purchasing power to buy food where it is not produced is, therefore, a determinant component of food security, especially in rural areas and in developing countries. This can be achieved by integrating gender component in the development process, food and agricultural policies, and every stage of project cycle.

### *Animal feed and Post Harvest Losses*

Unequal distribution and food shortage is also aggravated due to large amount of cereal supplies being fed by richer countries to livestock. Even during the 1974 food crisis, 56 million tonnes of protein-rich food were fed to cattle, rather than being used to feed hungry people (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 137). Apart from cereals, livestock feed also consist of soya, oil cakes and fish meals as part of intensive feeding to produce the target weight. It is argued that the grains fed to livestock would, in the long run, be either eaten by humans as meat, poultry or dairy products. However, it must be borne in mind that food stuffs used for livestock is available only to those rich countries or individuals having the cash to ensure such supplies. Moreover, the use of cattle as an intermediary in a food chain is an inefficient way of converting cereal energy into food energy. There is an urgent need to put in place a system that can divert food from animal to human consumption over long term and specifically during periods of acute food shortage. It would not only be unpopular but impractical as well to eliminate all animal products and meat from diets. Rather, it is suggested that meat be encouraged only as a small addition to a meal and the best incentive for such a change is by raising meat prices, making it too expensive for consumption in large quantity (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 138-141). The increasing coarse grain demand for purposes of animal feed is illustrated below (see Figure 2.11):

**Figure 2.11: Coarse Grain Unitization**



Source: FAO 2011b November: 19, Figure 15

Avoiding food losses, wastage of food between field and fork caused by pre-harvest losses due to pests and post-harvest losses due to mechanical and biological causes, is a vital but often neglected aspect of increasing the available supplies. The Seventh Special Session of the General Assembly (1975) called for the reduction of post-harvest losses in developing countries by at least half by 1985.<sup>12</sup> A Special Account for Prevention of Food Losses was established by FAO with a target of minimum US\$ 10 million to fund Action Programme to reduce pre- and post-harvest losses.<sup>13</sup> To prevent quantitative and qualitative food losses at all stages of post-harvest, handling, storage, processing, marketing and final delivery to consumers, FAO has published training manuals to provide practical measures to prevent food losses.<sup>14</sup> Post Harvest Technology has gained attention of development planners, though very little work has been done on it. Consulting the peasants represent the first step in reducing post-harvest losses at farm and village levels. The measures should be simple, practical and based on the use of local materials, like on-farm storage over centralised storage (George 1979: 60).

### ***Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome***

The interaction between HIV/AIDS and hunger and malnutrition is prominently negative. HIV/AIDS causes and exacerbates food insecurity by leading to nutritional deficiencies through decreased food intake, malabsorption and chronic illness. It impairs the immune system, resulting in additional infections, drastically debilitating and reducing the most productive part of the agricultural labour force. Conversely, poor nutrition accelerates the spread of HIV by increasing vulnerability to the virus and hastening the onset of AIDS. Therefore, incorporating HIV prevention, nutrition care for people with HIV/AIDS and AIDS mitigation measures into food security programs can help reduce its spread and impact as well as that of hunger (Gregory et al. 2005: 2141-2143; Shaw 2007: 393; Cohen et al. 2008: 18-19; FAO 2008a: 26). Food security has been severely undermined in Botswana and Swaziland due to high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, coupled with high inequality (IFPRI-GHI 2008: 12).

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<sup>12</sup> See, Resolution 3362 (S-VII) – *Development and International Economic Cooperation*, adopted at the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly, 9 April-2 May 1974.

<sup>13</sup> See, *Report of the Conference of FAO*, Nineteenth Session, 12 November-1 December 1977, Rome.

<sup>14</sup> See FAO Training Series No. 17/1 – *Prevention of post-harvest food losses: A training manual* (1985) and FAO Training Series no. 17/2 – *Prevention of post-harvest food losses fruits, vegetables and root crops: A training manual* (1989).

### ***War and Conflict***

Hunger and starvation are not only problems of skewed development but also a form of violence and a source of conflict. In the 1990s, the major source of food insecurity was armed conflicts and civil strife, accompanied by massive human suffering and material losses, especially agricultural output (FAO 2000b). Armed conflict and food insecurity are linked in a 'vicious circle of cause and effect' (Kracht 2000: 120),

Armed conflicts invariably cause food insecurity and hunger in the short term, often with long-term food-security consequences. In turn, food insecurity is increasingly often a contributing factor to the causes of conflict, within the broader context of political and socio-economic failure. In its extreme form, food insecurity can act as a trigger for conflict (Kracht 2000: 145).

Conflicts specifically linked to agriculture and food can relate to land distribution, environmental and water conflicts, and the most spontaneous and visible food riots, triggered by economic policy changes, such as structural adjustments, and rising prices, with deep-rooted structural imbalances and income inequalities (Kracht 2000: 126; 132). In a broader sense, Ellen Messer (1996a: 20; 1999: 164) defined 'food war' as "the deliberate use of hunger [food] as a weapon, or hunger suffered as a consequence of armed conflict", including destruction and diversion of food supplies or the potential of food production and "repressive measures and government policy that deny or restrict access to productive resources and income...and discriminatory practices associated with legal frameworks or social practices of discrimination".

Food insecurity persists as 'legacy of the conflict', post-conflict countries suffering from continued lack of access to adequate food (Messer and Cohen 2008: 300-302). During the Nigerian civil war in 1969-70, thousands of people died in Biafra of starvation, when external aid was restricted due to political and military constraints. The Pakistani civil war of 1972, resulting in the establishment of Bangladesh, starved to death thousands of people and left many more weakened by hunger due to diseases (Brown and Eckholm 1975: 27). Apartheid and cultural identification were used to selectively deny food and make the natives in South Africa and the Bosnian Moslems starve. Food insecurity can also cause the outbreak of a conflict. For example, droughts in the Horn of Africa aggravated the already food-insecure and politically oppressed populations, triggering chronic famines and civil war from the 1970 to the 1990s. The incapability or unwillingness of governments to respond to food shortages



and famines in Ethiopia and Sahelian regions of Upper Volta and Niger in the 1970s led to coups and overthrowing of governments (Messer et al. 2001: 6).

Armed conflicts can result in food shortages by seizure or destruction of food stocks, withholding or contamination of livelihood resources (land and water), diversion of relief food from intended beneficiaries and disruption of urban and rural markets, leading to multiple years of food emergency and starvation. In such circumstances hunger is manipulated as a political tool and international food relief misappropriated as a weapon by the warring parties for their tactical advantage (Messer 1996a: 20; Messer 1999: 166). For instance, food forms a part of economic sanctions (prohibition on trade, aid and financial transactions) imposed by one or a group of countries on another, like the US embargo against Cuba (1963), Iran (1987), Iraq (1990), Libya (1986), North Korea (1950), Sudan (1997), Syria (1996) among others.<sup>15</sup>

In 1990, the Sudan government sold grain reserves to support the military but refused to declare emergency or allow relief into starving opposition areas. Famine was exploited both by the government and the opposition to control territories and population and restricted access to food aid an instrument of ethnic and religious oppression. Entire communities or households suffer from food poverty as they lose entitlement to water, land and other productive resources, and are cut off from markets and other commercial networks that are necessary to access or produce food, due to armed conflicts. In Angola, rebels deliberately destroyed markets, while in Nigerian civil war all trucks were diverted to war efforts. Ethnic communities in Sudan, Dinka and Nubians, were systematically stripped off their livestock and other resources and rendered destitute by rival armed groups. Certain members of the population, women, children and refugees, are the most noticeable victims, suffering disproportionately as war-related disruption of sanitation, water and health services render them more vulnerable (Messer 1996a: 20-24, 1999: 166-173).

Most contemporary armed conflicts seem to be concentrated in regions that are heavily dependent on agriculture and in countries with a high proportion of food-insecure households, classified as 'low-income food deficit'. Hunger may induce

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<sup>15</sup> The United States International Trade Commission (1998) defines 'unilateral economic sanctions' as "any unilateral restriction or condition on economic activity with respect to a foreign country or foreign entity that is imposed by the United States for reasons of foreign policy or national security", available at: <http://www.usitc.gov/publications/docs/pubs/332/PUB3124.PDF>

conflict when people feel that they have nothing to lose and military service offers a free meal along with the power of flaunting a gun (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 10; Messer and Cohen 2008: 310-313). Since the 1980s, armed conflict and civil unrest have become a major food insecurity problem in Sub-Saharan Africa, with internal dissensions afflicting Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan. Major food emergencies in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, and countries of erstwhile Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have also been largely conflict-driven (Crawshaw and Shaw 1996: 215). Interventions to alleviate mass starvation during conflicts have experienced mixed success (Chen and Kates 1996: 39-40). Multilateral aid agencies, like WFP, bilateral donors and CSO/NGOs are involved in emergency relief and longer-term development efforts. In order to break 'the cycle of hunger and conflict', it is important to include conflict prevention and mitigation components in aid for food security and agricultural and rural development. In addition, relief and reconstruction programmes must have built-in components of food security and agricultural and rural development (Messer et al. 2001: 13).

### ***Trade***

Commercial trade across nations have historically bound together distant regions and societies in networks of production, global exchange of goods, and consumption. The long-distance trade and food markets, shipping of large quantities of commodities across continents at competitive prices, expanded from luxury items (spices, sugar, tea, and coffee) in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, to staple food (rice, wheat or wine) for mass consumption by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to further perishable goods (meat, fish and fresh produce) (Nützenadel and Trentmann 2008: 5). Globalisation of the world economy further accelerated the process of goods crossing international borders, providing governments with opportunities to levy taxes: import duties, export taxes, custom fees etc. These fiscal tools have allowed governments to both generate revenues and exert influence on the directions of national economic development, what will be produced locally versus what will be imported, by regulating trade (Lappé et al. 1998: 118-119).

Trade liberalization and integration of the world economy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, drawing on the conventional economic theory of Adama Smith's 'free hand' laissez faire and David Ricardo's comparative advantage (each country exporting what it can produce most cheaply and importing what it cannot, without protectionist barriers), is

prescribed as a cure for everything, from underdevelopment and corruption to hunger and general lack of freedom and democracy (Lappé et al. 1998: 113). Liberalising trade is seen as contributing to international food security by reducing the size of grain reserve required to achieve a higher degree of international food security with substantial degrees of protection to domestic agriculture, provided the form of protection is appropriate (Johnson 1980: 187-190).

Since domestic food price rises in relation to the available supply, causing food insecurity for the poor households, a country's food consumption can be maintained by either drawing from reserved stocks, by importing, or through export earnings. Though food imports can assure adequate domestic supply, it does not improve the condition of the poor individuals who do not have money to buy food. Hence, it is important for the developing countries to improve their national purchasing power or the amount of foreign exchange that comes through export earnings to pay for imports, adjusted for the international food price (Thompson 1983: 229). However, trade plays a controversial role in the world food situation by creating "a distinctly uneven playing field with clear advantages for both Northern countries and transnational corporations, where the net losers continue to be smaller-scale, more local, and poorer producers and consumers" (Lappé et al. 1998: 119).

The idea that greater trade openness leads to economic growth has come under increasing attack as the glorious promises of trade liberalisation fell apart in the real world. In the contemporary global economic context, 'free trade' is called a 'misnomer' because of its double standards of allowing protectionism in developed countries while requiring developing countries to open their markets to highly subsidized foreign competition, both through commercial channels and dumping of surpluses, damaging domestic agriculture and income of farmers. The developing countries, unable to compensate for the import surges with significant expansion of their own exports, become increasingly dependent on food imports. By pressurising developing country governments to increase production of export crops, causing diversion of land from local food crops for subsistence to export crops, trade liberalisation adversely impacts rural smallholder livelihood, degrades natural resources necessary for food production and hinders economic diversification. Moreover, pure comparative advantage seems untenable as economic specialisation

and monoculture cultivation is unfavourable for biological diversity, ecological sustainability and economic diversification necessary to promote national food security (Gonzalez 2004: 423; Rosset 2006: 54; Madeley 2002: 120, 126).

Millions of peasants are rendered vulnerable to price fluctuations in the world market, over which they have no control, enmeshing them in debt, loss of assets and land to creditors, and further pushing them into hunger. This is accompanied by an onslaught of agribusiness corporations, on peasant land and water resources, intensified by government rolling back of ceilings on land holdings to facilitate the entry of MNCs and TNCs (Patnaik 2007: 227). In the Indian context, farmers have been exposed to crashing global prices since mid-1990s due to removal of effective protection through quantitative restrictions. This has plunged millions of farmers in the abyss of cumulating debt and led to farmer suicides, the bulk in Andhra Pradesh, Vidarbha, Kerala, and Punjab, without any official action (Patnaik 2007: 6). During the severe drought of 2001-2002, following are the police records of farmer suicides in the three worst affected districts: 1,220 in Karimnagar, 903 in Warangal and 457 in Nizamabad; totalling to 2580 suicides in these three districts (Patnaik 2007: 101). Hence, trade interests should not be seen as the sole determinant of food provisions, rather agricultural trade liberalisation is urged to take into account 'multifunctionality' (McIntyre et al. 2009: 2) of agriculture, signifying more than producing tradable commodities, focussing on preserving landscapes, protecting rural traditions and livelihood, and ensuring food security.

### ***Food Pricing***

Prices of food commodities and price setting mechanisms determine the accessibility of food. Food prices are typically determined by the push and pull of demand and supply of food. Assuming that grain prices are relatively stable and income is fairly evenly distributed around the world, demand for food is, uniformly and predictably, directly proportional to rate of population and income growth rates. However, food supply can be volatile depending on environmental, weather and natural phenomenon as well as human and governmental decisions. Since the quantity and quality of food demanded is inelastic, when supply falls (in the absence of stocks), food prices will rise sharply because people will sacrifice great deal for food. However, when supply rises, people will have little use of additional food and will be willing to pay little for

it, leading to steep fall in food prices. Basic foods exhibit the least flexibility in demand and, thus, can experience the greatest price fluctuations (Walters 1975: 23).

Given variability in international grain prices (Huddleston et. al. 1984: 14-19) in most developing countries, price support schemes are of vital importance. The government determines the minimum prices of basic food commodities, and supports it by paying the producers in the event of market prices falling beyond the specified minimum. While lowering the price paid to producers acts as a disincentive for production, raising them to stimulate production undermines the purchasing power of the consumers, especially the growing numbers of poor consumers. In the price-setting process, the government has to face, on the one hand, the irk of large farmers, who are an essential part of the political constituent of the social basis of the government, and on the other hand, discontent and protests of consumers in the cities, which are crucial because cities are the main seats of political power (Spitz 1984: 179).

FAO measures the monthly changes in international prices of a basket of food commodities, consisting of cereals, dairy, meat, oil and fats and sugar, through its Food Price Index. In addition, the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System on Food (GIEWS) publishes Global Food Price Monitor that measures current food prices at world, regional and country level. World Bank's Food Price Watch, also monitors trends in domestic food prices in low and middle-income countries and their policy implications. Food prices are pushed upwards due to the impact of weather variability in key grain exporting countries; linkage between higher oil prices and increased use of biofuels; food demand growth outstripping output growth (World Bank 2011 April: 2-3); low global stocks, little shortfalls in yields causing amplified effects on prices; volatile prices of specific petroleum products, rice and sugar; and fluctuations in domestic food prices (World Bank 2011 August: 2-3). Increasing food prices push people to consume less or inferior quality cheaper staples, thereby by causing long-term nutritional setbacks (World Bank 2011 April: 7).

### ***Market***

Commercial channels are the primary means of global distribution of food, except for households that produce food for subsistence, household income is used to acquire food in the market (WFP 2009b: 55-63). Food available in the market does not signify

a solution for hunger unless it can be purchased by those who need it. While in chronic food shortage situation, incongruous income level and food prices extends undernutrition, in extreme situation of acute food shortage and famine, prices rise beyond realistic level of income lead to starvation (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 44-45). The global food situation is marked by debate on whether countries should attempt to ensure food self-sufficiency or rely on market mechanisms by specialising according to their comparative advantage. While on the one hand it is argued that production of adequate food by households or a country for its consumption is not a necessary precondition of food security, on the other hand, assuming a strictly economic reasoning, if food is treated like any other commodity, then food security can be potentially ensured through market mechanisms (Herrman 2007: 207).

However, food being a ‘strategic good’ (Herrmann 2007: 206), no country can afford to leave its supply to the operation of uncertain market forces. In fact, “the food dilemma in the least developed countries is closely related to distortion of the global agricultural markets, which can be attributed to agricultural support policies of advanced countries” (Herrmann 2007: 206-207). Market, as the handy device for distributing goods, is seen as responding only to the demands of wealth; mirroring inequalities in wealth and income, without being sensitive to the needs of all people. It is blind to the social and resource costs of the production process, like farmers’ vulnerability to the vagaries of international market, increased rural landlessness etc. A very small farmer cannot enter a market system because he has no money or effective demands. As the expectation of food shortage begins to raise prices, the poor find a minimum diet beyond their reach, while the economically well-off buy to hoard up grains forcing the prices to raise still further, causing deprivation to wider groups of people. Access to a market and the prices charged are determined by and lead to concentration of economic power in ever fewer hands, directly contributing to hunger. On the distribution side, the market does not seem to be able to provide food to those who need it the most (Ward 1975: xi; Aziz 1977: 22-23; Lappé et al. 1998: 99-102).

In the modern food economy, the international market alone does not determine the price at which food is exchanged locally, with government entities, private sector and multinational agribusiness participating in it. In addition to the role of political pressures and strategy, the process of mark-up (the difference between the price at

which a commodity is bought at one stage of trading chain and the price at which it is sold to the next stage), operating at each stage of the trading chain, is important for the small producers in the developing countries. The farmer may be paid only half the price at which the state-owned cooperative or MNCs sells to a foreign processor (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 45). Thus, direct intervention in the market is necessary to enhance the ability of the hungry to acquire food.

Market sceptics point at lack of discipline in the operation of markets and resulting skewed income distribution and dependence on markets, thereby advocating stronger government and public sector role in allocation of resources and income distribution. Market enthusiasts perceive it as the only way to organise economic activities, viewing government intervention as an anathema, as it leads to loss of economic efficiency, causes politicisation of economic activities and interferes with the ‘natural’ forces of income distribution (Schuh 1983: 227). It is important to develop market-based priority action that takes the market dynamics into consideration for hunger alleviation initiatives and supports markets through infrastructure and institutional instruments. Improving access to markets, especially of the rural poor and small-scale farmers, and reduction of market-based risks and vulnerabilities are crucial aspects of integrating market into food security policy measures (WFP 2009b: 140-144).

### ***Agribusiness Corporations***

The contemporary global food system is characterised by the steady growth in operations, monopoly and power of large multinational and transnational food and agribusiness corporations.<sup>16</sup> Increasing globalising trends, technological advances in transport and electronic communications have allowed MNCs and TNCs to disperse industrial and agricultural production around the globe with relative ease, seeking the

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<sup>16</sup> It is important to note the distinction between global multinational and transnational corporations (MNCs and TNCs). MNCs, headquartered in a particular home country, have extensive international operations and investments in more than one foreign country, without a coordinated product offering in each country, but adapting their products and services according to individual local markets. TNCs are MNCs that operate worldwide through a central corporate facility, without being identified with a national home base, but delegating research, decision-making and marketing powers to each individual foreign market. MNCs have branches in countries, whereas, TNCs have subsidiaries. Agribusiness is defined as “all production and distribution of farm supplies, production operations on farms, and the storage, processing and distribution of farm commodities and processed food” (Ray A. Goldberg of Harvard Business School as quoted in George 1976: 158). Also see, David C. Korten (1995), *When Corporations Rule the World*, West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press and Philip McMichael (ed.) (1994), *The Global Restructuring of Agro-Food Systems*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

lowest wages, most lenient regulations, cheapest resources, and high profit margins, precluding any developmental or humanitarian intentions. Food and agribusiness corporations, Syngenta, Monsanto, Dow Agro, DuPont, Bunge Corp., John Deere (agricultural input), Cargill, Nestlé, Archer-Daniels-Midland (ADM), Unilever, Continental Grain Corp., Del Monte, ConAgra Foods (food processing and trading), Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Metro Group, Tesco (food retailing), to name a few, control huge stakes in the international grains, fertiliser, pesticide, seeds and shipping markets, increasingly causing commercialisation of food for profit.

Some of these companies, as old as 175 years, like John Deere (1837), Cargill (1865), Nestlé (1866) and ADM (1923), are as influential in deciding what is produced and consumed and shaping food policy as government. Significant expansion in trade complemented by increase in the level of capital flows, particularly through Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), further suggests greater integration of financial markets and penetration of MNCs/TNCs. The agribusiness companies are involved in varying degrees with the food system – food production (providing inputs), processing, distribution, marketing, retailing and advertising, signifying changes in traditional production and consumption patterns. The emergence of fast food chains and retailing of processed food have radically altered national, regional and global food culture, largely bypassing traditional markets where smallholders sell to local markets and traders (World Bank 2008b: 135). In the context of world food and hunger problem, agribusiness becomes a cause of concern because it represents an ‘extractive industry’, resulting in the reduction of agriculture to a mere sub-sector of agro-industrial production. The process of agribusiness intrusion into traditional rural society destroys local employment pattern, food-crop production and family structure, and is antagonistic to small farmers, indigenous agricultural practices and national control over local food production and marketing, thereby jeopardising the whole food economy (George 1976: 158; George 1979: 63; Arroyo 1977: 255-256).

For example, while Nestlé makes an almost 200 percent profit by selling processed coffee, the farmer in Uganda growing this coffee is nearly broke due to near five times fall in price due to corporate intervention (Patel 2008: 8-10). The popularisation of artificial feeding of formula-milk as substitutes for breastmilk by MNCs, not only causes malnutrition and related diseases, like marasmus, kwashiorkor, gastro-enteritis



etc., but also causes death of babies in extreme cases. Widespread international attention was drawn to Nestlé's aggressive marketing strategies of powdered milk in Asia, Africa and Latin America, causing poor and illiterate mothers to push their babies towards fatal consequences, by the *New Internationalist Magazine* exposé in 1973, picked up by the War on Want campaign in 1974.<sup>17</sup> Noting the general decline in breastfeeding due to many factors, including breast milk substitutes, threatening the health and nutrition of infants and young children, the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes*<sup>18</sup> was developed, to regulate sales promoting activities of baby food producing MNCs, including necessary advertisement codes and legislations, endorsed at the 33<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly (decision-making body of the WHO) in 1980, adopted at the 34<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in May 1981.

Agribusiness corporations have gained the ability to control the entire food chain, from what goes in agricultural production at the farms to what comes out in the markets and makes way to the tables, redefining consumer taste and choice of diet, replacing tortillas with white bread, breast milk with artificial infant formula and promoting soft drink through advertising, in order to sell more. One of the biggest fallout of the escalating corporatisation of agriculture and industrialisation of food has been the drive towards vertical integration or production contract. Under vertical integration, the company monopolises every aspect of farm production and distribution, virtually running the farm itself. Under production contract, the company does not own land but signs up farmers, supplying them with inputs and advice and buying the harvest on company terms, subjecting the farmers to inclement weather and blights risks. Either ways, food is grown either by hired labour or by farmers working under stringent corporate specifications, not for human needs but for the market, where money is the magnet that draws food (George 1979: 28-29, 44-56; Madeley 2002: 121-123; Braun and Díaz-Bonilla 2008: 16).

Also alarming is the large-scale land acquisition (purchase or lease) by international investors in Africa, Latin America, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. It is estimated that about “50-80 millions of hectares of land has been acquired in middle and low

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<sup>17</sup> See, “The Baby Food Tragedy”, *New Internationalist*, No. 6, August 1973; and Mike Muller (1974), “The Baby Killer: A War on Want Investigation into the Promotion and Sale of Powdered Baby Milks in the Third World”, March, London: War on Want.

<sup>18</sup> Text of the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* (1981), is available at: <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/9241541601.pdf>

income countries by international investors through lease or purchase”, “2/3 of recent land deals are taking place in sub-Saharan Africa” (High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition 2011: 14-15). These deals are primarily driven by investment opportunities, perceived by the private sector and agribusiness, where land is diverted from agricultural production for other purposes, like non-food agricultural commodities and crops for biofuels. In some cases, governments promote acquisition of farmland in foreign countries as an alternative to importing food (Cotula et al. 2009: 15). ‘Land grabbing’ has resulted in adverse impact on the area under cultivation and the rural households, displacing them and damaging their local livelihood, food security and access to land and other key resources. Improvement in agricultural output arising from large-scale land acquisition is yet to be demonstrated (High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition 2011: 34-36).

Global corporations are pivotal in setting the terms of international trade and determining the ends to which developing countries put their lands and other resources to use. In a desperate bid for foreign investment, governments grant direct subsidies, tax exemptions and freedom from labour or environmental regulations, to MNCs/TNCs, which are only responsible to their share-holders and not to the larger society. Instead of a handful of corporations dominating decisions regarding commodities that are livelihood for millions of people, decision-making over aspects of food production, distribution and consumption, from individual family to the level of international business, must continuously be concentrated in the people whose well-being is affected by such choices (George 1979: 4; Lappé et al. 1998: 113).

### ***Biotechnology and Genetically Modified Food Crops***

Advances in agricultural biotechnology, such as genetically modifying (GM) food crops, have been advocated by the scientific community and food industry as holding great promise for the attainment of long-term food security. ‘Biotechnology’ is defined as “any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms, or derivatives thereof, to make or modify products or processes for specific use.”<sup>19</sup> Transgenic or genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are a result of

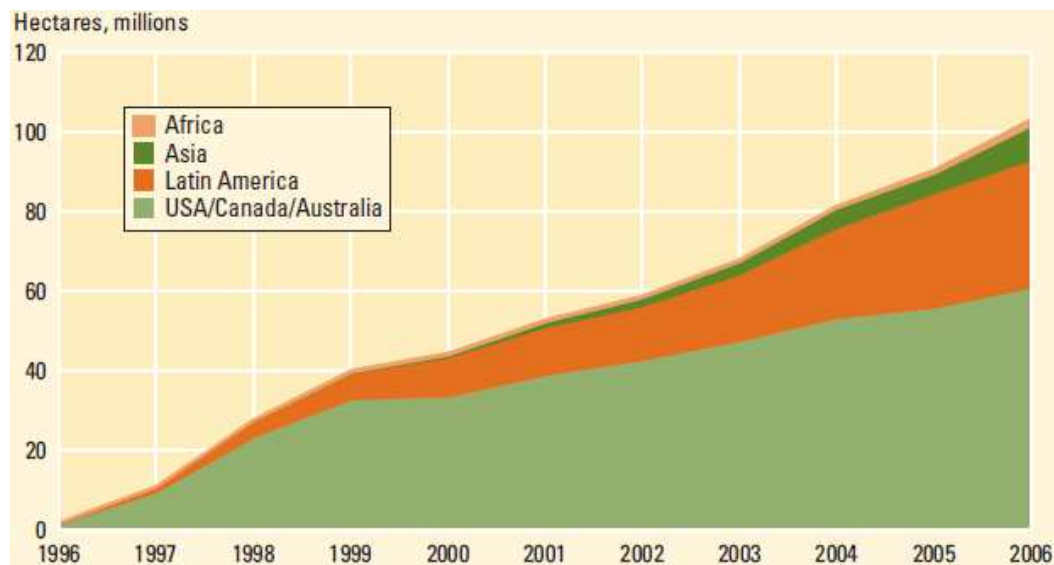
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<sup>19</sup> This definition is provided by the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992), signed at the 1992 Earth Summit, is available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf>

modifying and transferring genes from unrelated organisms and across species into a crop/plant to boost production and develop traits such as pest control. GMOs claim to improve the productivity of smallholder farmers and provide more nutritious foods to poor consumers in developing countries (World Bank 2008b: 177).

GM crops, first introduced commercially in the US during the mid-1990s, have subsequently expanded to many countries including, Australia, Brazil, China and Egypt. In EU, seven countries, including Germany and Portugal, grow GM maize at commercial scale. The global acreage covered of GM crops, by cultivation, has increased from estimated 4.3 million acres in 1996 to 145 million acres in 2000-2002, concentrated mainly in four countries: the US (66 percent), Argentina (23 percent), Canada (6 percent) and China (1 Percent), US and Argentina alone covering around 99 million acres. Other countries, Australia, South Africa, Mexico, Spain, France, Germany, Portugal, Romania and Ukraine, have been moderately enthusiastic about introducing transgenic crops (see Figure 2.12). The most widely grown crops are soybean (62 percent) and maize/corn (21 percent), with cotton (12 percent), rapeseed (canola) and potato tailing behind (Whitman 2000: 4-5; Paarlberg 2005: 277).

**Figure 2.12: Rising Adoption of Transgenics in Most Regions, except Europe**



Source: World Bank 2008b: 177, Figure E.1

It is argued that GM food crops, if responsibly developed and applied, can lead to improved nutrition and have dramatic positive implications in developing countries. However, sharp differences of perspectives persist on the potential economic and

political benefits, and costs of GM crops; while their social, cultural and ethical justifiability remains doubtful, their bio-safety, ecological, environmental and human health implications are uncertain, causing low consumer confidence. GM crops have potential negative effects; accelerating loss of agricultural biodiversity and genetic heritage by spreading genetic uniformity and standardization of cultivated species through industrial agriculture that displaces traditional agricultural systems. Farmers' rights are endangered due to the system of patent laws and monopolisation of GM seeds and crops by profit-driven agribusiness corporations, which have been making large investments in the new technology and holding patents on new-found species of rice, maize, wheat, soybean, potato and sorghum (Shaw 2007: 441; Paarlberg 2005: 280-282; Mayor and Bindé 2001: 235-249; Madeley 2002: 123-124).<sup>20</sup>

While some of the environmental, biosafety and toxin resistance concerns have been addressed on a case-by-case basis, through field testing and close monitoring, it is alleged that most of the required bio-safety tests are often flawed in their scope and fail to capture long-term impacts on environment and human health. Caution must be exercised in treading the path of vigorous commercial development of biotechnology, examining them in relation to international, scientific and ethical standards and relevance for the undernourished. Commercial release of transgenic plants must be preceded by rigorous tests for toxicity, bio-safety, agronomic worth and impact on human health (Mayor and Bindé 2001: 249).

### ***Environment and Climate Change***

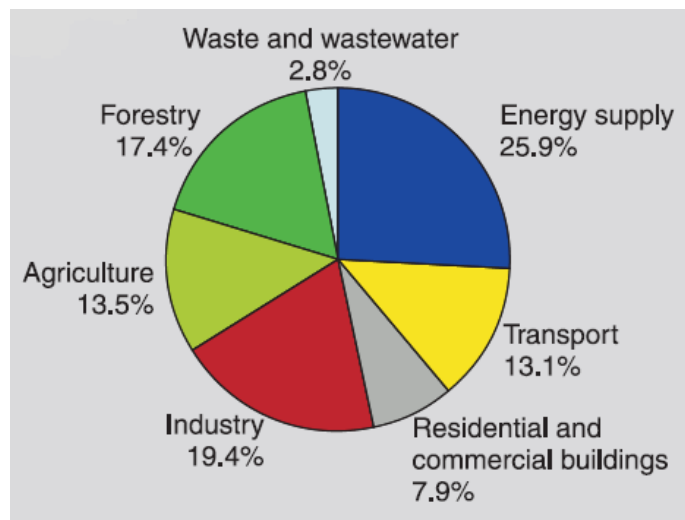
The sudden and dramatic food price rise during 2007-2008 amply corroborates Lester Brown's (1996: 19) prediction that rising food prices would be the first major economic indication of environmentally unsustainable world economy. Food security appears to be linked with environment in a vicious circle. Global environment and changes in climate-related parameters (increasing temperature, accumulation of greenhouse gases, changing rainfall patterns, melting glaciers, rising sea levels and changing weather conditions) have serious consequences for food security and agriculture in terms of crop productivity, resource endowments, threatening livelihood strategies and intensifying vulnerability. Conversely, it is argued that pressure to feed

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<sup>20</sup> The WTO agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) regularizes the global patenting system.

the world's hungry leading to increased agricultural activities and land-use change are undermining the very resources needed to grow food by escalating the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases and aerosols (see Figure 2.13), causing additional warming of atmosphere; pushing crop and livestock production onto marginal, erosion-prone land; poisoning of environment with pesticides; deforestation; land degradation; salinisation; erosion; and water logging, thus, causing environmental crisis while stresses like food insecurity (along with poverty, trends in economic globalisation, conflict, incidence of diseases etc.) are intensifying vulnerability to climate change (Parry et al. 1999; Gregory et al. 2005; Cohen et al. 2008; Madeley 2002: 130-133).

**Figure 2.13: Share of Different Sectors in Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 2004**

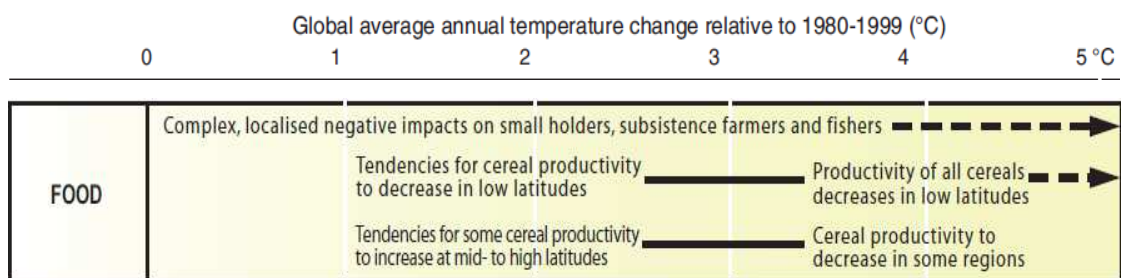


Source: IPCC 2007: 36.

Climate change adversely impacts food security outcomes for all the four components of availability, accessibility, utilization and food system stability, albeit differently across regions and countries, over time, on the basis of the socio-economic aspects (Schmidhuber and Tubiello 2007: 19703-19706; FAO 2008a: 9-29; Cohen et al. 2008). Climate change leads to alterations in the agro-ecological conditions, by varying temperature, rainfall, soil moisture etc., which renders some cultivated areas unsuitable for cropping and some local cropping patterns and farming practices obsolete, while potentially expanding the range pests and diseases. Climate fluctuations also increases the frequency and uncertainty of widespread droughts, cyclones, hailstorms and floods causing damage to food supplies, which eventually leads to rise in food prices.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>21</sup> Second Assessment Report (1995) highlighted the vulnerabilities of ecosystems and human communities to likely climate changes, particularly with regard to agriculture and food production, like a rise in temperature causing altered growing seasons and altered crop yields and productivity across regions and among localities, thereby changing patterns of production. The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (2007: 48) exposed the specific impact of climate changes on food chain and supply, “Globally, the potential for food production is projected to increase with increases in local average temperature over a range of 1 to 3°C, but above this it is projected to decrease” (see Figure 2.14).

**Figure 2.14: Impact on Food as Function of Increasing Global Average Temperature Change**  
(Impacts will vary by extent of adaptation, rate of temperature change and socio-economic pathway)



Source: IPCC 2007: 51

In terms of regional impacts of climate change, agricultural production, including access to food, in many African countries was projected to be severely compromised by climate variability, adversely affecting food security and worsening malnutrition. While in some African countries rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by half, agriculture-suitable areas, duration of growing season and yield potential are expected to decrease, especially in semi-arid and arid areas. In Latin America, overall number of people at risk of hunger was projected to increase, with decline in the productivity of some important crops due to salinisation and desertification of agricultural land. The projected changes in the frequency and severity of extreme climate events, like

<sup>21</sup> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 (by Resolution A/RES/43/53 – *Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations of Mankind*, adopted by the forty-third session of the General Assembly on 6 December 1988) to provide a scientific assessment on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts. It comprehensively reviews and assesses recent worldwide scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding of climate change, its potential impact and options for adaptation and mitigation.

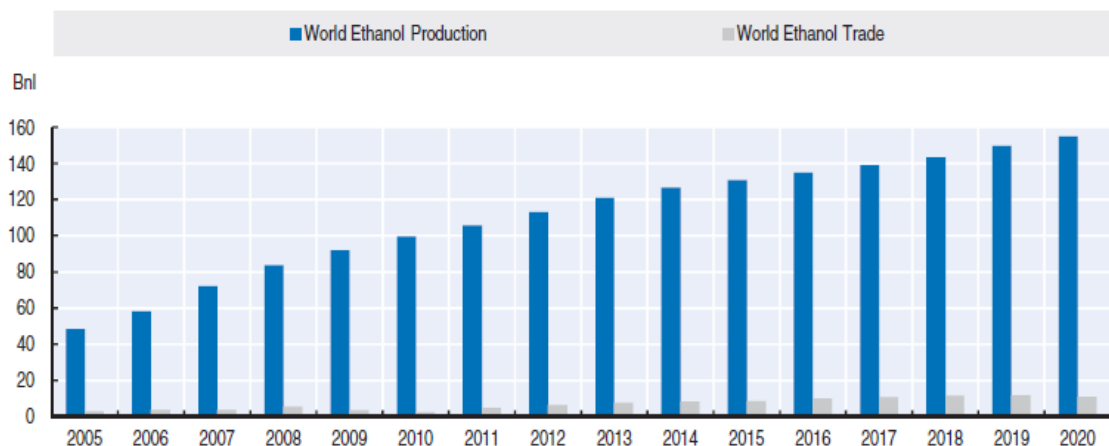
extension of drought-affected areas, is likely to cause food and water shortage, adversely impact agriculture, especially in low-altitude areas, increasing risk of food insecurity, malnutrition and water- and food-borne diseases (IPCC 2007: 50-53).

Extreme weather conditions in many countries and regions have led to production shortfalls and crop failures, causing rise in food prices and imposing export restrictions, a trend which is likely to intensify over the years. Cereal production in 2010 was severely affected due to drought in Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, unfavourable weather in Canada, the European Union (EU), and Ukraine and weather setbacks in importing countries like northern Africa (FAO 2010b November: 13; 18). Weather-reduced crops in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and drought in Tunisia and Morocco affected wheat output in 2010 (FAO 2010b November: 15), while exceptionally dry weather conditions in parts of the US and Europe further worsened wheat yields in 2011 (FAO 2011b June: 10). Rice production suffered large losses in 2010-2011 due to severe flooding Asian rice producing countries, like Pakistan Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao People's Democratic Republic, passage of storms in the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, and combination of drought and flood in China (FAO 2010b November: 22-23; 2011b November: 26).

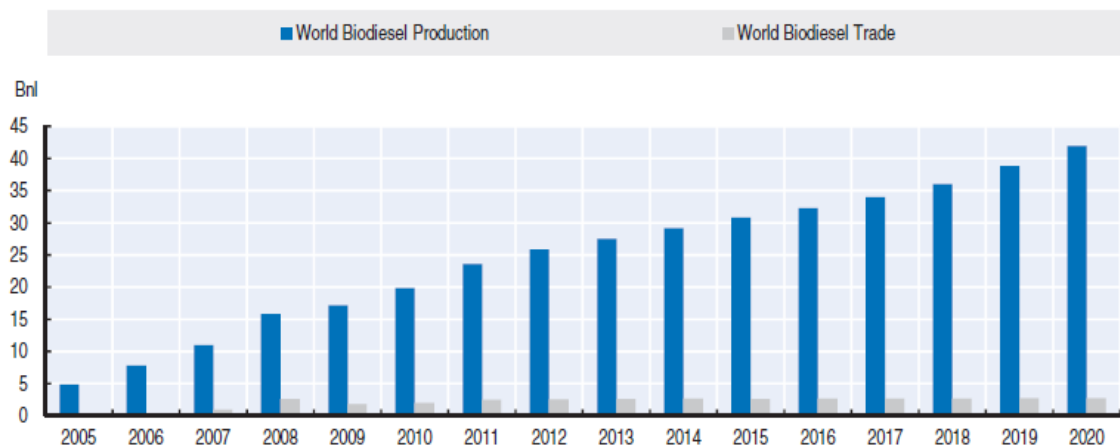
### ***Biofuel Production***

A relatively recent threat to food security is posed by the rapidly expanding global biofuels (ethanol and biodiesel) industry (see Figures 2.15 and 2.16).

**Figure 2.15: Development of the World Ethanol Market**

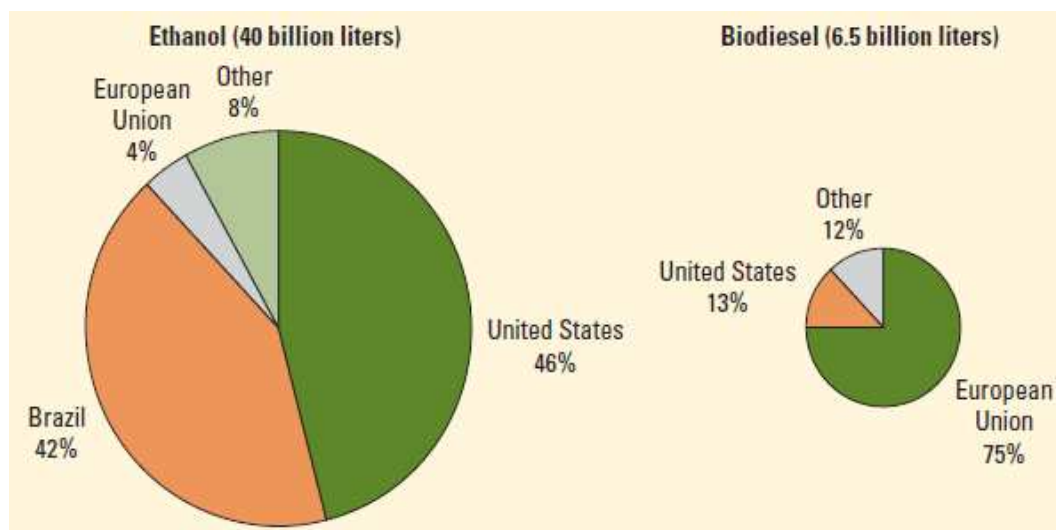


Source: OECD-FAO Agricultural outlook 2011-2020: 79, available at: <http://www.agri-outlook.org/dataoecd/23/56/48178823.pdf>

**Figure 2.16: Development of the World Biodiesel Market**

Source: OECD-FAO Agricultural outlook 2011-2020: 79, available at: <http://www.agri-outlook.org/dataoecd/23/56/48178823.pdf>

The potential of biofuels as a means to address global energy concerns and climate change, and promote agricultural rural development, has led to a surge in its demand, in national and world markets, prominently placing biofuels on the international agenda. In 2008, the US has been the largest producer of Ethanol, closely followed by Brazil, whereas the EU produces the biggest share of biodiesel (see Figure 2.17).

**Figure 2.17: Fuel Ethanol and Biodiesel Production**

Source: World Bank 2008b: 70, Figure B.1

The global mandate of carbon policies and trading to reduce carbon emission have led governments to adopt support measures, like subsidies and tariffs on imports, tax reduction/exemptions and time-bound mandates and targets for biofuel consumption, which has made biofuel production conducive and lucrative, an opportunity seized by commercial agriculture with increased investments (OFID 2009: 16) (see Table 2.6).



**Table 2.6: Country/Regional Biofuel Policies: Specific Mandates and Targets**

Brazil	Mandatory 20-25 percent Ethanol blending for Gasoline 2 percent Biodiesel blending, to be increased to 5 percent by 2013
USA	Energy Policy Act of 2005, at the federal level, mandated blending of 4 billion gallons of biofuels in 2006, raised to 12 billion gallon in 2010, 15.2 billion gallons in 2012, 20.5 billion gallons by 2015 and to 36 billion gallons by 2022. Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS-2) 2012 fixes the targeted volume of total renewable fuels at 15.2 billion gallons (1 billion gallons on biomass-based diesel; 2 billion gallons on advanced biofuels; and 3.45-12.9 million gallons on cellulosic biofuels)
EU	Biofuels Directive (2003/30/EC) set target level at 2 percent biofuels use by transport sector in 2005, to be raised to 5.75 percent in 2010. Renewable Energy Directive (RED) (2009/29/EC) mandated 20 percent binding target of renewable energy use (including 10 percent share in road transport fuels) by 2010 and 20 percent reduction green house gas emission by 2010
Australia	At least 350 million litres biofuels by 2010 Queensland has 5 percent ethanol blending mandate New South Wales has 4 percent ethanol blending mandate and 2 percent biodiesel mandate
Canada	Renewable Fuel Standard featuring 5 percent ethanol and 2 percent biodiesel content, with individual provincial mandates
China	2 million tons ethanol by 2010, raised to 10 million tons by 2020 0.2 million tons biodiesel by 2010, raised to 2 million tons by 2020
India	5 percent ethanol blending in gasoline in 2008, raised to 10 percent in 2009; indicative target of 20 percent ethanol blending in gasoline and 20 percent in biodiesel by 2017
Indonesia	2 percent blend in biodiesel, 3 percent ethanol mandate
Thailand	2 percent biodiesel blend by 2008, raised to 10 percent by 2012 10 percent ethanol blend by 2012
South Africa	Backed away from implementing (till July 2011) 8 percent ethanol blend and 2 percent biodiesel blend for 2013
New Zealand	3.4 percent for both gasoline and diesel by 2012

Source: Compiled from: *Biofuels Mandates Around the World* (2011), available at: <http://www.biofuelsdigest.com/bdigest/2011/07/21/biofuels-mandates-around-the-world/>; Rachid Bencherif (2009), *Biofuels & Food Security: Implications of an Accelerated Biofuels Production*, Presentation made at the "World Bank Energy Week 2009: Energy, Development and Climate Change", 31 March-2 April 2009, Washington, DC: World Bank Headquarters, available at: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTENERGY/Resources/335544-1232567547944/5755469-1239633250635/Rachid\\_Bencherif.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTENERGY/Resources/335544-1232567547944/5755469-1239633250635/Rachid_Bencherif.pdf); and Perrihan Al.Riffai, Benita Dimaranan and David Laborde (2010), *European Union and United States Biofuel Mandates: Impacts on World Markets*, Inter-American Development Bank Technical Notes No. IDB-TN-191, December, Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Unit, Infrastructure and Environment Sector, available at: <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=35529623>

The expanded targets for biofuel blending and production have propelled the demand for major food crops, causing crop substitution and diversion of land. Increased diversion of food crops, like corn, maize, wheat, potatoes, sugarcane, sorghum and biomass (cornstalks and vegetable waste) to make ethanol, and natural oils, like soybean and palm oil, to produce biodiesel, is being pointed out as aggravating world hunger by stealing food from plates. There has been a sharp increase in the amount of cereals used for biofuels, jumping by 23 percent from 2007/08 to at least 120 million tonnes in 2008/2009 (FAO 2009a: 8; Cohen et al. 2008). According to FAO (2010b June: 12), increasing demand for cereal-based biofuels has been a major factor in the rapid expansion of industrial use of coarse grains, maize (mostly in the United States) (see Table 2.7) and of wheat (mainly in the EU). Around five million hectares of cropland in Canada, EU and Russia went to rapeseed and sunflower production to be used for biofuels rather than wheat production (World Bank 2008a: 10).

**Table 2.7: Use of Maize for Ethanol (fuel) Production in USA**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 <i>estim.</i>	2011/12* <i>(f'cast)</i>
	<i>Thousand tonnes</i>							
Maize production	299 986	282 263	267 503	331 177	307 142	332 550	316 166	315 811
Ethanol use	33 611	40 726	53 837	77 453	93 396	116 616	127 513	127 005
Yearly change (%)	13	21	32	44	21	25	9	-0.4
As production (%)	11	14	20	23	30	35	40	40

*Source: FAO 2011b November: 20, Table 5*

Biofuel is a significant source of demand for agricultural commodities, causing a rise in their prices and for resources used to produce them (FAO 2008f: vii). Mainly because of the US ethanol program, the price of maize rose by 23 percent in 2006 and by 60 percent between 2006 and 2008 (World Bank 2008b: 70). However, the impact of all biofuel production on food price is not uniform. For example, increased biofuel production in Brazil from sugarcane has not caused substantial increase in sugar prices because sugarcane production has kept pace with demand. While it took approximately US\$ 0.90 per gallon to produce ethanol from sugarcane in Brazil in 2007, the production cost of maize-based ethanol in the US was US\$ 1.70 per gallon. Tariff reduction/removal and phasing out subsidies in the EU and USA will enable production of biofuel from more efficient feedstock and at much lower cost (World Bank 2008a: 10; Mitchell 2008: 17).

Given the extensive requirement of land to produce feedstock for biofuel, it will be able to supply only a small portion of global transport energy and even smaller portion of total global energy, definitely not replacing fossil fuels (FAO 2008f: 9). While the contribution of biofuels to climate change and energy security remains to be satisfactorily ascertained and the sustainability of the production process is yet to be determined, acceleration in biofuel production is definitely endangering food security by diverting resources away from food for consumption and causing agricultural price volatility. Agrofuel expansion also threatens the RTF of most vulnerable groups, like small scale farmers and rural women by destroying their livelihood options (FIAN 2008).

The potential influence of biofuels on local, national, regional and global socio-economy and agro-ecology – sustainable agriculture, land use change, fuel security, green house gas emission and climate change mitigation, price overshoots of agricultural commodities – has to be comprehensively assessed (OFID 2009: 9-11; Oxfam International 2008; FAO 2008f: 8). In his opening address to the High-Level Segment of the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 14 May 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon asserted the “need to study carefully both the potentials and the risks of biofuels...to ensure that policies promoting biofuels are consistent with maintaining food security and achieving sustainable development goals.”<sup>22</sup> Similar concern underlined FAO’s call for urgent need to review current policies supporting, subsidising and mandating biofuel production and use that are driving the rush to liquid biofuels (FAO 2008f: 92-93).

## **Conclusion**

The world food system has evolved dramatically since the end of World War II. Issues related to production and distribution of food, and the causes and consequences of hunger vary widely across time and geographical area. From the situation of food surpluses in developed countries diverted to ease food shortage in the developing countries, the focus shifted to the importance of ensuring access by poor people to the food they needed through increasing employment and purchasing power. At the same

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<sup>22</sup> UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s address to opening of the high-level Segment of the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 14 May 2008, is available at: [http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/search\\_full.asp?statID=242](http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/search_full.asp?statID=242)

time, powerful forces entered the world food system, including the emergence of large multinational food corporations, leading to increasing commercialization and control of the food chain, resulting in a considerable expansion of world food trade (Maxwell and Slater 2003). Another significant development has been the emergence of fast-food industry and super-market chains that introduce large number of new food products every year and use the unrelenting marketing power to sell, systematically changing patterns of food consumption (Shaw 2007: 385-386). Globalisation of the world food system, characterised by multifaceted dimensions of agricultural production, marketing and distribution, trade liberalisation, concerns regarding nutrition, environment, consumer safety and food quality, technological advancements and incorporation of newer actors, agribusiness corporations and CSO/NGO, have led to the compounding of contemporary world food security.

The world food problem is actually two different but interrelated problems. First is the periodical and immediate threat of famine, an extreme manifestation of food shortage or excessively high prices, following unfavourable weather conditions or unexpected fluctuation in production. There has been a continuous and substantial reduction in famines, understood in the conventional sense of starvation and mortality, and geographical concentration, owing partly to improvements in food production and partly to development of transportation, storage and distribution facilities.<sup>23</sup> However, the persistent part of the problem is the ever-present hunger chronic undernutrition of the poor people, especially developing countries, who are unable to produce or buy enough food to meet their minimum requirement, coupled with unequal distribution of production and purchasing power. It has become increasingly apparent that lack of purchasing power in the hands of the poor is one of the major hurdles standing in the way of the objective of adequate food for all. Hence, in its modern version, famine is more evenly spread as a regular part of their lives among the world's poor.

Over the decades, there have been sustained attempts to define and measure hunger, classify and map who might be vulnerable to hunger at a given point of time, estimate

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<sup>23</sup> While in the last quarter of the nineteenth century around 20-25 million people died of famine, for the entire twentieth century there were 12-15 million famines deaths, and many were due to deliberate governmental policies, official mismanagement and war, rather than serious crop failure. Since 1950s, the incidence of famine shifted from Asia to Africa, with the average world population affected by famines declining from 788 million people (1957-63) to 264 million people (1978-84) (Johnson 1975: 17; Reutlinger and Castillo 1994: 149).

their numbers and analyse the causes. Though most of these exercises lack consensus, are ridden with conceptual difficulties and methodological differences, and fail to arrive at a conclusive definitional, measurement and vulnerability criteria, the important aspect to note is that the problem of food has attracted attention from economists, sociologists, anthropologists, policy-makers, and various governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies at local, national, regional and international levels. Routine engagement with problems of hunger and malnutrition, and more recently global food security, at least signifies that the issues are accorded importance, though it might not mean that they are necessarily being taken care of.

It terms of estimates of hunger and malnourishment, pure statistical projections, especially involving longer time frames, are unreliable because different countries or regions have different resource endowments and capacities, varied production, distribution and consumption relationships that are influenced by domestic, economic, social and political factors, institutions and policy changes. Data on hunger and famine are invariably based on data given by governments, which often prefer to present the situation in a more favourable light than it really is, resulting in wrong estimates, delaying relief efforts and increasing suffering and deaths. Secrecy surrounds availability of information on output figures, harvests etc. Failure to ensure detailed, appropriate and regular reporting on crop production and shortage in every nation makes it very difficult to analyse the world food situation at any point in time and prepare any meaningful plans to avoid food crisis. Hence, any meaningful assessment of the food situation must go beyond statistical projections to include policy implications of the projected demand for food; the likely production or supply of food; and the likely distribution of available food supply (Aziz 1977: 18).

The discussion in this chapter has made it evident that food security is a multifaceted and multidimensional issue, influenced by a variety of social, economic, political and cultural aspects. “Despite a great deal of discussion and debate...the underlying issues are still very confused and different groups of people in different parts of the world continue to look at the food problem from their own particular angle...The food situation itself and forecasts about its future are clouded by so many imponderables that predictions swing from deep pessimism to cautious optimism” (Aziz 1977: 15). Individual experience of hunger is probably the closest aspect of food security,

followed by household's access to the basic bundle of foodstuffs constituting a balanced diet in terms of nutrition and calories. Food security also signifies locally, socially and culturally determined food preferences. Thus, being highly context specific and subject oriented, determining and ascertaining food security is not easy. The authority for directing food security related obligations and responsibility is also complex, ranging from national governments, to regional and international inter-governmental organizations.

Global food security is 'unpredictable and fragile', susceptible to quick and sudden changes (Shaw 2007: 115). Hunger numbers are still large and forbid complacency. The task of feeding the hungry is not simply one of increasing production, there will always remain the problem of getting the produce to those who need it. Lack of income will preclude significant reduction of hunger, because those most in need of food will not have access to it. Increasing production through agriculture must be supplemented by increasing opportunities for employment and income to alleviate poverty and enable people to purchase adequate food. The reduction of inequality, both within and among nations, is essential. Thus, in coping with the global food problem, the internal as well as the international problem of distribution must be dealt with. Concerns with world hunger have shifted from population to food production to income/purchasing power, which influence the incidence of undernutrition (Leathers and Foster 2005: 123-124; Eide et al. 1984: v-vi).

The demand for food, determined by population, food price, and income/purchasing power is juxtaposed with the supply of food, determined by agricultural productivity, physical resource base, technological advancement, access to international and domestic, mediated through national and international institutions, along with maldistribution of food in the world, over-consumption in the developed countries and widespread undernourishment in the developing countries. Issues like role of women, war and conflict, and world trade in food and agricultural products have significantly impacted food security and hunger. While all these long-established factors still hold good and continue to impact the world food problem, newer challenges – expansion of agribusiness corporations, advent of biotechnology, environment and climate change, and biofuels – have added further dimensions to it, making global food

security more complex. As causal factors, they are inextricably interconnected with each other and form components of larger socio-economic development.

Food security is variously impacted by the process of globalisation, broadening of the human security concept to incorporate non-traditional threats and growing relevance of new actors, like the international organisations, NGOs and MNCs. By way of response, the umbrella concept of global food security encompasses establishing an overarching right to food paradigm to understand the issues involved, providing policy advice to address the multiple causes that enable vulnerable groups to cope with hunger, including food aid. It is beyond doubt that a consistent and long-term upward shift is occurring in world food prices, largely superseding the growth in income of the world's poorest people, forcing their purchasing power farther below the level necessary to obtain even the basic minimum adequate amount of food, juxtaposed with the demands of the rich, who can choose what to consume. The urgent need for an international approach to the world food situation is all too evident and, thus, brings us to the question of the capacity of the international community to respond to such a predicament adequately and effectively. Has the international community confronted this problem in a meaningful way? Has it systematically examined the alternatives available to mitigate the impacts of these trends on people?

Global food security is one of the most dominant challenges for the international community. The critical element in this junction is the emergence and strengthening of global governance and the international institutional arrangement, which are involved in issues related to food security and respond to situations of hunger and undernutrition at the global level. While some agencies and funds of the UN system, FAO, WFP, and IFAD, are directly concerned with food and agriculture, for others, WHO and UNICEF, hunger is a focus because of linkages to different issues. There are still other institutions, like the World Bank, which have progressively incorporated concerns of food within their otherwise strictly economic mandate. The following chapter focuses on this specific element of the international institutional architecture, by way of introducing and providing an overarching framework of the existing and ever-developing UN system, regional associations, and NGO initiatives. The endeavour is to understand the nature, mandate and functioning, of these institutions, their intersection with the various dimensions of the world food problem.

## CHAPTER III

# International Institutional Architecture of Food

*We call on all parties (governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector) to reinforce their efforts so as to act as an international alliance against hunger to achieve the world food security targets...with this aim, parties should promote coordinated action...*

- **International Alliance Against Hunger**, Declaration adopted at the World Food Summit: Five years later, 10-13 June 2002, Rome

*The world is undoubtedly a market. But it is not by any stretch of the imagination a community. It has some community institutions – the UN and its “family” of Specialized Agencies – but little community content...*

- **Barbara Ward** (1975: x)

### **Introduction**

The previous chapter has amply demonstrated that global food security is multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral, involving manifold actors at different levels and has assumed increasing prominence in the agendas of several international organisations. The 2007-2008 food crisis resulted in the UN and its specialised agencies, the IFIs, several regional organisations and NGOs promptly responding with many innovative initiatives and commitments to combat food insecurity. Their response provides an useful backdrop to the overall institutional architecture of global food security. The Committee on Social Economic and Cultural Rights (CESCR 2008: 2-3), in its *Statement on World Food Crisis*, urged states “to oversee and coordinate responses to the food crisis”. The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, called for “coordinated reaction from the international community...guided by the obligations of all States under international law to respect the right to adequate food” to address both short-term impacts and the structural causes of soaring food prices (Schutter 2008: 20).

The UN CEB Communiqué, issued after a meeting of the Executive Heads of the UN specialised agencies, funds and programmes and BWIs in Berne, 28-29 April 2008, under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, agreed on a common strategy of immediate assistance to reduce the nutritional and health impacts of the food crisis and the ensuing social tensions, followed by short-to-medium-to-long term actions to



prevent such crisis in the future.<sup>1</sup> A High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on Global Food Security Crisis, established in April 2008 by the UN Secretary-General, developed the *Comprehensive Framework for Action* (CFA) (updated in 2010) to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations, build long-term resilience and contribute to global food and nutrition security. This was followed by a High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All, 26-27 January 2009, Madrid, to review the progress made since the establishment of the HLTF. The Madrid meeting witnessed participation not only from the UN system and the governments, but also from private entities and CSOs.

FAO hosted an emergency three-day High-Level Conference on Food Security, 3-5 June 2008, in Rome, with 181 governments pledging to address the causes and effects of soaring global food prices by reducing trade barriers and market distorting policies, and boosting agricultural production to combat rising food prices. FAO approved a declaration resolving to increase investment in agriculture by calling for swift help for small-holder farmers in poor countries who are in need of seed, fertilisers and animal feed in time for approaching planting season. It also called for \$1.7 billion in new funding to provide low-income countries with agricultural support,<sup>2</sup> and decided to continue with FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices, launched in December 2007 that works primarily with small farmers to ensure success of next planting season.

IFAD, as a short-term response, made available \$200 million, from its existing loans and grants, to provide an immediate boost to agricultural production in the developing world and enable poor farmers to access essential inputs such as seed and fertilizers. It undertook joint assessment missions with FAO, WFP and the World Bank in Africa, Asia and Latin America to boost production of smallholder family farms.<sup>3</sup> WFP confronted the crisis through its *Strategic Plan 2008-2013*, which included food, cash and voucher support, new nutritious products to prevent and treat malnutrition and Purchase for Progress (P4P) that opened new markets for small scale farmers (WFP 2008). Aiming to meet the food needs of about 100 million hungry and crisis-affected people in 77 counties and faced with a deep funding crisis due to slashing of government aid budgets, WFP made special appeal for US\$ 755 million in additional

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Chief Executives Board (CEB) Communiqué, issued on 29 April 2008, Berne, Switzerland, is available at: [http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/foodcrisis/ceb\\_cmunique\\_29apr08.htm](http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/foodcrisis/ceb_cmunique_29apr08.htm)

<sup>2</sup> See FAO (2008), *Report of the High-level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, 3-5 June 2008, Rome, HLC/08/REP*.

<sup>3</sup> See, *IFAD's Response to the Food Price Increases*, REPL.VIII/3/R.4, 8 July 2008.

funding to cover the high cost of food and fuel. This was met in May 2003, with 31 countries donating a collective of US\$ 460 million and Saudi Arabia donating US\$ 500 million, leaving additional US\$ 14 million for urgent hunger needs.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of the 2008 food crisis, the IMF (2008a: 23)) advice to the countries included putting in place measure, like targeted transfer programmes as part of social safety nets and balancing financing and adjustment in the context of country-specific conditions and priorities, to protect the poor, while simultaneously maintaining macroeconomic stability and growth. The IMF has undertaken country-specific surveillance and diagnosis through country teams and is offering policy advice on fiscal, monetary, exchange rate and trade aspects. It assists countries is designing and implementing tax, tariff and transfer programmes and is prepared for quick disbursement of funds to countries facing balance of payment deficits (IMF 2008: 35).

The World Bank created a \$1.2 billion rapid financing facility in May 2008, the Global Food Crisis Response Programme (GFRP),<sup>5</sup> as part of its New Deal on Global Food Policy, which embraces expanding social security programmes targeted at the poor over the short-term and advancing agricultural productivity as a long-term response. The GFRP's size was increased in April 2009 to US\$ 2 billion to encompass Food Price Crisis Response (FPCR), a trust fund of US\$ 200 million for fast-tracking of substantial resources for food crisis response.<sup>6</sup> Between May and June 2008, grants were approved for Djibouti (US\$ 5 million), Haiti (US\$ 10 million), Liberia (US\$ 10 million), Tajikistan (US\$ 9 million) and Yemen (US\$ 10 million) to scale up safety net programmes and develop an insurance scheme against food inflation (World Bank 2008a: 12). In April 2010 the Bank launched the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a multilateral mechanism including both public and private sector financing window, to be implemented as a Financial Intermediary Fund for which the Bank serves as a trustee. The donors pledged a total

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<sup>4</sup> See, the UN System Response to the World Food Security Crisis (as of September 2008), available at: [http://www.un.org/en/issues/food/taskforce/FACT\\_SHEET.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/issues/food/taskforce/FACT_SHEET.pdf); and "WFP completes \$755 million appeal with Saudi Pledge", available at: <http://www.wfp.org/node/183>

<sup>5</sup> World Bank (2008), *Framework Document for Proposed Loans, Credits, and Grants in the Amount of US\$ 1.2 Billion Equivalent for a Global Food Crisis Response Program*, is available at: [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/06/30/000333038\\_2008063001046/Rendered/PDF/438410BR0REVIS10and0IDAR20081016212.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/06/30/000333038_2008063001046/Rendered/PDF/438410BR0REVIS10and0IDAR20081016212.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> See *Progress Report: Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP)*, 27 March 2009 and *Progress Report: Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP)*, 29 December 2010.

amount of US\$ 971.5 million to the GAFSP, of which 57 per cent, amounting to US\$ 557.2 million for the public sector window, has been received as of 31 August 2011.<sup>7</sup>

The Group of 8 (G8)<sup>8</sup> Summit, 7-8 July 2008, Hokkaido Toyaho (Japan), featured the twin themes of soaring oil and food prices, and climate change. It committed over US\$ 10 billion to support food aid, nutrition interventions, social protection activities and measures to increase agricultural output in affected countries. International coordination and global partnership on agriculture and food were emphasised – integrating international institutions, the UN, FAO, WFP, Bretton Woods, with the developing country governments, the private sector, civil society and the donors – to ensure food security for all.<sup>9</sup> At the L’Aquila (Italy) G-8 Summit, 8-10 July 2009, the heads of the states, adopted the *L’Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security*, agreeing to partner with and provide financial and technical assistance to vulnerable countries and regions in developing and implementing their own food security and agricultural strategies through strengthening local and global governance.

At FAO World Summit on Food Security, 16-18 November 2009, Rome (2009-WSFS), 60 heads of states vowed ‘urgent action’ to eradicate hunger and based their commitments and actions on the following principles to: invest in country-owned plans; foster strategic coordination at national, regional and global level of governance; improve efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, and coordination of multilateral institutions; and ensure sustained investment in agriculture, food security, nutrition and rural development. A ‘twin-track approach’ was advocated that included direct action for the most vulnerable, and sustainable medium- and long-term programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty and realise the RTF. These were called the ‘Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security’. However, no new financial commitments were made, except for urging the wealthy nations to honour pledges of US\$ 20 billion in aid made at L’Aquila.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> GAFSP donors include: Australia (Public Sector); Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Public Sector); Canada (Public and Private Sectors); Ireland (Public Sector); Korea (Public Sector); Spain (Public Sector); and the Unites States (Public and Private Sectors).

<sup>8</sup> The G8 consists of: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the US, Canada and Russia. The European Union participates in the G8 but does not take Presidency or host Summits.

<sup>9</sup> *The G8 Leaders Statement on Global Food Security*, G8 Hokkaido Toyaho Summit 2008, is available at: [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2008/doc/doc080709\\_04\\_en.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2008/doc/doc080709_04_en.html)

<sup>10</sup> See, *Feeding the World, Eradicating Hunger*, WSFS 2009/INF/2, Background Paper to World Summit on Food Security, 16-18 November 2009.

The Group of 20 (G-20)<sup>11</sup>, 11-12 November 2010 Seoul Summit, invited relevant international organizations and bilateral and multilateral channels to develop “proposals to better manage and mitigate risks of food price volatility without distorting market behaviour” and “enhance food security policy coherence and coordination and increase agricultural productivity and food availability, including by advancing innovative result-based mechanisms, promoting responsible agriculture investment, fostering smallholder agriculture...”<sup>12</sup> A meeting of the G20 Ministers of Agriculture, June 2011, launched the Agricultural Market Information System as a collaborative platform for countries, international institutions and the private sector to share food information, strengthen reliability of data and promote policy dialogue, managed by a joint Secretariat located in FAO (FAO 2011b November: 91).

The aforesaid initiatives and promises illustrate that the international community is significantly concerned about global food security. However, are these simply indicative of a crisis-response or signs of a resolve to undertake enduring efforts to address the root causes of the food problem? How have international institutions framed the issue of food in their agendas? How do the various organizations working on food-related issues coordinate their activities? This chapter looks at multilateral governance of the food through the role played by international institutions: the UN System, FAO, WFP, IFAD, the BWIs, specifically the World Bank, the WTO, regional mechanisms and NGOs. The UN system coordinating mechanisms are discussed along with inter-organizational cooperation and turf wars. The endeavour is to map the overarching international institutional architecture of food, the differences in the approach of these very distinct international institutions (in terms of mandate and structure) to the global food problem and delineate the roles they assume vis-à-vis the identified food-related concerns – the right to food, policy advice and food aid.

### **Inter-Governmental International Organizations**

Conventionally, the responsibility for addressing issues of food and agriculture was strictly the concern of the individual country governments, dealt with at the domestic

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<sup>11</sup> The G20 consists of: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the European Union.

<sup>12</sup> For full text of the G20 Seoul Summit Leaders’ Declaration November 11-12, 2010, see, [http://www.g20.org/Documents2010/11/seoulsummit\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.g20.org/Documents2010/11/seoulsummit_declaration.pdf)

and local levels. This has changed, given the increasing globalisation of the food system and the involvement of various international actors and institutions with food-related issues. Alleviation of hunger has been on the UN agenda since its inception, documented and analysed in numerous publications. The following sections provide brief initiation into the organisational structure and mandate of the UN system followed by its main food agencies, FAO, WFP and IFAD. The World Bank's functional record over the decades is analysed in terms of its lending for agricultural and rural sectors. The IMF and GATT/WTO are discussed briefly in relation to compensatory financing mechanism and the importance of food and agricultural trade, respectively. The larger attempt is to comprehensively understand their interface with the various dimensions of food-related concerns and with each other.

### **The United Nations System**

The UN System is understood to include the complex of specialized agencies, funds, programmes, and research and training institutes, established by intergovernmental agreement, having international functional responsibilities, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields through information exchange, standard-setting and development promotion. In addition to securing international cooperation in socio-economic fields, the UN system is especially valuable in providing technical assistance to governments (Pearse 1980: 245).

After the end of World War II, it was felt that achieving a peaceful world depended upon functional rather than a political approach to international relations – which meant that nations were to devote more attention to working together on solving some problems of technical nature and spend less time on political debate. Immediate awareness regarding post-War reconstruction propelled the creation of the IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) in 1944, even before the UN was established in 1945. Though very different in character, these organizations have become important actors in the international financial and economic relations. Other specialized agencies came into existence partly due to needs of reconstruction and partly due to technical concerns.

The ILO, FAO, the WHO and the UNESCO had a reconstruction role, including social and functional purposes, and together came to be known as the 'Big Four'

among the Specialised Agencies, later joined by the UNIDO to become the ‘Big Five’ (Williams 1987: 3). Despite dealing with specific functional sectors, the activities of these agencies impinge so widely on the economic and social aspects of the member countries that they become politically charged. The primary purpose of technical organisations – the UPU, the ITU, the IMO, the WMO, the ICAO, the WIPO and the UNWTO – was to establish global standards on specialised services, which will enable member states to cooperate internationally to achieve effective technical functioning domestically (Williams 1987: 29-30).

The UN General Assembly recognised the problems of wasting food as early as 1948, and food shortages and famine in 1951, and asked the ECOSOC to explore the possibilities of creating an emergency food reserve to make food promptly available to states affected by serious shortages and famine, calling into attention the need to increase food production in 1952.<sup>13</sup> The crux of the food problem was perceived as resource mobilisation during emergency, availability of plentiful food stocks when disaster struck and speedy transportation to disaster-stricken areas. According to the General Assembly (1954: 14) international and national actions were required:

- (a) To raise the levels of production and standards of consumption of food in areas of the world where famine or chronic malnutrition is a major problem;
- (b) To prevent unduly large short-term fluctuations in agricultural prices and to this end to promote the rational disposal of intermittent agricultural surpluses.

This approach of the UN corresponds with the larger objectives designated in the *First UN Development Decade* (1960s) of ‘self-sustaining growth of the economy of the individual nations’.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly emphasised on the specific problems of food shortages in developing countries, urging measures to increase food production and storage facilities in developing countries (General Assembly 1974: 5-6). The Seventh Special Session of the General Assembly noted the urgent need to introduce necessary changes in patterns of world food production and implement trade policy measures to rapidly increase production and export earning of the developing countries. The importance

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<sup>13</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/202 (III) – *The Problem of Wasting Food in Certain Countries* (third session, 8 December 1948); Resolution A/RES/525 (VI) – *Food and Famine*, (sixth session, 26 January 1951); and Resolution A/RES/628 (VII) – *Increasing Food Production* (seventh session, 21 December 1952).

<sup>14</sup> General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1710 (XVI) – *United Nations Development Decade: A Programme for International Economic Cooperation* (sixteenth session, 19 December 1961).

of food aid as a transitional measure was recognised and all the countries were urged to accept a minimum food aid target (General Assembly 1975: 7-8).

It is proper to launch the discussion of the UN system's engagement with global food security with the 1974 World Food Conference (1974-WFC), 5-6 November, Rome,<sup>15</sup> the first UN-sponsored inter-governmental meeting at ministerial level. The 1974-WFC took place at a time when the global dimensions of food were significantly being altered due to poor harvests and changed equations between exporting and importing countries, creating the need for strategic responses from the international institutions. It was faced with three principal issues: the short-term crisis; building up an international system of reserves to prepare for future harvest failure; and long-term agricultural improvement. Referring to the actual number of hungry people as "the grim centre of the world's food problem" (United Nations 1974a: 55), the 1974-WFC turned the spotlight on food crisis as the most pressing international concern requiring concerted world-wide action. The objectives of world food security were identified as ensuring that all countries (United Nations 1974b: 13),

- 1) can meet emergencies that occur in an uncertain world without a substantial cutback in supplies of basic foodstuff to their populations;
- 2) can rely on the availability of supplies on commercial or concessional terms when formulating their own development strategies;
- 3) can make production decisions in the agricultural sector in the knowledge of reasonable market stability and the continuance of stable trading relationships.

The 1974-WFC adopted the *Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition* (UDEHM), identifying eradication of hunger as the common objective of all countries and the international community. It recognised the fundamental responsibilities of the governments to "work together for higher food production and a more equitable and efficient distribution of food between and within countries... formulate appropriate food and nutrition policies integrated in over-all socio-economic and agricultural development plans..." and the "common responsibility of the entire international community to ensure the availability at all time of adequate

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<sup>15</sup> It resulted from simultaneous emergency calls made by the Fourth Conference of Heads of State of Non-Aligned countries, 5-9 September 1973, at Algiers, and the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to hold an ministerial level inter-governmental conference, under UN auspices, to consider the world food situation, leading to the adoption of General Assembly Resolution (XXVIII) on 17 December 1973, at its twenty-eighth session, to convene the 1974-WFC. A Preparatory Committee, open to all governments and recognised observers, carried out the preparations for the conference. See, the *Report of the Preparatory Committee for the World Food Conference on its Third Session* (E/CONF. 65/6), along with *Assessment of the World Food Situation: Present and Future* (E/CONF. 65/3) and *The World Food Problem: Proposals for National and International Action* (E/CONF. 65/4).

world supplies of basic food stuffs” (United Nations 1975: 6-9). All the countries were called upon to cooperate in establishing the International Fund for Agriculture Development (Resolution XIII) and the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (Resolution XVI) (United Nations 1975: 12-14).

The 1974-WFC resolutions aimed at achieving the objectives and strategies of food production (Resolution I), policies and programmes to improve nutrition (Resolution V), and a desirable balance between population and food supply (Resolution IX), to be attained through agricultural and rural development (Resolution II) and food and agricultural research, extension and training (Resolution IV). Evolution of the world food security system was envisaged through improved food aid policy (Resolution XVIII) and international trade, stabilisation and agricultural adjustment (Resolution XIX). The crucial relation between women and food (Resolution VIII) and the need for food aid for victims of African colonial wars (Resolution XV) were recognised, along with specific resolutions on fertilizers (Resolution III), pesticides (Resolution X) and seed industry development (Resolution XII) (United Nations 1975).

Disappointment was expressed as no “great new initiatives were taken, no new vision was spelt out” (Power and Holenstein 1980: 180-191) and the operative paragraphs of the 1974-WFC resolution retained the traditional food policy frame and consisted entirely of uncontroversial and non-political recommendations and an assortment of technical measures to be taken by appropriate international organisations (Bergesen 1978: 38-39). It was asserted that apart from agreeing on the gloomy scenario that the world food situation was bound to grow worse, the 1974-WFC merely offered the rhetorically technical solutions for increasing food production through transfer, adaptation and dissemination of technology, rather than equitable distribution of food, echoing the dominant measures of the time (George 1976: 15).

However, the most significant contributions of the 1974-WFC included, “shifting the problem of hunger from the technical arena to a more social and political one” (Jonsson 1984: 23), recognising food crisis as an immediate humanitarian problem, facilitating an understanding of the concept of world food security, and initiating procedures to alleviate hunger by laying the foundations of an institutionalised framework for cooperation (Marei 1976: 95-96; Shaw 2007: 143-145). The 1974-WFC was ‘the most prominent and spectacular indication’ (Brown and Eckholm



1974: 226) of multilateral organizational response to an unprecedented world food crisis, laying the groundwork for future cooperative and collaborative efforts.

The World Food Council was established in 1974 “to function as an organ of the United Nations, reporting to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council”.<sup>16</sup> The Council was expected “to give guidance and direction to international efforts to solve the world food problem” (Hannah 1977: 109) by providing overarching, protracted and integrated attention to food security policies related to production, trade and aid, encompassing all relevant agencies of the UN system, with special attention to the poorest and most seriously affected countries (Marei 1976: 93; George 1976: 275; Shaw 2007: 167-168). However, the Council was perceived to have a heavy American slant, its actual operations far removed from the agenda (laid out in 1974-WFC Resolution XXII.4). Its sessions represent ‘procedural wrangling and intercontinental in-fighting’ as western delegates merely reiterating their 1974-WFC position (George 1976: 278-279). Consisting of only Ministers of Agriculture as members, the Council’s role was a confusing mixture of general advocacy and action plans, with insufficient monitoring mechanism (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 42). In its final session in 1992, the Council observed that it “has fallen short of achieving the political leadership and coordination role expected from its founders”,<sup>17</sup> and was finally discontinued in 1996, its functions absorbed by FAO and WFP.<sup>18</sup>

The importance of nutrition, highlighted by the 1974-WFC, was institutionalised through the establishment of a Sub-Committee on Nutrition (SCN), under the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in 1977 as a coordinating body and harmonization forum for food and nutrition policy within the UN.<sup>19</sup> Following the renaming of the ACC as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for

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<sup>16</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/3348 (XXIX) – *World Food Conference* (twenty-ninth session, 17 December 1974).

<sup>17</sup> See, *Report of the World Food Council on the Work of its Eighteenth Session*, General Assembly Official Records, Supplement No. 19 (A/47/19), Forty-Seventh Session, 23-26 June 1992.

<sup>18</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/50/277 – *Further Measures for the Restructuring and Revitalizing of the United Nations in the Economic, Social and Related Fields* (fiftieth session, 1 July 1996). Another failed institutional effort was the Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment (CGFPI), established in January 1975, pursuant to paragraphs 14 and 15 of Resolution XXII of the 1974-WFC, and terminated in June 1978.

<sup>19</sup> ECOSOC Resolution 2107 (LXIII) – *Institutional Arrangements Relating to Nutrition*, adopted at the 84<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting on 3 August 1977. Originally known as the Co-ordination Committee, it was modified to Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in 1948 to distinguish it from the ECOSOC’s own Coordination Committee, subsequently renamed as the (CEB).

Coordination (CEB) in 2001,<sup>20</sup> the ACC/SCN continued to function as the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), reporting to the CEB. The UNSCN is mandated to advance cooperation in international, regional and national efforts to end malnutrition undertaken by the UN system agencies, funds and programmes through communication, partnership building, assessment, monitoring and review of programme implementation.<sup>21</sup> As part of advocacy, it publishes *Reports on World Nutrition Situation* since 1987 and *SCN Nutrition Policy Papers* since 2005. In 2003, *Nutrition – A Foundation for Development* was launched, compiling the latest research in nutrition and integrating it with other development sectors, as a dialogue between the nutrition community and development practitioners.

The UN efforts to address hunger-related issues since the 1970s were interwoven with the debates around the New International Economic Order (NIEO),<sup>22</sup> which recognised the “desirability of integrating food and commodity concerns into a comprehensive global framework” (Thompson 1981: 202). The NIEO aimed at removing the widening gap between the developed and the developing countries to accelerate economic and social development, and redress inequalities and injustices. For the South it signified economic justice, to be achieved through favourable, stable and guaranteed prices for exports of the underdeveloped countries, greater access to Northern industrial markets, debt relief and increased aid (George 1979: 1-2).

The UN Committee of the Whole (COW), established in 1977, took up issues of food and agriculture in March 1979. Interestingly, statements made by the representatives of UN specialized agencies at this session brought out diverse perspectives on hunger. While Nurul Islam of FAO held that slow progress in agricultural development and international trade were the problems, Sartaj Aziz of the IFAD emphasised the lack of structural change at international and domestic levels, Montague Yudelam of the World Bank pointed out the increasing dependency on North America as a concern, Bradford Morse of the UNDP blamed neglect of technical cooperation, and WHO’s S. Malafatopoulos stressed malnutrition as a health issue (Miljan 1980: 7-16). The COW

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<sup>20</sup> ECOSOC Decision 2001/321 – *Further Consideration of the Annual Overview Report on the Administrative Committee on Coordination*, adopted at the 45<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting on 24 October 2001.

<sup>21</sup> See, UNSCN (2006), *Strategic Framework*, approved by thirty-third session of the SCN; and UNSCN (2006), *Action Plan 2006-2010 and Biennium Budget 2006-2007*.

<sup>22</sup> Resolution A/RES/S-6/3201 (S-v) - *The Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order*, adopted by the Sixth Special Session of General Assembly on 1 May 1974.

session represented the first ever attempt made by a General Assembly Committee to devote a full session to strategise on world hunger.

The *Third UN Development Decade* spelt out “agriculture and rural development and the eradication of hunger and malnutrition” as essential aims for the 1980s (General Assembly 1980: 112). The stress was on acceleration of food and agricultural production with the aim of improving national and collective food self-sufficiency. Donor countries and IFIs were urged to increase investment in agriculture in developing countries and the international community was directed to provide support measures, agricultural inputs, fertilisers, pesticides and seeds. Ensuring food security depended maintaining an adequate level of internationally coordinated nationally held food reserve and international food aid. The IMF was directed to consider the feasibility of providing additional balance-of-payment support for meeting increase in food deficit bills of poor countries within its financing facilities. It also encouraged rural industrialisation, establishment and strengthening of agro-industries and supporting agricultural co-operatives (General Assembly 1980: 112-113).

The UNU’s World Hunger Programme, despite having food and nutrition policy analysis and planning as sub-programmes, adopted a rather technical orientation to research and training, typically focusing on an econometric approach, according marginal attention to problems of hunger (Eide et al. 1984: vii-viii). Faced with growing criticisms and the need to consider implications of food as a fundamental human right, an inter-disciplinary process was initiated to allow scholars with widely different world-views and experiences to come together and focus attention on the common problems of hunger and food security, culminating in UNU sponsored workshops on “Food and Nutrition Policy” (1979), and “Food as a Human Right” (1981) (Eide et al. 1984: ix; Wallerstein 1981).

By the *Fourth UN Development Decade*, priorities were focussed on eradication of poverty and hunger, human resource development, and environment. Food security was recognised as “a major aspect of the fight against hunger and poverty”, calling “for an integrated approach to food production and consumption” with four goals:

- (a) The elimination of starvation and death caused by famine;
- (b) A substantial reduction in malnutrition and mortality among children;
- (c) A tangible reduction of chronic hunger; and
- (d) The elimination of major nutritional diseases (General Assembly 1990: 132).

Attention was elicited for increasing agricultural output, calling for policies and measures to distribute economic progress (employment and income generation) and special and supplementary actions (provision of cheap, subsidised food and income support, local self-help and community development) directly targeting benefits to the poor and vulnerable sections, especially women and children. The scope of food aid to go beyond emergency situations was hinted at (General Assembly 1990: 131-132).

The new millennium began with many hopes and even more promises. The first of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (adopted at the UN Millennium Summit, 6-8 September 2000)<sup>23</sup> envisages “eradicating extreme poverty and hunger”, with the targets of halving, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and whose income is less than US\$ 1 a day (UN Millennium Project 2005: xxiv-xxv). In an attempt to invigorate the international community in meeting the MDGs, the ECOSOC in 2007 adopted two new functions of Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). While the DCF engaged development partners in a dialogue on coherence and effectiveness of international development cooperation, the 2007 AMR focussed on ‘Strengthening effort to eradicate poverty and hunger including through the global partnership for development’, through roundtable discussion and information sharing on implementation of national development strategies among member states, UN system, other institutional stakeholders, NGOs, academics and private sector.<sup>24</sup>

Within the broad agenda of the UN, while most of the agencies are obliquely engaged in food security related issues, FAO, WFP and IFAD are specifically mandated to focus on food and nutrition security, alleviating hunger and poverty and promoting agricultural and rural development. Progressively, organisations like the World Bank, with no specific food mandate, have made forays in these issue areas (see Table 3.1). The UN system has sponsored and conducted a series of conferences, meetings and summits that have contributed to shifting and broadening of focus regarding various aspects of food and nutrition security (see Table 3.2). The sheer number of such

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<sup>23</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/55/2 – *The United Nations Millennium declaration* (fifty-fifth session, 18 September 2000).

<sup>24</sup> See, ECOSOC (2007), *Report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger including through the global partnership for development*, E/2007/71, Substantive Session of 2007, 2-7 July 2007; and United Nations (2007), *Strengthening Efforts to Eradicate Poverty and Hunger: Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council*, New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination.

initiatives represent that, “Our Planet is in the middle of an unprecedented dialogue about itself... the whole world seems full of moving delegates, declarations, speeches, disclaimers, corridors of rumours, endless shifts behind the scenes” (Ward 1975: ix).

**Table 3.1: UN Bodies with an Interest in Food and Food Security**

<b>UN Body/Agency</b>	<b>Food/Food Security Interest</b>
FAO	Agricultural production, agrarian reforms, marketing, trade, food security, nutrition, rural development, income generation, food emergency/early warning
IFAD	Agricultural production, rural development, agrarian reform, income generation
WFP	Coordination of food aid policy through CFA, supply of developmental and emergency food aid for food security and nutrition
World Bank	Macro-economic and sectoral planning and policy, programme and project lending for food security, CGIAR secretariat, structural adjustment, nutrition improvement
IAEA	Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, located at IAEA headquarters, International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation (ICGFI), coordinating global work in this field between IAEA, FAO and WHO
ILO	Employment, income generation, training, entitlement programmes, social protection, rural development
IMF	Macro-economic policy, financing of food imports, structural adjustment
UN-INSTRAW	Women and food security
UN Centre for Human Rights	Food as a human right
UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)	Food security and viable and sustainable settlements
UN Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs	Food policy in the context of social development
UN Regional Commissions	Food security and nutrition in regional economic and social policy context
UN Secretariat	General oversight, political questions
UNCTAD	Food trade, agricultural subsidies
UNCTC	Food production and trade of TNCs
UNDHA	Humanitarian operations

UNDP	Technical cooperation for food production and consumption, management of round-table process, grant aid for programmes and projects for food security and nutrition
UNEP	Food production, food security and environmentally sustainable development
UNESCO	Formal and informal education on food and nutrition related issues
UNFPA	Population, development and food
UNHCR	Refugee nutrition (with WFP)
UNICEF	Health and nutrition programmes for children and mothers
UNIDO	Agro-industry, food processing
UNITAR	Training programmes in food security, nutrition and related issues
UNRISD	Research on food and other issues
UNRWA	Food security and nutrition for Palestinian refugees
UNU (including WIDER)	Research on food and other issues
WHO	Health and nutrition policy and programmes
WTO	Food trade

Source: Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 43, Figure 1; Shaw 2007: 207, Figure 17.1

**Table 3.2: Select UN Conferences on Food-Related Issues, 1963-2010**

Date	UN Conferences and Summits
1963	Special Assembly of 29 eminent personalities, FAO, Rome, 14 March 1963 (issued <i>Man's Right to Freedom from Hunger</i> )
	First World Food Congress, June, Washington DC
1970	Second World Food Congress, 16-30 June, The Hague
1974	FAO World Food Conference, 5-6 November, Rome (1974-WFC) (establishment of World Food Council, International Fund for Agricultural Development, FAO Committee on World Food Security)
1975	FAO Global Information and Early Warning System established
	International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) established
1977	The World Food Conference, 27 June-1 July, IOWA State University, Ames
1979	The Committee of the Whole (COW) of the UN met in March to discuss the world's situation with respect to food and agriculture

	FAO World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), 7 July, Rome (adopted the <i>Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action</i> )
1985	World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 15-26 July, Nairobi <sup>25</sup>
1989	UN World Summit for Children, 29-30 September, New York
	International Conference on Agricultural Development, 13-16 November, Bellagio (adopted the <i>Bellagio Declaration: Overcoming Hunger in the 1990s</i> )
1991	FAO Conference on Agriculture and Environment, 15-19 April, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands (adopted the den Bosch Declaration and Agenda for Action on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development)
1992	UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), 3-14 June, Rio de Janeiro (adopted <i>UN Framework Convention on Climate Change</i> )
	International Conference on Water and the Environment, 26-31 June, Dublin
	FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition, 5-11 December, Rome (adopted <i>World Declaration and Plan of Action on Nutrition</i> )
	World Bank Conference on Overcoming Global Hunger, 30 November-1 December, Washington, DC <sup>26</sup>
1993	UN World Conference on Human Rights, 14-25 June, Vienna (adopted the <i>Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action</i> )
	NATO Advanced Research Workshop on Climate Change and World Food Security, 10-15 July, Oxford
	UN International Conference on Population and Development, 5-13 September, Cairo
1994	UN World Summit on Social Development, 6-12 March, Copenhagen
1995	Fourth UN Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, 4-15 September, Beijing <sup>27</sup>
	FAO International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, 17-23 June, Leipzig
1996	FAO World Food Summit, 13-17 November, Rome (adopted the <i>Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action</i> ) (1996-WFS)

<sup>25</sup> This conference was preceded by the First World Conference of the International Women's Year, 19 June-2 July 1975, Mexico; and the Second World Conference of the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 14-30 July 1980, Copenhagen.

<sup>26</sup> For proceedings of this conference, see Serageldig and Landell-Mills (1994).

<sup>27</sup> This conference was followed by Five-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 5) held in the General Assembly, 5-9 June 2000; Ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing + 10) held during the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), 28 February-11 March 2005; and 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 15) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, 1-12 March 2010.

	UN Millennium Summit, 6-8 September, New York (adopted the <i>United Nation Millennium Declaration</i> )
1997	Adoption of the <i>Kyoto Protocol</i> on 11 December, entered into force on 16 February 2005
2002	International Conference on Financing for Development, 18-22 March, Monterrey
	FAO World Food Summit: Five Years Later (2002-WFS+5), 10-13 June, Rome (adopted the <i>International Alliance Against Hunger</i> )
	World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002-WSSD), 26 August-4 September, Johannesburg
	World Millennium + 5 Summit, 14-16 September, New York
2006	FAO International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), 7-10 March, Porto Alegre
2008	UN CEB Communiqué issued April, after a meeting of the Executive Heads of the UN specialised agencies, funds and programmes and BWIs in Bern, 28-29 April, under the chairmanship of UN Secretary-General
	UN High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on Global Food Security Crisis established in April by UN Secretary-General
	World Bank Global Food Crisis Response Programme (GFRP) created in May
	FAO High-level Conference on Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, 3-5 June, Rome
	G-8 34 <sup>th</sup> Summit, 7-9 July, Japan
2009	UN Secretary General's High Level Meeting on Food Security for All, 26-27 January, Madrid
	Group-8 35 <sup>th</sup> Summit, 8-10 July, L'Aquila (adopted the <i>L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security</i> )
	FAO World Summit on Food Security, 16-18 November, Rome
2010	World Bank Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) launched in April
	G-20 5 <sup>th</sup> Summit, 11-12 November, Seoul

Source: Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 44, Figure 2; Shaw 2007: 277-278, Annex 24.1

### ***Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)***

The organisational genesis of FAO can be traced back to the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA), founded in Rome in 1905, with the broad technical task of collecting and publishing agricultural statistics and information, and to advise governments on common interests, protection and improvement of the condition of farmers (FAO 1985: 5). The IIA was limited in scope and impact in the context of a world where the idea of widespread international cooperation was itself very limited.



The ideational origins of FAO developed from the food movement that gained momentum during the inter-war period, highlighting the need for peace and freedom from want, and the ‘marriage of health and agriculture’ (Saouma 1993: 1; Abott 1992: 1), solemnised by Frank McDougall (Economic Advisor to the Australian Mission to the League of Nations), Boyd Orr (Nutritionist in Aberdeen, UK) and Stanley Bruce (High Commissioner in London and former Prime Minister of Australia).

At the end of World War II, the circumstances of food rationing, active government intervention on food distribution and trade, promise of science and technology in increasing agricultural output, and the growing desire for international machinery to solve world problems prompted US President Franklin D. Roosevelt to call an international conference on food and agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, in May-June 1943. The Conference recognised that “freedom from want means a secure, an adequate, and a suitable supply of food for every man” and emphasised “the fundamental interdependence of the consumer and the producer” (Shaw 2007: 3).<sup>28</sup> There was a consensus on the establishment of a permanent organization dealing with food and agriculture, to provide information and advice in nutritional and agricultural matters and to maintain international statistics.<sup>29</sup>

Two and a half years of preparatory work culminated in the establishment of FAO, at the first FAO Conference of representatives from 44 countries, in Quebec, Canada, 16 October-1 November 1945, as the first independent and one of the largest Specialised Agencies of the UN system. Sir John Boyd Orr was elected as its first Director-General. FAO, with the motto *Fiat Panis*, meaning ‘let there be bread’, began with its headquarters in Washington, DC, eventually shifted to Rome, Italy, in 1951. As of 2011, FAO has 191 member nations; one member organization, the European Union; and two associate members, the Faroe Islands and Tokelau and is present in more than 130 countries.<sup>30</sup> In 2010, FAO implemented 2670 projects with a total value of US\$ 903 million (FAO 2011a: 22). FAO, “created both because of the belief that internationalism held the key to a better world order and because of new attitudes that

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<sup>28</sup> Also see, D. Murray Lyon (1944), “The Hot Springs Conference”, *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 2 (3-4): 177-215.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed account of the origins of FAO and the events leading upto its formal establishment, see Hambidge 1955: 39-60; FAO 1985: 3-11; Phillips 1981: 3-18; and Shaw 2007: 3-11.

<sup>30</sup> FAO network includes 5 regional offices, 11 sub-regional offices, 1 multidisciplinary team, 74 country offices, 8 offices with technical officers/FAO Representatives, and 36 countries covered through multiple accreditation.

had been forming about questions of food and agriculture”, was mandated “to help build a food-secure world for present and future generations” (FAO 1980: 6). In the Preamble to FAO’s constitution, the accepting nations pledged ‘separate and collective action’ for the purpose of:

raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples under their respective jurisdictions;  
securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products;  
bettering the condition of rural populations;  
and thus contributing toward an expanding world economy and ensuring humanity’s freedom from hunger (FAO 2001a: 3).

The four basic functions of FAO include – collecting, analysing and disseminating information; providing policy advice to governments; serving as an international forum for consultations among its Member Nations; and technical cooperation in the field (Article 1 of FAO’s Constitution). FAO’s preview extends to fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forest products.

FAO began its journey in the immediate context of accumulating surpluses in few developed countries, and the need to restore food productivity and make food available for war-ravaged regions, along with long-term issues of production, distribution and consumption of food and agricultural products. In a ‘Special Meeting on Urgent Food Problems’, May 1946, Boyd Orr proposed the establishment of a World Food Board, either as a new international agency or by altering FAO’s constitution to enable its creation. Based on interrelationships between nutrition, health and agriculture with industry and trade, it envisaged to stabilize prices by buffer stock schemes, set up a world food reserve against famines and finance the disposal of surpluses to countries which most need them (FAO 1980: 7-8; Shaw 2007: 17, 24). The Preparatory Commission, established to examine the feasibility of the World Food Board, however, did not favour its creation and proposed instead the establishment of a ‘World Food Council’ or ‘Council of FAO’, created in 1947, replacing the original Executive Committee of FAO, to “keep the world food situation under continuous review and, when necessary, would promptly call emergency needs to the attention of governments...” (Shaw 2007: 29).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> A later suggestion by Norris E. Dodd to create an International Commodity Clearing House to channel available stocks to food-deficit countries, met with the same fate as the World Food Board.

To deal with the surplus issues and provide advice on problems arising out of balance-of-payments problems, the Committee on Commodity Problems (FAO-CCP) was established in 1949 purely as an advisory body to function under the supervision of the Council of FAO. In 1957, the CCP was made a committee of the Council of FAO and its functions were extended to reviewing all commodity problems affecting international production, trade, distribution and consumption; preparing statistical and analytical survey of world commodity situation; and advising the Council on policy issues. The CCP established a Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal in 1954, renamed as the Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD), primarily to reduce the impact of international use of surplus agricultural commodities as food aid on agricultural production and commercial trade in recipient countries. As one of its earliest activities, the CSSD drafted the *Guiding Lines and Principles of Surplus Disposal*, which though not legally binding, provided ‘consultative obligations’ (subsequently revised and expanded) (Shaw 2007: 32-35; Phillips 1981: 169).

FAO witnessed major transformation under Director-General B. R. Sen (1957-1967) as the swelling membership from the independent former colonies expected for it an ‘international frame of assistance’ (Abbott 1992: 3). Sen provided a new approach to world food security through the Freedom from Hunger Campaign (FFHC), which used voluntary aid funds to support development projects to be implemented by FAO. FFHC directed attention to non-market dimension of food issues and increased coordination between international organisations, national governments and NGOs (Abbott 1992: 3; Thompson 1981: 193). The FFHC was meant “primarily to alert public opinion to the continuing gravity of the world food problem” and to act “as the channel for support from the general public for field projects” (FAO 1980: 9). Launched on a five-year trial basis in 1960, the FFHC was extended through 1980, promoting balanced economic and social thought and action through information and education, research, and action (Sen, B. R. 1962: 605).

Sen also made an historic agreement with World Bank President George Woods in 1964, setting up FAO/IBRD Cooperative Programme, enabling the Bank to channelise massive capital for agriculture and rural development in developing countries. By this arrangement, FAO used its technical competence to identify and prepare potential projects for financing, which were appraised and supervised by the

Bank (Abbott 1992: 4).<sup>32</sup> FAO undertook many path-breaking efforts like conducting World Food Surveys since 1946, producing a comprehensive and uniform soil map of the world (1961) in collaboration with UNESCO, holding two major World Food Congresses (1963 and 1970), and forging global information and planning through the Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development (IWP) (endorsed in 1965 and prepared between 1967 and 1969).<sup>33</sup> The International Undertaking on World Food Security (1974),<sup>34</sup> represented common responsibility of the international community to prevent acute shortages and assure world food security, urging governments to undertake continuous consultations on global food problems, establish a global food information system and share information on food production and demand (United Nations 1974b: 171-181; 1975: 14; Thompson 1981: 196; FAO 1980: 62-63).

An important development was the Codex Alimentarius Commission (FAO/WHO CAC), set up in 1963 under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, as an intergovernmental standard-setting body to formulate and develop food standards based on sound scientific analysis. Its guidelines constitute internationally recognised benchmark for food safety and quality standards for protection of consumer health, promoting international trade in food through fair trade practices and facilitating coordination of all food standards work undertaken by international government and NGOs (FAO/WHO 2006). Though compliance with CAC standards is voluntary, it has assumed increasingly important role since the WTO accorded it a special status under the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreements in 1995, making it a satellite body of the WTO legal system (FAO/WHO

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<sup>32</sup> B. R. Sen established the FAO Industry Cooperation Programme (ICP) in 1966 to work in cooperation with the World Bank, regional development banks and other financial sources to identify, design and evaluate agricultural investments in developing countries, in an attempt to partner between agribusiness companies and the governments and provide an inroad for agro-allied companies into the UN system. Most successful commercial ventures of the ICP were probably Brazil's Amazonian region and combating trypanosomiasis in Africa. Following criticisms regarding penetration of corporations, particularly pesticide producers, into the UN, with substantial power to manoeuvre decision, Edouard Saouma dismantled ICP in 1978 (George 1976: 215-229; Gerlach 2008: 194-197; Simons 1976: 173). Also see, B. R. Sen (1982), *Towards a Newer World*, Dublin: Tycooly International Publishing Ltd

<sup>33</sup> See Report of the Thirteenth session of the Conference of FAO, 20 November-9 December 1965; Fourteenth session of the Conference of FAO, 4-23 November 1967; and Fifteenth session of the Conference of FAO, 8-27 November 1969. However, the draft document IWP plan ran into trouble regarding where the plan should concentrate (national or international level), what should be the unit of analysis (commodities or geography) and its authority over national decision-makers (Thompson 1981: 195), and was downsized as the *Perspective Study of World Agricultural Development* (PSWAD). See Report of the Sixteenth session of the Conference of FAO, 6-25 November 1971. Also see, Karl Fasbender (1970), "FAO Indicative World Plan", *Intereconomics*, 5 (6) June: 190-192.

<sup>34</sup> Adopted by the Sixty-Fourth Session of the Council of FAO, 18-29 November 1974, and subsequently endorsed by the 1974-WFC (Resolution XVII).

2006: 29-31; Poli 2004: 614-615). Through the CAC, FAO has strengthened its role as facilitator of international food trade and as a leading source of technical advice to developing countries on the introduction and application of standards and establishment of efficient and effective food control structures (FAO 2000a: 34-35).

By the mid-1970s, doubts appeared on the efficacy of international cooperation through the UN system to deal with global food problems. Questions were raised on the utility and relevance of FAO and the need for structural innovations was felt (Thompson 1981: 195). Voluntary pledges by governments made sustained budgeting uncertain and commodity price fluctuations resulted in decreasing food resources. The election of Edouard Saouma as the Director-General of FAO in 1975 (1976-1981), followed by two consecutive terms (1981-1987 and 1987-1993), marked a major juncture in FAO's history, not so much in terms of change in strategies, but shifting emphasis from 'theoretical endeavours' to practical programs, technical assistance and development programming (Thompson 1981: 196). Saouma classifies his years in FAO as, 'a time for innovations' (1976-1981), 'a time for commitment' (1982-1987), and 'a time of contradictions' (1988-1993) (Saouma 1993: ix-xi).

FAO's functional evolution under Saouma makes for an interesting backdrop to understand many of its present activities. He streamlined FAO by substantial cuts in traditional Secretariat activities, reducing posts, proposed meeting and publications, resulting in saving considerable resources from the total budget, which he invested in setting up a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) in 1976, strengthening FAO's Investment Centre and establishing country offices in developing countries to bring the representatives closer to real and practical needs in the field (FAO 1980: 74; Shaw 2007: 235-236; Saouma 1993: 15-40). The World Food Day was instituted to be observed each year on 16 October, coinciding with FAO foundation.<sup>35</sup> Initiatives, such as Food Security Assistance Scheme (1977), Food Security Action Programme (1979), and World Food Security Compact (1985), were undertaken to establish indicators to signal food shortages, improve nutritional preparedness and raise the world's moral conscience. Following up on the 1974-WFC, FAO Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) was created in 1975.

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<sup>35</sup> Resolution 1/79 – *World Food Day*, adopted at the twentieth session by the Conference of FAO, 10-28 November 1979.

FAO also developed normative instruments on conservation of genetic resources and use of pesticides (Saouma 1993: 41-52; 57-59; 81-99).<sup>36</sup>

The Committee on World Food Security (FAO-CFS), established in 1974 as an intergovernmental body of the FAO Council, had the specific responsibilities of monitoring, evaluating and consulting policies related to world food security, including production and access to food. The FAO-CFS provides a platform to bring together relevant national, regional and global stakeholders to discuss and collaborate on issues of common concern, share best practices and arrive at collaborative actions, convergent policies and international strategies for a global food and nutrition security framework. It facilitates the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national and regional action plans for addressing hunger. The FAO-CFS underwent reform during 2009 to bring about better policy convergence, coordination and accountability among various stakeholders and make it more effective and inclusive.<sup>37</sup>

Saouma continued to explore trends in world agriculture begun by the IWP through a detailed study, *World Agriculture Towards 2000*,<sup>38</sup> which took almost a decade from its conception in 1978 to publication in 1988. The underlying themes included global long-term prospects for enhanced food and nutrition security through improved agricultural sustainability and rural development. FAO also elicits participation from local people and communities in decision-making by promoting programmes for effective communication channels and training practices. It fostered the relationship between agricultural development, environment and sustainable development for more equitable production and consumption. FAO acted as a catalyst to build awareness on nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies by co-sponsoring with WHO

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<sup>36</sup> Following the Resolution 6/81- *Plant Genetic Resources* (twenty-first session of the Conference of FAO, 7-25 November 1981), the *International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* was adopted at the twenty-second session of the Conference of FAO, 5-23 November 1983, finally replaced by Resolution 3/2011 – *The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (thirty-first session of the Conference of FAO, 2-3 November 2001). Resolution 10/85-*The International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides* (twenty-third session of the Conference of FAO, 9-28 November 1985), was revised and adopted by the 123<sup>rd</sup> session of the Council of FAO, 28 October-1 November 2001.

<sup>37</sup> See, Committee on World Food Security, FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies Website, available at: <http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/committee-wfs/en/>; and Committee on World Food Security (2009), *Reform of the Committee on World Food Security*, CFS: 2009/2 Rev.2, Thirty-fifth Session, 14, 15 and 17 October 2009, Rome.

<sup>38</sup> Nikos Alexandratos (ed.) (1988), *World Agriculture Towards 2000: An FAO Study*, London: Belhaven Press. This study was further updated, amplified and extended in Alexandratos 1995 and Jelle Bruinsma (ed.) (2003), *World Agriculture: Towards 2015/2030 – An FAO Perspective*, Rome; London: FAO of the United Nations and Earthscan.

the International Conference on Nutrition in 1992 (1992-ICN), and committing to facilitated the formulation of national plans in achieving nutritional goals.

The 1990s witnessed a changed global context, marked by political and economic transformations of member states and a greater diversity of development problems. World agriculture, impacted by structural adjustment policies, economic stabilisation and trade liberalization, witnessed declining flow in assistance, accompanied by waning state involvement and emergence of new actors in development process. This was compounded by mounting criticism regarding FAO's lack of focus caused by overly bureaucratic procedural overload and fragmented and diffused efforts. Its restricted effectiveness was attributed to structural weaknesses and excessive centralisation (FAO 1997a: 8-10; 2000a: 2-7).

Jacques Diouf took office as FAO Director-General (1994-2011) with the objective to "review the programmes, structures and policies of the Organization" to ensure food security in the context of external changed global environment and internal structural weakness (FAO 1997a: 8), while "increasing its global outreach, improving resource management and enhancing its efficiency" (FAO 2000a: 6). Diouf embarked upon a radical restructuring of FAO based on separation of normative and operational tasks; decentralisation of operational activities; strengthening technical and policy assistance and administrative systems; reorganisation of procedures; enhancing governance efficiency and effectiveness; reduction in costs; promoting cooperation with the private sector and NGOs, and encouraging integrated approaches for addressing new issues (FAO 1997a: 17-29; FAO 2000a: 10-11; 14-16; 20; 27).<sup>39</sup> It was asserted that Diouf undertook "one of the most profound and comprehensive reforms in the history of the whole UN system", which has made FAO "horizontal, flatter and less hierarchical with a structure that is results-based...with greater delegation of authority and stronger accountability...both at headquarters and in decentralized offices", transforming it to become "leaner, more focussed and fitter for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century".<sup>40</sup>

An integrated Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) in low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) was launched in 1995 to help small farmers improve yields

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<sup>39</sup> Jacques Diouf's proposals on programmes, structures and the policies were unanimously approved and endorsed by 106<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of FAO, 30 May-1 June 1994.

<sup>40</sup> See, *Statement by the Director-General*, thirty-seventh session of the Conference of FAO, 25 June-2 July 2011, C 2011/INF/5.

of staple food crops, diversify their farming and reduce production variability. Reformulated as the Supporting Programmes for Food Security, it initiated a South-South Cooperation Agreement (SSC) to enable field technicians and experts from the developing countries to directly work with farmers, animal breeders, and fishers in a host country, sharing knowledge and skills. The first SSC Agreement was signed between Viet Nam and Senegal in 1996, followed by 40 such agreements signed till 2010, the most recent being between Chad and Vietnam signed in March 2010.<sup>41</sup> FAO *Strategic Framework 2000-2015* (1999b: 4), defined its mission as, “Helping to build a food-secure world for present and future generations”. The purpose of the institution and the goals of its members were: access to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food for all and reducing the number of undernourished; sustainable agriculture and rural development; and conservation, improvement and sustainable utilisation of natural resources, including genetic resources for food and agriculture (FAO 1999a).

FAO assists in exchange of research information among countries through the UK Government Department for International Development (DfID)-Current Agricultural Research Information System (CARIS) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)-International Information System for Agricultural Science and Technology (AGRIS). It began to annually publish the *State of Food and Agriculture* (SOFA) since 1993 to provide science-based assessment of food and agricultural issues, and the *State of Food Insecurity in the World* (SOFI) since 1999 as a means of reporting on the condition of global food insecurity and documenting the number of undernourished people in both developing and developed countries. FAO biennially publishes the *State of Agricultural Commodity Markets* (SOCO) since 2004 to inform the wider public and policy-makers on commodity markets issues.<sup>42</sup>

FAO is a ‘knowledge organization’ (Shaw 2009: 110) developing and maintaining a series of statistical databases on food and agriculture, like AQUASTAT (global information system on agriculture and water), FAOSTAT (multi-lingual database covering agriculture, nutrition, fisheries, forestry and food aid records from over 210 countries), PAAT Information System (promotes integrated trypanosomiasis control),

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<sup>41</sup> See, the official website of Supporting Programmes for Food Security (Technical Cooperation Department), available at: <http://www.fao.org/spfs/spfs-home/en/>

<sup>42</sup> Other FAO annual publications include: the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA); State of the World’s Forests (SOFO); the State of the World’s Land and Water Resources (SOLAW).



Agro-MAPS, CountrySTAT, and TERRASTAT, among others. The developments affecting global food and feed markets are tracked by FAO-GIEWS biannual publication *Food Outlook*, while the *Crop Prospects and Food Situation*, published quarterly, provides a regional review of the food situation. As part of the FIVIMS, FAO also seeks to identify and locate the food insecure and vulnerable, exploring the causes of their food insecurity and the measures to overcome their vulnerability.

Shifts in FAO's strategies have corresponded with changing perceptions of the world food problem and the definition of food security. The priority concerns post-World War II were the protracted problem of surplus accumulation of food in few developed countries, while millions of people went hungry in the developing countries, and making food available for war-ravaged regions. The typical course of action was market regularisation and managing surpluses. As war devastations were gradually overcome, a different set of food issues were superimposed on FAO's agenda, shifting focus to the impact of global poverty. Strategies to accelerate agricultural production and addressing problems of distribution gained particular significance (Thompson 1981: 194-196; FAO 1980: 8). As the initial enthusiasm of international solidarity and hopes associated with multilateral arrangements began to wane and the economically developed countries reverted to self-centred national policies and bilateral relations, these changes got reflected in FAO's personality, which "was to keep off the short-term food crisis and commercial and commodity policies and concentrate on long-term issues of nutrition, production and national distribution" (Shaw 2007: 13). FAO still remains far too huge, with a mandate covering almost everything related to food and nutrition security, thereby overlapping with other UN agencies. Hence, efficient monitoring of its activities is equally important. Infusing inter-disciplinary approach within its technical culture to address development problems and rotating staff between headquarter and field positions can stimulate normative and operative links.

FAO has made significant contributions in the evolution of food aid from a surplus disposal strategy to a mechanism for promotion of development and the potential of food aid in pursuing food security.<sup>43</sup> It was noted that food aid could strengthen the

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<sup>43</sup> See, FAO (1985), *Food Aid and Food Security: Past Performance and Future Potential*, Economic and Social Development Paper no. 55; Sarah Lowder and Terri Raney (2005), *Food Aid: A Primer*, ESA Working Paper No. 05-05; FAO (2006), *The State of Food and Agriculture: Food Aid for Food Security*, Rome: Agricultural and Development Economics Division, FAO of the United Nations.

three components of food security: food production, stabilising food supplies and ensuring access to food availabilities (Shaw 2007: 251-254). Multilateral food aid was institutionalised through the creation of WFP. It is pertinent to note here that any discussion on WFP cannot be divested of general debates on aid and specifically food aid. WFP is regarded as being almost synonymous to multilateral food aid. However, the purpose of the next section is only to explore the organisational and structural dimensions of WFP, the scope of its mandate and institutional relationship with the UN system, and impartially present its activities over the years, without engaging with its implications on the larger domain of food aid, which is discussed in Chapter VI.

### ***World Food Programme (WFP)***

WFP, jointly undertaken by the UN and FAO, began on a three-year ‘experimental’ basis in 1963, to enable multilateral use of food surpluses as “an important transitional means of relieving the hunger and malnutrition of food-deficit peoples, particularly in the less developed countries, and for assisting these countries in their economic development”.<sup>44</sup> Projects, undertaken only in response to request from the recipient countries, were to focus on “meeting emergency food needs and emergencies inherent in chronic malnutrition”, “assisting in pre-school and school feeding” and “the multilateral use of food as an aid to economic and social development, particularly when related to labour-intensive projects and rural welfare” (Establishing Resolutions). WFP was continued in 1965 “for as long as multilateral food aid is found feasible and desirable, on the understanding that the Programme will be regularly reviewed before each pledging conference and that, if circumstances so require, it may be enlarged, curtailed or terminated as the end of any period for which resources have been pledged”,<sup>45</sup> attributing it a permanent status.

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<sup>44</sup> WFP was established by parallel resolutions adopted at the eleventh session of the Conference of FAO (Resolution 1/61: *Utilization of Food Surpluses – World Food Program*, adopted on 24 November 1961) and the sixteenth session of the General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/1714 (XVI) – *World Food Programme*, adopted on 19 December 1961), based on FAO Director-General’s report, *Development through Food – A Strategy for Surplus Utilization* and the report of UN Secretary-General, *the Role of the United Nations and the appropriate specialized agencies in facilitating the best possible use of food surpluses for the economic development of the less developed countries*.

<sup>45</sup> WFP was continued by parallel resolutions adopted at the thirteenth session of the Conference of FAO (Resolution 4/65 – *Continuation of the World Food Program*, adopted on 6 December 1965), and the twentieth session of the General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/2095 (XX) – *Continuation of the World Food Program*, adopted on 20 December 1965).

A Joint UN/FAO World Food Programme Inter-Governmental Committee was created in 1961 to guide WFP on policy, administration and operations, along with a joint UN/FAO administrative unit reporting to the UN Secretary-General and FAO Director-General. As a result of the broadening the terms of reference by 1974-WFC, the Inter-Governmental Committee was reconstituted as the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes in 1975, with half members elected by FAO Council and half by ECOSOC, reporting annually to both.<sup>46</sup> The Committee was eventually replaced in 1996 by the Executive Board, composed of 36 members, of which 18 are elected by the ECOSOC and 18 by the Council of FAO.<sup>47</sup> The Executive Board meets four times a year to oversee WFP's humanitarian and development aid, reporting annually to the ECOSOC and the Council of FAO. The WFP Secretariat, located at Rome, is headed by an Executive Director, jointly appointed by the Director-General of FAO and the UN Secretary General for fixed five-year terms. Accountable to the Board, the Executive Director is responsible for the administration of the WFP and the implementation of its projects, programmes, and activities (WFP 2010c: 8-11).

All contributions to WFP are entirely voluntary, either by governments in supplement to bilateral food aid, intergovernmental bodies, other public and appropriate non-governmental and private sources and corporations. In addition to regular pledges made by the members, WFP resources comes from the Food Aid Convention (FAC) and the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR), including a cash reserve, Immediate Response Account (IRA). According to its Annual Report 2010, by 17 December 2010, WFP had received US\$ 3.6 billion against the assessed needs of US\$ 6.9 billion. While 8 per cent of all contribution, US\$ 277 million, was from multilateral sources, rest of the funds came from 71 government donors. WFP's expenditure in 2010 for 'protracted crises' accounted to 60 per cent of its total expenditure, showing its thrust towards not only humanitarian assistance but

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<sup>46</sup> WFP was Reconstituted by parallel resolutions adopted at the eighteenth session of the Conference of FAO (Resolution 22/75 – *Reconstitution of the United Nations/FAO Intergovernmental Committee of the World Food Programme as a Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes*, on 26 November 1975) and at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/3404 (XXX) – *Reconstitution of the United Nations/FAO Intergovernmental Committee of the World Food Programme as a Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes*, on 17 December 1975).

<sup>47</sup> Initiated by General Assembly Resolution A/RES/48/162 – *Further Measures for the Restructuring and Revitalization of the United Nations in the Economic, Social and Related Fields* (forty-eighth session, 20 December 1993) and subsequently adopted by Council of FAO Resolution 9/95 – *Revision of the General Regulations of the World Food Programme and Reconstitution of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes as the Executive Board of the World Food Programme*, at the 108<sup>th</sup> session, 5-14 June 1995, CL 108/REP.

investment in longer-term food security and development activities. WFP's increasing partnership with the private sector was reflected in the donations from the latter exceeding the annual target of US\$ 120 million (WFP 2011a: 5).

During the first three years of its 'experiment', having received requests for emergency assistance, both natural and man-made disasters, and increasingly realising the difficulty in swiftly responding to them in the absence of emergency reserves, transport and logistics facilities, WFP restricted its emergency role, instead shifting attention to socio-economic development projects, which remained the focus of its operational activities for the next 30 years. During its first decade (1965-1975), WFP was occupied with its unstable and fluctuating resources, grappling to maintain the balance between pledges, commitments and disbursements. It used the next twenty years (1975-1995) to develop and institutionalise 'project approach' to aid, through food-for-work programmes; land settlement and reform; special feeding programmes; nutritional improvement projects; and animal production projects. A meagre share of assistance went for emergency operations during this period (Shaw 2001: 38-43; 67).

During the first 30 years of its operation, WFP provided over US\$ 13 billion of aid, about 40 million tons of food, assisting more than 1,600 development projects and supplying humanitarian aid for over 1,200 emergency and relief operations, mostly for poor and food insecure people in the developing countries (Shaw 2001: 4). Total resources contributed to WFP grew from US\$ 84 million in 1963-65 to a target of US\$ 750 million in 1977-78 (Thompson 1981: 193). The largest number of approved projects was in Asia, followed by Africa, Southern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean (Shaw 2001: 38-39). Two-third of the assistance up to 1990 was allocated for development projects, and the rest went to emergency aid (Shaw 2009: 76).

The 1990s brought a major reorientation in WFP's operational mandate, placing it at the forefront of international emergency food relief. As man-made disasters steadily grew in number, scale, and complexity, a special subset of WFP's regular resources was made available to respond to refugees and displaced persons (PRO) since 1989. The IEFRR, established in 1975, was strengthened in 1991 by the addition of a cash reserve, IRA. The largest share of WFP emergency assistance went to Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by South Asia and Europe (ex-Yugoslavia). WFP strategically placed its assistance to link development and relief, mutually reinforcing each other.

Thus, the four essential areas of WFP's contemporary operations are improving food security for people through development (DEVs); providing immediate assistance for emergency (EMOPs); extend relief, rehabilitation and rebuilding after an emergency (PRROs) and special operations (SOs) that create needs infrastructure for emergency operations. In addition, WFP addresses hunger and promotes food security through school feeding programmes, aiming to provide nutrition to children, promote education by retaining them in schools and extending safety net for poor families; food-for-work schemes, aiming at twin objectives of generating giving food for wages and building assets; distributing cash and vouchers, and programmes focussing on women and people living with HIV/AIDS. "WFP has gained considerable reputation for being able to move large amounts of food commodities, often in difficult circumstances, throughout the developing world" (Shaw 2009: 80-81).

The 1994 *Mission Statement*<sup>48</sup> and the *General Regulations, General Rules, Financial Regulations, Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board* (WFP 2010c: 5) reiterated that WFP will "use food aid to support economic and social development", "meet refugee and other emergency and protected relief food needs" and "to promote world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the UN and FAO". The WFP, on request, will implement food aid programmes, projects and activities to:

- (a) aid in economic and social development, concentrating its efforts and resources on the neediest people and countries;
- (b) assist in the continuum from emergency relief to development by giving priority to supporting disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation and post-disaster rehabilitation activities;
- (c) assist in meeting refugee and other emergency and protracted relief food needs, using this assistance to the extent possible to serve both relief and development purposes; and
- (d) provide services to bilateral donors, UN agencies and NGOs for operations which are consistent with the purposes of WFP and which complements WFP's operations (WFP 2010c: 5-6).

The WFP routinely faced cash crunch, as donors initially preferred to contribute in food commodities. With increasing emergency operations, the need for cash mounted as WFP covered the internal transport, storage and handling costs in the poorest countries. Though not a preferred option, monetisation was allowed on a small and restricted basis to increase efficiency of cost-starved projects and cover transport and non-food costs of food aid projects. However, in recent years, the bulk of donors

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<sup>48</sup> The WFP *Mission Statement* (1994) is available at: <http://www.wfp.org/about/mission-statement>

prefer to give cash to WFP, instead of food, often tied with conditions regarding preference of using the donation in specific countries. This makes monetisation harder to justify. An interesting aspect is WFP's triangular transactions, using the resource and expertise of some developing countries to support development efforts in others. The WFP and the Brazilian Government have cooperated to provide technical and financial support to sustainable school feeding programmes in Latin American and Caribbean countries and home-grown school meals in Mozambique. The government of Chile and WFP have supported hunger solutions in Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Peru (WFP 2011a: 15).

WFP has markedly shifted its thrust to cash-based programming, using both cash and vouchers in its food assistance programmes, in collaboration with private sector and NGO partners. A total transfer of US\$ 311 million had been approved by WFP as cash-based interventions in 48 projects till November 2010 (WFP 2011a: 18-19). The Haitian case illustrated the appropriateness of cash and vouchers, where reconstruction following the general food distribution for earthquake victims was supported by WFP cash and food-for-work programmes that employed people in clearing rubble and rebuilding. Mobile phone-based electronic voucher delivery and tracking system were launched by WFP for Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, in the slums of Manila in Philippines and in targeted households living with HIV/AIDS or tuberculosis in Zambia (WFP 2011a: 19).

WFP is an important actor in food security because it uses food aid for programmes that promote economic and social development along with providing food and associated logistical support during emergency situations. The aim in both the cases is threefold: saving, protecting and preserving human lives; nutritional improvement of vulnerable individuals at critical times; and creation of self-reliance, employment, income and assets for the poor people (Shaw 2001: 2). WFP has been publishing *Occasional Paper* series since 1985 to reflect upon food aid issues and the *Policy Papers* contributing to policy-debates. The *World Hunger Series* explores the relationship between hunger and learning, health, and markets. WFP also manages a comprehensive database of all global food aid through the International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS) and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping

(VAM) system, created in 1994.<sup>49</sup> They are of vital importance to food aid decision-makers by creating a centralised knowledge base and harmonising food aid activities.

Opinions are sharply divided over whether WFP should entirely transform itself into an emergency and relief agency or whether it should retain its development aid role. Following a year-long consultation process, a comprehensive WFP policy paper expressed commitment to introduce new policy directions, enabling the use of food aid for meeting the urgent needs of poor, food-insecure households and communities, who were bypassed by the conventional development process, and make investments that will bring then long-term benefit (WFP 1999b: 10). Food aid was to be used in combination with other development measures, through well-designed and monitored activities “for a secured and increased flow of development resources to help the hungry poor along the path to sustainable food security” (WFP 1999b: 29).

Subsequently, WFP assistance was restricted only to of inadequate food consumption for good health and productivity, and its development activities limited to:

- Enabling young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs; poor households to invest in human capital through education and training; households which depend on degraded natural resources for their food security to make a shift to more sustainable livelihoods;
- Making possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets
- Mitigating the effects of natural disasters, in areas vulnerable to recurring crises of this kind (WFP 1999a: 2-3)

The major problem faced by a multilateral agency like WFP is coordination between donor countries and governments of recipient countries and various branches within, and coordination of food aid from different sources, a typical problem being the synchronization of the planning, programming and budgeting cycle of the UN and the bilateral aid donors (Shaw 2001: 66). Another area of skirmish is the relationship with local and international NGOs, with which WFP regularly collaborates for distribution of aid, whether for development or during emergency. While WFP claims to have a cordial in-field engagement with NGOs, the same has not been corroborated by the

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<sup>49</sup> WFP Food Security Assessment are of the following types: Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA), *CFSVA Guidelines* (2009); Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), Conducted with FAO, *FAO/WFP Joint Guidelines for CFSAM* (2009); Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA), *EFSA Handbook* (2009); Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS); and Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), conducted in collaboration with UNHCR, *UNHCR/WFP JAM Guidelines* (2008).

staff of NGOs who regularly associate with WFP for aid assistance. Having resources at its disposal and multilateral institutional backing, the WFP is often accused by the NGOs of assuming a ‘big-brother’ role in the projects and operations, relegating to the NGOs mere peripheral role and marginal decision-making powers (*from field study*).

### ***International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)***

The 1974-WFC called for the creation of an International Fund for Agricultural Development, “to finance agricultural development projects primarily for food production in developing countries” (United Nations 1975: 13), based on voluntary contribution from developing countries, according to their capacity, and all developed countries. IFAD became operational in 1977 with 80 countries pledging more than US\$ 936 million to set it in motion (Hannah 1977: 108). Establishment of IFAD, as a specialised UN agency, was perhaps the ‘most tangible achievement’ of the 1974-WFC (Tansey 1978: 225). According to Article 2 of the *Establishing Agreement*, IFAD’s objective were “to mobilise additional resources to be made available on concessional terms for agricultural development in developing Member States...financing primarily for projects and programmes specifically designed to introduce, expand or improve food production systems and to strengthen related policies and institutions within the framework of national priorities and strategies” (IFAD 1976: 4). Based in Rome, IFAD has 167 member countries.

IFAD is ‘an unique institution’ (Hannah 1977: 108), in terms of its membership, which is open to all, but classified into three categories: List A (Former Category I Countries), primarily consisting of OECD members; List B (Former Category II Countries), primarily consisting of OPEC members; and List C (Former Category III Countries), mainly developing countries, which is further divided in sub-list C1 (countries in African), sub-list C2 (countries in Europe, Asia and the Pacific), and sub-list C3 (countries in Latin America and the Caribbean). The Governing Council of IFAD has the highest decision-making power, each member state being represented in it by a Governor, Alternative Governors and other designated advisers that meet annually. The Executive Board is responsible for overseeing IFAD’s general operations and its programme of work, including approval of projects, programmes and grants, adopting/recommending action.



In pursuance of its objectives, IFAD financing takes the form of “loans, grants and debt sustainability mechanism”, as decided by the Executive Board, “on such terms as the Fund deems appropriate, having regard to the economic situation and prospects of the Member and to the nature and requirements of the activity concerned” (Article 7, Section 2 (a), IFAD 1976: 13). Article 7, Section 1 (d) (IFAD 1976: 12) lay out that allocation of resources by the IFAD will be guided by the following priorities:

- (I) the need to increase food production and to improve the nutritional level of the poorest populations in the poorest food deficit countries;
- (II) the potential for increasing food production in other developing countries. Likewise, emphasis shall be placed on improving the nutritional level of the poorest populations in these countries and the conditions of their lives.

In the 1990s, the IFAD’s mandate was substantially broadened to focus on issues of poverty, rural development and sustainable agriculture. It was recognised that poverty was largely concentrated in rural areas and the development of the poor depended on improvement of means of production directly accessible to them. Investments in the agricultural sector was realised the best way to address rural poverty. This orientation of IFAD was carried forward in subsequent decades (IFAD 2001; 2011d). Apart from growth and distribution, IFAD’s approach was reoriented to provide opportunities of access to physical and financial assets for rural poor, sustainable agricultural intensification for enhancing smallholder productivity, improve agricultural markets for improved incomes, create rural non-farm opportunities, extend technology and natural resources for rural poverty reduction and build pro-poor institutions.

The lending criteria of IFAD involve country requirement, priority attention given to poorest developing countries, and selecting projects that reduce rural poverty cost-effectively, based on the socio-economic dynamics. IFAD was restricted from financing projects and programmes “whose overall impact on income distribution is negative, i.e., those which fail to provide proportionately larger benefits to the poorest segment of the population when compared with other groups” (IFAD 1978: 12). It proclaims to give preference to projects that enable increased supplies and strengthen technical and institutional capacity for agricultural and rural development. Using Gross National Product (GNP) per capita as the determining criterion, developing member countries with GNP per capita of US\$ 805 or less are eligible to receive IFAD loans on highly concessional terms; GNP per capita between US\$ 806 and

1,305 are eligible to receive loans on intermediate terms; and GNP per capita of US\$ 1,306 and above are eligible to receive loans on ordinary terms (IFAD 1978: 14-15).<sup>50</sup>

The IFAD provides grants “to promote successful and/or innovative approaches and technologies, together with enabling policies and institutions that will support agricultural and rural development, thereby contributing to the achievement of IFAD’s overarching goal of empowering poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security” (IFAD 2011b November: 1-2). A major portion of IFAD-funded projects provide microfinance services (credit, savings and insurance) for the rural poor and opportunity to establish local microfinance institutions and cooperatives to protect them from risks (IFAD 2009; Schanbacher 2010: 5-6; 26-28). The revised *IFAD Policy for Grant Financing*<sup>51</sup> emphasised efficient and effective planning and management of the grant portfolio, in support of and complementary to its lending portfolio and opened window for NGOs and the private-sector to partner in implementing IFAD’s grant financed activities.

The first IFAD loans were made of US\$ 12 million each, for development projects in Sri Lanka and Tanzania (December 1977), with interrelated aims of increasing food production, reducing rural poverty and improving nutrition (Tansey 1978: 225). Since these early loans and its initial objective of agricultural development to expand food production systems, IFAD has broadened its scope to focus on rural poverty reduction in developing countries to alleviate hunger and malnutrition and improve productivity and incomes, targeting the poorest and most deprived groups, and has become one of the largest sources of international development financing in developing countries for rural development and agriculture (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4), with the self-proclaimed goal of investing in smallholder agriculture “to empower poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and food security”(IFAD 2010b).

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<sup>50</sup> Special loans on highly concessional terms are interest-free but carry a service charge of three-fourths of one per cent (0.75 percent) per annum, with a maturity period of 40 years, including a grace period of 10 years; loans on intermediate terms have a per annum interest rate equivalent to 50 percent of the variable reference interest rate, annually determined by the Executive Board, with a maturity period of 20 years, including a grace period of 5 years; loans on ordinary terms have a per annum interest rate equivalent to 100 percent of the variable reference interest rate, annually determined by the Executive Board, with a maturity period of 15-18 years, including a grace period of 3 years

<sup>51</sup> See, *Revised IFAD Policy for Grant Financing*, EB 2099/98/R.9/Rev.1, approved by the Ninety-eighth session of IFAD Executive Board in 15-17 December 2009.

**Table 3.3: IFAD at a Glance, 1978-2010** (a, b)

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>1978-2010</b>
<b>Operational activities</b> <sup>(c)</sup>				
<b>Loan and DSF grant approved</b>				
Number of programmes and projects	21	27	33	859
Amount (US\$ million)	319.2	515	794.2	11,926.6
<b>Grant approved</b>				
Number of programmes and projects	85	109	88	2,315
Amount (US\$ million)	23.9	41.8	51.2	749.5
<b>Total IFAD loan and grant operations</b> (US\$ million)	<b>343.1</b>	<b>556.8</b>	<b>845.4</b>	<b>12,676.1</b>
<b>Cofinancing</b> (US\$ million)	<b>133.4</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>691.7</b>	<b>8,786.9</b>
Multilateral	73.6	67.3	578.6	7,003.0
Bilateral	51.2	27.0	74.3	1,334.1
NGO	0.0	0.6	10.4	41.1
Other <sup>(d)</sup>	8.5	1.3	28.3	408.3
<b>Domestic contributions</b> (US\$ million)	<b>263.7</b>	<b>290.5</b>	<b>928.3</b>	<b>10,822.6</b>
<b>Total programme and project cost</b> <sup>(e)</sup> (US\$ million)	<b>719.3</b>	<b>906.5</b>	<b>2,427.4</b>	<b>31,618.2</b>
Programmes and projects				
Number of effective programmes and projects under implementation	199	187	234	-
Number of programmes and projects completed	29	26	20	594
Number of programmes and projects in pipeline	56	56	74	-
Number of approved programmes and projects initiated by IFAD	22	25	28	699
Number of recipient countries/territories (current portfolio)	115	85	95	-
<b>Loan disbursements</b> (US\$ million)	<b>262.4</b>	<b>387.5</b>	<b>457.6</b>	<b>7,667.2</b>
<b>Loan repayment</b> <sup>(f)</sup> (US\$ million)	<b>126.8</b>	<b>148.5</b>	<b>274.1</b>	<b>2,522.3</b>
<b>Membership and administration</b>				
Member States – at end of period	162	165	165	-
Professional staff – at end of period <sup>(g)</sup>	132	203	260	-

(a) IFAD loans and debt sustainability framework (DSF) grants for investment programmes and projects are denominated in special drawing rights (SDRs)

(b) 1986-195 figures include Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification.

(c) Excludes fully cancelled programmes and projects. Excludes the Programme Development Financing Facility.

(d) Includes financing under basket or similar funding arrangements, financing from private-sector resources and financing that was not confirmed at the time of Executive Board approval.

- (e) Includes DSF grants, component grants and contributions to IFAD's replenishments, and excludes grants not related to investment projects.
- (f) Loan repayments relate to principal repayments and include repayments on behalf of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative countries.
- (g) Approved positions (excluding those of the President and Vice-President)
- Source: Compiled from IFAD Annual Report 2006-2010

**Table 3.4: Ongoing Programmes and Projects by IFAD Operational Division**  
(as on 31 October 2009)

Region	IFAD approved amount (US\$ million)	Percentage of total approved
Western and Central Africa	589.0	15.8
Eastern and Southern Africa	889.4	23.8
Asia and the Pacific	1 140.0	30.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	550.0	14.7
Near East and North Africa, Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States	566.1	15.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 734.5</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: IFAD 2010b

In the context of increasing international awareness on the need to address debt, IFAD initiated the Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) since 2007 to provide debt relief and management in poorest countries. Based on the World Bank and IMF classification of debt status of a country, in terms of debt sustainability, IFAD extends 100 percent grant to countries with low debt sustainability, 50 percent grant-50 percent loan to countries with medium debt sustainability and 100 percent loan to countries with high debt sustainability. The Governing Council endorsed IFAD's country-by-country participation in the IMF/World Bank Debt Initiative for Heavily – Indebted Poor Countries in 1997 (HIPC-DI) (Resolution 101/XX) (IFAD 1998: Annex II) in recognition of the link between debt manageability and sustainability of poverty eradication efforts and the Executive Board endorsed an IFAD Trust Fund endorsed by (IFAD 1998: Annex I). IFAD has provided US\$ 362.9 million in debt relief to 31 countries as of 30 September 2011, funded 64.4 percent (US\$ 240 million) through external contributions, 32.8 percent (US\$ 124.7 million) from its own resources and the rest from IFAD HIPC Trust Fund balance (IFAD 2012: 2).<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> HIPC-DI was put in motion for Uganda, Bolivia, Burkina Faso (in 1997), Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Togo, Vietnam, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Mali, Mozambique (in 1998), Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Niger, Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia (in 1999), Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Honduras, Myanmar, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe (in 2000-2001) (IFAD 1998: 3).

The conventional IFAD project cycle – identification, preparation, appraisal, supervision, monitoring, follow-up and evaluation (IFAD 1978: 19-21), has given way to a more pragmatic project design cycle, which includes project development (concept note, detailed design and design completion), and project implementation (supervision, mid-term review and project completion). Opportunities for IFAD financing are identified through a Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (RB-COSOP) to ensure a positive impact on poverty, involvement of wide stakeholders, country ownership, and alignment with national development strategy.<sup>53</sup> IFAD-initiated projects are increasingly co-financed by multilateral and bilateral donors, including regional funds and banks, national government, and other UN agencies, FAO, WFP, World Bank (IBRD/IDA), UNICEF, UNDP etc.

A specific area of IFAD's focus has been the Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1984, IFAD formed a Joint Programme intervention, in partnership with the Belgian Survival Fund (BSF), renamed as the Belgian Fund for Food Security (BFFS) in 2010, which was created in 1983 by the Belgian Government in response to drought and famine in Sub-Saharan Africa. IFAD also launched the Special Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa (SPA) in 1985, as an emergency response to drought that was affecting millions of farmers. (IFAD 2006a: 2). IFAD-funded projects have attempted to prevent outbreaks of violence in areas affected by unresolved conflicts (South-East Asia and Sudan) and arrest the spread of violent groups among rural communities by maintaining minimum level of rural development activities despite collapse of government (Burundi, Peru, Sudan, and in countries without recognised governments, like Somalia) and assisted in post-conflict recovery of production potential of vulnerable households (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Rwanda), while addressing the changed target groups as a result of the crisis (IFAD 2006a: 2-3).

Over the years, IFAD has undertaken many organizational and structural innovations to improve its performance and maintain its congruity. The relevance of IFAD's mandate and operations in the changing context of international development assistance – development effectiveness of financing operations and organisational efficiency in deliverance – have been the concerns of its annual report on

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<sup>53</sup> See, IFAD (2011), *Updated Guidelines and Source Book for Preparation and Implementation of a Results-Based Country Strategic Opportunities Programme*, Volume 1-Guidelines, January.

Development Effectiveness (RIDE), published since 1998. In 2003, IFAD initiated the Performance-Based Allocation System (PBAS) and the Results and Impact Management System (RIMS). While PBAS increases transparency and the efficacy of using IFAD's resources, RIMS provides information on results and impacts of IFAD-supported country programmes related to project activities, outcomes, and impact on child malnutrition and household living standards. In a further attempt to improve IFAD-financed country operations achieve better results, it introduced supervision and implementation support to increase involvement with projects and programmes.

IFAD underwent a comprehensive Independent External Evaluation (IEE) in 2004-2005 by the Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE). The IEE observations revealed that IFAD's resource allocation was largely ad hoc and not fully responsive to regional and country needs, and borrower performance, with lending per poor rural person being higher in less-poor countries. Its portfolio performance was shown as underperforming compared to the World Bank. It was observed that IFAD's strategic framework and country strategies did not effectively filter project selectivity, effectiveness and targeting in the project design was weak, and a majority of them failed to clearly establish a causal link between objectives and poverty impacts. Its operational, sectoral and internal governing policies were inadequate and relatively few compared to other IFIs and had not kept pace with its own strategic agenda, with minimal policy influence at project and programme level (IFAD 2005: 2-11). The IEE observed that "while the Fund has a relevant, clear and distinctive role to play", "it needs to achieve a better performance...characterised by more effective innovation and focus on poor people in hard-to-reach circumstances" (IFAD 2005: 12).

Based on the IEE evaluation and the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005), the IFAD Executive Board approved the *Action Plan 2005* to reform IFAD's and make its work more effective, efficient and relevant.<sup>54</sup> IFAD proposed to improve its representation in the borrowing countries through the *IFAD Country Presence Policy and Strategy*<sup>55</sup> and progressively partners with the private sector and companies and corporate at domestic and international levels on policy dialogue, investment

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<sup>54</sup> The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005) and the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008), are available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>; also see, IFAD (2011), *Evaluation Policy* (May 2011), Rome: IFAD.

<sup>55</sup> See, *IFAD Country Presence Policy and Strategy*, EB 2011/102/R.10/Rev.2, 102<sup>nd</sup> session of the IFAD Executive Board, 10-12 May 2011, Rome.

operations and developing knowledge (IFAD 2007; IFAD 2011e). IFAD's *Strategic Framework 2011-2015* identified five strategic objectives to improve food and nutrition security of the rural poor: provide a resilient natural resource and economic asset base; access to services to reduce poverty, improve nutrition, raise incomes and build resilience; manage profitable and sustainable farm and non-farm enterprises to generate work opportunities; influence policies and institutions affecting their livelihoods; and enable institutional and policy environment that support agricultural production and related non-farm activities. To pursue these objectives eight principles of engagement were identified: differentiated country-based approach; targeting; empowering poor rural people; promoting gender equality and women empowerment; creating viable opportunities for rural youth; innovation, learning and scaling up; effective partnerships and resource mobilisation; and stability (IFAD 2011e).

### ***Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs)***

The IBRD and the IMF were born as conjoined twins at the International Monetary Conference, at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944, where representatives of forty-four nations met to discuss the post-war economic plans of peace and prosperity.<sup>56</sup> The original mandates of neither of the BWIs featured any concern regarding food-related issues. However, with the growing international concern over hunger and malnutrition, it was not long before the BWIs, particularly the World Bank, started exploring possible options for ensuring global food security.

### ***International Monetary Fund (IMF)***

The IMF was designed to remove international monetary instability and exchange restriction, which had thwarted international trade and payments during the inter-war years, and ensure exchange rate stability and international payments that enables countries and their citizens to buy goods and services from each other. As the fixed exchange rates system collapsed and major currencies began to float against each other in the international economy, the IMF branched out to lending to preserve

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<sup>56</sup> For the events leading upto the Bretton Woods Conference and its aftermath, see: Armand Van Dormael (1978), *The Bretton Woods Conference: Birth of a Monetary System*, New York: Holmes and Meier; Harold James (1996), *International Monetary Cooperation since Bretton Woods*, Washington D. C.: Oxford University Press for IMF; W. M. Scammel (1975), *International Monetary Policy: Bretton Woods and After*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd.; Harold James (2011), "The Multiple Context of Bretton Woods", *Past and Present*, 210 (Issues supplement 6): 290-308.

financial stability (Structural Adjustment Facility succeeded by the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility) and concessional lending facilities to address balance of payment difficulties faced by the poorest countries. To alleviate debt burdens of the poor countries, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative was launched in cooperation with the World Bank, further supplemented by the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Progressively, the IMF has come to monitor global economic trends and performance through global, regional and country surveillance, alerting member countries regarding impending dangers, providing a forum for policy dialogue and extending technical assistance to governments in addressing economic situations through policy advice and lending. It also works with the developing countries to help them in achieving macroeconomic stability and reduce poverty.

IMF's mandate covered balance of payments support for meeting the cost of increased food imports. In its deliberations, IMF made it sufficiently clear that "it did not have an institutional mandate to subsidize programs to increase consumption or to improve nutrition in developing countries. All it could appropriately offer would be financing to countries whose foreign exchange positions were strained by extra pressure of high cereal import bills in certain years when normal consumption could not be maintained without additional cost" (Huddleston et. al. 1984: 70). FAO and the erstwhile World Food Council requested the IMF to create a cereal import facility to financially assist member countries in meeting their variable food import needs due to domestic food production shortfalls or high international prices. IMF established an integrated financing facility for food imports in May 1981, by extending its Compensatory Financing Facility (CFF) for export earnings to cover cereal import bills.<sup>57</sup>

The amended CFF allows IMF members to make drawings under the CFF to finance temporary excesses in cereal import bills, caused by factors beyond the requesting government's control, thereby preventing cereal consumption levels from falling, minimising starvation and preventing disruption of development efforts. However, the

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<sup>57</sup> The IMF Compensatory Financing Facility (CFF), established in 1963, provided temporary foreign exchange credit to a country to cover shortfalls in export earnings. It was replaced in 1988 by the Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility (CCFF). For an assessment of the impact of IMF's financing facility, see, Richard H. Adams Jr. (1983), "The role of research in policy development: The creation of the IMF cereal import facility", *World Development*, 11 (7) July: 549-563; Manmohan S. Kumar (1988), *The stabilizing role of the compensatory financing facility: Empirical evidence and welfare implications*, IMF Staff Papers No. 88/108, 21 December; World Bank 1986b: 137-139; Huddleston et al. (1984); Green and Kirkpatrick (1981); and Kirkpatrick (1985).



facility does not include non-cereal food items, like sugar, vegetable oils etc, which predominantly figure in developing countries' food import bills. Also, the borrowing sanctioned to a member country from the facility is constrained in relation to its IMF quota. It has been asserted that, complemented by domestic policies related to price, public works, domestic credit and food distribution schemes, the IMF facility can create favourable food security conditions (Valdés and Castillo 1984: 34-35; Shaw 2007: 240).<sup>58</sup> But, it is uncertain how much countries will modify domestic import practices and consumption policies knowing that the IMF financing facility will provide a safety net against unexpected cost increases (Huddleston et. al. 1984: 72).

The IMF's cereal funding facility seems to suffer from some inherent weakness and has failed to significantly alleviate food security in developing countries. Combining both export earning and cereal import costs in the same facility renders the facility fundamentally weak. Compensatory funding for foodstuff, which stabilises domestic food consumption, is different from funding for exports, which only stabilises foreign exchange receipts or food import expenditures. Variations in food imports are partly caused by variations in domestic food production that do not get reflected in trade accounts. Hence, the observed value of food imports does not contain production and consumption information of a country or the volume of imports needed to make up for the deficit. Kirkpatrick asserts that an effective food facility must take into account more information than just provided by the observed value of food imports and determination of cereal import compensation must be independent of export earnings (Kirkpatrick 1985: 304-305). In 1988, the External Contingency Mechanism (ECM) was added to the existing CFF to create the Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility (CCFF), providing for additional resources to address broader deviation caused by critical external variable, export price or foreign interest rates.<sup>59</sup>

### ***The World Bank***

The World Bank, founded as the IBRD and broadened to become the 'World Bank Group', is the largest multilateral development lending organization, both in terms of

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<sup>58</sup> See C. H. Kirkpatrick (1985), "Improving Food Security in Developing Countries: A Role for the IMF", *Banca Nazionale del Lavoro Quarterly Review*, June: 173:185.

<sup>59</sup> For details see, IMF (1999), *Review of the Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility (CCFF) and Buffer Stock Financing Facility (BSFF) – Preliminary Considerations*, Prepared by the Policy Development and Review Department in consultation with other departments of the IMF.

the money it loans and the advisory influence it wields over developing countries.<sup>60</sup> The change is not merely nomenclatural but includes addition of specialised institutions, along with a discernible expansion in its size and mandate and a transformation of its character and style of functioning. With 188 member countries and headquartered in Washington, DC, the stated mandate ‘Our Dream is a world Without Poverty’ is reflective of the Bank’s constant attempt to interpret its founding *Articles of Agreement*. The total thematic and sectoral lending of the World Bank has witnessed steady growth over the years, though under certain heads there has been a decline in financing (see Table 3.5). For the present study, the World Bank will refer to the WBG, unless specifically mentioned, and its lending operations will be seen as integrated and not separately in terms of each component institutions.

**Table 3.5: World Bank Lending by Theme and Sector**  
US\$ in million

<b>THEME</b>	<b>FY 2000</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>FY 2011</b>
Economic Management	799.6	594.6	3,950	655
Environmental and Natural Resource Management	1,829.4	2,493.8	4,337	6,102
Financial and Private Sector Development	3,368.4	3,862.0	17,726	7,981
Human Development	1,190.3	2,951.0	8,421	4,228
Public Sector Governance	2,142.5	2,636.4	5,750	4,518
Rule of Law	373.6	303.8	207	169
Rural Development	1,413.7	2,802.2	5,004	5,636
Social Development, Gender, and Inclusion	800.8	1,285.8	952	908
Social Protection and Risk Management	1,895.0	2,437.6	5,006	5,691
Trade and Integration	426.4	1,079.9	1,818	2,604
Urban Development	1,036.6	1,860.0	5,575	4,514
<b>Theme Total</b>	<b>15,276.2</b>	<b>22,307.0</b>	<b>58,747</b>	<b>43,006</b>
<b>SECTOR</b>				
Agriculture, Fishing, and Forestry	837.5	1,933.6	2,618	2,128
Education	728.1	1,951.1	4,944	1,733
Energy and Mining	1,572.4	1,822.7	9,925	5,807

<sup>60</sup> ‘World Bank Group’ (WBG) is a collective expression used for the conglomerate of five specialised institutions –IBRD (1944), International Development Association (IDA, 1960), International Finance Corporation (IFC, 1956), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA, 1988), and International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID, 1966). For the present study, the terms ‘World Bank’ and ‘the Bank’ will suggest reference to the IBRD, unless mentioned otherwise.

Finance	1,571.6	1,675.1	9,137	897
Health and Other Social Services	1,491.7	2,216.4	6,792	6,707
Industry and Trade	1,036.7	1,629.4	1,251	2,167
Information and Communication	273.8	190.9	146	640
Law and Justice and Public Administration	4,534.6	5,569.3	10,828	9,673
Transportation	1,717.2	3,138.2	9,002	8,638
Water, Sanitation, and Flood Protection	1,512.6	2,180.2	4,103	4,617
<b>Sector Total</b>	<b>15,276.2</b>	<b>22,307.0</b>	<b>58,747</b>	<b>43,006</b>
<b>Of which IBRD</b>	10,918.6	13,611.0	44,197	26,737
<b>Of which IDA</b>	4,357.6	8,696.1	14,550	16,269

*Source: Compiled from World Bank Annual Report 2005 and Annual Report 2011*

The Bank was originally mandated to facilitate provision of capital for reconstruction in the immediate post-war period and then to make development loans.<sup>61</sup> “The resources and the facilities of the Bank shall be used exclusively for the benefit of members within equitable consideration to projects for development and projects for reconstruction alike” (Article III, Section 1a), and in determining the conditions of loans, the Bank should “pay special regard to lightening the financial burden and expediting the completion of restoration and reconstruction” (Article III, Section 1 b).

Rendered virtually irrelevant for reconstruction due to the introduction of the Marshall Plan in 1947 for Western Europe’s,<sup>62</sup> the Bank transformed into a

<sup>61</sup> According to Article I of IBRD Articles, its official purposes were to:

- (i) assist in the reconstruction and development of members by facilitating the investment of capital for productive purposes, including the restoration of economies destroyed or disrupted by war, the reconversion of productive facilities to peacetime needs and the encouragement of the development of productive facilities and resources in less developed countries;
- (ii) promote private foreign investment by means of guarantees or participations in loans and other investments made by private investors; and when private capital is not available on reasonable terms, to supplement private investment by providing, on suitable conditions, finance for productive purposes out of its own capital, funds raised by it and its other resources;
- (iii) promote the long-range balanced growth of international trade and the maintenance of equilibrium in balances of payments by encouraging international investments for the development of the productive resources of members, thereby assisting in raising productivity, the standard of living and conditions of labour in their territories;
- (iv) arrange the loan made or guaranteed by it in relation to international loans through other channels so that the more useful and urgent projects, large and small alike, will be dealt with first;
- (v) conduct its operations with due regard to the effect of international investment on business conditions in the territories of members and, in the immediate post-war years, to assist in bringing about a smooth transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy.

<sup>62</sup> Through the Marshall Plan of 1946, the US transferred \$41.3 billion as financial and food aid to Europe to assist its economic recovery with the prospect of breaking down the national economic barriers to trade.

development bank, focusing on the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Beginning with lending only for infrastructural projects, strictly under economic overheads – transport, communication, power projects, ports, dams etc., that could be shown as financially viable in terms of rate-of-returns, the Bank gradually adopted non-economic (poverty alleviation, human resource development, education, agriculture, industry, health facilities, employment schemes, water, sanitation etc., – components of the ‘basic needs approach’) and non-project (program based lending and structural adjustment) lending. Over the years it has incorporated concerns of environment, gender, governance, participation and ownership.

In the initial years, the Bank largely bypassed agricultural lending. While rapid industrialisation was widely considered as the key to economic growth, agriculture remained a neglected sector in most of the developing countries. Premised on the trickle-down approach, the Bank’s early understanding of economic development did not perceive agriculture as an ideal route for promoting growth. FAO, established only a year ahead of the Bank, swiftly embarked on the road of agricultural development, while the Bank’s efforts remained modest. The *Articles of Agreement* discouraged financing agricultural projects as they were accompanied by high local expenditure and not financially self-liquidating. The young Bank, preoccupied with establishing its creditworthiness in the international financial market, financed only those projects that promised to generate returns. However, the catastrophic drought in the Indian subcontinent in the 1960s, followed by technological innovations in cultivation, dramatic breakthrough in plant breeding and establishment of new institutions and cooperatives, not only changed international perception regarding agriculture’s role in economic development, but also boosted the Bank’s agricultural financial commitments. Launching of IDA, the soft credit arm, switched the flow of credit to agricultural lending, especially the developing countries dependent on agriculture (Mason and Asher 1973: 203; Kapur et al. 1997: 379, 381, 385-388).

President George David Woods (1963-1968) initiated the expansion of the Bank’s financial assistance to the non-traditional agricultural sector and by initiating a cooperative arrangement with FAO in 1963-64 to assist member governments in identification and preparation of agricultural projects. Under the FAO/IBRD Cooperative Program, the Bank got access to FAO’s expertise, while FAO got a

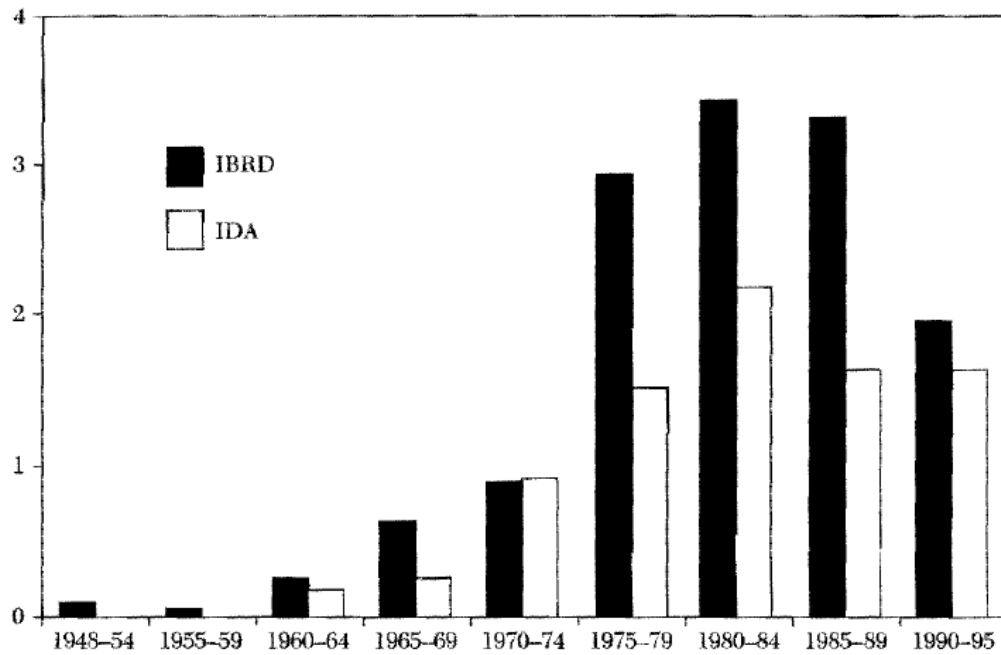
financing partner. Though the Bank retained the primary responsibilities of project appraisal and supervision, FAO staff could participate and provide technical assistance (Mason and Asher 1973: 314; Kapur et al. 1997: 383). FAO Bankers program, initiated in 1972, linked national development banks in developing countries and international commercial banks in mobilising allocation of financial resources for agricultural projects, many of them formulated by FAO. Most of the Bank's lending in agriculture from 1964 to 1973 was in support of large-scale production of livestock and export crops, less than a quarter of the lending being directed to increasing the production of domestic food crops (Murdoch 1980: 264).

By the 1970s, it was realised that economic growth-led development had bypassed the poorest people, failing to translate into an improvement in their real living conditions and, in certain cases, worsening their circumstances. The concept of aggregate growth that included socio-economic objects drew larger attention. The momentum of the Woods years continued into the 1970s as agricultural expansion, specifically raising food output, in developing countries remained a key goal of the Bank's development policy. As poverty alleviation, income distribution, rural development became integral components of development assistance, the connection between agriculture and poverty became inexorable as most of the absolute poor in developing countries live in the rural areas, majority of them (landless labourers, small farm proprietors, tenants and sharecroppers) dependent on indigenous food supplies eked out of agriculture.

As the Bank reoriented its development goals, fostering commercialised agriculture, increasing the productivity of smallholder agriculture and promoting rural development became the main ingredients of its integrated anti-poverty strategy. Under President Robert S. McNamara (1968-1981), agriculture and rural development became the most rapidly growing sections of the World Bank financing. The Bank also witnessed a steady increase in the number of technical agriculturalists, scientists, agricultural engineers and agronomists among its staff and substantial organizational changes accompanied its reorientation towards lending for The Agricultural Projects Department that was responsible for all agricultural lending was renamed as the Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) Department in 1973 (Mason and Asher 1973: 655; Kapur et al. 1997: 394-397). The Bank also stated its support for land reform and other changes designed to help the poor. However, the Bank could force

such reform, only supporting it where it occurs (Murdoch 1980: 264-265). The Bank's lending for agriculture, which accounted for 8.5 per cent of its total lending during 1947-63, rose to almost 19 per cent in 1968-71 (Mason and Asher 1973: 711); from US\$ 872 million in 1964-1968, the Bank's agricultural loan rose to US\$ 3.1 billion in 1969-1973, to further \$7 billion in 1974-1978 (George 1976: 244) (see Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1: Rapid increase in Agriculture's share of IBRD/IDA lending, 1948-95**  
Annual averages, billions of US\$



\* The IDA lending began in 1961.

Source: Kapur et al. 1997: 392, Figure 8-2

The preliminary agricultural lending of the Bank was restricted to financing for importation of tractors and agricultural machinery (for Chile, Columbia and India), land clearance projects, flood control, livestock improvement, irrigation and drainage projects, and storage facility, befitting its larger goal of promoting development through capital-intensive infrastructural lending (Mason and Asher 1973: 163-164; Kapur et al. 1997: 380). Incorporation of poverty alleviation and rural development approach, shifted the Bank's emphasis to integrated smallholder development programs – agricultural credit and extension services, local marketing facilities for food surpluses, soil conservation, input surpluses, improved seeds, technical training of farmers, local cooperatives, etc. (Mason and Asher 1973: 713-714). Investment in irrigation in developing countries increased sharply, reaching close to US\$ 15 billion by 1980, while the Bank continued to fund other water management projects, especially in south Asia (Pakistan and India) (Kapur et al. 1997: 405) (see Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6: Agricultural Lending by Subsector, 1959-91**  
(Percent share)

Subsector	Through				
	FY 1959	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-91
Agriculture credit	10.9	11.6	15.5	15.4	10.5
Area development	2.6	7.7	21.8	18.5	17.0
Fisheries	0	2.1	1.1	0.6	0.9
Irrigation drainage	49.7	54.6	32.2	27.0	22.9
Livestock	0.0	17.5	9.4	2.6	0.5
Agro-Industry	4.1	1.5	6.0	7.4	3.2
Perennial crops	0	3.3	7.5	5.3	5.3
Research/extension	0	0	3.7	4.6	6.4
Forestry	2.2	0.3	1.9	3.5	7.7
Agriculture adjustment	0	0	0	9.9	18.1
Other <sup>a</sup>	30.5	1.3	0.7	5.1	7.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100

a. Includes agriculture

Source: Kapur et al. 1997: 393, Table 8-2

McNamara provided impetus to agricultural research by facilitating the Conference on Agricultural Development (1969), Bellagio, Italy and establishing the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in 1971 (Kapur et al. 1997: 399-401).<sup>63</sup> The Bank for the first time in 1971 financed for agricultural research through a US\$ 12.7 million loan to Spain (Mason and Asher 1973: 204). During the 1970s and 80s, the Bank increased its financing for fertilizer plants to increase production capacity, improve distribution and renew and upgrade existing facilities (Kapur et al. 1997: 409-412). The Bank's agricultural and rural development programmes under McNamara have been analysed with critical cynicism. It is pertinent to note that the Bank's 'basic needs approach' to the development process did not signify the abandonment of the growth model. Hunger and malnutrition were acknowledged because of their adverse consequences for national economic development. Poverty alleviation and rural development projects were justified only on the ground of their being the greatest drag on economic growth. Clearly, the satisfaction of basic needs, through increased investment in agriculture, was not considered *a priori* a part of the very definition of development and was subordinated to its impact on national economic growth.

<sup>63</sup> See Warren C. Baum (1986), *Partners against Hunger – Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research*, Washington, DC: The World Bank, CGIAR Secretariat; Warren C. Baum (1988), *CGIAR – How it all began*, A 1985 Annual Report Reprint, Washington, DC: The World Bank; Emil Javier (2000), *A Food Secure World for All: Towards a New Vision and Strategy for the CGIAR*, October, Technical Advisory Committee (CGIAR) Secretariat.

Despite McNamara's scepticism over the Green Revolution and acknowledgement of its limited benefits, the Bank's policy seemed to bring improved technology and other inputs to the small farmers, reinforcing the green revolution and increasing the productivity of the poor. Though it was realised that generating employment for the landless through public works will both provide them with income to purchase food and create productive facilities for agriculture, the Bank avoided rural works project and did not deem land and tenancy reform as necessary (George 1976: 245, 250-251; Kapur et al. 1997: 416). The Bank's limited recommendations for land reform, preferably for large-scale cash-crop agriculture,<sup>64</sup> and when pressed for, better organization of small farmers, were made in vacuum, without considering their political context. Susan George (1976: 255-259) contends that the Bank could have exhibited commitment to land reform and redistribution of national incomes to the poorer section of the population by making all its loans conditional upon structural changes and orienting national policies in the recipient countries to those ends.

Though lacking uniform profile and clear understanding of 'small farmer', the Bank's rural development project, variously called 'sectoral', 'integrated' or 'functional', had certain common elements. They were applied to a specific geographical territory, gave the farmers necessary physical inputs to make them more productive, and made investments in social services – schools, healthcare, roads, credit, etc. – which are not immediately profitable. Such an integrated rural development scheme, funded by interest-free IDA credits, was entirely different from the Bank's earlier breed of 'good' projects, which could furnish an immediate return on investment. George criticises such strategy as creating "an island of development in an ocean of poverty", and to be replicated once proved successful, without considering the way these projects would fit into the nation as a whole (George 1976: 255-256).

According to the standard procedure, a member government decides on a project and then seeks out the Bank's financing. However, in case of rural development projects, since the less developed countries lack the required techniques to define a project according to the Bank standard, the Bank itself established schedules of possible loans

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<sup>64</sup> Harle questions the underlying premise of the increased international capital investment in agriculture. Though the Bank's enhanced loans to finance food production imply a new orientation to its activities, however, a major portion of foreign capital investments is directed towards increasing agricultural production for exports to the markets of the developed countries rather than for domestic consumption in less developed countries (Harle 1978: 298).



and sent experts to find bankable projects. While FAO/IBRD Cooperative Programme identified about 40-50 per cent of such projects, the Bank's director prevailed upon the government to accept a project identified by the Bank. Hence, in practice, the Bank's team defined the location, context, organisation, priorities and financing of the projects and the governments usually agreed to such arrangements. Because these projects were economically and socially complex and governments did not have trained personnel to manage them, the Bank experts not only took care of implementation but actually took over the entire functions of public administration in the area of the country chosen for rural development schemes (George 1976: 257).

The *World Development Report 1980* recognised agriculture as an imperative component of development and poverty reduction, emphasising on a package of irrigation, fertiliser and seeds input, services and credit extension and ensuring adequate producer price (World Bank 1980: 9). Land reform schemes were tried out (in South Korea, Brazil, Indonesia, Algeria and China), with mixed results, along with providing productivity in traditional small-scale agriculture (World Bank 1980: 41). The *World Development Report 1982* echoed the message, stressing on "a key feature of development experience – the strong association between agricultural advance and overall economic growth to stimulate more rapid agricultural growth" (World Bank 1982: iii). However, the development paradigm in the 1980s came to be characterised by the 'Washington Consensus', which became a standard component of the reform package advocated by the US, the IMF and the Bank throughout the 80s and 90s. As emphasis shifted to the virtues of trade liberalisation and free play of market forces, the Bank assumed a more interventionist role through structural adjustment lending, conditioned upon prescriptions for privatization, market liberalization to attract FDI, balance of payment adjustments, macro economic stabilization, limiting government intervention and strengthening the private sector to spur economic growth.

McNamara's successors did not share his enthusiasm for smallholder agriculture, poverty alleviation and rural development were relegated to cold storage and the Bank's lending in agricultural sector declined. The shift in priority for international action in agriculture was evident in the 1986 *World Development Report*, which emphasised on the potential gains from more liberalised agricultural trade enabled through integrating domestic agricultural policies through the world (World Bank

1986b: iii). The Bank's agriculture lending rose from 13.6 per cent of its total lending in 1966 to 32.2 per cent in 1978, but declined to around 25 per cent during 1984-85, to a final low of 23.4 percent in 1988 (Lipton and Paarlberg 1990: 10). Three substantial reasons for this huge fall in Bank's agricultural lending are pointed out by Lipton and Paarlberg (1990: 18) as, "...declining agricultural commodity prices and projects that may be too pessimistic, tightening constraints (and burdens) on Bank staff resources, and the arithmetic and ideology of adjustment lending", along with performance failure of these projects.

The Bank's Structural Adjustment Loan, aimed to liberalise markets, production and prices, curtaining subsidies to farming and increasing costs of imported inputs, had spill over impact on agriculture. In addition, Sectoral Adjustment Loan/credit enabled similar market-based policy reform on sector by sector basis, like Agricultural Sector Adjustment Loan and Operations, based on completion of key macroeconomic reforms before lending (Kapur et al. 1997: 426-428).<sup>65</sup> Between 1979 and 1985, the Bank signed 34 sector adjustment loan agreements in 25 countries, 26 of which had an agricultural component (Norton 1987: 6). A shift is evident in the subsectors of agricultural lending, which includes environment and natural resource management, agrarian reform and local empowerment, agricultural credit, Agricultural Innovation Systems – research, agricultural education and training, and agricultural extension and rural advisory services (Kapur et al. 1997: 429-441). During the mid-1980s, a World Bank (1986a: 10) policy study made the following observations:

- The lack of food security is a lack of purchasing power of people and nations. Thus there is a strong convergence between the objectives of alleviating poverty and ensuring food security.
- Food security does not necessarily come from achieving food self-sufficiency in a country, nor from a rapid increase in food production.
- Food security in the long run is a matter of achieving economic growth and alleviating poverty. But food security in the shorter run means achieving a redistribution of purchasing power and resources.

Around the same time, Michael M. Cernea (1988: 1, 13) (Senior Rural Sociologist, Rural Sociological Advisor at the Bank's Agriculture and Rural Development

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<sup>65</sup> The Operations Evaluation Department (OED), established in 1973, renamed as the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), evaluates all the Bank's completed lending operations, policies and processes and reports its findings to the Executive Board. For OED evaluation of the Bank's support to agriculture, see "Evaluation Results for 1992: The Agricultural Portfolio", *OED Précis*, November 1993.

Department, 1980-1991) brought to attention the role of rural sociology and the sociology of agriculture to food security issues. It was asserted that broadening the areas of sociology to include farming systems, local food systems, crop cosmology, sociological organisation of agriculture, transition from subsistence to market-oriented production, and agroforestry systems can help in addressing food insecurity and structures of poverty within the Bank (Cernea 1988: 16). Since the late 1980s, the Bank began to specifically confront the problem of food security in Africa through a strategy to promote agriculture and food production and integrate food security initiatives with existing programs.<sup>66</sup>

The 1990s saw a revival of the correlation between reducing poverty, hunger and nutritional deprivation, and raising food production, income and economic growth as the Bank broadened its agricultural strategy to include rural development by launching *From Vision to Action* (1997), subsequently revised in *Reaching the Rural Poor* (2003), recognising agricultural development as the cornerstone of its efforts.<sup>67</sup> In tandem with the renewed rural development strategy, the World Bank (2005: xv) recognised the potential and urgency “for securing agriculture’s prominence in the development agenda”. However, the agricultural sector witnessed a gradual decline in focus from the early 1990 till about mid-2000. The share of the Bank’s agricultural lending drastically declined from 30 percent (1980-82) to 7 percent (1999-2001), marginally increasing to 12 per cent in 2006-08 (World Bank 2009: 7). During 1998-2008, the Bank provided about US\$ 23.7 billion in financing for agriculture and agribusiness activities in 108 countries (including US\$ 5.6 billion from IFC), accounting for only 8 per cent of its total lending (IEG 2011a: xi). Most of the funds were channelled for irrigation and drainage; research and extension; access to credit; land access and land rights formalization; roads and marketing infrastructure; and marketing and agribusiness (IEG 2011a: 32-62) (see Table 3.7 and Figures 3.2 and 3.3).

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<sup>66</sup> See, World Bank (1988), *The Challenge of Hunger in Africa: A Call to Action*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

<sup>67</sup> World Bank (1997), *Rural Development: From Vision to Action*, A Sector Strategy, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Studies and Monograph Series 12, Washington, DC: The World Bank; World Bank (2003), *Reaching the Rural Poor: A Renewed Strategy for Rural Development*, Agriculture and Rural Development Department, Washington, DC: The World Bank

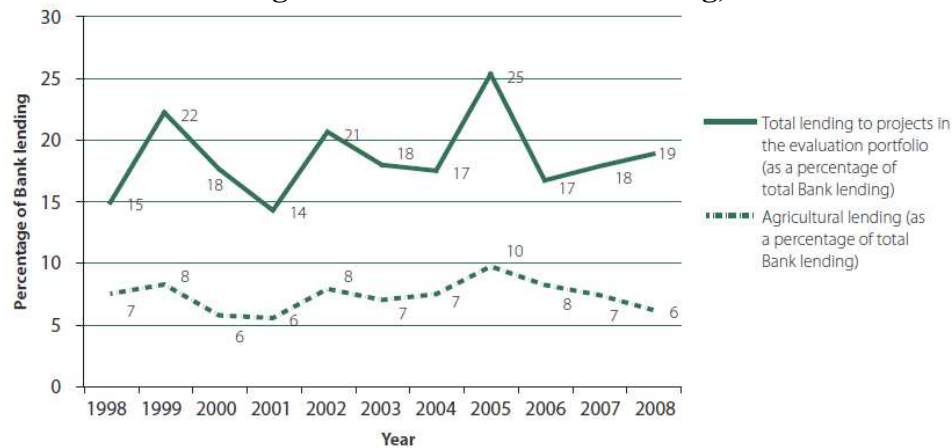
**Table 3.7: Total World Bank Lending to Agriculture, 1998-2008**

Details of agricultural lending	1998–2008
Total World Bank lending (all sectors, US\$ billions)	243.1
Lending to projects with agricultural components (US\$ billions)	45.2
Lending to projects with agricultural components (as a percentage of total World Bank lending)	20
Agricultural lending <sup>a</sup> (US\$ billions)	18.1 <sup>b</sup>
Agricultural lending (as a percentage of lending to projects with agriculture components)	40
Agricultural lending (as a percentage of total World Bank lending)	7

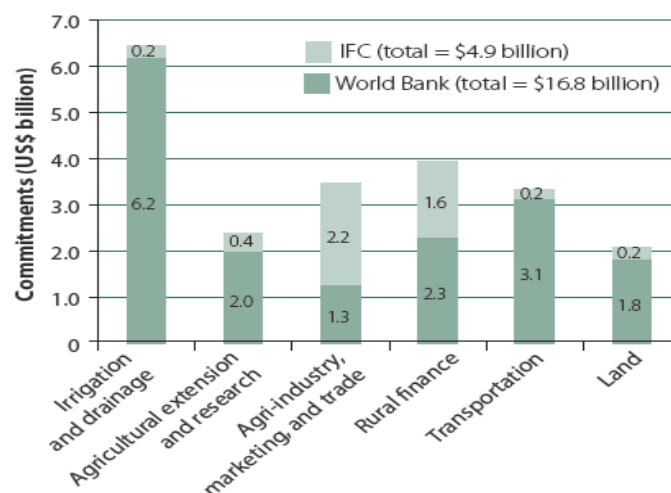
a. “Agriculture” comprises components with any of the following codes: agricultural extension and research; animal production; crops; forestry; irrigation and drainage; general agriculture, fishing, and forestry; agricultural marketing and trade; and agro-industry. Agricultural lending consists of the dollar amounts assigned to these subsectors.

b. an additional US\$ 3.8 billion was committed by the World Bank in fiscal 2009.

Sources: IEG 2011a: 99, Appendix Table B.1

**Figure 3.2: Total Portfolio Lending and Agricultural Lending, as a Percentage of Total World Bank Lending, 1998-2008**

Sources: IEG 2011a: 13, Figure 2.1

**Figure 3.3: World Bank and IFC Contributions by Investment Area, 1998-2008**

Note: IFC figures are total net commitment to projects that address the area among other, broader objects. World Bank commitments labelled “rural finance” and “transportation” refer to the agriculture portfolio of 633 projects that also include rural finance or transport activities. World Bank land commitments are for stand-alone land projects.

Sources: IEG 2011a: 33, Figure 3.1

Finally, in the shadow of the 2007-2008 food crisis, the 2008 *World Development Report* reaffirmed agriculture as ‘a development tool’ and encouraged “governments and the international community on designing and implementing agriculture-for-development agendas that can make a difference in the lives of hundreds of millions of rural poor” (World Bank 2008b: xiii). The report identified three distinct agricultural worlds: the agriculture-based countries (includes most of Sub-Saharan Africa); transforming countries (includes most of South and East Asia, Middle East and North Africa); and urbanised countries (includes Latin America and much of Europe and Central Asia). The Bank proposed to use agriculture to promote economic growth and reduce poverty, and food insecurity in agriculture-based countries; assist in reducing rural-urban income gaps and rural poverty in transforming countries agriculture; and link smallholders to the new food markets and providing good jobs in the urbanised countries (World Bank 2008b: 229-242). Agricultural policies included: reforming trade, price and subsidy policies; connecting agriculture to market; institutional innovations to support smallholder; scientific and technological innovations; making agricultural systems environmental sustainable; and focussing on non-farm employment and safety nets (World Bank 2008b: 96-225).

Following this, a significant increase in the WBG’s (IBRD, IDA and IFC) support for agriculture and related sectors was projected in *World Bank Group Agriculture Action Plan: FY 2010-2012*, from a annual baseline average support of US\$ 4.1 billion (FY 2006-2008) to between US\$ 6.2 and 8.3 billion annually over FY 2010-2012, representing about 13-17 per cent of total Bank commitments (World Bank 2009: xv). The focus areas were identified as: raising agricultural productivity growth; linking farmers to markets and strengthening value chains; reducing risk and vulnerability; facilitating agricultural entry and exit and rural non-farm income; and enhancing environmental sustainability (World Bank 2009: 15-30).

Within the World Bank, decision-making on agriculture, rural development and nutrition takes place in a strikingly changed context, compared to the initial decades of its establishment. As the international conception of development was modified, the Bank also tailored its original mandate to include agricultural, rural development and nutritional policies, programmes and projects, substantially increasing finance for these sectors. This shift in emphasis is evidently Presidential-motivated. The Bank’s

active engagement with food security is partially a response to requests from member countries for assistance and the changed global economic circumstances (*from field study*). Its critical role stems from its status as the single largest lending arm of the UN, extending advice on agricultural strategies to national governments. However, the Bank seems to lack a focussed food security strategy and inter-sectoral coordination, trying to subsume varied stands of agriculture, nutrition, poverty alleviation and rural development simultaneously and interchangeably.

The BWIs are primarily financial organisations characterised by a pronounced inclination to free market and privatisation, which colour their policy prescriptions and lending to developing countries. The impact of IMF/World Bank-mandated structural adjustments on food security were criticised as being devastating for developing countries, pushing them towards economic specialisation and monoculture cultivation to increase agricultural exports and foreign exchange earnings available for servicing foreign debt (Gonzalez 2004: 424). Bank's encouragement of export/cash crops has been one of the most controversial issues. The agricultural restructuring loan made to Vietnam for diversification to coffee production caused huge surplus in international coffee market (out of nowhere Vietnam became the second largest coffee-producing country) that led to slumping of world coffee price, much to the dismay of coffee farmers in over 70 countries (Madeley 2002: 154-155; Patel 2008: 10-11). Export-led cash crop production reinforced the privileged status of the large, wealthy farmers at the expense of smallholders, thereby increasing economic polarisation and deepening rural inequality (Gonzalez 2004: 467-468).

In spite of its intentions to help poor farmers, much of the Bank's efforts benefited larger farmers. In the late 1970s almost half of its projects were criticised of 'leakage' upward of benefit from projects designed to help the small farmers. The Muda River Project, Malaysia, beginning in the late 1960s with a \$45 million loan from the Bank explicates how benefits move toward the better-off segments of the society (the richer farmers benefited due to uneven increase and distribution in farm incomes, while the towns and cities received the increased resources and welfare) even when aimed at the poor (*padi* rice farm families). The Bank's agricultural strategies were criticised for failing to include the rural landless, generally the poorest group who are a big section of the agricultural population in developing countries (Murdoch 1980: 265-266).

The strategic economists at the Bank and the IMF are criticised as being guided by fiscal viability in taking decisions and proposing policies that deny the poorest in the poor countries the basic right to food. The structural adjustment conditionalities required the developing countries to lower tariffs and eliminate non-tariff barriers and open up their markets, while the industrialised countries of US and EU increased both agricultural subsidies and kept developing country exports at bay by using tariff and non-tariff barriers. This led to influx of cheap food in the developing countries, depressing food prices, discouraging domestic food production, and reducing export revenues, rendering small farmers destitute and increasing their hunger (Gonzalez 2004: 424). The IMF-market laws were held responsible for pressurising African, Asian and Latin American governments to reduce entitlements for poor and food subsidies, resulting in food riots (known as ‘IMF riots’) in Cairo, Tunis, North East Brazil, Morocco, Madagascar, Venezuela, Zambia, Argentina and the Dominican Republic in the early 1980s (Spitz 1984: 184-185; Gonzalez 2004: 466).

It is asserted that the ‘neo-liberal’ (Patnaik 2007: 1; Schanbacher 2010: 3) economic reforms advocated by the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes led to slashing of social spending, eliminating social safety nets, shrinking domestic food production, and diminishing export earning, which caused increasing inequality, poverty, hunger and food insecurity. The GATT/WTO is expected to regulate international trade by correcting market distorting subsidies and protectionist import barriers. The potential benefits of and prospective damage caused by multilateral trading system in agricultural sector, however, have remained issues of long-standing disagreement and debate. The next section briefly examines WTO’s engagement with international agricultural trade and its implications for global food security.

### ***World Trade Organization (WTO)***

The International Trade Organization (ITO) charter, negotiated at the UN conference in Havana, Cuba in 1948, included a set of rules and procedures for the conclusion and operation of international commodity agreements. The ITO, however, was never ratified and the General Agreement Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1947 took over its agendas. In September 1986, the Uruguay Round was launched under the GATT in Punta del Este, Uruguay. Trade ministers from more than 100 countries signed the Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Negotiations

at Marrakesh Ministerial Meeting, on 14 April 1994, which came into force on 1 January 1995, with the establishment of the WTO, replacing the GATT, to oversee multilateral trading and administer the agreements negotiated during the Uruguay Round. This ushered in a new era of global economic cooperation and set the context for an increasing liberalised global economy. Subsequent Ministerial Conferences, the highest decision-making body of the WTO that brings together all its members every two years, have reasserted and strengthened commitments towards an ‘open multilateral trading system that is free, fair and market-oriented’.

The 1986-94 Uruguay Round negotiations also resulted in the signing of the WTO-Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), along with the SPS Agreement; Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures; Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries; and Member Countries’ Schedules of Commitments on Goods providing market access, tariffs, combination of tariffs and quotas, export subsidies and domestic support. The WTO-AoA is significant because it subjected agricultural commodities to multilateral trading rules, which were largely exempted from it prior to the Uruguay Round. The WTO-AoA commitments were phased out over a six year period from 1995 (ten years for developing countries) and the Agriculture Committee was entrusted to oversee its implementation. Negotiation began in early 2000, which led to 121 members submitting negotiating proposals to the Doha Ministerial Conference, called as the ‘Doha Development Round’. It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse in details the various measures included in the Articles of the WTO-AoA. However, the outcomes of the trading rules are pertinent for understanding their implication for global food security, discussed very briefly below.

*The Doha Ministerial Declaration* (2001) recognised that “International trade can play a major role in the promotion of economic development and the alleviation of poverty” and expressed determination to maintain “liberalization of trade policies”, pledging “to reject the use of protectionism”. It reaffirmed “the long-term objective” of establishing “a fair and market-oriented trading system encompassing strengthened rules and specific commitments on support and protection in order to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets” and committed to comprehensive negotiations aimed at “substantial improvements in market access” by



converting all non-tariff import restrictions to tariffs barriers and binding and limiting them; “reduction of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies”; and “substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support”,<sup>68</sup> with “special and differential treatment for developing countries” to enable them “to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development” (WTO 2001: 3, Paragraph 12; contained in the WTO-AoA).

However, the negotiations at the Doha Round hit a stalemate over rules governing agriculture trade, which remains a highly sensitive sector. It is asserted that the WTO-AoA, failed to achieve a fair market-oriented trading system, instead of correcting the inequalities of world agricultural markets it systematically favoured the producers of industrialized countries. The developed countries continued to impose agricultural protectionism and support measures, while keeping out products from developing countries (through tariff and non-tariff barriers), most developing countries had already lowered trade barriers (eliminated non-tariff barriers and significantly reduced tariffs) pursuant to IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes. Export subsidies and other trade-distorting domestic subsidies (mainly used by the US and the EU) were permitted or conveniently exempted, allowing the developed countries to continue using them, and were refused to countries that had not used them in the past (mainly developing countries), unless restricted to low-income or resource-poor farmers. Developed countries further avoided the mandated subsidy reduction by shifting to forms of support/subsidies that were not explicitly included or prohibited in the WTO-AoA. Thus, the WTO-AoA allegedly contributed in institutionalising the precise inequalities in the global trading system, which it was mandated to remedy, (Gonzalez 2004: 460-461; Herrmann 2007; 213-231).

*The Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration* (adopted at the Sixth Ministerial Conference, 13-18 December 2005, Hong Kong) reaffirmed commitment to the agricultural mandate set out in the *Doha Ministerial Declaration* and Annex A (Framework for Establishing Modalities in Agriculture). Though the EU, US and Japan pledged to phase out direct subsidies to food exports, and India and Brazil called for easier

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<sup>68</sup> Domestic Support Measures have been divided into three categories or ‘boxes’ in WTO parlance: the amber box refers to trade distorting measures that promote production, like input subsidies; the blue box refers to programmes that limit production, like direct payments to farmers; and the green box refers to measures that are assumed to have no impact on production, like public sector financing of research or assistance for marketing crops.

access to developed markets and cuts in farm subsidies, the US continued to demand huge cuts in farm import tariffs to open up markets for its farmers, which was rejected by the EU, India and Japan, resulting in irreconcilable differences and indefinite suspension of the Doha Round (Shaw 2007: 362). Moreover, the US and the EU are at loggerheads at the WTO table; while the EU accused the US of circumventing obligations to reduce export subsidies by unfairly using agricultural export credits and food aid, the US filed a complaint against EU for its 1998-2004 moratorium on the approval of new GM seeds and food products. The EU-US disagreement has not only frustrated WTO negotiations on agriculture, but also has wider implications for the developing countries (Clapp 2004: 1493).

The WTO-AoA has garnered unfavourable attention with calls for getting ‘the WTO out of Agriculture’ (Rosset 2006; Via Campesina 2003). WTO ministerial meetings are accompanied by massive street protests by farmer organizations and NGOs, the most dramatic and widely publicised instance being the self-stabbing of Lee Kyung Hae, a Korean farmer and the founder of a cooperative farmers’ association in Korea, while shouting ‘the WTO kills farmer’, as the Cancún WTO Ministerial Meeting was in progress on 10 September 2003 (Rosset 2006: xii-xiv; Patel 2008: 34-35). The agricultural trade policy included in the Uruguay Round has been criticised as being geared to make poor countries export more primary products, without any concern regarding making more people hungry or lose their lives in these countries. The WTO principle imposed mandatory “trade openness for developing countries...while advanced countries retained intact their non-trade barriers, even imposed new tariffs and subsidized output of their primary products heavily” (Patnaik 2007: 3-4).

It is argued that perhaps the GATT/WTO structure is not conducive to discussions on the general issue of food security. The prevalent notion seemed to be that agricultural trade policies are an outgrowth of domestic policies and, hence, are required to be defended rather than amended in international discourse (Josling 1980: 54). The WTO AoA directs members instituting export prohibition or restriction to give due consideration on importing members’ food security (Part VI, Article 12) and allows public stockholding corresponding to predetermined targets solely for food security purposes (Annex 2, paragraph 3). However, ‘food security’ is mentioned as a non-trade concern (WTO AoA: Preamble), and the purchases for food security stocks are

subjected to be made at current market prices and sales from them are required to be made at no less than the current domestic market price for the product and quality in question. It remains to be seen whether the WTO is able to resolve competing national interests to arrive at a consensus on multilateral agricultural trading that is not subversive for the economy and food security of developing countries.

Institutional responses to the food problem are not limited to global inter-governmental organizations but also include the efforts undertaken by regional organisations, and CSOs/NGOs that operate nationally and internationally.

### **Inter-Governmental Regional Institutions**

Regional and sub-regional frameworks can provide an effective middle-level context for addressing food problems faced by countries within a definite area. The regional approach draws upon similarities in climate, economic patterns, policy environments and development status of countries, along with shared geographical, historical and cultural dimensions, resulting in similar food situations. Regional cooperation is envisaged on exchange of information, experience and early warning systems; sharing production technologies and market arrangements; strengthening transport and communication infrastructure; alliance in agricultural experimentation and research; promoting intra-regional trade; and materialising a regional grain reserve for speedy delivery and economical management. However, conflicting national politico-economic interests that influence individual government behaviour and complicate food problems, need to be reconciled to arrive at integrated policy recommendations and implement workable solutions (Carey 1981: 4-5; Balaam 1981: 207-209). At the regional level, individual country governments, national bodies and regional organizations constitute the main actors in determining food policy, along with CSOs, farmer/consumer interest groups, NGOs and media, influencing policy formulation and implementation. Regional organizations act as 'halfway houses' (Balaam 1981: 208) between countries and international institutions, representing institutionalisation of regional patterns of food politics and integrative effects on agricultural production and food distribution within specific regions to deal with diverse food problems.

The 2007-2008 international price rise, especially of two key staple cereals, rice and wheat, produced and consumed in Asian countries, increased domestic inflation,

pushed large numbers of households below the poverty line and generated fears of a food crisis in the region. The South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) operationalised its 'Food Bank', proposed in August 2008 at the Colombo Summit, subsequently ratified by an Extraordinary Meeting of Agricultural Ministers of the region. The SAARC member countries adopted the *Colombo Statement on Food Security* in its 15<sup>th</sup> Summit, resolving to ensure food security in the South Asian region through increase in production and investment in agriculture, and sharing best practices in procurement and distribution. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) called recognised the need to rapidly accelerate investment programmes to secure food supplies for the poorest people in Asia. To combat the rising prices, the rice-producing countries of Asia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos, mooted the idea of creating a rice cartel to regulate price and support rice farmers and traders in these countries at the risk of irking the importing countries of Philippines, Singapore and Hong Kong (Fuller 2008). ADB's strategic response included a combination of short-term, and medium-to-long-term policies to reduce the impact of food price rise on household poverty and food distribution (ADB 2008; 2009).

The its 14<sup>th</sup> Summit in 2009, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted the Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and the Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security (SPA-FS). A Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change and Food Security (AFCC) was endorsed by the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) Meeting in November 2009. The ASEAN also has in place a Food Safety Network since 2004 and the ASEAN Guidelines on Risk Assessment of Agriculture-Related GMOs (adopted in 1999). The Strategic Plan of Action (SPA) on ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (1999-2004), endorsed by AMAF Meeting in September 1998, was renewed by the new SPA (2005-2010), endorsed by AMAF Meeting in October 2004. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development taking note of the steep food price increase undertook a policy dialogue to assess the responses of the donors (OECD 2009) called for humanitarian aid in the short-term and fostering economic growth and development in the long-run, particularly investment in agriculture and smallholder productivity.

Food shortages, high food prices and food crisis related to social unrest and political instability pose major challenges for food security in the African region. The African

Union (AU) ratified the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2002, to address Africa's development problems by reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, empowering women and halting marginalisation of Africa. NEPAD's agricultural programme, guided by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), established in July 2003, aims to improve economic growth and socio-political stability, alleviate hunger and poverty, increase food production and food security through agriculture-led development. CAADP focuses on four key areas: land and water management; market access; food supply and hunger; and agricultural research. The NEPAD/African Bioscience Initiatives (ABI) focuses on applying biodiversity science, biotechnology and indigenous knowledge systems in agriculture, health, and environment sectors. The Agriculture and Food Security Division (AFSD) of the AU's Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture coordinates continent-wide initiatives on agriculture, food and nutrition security, and climate change through appropriate policy and technological interventions, and is responsible for the implementation of the CAADP agenda in collaboration with the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA).

The European Union (EU), responded to the 2008 crisis with a massive € 1 billion Food Facility, channelled mainly through UN agencies (FAO, UNRWA, UNICEF, WFP, UNOPS, the World Bank, IFAD and UNDP), and also via national budgets and non-state actors, like NGOs, private sectors bodies, local authorities etc. In the first phase, agreements were signed on 15 May 2009 with FAO (€ 106 million), UNRWA (€ 39.6 million) and UNICEF (€ 8.2 million) and on 26 May 2009 with WFP (€ 38.7 million) totalling to € 212 million. The EU established the stabilisation of export receipts on agricultural products (STABEX) compensatory funding mechanism to offset losses on agricultural products like cocoa, coffee, groundnuts, tea etc., due to crop failure and price fall and prioritised sustainable agriculture, under the first Lomé Convention (World Bank 1986b: 139-142). It launched the Plan to Combat Hunger in the World (also known as the Pisani Plan) in 1981 to define and implement food strategies in developing countries, as part of an overall approach to development of the food sector. It was implemented on an experimental basis in Mali, Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia (Franco 1988: 90-91). The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU is one of the oldest and perhaps the most pervasive of all its policies for which the

members overcame many security, ideological, trade and resource interdependence barriers to establish new rules for agriculture within the regional context.

The EU CAP began operating from 30 July 1962, providing countries with joint control over food production, with the purposes of supporting and giving incentives to the war ravaged agricultural sector for better productivity and assured availability of food supplies for the consumers (Ackrill 2000: 30-42). Over the years the move was to achieve unification of European agricultural market through free movement of agricultural products, removal of trade barriers, progressively unified pricing and enabling common intervention, with explicit incorporation of economic, social, rural development and environmental policy in the CAP (Ackrill 2000: 49-224).

Cooperation between UN system agencies and regional organizations is evidenced in FAO's cooperation with regional banks and participation in regional reserves. FAO signed agreements of cooperation with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Andean Development Corporation in 1977, with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa in 1978, and working arrangements were also established with the Kuwait Fund (FAO 1980: 68). In 1995, FAO signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (FAO 2000a: 45-46). In 1997, FAO MOUs with the World Bank and the African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, with the banks agreeing to provide soft loans, in some cases grants, for promotion of rural development and food security (FAO 2000a: 29). FAO Secretariat provided technical advice to the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development on food security schemes, organised detailed study for the Sahelian zone together with the Sahelian countries of West Africa, collaborated with the UN Economic Commission for West Asia to explore options of sub-regional cooperation in West Asia, and assisted Southern Africa Development Conference (SADCC) and the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in preparing projects on regional food security. An ASEAN Food Security Reserve of rice was establishing in 1979. An Arab food reserve stock was agreed upon in 1980, and regional grain reserve system was initiated for Sahel and SELA in 1981 (Shaw 2007: 243-244).

The EU is a member organization of FAO and their collaboration dates back to the 1991 Framework Cooperation Agreement, replaced in 2002 with the establishment of

the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) between the EU and all UN organizations. A Strategic Partnership Agreement was established between the EU and FAO in 2004 with the aim of enhancing their effectiveness to achieve common goals and objectives, including food security, sustainable rural development and agricultural policies, and food and quality. The EU provides substantial financial contribution to the funds and programmes of the UN and under the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) and funds the FAO programme 'Linking Information and Decision Making to Improve Food Security'. To further mobilise resources to harmonise and coordinate implementation of food security and humanitarian food assistance goals, the EU, FAO, WFP and IFAD signed a Statement of Intent on Programmatic Cooperation on Food Security and Nutrition on 27 June 2011.

The EU has a Permanent Observer status in WFP (not a member, but has a privileged permanent seat on the Executive board, but can only speak after the state members of the Board) and a Simple Observer status in IFAD (not a member). The EU is a major donor to WFP, especially emergency and humanitarian food aid, and has co-financed with IFAD several rural development projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. To consolidate their relations and identify areas of collaboration, the EU signed a MoU with WFP and a FAFA with IFAD in September 2004. The EU is also a policy maker within FAO/WHO CAC and is a selective policy recipient, taking into consideration while adopting EU food legislations as long as they are compatible with EU's food safety objectives (Poli 2004: 616-617).

WFP provided technical and managerial assistance for initiating AU's African Risk Capacity in 2010 and collaborated with the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the AU in addressing child hunger in Africa through a technical working group that included members from WFP, ECA, AU Commission, NEPAD, ECLAC, UNICEF and WHO to undertake the study (WFP 2011a: 12). IFAD also collaborates with AU-NEPAD to enable smallholders to influence rural development policies in Africa.

It is evident that regional organizations have the potential to mitigate hunger problems, establish food policies, accelerate movement of food supplies by drawing attention and mobilising support during severe food shortage and help in development of intra-regional trade and objectives for economic specialisation of commodities in which the region has comparative advantage. However, in analysing food problems

and policies of regional organizations, it is imperative to bear in mind that they are manifestations of aggregate national food issues within a specific region, and require balancing public and private welfare and overcoming natural limitations and historical, economic, political, and socio-cultural differences.

### **Non-Governmental Initiatives**

The food problem is not confined to deliberations within inter-governmental global and regional organizations. CSOs/NGOs, including consumer unions and farmers' organizations at international and national levels, have increasingly responded to problems of food and nutrition, primarily from human rights-based perspective, by researching on dimensions and causes of hunger and undernutrition and influencing policy decisions. Through advocacy and activism, they make people aware of their food and nutritional rights. NGOs facilitate in-field community participation and collaborate to provide emergency relief and voluntary food aid to vulnerable groups. While farmers' organisations are critical for advancing farmers' interests, voicing their needs and concerns, development of sustainable and appropriate agricultural and rural policies and mainstreaming agricultural research, consumers' unions protect and promote consumers' interests through research, providing reliable information, lobbying decision-making bodies and averting misleading advertisements. They can pressurise governments, international organisation and business conglomerates to focus attention on food and nutrition security and inform policy-making.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) (the policy arm and one of the 15 centres supported by the CGIAR), is by far the largest global food research organization. It has been working to identify and analyse national and international strategies and policy solutions to reduce poverty and end hunger and malnutrition, especially in poor low-income countries, since its establishment in 1975. through a series of research publications, including Discussion Papers, Project Papers and Notes, IFPRI Briefs, Books and Monographs, Technical Guides, Food Policy Reports. Non-profit organizations, such as ActionAid, MercyCorps, Action Against Hunger, InterAction, OXFAM, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, provide in-field food assistance to dislocated and vulnerable groups during humanitarian and emergency crisis caused. Local ActionAid and Red Cross act as implementing partners of WFP, distributing food on its behalf.



The Bread for the World Institute on Hunger and Development, the Congressional Hunger Centre (Washington, DC), the Hunger Project, the Global Policy Forum (New York), and the Citizens' Alliance against Malnutrition (India) engage with food security through mobilisation of knowledge and information and monitoring international and domestic policy on poverty, food and hunger. Advocating and realising the human right to food has been the mission for Heidelberg-based FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) and the Right to Food Campaign (India). M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Navdanya and Gene Campaign in India have been generating public debate to inform legislation on issues of food sovereignty, livelihood security, especially for rural, tribal and indigenous communities, biological and ecological resources, use of biotechnology, seed patenting, farmers' rights, and sustainable agriculture, through research and advocacy.

The UN system has progressively accommodated CSOs/NGOs, as observers, source of knowledge and expertise, and potential partners in decision-making, based on Article 71 of the UN Charter and the subsequent ECOSOC Resolution of July 1996.<sup>69</sup> FAO and the World Bank have, over the years, expanded their relationship with CSO/NGO.<sup>70</sup> IFAD-NGO cooperation dates back to the Extended Cooperation Programme (ECP), created in 1978 to promote community-based and participatory rural development through financial support for NGO activities. The IFAD/NGO Consultation Steering Committee and the NGO Coordination Unit facilitate policy dialogue, exchange of knowledge and operational information.<sup>71</sup> Since CSO/NGO research and field experience, provide alternative perspectives to the UN's report and documents, dialogue and consultation with them ensure that a variety of interests get reflected in the UN process, along with facilitating transparency and accountability.

### **Coordinating Mechanism in the UN System**

The UN system specialised agencies are coordinated by the ECOSOC, at the inter-governmental level, and the CEB (erstwhile ACC), at the inter-secretarial level.

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<sup>69</sup> Resolution 1996/31 – *Consultative Relationship between the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations*, adopted by ECOSOC Substantive session of 1996 on 25 July 1996.

<sup>70</sup> See, FAO (1999), *FAO Policy and Strategy for Cooperation with Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations*, Rome: FAO Information Division; OED (2002), *Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Engagement in World Bank Supported Projects: Lessons from OED Evaluations*, Lessons and Practices No. 18, August, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

<sup>71</sup> See, IFAD (2002), *IFAD and NGOs; Dynamic Partnerships to Fight Rural Poverty*, Rome: IFAD.

Chapters IX (Articles 57, 58, 59) and X (Articles 62, 62, 64, 66 and 70) of the UN Charter elaborate the relationship between the UN and its specialized agencies. Each individual body, upon negotiation with the UN, concludes relationship agreement with it, which confirm their status as specialised agencies of the UN. Though the terms of such agreement differ in case of each agency, but most of the agencies undertake to submit regular reports to the ECOSOC, remaining independent in their operations. The Specialised Agencies may only agree to consider recommendations made by the General Assembly and are not bound by them (Williams 1987: 16-17).

The primary responsibility of coordinating the UN system and bringing together the disparate parts of a decentralized system of specialized bodies – each with its own constitution, mandate, governing bodies and budgets – into a cohesive and functioning whole was entrusted to a little-known institutional mechanism, which had no mention in the UN Charter – the ACC. It reported to the ECOSOC and facilitated coordination of policies at the national level by keeping the members of the Agencies in close contact with the key officials of the different ministries dealing with the affairs of their respective agencies (Hill 1966: 122; Williams 1987: 109). In addition to the activities undertaken in response to direct requests by the ECOSOC and the General Assembly, the ACC also provided “point of contact among the organizations of the United Nations family at the top executive level” (Hill 1966: 105), with the primary aims of avoiding duplication and overlapping; adopting an uniform or comparable regulations, practices and methods; and making arrangements for cooperation and appropriate division of work.

The ACC was criticised as representing “the views of the Agencies rather than those of either the United Nations or the member governments” (Williams 1987: 110) because its members, as Executive Heads of their respective agencies, had vested interests in the preservation of the matters of concern to their specific organization. The members were primarily responsible to their own governing bodies and not to the ECOSOC, despite the fact that the same governments were represented on ECOSOC and the governing bodies of the Specialised Agencies (Williams 1987: 109). This led to the allegation that the ACC was “used by the agencies as an instrument to safeguard entrenched interests and limit interference by the Council [ECOSOC]” (Hill 1966: 124). Moreover, the quality of ACC’s performance, to a great extent, depended

on the personalities, policies and methods of the Secretary-General, as its chairman, along with the time and inclination they were willing to devote to its affairs (Williams 1987: 108-109; Hill 1966: 131). Hence, the ACC was not perceived as an effective instrument for close coordination across the whole UN System.

Subsequent to many attempts at reforming the ACC, it was renamed as the CEB in 2001.<sup>72</sup> The CEB meets twice a year, under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, serving as a forum for inter-agency dialogue for issues of global concern and is supported by the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP); the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM); and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). It supports the Resident Coordinator (RC) system<sup>73</sup> and UN country teams by providing guidance on business operations, coordination, planning and programming and by promoting coherent and effective oversight of country operations and to develop and apply new and better ways of working together.

To further improve UN system coordination at the country level, the General Assembly adopted a comprehensive process of 'triennial' policy review of the operational activities for development with the UN system (General Assembly 1993: 3-5). A subsequent resolution envisaged linking national government, the UN system, civil society, national NGOs and the private sector involved in the development process (General Assembly 2005: 3). In order to increase coherence, effectiveness and relevance of operational activities, the UN system was urged to conduct common country assessment, provide financial, technical and organizational support to the RC and form country teams (General Assembly 2005: 8-10).<sup>74</sup> The report, *Delivering as One*, of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, established in 2006, attempted to reduce fragmentation with the UN system and harness its full capacity through the 'One United Nations' approach (one budget, one leader and one set of

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<sup>72</sup> The CEB consists of the executive heads of the Specialised Agencies (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, WHO, World Bank Group, IMF, UPU, ITU, WMO, IMO, WIPO, IFAD, UNIDO and UNWTO); the Director-Generals of IAEA and GATT/WTO; the Secretary-General of UNCTAD; the Administrator of UNDP; the High Commissioner for UNHCR; Commissioner-General of UNRWA; and the Executive Directors of UNEP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, UNDOC and UN-HABITAT.

<sup>73</sup> The Resident Coordinator (RC) system encompasses all the UN System entities that carry out operational activities for development in member countries, regardless of their physical presence in the country. It coordinates UN operations that support nationally-owned and led development plans and programmes as well as emergency, recovery and transitory activities in the countries.

<sup>74</sup> Also see, ECOSOC (2006), *Progress in the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 59/250*, Report of Secretary-General, E/2006/58, ECOSOC Substantive Session of 2006.

management systems). Particular attention was given to the increasing overlap and duplication in the work of the UN and the BWIs and the need to strike a balance between ‘healthy competition and inefficient overlap and unfilled gaps’. Building on their respective strengths, the report urged the UN Secretary-General, the World Bank President and the IMF Executive Director to formally review and update their respective roles at global and country levels (General Assembly 2006: 15-16).<sup>75</sup>

The issue of system-wide coherence received renewed attention with the adoption of subsequent Resolutions by the General Assembly (2008, 2009, 2010), calling for strengthening of governance of operational activities, developing an independent system-wide evaluation mechanism, approval of common country programmes, improving the funding system (ensuring adequate funding, and improving the quality of funds and information to monitor funding trends), and harmonisation of business practices for enhanced system-wide coherence. Despite many attempts at coordinating decision-making by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the ACC/CEB, reduction in the numbers of ad hoc and inter-agency coordinating bodies, strengthening the coordinating role of the ECOSOC, and setting up of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) by the funding programmes to devise collaborative policies and action plans, the UN system remains a complex web in the food security arena, each agency having a large degree of autonomy (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 42).

### **Inter-Organizational Cooperation and Turf War**

Examination of international organizations as instruments used by states and their impact on international issues and on individual states has been the concern of many studies. However, few have taken up the issue of inter-organizational coordination and relationships in a comprehensive manner. This gap is glaring considering the proliferation of international organisations and multiplication of their activities in socio-economic development that has created a ‘complex web of interdependencies’, along with ‘opportunities for competition and rivalry’ that ‘threatens to undermine development efforts’, necessitating innovative form of cooperation and coordination

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<sup>75</sup> Also see, General Assembly (2007), *Recommendations Contained in the Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment*, Report of Secretary-General, A/61/836, Sixty-first session.

(Charlton 1992: 630-631). This section looks at inter-organisational relationships in the identified issue area, global food security. An increasing collaborative trend is evident among the three Rome-based UN food organisations – FAO, IFAD and WFP. In addition to their usual relationship with General Assembly and ECOSOC as specialised agencies of UN system, FAO, IFAD and WFP have established a variety of working relationships with each other and with other UN system agencies, like WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNDP, WMO, IAEA and IMCO, on issues of common and overlapping concern and steadily increasing the flow of funds.

In response to the 2008 food crisis, FAO/IFAD/WFP (2009), in a joint statement addressed to the ECOSOC High-level Segment in 2009, espoused a right-based approach to development, combining the right to food and the right to health, and recognised the potential benefits of cooperation in research, coherence in policy making, and coordination of practice to address the global problem of hunger. The UN-HLTF CFA is envisaged as a catalytic framework to bring coordination and cohesion between governments, international and regional organisations on common issues of agriculture, and global food and nutrition security.<sup>76</sup> A Food Security Cluster (FSC), jointly led by FAO and WFP was endorsed in December 2010, with the primary purpose of coordinating food response, through effective cooperation with partner organizations. Based at WFP's Rome headquarters, the FSC Global Support Team consists of FAO, WFP, and international NGOs.

Given the complementarities in their mandates, joint vulnerability assessments are undertaken by FAO and WFP, while IFAD grants are disbursed based on FAO technical assistance and research activities, WFP provides logistical support for food aid distribution. Field collaboration among these organizations is of particular importance for cost sharing, avoid overlapping by information sharing and channelising respective resources to address the identified food issue. Regular tripartite policy and technical meetings are held to determine modalities for mutual

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<sup>76</sup> HLTF UN System participation includes: FAO; IFAD; IMF; ILO; OHCHR; OCHA; UN Office of High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; UNCTAD; UNDP; UNEP; UNHCR; UNICEF; the World Bank; WFP; WHO; WTO, UN DESA; UN Department of Political Affairs (UN DPA); UN Department of Public Information; and UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

HLTF regional partners include: AU; ASEAN; ECOWAS; and SADC, and regional programs such as AU/NEPAD MDG-Africa Initiative's Business Plan for Agriculture and Food Security and AU/NEPAD-CAADP.

cooperation and to identify specific areas and programme for further follow-up and joint or complementary operations (FAO 2000a: 4; FAO/IFAD/WFP 1999). FAO/IFAD/WFP participated in the *Delivering as One* initiative to bring about UN system-wide coherence, which recognised inter-agency coordination and complementarities in strategies of these three organisations to build long-term food security and strengthen local capacity and resilience to cope with consequences of famine (General Assembly 2006: 27).

Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on human requirement of energy and protein, later joined by UNU, and FAO/WHO CAC represent long-term collaborative ventures. FAO-SPFS activities are funded by various bilateral and multilateral donors, international and regional financing institutions and banks (UNDP, IFAD, WFP and the UN Fund for International Partnerships), NGOs and the private sector. FAO collaborated with the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Assistance, the UNHCR, the OCHA and WFP to deal with natural and humanitarian emergencies. FAO contributed to the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), launched in 1997 by the UN Secretary-General, by preparing the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and cooperated with the World Bank-Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), initiated in 1999 (FAO 2000a: 43-44).

The WFP and IFAD joint initiative, Weather Risk Management Facility (WRMF) was launched in 2008. WFP's Purchase for Progress (P4P) collaborates with IFAD and FAO. In 2010 WFP collaborate with FAO in 62 countries on 92 projects, related to agriculture and food security, and with IFAD in 15 countries on 17 projects, related to food-for-work, food-for-training and microcredit programmes. WFP and FAO have aligned their early-warning information systems for food security. An example of country-level collaboration is the tripartite WFP-FAO-IFAD food security joint task force established to support the Haitian Government in implementing food assistance, social safety nets and integrating agricultural production (WFP 2011a: 13). WFP also partners with the UNICEF, UNHCR, UNEP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNDR0 under MoU on areas of potential cooperation and overlap of mandates among these institutions (Charlton 1992: 650-653). The Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) was endorsed by the thirty-fifth session of the UNSCN, March 2008 as a joint UN partnership between FAO, WHO, UNICEF and WFP. The

ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security, established in April 1997, is jointly managed by FAO and IFAD, in collaboration with WFP, to ensure interagency coordination of 1996-WFS follow-up at the field level (FAO 2000a: 49-51).<sup>77</sup>

Though the World Bank's philosophy stands against much of what is represented by food aid, a number of ways were identified to expand WFP's linkages with it, including co-financing, consultative groups, project design and formulation, bilateral and recipient services, some of which go beyond WFP's conventional development and emergency food aid roles (Charlton 1992: 653-656). In 2010, the Bank has provided US\$ 3 million in support of WFP's emergency earthquake response in Haiti and secured for WFP more than US\$ 35 million as part of additional financing for social safety nets in Nepal. WFP and the Bank have also partnered in mainstreaming school feeding in national development policies and developing institutional capacities for cost-effective implementation in Bangladesh, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali and Mozambique (WFP 2011a: 20-21).

Since 1975, the World Bank joined FAO and UNIDO in conducting industry-monitoring through the World Bank/FAO/UNIDO Fertilizer Working Group (Kapur et al. 1997: 411). The Bank collaborated with UNICEF to support nutrition in India, through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) I (1990-97) in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, ICDS II (1993-2001) in Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, and ICDS III, called Women and Child Development Project (1998-2003) in Maharashtra Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh (Pyle and Greiner 2003: 112-113). The Bank has partnered with the WHO in health, nutrition and population sectors since the 1973 MoU, under which the Bank consults WHO technical experts in preparing projects in related sectors (Sridhar 2008: 60).

However, the Bank's relationship with UNICEF and WHO has been rather uncomfortable, "inter-agency collaboration, the cooperation of the Bank with other agencies have been more one-sided...The Bank has become a partner of various agencies without enabling those agencies to feel that they are full and equal partners of the Bank" (Mason and Asher 1973: 750). The Bank and UNICEF differed

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<sup>77</sup> See, WFP (2012), *From Food Aid to Food Assistance – Working in Partnership: A Strategic Evaluation – Vol. IV Survey Results: Partnership Scorecard Review (Annex XXV)*, OE/2012.003, 5 January, Commissioned by the Office of Evaluation.

significantly on processes and institutional means, while “UNICEF supported country programmes and directly advocated policy change”, the “Bank used analytical work and the project approach to influence policy at the macro-level” (Shaw 2007: 401). The Bank and WHO failed to agree on the role of technical experts invited from the WHO as well as ascertaining whose responsibility it was to provide technical assistance for administration and training (Sridhar 2008: 60).

The UNDP-FAO partnership was not cordial either. As a long-standing funding agency for FAO projects, UNDP became ‘disenchanted’ (Saouma 1993: 152) with the internal strife and ‘pugnacious independence’ of some FAO representatives, who were placed in the UNDP country offices as senior agricultural advisors (Abbott 1992: 7). UNDP finally turned away from FAO after the institution of separate FAO representatives with direct link to country governments. Given the sheer size of FAO’s mandate and significant interdependence of issues, it constantly has ‘boundary disputes’ with UNESCO and UNIDO over agricultural education and training, and agricultural processing and projects that fell on their margins (Abbott 1992: 7).

FAO-WFP relationship emerges from the constitutional regulations that accompanied WFP’s establishment.<sup>78</sup> Despite the umbilical relationship with its ‘parent bodies’, WFP increasingly became independent of the ‘Byzantine vortex’ of control and balances (Shaw 2001: 206) developed and consolidated by the UN and FAO since its establishment, which eclipsed its administrative and operational independence. This tension was perhaps expected, because the expansion of WFP’s function and growth in prominence as a development assistance agency posed a challenge to FAO, which “has historically been the central international food agency” (Charlton 1992: 633).

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<sup>78</sup> FAO and the UN appoint the members of WFP Executive Board and the Executive Director (after consultation with the Executive Board). WFP governing body annually reports to the ECOSOC and Council of FAO on administration and operation of WFP. The provisional agenda of WFP governing body session is prepared by the Executive Director, in consultation with UN Secretary-General and FAO Director-General. WFP Executive Director presents annual statement of report to WFP governing body in consultation with and approval of UN Secretary-General and FAO Director-General, whose agreement is required for choosing senior officials of the Secretariat. UN and FAO executive heads are jointly responsible for convening ‘pledging conferences’. FAO Director-General is responsible for WFP’s financial arrangements, a portion of the latter’s food resources was kept reserved for FAO’s use in meeting food emergencies, and WFP annual budgets, accounts and financial report were reviewed by FAO Finance Committee and the UN Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. FAO provided administrative services for WFP, along with technical advice and project design (Abbott 1992: 191; Shaw 2001: 206-208; Charlton 1992: 634-635).



Though the executive heads of both UN and FAO were to have equal responsibilities, in practical terms, FAO Director-General usurped the major decision-making powers. WFP governing body reviewed emergency allocation in consultation with FAO Director-General. The dispatch of WFP emergency food aid shipments required the approval of FAO Director-General, upon which an agreement was concluded between WFP Executive Director and the recipient government. In particular, FAO Director-General Saouma was considered as assuming *de facto* control over WFP, insisting on seeing all WFP policy papers and draft reports of the governing body. He was also criticised for delaying the consignment for Ethiopia in 1984 (Abbott 1992: 11; Shaw 2001: 209-213; Charlton 1992: 636-637). Though WFP remained a much smaller agency in terms of personnel, but its programme spending, US\$ 900 million (1987), far outstripped FAO's programme budget, US\$ 437 million (1986-87) (Charlton 1992: 636). FAO-WFP contentious power-struggle continued to escalate on policy role, personnel issues, costs charged on WFP by FAO for providing services, and the modalities of operation of IEFER, the need for FAO Director-General's approval only added a layer of bureaucracy that slowed it down (Shaw 2001: 214-222; Charlton 1992: 637-647). It was only in March 1992 that the *General Regulations of the World Food Programme* was revised to adopt extensive changes in its constitution.<sup>79</sup> Entering into force from 1 January 1992, the revised General Regulations maintained WFP's reliance on the technical services of FAO, but allowed administrative autonomy to WFP. For the first time since inception, financial responsibility and administrative accountability were shifted to the WFP governing body and the administrative powers of the Executive Director were enhanced.

## Conclusion

The increasing global interconnections since the end of World War II have resulted in the development of 'complex interdependence'.<sup>80</sup> While interdependence influences

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<sup>79</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/46/22 – *Revision of the General Regulations of the World Food Programme and Enlargement of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes of the World Food Programme* (forty-sixth session, 5 December 1991) and Resolution 9/91 – *Revision of the General Regulations of the WFP and Membership of the WFP Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes*, adopted by the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of FAO, 9-27 November 1991.

<sup>80</sup> Keohane and Nye (1977: 24-29) define 'complex interdependence' as having three main characteristics: multiple channels (interstate, transgovernmental and transnational) connects societies; the absence of hierarchy among issues; and abstinence by governments from using military force. This gives rise to distinctive political processes. Since goals of states vary by issue areas that are equal in importance, linkages between them become less effective resulting in outcomes of political bargaining

state behaviour, governmental actions also influence patterns of interdependence. “By creating or accepting procedures, rules or institutions for certain kinds of activity, governments regulate and control transnational and interstate relations”, these governing arrangements called ‘international regimes’ (Keohane and Nye 1977: 5).<sup>81</sup> International regimes affect patterns of interdependence by acting as “intermediate factors between the power structure of an international system and the political and economic bargaining that takes place within it. The structure of the system profoundly affects the nature of the regime...The regime, in turn, affects and to some extent governs the political bargaining and daily decision-making that occurs within the system” (Keohane and Nye 1977: 21). Under conditions of complex interdependence, international organisations are likely to appear (Keohane and Nye 1977: 57) as a type of world political structure and assume a significant role in world politics, by setting the international agenda, acting as catalysts for coalition-formation, and as arenas for political initiatives and linkage by weak states (Keohane and Nye 1977: 29-36).

Apart from being linked by formal relations between foreign offices, governments are also linked by intergovernmental and transgovernmental ties at various levels, reinforced by norm prescribing behaviour in particular situations and in some cases by formal institutions. Once established, the set of networks, norms, and institutions will be difficult either to eradicate or drastically rearrange, even by governments with greater capabilities, who will find it difficult to impose their will if it is in conflict with the established pattern of behaviour within existing networks and institutions.

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that increasingly varies by issue areas. Agenda setting assumes importance, affected by as international and domestic problems created by economic growth and increasing sensitivity interdependence. As difference between domestic and international politics gets blurred national interests are differently defined on different issues at different points in time by different governmental units.

<sup>81</sup> Stephen D. Krasner (1982: 186) defines ‘regimes’ as, “sets of implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor’s expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Principles are beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice”. Ernst B. Haas (1982: 210-11) defines regimes as “man-made arrangements”, “peculiar to substantive issue-areas in international relations that are characterised by the condition of complex interdependence”. According to Oran R. Young (1982: 277), regimes are “social institutions governing the actions of those interested in specifiable activities...they are recognized patterns of behaviour or practice around which expectations converge”. The phenomenon of regimes have the following particular features: though being subjective, regimes exist as participants’ understandings, expectations and convictions about legitimate, appropriate and moral behaviour and adherence to principles, norms and rules; regimes include tenants regarding appropriate decision-making procedure; regimes must include the principles it upholds and the norms of behaviour it prescribes; each regime is composed of a set of elites who are the practical actors within it; and regimes exists in every substantive issue-area in international relations that has discernibly patterned behaviour (Puchala and Hopkins 1982: 245-247).

International organisations will prevent regimes from becoming congruent with underlying patterns of state capabilities (Keohane and Nye 1977: 54-55). Weakness of international organizations and the problems of enforcing international law must not be misinterpreted to assume international regimes as insignificant or completely ignoring them (Keohane and Nye 1977: 19).

The consensual nature, usually attributed to regimes, is criticised by Uvin as being overly limiting (Uvin 1994: 12). Common agreement and internalisation of originally imposed norms over time can make norms and principles dominant. Hence, “all issue areas, at all levels, are characterised by a dominant set of norms and principles that apply to the activities undertaken by the actors within them...not because there is always cooperation or consensus, but because there are always patterns of norms and principles for all issue areas in which individuals engage” (Uvin 1994: 13). Regimes differ in their nature (the objects promoted by it) and level of institutionalisation (extent to which it has been formalised through establishment of organisations to monitor, coordinate and execute its provisions). Hence, regimes influence the definition and redefinition of preferences for an issue area, along with the perception of outcomes in that issue area (Uvin 1994: 13-19).

The issue area of food is considered a typical case of ‘complex interdependence’ (Keohane and Nye 1977: 12-20; Uvin 1994: 8). In the aftermath of World War II, establishment of the UN system led to the development of specific sets of rules and procedures have been developed that guide states and transnational actors in a wide array of issue areas, including aid, trade, environment protection, international food policy, international monetary policy, meteorological coordination, regulation of MNCs, international shipping policy, international telecommunications policy etc. The UN food organisations may be given some credit for the emergence and acceptance of several principles and norms of the ‘global food regime’,<sup>82</sup> affecting, modifying and enforcing them by generating awareness and focusing national attention on specific issues, collating information and research, operationalising

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<sup>82</sup> Eight norms pertaining to the international food regime, that guided or constrained international relation of food from late 1940s to early 1970s, have been identified as: respect for a free international market; national absorption of adjustments imposed by international markets; qualified acceptance of extra-market channels of food distribution; avoidance of starvation; free flow of scientific and crop information; low priority for national food self-reliance; lack of concern for chronic hunger; and national sovereignty and the illegality of external penetration (Puchala and Hopkins 1982: 263-265; Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 600-603).

projects and programmes, and legitimising practices and patterns of behaviour (Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 610-613).

Since the end of World War II, food, hunger and agriculture have recurrently featured in the scheme of international organisations. The establishment of FAO, with the specific food and agricultural mandate clearly demonstrates the increasing realisation of their importance by the international community, in general, and the UN system. Subsequently, WFP and IFAD joined FAO to form the coalition of the Rome-based food, hunger and agricultural agencies. Conceptually, it was a sound idea of having these three institutions approach global food security from the perspective of technical and normative support; emergency relief and long-term development aid; and funding for agriculture and rural development. The World Bank joined the crusade against hunger and malnutrition through lending for agriculture, rural development, social safety nets and nutrition (discussed in Chapter V), simultaneously getting embroiled in controversy regarding the negative impact of its structural adjustment lending. Nevertheless, since 2008, the Bank has categorically incorporated food security in its larger agenda. With broadly the same objectives as approved during establishment, these organisations are performing radically different tasks in a changed milieu.

The clubbing of the organisations based on the location of their headquarter, FAO, WFP and IFAD in Rome and the World Bank in Washington, DC, does not really reflect their congruence in terms of activities. In functional terms, FAO is markedly different. From a modest beginning and a limited focus on regulation of international surpluses, FAO has evolved into the largest executing agency for investment, policy advisory services and technical cooperation in food and agriculture. Over the years, FAO's functions have increasingly become concerned with agrarian reform; food crop system; technological innovations and resource transfer; agricultural research and biotechnology; rural development; education, training and communication; human resource development; international trade in food commodities; food aid; gender issues; climate change and environment; biofuels; food safety and quality; and marketing and labelling (discussed in Chapter V). FAO is also recognised for its normative functions, standard-setting in measuring food security, developing an early warning system; determining vulnerability to and estimating the number of hungry and malnourished people; collecting, analyzing and disseminating information and

statistics; preparing guidelines and technical manuals; developing analytical tools and techniques; and serving as fora for negotiating intergovernmental agreements. Indeed FAO, as the repository of statistical data and information on food, nutrition, and agriculture, considered as ‘official’, remains unmatched.

WFP, beginning with less than US\$ 100 million of mandated resources, has become ‘one of the major operational organizations’ of the UN system (H. W. Singer’s *Foreword* in Shaw 2001: x), the “principal international channel of grant food aid for both development projects and emergency relief” (Shaw 2001: 2) and “the world’s largest humanitarian organization operating on the frontlines of hunger (Shaw 2001: 79). It has innovatively interpreted its mandate and modified its activities according to its organizational capacity and the international requirements, renovating its assistance to bring about a relief-cum-development strategy. The WFP has become the face of multilateral food aid and an indispensable institution during emergencies.

The World Bank, the IMF and the IFAD have “real resources under their control or within the scope of their bargaining and negotiating powers” (Williams 1987: 28), though substantially under the control of its member states. IFAD’s annual lending is relatively modest in comparison to the Bank and there seems to be little difference between their agricultural and rural development financing. IFAD’s continuance might appear superfluous, as the Bank has increasingly expanded its lending portfolio and, since 1960, the IDA has been giving assistance to poorest countries.<sup>83</sup> IDA lends on concessional terms – interest-free or very low interest credits, repayment stretching upto 24 to 40 years, including 5-10 years grace period, and provides grants for countries facing debt risk. However, IFAD is specifically makes concessional loans in the agricultural sector, focuses on remotest rural areas, small-scale farmers, women and poorest of the poor and lends, and unlike the Bank, without any interest rate or return criterion (Abbott 1992: 28). In fact, IFAD officials claim to penetrate such interior regions that the Bank would not venture into and, apart from joint lending or monitoring ventures, see little overlap or conflict in operational areas (*from field study*). IFAD increasingly co-finances with the Bank and other regional development

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<sup>83</sup> In the fiscal year 2012, countries below US\$ 1,175 per capita Gross National Income threshold were eligible for IDA support, along with several small island economies lacking IBRD creditworthiness and ‘blend’ countries, such as India and Pakistan, which are both creditworthy for some IBRD borrowing and eligible for IDA loans based on their per capita income levels. As of 2011, 81 countries were eligible to receive IDA support.

banks, entrusting the project supervision role to the Bank. Undoubtedly, the Bank is enormous in terms of financial resources and economic advisory power, but IFAD has carved a niche area of expertise that attacks hunger and poverty from the very bottom.

While the IFAD and WFP are relatively smaller organisations in terms of resources and staff, FAO and World Bank are huge organizational bureaucracies involved in almost all dimensions of the global food. In terms of financial resources, the Bank wields the highest influence, equally matched by its economic expertise and advisory capacity. Successive leadership have brought dynamism to the functioning of these organisations and shaped their structural and functional evolution, especially for FAO and the Bank. WFP's functional redefinition and reinterpretation (discussed in Chapter VI) and the Bank's gradual foray into increased lending for agriculture, rural development and nutrition (discussed in Chapter V) bears testimony to the assertion that a growing international concern is accommodated within the mandate and operation of an international organisation beyond what was envisaged by its founding fathers. And vice-a-versa the issue itself, in this case global food security, gets delimited to encompass newer dimensions.

However, the strongly expressed common sentiment to build a food secure world has hardly been consistently represented across international institutions. The resources diverted by the international community to food security do not seem to have expanded in relation to the magnitude and intensity of the global food problem, evident in the rising incidence of hunger and malnutrition and recurrent food crises. Despite more than six decades of operational history, the international institutions have been unable to reach a consensus on a common approach towards the global food problem and devise a mechanism to prevent food crisis. Though collaborative ventures are on the rise among FAO, WFP, IFAD and the Bank and also with other UN system agencies, but they are disjoint initiatives on areas of common interest. Functional expertise of each organisation can be maximised upon to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the global food security, while an overall cohesive policy or institutional coordination mechanism that can bring the scattered activities under a well-defined rubric is still missing.

Multilateral inter-governmental institutions, composed of country governments, are intrinsically responsible to the member nations. Wary of offending them, international

organisations are constrained in their capacity due to divergent, sometimes, opposing and conflicting interests and priorities of member states. How these institutions of global governance are themselves governed – “by whom, for whom, in what manner, and with what results – are political matters of enduring consequences” (Talbot and Moyer 1987: 364). The economically advanced states exert more dominance within the institution and influence the decision-making process. The relation of the US with the Rome-based organisations and the World Bank is a typical case in point. Due to its large share of financial contribution and consequent voting share (in the World Bank and IFAD), the US almost prevails on these organizations, curbing organizational democracy and independence. At the same time, dissatisfaction among the developing country members with the performance of the international institutions have also led to shifted priorities and changing conceptions of development. Since the international organisational agendas are ultimately shaped by their member countries, they strive to achieve the best within this limitation and available resources, though some organisations wield considerable power over the governments due to their financial resources and technical expertise (*from field study*).

It is repeatedly asserted that in order to address global socio-economic problems, nations must act in close cooperation. However, states can act together only within the umbrella of an adequate international architecture that provides for exchange of information, joint consultation and policy negotiations, and coordination in implementation. On the other hand, these international agencies will perform better with cooperation from member countries their willingness to give resources and authority to the organisation for implementing policies and programmes (Shefrin 1980: 291; Talbot 1991: 383).

The concept of global food security has been redefined and understood through the policies and strategies of the international food and agriculture organisations. While FAO and IFAD view food security as poverty alleviation, rural development and agricultural investment, WFP seeks to ensure food security through food aid approach that addresses short-term emergency concerns and promotes long-term development. Food security is pursued by IFIs, the World Bank, IMF and WTO, through economic policies of privatisation, opening up of domestic markets in developing countries, trade liberalisation, deregulation of national industry, and market mechanisms.

An assessment of the mandates, organisational structure and functional evolution of these international organisations highlight the different roles they assume vis-à-vis global food security. The UN system, in general, and FAO undertake food-related advocacy, most evident in their support for the right to food (Chapter IV). Through conventions and declarations they promote rights-based approach to food security and mobilise support for national action. Much of these do not entail legal obligations but are significant for global awareness generation, normative content and consensus building. All the organisations under study carry out advisory tasks pertaining to multiple dimensions of the world food problem (Chapter V) in varying degrees of enforceability and effectiveness. The national governments are primarily responsible for policy formulation and implementation, but international institutional policy advice streamlines the individual country policies towards the global objective of food security by providing pointers regarding policy gaps and areas that need effective engagement. Finally, taking decision on the delivery of food aid is the mainstay of WFP. Food aid is particularly important in emergency situations and also has associated development objectives, therefore, speedy, timely and adequate quantity of disbursement are significant to determine its effectiveness (Chapter VI).

The contemporary global food system defined by the choices of the few and the powerful not only entails unfair consequences for the majority but also abuses and violates the human rights of the relatively defenceless producers and consumers. Hence, the traditional roles of the international institutional architecture governing global food system requires rethinking and adjustment in the context of growing complexity of the world food problem and the differential roles of the varied actors involved. International organisations must incorporate perspectives from regional institutions, NGO/CSO networks, farmer/consumer representatives, and agribusiness and food industry for a comprehensive and holistic approach to global food security.

‘Food sovereignty’, developed and brought to public debate by Via Campesina<sup>84</sup> during the 1996-WFS, advanced as an ‘alternative concept’ or ‘new direction to food security’ is gaining dominance in international debates. Food sovereignty is defined as “the peoples’, Countries’ or State Unions’ RIGHT to define their agricultural and

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<sup>84</sup> La Via Campesina, beginning in 1993 in Mons, Belgium, is an international movement comprising of about 150 local and national organizations in 70 countries of Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas, representing around 200 million farmers.



food policy, without any dumping vis-à-vis third country...the right of farmers, peasants to produce food and the right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced” (La Via Campesina 2003). To this, the International Planning Committee (IPC)<sup>85</sup> for Food Sovereignty adds, “Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems” (IPC 2007). Thus, food sovereignty model reclaims control over the food system through sustainable development, local production and consumption, and individual and collective rights and efforts to restore individuals as sovereign in the fields in their homes through their foundational demand of human right to food (Patel 2008: 303; Schanbacher 2010:77).

Food, being a fundamental human need, has been widely accepted as a basic human right. A strong rights-based approach to food and nutrition security emerges from the UN declarations and plans of actions, signifying the transcendence of achievement of food security from merely policy discretion to a legal obligation. The UN system has formally and firmly established the RTF through a set of international standards, delineating national and international obligation to ensure its implementation. The realisation of the RTF does not relate only to ascertaining food availability or means of procurement, but also includes putting in place institutions and processes that empower the vulnerable people to achieve food and nutrition security.

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<sup>85</sup> The International Planning Committee (IPC) is a global network of about 45 people’s movements, representing small and medium scale farmers, agricultural workers, and indigenous peoples, along with and NGOs to facilitate discussion among them as well as dialogue with FAO.

## CHAPTER IV

# Advocating the Right to Food

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*The States Parties to the Present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food... (Part III, Article 11, Paragraph 1) ...recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger... (Part III, Article 11, Paragraph 2)*

- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,**  
16 December 1966

*The Right to adequate food is realised when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, have physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. The right to adequate food shall therefore not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with a minimum package of calories, proteins and other specific nutrients. The right to adequate food will have to be realized progressively. States have a core obligation to take the necessary action to mitigate and alleviate hunger...even in times of natural or other disasters.*

- **General Comment 12** (Paragraph 6) (1999)

### Introduction

In a vital sense, the 2007-2008 global food security crisis represented a threat for human rights (HLTF 2008: 1), reflected a “failure of national and international policies to ensure physical and economic access to food for all”, and underscored “the interdependence of all human rights, as the enjoyment of the human right to adequate food and freedom from hunger is of paramount importance for the enjoyment of all other rights, including the right to life” (CESCR 2008: 1-2). It revealed the extent to which people around the world are unable to enjoy their right to adequate food by accessing adequate food or the means for its procurement at all times (HLTF 2010: 5).

The UN General Assembly recognised that RTF was threatened to be violated on a massive scale by the complex character of the global food crisis and “resolved to act to ensure that the human rights perspective is taken into account at national, regional and international levels in measures to address the current global food crisis”.<sup>1</sup> The Human Rights Council, expressing grave concern at the worsening of the world food

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<sup>1</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/159 – *The Right to Food* (sixty-fourth session, 18 December 2009); Resolution A/RES/65/220 – *The Right to Food* (sixty-fifth session, 21 December 2010); and Resolution A/RES/66/158 – *The Right to Food* (sixty-sixth session of, 19 December 2011).

crisis called upon states to undertake necessary measures “to ensure the realization of the right to food as an essential human rights objective”.<sup>2</sup>

Alarmed at the number of people afflicted by hunger and poverty, the *Declaration of the FAO World Summit on Food Security* (2009: 3) affirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food” and recognised the need to “collectively accelerate steps to reverse this trend and to set the world on a path to achieving the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security” (2009: 1). Increasingly a RTF framework is advocated to design, implement and evaluate national laws, policies and programmes (HLTF 2010: 5). The ‘twin-track approach’ to food security, comprising of direct and immediate action to tackle hunger for the most vulnerable, and medium-and long-term measures of agriculture and rural development that strive to eliminate the root causes of hunger, poverty and undernutrition are crucial to progressively realising the RTF beyond the immediate emergency context (HLTF 2008: 4; HLTF 2010: 6).

In the backdrop of the 2007-2008 dramatic food price rise, the UN Special Rapporteur on RTF recognised the obligation of states to ensure the RTF by adopting national measures that safeguard vulnerable populations from the impact of increases in prices of essential commodities. Such a national strategy entails, identifying emerging threats to RTF by adequate monitoring; assessing impact of new legislative policies on RTF; improving coordination between relevant ministries and between national and subnational levels of government, taking into account impact of RTF and nutrition, of health education, access to water and sanitation measures; improving accountability by clear allocation of responsibilities; and ensuring adequate participation of food-insecure sections of the population (Schutter 2008: 10).

RTF represents the ‘marriage of human rights with the food/hunger issues’, drawing on nutrition, development and human rights fields (Eide et al. 1984: ix). Prior to the development of the state apparatus, RTF was entrenched in the social relations of each society through a range of redistributive mechanisms. As agricultural societies and the state developed, food systems became intertwined with military and fiscal systems, and “the right to food was progressively denied by the state itself to many of its own

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<sup>2</sup> See, *The negative impact of the worsening of the world food crisis on the realization of the right to food for all*, A/HRC/S-7/L.1/Rev.1, Seventh Special Session of Human Right Council, 22 May 2008.

subjects, and particularly to those who were producing it, while food was guaranteed to non-producers, such as soldiers, priests, and civil servants” (Spitz 1984: 171).

Laws and regulations were formulated to reconcile fiscal, military and food systems. With industrialisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, food issues lost their specificity, as famines and starvation gradually disappeared. However, in developing countries, food still remains a central issue for the rural poor without sufficient land and urban poor without sufficient income or food purchasing power (Spitz 1984: 173-175). Since the end of World War II, with the proliferation of international institutions and their increasing activism, the RTF has assumed an entirely new meaning and concern in the context of the evolving international economic order. As a concept, ‘food security’ is much younger, developing only in the 1970s, than the ‘right to food’ (Mechlem 2004: 633), a right recognised by the international human rights framework since 1948 by the UDHR, firmly entrenched in the ICESCR (1966), and subsequently proclaimed and upheld in numerous international human rights instruments.

The UN General Assembly has recurrently reaffirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food...so as to be able fully to develop and maintain their physical and mental capacities”. According to it, “hunger constitutes an outrage and a violation of human dignity” requiring “the adoption of urgent measures at the national and international levels for its elimination”. To these ends, states are encouraged “to promote conditions for everyone to be free from hunger”, “to elaborate and adopt national plans to combat hunger”, “to reinforce national actions to implement sustainable food security policies”, and “to give adequate priority in their development strategies and expenditures to the realization of the right to food”.<sup>3</sup> In addition, private actors and international organizations, within their respective mandates, are urged “to take fully into account the need to promote the effective realisation of the right to food for all...” All the relevant international organizations, including the IMF and the World Bank, are called upon “to promote policies and

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<sup>3</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/56/155 – *The Right to Food* (fifty-sixth session, 19 December 2001); Resolution A/RES/57/226 – *The Right to Food* (fifty-seventh session, 18 December 2002); Resolution A/RES/58/186 – *The Right to Food* (fifty-eighth session, 22 December 2003); Resolution A/RES/59/202 – *The Right to Food* (fifty-ninth session, 20 December 2004); Resolution A/RES/60/165 – *The Right to Food* (sixtieth session, 16 December 2005); Resolution A/RES/61/163 – *The Right to Food* (sixty-first session, 19 December 2006); Resolution A/RES/62/164 – *The Right to Food* (sixty-second session, 18 December 2007); Resolution A/RES/63/187 – *The Right to Food* (sixty-third session, 18 December 2008); Resolution A/RES/64/159; Resolution A/RES/65/220; Resolution A/RES/66/158.

projects that have a positive impact on the right to food, to ensure that partners respect the right to food in the implementation of common projects, to support strategies of Member States aimed at the fulfilment of the right to food and to avoid any actions that could have a negative impact on the realization of the right to food”.<sup>4</sup>

Successive General Assembly resolutions acknowledged the inextricable relationship between hunger, gender discrimination, rural development, land and agrarian reforms and environmental degradation, and the RTF of children, women, small-scale farm holders, fishing communities, indigenous people, and people forced to leave their homes and livelihood due to hunger and humanitarian emergencies, who are especially vulnerable to food insecurity.<sup>5</sup> The Resolutions also stressed the importance of international development cooperation and assistance in emergency situations – natural and man-made disasters – for the effective realisation and protection of the RTF and achievement of sustainable food security, while recognising individual countries as the primary responsibility bearer in ensuring implementation of national programmes and strategies.<sup>6</sup> Since its establishment in 2006, the Human Rights Council Resolutions have added its forcible voice in strengthening all the above provisions of the General Assembly.<sup>7</sup>

Achieving RTF for everyone might appear beyond immediate reach, yet, it is tempting to see it as a long-term objective of global food security. At the national level, implementation of RTF has institutional dimensions that require identifying and targeting the most vulnerable, establishing an accountability mechanism to enable victims of violations of RTF to access independent bodies to seek remedy, and subordination of trade and investment policies and choices in modes of agricultural production to the larger objective of RTF. At the international level, devising solutions for the global food crisis grounded in RTF implies global governance of the

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<sup>4</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/165; A/RES/61/163; A/RES/62/164; A/RES/63/187; A/RES/64/159; A/RES/65/220; A/RES/66/158

<sup>5</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/165; A/RES/61/163; A/RES/62/164; A/RES/63/187; A/RES/64/159; A/RES/65/220; A/RES/66/158

<sup>6</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/165; A/RES/61/163; A/RES/62/164; A/RES/63/187; A/RES/64/159; A/RES/65/220; A/RES/66/158

<sup>7</sup> See, Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/7/14 – *The Right to Food* (seventh session, 27 March 2008); Resolution A/HRC/RES/10/12 – *The Right to Food* (tenth session, 26 March 2009); Resolution A/HRC/RES/12/10 – *The Right to Food* (twelfth session, 1 October 2009); Resolution A/HRC/RES/13/4 – *The Right to Food* (thirteenth session, 24 March 2010); Resolution A/HRC/RES/16/27 – *The Right to Food* (sixteenth session, 25 March 2011).

food system through “strengthening multilateralism in order to address effectively the structural causes of hunger” (Schutter 2009: 7-8).

A parallel NGO/CSO movement, launched by Via Campesina’s during the 1996-WFS, gained momentum during the 2002-WFS+5, whereby RTF is contextualised within the concept of ‘food sovereignty’. The Rome NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty (2002: 2-3) defined food sovereignty as:

the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies.

Food sovereignty means the primacy of people’s and community’s right to food and food production, over trade concerns, this entails the support and promotion of local markets and producers over production for export and food imports.

While food sovereignty offers an alternative means to better ensure RTF as a basic human right that must be respected while formulating agricultural and food policies, RTF provides a legal basis for the fight for food sovereignty (Ziegler 2003: 13)

The RTF is firmly embedded in the wider system of international human rights law, the Charter of the UN, the UDHR, and the two Covenants – ICCPR and ICESCR. Proliferation of international mechanisms recognising its importance does not automatically translate into realisation of every individual’s RTF. Assessment of RTF is concerned with the meaning and nature of the right, obligations of states and international community, including IFIs and TNCs arising from an interpretation of its normative content and the existing mechanism for implementation, monitoring and supervision, at both national and international levels. A comprehensive understanding of RTF entails the dynamic integration of the human rights paradigm with the changing development discourse. Conceptualisation of RTF has been a long-drawn exercise involving academic debates on development and human rights. The next section briefly captures these two trends in an attempt to comprehend the definitional scope of RTF. The evolving normative content of RTF must be contextualised within the progressive dissolving of the perceived hierarchy among the seemingly distinct categories of rights – civil and political rights versus economic, social and cultural rights. With the aim of deriving the normative content of RTF the subsequent section

attempts to interpret RTF through the international human rights instruments. The last section analyses the implementation of the RTF, understood in the context of state and international institutional obligations. The main objectives of this chapter are to examine the implications of recognising food as a human right for global food security and the role of UN advocacy in making RTF an essential component of the international institutional food architecture.

### **The Right to Food in the UN System Human Rights Paradigm**

Human rights consist of those fundamental rights of the person ‘that are necessary for a life with human dignity’ (Forsythe 2000: 3), and ‘that human beings have simply because they are human beings’, ‘independent of their varying social circumstances and degrees of merit’ (Shestack 1998: 203). They are ‘something that no one, anywhere, may be deprived of without a grave affront to justice’ (Cranston 1983: 12). Human rights are the rights ‘of an individual or a group to participate in and take responsibility for one’s own future and development’ together with the ‘limitations imposed upon certain actors in relation to legislation, policy implementation, and other acts which have effects on individuals or groups of individuals’ (Skogly 1993: 757). Analysing human rights from an entirely novel view, Arjun Sengupta says,

In the ultimate analysis, human rights are those rights which are given by people to themselves. They are not granted by any authority, nor are they derived from some overriding natural or divine principles. They are human rights because they are recognised as such by a community of people, flowing from their own conception of human dignity, in which these rights are supposed to be inherent. Once they are accepted through a process of consensus-building, they become binding at least on those who are party to that process of acceptance (Sengupta 1999: 2920).

Human rights primarily denote norms regarding the relationship between individuals (sometimes groups of individuals) and the state and, therefore, evoke a sense of freedom and claims or demands, “while freedom sets limits to the exercise of state authority, demands require action by the state, which necessitates the existence of state administrative machinery equipped for this task” (Eide 1984: 153). The subjects or beneficiaries of human rights are individuals (sometimes groups or associations of individuals), and it is primarily the obligation of the state to operationalize these rights, ensuring freedoms and satisfying demands (along with the duties of the individuals). However, pending ideological and practical consensus on its definition and dimensions, human rights remains a contested and ambiguous concept.

The modern idea regarding the inalienable rights of the individual can be traced back to the idea of ‘natural rights’ in the 17<sup>th</sup> century social contract thought of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, ‘human rights’ being the contemporary expression for what was known as ‘the rights of man’, which had replaced the original ‘natural rights’ (Cranston 1983: 1). These ideas formed the source and inspiration for the U.S. Declaration of Independence (4 July 1776), the U.S. Bill of Rights (15 December 1791) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (26 August 1789), which together are considered as the bedrock of subsequent human rights movement. Thus, human rights did not originate as ‘legal rights’, existing at the level of ideals and moving to the status of rights when recognised by authoritative bodies of society in a positive statement of norms or principles, perhaps only in the moral sense if corresponding obligations are not formulated. However, human rights concerns largely remained confined to the national level, with many domestic legal systems incorporating human rights till it was accepted and recognised as international law in 1945 by the UN, which set in motion the process of transformation from ideals to positive law at the international level (Eide 1987: 13; Forsythe 2000: 3).<sup>8</sup>

The UN, in the Preamble to its Charter (adopted on 26 June 1945, entered into force on 24 October 1945), unequivocally affirmed ‘faith in fundamental human rights’ and ‘the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small’ (UN Charter: Paragraph 2). Article 1 (of UN Charter) recognises the purposes of the UN, which comprise of, *inter alia*, the achievement of international cooperation “in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion...” For the discussion on the RTF, it is pertinent to note that the Preamble to the UN Charter envisages the employment of “international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples” (UN Charter: Paragraph 8).

The UN Charter also envisages “international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character” (UN Charter: Article 1, Paragraph 3), and promotion of “higher standards of living, full

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<sup>8</sup> The League of Nations, forerunner of the UN, established at the end of the First World War in June 1919, failed to make any explicit mention of human rights in its Covenant. Only in its Article 23, did the League postulate to maintain fair and humane conditions of labour; to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control; and to control traffic in women and children.



employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development” (UN Charter: Article 55). These articles, together with Article 56, by which members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in cooperation to achieve the above purposes, laid the foundation of international recognition and cooperation and state action for the advancement of economic and social rights. Despite numerous references made to human rights,<sup>9</sup> the UN Charter was premised on the sovereignty of its member states. What is notable, however, is the fact that despite the persistence of the sovereign state system, human rights were attributed limelight (Falk 2000: 6-7).

The *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (UDHR), 1948, which represents ‘the founding document of modern human rights doctrine’ (Beitz 2003: 36), established that ‘all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights’ (UDHR: Article 1) and ‘everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms...without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status’ (UDHR: Article 2). Explicitly mention was made of the RTF in Article 25 (1) of the UDHR, which upheld that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family,<sup>10</sup> including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services...”, which is conjoined with ‘the right to life...’ of everyone contained in Article 3 of the UDHR. While the UDHR, represented ‘a common standard of achievement’, but it was not a legally binding ‘agreement’ (Beitz 2003: 38; Falk 2000: 6-7) and was described as “a compilation of various legal and moral ideas about state-society relationships... conceived as an admonishment to governments, and more relevantly, as a kind of heterogeneous wish list cobbled together by representatives of liberal individualism and collective socialism” (Falk 2000: 38).

The UDHR incorporated both civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights. While the civil and political rights, akin to ‘negative rights’ (freedoms from), enumerate prevention of state interference in a citizen’s life, economic, social and cultural rights, analogous to ‘positive freedoms’ (rights to), concern affirmative

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Human Rights’ appear in the following provisions of the UN Charter: second paragraph of the Preamble, Articles 1 (3), 13 (1) (b), 55, 56, 62 (2), 68 (Steiner and Alston 2000: 138).

<sup>10</sup> At the drafting stage, Article 25 was primarily conceived as ‘a right to social security’, “usually associated with breadwinners and extended through them to their families, and since the vast majority of the world’s formal labour force at that time was male, such terminology is readily understood. Nevertheless, changes in perceptions and circumstances would seem to demand that no particular significance be attaches to this phrase today” (Alston 1984: 35).

action by the state (CDHR 2004: 43). While the Western liberal societies focussed on the civil and political rights of the individual, the Communist societies and the newly independent states emphasised social and economic well-being. As a compromise, two separate covenants – the ICESCR and the ICCPR – were adopted.<sup>11</sup> An *Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* was adopted to receive and consider communications from individual victims of violation of the rights in the ICCPR. A *Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty* was established to prevent execution.<sup>12</sup> The UDHR, along with the two Covenants and the two Optional Protocols to the ICCPR, constitute the International Bill of Human Rights. The *Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted in 2008, is yet to enter into force, pending the required ratification from ten member states (as of June 2012 it has eight state parties).<sup>13</sup>

The Human Rights Committee was established under Article 28 of the ICCPR as a body of independent experts to monitor the implementation of the Covenant by the state parties, who are obliged to submit regular reports to it on the how the rights are being implemented. While Article 41 of the ICCPR allows the Committee to receive and consider communications from a state party claiming that another state party is not fulfilling its obligation under the Covenant (inter-state complaints), the first Optional Protocol to ICCPR enables it to receive and consider individual communication from victims of violations of the rights contained in the Covenant.<sup>14</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) was established by the UN ECOSOC,<sup>15</sup> pursuant to Article 17 (1) of the ICESCR, as a body of

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<sup>11</sup> The ICESCR, the ICCPR and its first Optional Protocol were opened for signature, ratification and accession by Resolution A/RES/2200 (XXI) A - *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, adopted by the twenty-first session of the UN General Assembly on 16 December 1966. The ICESCR entered into force on 3 January 1976 and the ICCPR and its Optional Protocol entered into force on 23 March 1976.

<sup>12</sup> The Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, was adopted by Resolution A/RES/44/128 - *Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty*, at the forty-fourth session of the UN General Assembly on 15 December 1989.

<sup>13</sup> The Optional Protocol to the ICESCR was adopted by Resolution A/RES/63/117 – *Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, at the sixty-third session of the UN General Assembly on 10 December 2008.

<sup>14</sup> For details on the composition and function of the Human Rights Committee, see, *Civil and Political Rights: The Human Rights Committee*, Fact Sheet No. 12 (Rev. 1).

<sup>15</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) was established by UN ECOSOC Resolution 1985/17 – *Review of the Composition, Organization and Administrative Arrangements of*

independent experts to monitor the implementation of the Covenant by state parties, who are obliged to submit reports on the measures adopted and progress made in achieving the observance of the rights recognised in the Covenant (ICESCR: Article 16, Paragraph 1), indicating factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present covenant (ICESCR: Article 17, Paragraph 2).

The reports submitted to the UN Secretary-General is transmitted to the ECOSOC (ICESCR: Article 16, Paragraph 2a), which is responsible for submitting regular recommendations and summary of information to the General Assembly (ICESCR: Article 21) and bring to the attention of other UN agencies any matter arising out of these reports (ICESCR: Article 22). The CESCR considers the reports submitted by state parties to the ICESCR and makes suggestions and recommendations as part of the summary it submits to the ECOSOC along with a report in its activities to assist the ECOSOC in fulfilling its responsibilities under Article 21 and 22 of the Covenant. The Optional Protocol to the ICESCR (yet to enter into force) extends competence to the CESCR to receive and consider individual complaints. Both the Human Rights Committee and the CESCR interprets the content of the provisions in the Covenant (General Comments), with a view to assist state parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations and to provide greater interpretative clarity regarding the meaning, scope and intent of the articles in the Covenant.

The International Bill of Human Rights has been supplemented by numerous human rights treaties, declarations, conventions, protocols and resolutions promulgated by the UN system pertaining to slavery, genocide, refugees, racial discrimination, torture, disabilities, forced disappearances, and rights of women, children and migrants. The expanding UN machinery has been supported by regional arrangements (the European Convention System, the Inter-American System, the African System and the Arab League's Human Rights Commission), which provide important additions to the knowledge derived from the UN system, and domestic and international CSO/NGO

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*the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted on 28 May 1985 at its first regular session. The CESCR renames the erstwhile Sessional Working Group on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights established by the UN ECOSOC decision 1978/10 of 3 May 1978 (subsequently approved by UN ECOSOC Resolution 1979/43 of 11 May 1979 and modified by its decision 1981/158 of 8 May 1981, and its Resolution 1982/33 of 6 May 1982). For details on the composition and function of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, see, *The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Fact Sheet No. 16 (Rev. 1).

advocacy (Amnesty International, Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, FIAN), which are vital for standard-setting, fact-finding, awareness generation, sensitisation, mobilisation, promotion, propagation and enforcement of human rights norms. Though aiding in ‘universalization’,<sup>16</sup> the proliferation of human rights instruments does not automatically signal their actual implementation. They are mainly standard-setting, their ‘application’ ranging from making recommendations to adopting declarations, carrying marginal legal obligations and no means of enforcement.

The common Article 1 of both the Covenants – ICCPR and ICESCR, recognising ‘the right of self-determination’ of all peoples to “freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (Paragraph 1) is of significance to the RTF, in particular paragraph 2, which states that,

All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

A broad interpretation of Article 6 of ICCPR, “every human being has the inherent right to life”, embraces the freedom from extreme want and hunger that endanger human life. However, the ICESCR was the first UN document to recognise the RTF as a human right within the framework of international law, Article 11 being the single most important provision relating to the RTF (already mentioned at the beginning of the chapter). It also lays down state obligation by recognising that the state parties to the present Covenant shall take “individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

- (a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;
- (b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world supplies in relation to need (ICESCR: Article 11, Paragraph 2).

The two Geneva Conventions (1949) and their two Additional Protocols (1977), comprise the basic international humanitarian law for protection of the RTF of

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Universal’ human rights mean ‘all human beings at all times and places would be justified in claiming them’ (Beitz 2003: 43), ‘based on treaties that aim at worldwide membership’ (Steiner and Alston 2000: 136).

prisoners of war and civilian persons in time of war.<sup>17</sup> It has been asserted that the relevant provisions of the Geneva Conventions in certain respects “are more detailed and comprehensive than those provisions of international law which govern realisation of the right to food in peace-time” (Alston 1984: 26).

There has also been substantial advocacy at the international summit and conference level, resulting in declaratory affirmations and assertion of the human RTF. A plethora of UN human rights instruments has, over the years, addressed the RTF and nutrition “civil-political, economic-social-cultural, development, and indigenous rights construction” (Messer 1996b: 66), invoking a pluralistic understanding. It is beyond the scope of the present study to conduct an exhaustive survey of all such international instruments that directly or indirectly relate to freedom from want and hunger and thereby RTF and nutrition.<sup>18</sup> Suffice it to say that RTF have found reference in a wide variety of international statements pertaining to various issues of human rights, a selected assortment of which is briefly enumerated below to provide a general sense of international activism in relation to RTF and nutrition security.

A Special Assembly of 29 eminent personalities meeting at FAO headquarters on 14 March 1963, Rome, issued a historic manifesto *Man’s Right to Freedom from Hunger*, stating that, “freedom from hunger is man’s first fundamental right. In order to achieve this, we suggest urgent and adequate national and international effort in which the Governments and the peoples are associated...We feel that international action for abolishing hunger will reduce tension and improve human relationships” (Krishnaswamy 1963: 9) [emphasis added].

The *Declaration on Social Progress and Development* (1969), upheld that “all human beings, without discrimination as to race, color, sex, language, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, family or social status, or political or other conviction, shall have the

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<sup>17</sup> The *Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* (adopted on 12 August 1949, entered in force on 21 October 1950): Articles 15, 26, 51 and 71; the *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (adopted on 12 August 1949, entered in force on 21 October 1950): Article 55; the *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts* (Protocol II) (adopted on 8 June 1977, entered into force on 7 December 1978): Articles 14 and 18 (2).

<sup>18</sup> For such a comprehensive catalogue, see Katarina Tomaševski (ed.) (1987), *The Right to Food: Guide through applicable international law*, Dordrecht; Boston; Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff; Food and Agriculture Organization (1996), *Extracts from International and Regional Instruments and Declarations and other Authoritative Texts Addressing the Right to Food*, FAO Legislative Study No. 68, Rome: Legal Office, FAO of the UN; and Eide 1987: 19-20.

right to live in dignity and freedom and to enjoy the fruits of social progress” (Article 1). It enunciated that “social progress and development shall aim at the continuous raising of the material and spiritual standards of living of all members of society, with respect for and in compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms, through the attainment of” *inter alia* “the elimination of hunger and malnutrition and the guarantee of the right to proper nutrition” (Article 10b). National and international action was called for to use the *Declaration* as a common basis for social development policies (General Assembly 1969: 49-50) [emphasis added].

The UDEHM, adopted by the 1974-WFC, asserted that, “every man, woman and child had the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties” (United Nations 1975: 2, Article 1) [emphasis added]. In the same years, the *Cocoyoc Declaration* (1974) redefined the whole purpose of development as, “not to develop things but to develop man. Human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, health, education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfilment – or, even worse, disrupts them – is a travesty of the idea of development” (Paragraph 18) [emphasis added].

The *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979) notes that, “in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs” (Paragraph 8) and ensure women the right to, *inter alia*, “participate in...development planning at all levels” (Article 14, Paragraph 2a), “benefit directly from social security programmes” (Article 14, Paragraph 2c), “organise self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment” (Article 14, Paragraph 2e), and “have access to agricultural credit, loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes” (Article 14, Paragraph 2g) [emphasis added].

The state parties to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989) recognise the right of the child “to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health” (Article 24, Paragraph 1) and resolve to pursue full implementation of this right by appropriate measures, which include, *inter alia*, “to combat disease and malnutrition...through the provision of adequate nutritious foods...” (Article 24,

Paragraph 2c) and “to ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition” (Article 24, Paragraph 2e). In recognition of “the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development” (Article 27, Paragraph 1), the state parties “in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and...provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition...” (Article 27, Paragraph 3) [emphasis added].

The *Bellagio Declaration on Overcoming Hunger in the 1990s* (1989: 87) highlighted the RTF of civilians during armed conflicts,

The major obstacle to eliminating famine remains the destruction of civilian food supplies in zones of armed conflicts. The rudiments of international protection of civilian rights to food exists in international law, most specifically in the 1977 protocols to the Geneva Convention of 1949 that prohibit starvation of civilians as a means of combat. More recently, there is renewed interest in an international or regional convention for the sanctity of civilian food supplies and the safe passage of emergency food relief. Such a covenant could bind nations to provide safe passage and might permit convoy by United Nations peacekeeping forces within their national territory [emphasis added].

The *World Declaration on Nutrition* (1992) recognised that “access to nutritionally adequate and safe food is a right of each individual” and “bearing in mind the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we [Ministers and Plenipotentiaries representing 159 states and the European Economic Community] pledge to act in solidarity to ensure that freedom from hunger becomes a reality” (Paragraph 1). The *Plan of Action for Nutrition* upheld that “improving nutrition should...be seen both as a goal of development in its own right and as a means of achieving it” (FAO/WHO 1992a: 24) and “consumers have a right to a good quality and safe food supply, and government and food industry actions are needed to ensure this” (FAO/WHO 1992a: 33) [emphasis added].

The *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* (1993) noted that,

The World Conference on Human Rights calls upon States to refrain from any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that creates obstacles to trade relations among States and impedes the full realisation of the human rights set forth in the Universal declaration of Human Rights and international human rights instruments, in particular the rights

of everyone to a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being, including food and medical care, housing and the necessary social services. The World Conference on Human Rights affirms that food should not be used as a tool for political pressure (Paragraph 31) [emphasis added].

The *Rome Declaration on World Food Security* (1996) reaffirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger” (Paragraph 1). This would have sounded like the customary rhetorical declaration that follows any international conglomeration without the *World Food Summit Plan of Action* (1996). The basis of action for Commitment One<sup>19</sup> contained in the *Plan of Action* included “promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food for all...” (Paragraph 13) [emphasis added].

Objective 7.4 of Commitment Seven,<sup>20</sup> spelled out in the *Plan of Action*, clarifies the content of “the right to adequate food” and “the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”, as stated in the ICESCR, giving particular attention “to implementation and full and progressive realization of this right as a means of achieving food security for all”. To this end, governments, in participation with the civil society, were urged to make every effort to implement the provisions of Article 11 of the ICESCR; the CESCR was enjoined to give specific attention to the *Plan of Action* in the framework of its activities and continue to monitor the specific measure provided in Article 11 of the Covenant; the relevant treaty bodies and specialised agencies of the UN were called upon to consider how they could contribute, within the scope of their mandate and the framework of the UN system follow-up, to further the implementation of the RTF. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was urged to better define the rights related to food, in consultation with appropriate UN system agencies and other relevant inter-governmental mechanisms, and to propose ways to implement and realise these rights to ensure food security for all.

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<sup>19</sup> Commitment One – “We will ensure an enabling political, social, and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty and for durable peace, based on full and equal participation of women and men, which is most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all” (*World Food Summit Plan of Action*, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> Commitment Seven – “We will implement, monitor, and follow-up this Plan of Action at all levels in cooperation with the International Community” (*World Food Summit Plan of Action*, 1996).



The *International Alliance against Hunger* (2002) reaffirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food” (Paragraph 4) and reiterated that “food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure (Paragraph 5).

Triggered by the 1996-WFS for a better definition of the rights relating to food and the steps needed to realise it, the CESCR further clarified the RTF in 1999, by attaching General Comment 12 on this right. It marks ‘a major breakthrough’ in the prolonged discussion on the meaning and scope of the RTF and constitutes the ‘first authoritative interpretation’ of the right more than three decades after its formal expression in the ICESCR (Eide, W.B. 2000: 327). The General Comment 12 (Paragraph 4) affirmed that “the right to adequate food is indivisibly linked to the inherent dignity of the human person and is indispensable for the fulfilment of other human rights enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights. It is also inseparable from social justice, requiring the adoption of appropriate economic, environmental and social policies, at both the national and international levels, oriented to the eradication of poverty and the fulfilment of all human rights for all”.

The core content of the right to adequate food implies:

The availability of food in a quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substance, and acceptable within a given culture;

The accessibility of such food in ways that are sustainable and that do not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights (General Comment 12: Paragraph 8).

Particularly significant for the RTF is the concept of ‘adequacy’, which comprises of factors that must be taken into account in determining whether the specific accessible food or diet can be considered as the most appropriate in a given context, and the notion of ‘sustainability’, which implies that accessibility of food for both present and future generations. “The precise meaning of “adequacy” is to a large extent determined by prevailing social, economic, cultural, climatic, ecological and other conditions, while “sustainability” incorporates the notion of long-term availability and accessibility” (General Comment 12: Paragraph 7). It is evident that the RTF entails more than what is usually implied by the narrow understanding of ‘food security’ in terms of minimum protein-energy (calorie) requirement. In the attempt to clarify the contents of the RTF, the General Comment detailed the meaning of the sub-concepts of dietary needs (General Comment 12: Paragraph 9), free from adverse substances

(General Comment 12: Paragraph 10), cultural or consumer acceptability (General Comment 12: Paragraph 11), availability (General Comment 12: Paragraph 12) and accessibility (General Comment 12: Paragraph 13), which greatly benefits in “setting precise benchmarks and developing appropriate indicators for the monitoring of the realisation of the right to food” (Eide, W.B. 2000: 329).

In the backdrop of the 2007-2008 food crisis, the *Cordoba Declaration on the Right to Food* (2008: 1-6) demonstrated that “the right to food can tackle the structural causes of hunger and contribute to food security for all” and called on states “to place the right to food at the top of the political agenda regarding food and agriculture”. It held that all national and international policies should be guided by a human rights-based approach, to guarantee that they respect, protect and fulfil the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food”.

Undoubtedly, human-rights based approach has become an “increasingly important rallying call in the global fight against hunger” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 111). The debate during 1970s focussed on advancing higher food production to strengthen availability and stability of national and global supply. A new policy-orientation towards food and nutrition was evident as attention diverted to recognition of greater role and responsibility of state authorities as essential for prevention of hunger and promotion of nutritional well-being. In the backdrop of the 1974-WFC and the entry into force of the ICESCR in 1976, strong relationship between human rights and socio-economic development began to surface in the international community and among interested states (Eide, W.B. 2000: 330). However, the UDEHM only proclaimed ‘the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition’, without mentioning the ‘right to adequate food’ enshrined in the ICESCR only eight years ago, and developing the implications of recognising a right (Mechlem 2004: 634).

Though centralised food and nutrition models, concerned with the impact on national development, were put forward within the international food and nutrition domain, a universal framework (provided by the human rights paradigm) to identify and locate actions to combat hunger was largely lacking. The idea of approaching the food and nutrition policy and planning through human rights began to ferment among nutrition policy analysts ‘via spill over effect’. It was increasingly realised that states’ responsibility for adequate food and nutrition for all can be underscored by

transforming the ethical principles into human rights norms under international law, “human rights might offer a new opportunity for advocacy and action to improve good nutrition as a critical factor in human and social development...by applying human rights principles to identifying the nature of the gap between ‘the normative and the reality’ and to obstacles to closing that gap” (Eide, W.B. 2000: 331).

In the 1980s, the understanding of the causes of hunger and malnutrition was broadened as it became clear that not food availability but poverty and lack of access cause food insecurity, along with expansion of food security agenda from instability and acute crisis to the problem of chronic hunger and shifting of focus to households and individuals, linked to income and resources. Further, it came to be realised that food was only one component, though an important one, in a complex set of factors that determined human food security. Health and nutrition were linked in a reciprocal and synergetic relationship with food intake and nutritional well-being, which led to food gradually being included in the international human rights agenda (Mechlem 2004: 265-266; Eide, W.B. 2000: 334).

By the 1990s the need was felt to pursue the human RTF beyond the technical and policy perspectives of ‘professional food and nutrition development circles’ (Eide, W.B. 2000: 334). The notion of food security evolved and diversified to become more ‘encompassing and multilayered’ and attention shifted from international to national, to household to the individual as the unit of analysis; from the conventional panacea of food availability to recognition of food quality, safety, and micronutrients; and finally to non-food factors relevant for food security (Mechlem 2004: 637). The concept of RTF ‘matured in an interactive process’ and found its way into the ‘political development agenda’ through the UN system’s standard-setting and monitoring role, along with innovations and performance by states that are parties to Conventions relevant to the RTF that operationalised it within the national context (Eide, W.B. 2000: 326).

### **What is the Right to Food?**

Since global food security, hunger and poverty alleviation, and agricultural and rural development, are integral components of the larger process of development, it is appropriate to examine the progressive integration of human rights within the

development discourse. RTF can be located as an integral part of the intersection. The increasing attention paid to RTF is intimately linked with the trend in development circles to explore and discuss rights-based approaches to poverty reduction and economic growth, which recognises that individuals are not merely objects of development policy, but as human beings they have rights to food, education, health, participation, and fair judicial processes (Mechlem 2004: 645).

In various periods of time, development has been understood to mean, among others, the following: growth in GNP or per capita income, growth with redistribution; self-sufficiency and self-reliance; satisfaction of basic needs; and respect and fulfilment of human rights (Zalaquette 1984: 145). Development, in the immediate post-World War II, was primarily contemplated as an economic process, characterised by increase in GNP, construction of infrastructure, expansion of industry and increased production and consumption of goods and services, conspicuously oblivious to any reference of human rights. In fact, till the 1960s, it was argued that, “each gain in the degree of freedom will be paid for with a slowing down of development; each degree of speeding up development will be paid for with a certain loss of freedom” (Richard Lowenthal as quoted in Klaff 1998: 77). Arguments in favour of tolerating temporary violation of human rights in order to achieve the end of development were used to legitimise particular forms of government initiatives in the developing countries (Klaff 1998: 77). This reinforced the focus of development only on economic variables, almost in omission of socio-political facets from its sphere of influence.

However, practical experiences proved contrary to these assertions as economic growth failed to percolate and promote development as economic performance were evaluated against the existence and incidence of poverty and the distribution of income and wealth within and between countries (Tomaševski 1984: 139-140). It was realised that without the protection of human rights, genuine development is impossible since human rights violations impede the process of development. Hence, the need for a holistic, human, basic need, equity and poverty based understanding for pursuing development was felt. This was paralleled by a broadening of focus of the international human rights debates to include a range of economic issues that had previously been considered solely as the prerogative of international development agencies (Alston and Robinson 2005: 1). The entry of newly independent states in the

UN between 1960 and 1970 particularly spurred the attempt to bridge the two domains in the context of their struggle to establish a New International Economic Order (NIEO) (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004: 1422). Development policy measures began to insist on ‘human development’ and education, health, nutrition and fertility gained prominent place in development policy recommendations and the 1980s were marked by orientation of development goals and policies towards peoples’ needs, rights, aspirations as the ‘end of over-all development’, evident in the changing priorities of the UN Development Decades (Tomaševski 1984: 140).<sup>21</sup>

The spotlight turned on the relevance of the human rights framework to the development discourse and by the 1990s, the human rights and the development communities began direct and constructive engagement signalling the beginning of a ‘rights-based’ approach to development. While human rights was redefined as “claims to the requirements of human development and the exercise of those rights are consequently the necessary actual condition of development” (O’Manique 1992: 1992), the ultimate objective of development was to be the realisation of human rights, reflecting landmark progress in thinking about the ends and means of development. The RTF is upheld as “an international development objective of a high priority rank, even if in its rudimentary form of the alleviation of starvation in the world” (Tomaševski 1984: 139).

Since the end of Cold War a confluence of factors – globalization, increasing influence of non-state actors, academics, policy-makers and advocates and innovative international attempts – have contributed to the ‘gradual rapprochement and increasing dialogue’ between the human rights and development paradigms. While scholars like Amartya Sen and Mahbub-ul-Haq<sup>22</sup> spearheaded the conceptual

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<sup>21</sup> The First Development Decade (1960s) insisted on economic growth of developing countries, the second (1970s) put forwards equality of opportunity for countries and for individuals, the third (1980s) postulated improvement of well-being of the entire population (Tomaševski 1984: 139).

<sup>22</sup> The theoretical underpinnings of the new development paradigm were developed by Amartya Sen, who described ‘development’, as ‘a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy’ (Sen 1999: 3). An adequate conception of development, must traverse individual income and GNP growth, while are general-purpose means of expanding the freedom of people. Freedom depends on socio-economic arrangements; education, health care, social security, political and civil rights and participation in development activity (Sen 1999: 36-37). Individuals are not merely the passive recipients of the benefits of development process, rather adequate social opportunities would equip them to effectively shape their own destiny (Sen 1999: 11).

Mahbub-ul-Haq asserts that human beings ‘are both the means and the end of economic development’ (Haq 2002: 3), the ‘principal object and subject’ of the development dialogue (Haq 2002: 11) and

integration of the two concepts, the adoption of the UN *Declaration on the Right to Development*<sup>23</sup> paved the way for a rights-based approach to development. Growing NGO activism further led to increasing awareness and helped build public opinion in support of integrating human rights in development and urged for a more comprehensive view of rights as encompassing civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004: 1423-1424; Brodnig 2001: 1, 10-13), which interprets human rights and development as being positively interdependent and mutually reinforcing (Klaff 1998: 77). There is increasing recognition that human rights advocacy complements market mechanism and does not circumvent them, calling governments to undertake development reforms that improve food production, distribution and consumption (Narula 2006: 702).

The right to development, personifying the ‘right-based’ approach to development, “is defined as the right to a particular process of development that ensures realisation of all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural” (CDHR 2004: 44). The UN *Declaration on the Right to Development* (1986) envisaged bridging the chasm between the two ostensibly exclusive discourses of civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights by recognising ‘development’ as “a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting there from...” (Preamble, Paragraph 2).

Development and human rights are interdependent and “development... has as one of its constituent elements respect for and promotion of human rights of the individual” (United Nations 1991: 27), including the RTF. States are urged to undertake all the necessary measures, at the national level, for the effective realisation of the right to development, ensuring, *inter alia*, “equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair

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therefore, ‘human welfare – not GNP – is the true end of development’ (Haq 2002: 4) implying a movement towards ‘a new human development paradigm’ (Haq 2002: 12). The basic purpose of development is the enlargement of people’s choices – economic, social, cultural and political and creation of an enabling environment for them to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives (Haq 2002: 14).

<sup>23</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/41/128 – *Declaration on the Right to Development*, (forty-first session, 4 December 1986).

distribution of income” (*Declaration on the Right to Development*: Article 8, Paragraph 1). Hence, RTF is indispensable for the right to development.

Amartya Sen bases his understanding of whether people have a right to be free from hunger on Ronald Dworkin’s distinction between ‘background rights’ that “provide a justification for political decisions by society in abstract” and ‘institutional rights’ that “provide a justification for a decision by some particular and specified political institution” (Dworkin quoted in Sen 1984: 69). Based on this he asserts that,

A system of social security that guarantees to everyone a minimum income sufficient to buy enough food can be seen to make the right to be free from hunger an institutional right, provided it could be assumed that the decision-making within the family would lead to the income being expended for that purpose rather than some other. For a great many countries, however, such social security arrangements do not exist, and if the right in question is asserted in the context of such countries as well, they would clearly not be institutional rights, but merely background rights (Sen 1984: 69).

Sen also draws from Dworkin’s distinction between ‘concrete’ and ‘abstract rights’, “An abstract right is a general political aim the statement of which does not indicate how the general aim is to be weighted or compromised in particular circumstances against the other political aims” (Dworkin quoted in Sen 1984: 70). According to Sen, “The right to be free from hunger may be treated as an abstract right when the “trade-offs” with other objectives are not specified and other features of concrete application kept somewhat vague” (Sen 1984: 70). Thus, the right to be free from hunger can have varying status in different countries from being concrete and institutional rights (in countries that have elaborate social security systems with specifies priorities) to abstract and background rights (in countries that accept such rights without institutional translation and concrete specification of priorities) (Sen 1984: 70).

Sen supplements Dworkin’s categorisation with his conception of ‘metarights’ – “A *metaright* to something  $x$  can be defined as the right to have policies  $p(x)$  that genuinely pursue the objective of making the right to  $x$  realisable” (Sen 1984: 70). “A metaright...concentrates not on the achievement of  $x$ , which might be currently unachievable, but on the pursuit of policies that would help to make  $x$  achievable in future” (Sen 1984: 71). Metarights are relevant for poverty and hunger alleviation, especially in countries where they are widespread, but freedom from them cannot be guaranteed for all, immediately or in near future, despite existence of policies that

would rapidly lead to such goal. “The metaright for freedom from hunger is the right to such a policy, but what lies behind that right is ultimately the objective of achieving that freedom” (Sen 1984: 71). Sen’s system of rights is related to his concept of ‘entitlements’, “being free from hunger is really a matter of entitlements rather than of rights only”, entitlements meaning the bundle of things one can have by virtue of rights (Sen 1984: 72). The distinction between moral rights and legal rights is pointed out as pertinent, “A nutritionally adequate diet may well be taken to be a part of a person’s moral entitlement, even when it is not a part of his legal entitlements” (Sen 1984: 74). However, if the moral entitlements are supported by adequate agreement on principle and force of political organisation, eventually the legal entitlements may change to incorporate the right to a nutritionally adequate diet (Sen 1984: 75).

As a corollary of ‘food security’, the RTF is defined as “the right to have regular, permanent and free access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumers belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear” (Ziegler 2001: 7). It includes “the right to have access to the resources and to the means to ensure and produce one’s own subsistence, including land, small-scale irrigation and seeds, credit, technology and local and regional markets, especially in rural areas and for vulnerable and discriminated groups, traditional fishing areas, a sufficient income to enable one to live in dignity, including for rural and industrial workers, and access to social security and social assistance for the most deprived” (Ziegler 2008: 9).

While improving food security leads to progressive realisation of the RTF, the rights-based approach to food security complements it with dimensions of human dignity, explicit acknowledgement of existing human rights standards, transparency, accountability and empowerment, through participation, non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups (Mechlem 2004: 646), there being a clear distinction between promoting a specific policy to improve food security over another and recognising that individuals have a right to food.

A right-to-food approach is not based on vague and replaceable policy goals subject to periodic redefinition, but on existing obligations that are comparatively specific and continuously being better-defined and clarified. It is part and parcel of



a wider set of rights-based approaches to development to which states have committed themselves to under human rights law (Mechlem 2004: 468).

Asserting food as a basic ‘human right’ transforms the hungry from being mere ‘passive recipients of charity from dominant groups’ that may or may not allocate resources for their benefits into ‘rights-holders’, which means that “they can in principle claim that their rights be fulfilled, while an external party – primarily the state – by definition becomes the corresponding duty-bearer with obligations to help fulfil the right” (Eide, W.B. 2000: 332). The conventional imperative of non-interference in the internal matters of sovereign states that precluded any possibility of international supervision gave way to accommodate monitoring of states’ compliance with their obligation by the international community via the UN system.

Hence, RTF “constitutes a claim of the individual vis-à-vis the state in which s/he resides, and generates individual entitlements and related obligations potentially enforceable in courts of law. This underlines the difference between needs and rights – rights imply an obligation on behalf of other parties that needs do not” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 112). It encompasses elements of international humanitarian law, prohibiting the use of food as a weapon, the starvation of civilians as a method of combat in international and domestic armed conflicts, attacking or destroying civilian food stocks or water sources or forced displacement of civilian populations in time of war, enjoining upon the belligerent parties in armed conflicts to permit humanitarian access to impartial relief operations – including food. Since the human rights system is ‘seamless’, ‘interrelated and interlocking’, by its very nature, no right can be seen in isolation or prioritised or chosen over other rights. Hence, its proponents advocate incorporating a broad framework of right to nutrition, health, education, productive livelihood and rights of women and children, without which the RTF would be meaningless without (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 112-113).

RTF is also has a qualitative dimension expressed in people’s right to specific types of food that they are familiar with, reflecting certain traditional and cultural patterns of their consumption. Preserving the diversity in food sources and the rights of people to maintain their own food habits, along with having sufficient access to food, is essential from nutritional, ecological and socio-cultural perspectives (Goonatilake 1984: 102-109). “Entitling people to foods that are traditional in their own

regions...would encourage the maintenance of food patterns which make maximum use of sustainable local food-production systems, thus reducing the dependence of the poor on the largesse of the rich, a development which may move the world closer to the realization for all of the right to food” (Schatan and Gussow 1984: 116).

RTF is part of a ‘human rights system’ that is ‘indivisible’, consisting of a “balance between freedom and demands, obligations by the state, and duties of individuals” (Eide 1984: 156). While individuals are the ‘subjects or beneficiaries’, “the notion of human rights is intimately linked to the notion of “state”, human rights referring “to norms concerning the relationship between individuals (sometimes groups of individuals) and the state” (Eide 1984: 153), which should respect some limitations on its action, but it is obliged also to be active in order to fulfil its human rights requirements” (Eide 1984: 154).

### **The Normative Content of the Right to Food**

Understanding the precise nature and normative content of the RTF is essential for its realisation, to spell out the definitive implications and specify the internal and external obligations of different entities (states and international community) deriving from it. However, the normative content of the RTF cannot be examined without contextualising it within the broad international legal framework, especially the alleged prioritisation of the civil and political rights over the economic, social and cultural rights, which determines the position of the RTF within international law.

The traditional understanding of human rights differentiated between civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other.<sup>24</sup> At one extreme, it was argued that the term ‘right’ (of an individual) is only applicable to “those rights that are capable of being enforced by their bearers in courts

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<sup>24</sup> While the civil and political rights are known as the ‘first generation rights’, the social, economic and cultural rights are called the ‘second generation rights’. Karel Vasak developed a ‘third generation of solidarity rights’, which included ‘the right to development, the right to peace, the right to environment, the right to the ownership of the common heritage of mankind, and the right to communication’ (Karel Vasak 1979, “For the Third Generation of Human Rights: The Right of Solidarity”, Inaugural Lecture, Tenth Study Session, International Institute of Human Rights, July as quoted in Steiner and Alston 2000: 1319). These rights, though address new dimensions, are very vague and ambiguous in their definition, scope and application. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain the beneficiaries of these rights and against whom the claim can be made.

of law, or in a comparable manner” (Vierdag 1978: 73).<sup>25</sup> A right must be ‘legally definable’ to qualify as a legal right, “only then can it be legally enforced, only then it can be said to be justifiable. All aspects of economics, social and cultural rights: elements, forms, goals, methods of implementation, and so on, are economic, social and cultural, not – as yet – legal” (Vierdag 1978: 93). It is argued the ICESCR uses the word ‘right’ in a ‘moral and honorary sense’ (Vierdag 1978: 103) and since the economic, social and cultural rights, granted by the Covenant are “not directed at government action that can be described or defined in terms of law” (Vierdag 1978: 93), they are not really laws, are ‘legally negligible’, ‘except in circumstances of minimal or minor economic, social or cultural relevance’ (Vierdag 1978: 105).

Another argument designates the socio-economic and cultural rights as ‘inferior’ to civil and political rights, attributing them a ‘second-rate status’ (Hoof 1984: 97). Since “civil and political rights require non-interference on the part of the State, whereas the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights requires active intervention by the State, the former are said to create ‘negative obligation’, whereas the latter create ‘positive obligation’ (Hoof 1984: 103). While civil and political rights are allegedly absolute in character, requiring immediate implementation, respected in their entirety and ensured to everybody, the economic, social and cultural rights are arguably subjective in nature that can be progressively realised, accepted partially and guaranteed selectively, prioritising certain groups of population (Hoof 1984: 104).

The UN system’s approach to human rights is based on the conviction that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are ‘interrelated’, ‘indivisible’, ‘interdependent’ and ‘inalienable’. The UN asserts “equal attention and urgent consideration...to the implementation, promotion and protection of both civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights”, in view of the recognition that “the full realization of civil and political rights without the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights is impossible (General Assembly 1977: 151). The non-hierarchical nature of human rights was further consolidated by the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, adopted at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, which endorsed

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<sup>25</sup> “‘Enforceable’ is intended to mean that an authority of the state (or, for that matter, an international authority) is competent to receive complaints about violations of the right by anyone – executive state organ, official, or private person – and to give redress by cancelling or rectifying the violating act or regulation, or by awarding compensation for damage, or both. If the authority in question is a court of law, the term ‘justiciable’ may be preferred” (Vierdag 1978: 73).

that, “all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis” (Paragraph 5).

Hence, it came to be accepted that economic, social and cultural rights could no longer be seen in isolation from civil and political rights; ‘they are not only inter-related but are actually integrated’, violation of one would cause violation of the other and there cannot be fulfilment of either without development (Sengupta 1999: 2921). However, this fundamental tenet of the UN’s approach to human rights has not been adequately reflected in national and international practice. The reason “for this discrepancy is the fact that both the precise content of a number of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the specific obligations which they imply for State Parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, remain extremely vague. This vagueness, when contrasted with the degree of precision with which most civil and political rights have been elaborated, has tended to encourage the relative neglect of economic and social rights” (Eide 1983: 2).

The RTF and other social, economic and cultural rights are as ‘genuine’ as human rights as are civil and political rights (ECOSOC 2001: 4). By virtue of being included in an international treaty (the ICESCR), as well as in a range of other international instruments, the RTF “is a part of established international law” (Eide 1983: 3). It is “the most concrete of the economic rights; it has immediate appeal to deeply-rooted human feelings because food is a matter of life and death. It is therefore quite in order to start trying to define a legal framework for the right to food...” (Spitz 1984: 170). The RTF goes beyond availability and accessibility of food, and it is intricately related to the ‘right to life’, ‘human dignity’ and ‘better standards of living’, also encompassing a whole range of other rights enshrined in the UN Charter and the UDHR beyond mere survival or life-saving provisions. Though primarily an economic right, the RTF is intricately linked with rights to land, work (fair wages), health, water, a clean environment, a just economic order, personal security, fulfilment of civil-political rights, freedom from violence and fear, collective rights of indigenous people to natural and economic resources sufficient to feed group members and keep them from extreme want, and individual right to food of refugees, prisoners of war and civilians during conflict (Messer 1996b: 67).

It has been asserted that the ‘right to adequate food’ (ICESCR: Article 11, Paragraph 1) is a ‘relative standard, the ‘right to be free from hunger’ (ICESCR: Article 11, Paragraph 2) is ‘absolute’ and the only right to be qualified as ‘fundamental’ in both the Covenants (Narula 2006: 706), however, “there is no indication that paragraph 2 was intended... to restrict or narrow the scope of the right proclaimed in paragraph one” (Alston 1984: 32). On the contrary, it is argued that there are substantial implications of taking the ‘right to adequate food’ as ‘the primary norm’ instead of the ‘right to be free from hunger’,

Whereas the former facilitates the adoption of a maximalist approach, the latter, which is in fact a sub-norm, is able to be fully satisfied by the adoption of policies designed to provide a minimum daily nutritional intake... While it may be appropriate to focus on freedom from hunger as a means by which to mobilize public support and as a starting point for national and international efforts, such an approach should be seen only as the first step towards realization of the primary norm which is the right to adequate food... (Alston 1984: 33).

The ICESCR “commits State Parties to recognition of the right” that is to be enjoyed by “everyone” to adequate food (Alston 1984: 32). However, it (ICESCR: Article 11) only ‘recognises’ the RTF and in terms of its ‘realisation’, includes a very general statement on agrarian policy (‘production, conservation and distribution of food’) to be undertaken by states, ‘individually and through international cooperation’, through ‘measures, including specific programmes’. While the precise implication of ensuring ‘an equitable distribution of world food supplies’ remains debatable, the specific national objectives contained in Paragraph 2a, Article 11 is ‘poorly drafted and confused’ (Alston 1984: 34). The same provision of the ICESCR is commendable in highlighting ‘technical and scientific knowledge’, ‘principles of nutrition’, ‘reforming agrarian system’ and ‘efficient development and utilization of natural resources’.

The normative content of the RTF has been progressively shaped by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food appointed by the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The UN Human Rights Council was created by General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/251 – *Human Rights Council* (sixtieth session, 15 March 2006), as an inter-governmental body within the UN system responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide and addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them.

The UN-HRC replaced the UN Commission on Human Rights, a subsidiary body of the ECOSOC, established in 1946 as one of the two functional commission (the other being the Commission on the Status of Women), to act as the principal UN forum for promotion and protection of human rights. Its main subsidiary body, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities established in 1947, renamed as the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 1999, was also subsumed by the UN-HRC since 2006.

Asbjørn Eide was appointed as the first Special Rapporteur, by the erstwhile Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in 1983, entrusted with the preparation of a study on the RTF as a human right, according special attention ‘to the normative content’ of the RTF and spelling out the precise implication of the right including the obligations derived from it.<sup>27</sup> In response to the contention that the RTF contained in the ICESCR (Article 11) is not a right of individuals, but constitutes “broadly formulated programmes for governmental policies in the economic, social and cultural fields” (Vierdag 1978: 103), Eide in his first report as the Special Rapporteur strongly maintained that the RTF was proclaimed by the ICESCR as ‘the right of everyone’, belonging to individuals, and not as a broad collective proposition (Eide 1987: 10).

It is also alleged that the RTF is no human right because the international instruments that proclaim its existence only seem to imply a moral obligation on the government and create no enforceable entitlements. The RTF asserted in these documents is ‘legally meaningless’ because it is bereft of any legal content and has no way of being enforced. Article 11 of the ICSECR prescribes the governments only with the task of ‘recognising’ the fundamental right of everyone, the obligations being only indicative and not definitive (Dias and Paul 1984: 206-207). Its implementation “is a political matter, not a matter of law, and hence not a matter of rights” and though they “may not be inherently unenforceable, depending on the socio-economic system of a country and the role of the judiciary in it”, their execution “exists only to the extent that a court could order the service to be extended to a qualified person without thereby directly compelling the political organs to increase financial resources...” (Vierdag 1978: 103). Consequently, it is asserted that since the RTF is not legally binding in nature it is not a right under international law.

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The UN-HRC assumed the work of UN Special Procedures, established by the UN Commission on Human Rights to examine, monitor, advise and report on specific thematic issues or country situations, made up of special rapporteurs, independent experts, special representatives and working groups. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), headed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, supports the UN-HRC and provides Special Procedure mechanisms with personnel, policy, research and logistical support for the discharge of their mandates.

<sup>27</sup> The ECOSOC decision 1983/140 – *The New International Economic Order and the Promotion of Human Rights*, adopted on 27 May 1983 at its first regular session, authorised the erstwhile Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to entrust Asbjørn Eide, Special Rapporteur, with the preparation of a study on the right to adequate food as a human right.

Eide (1987: 11) counters to such arguments with the contention that it is a mistake “to confound the question whether a right has become justiciable right, with the question whether the right exists under international law”. An appropriate application of an enforceability test to ascertain whether a right can be deemed as a part of international human rights law is highly questionable. In fact, “it is the exception rather than the rule that norms of international law can be enforced through courts of law” (Hoof 1984: 101). The assertion that the RTF is a ‘soft law’ whose primary function is to provide a set of guidelines that states may or may not choose to follow is problematic. “The right to food is hard law; it is binding on states upon ratification of the ICESCR. To characterise the right to food as soft law misinterprets and undermines the legal obligations of states to respect fundamental human rights norms. The problem lies not with the binding nature of the norm, but with weakness in implementation, enforcement, and a lack of universal ratification” (Narula 2006: 775).

By the time Eide updated his study in 1999, much had changed in the international scenario of food security and RTF. There was much wider recognition of the RTF and nutrition security in international human rights law, more general awareness regarding the impact of hunger and malnutrition, intense international activism through a series of conferences, extensively addressing these problems, and broad endorsement by international institutions of the human rights approach to food and nutrition security, ushering in “a new and potentially powerful momentum to act in a concerted way to contribute to the realisation of these rights and to eliminate the scourge of hunger from humanity” (Eide 1999: 34). The most significant step towards clarification of the content of the RTF and steps to be taken for its realisation has been the adoption of General Comment 12, “as the official interpretation by the treaty body responsible for monitoring State parties’ implementation of the right to adequate food, this general comment will in the time ahead stand as the most authoritative document formulated to date regarding the right to food” (Eide 1999: 14).

The updated report of the Special Rapporteur accorded special attention to the RTF in the context of globalisation. The institutional agents of globalisation, WTO, IMF and the World Bank are juxtaposed against the UN system, particularly its human rights bodies that are agents of universalisation of human rights, to develop a ‘constructive and corrective relationship’ between the forces of the markets and power of the state

that is structured for optimal implementation of human rights. Such a framework requires good governance – rule of law, transparency, responsiveness and accountability – both at national and international levels. Considering the prospects of the RTF in this context reveals ‘the potential for and constraints to its universalisation’. As the process of globalisation affects food in a complex and multifaceted manner, evolving critical issues, like biotechnology revolution and opportunities of GMOs, farmers’ rights, consumers’ health and safety assume importance for the RTF (Eide 1999: 31-33).

The erstwhile Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur in 2000 to fully respond “to the necessity for an integrated and coordinated approach in the promotion and protection of the right to food”.<sup>28</sup> The Human Rights Council (which replaced the Commission on Human Rights in 2006) endorsed and extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the RTF in 2007,<sup>29</sup> and called upon the OHCHR to provide all necessary human and financial resources, all governments to cooperate and assist by supplying necessary information, and the relevant UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector through submission of comments and suggestion on ways and means of realising the RTF to ensure effective fulfilment the Special Rapporteur’s mandate (HRC 2007: 3).

Special Rapporteurs on the RTF, Jean Ziegler (2000-April 2008) and Olivier De Schutter (since May 2008) have sought to implement the mandate (supplemented by subsequent General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions related to the above broad mandate) by undertaking country visits to monitor the RTF situation throughout the world and identify general trends, communicating with concerned states and other parties with regard to alleged cases of violations of the RTF, and participating in conferences, expert meeting and seminars to promote dialogue with

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<sup>28</sup> See, Commission on Human Rights (2000), *The Right to Food*, E/CN.4/RES/2000/10, adopted on 17 April 2000, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

<sup>29</sup> The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the RTF includes: promoting the full realisation of the RTF through the adoption of national, regional and international measures; examining ways and means of overcoming existing and emerging obstacles to the realisation of the RTF; mainstreaming gender perspective and taking into account an age dimension (children); aiding in the realisation of the millennium development goal to halve the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015; recommending possible steps to promote the conditions for achieving progressively full realisation of the RTF; working in close cooperation with all the states, intergovernmental institutions, NGOs, the CESCR, and other relevant actors; and participating in and contributing to relevant international conferences and events with the aim of promoting the realisation of the RTF (HRC 2007: 2).



relevant actors in realising the RTF. The Special Rapporteurs submit annual reports to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on the implementation of the mandate and the activities undertaken. These annual reports are important documents in developing the normative content of the RTF and identifying concrete steps for national legislation and local food security measures for the implementation of the RTF. Special Rapporteurs have increasingly sought, through the annual reports, to clarify the definition of the RTF<sup>30</sup> by situating it within the evolving context of global food security, looking at the impact on RTF of emerging concerns of the international food problem, and the RTF of vulnerable groups.

For example, consecutive annual reports to the General Assembly, the erstwhile Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council have assessed the impact of armed conflicts and international trade, access to land and agrarian reform, transnational corporations, desertification and land degradation, biofuels, seed policies and agrobiodiversity, agribusiness and agroecology on RTF; looked at the relationship between food sovereignty and RTF; the role of development cooperation and food aid in realising RTF; and the potential of integrating human rights criteria for making contract farming and other business models that could benefit small-scale farmers; and analysed the RTF of fishing livelihoods, indigenous peoples, children, and refugees.<sup>31</sup> The Special Rapporteur moved forward the debate on justiciability, as a crucial aspect of RTF signifying whether people can seek remedy and accountability if their right is violated, by asserting that by its very nature the RTF can be understood as justiciable. For a long time the RTF, being a part of the socio-economic and cultural rights, was considered as not being justiciable in the same way as civil and political rights, capable of being adjudicated by a court of law moved by the victim of

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<sup>30</sup> See, Jean Ziegler's Report to General Assembly (A/56/210, fifty-sixth session, 23 July 2001); Report to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2001/53, fifty-seventh session, 7 February 2001); and Report to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2006/44, sixty-second session, 16 March 2006).

<sup>31</sup> See, Jean Ziegler's Report to General Assembly: (A/56/210, fifty-sixth session, 23 July 2001), (A/57/356, fifty-seventh session, 27 August 2002), (A/58/330, fifty-eighth session, 28 August 2003), (A/59/385, fifty-ninth session, 27 September 2004), (A/60/350, sixtieth session, 12 September 2005), (A/61/306, sixty-first, 1 September 2006), (A/62/2896, sixty-second, 22 August 2007); Report to the erstwhile Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2004/10, sixtieth session, 9 February 2004); Report to Human Rights Council (A/HRC/4/30, fourth session, 19 January 2007); (A/HRC/7/5, seventh session, 10 January 2008); and Olivier De Schutter's Report to General Assembly: (A/64/170, sixty-fourth session, 23 July 2009), (A/65/281, sixty-fifth session, 11 August 2010), (A/66/262, sixty-sixth session, 4 August 2011); and Report to Human Rights Council: (A/HRC/10/5, tenth session, 11 February 2009); (A/HRC/13/33, thirteenth session, 22 December 2009); (A/HRC/16/49, sixteenth session, 20 December 2010).

violation who could seek effective remedy from a particular state. However, the General Comment 12 has largely changed this perspective and increasingly justiciability of RTF is becoming a reality at the national level, though regional and international enforcement mechanisms remain relatively weak (Ziegler 2002: 11-12).

NGOs have also been pivotal in advocating, mobilising and developing a human rights approach to global food security through RTF. They have assisted in advocating and monitoring the RTF through conferences and publications that analyse hunger as a violation of human rights caused due to political-economic exploitation. NGOs through their parallel studies and shadow reports clarify the legal and political content of the 'food and nutrition security matrix', urge the states to adhere to the human rights instruments accepted by them by locating their food and nutrition policy within the obligation to guarantee the RTF and criticising the defaulting governments through mobilising public opinion and in international forums (Eide 1984: 159; Messer 1996b: 68). For example, FIAN provides guidelines for *Parallel Reporting before the UN CESCR*<sup>32</sup> on the situation of the RTF, highlights cases of violations of the RTF.

The World Alliance for Nutrition and Human Rights (WANAHR)<sup>33</sup> was founded in May 1994, Florence (Italy), as a global network of participants representing the UN system, NGOs and other organisations concerned with the human rights approach to nutrition, to accelerate progress in reducing hunger and malnutrition in the rapidly changing global scientific, economic, social and political context using the human rights approach. The WANAHR joined the FIAN and Jacques Maritain Institute to carry forward the recommendation of the 1996-WFS to prepare 'voluntary guidelines' by drafting a *Code of Conduct on the Human Right to Adequate Food*, clarifying the content of the RTF and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger and giving specific attention to full implementation and progressive realisation of this right as a means of achieving global food security. While the primary responsibility rested with the states, it recognised that TNCs, international organisations, banks and financing institutions were called upon 'not to undermine the regulatory capacity of the state in ensuring the right to food' (Eide 1999: 12; Eide, W.B. 2000: 343-344).

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<sup>32</sup> FIAN (2003), *Parallel Reporting before the UN CESCR*, writing a parallel report on the situation of the Right to Adequate Food in co-operation with FIAN International, revised in May 2007

<sup>33</sup> See, WANAHR Secretariat (1996), "Rejoinder: World Alliance for Nutrition and Human Rights", *Food Policy*, 21 (1) March: 129-137.

While the RTF “has been endorsed more often and with greater unanimity and urgency”, at the same time it has been “violated more comprehensively and systematically” in practice, “accompanied and even facilitated by the almost total neglect...of its theoretical, normative and institutional aspects” (Alston 1984: 9). Despite being “an integral part of the existing structure of contemporary international law” (Alston 1984: 13), translating the international normative standards of RTF into concrete and positive action within the national legal system is extremely difficult. This is because, the wide recognition of RTF in international law, both in general and specific terms, is not supported by corresponding obligations, which remain less developed, more in the nature of diverse and vague general provisions, found in many different instruments (Eide 1987: 55), “largely formulated as broad obligations of result rather than specific obligations of conduct” (Eide 1987: 11). States do not have any specific obligations to guarantee it, nor does any effective mechanism exist to supervise and implement the RTF. The UN human rights framework concentrate more on civil and political rights and consider the RTF, like other economic, social and cultural rights, as a mere aspirational right or programmatic goal to be achieved thorough economic growth. A general sense of ‘insufficiency of normative standards’ for the economic, social and cultural rights in the ICESCR prevails with those concerned with operationalisation of those rights (Tomaševski 1984: 153).

Hence, mere existence of the normative framework of RTF does not ensure protection of the right or guarantee peoples’ entitlements and accessibility to adequate food. In fact, the entire exercise of developing and signing of normative statements has been discredited “in part because they tend to become and end in themselves – and even when they are only viewed as a means to an end, in and of themselves, they offer little guarantee of achieving those ends” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 117). Nevertheless, the normative element is useful as it provides clear ‘benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation’, to which states and international institutions can be held accountable to (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 118). The most crucial task in developing the normative content is “to specify the internal and external obligations of States” and that of the international community (Eide 1983: 4). Elaboration of the normative content of RTF must be substantiated with establishment of ‘an effective supervisory mechanism’ for its implementation (Westerveen 1984: 121). Though international actors, states and

international institutions, have progressively embraced many normative standards of RTF, their implementation frequently falls short of policy imperatives.

### **Implementing the Right to Food**

Boutros Boutros Ghali signalled in 1992 that ‘the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty...has passed...’ (*An Agenda for Peace Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping* 1992: Paragraph 17). Undoubtedly, the nature of state sovereignty has altered, yet the authority and power of the state cannot be disregarded. Territorial state, its claims to sovereignty and its consent still remain the substratum of the international political system. However, increasingly states are being obligated to share the international arena with other actors and become part of international institutions that consequently restrict the operation of state sovereignty. Hence, international relations remain, ‘a modified state system’ or ‘pooled sovereignty’ (Forsythe 2000: 22-24). In an increasingly globalised world characterised by deterritorialization of political authority and identity, borders have lost their sacrosanctity and the agenda of international politics has enlarged beyond its traditional scope. Promotion and preservation of human rights has become the pressing concern and national and international actors are enjoined to incorporate human rights into the dynamics of development.

The right of someone necessarily entails a corresponding duty and responsibility regarding those rights for other parties, and in this sense, right-based approach is essentially different from needs-based approach. “Whereas needs may or may not be met, rights and responsibilities go together” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 113). States are the primary human rights duty-bearers, their human rights obligations developed by Eide (1984: 154; 1987: 14-15) at three levels:

- The obligation to respect requires the State to abstain from doing anything that violates the integrity of the individual or infringes on her or his freedom, including the freedom to use the material resources available to that individual in the way she or he finds best to satisfy basic needs.
- The obligation to protect requires from the State the measures necessary to prevent other individuals or groups from violating the integrity, freedom of action, or other human rights of the individual – including the prevention of infringement of his or her material resources.
- The obligation to fulfil requires the State to take the measures necessary to ensure for each person within its jurisdiction opportunities to obtain

satisfaction of those needs, recognised in the human rights instruments, which cannot be secured by personal efforts.

In his updated study of 1999, Eide added a 'tertiary level' of state obligation "to facilitate opportunities by which the rights listed can be enjoyed" (Eide 1999: 15). Corresponding to the three levels of responsibility, Eide (1987: 15) also distinguishes between 'obligation of conduct and of result',

An obligation of conduct (active or passive) points to a behaviour which the duty-holder should follow or abstain from. An obligation of result is less concerned with the choice of the line of action taken, but more concerned with the results which the duty-holder should achieve or avoid. State agents are obliged not to torture – that is an obligation of conduct, state and their agents should eliminate the occurrence of hunger – that is an obligation of result.

It does not necessarily follow that the obligation of result invariably requires the state to actively fulfil the needs of individuals, by being a provider of material goods. It may be the case that "the state can avoid hunger better by being passive, by not interfering with the freedom of the individuals and with their control over their own resources", depending on specific circumstances and context (Eide 1987: 15).

Eide's original three-tier of rights-obligation was modified by Hoof (1984: 106) as four 'layers' of State obligation: an obligation to respect, protect, ensure (akin to fulfil) and promote. While the obligation to respect closely resembles 'an obligation of non-interference', forbidding the state to "to act in any way which would directly encroach upon recognized rights or freedoms", the obligation to protect enjoins upon the state "to take steps – through legislation or otherwise – which prevent or prohibit others (third persons) from violating recognized rights and freedoms". Taken together, the obligation to ensure and promote, encompass 'programmatic' obligations within the context of economic, social and cultural rights, designed to achieve certain results. The obligation to ensure requires the government "to actively create conditions aimed at the achievement of a certain result in the form of a (more) effective realization of recognized rights and freedoms" and the obligation to promote "concerns more or less vaguely formulated goals, which can only be achieved progressively or in the long term" (Hoof 1984: 106). Agencies that attempt to implement a rights-based approach take up the obligation to promote greater awareness of rights and responsibilities (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 113). The four-layered obligation model stresses,

the unity between civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights, as long as it is recognized that the various "layers" of obligation can be

found in each separate right or freedom...civil and political rights do not always consist only of obligation to respect and obligation to protect...Conversely, economic, social and cultural rights are not always made up only of obligations to ensure and/or obligation to promote (Hoof 1984: 107).

States, by virtue of being party to international treaties, are the primary obligation holders of human rights and all levels of obligations are applicable to them (Skogly 2001: 151; Goodwin-Gill 1984: 115) and are, thus, ultimately accountable for compliance with it (CESCR 1999: 6). It must be noted that a state party to an international treaty is under no obligation to incorporate the provisions of the same or of general international law into domestic legislation, unless the concerned treaty specifically mentions a determined course of legislative or other measure for the state parties. In case of the ICESCR, in accepting obligations with regard to human rights, in principal, the individual states are left with the choice of means ranging from legislative incorporation, administrative regulation, informal and ad hoc procedures, or any combination thereof (Goodwin-Gill 1984: 112-115).

Within the “flexible approach to defining state obligations according to needs and circumstances” of respecting, protecting and fulfilling (Eide, W.B. 2000: 333), a three-level ‘matrix’ was proposed as “a practical tool for exploring the content of State obligations” (Eide 1987: 28) within the elements of a household food security framework in order to realise the substantive normative content of the RTF (see Table 4.1). The nature and levels of obligations are identified in a national context through activities towards food security that includes notions of adequacy, stability and sustainability of food supply and access to food, expressed both as obligations of result and of conduct. This matrix format has been embraced by a number of scholars, both as educational and analytical tool for elaboration of other rights, such as right to education and health, while a few countries have outlined the nature of obligations in their specific situations (Eide, W.B. 2000: 333).

**Table 4.1: The Food Security and State Obligation Matrix**

Guiding principles Level of National obligations	Food Adequacy			Variability in Procurement Consistent (not conflicting) with the realization of other Basic Human Needs)	Sustainability of Access
	Nutritional Adequacy	Safety	Cultural Acceptability		
<b>RESPECT</b>	<u>Recognise</u> the positive nutritional aspect of existing food patterns	-	<u>Recognize</u> the significance of food culture as part of a wider cultural identity	<u>Recognise</u> customary rights to means of food procurement, consistent with Basic Human Needs; <u>recognise</u> the significance of informal and non-governmental institutions in facilitating food procurement	<u>Recognize</u> the positive ecological significance of existing food production systems; <u>recognize</u> the significance of informal and NGO institutions in crisis management (“buffer systems”)
<b>PROTECT</b>	<u>Prevent</u> distortion of positive nutritional aspects of existing food patterns	<u>Develop</u> national legislation on food safety; <u>participate</u> in developing international legislation on food safety (Codex Alimentarius)	<u>Counteract</u> when necessary influence which may negatively erode positive aspects of existing food culture	Develop national legislation and administrative mechanisms and procedures to protect and facilitate a viable food procurement for all	Develop national legislations to: counteract activities that may erode ecological balance; <u>Protect</u> ecologically sound buffer systems in crisis management
<b>FULFILL</b>	<u>Correct</u> negative aspects of existing food patters; <u>guide</u> dietary change when necessary, consistent with the above; <u>incorporate</u> nutritional considerations in relevant development activities	<u>Establish</u> a nationwide system of food control and inspection	<u>Incorporate</u> positive aspects of food culture into relevant development activities (agriculture, health, educational, industrial, etc.)	<u>Formulate</u> and execute policies, plans and programmes to facilitate and assist all groups in society (with emphasis on the socio-economically most vulnerable) in obtaining viable procurement of food, consistent with Basic Human Needs	<u>Formulate</u> and execute policies, plans and programmes to facilitate the restoration of ecological balance; <u>support</u> and strengthen effective existing institutions and as necessary develop new ones for crisis management

Source: Eide 1978: 29, Figure 1

The ‘layers’ of state obligation are applied to the RTF to formulate a content-specific national scheme necessary for its implementation (see Table 4.2). Constitutional guarantees do not provide any insight into the degree of actual realisation of a specific right, though the “difference between constitutional and/or legal provisions which just proclaim a specific right”, “recognising a particular right as a human right”, and “those which spell out guarantees for its realization” and “providing for indices for its monitoring and mechanisms for its protection” are crucial (Tomaševski 1984: 153).

**Table 4.2: Specific Content of State Obligation for the Realisation of the RTF**

Types of obligation	Content of Specific State Obligation vis-à-vis the Right to Food	
	G. J. H. van Hoof (1984: 107-108)	Katarina Tomaševski (1984: 154)
RESPECT OR RECOGNISE	Implies that the government may not expropriate land from people for whom access to control over that land constitutes the only or main asset to satisfy their food needs, unless appropriate alternative measures are taken.	<p>To include the RTF into human rights law (the ratification of the ICESCR, the inclusion of the RTF into constitutionally guaranteed human rights, etc.),</p> <p>To include the realisation of RTF into development objectives (the incorporation of the goal of adequate food for all into objectives of development strategy, adoption of national food strategy, etc.),</p> <p>To enact legislation aimed at progressive realisation of the RTF (to enact legislation leading toward equal access to food production resources, i.e. to design and implement agrarian reforms, to enact stimulative measures for food production destined for domestic consumption, etc.).</p>
PROTECT	Implies the duty of the government to prevent others from depriving people in one way or another, for instance by force or economic dominance, from their main resource base to satisfy their food needs, such as access to land, water, markets, or jobs.	<p>To refrain from, and to enact and enforce, prohibitions of any acts resulting in deprivation of food,</p> <p>To establish mechanisms for the supervision of compliance with the obligation undertaken,</p> <p>To establish entities empowered to monitor the realisation of the RTF.</p>



<p>FULFILL OR ENSURE</p>	<p>Implies the responsibility of the government to take steps in case members of its population prove incapable of providing themselves with food of a sufficient quantity or quality.</p> <p>In emergency situations, the government must, to the maximum of its resources, make available the necessary food stuffs. Alternatively or in addition it must seek the assistance of other states to cope with the hunger problem (this raises the question as to the existence of an obligation on the part of other States to provide the required assistance to the best of their ability).</p> <p>In a more structural way, it entails the duty of the government to initiate land reforms in order to improve the production and distribution of food. Though indicating the specific measures that a government has to take may be difficult, a State violates this obligation when, in the face of food shortage, it does nothing.</p>	<p>To adopt national food legislation and national food strategies securing the progressive implementation of the RTF or full and immediate application of RTF, depending on the availability of resources,</p> <p>To establish a system of monitoring and complementary interventionary measures to identify and eliminate widespread nutritional deficiencies.</p>
<p>PROMOTE</p>	<p>Implies measures aimed at long term goals and may consist of, for instance, the duty on the part of the government to set training programmes for farmers in an effort to improve methods of production and thus raise productivity in agriculture.</p>	<p>To incorporate specific targets leading towards progressive realisation of the RTF into development plans, categorised according to the criterion of resource availability, into three levels of the implementation of the RTF:</p> <p>(1) to raise nutritional levels (the incorporation of qualifies objectives concerning the state of satisfaction of nutritional needs into development plans)</p> <p>(2) to eradicate hunger and malnutrition (the identification of target groups and the adoption of appropriate measures for the elimination of hunger)</p>

		(3) to ensure adequate food for all (the establishment of a system of guarantees of the full and immediate applicability of the RTF, including complaints and remedial procedures).
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Source: Compiled from Hoof (1984: 107-108) and Tomaševski (1984: 154)

Human rights norms for food and nutrition are reasonably well agreed upon by experts, the desirable behaviour of governments to achieve these norms has been a contentious issue. Consensus is missing on the precise content of a state's obligation vis-à-vis RTF. Though there seems to be some agreement on state's responsibilities to ensure people's RTF during emergency, natural disaster or man-made conflict, ascertaining state obligation to the right of every human being to be free from chronic hunger and undernourishment associated with poverty, lack of income/purchasing power, and structural causes is more problematic and controversial. Obligations of the state remain a 'touchy subject' which "clearly ought to be defined in more nuanced as well as realistic terms, with options for different degrees of involvement by the state authority, and with varying scope of the action implied" (Eide, W.B. 2000: 333).

In very general terms, Article 2 (1) of the ICESCR sets out the legal obligation of the state parties as taking steps, "individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures". The nature of the state's legal obligation under this article has been dealt with by the CESCR General Comment 3<sup>34</sup> and specifically spelled out in General Comment 12 (Paragraphs 14-20) in relation to the RTF. General Comment 12 maintained the three levels of state obligation for the right to adequate food – to respect, protect and fulfil. However, the obligation to fulfil was seen as incorporating "both an obligation to facilitate and an obligation to provide":

The obligation to fulfil (facilitate) means the State must pro-actively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security. Finally, whenever an individual or group is unable, for reasons beyond their control, to enjoy the right to adequate food by means at their disposal, States have the obligation to fulfil

<sup>34</sup> CESCR (1990), *General Comment 3: The Nature of States Parties Obligation (Article 2, Part 1)*, 14 December 1990, Fifth session, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

(provide) that right directly. This obligation also applies for persons who are victims of natural and other disasters (General Comment 12: Paragraph 15).

Thus, “every state is obliged to ensure for everyone under its jurisdiction access to the minimum essential food which is sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe, to ensure their freedom from hunger” (General Comment 12: Paragraph 14).

State legislations promoting agricultural production, fair food prices, just wages, environmental protection, and social security programs, like access to health care and education, indirectly advance the fulfilment of the RTF. State-level legal instruments for addressing emergency and monitoring nutritional status also convolutedly contribute to the realisation of RTF (Messer 1996b: 67). Though each state party to the ICESCR is required to take measures to ensure that everybody is free from hunger, conditions differ widely between countries and, hence, the appropriate ways and means of implementing the RTF vary considerable (Eide, W.B. 2000: 345-346). Two countries – India and Brazil – that have specifically embarked upon defining and implementing the human rights approach to food and nutrition security through domestic policies and legislations offer interesting examples (see Annexure I).

However, in practice, most states are yet to develop national legal frameworks around food and nutrition security, very few state constitutions or national legislations explicitly guarantee individuals the RTF either due to the absence of clearly stated and binding legal obligations or political will.<sup>35</sup> States that are not parties to the ICESCR do not treat the RTF as a formally enforceable, categorically rejecting any legal obligation to adhere to it, and even those states that have ratified it, construe the obligation as vague and subject to interpretation.<sup>36</sup> Though the individual’s right not to starve is widely affirmed by international instruments and state actions, the precise

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<sup>35</sup> Countries that have recognised the right to adequate food and nutrition in their national constitutions include: Haiti (Article 22); Cuba (Article 8); Guatemala (Article 51 and 99); Nicaragua (Article 63); Colombia (Article 44); Ecuador (Article 19); Brazil (Article 227); Paraguay (Article 53); Ukraine (Article 48); Iran (Article 3 and 43); Pakistan (Article 38); India (Article 47); Bangladesh (Article 15); Sri Lanka (Article 27); Ethiopia (Article 90); Malawi (Article 13); Uganda (Article 14); South Africa (Section 27 and 28); Congo (Article 34); and Nigeria (Article 16) (FAO 1998 *Right to Food in Theory and Practice*: 42-43). The list of countries that had no mention of the right to food in their constitution is long and, ironically, includes the developed countries.

<sup>36</sup> The ICESCR has 70 signatories and 160 states who are party to it (as of June 2012), the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR has 40 signatories, but only 8 state parties (as of June 2012), the number of ratification required for it to enter into force is 10, pending which it is yet to enter into force. Contrast this with the ICCPR, which has 74 signatories and 167 states who are parties to it (as of June 2012), the first Optional Protocol to the ICCPR has 35 signatories and 114 state parties (as of June 2012) and the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR has 35 signatories and 74 state parties (as of June 2012).

definition of RTF and nutrition is likely to remain country- and culture-specific. Apart from public censure and embarrassment, no international sanctions exist against a state that fails to guarantee its citizens the RTF (Messer 1996b: 70).

State obligation to undertake ‘appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures’ is subjected to ‘maximum of its available resources’ in order to ‘progressively’ achieve full realisation of the RTF (ICESCR: Article 2, Paragraph 1) representing a ‘gradual approach’ (Tomaševski 1984: 151). Even a cursory comparison of the very phrasing of Article 2 of the two Covenants, reveal an inherent hierarchy of rights. The ICCPR is unambiguous in its assertion that “Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all Individuals...the rights recognized in the present Covenant...” (ICESCR: Article 2, Paragraph 1). “Where not already provided for by existing legislative or other measures, each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such laws or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant” (ICESCR: Article 2, Paragraph 2).

The states also agree to ‘international assistance and co-operation’ (ICESCR: Article 2, Paragraph 1) and ‘international action’ for the achievement of the rights enshrined in the ICESCR through “conclusion of conventions, the adoption of recommendations, the furnishing of technical assistance and the holding of regional meetings and technical meetings...” (ICESCR: Article 23). For the implementation of this commitment, General Comment 12 holds that states should respect and protect the enjoyment of the RTF in other countries, facilitate access to food and provide necessary aid when required, and ensure that, wherever relevant, international agreements give due attention to the RTF (Paragraph 36). States are also directed to refrain from food embargos and similar measures that threaten food production or access to food in other countries, specifically highlighting that “food should never be used as an instrument of political and economic pressure” (Paragraph 37).

In case of external threats a state may be required to impose strict internal discipline, thereby restricting individual freedom and action, or it may allocate substantial part of its resources for military purposes, thereby unable to realise the social and economic rights. Similarly, developing countries might be constrained in accomplishing the

rights of its citizens to adequate standard of living, food, health and other socio-economic rights. Though these cannot be resorted to as justification for violating basic integral human rights of the individual by the state, but they may amount to reasonable explanation for incomplete fulfilment of some rights (especially third generation rights under which the RTF is categorised) (Eide 1984: 159-160).

In an expert consultation on the RTF organised by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 12-14 March 2001, it was asserted that the implementation mechanisms of the RTF at the national and international levels should be guided by General Comment 12.<sup>37</sup> Poverty eradication, economic growth and equitable distribution of the benefits of growth are interrelated and, therefore, the development activities of individual states must be guided by the progressive realisation of the RTF and other human rights. The prerequisites for implementing the RTF include: political will, organisational and managerial capacity and the allocation and appropriate use of adequate resources (ECOSOC 2001: 4). A common concern that emerged was the lack of understanding of economic, social and cultural rights among the government official, judiciary and parliamentarians, leading to their inadequate recognition (ECOSOC 2001: 3).

Under the existing human rights legal framework, states' obligations are only limited to individuals in their territory and states not ratifying the ICESCR may altogether escape any obligation towards RTF. It also fails to adequately address the accountability of global actors and RTF obligations of the TNCs and the IFIs (Narula 2006: 694). In this context, the issue of extraterritorial obligations in relation to human rights is animating debate in the backdrop of globalisation, interdependence and lack of coherence in government policies. Extraterritorial human rights obligations have mostly been debated upon as being non-existent in relation to civil and political rights, which contain explicit territorial and jurisdictional limitations. However, economic, social and cultural rights do not contain such limitations, instead having legal commitments to cooperate for the realisation of these rights. Hence, the Special Rapporteur on the RTF argues that states do have extraterritorial obligations,

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<sup>37</sup> The 12-14 March 2001 Expert Consultation was the third such session, preceded by the first expert consultation on 1-2 December 1997, Geneva, and the second expert consultation in 18-19 November 1998, Rome, co-hosted by FAO.

under international law, to respect, protect and support the fulfilment of the RTF of people living in other countries (Ziegler 2005b: 14).

The extraterritorial obligation to respect the RTF is primarily ‘do not harm’, which requires states to ensure that their policies and practices do not cause RTF violations of people living in other countries, like refraining from implementing food embargos or taking decisions within WTO, IMF and the World Bank or policies such as subsidisation of agricultural production that can negatively impact an individuals’ RTF in other countries. Extraterritorial obligation to protect the RTF requires states to ensure that their citizens or TNCs (while controlling the food chain through production, processing and marketing) do not violate the RTF of people living in other countries, without undermining direct obligations of such third parties. Finally, governments also have extraterritorial obligation to support the fulfilment of the RTF in poorer countries that do not have the necessary resources for the realisation of the RTF or are faced by emergency situation, like famine or natural disaster or conflicts, and seek international assistance (Ziegler 2005b: 16-18).

The normative expansion of extraterritorial application of states’ obligations under the ICESCR is argued as being at odds with international law. The states’ obligation is only within its territory or under its jurisdiction (applying only to situations where a state exercises ‘effective control’) and cannot be obliged to ensure that its policies in IFIs do not violate RTF of people in territories over which it does not exercise effective control. Since non-state actors are not ‘legal subjects’ under international human rights law, they must be regulated via state, which is fraught with problems in case of TNCs where the host’s ability to indirectly regulate TNC activity might be restricted by the economic arrangement between them. Moreover, states have obligations under multiple legal regimes (contracts with IFIs and TNCs) that might conflict with their human rights obligations. While “development of norms outside the covenant model to cover other areas of international law and to reconcile the incompatibility of multiple legal regimes is a precursor to building an international order where the right to food can be realised”, “locating the right to food in customary international law”,<sup>38</sup> can hold the TNCs and IFIs accountable via their relationship to

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<sup>38</sup> Along with general principles of law, the International Court of Justice Statute (Article 38) recognises customary international law as the sources of law, defined as ‘a general practice accepted as law’ and determined by state practice (widespread repetition of similar international acts by states over

the state and bind non-ratifying states and encourage them to implement international agreements in line with customary human rights norms (Narula 2006: 726-727).

It is postulated that while the ‘right to be free from hunger’ has evolved into a customary international law, evinced by its recognition in a plethora of treaties, resolutions and declarations at the international level and constitutional and judicial interpretation at the national level, however, the recognition of the ‘right to adequate food’ for everyone as a legal right, with corresponding legal obligation, is not universal and ascertaining its status of customary norm is ‘premature’ (Narula 2006: 791). This tenet draws from the way states responsibility is spelled out in the ICESCR and General Comment 12. The states are obliged to take only ‘appropriate steps’ for the right of everyone to adequate food (ICESCR: Article 11, Paragraph 1), which ‘will have to be realised progressively’ (General Comment 12, Paragraph 6). However, for the realisation of the ‘right of everyone to be free from hunger’ the state is obliged to take measures ‘which are needed’ (ICESCR: Article 11, Paragraph 2) and pursuant to it ‘more immediate and urgent steps may be needed’ (General Comment 12, Paragraph 1). Even in times of natural or other disaster, states have a “core obligation to take the necessary action to mitigate and alleviate hunger as provided for in paragraph 2 of article 11” (General Comment 12, Paragraph 6).

Human rights increasingly influence the development paradigm by insisting on the adoption of rights-based approach to development and has been actualised to a certain extent by various international organizations (Brodnig 2001:1). While the primary responsibility for realising human rights – obligation to respect, protect and fulfil – rests with the state, “in an increasingly globalized and integrated world, the power of nation States is often eclipsed by other actors, such as more powerful States, multinational corporations or international organizations”, hence, the need “to extend the traditional boundaries of human rights to regulate the power of these other international actors” (Ziegler 2005a: 15). The indispensable obligation of global actors has been increasingly realised as the intergovernmental institutions – the UN system and IFIs, donor community, NGOs, agribusiness corporations and private sector bear strong and continuous responsibility to function in tandem with human

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time), *opinion juris* (acts occurring out of sense of obligation, and acts that are undertaken by a significant number of states and not rejected by a significant number of states).

rights and realize these rights by facilitating and assisting national governments to establish a dialogue on accountability (Eide et al. 1984: vii; HLTF 2010: 32; ECOSOC 2001: 4; Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004: 1417; Skogly 1993: 754). Such roles for the international community are called for on the basis of Article 28 of the UDHR, which states that, “everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”.

While the state provides an environment that facilitates implementation of the responsibilities pertaining to RTF, “the private business sector – national and transnational – should pursue its activities within the framework of a code of conduct to respect of the right to adequate food, agreed upon jointly with the Government and civil society” (CESCR 1999: 6). TNCs can be held responsible for respecting RTF both indirectly, deriving from government’s duty to protect people against any potential negative impact of TNCs activities on RTF, which relates to governments monitoring and regulating them, and by directly imposing obligations on TNCs through intergovernmental instruments and voluntary commitment (Ziegler 2003: 12). While national and regional courts, human rights institutions and international mechanism, like the CESCR, can be used to regulate the activities of the TNCs, these monitoring mechanisms remain limited and weak, and TNCs are rarely scrutinised for their adherence to human rights obligations (Ziegler 2004: 16-17).

Of special significance is the role of UN system agencies in realisation of the RTF. The food organisations – FAO, WFP, IFAD – in conjunction with the World Bank, UNDP, UNCEF and regional development banks “should cooperate more effectively, building on their respective expertise, in the implementation of the right to food at the national level, with due respect to their individual mandates” (General Comment 12: Paragraph 40). Though it is argued that IFIs – IMF, World Bank and WTO – do not have direct human rights responsibility, including the RTF, however, being powerful multilateral institutions, determining economic policies in developing countries and having autonomous decision-making powers, they have significant impact on human rights. For example, violations of RTF of indigenous population, forcibly displaced without rehabilitation and resettlement, by Bank-funded large development projects, like dam constructions or mining, are well documented (Ziegler 2005a: 15-16). The IMF- and Bank-mandated structural adjustment programmes may have direct and



profound negative impact on food security and RTF, causing deterioration of food security among the poorest (Narula 2006: 712-713). In fact, in the Bank there is an “immense gap between the rhetoric of its policy and the reality of its lending operations” (Plant 1984: 193). Hence, greater attention should be accorded by IFIs to factor in RTF in their lending policies, credit agreements, measures to address debt crisis and structural adjustment programme (General Comment 12: Paragraph 41).

International monitoring and supervision is important to supplement and strengthen national efforts, organise adequate international support and assistance, and create awareness of situations when state actions are detrimental to RTF. International institutions encourage and promote national efforts by assisting in removing obstacles to the realisation of RTF, advising through technical assistance in the establishment and utilisation of national monitoring systems, providing assistance where exogenous factors impede national realisation of the RTF, and reacting to gross neglect of state obligation or violations of the RTF (Eide 1987: 55-56). Increasingly the international community has woken up to the need for acknowledging the human rights framework as steering development policies and begun to explore the operational implications of the relationship between development and human rights. In the absence of procedures to accommodate individual complaints by people whose RTF has been violated, the aim of international monitoring is to establish a dialogue with that states can be shown to have deliberately violated this right, or, “to omit pursuing an explicit policy towards the realisation of the right to food” (Eide, W.B. 2000: 334, footnote no. 11).

In this context, the UN system is expected to play a proactive role in achieving freedom from hunger and ensuring food for all. The effectiveness of government’s food programmes, making available supplies accessible on a non-discriminatory basis and the existence of legal or administrative remedies would be difficult to monitor in the absence of effective international supervision (Goodwin-Gill 1984: 116-117). Though international organisations have very limited sanctions at their disposal against states that neglect or violate human rights, three international procedures have evolved by which they can examine, supervise and monitor the performance of states in relation to their obligation under the requirements of human rights system:

*Reporting systems*, by which the international organs base their supervision on a discussion of reports presented by the governments of the various states about their human rights performance in various fields.

*Complaint systems*, by which international organs receive complaints from individuals and groups about human rights violations and respond to those complaints by a mixture of conciliatory and adjudicatory methods.

*Communications about gross and systemic violations of human rights*, by which international organs receive and systematize communications from individuals and groups about alleged gross violations, and seek clarifications from the state concerns about the veracity of such communications (Eide 1984: 158-159).

The specialised agencies can participate in the supervision of the ICESCR (Articles 18-22). Under Article 18 of the Covenant, the ECOSOC can “make arrangements with the specialised agencies in respect of their reporting to it on the progress made in achieving the observance of the provisions of the present Covenant falling within the scope of their activities”. Such reports have been furnished by ILO, FAO, WHO and UNESCO. The ECOSOC can transmit the reports submitted by the specialised agencies to the General Assembly (ICESCR: Article 21) and the ECOSOC and the CESCR can bring to the notice of the specialised agencies matters “on advisability of international measures likely to contribute to the effective progressive implementation of the present Covenant” (ICESCR: Article 22).

State reporting under the ICESCR (Articles 16 and 17) is particularly significant for implementation of the RTF through monitoring and supervision, reiterated by General Comment 12, which directs the states to “develop and maintain mechanisms to monitor progress towards the realisation of the right to adequate food for all, to identify the factors and difficulties affecting the degree of implementation of their obligations, and to facilitate the adoption of corrective legislations and administrative measures” (Paragraph 31). International institutional mechanisms and procedures for monitoring the implementation of human rights by UN members are pivotal for realisation of food and nutrition security from a human rights perspective (Eide, W.B. 2000: 334). Member states who are parties to the Covenant record their adherence by reporting on nutritional status in their countries, indicating supporting legislations and necessary measures to implement RTF with regard to the vulnerable groups, who are subjected to discrimination. The CESCR monitors states’ compliance with the ICESCR, clarifying their reporting obligation, monitoring their progress, hearing complaints of violations and trying to rectify abuses (Messer 1996b: 68).

The reporting guidelines require states to submit a common core document containing general information about the state, existing framework for the protection and

promotion of human rights and information on non-discrimination and equality and effective remedies. This is to be supplemented by a treaty-specific document containing specific information relating to implementation of Articles 1 to 15 of the Covenant in the context of General Comment 12 (CESCR 2009: 3). With regard to the RTF, the guidelines requested the states to:

Provide information on the measures taken to ensure the availability of affordable food in quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of everyone, free from adverse substances, and culturally acceptable.

Indicate the measures taken to disseminate knowledge of the principles of nutrition, including of healthy diets.

Indicate the measures taken to promote equality of access by the disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups, including landless peasants and persons belonging to minorities, to food, land, credit, natural resources and technology for food production.

Indicate whether the State party has adopted or envisages the adoption, within a specified time frame, of the 'Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security'. If not, explain the reasons why (CESCR 2009: 10).

However, efforts to obtain satisfactory assessment of the degree of realisation of the RTF through reporting remains limited, unsatisfactory and disappointing (Eide 1987: 52; Westerveen 1984: 123). Despite the reporting guidelines, few states have provided sufficient and precise information to enable the CESCR to assess the prevailing situation in the concerned countries with respect to RTF and to identify obstacles in its realisation (CESCR 1999: 2). The state reports on the RTF have an overt emphasis on technical issues and differ considerably from one another, the report of the German Democratic Republic in 1980 (E/1980/6/Add.6) being less than one page, that of Norway (E/1980/6/Add.5) being eleven pages in the same year, while that of the UK (E/1980/6/Add.16) stating that no laws, regulations, agreements or court decisions existed in the country that had any bearing on the right of everyone to adequate food (Westerveen 1984: 123). While difficulties in fulfilling RTF are seldom mentioned, very few states accept the existence of hunger and malnutrition in their countries; statistical information is hardly provided, and the practical effects of the legislative and administrative regulations were rarely highlighted (Westerveen 1984: 123).

The other human rights supervisory procedure based on complaints by individuals, groups or states is applicable for the ICCPR and its Optional Protocols. Though the supervisory body cannot initiate any procedure on its own, which can only be set in motion by the actual submission of a complaint by the affected party, a complaints

procedure ensures participation of the beneficiaries, in as much as they lodge complaints, and contains the potential of thorough investigation of factual and legal issues related to violations of human rights. However, the complaints procedure is generally considered as being impractical for economic and social rights, which can only be ‘progressively’ achieved and as such complaints would only relate to insufficient or inadequate implementation rather than actual violations. The states are unlikely to readily submit to international complaints procedure, its effectiveness depending on the ability to provide an international remedy for the individuals whose rights have been violated. Hence, though “possibilities for complaints by individuals are a necessary component of a future supervisory system related to human right to food”, however, “the feasible option for a supervisory body focussing on the right to food, is some form of reporting” (Westerveen 1984: 126-127). The nature and composition of the international supervisory body (ECOSOC and CESCR in case of the ICESCR) significantly impact the effectiveness of the supervisory mechanism. In addition to government representatives in bodies, there is also need for independent members who have sufficient expertise in the fields covered by the mandate of the body to ensure objectivity, impartiality and efficiency. An international supervisory body should have sufficient powers to ensure adequate and comprehensive information to perform the review function of supervision, and to persuade governments to remedy violations of human rights (Westerveen 1984: 127-131).

Violation of the rights in the ICESCR can be caused by both acts of omissions and commission by states either when states fail to ensure the satisfaction of at least the minimum essential level required to be free from hunger (due to its inability or unwillingness) or through the direct action of states or other entities insufficiently regulated by states (General Comment 12: Paragraphs 17 & 19).<sup>39</sup> A state claiming its inability to carry out the obligation pertaining to the RTF due to resource constraint bears the burden of demonstrating that it has taken every effort to use all the resources

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<sup>39</sup> The direct action of states or other entities insufficiently regulated by states include (General Comment 12: Paragraph 19):

the formal repeal or suspension of legislation necessary for the continued enjoyment of the right to food; denial of access to food to particular individual or groups, whether the discrimination is based on legislation or is pro-active; the prevention of access to humanitarian food aid in internal conflicts or other emergency situations; adoption of legislation or policies which are manifestly incompatible with pre-existing legal obligations relating to the right to food; and failure to regulate activities of individuals or groups so as to prevent them from violating the right to food of others, or the failure of a state to take into account its international legal obligations regarding the right to food when entering into agreements with other States or with international organizations.

at its disposal and has unsuccessfully sought to obtain international support to ensure availability and accessibility of necessary food (General Comment 12: Paragraph 17). Deriving from Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the ICESCR, which enjoins the states to guarantee the rights enunciated in the Covenant “without discrimination of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”, General Comment 12 holds that any discrimination in access to food and means of entitlements for its procurement based on the above criteria constitutes a violation of the Covenant (Paragraph 18).

The ICCPR, on the other hand, ensured that “any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy” (Article 2, Paragraph 3a). This innate discrepancy in the basic statement of obligation, which is more qualified and ambiguous in the ICESCR, has led many to describe its thrust as ‘programmatic and promotional’ rather than descriptive and mandatory of individual rights (Goodwin-Gill 1984: 111).

General Comment 12 seeks to remedy this bias to a certain extent through its ‘remedies and accountability’ section, which envisages “access to effective judicial or other appropriate remedies at both national and international levels” by the victim of violation of the RTF, who are “entitled to adequate reparation, which may take the form of restitution, compensation, satisfaction or guarantee of non-repetition” (Paragraph 32). While national ombudsmen and human rights commissions are entrusted with addressing the violations of the RTF, the scope and effectiveness of remedial measures could be significantly enhanced by incorporating international instruments recognising the RTF in the domestic legal order, which would then empower courts “to adjudicate violations of the core content of the right to food by direct reference to obligations under the Covenant” (Paragraph 33). While the need of procedural improvement of international supervision of the implementation of the RTF is well acknowledged, its effectiveness will depend on reaching of consensus on its normative content. “Absence of consensus on the normative content of the right to food will have a prohibitive effect on supervision; the supervisory body will not be able to set standards against which to measure States’ conduct, and supervision will remain a futile exercise, regardless of the amount of powers conferred upon the supervisory body” (Westerveen 1984: 133).

Among the UN food agencies, the FAO, by virtue of its constitutional mandate and functional responsibilities in relation to food, agriculture, nutrition (forestry, fisheries) and rural development, has ‘a central responsibility’ for the realisation and promotion of the RTF, which also derives from the ‘decisive role’ it played in shaping the content of Article 11, Paragraph 2 of the ICESCR. FAO was an important catalyst in the adoption of Article 11 of the ICESCR in its present form (Traylor 1984: 190-192; Alston 1984: 29-31; Mechlem 2003: 1-3). While “ensuring humanity’s freedom from hunger” and committing to “raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples” in its Constitutional Preamble (FAO 2001a: 3), FAO subsequently declared and reaffirmed its commitment to promote the realisation of the RTF through a wide range of declarations, resolutions and manifestos, issued directly or emanating from conferences and meetings held under its auspices. FAO’s work on agrarian reform and rural development, nutrition, women’s role in the food system is pertinent to human rights orientation to food (Traylor 1984:194-201).

FAO’s supervisory role is pivotal in assisting the ECOSOC and the CESCR in assessing state parties’ compliance with their obligation under the Covenant to promote the RTF in their respective countries, given its specialised expertise in food and agricultural issues.<sup>40</sup> FAO’s ‘comparative advantage’ in advising interested member states in drafting their reports on implementation of the RTF in domestic law and administrative practices can be harnessed to support policies and programmes for achieving food and nutrition security (Eide, W.B. 2000: 339). Through its Legal Office, the FAO has made efforts to sensitise the organisation to a human rights perspective, representative of a growing ‘in-house’ interest. As the host of the FIVIMS, FAO has an opportunity to introduce human rights criterion in mapping international food insecurity and vulnerability, thereby strengthening and enriching overall human rights monitoring (Eide, W.B. 2000: 339-340).

At the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UDHR, the FAO published a booklet *The Right to Food in Theory and Practice* (1998), examining the rights related to food from both human

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<sup>40</sup> The relevant provisions of the ICESCR’s implementation procedure (Part IV, Articles 16-25) include: FAO is transmitted state parties’ reports (or its relevant parts) submitted to the Secretary-General (ICESCR: Article 16, Paragraph 2b); the FAO is consulted for the establishment of the overall programme concerning the submission of state parties’ reports (ICESCR: Article 17, Paragraph 1); the FAO reports to the ECOSOC “on the progress made in achieving the observance of the provisions of the present Covenant” within the scope of its activities and “may include particulars of decisions and recommendations on such implementation adopted by their competent organs” (ICESCR: Article 18).

rights and operational perspectives, bringing together insights from human rights experts, NGOs, UN agencies such as the WFP and the IFAD as well as FAO's own contribution.<sup>41</sup> The 2002-WFS+5 invited "the FAO Council to establish at its One Hundred and Twenty-third Session an Intergovernmental Working Group...to elaborate...a set of voluntary guidelines to support Member States' efforts to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security" (*The International Alliance against Hunger: Paragraph 10*).

Given the adoption of General Comment 12, outlining the normative content of the RTF, state obligations, violations and implementation and international obligation, the necessity and usefulness of developing another international instrument with broadly similar mandate and overlapping content was questioned. Moreover, it contained the danger of blurring the states' binding obligation under the ICESCR and the voluntary commitments, with states preferring to refer to the guidelines and refraining from acceding to the ICESCR. However, the voluntary guidelines also had the potential of strengthening the implementation of the RTF since it would be deliberated upon and developed by states themselves, which will increase awareness and understanding of RTF. The voluntary guidelines were not intended as an alternative to the General Comment, rather they were to complement the 'authoritative interpretation' of the right in the General Comment, spelling out in greater details how the states should proceed in order to achieve its obligation towards the right, thereby closing some of the lacunae in found in implementation (Mechlem 2003: 6-7).

The Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Food, established by the FAO Council in 2002 as a subsidiary body of FAO-CFS<sup>42</sup> developed the *Voluntary Guidelines* to support the progressive realisation of the RTF in the context of national food security, adopted by the 127<sup>th</sup> session of the FAO Council in November 2004.<sup>43</sup>

These voluntary guidelines are a human rights-based practical tool addressed to all States. They do not establish legally binding obligations for States or international organizations, nor is any provision in them to be interpreted as amending,

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<sup>41</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (1998), *The Right to Food in Theory and Practice*, Rome: FAO of the United Nations, is available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w9990e/w9990e00.htm>

<sup>42</sup> See, "Appendix D: Establishment of the Intergovernmental Working Group requested in Paragraph 10 of the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later" (2002), *Report of the Council of FAO*, CL 123/REP-Revised, Hundred and Twenty-third Session, 28 October-1 November 2002.

<sup>43</sup> See, "Appendix D: *Voluntary Guidelines* to Support the Progressive Realisation of The Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security" (2004), *Report of the Council of FAO*, CL 127/Rep, Hundred and Twenty-seventh Session, 22-27 November 2004.

modifying or otherwise impairing rights and obligations under national and international law. States are encouraged to apply these Voluntary Guidelines in developing their strategies, policies, programmes and activities, and should do so without discrimination of any kind, such as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (FAO 2005: 2)

A Right to Food Team, including a Human Rights Adviser, a Right to Food Capacity Adviser, Economist and a Legal Officer, along with a group of project staff, was established within the FAO to mainstream the *Voluntary Guidelines* by assisting stakeholders (right holders and duty bearers) in implementation of the RTF, raise awareness and understanding of the right at national level, and integrating the RTF into FAO's work. To further provide practical aid for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines, the *Methodological Toolbox*<sup>44</sup> was developed containing a series of normative, analytical and educational tools directing operational aspects of the RTF and strengthening country capacity to implement it. The Right to Food Portal – *The Right to Food Information and Knowledge System* was launched to raise awareness; assist in implementation through guidance, methods and instruments and develop national and international capacity pertaining to the RTF.

It is alleged that FAO, as the UN specialised agency specifically charged with the responsibility for food and agrarian questions, “has devoted practically no attention to the vital issue of standard-setting” relating to the RTF (Plant 1984: 192) nor did it undertake any detailed study of the content of the right and its implication for the organisation itself and its member states, the record of its policies and practices reflecting “oft-repeated rhetorical commitments to the right to food” (Traylor 1984: 211). Though the ICESCR spells out the functions of the specialised agencies (including the FAO) in implementing the Covenant, it is doubtful whether FAO's report on the implementation of the Covenant “contributes very much to the capacity of ECOSOC in its supervisory role...to assess state parties' compliance with their covenant obligation concerning the RTF (Traylor 1984: 209).

This lacuna is particularly glaring when compared with the performance of the ILO, which has provided detailed analysis of state parties' report in terms of pointing out

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<sup>44</sup> The *Methodological Toolbox* consists of: Guide on Legislating Food the Right to Food; Methods to Monitor the Human Right to Adequate Food – Volume I; Methods to Monitor the Human Right to Adequate Food – Volume II; Guide to Conducting a Right to Food Assessment; Right to Food Curriculum Outline; and Budget Work to Advance the Right to Food.



both the positive measures taken to implement the rights under consideration and the possible deficiencies in the reports (Traylor 1984: 210). The ILO has been extremely active in labour rights-related standard-setting, formulating clear international labour standards, incorporated in municipal law as justiciable legal rights, and establishing enforcement procedure and complaints machinery. This has been enabled by the tripartite structure of the ILO governing body, consisting of representatives from employer and worker organisations and government representatives, participating in annual conferences that draft conventions and recommendations. The ratifying member states are obligated to ensure that their domestic law and practice are in conformity with the international model. FAO, on the other hand, is essentially an inter-governmental body, without any specific procedure to facilitate participation of NGOs, or representation from farmer/peasant, rural worker or consumer organisations in its decision-making procedures. While the FAO Charter encourages it to draft Conventions in its specific areas of concern, grassroots voices are seldom heard since it is under no pressure to respond to such grievances. This has led the FAO to interpret its standard-setting role in a highly technical manner, overlooking structural issues that thwart adequate food production and distribution (Plant 1984: 192).

The traditional UN system approach towards operationalising the RTF was the development of a system of experts/inspectors whose limited task was to count the poor and their calories in order to better distribute food aid and facilitate redistribution at international level (Spitz 1984: 182). The UN human rights bodies are criticised as not having performed strongly on economic, social and cultural rights. Though the CESCR made efforts to improve guidelines for state reporting in the implementation of these rights, including the RTF, its effectiveness is dependent upon a concerted relationship between the UN system and its member states on the manner of actively using the CESCR to guide development in general (Eide, W.B. 2000: 335).

It must be noted that the UN system is traditionally composed of the various agencies that are formally responsible to the member governments and, therefore, wield to their wishes. Though each of these agencies have the scope and potential to take initiatives, but challenging the principle of national sovereignty is not a common practice. Within this constraint, the following tasks can be identified for the UN system vis-à-vis food security: use the platform of international conferences to build consensus, advocate,

morally persuade and set targets; act as a forum to prepare and negotiate international treaties on food and related areas of policy; provide technical coordination and standard-setting (standards of food quality, definitions and methods of measurement of under nutrition, etc.); collect and disseminate information (on food supply, extent of chronic hunger); coordinate actions among national and international agencies, with bilateral governments and NGOs; and implement aid programmes, including capacity-building and direct resource transfer (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 45).

There is significant disconnect between the actual power of international institutions and the legal and political options to hold them accountable, particularly the IFIs – IMF and the World Bank (Brodnig 2001:1-2). Except for the UN, other international organizations do not share the same obligations as states, since they are not parties to any human rights treaties. For example, ascribing the obligation to promote and fulfil human rights to the World Bank would be infeasible, since they are not mentioned in its statute and would require more proactive human rights policy operation than it has been set up to handle. However, assigning the obligation to respect human rights to the Bank is both reasonable and plausible. The twofold content of the obligation to respect (negative obligation to ascertain that human rights situation is not deteriorating and the more neutral obligation to observe currently implemented human rights) imply that the Bank, while designing policies would be under the obligation to be certain that the planned policy or programme would not violate human rights and ensure that the present level of human rights protection is observed. Thus, no policies should restrict the enjoyment of human rights that are currently in place or result in their abuse. However, the Bank would not be under the obligation to introduce policies that establish new human rights standards or norms (Skogly 2001: 151-152).

A key obstacle to the realisation of the RTF is, therefore, the ‘schizophrenia in the United Nations system’ (Ziegler 2008: 10). While the UN agencies – FAO, WFP, UNDP and UNICEF – emphasise and advocate social justice and human rights, working to promote the RTF, the BWIs and the WTO not only refuse to recognise mere existence of a human RTF but, on the contrary, impose an economic model based on liberalisation of agricultural trade, privatisation of institutions and public utilities, market-assisted model of land reform, and slashing of state domestic budget, which in many cases produces greater inequalities and ‘creates catastrophic

consequences' for the RTF (Ziegler 2008: 10-11). Hence, the Special Rapporteur on the RTF, asserted that since the World Bank, IMF and WTO "have legal personality under international law", "it is clear that international law is binding" on them, "including as concerns the human right to food" (Ziegler 2005a: 17).

The argument by the IMF and the Bank that their Articles of Agreement preclude the use of political considerations in their activities (human rights interpreted as political) is not well founded as relevant provisions can be interpreted to enable them to integrate human rights considerations in their activities. Since most of the member states of these IFIs have ratified at least one human rights treaty containing the RTF, they cannot hide behind the excuse of not having human rights responsibilities as they are not parties to the international treaties. Hence, the IFIs have the 'minimum negative obligations to respect' by not harming or causing violation of the RTF through their advice, policies and practices, especially of vulnerable groups. They have the obligation to protect by ensuring that their partners (states, private actors and transnational corporations) do not violate the RTF in granting concession and contracts and implementing common projects that can threaten people's livelihoods and food security. Finally the obligation to support the fulfilment of the RTF requires the multilateral organisations to facilitate the capacity of people to feed themselves by providing necessary assistance to all people, indigenous, minorities and vulnerable groups, and helping to ensure emergency support when they cannot feed themselves for reasons beyond their control (Ziegler 2005a: 18-20).

It is pertinent to note that while undertaking 'international cooperation' by state parties to ensure realisation of the RTF is mentioned twice in Article 11 of ICESCR (Alston 1984: 32), it is based on 'free consent' (ICESCR: Article 11, Paragraph 1). Hence, it is only voluntary in nature, without any specific guidelines for structured engagement. However, international cooperation for undertaking measures 'which are needed' for the realisation of 'the right of everyone to be free from hunger' (ICESCR: Article 11, Paragraph 2a) is mandatory and not subject to consent (Narula 2006: 792). Internationally adopted Conventions only provide general parameters, which must then be translated into specific economic, social and agricultural policies and adapted to the requirements of human rights and social justice. Though they do not provide for the elaboration of specific and enforceable legal rights, an important contribution of

international conferences, conventions and declarations is that of goal-setting in the food security sector, by recognising food as a human right of every individual and determining a set of targets for reducing hunger, malnourishment and poverty.

As a consequence of globalisation, the 'historic deprioritisation' of socio-economic rights have been brought to the forefront of human rights and development discourse, necessitating the re-examination of human rights framework in light of globalisation to ensure the RTF for all (Narula 2006: 799-800). The international community has been partially effective to codify international norms pertaining to RTF. The absence of universal consensus on the causes and solutions of the food problem makes it rather difficult to promote the realisation of and establish effective machinery for the implementation of the RTF. Moreover, the prevalent understanding accords priority to civil and political rights and realisation of human rights such as the RTF, belonging to the category of economic, social and cultural rights, is made conditional upon the attainment of the civil and political rights. Mere moral and humanitarian considerations are not sufficient to sensitise the governments and other relevant agencies to respect the RTF (Hoof 1984: 97).

In order to give teeth to the obligations contained in the ICESCR, the terms must be given concrete meaning and content, enabling the formulation of international standards to assess the performance of states. The ICESCR gives an international dimension to certain domestic issues since the policies and programmes, legislative, administrative and other measures, of the state attain relevance in determining the effective and efficient implementation of its international obligations (Goodwin-Gill 1984: 111-112). Monitoring the role and performance of multilateral agencies and financial donors, who have a decisive impact on agrarian and food policy, can be more effective through the establishment of firmer criteria at the international level either through the adoption of specific Conventions on redistributive land reform and agrarian policies. Policy analysts within the IFIs, despite recognising the need for redistributive land reforms in the interests of both economic efficiency and social justice, may be reluctant to engage with the internal affairs of aid-recipient countries that are construed as political rather than strictly economic (Plant 1984: 192).

The RTF is intimately connected with the rights of the use and ownership of land, since food is essentially produced on the land through agricultural process (Plant

1984: 189). The ILO Convention C107 Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention (1957), revised by C169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989)<sup>45</sup> is the only international document specifically dealing with land. Other international instruments have stressed the importance of redistributive measures regarding the use and ownership of land. Part III (Articles 13-19) of C169 particularly deals with the issue of land. It recognises the rights of ownership and possession of people over lands to which they traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities; directs governments to take necessary steps to identify the lands traditionally occupied and take appropriate measures to guarantee effective protection of right of the peoples concerned to use lands; and provides for the establishment of adequate procedures within the national legal system to land claims by the people concerned (Article 14, Paragraph 1, 2 and 3). However, only 22 countries have ratified this Convention (as of June 2012), with the exception of all the developed and rich countries. In addition, the *Declaration on Social Progress and Development*, calls for ownership of land and of means of production, precluding any exploitation of man, and urges land reforms in which ownership and use of land are made to serve best the goals of social justice and economic development (Plant 1984: 190).

Suggestions for operationalising the RTF, especially for the vulnerable sections, have highlighted the need for agrarian and land reforms (Plant 1984: 191; Spitz 1984: 180-182) and people's participation in decision making (Dias and Paul 1984: 203-213; Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 113) as means of empowering both the victim groups and the social action groups working with them to identify the human practices that cause food shortages, hunger, malnutrition and starvation, and demand protection against them. A benevolent state that seeks to ensure the RTF of its people by adopting policies would most certainly face many dilemmas between the interests of producers-consumers, consumption-investment, short term-long term, strong central state power-people's organization etc. Hence, in order to attack food deprivation at its root, sufficient erosion of the power of the dominant groups in favour of the majority of the poor and hungry people through internal redistribution of assets and political power is most necessary. These internal structural changes must be supplemented by changes in the present international economic order (Spitz 1984: 184).

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<sup>45</sup> International Labour Organization C169 – *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989*, adopted at the 76th session on the International Labour Conference, 27 June 1989, Geneva, entered into force on 5 September 1991.

Effecting the RTF for the small producers and landless workers in the rural areas, who constitute the major victims of food insecurity and hunger, entails agrarian and land reform legislations in individual countries that aim at growth with equity, and the redistribution of economic and political power. These include, security of tenure; fairer share-cropping systems; protection of rural workers from exploitation; redistribution of land holdings; ceilings on the size of private landholdings; adoption of laws curbing usurious practices, like unequal privatisation of rights and absentee ownership; creation of liberal agricultural credit systems; organisation of market and credit systems along cooperative lines, supported by adequate laws; reasonable pricing policies; minimum wage legislation. Technological choices and research priorities in agriculture, which are shaped by social and political forces, often biased in favour of large farmers and agribusiness interests at national and international levels, must take complete account of their potential impact on the RTF of small producers, landless labourers and nomadic populations, and ensure remunerative employment in all seasons. In addition, greater local participation in agrarian reform and rural development programmes, the right of potential beneficiaries to organise themselves to contribute to the drafting of such legislations and in guaranteeing their enforcement must be recognised (Spitz 1984: 180-182; Plant 1984: 191).

The participatory approach stands apart from the conventional ‘top-down’ efforts, which assume that only the UN agencies, expert officials, scholars, lawyers and policy-makers are capable of developing the content of the RTF, and secures it as a right capable of enforcement by the people, enabling them to participate in shaping policies and obligations designed to protect themselves from the activities of public or private actors that pretend to promote development (Dias and Paul 1984: 205-207). it enables the victims of human rights violation to gain the power to command the protection promised by a particular human right:

in the development of a Human Right to Food, it is vital that groups of the rural poor presently confronted with hunger and malnutrition (and other support and action groups working with them) articulate **their** concerns and needs in regard to deteriorating food situations and formulate **their** strategies to develop and enforce a body of law to secure **their** right to food (Dias and Paul 1984: 203).

In participatory approach, the development of the RTF and the measures to recognise and protect it are ongoing process that require continuing efforts to generate and fuse different kinds of knowledge and skills, through inter-disciplinary network connecting

human rights activists, scientists, social scientists, jurists and combined efforts of grassroots workers and RTF-related NGOs, both at national and international levels, to secure the essential components of the RTF and redress harmful practices. It is important to identify associated rights that together make up people's basic RTF by working with affected groups, in different settings, to recognise specific practices that threaten or impose food deprivation, which then can be remedied by various kinds of corrective legal measures. Through deliberation and interaction people can realise their right to protect food producing and distributing systems, and identify governmental practices that impair these rights. They can also identify appropriate legal measures to prevent such wrongful and derivational practices to vindicate their RTF. Subsequently, they can demand strategies to recognise and legally protect these rights, which are country-specific (Dias and Paul 1984: 207-211).

At the grassroots level, victim groups – peasants, agrarian labourers, fishermen etc. – who depend on sources of food production and distribution and need knowledge about their rights and means of enforcing them, must unite and organise. At the national level, specialists – scientists, social scientists, lawyers, consumers, environmentalists etc. – who understand how some practices contribute to food deprivation and need knowledge about using that insight to establish and protect RTF, must come together. At the international level, NGOs and agencies must be linked to and informed by national and grassroots groups. These levels can be combined to initiate periodic review to identify violators of RTF, victim groups, research institutes and actions that could be integrated into the human rights network on food-related issues and remedial measures to protect people's RTF in particular setting. Efforts of journalists and academicians can also supplement the efforts to educate people regarding their RTF and ways of protecting it. National forums, such as media, schools, government bodies, courts and ombudsman type agencies, and international forums, such as international organizations, foreign media and international courts can be used to spread knowledge and garner support for RTF (Dias and Paul 1984: 210-211).

## **Conclusion**

It is indeed ironical that even decades after the adoption of the UDHR and the ICESCR, followed by the evolving normative content of the RTF, chronic hunger and undernutrition persist and are even growing in incidence, as evinced by the recent

food crisis. While conventional national strategies prioritised army and military preparedness over food, nutrition and human security, development goals were equated with economic growth, rather than having human beings as the centre-piece of the development process. Increasing recognition of the interdependent relationship between political-economic and socio-cultural rights is evident. Further, human rights act as a central mobilising theme that unites local communities, states and the international community through convergence of interests in acting against hunger and undernutrition. Although the RTF is a very general norm in the human rights system, “human rights logically and practically could provide a common reference point, and rationale for economic, agricultural, and human development programmes; and a standard against which to judge the appropriateness and effectiveness of planned change” (Messer 1996b: 74). Recognition of RTF is crucial because practically in every part of the globe a substantial portion of humanity is confronted with hunger and malnourishment, threatening their very survival and ‘right to life’.

A rights-based approach addresses the underlying causes of poverty and human rights violations, rather than merely addressing hunger and undernourishment as symptoms, while holding actors (humanitarian and developmental) accountable for the consequences of their actions (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 113-114). Assertions of the RTF being ‘undefinable’ and ‘undeliverable’ are countered by the argument that the RTF is evolving into an enforceable rights because “is a right to policies (or, is a right to a right) that enable individuals to produce or acquire minimum food entitlements” (Gaiha 2006: 4269). Recognising food as a human right, with correlated duties on the part of other, especially the state, facilitates channelising food aid from donors more effectively, enables government to provide development policies and programmes, which is what they should do, and sharpens focus of NGOs/CSOs as agents in a hunger, malnutrition and famine elimination strategy.

The human-rights approach to global food security does not perpetuate ‘misery research’, an analysis of why people do not have food. Rather it provides those concerned with hunger, undernourishment, poverty and development with “the possibility for operationalizing a set of norms, a series of statements about what *should be*, against which the performance of states can be measured” by opening up avenues “of advocacy at the national and international levels, based on obligations



accepted by states, and the potential for utilization of the international supervision system” (Eide et al. 1984: vii). It provides some leverage for making the state governments accountable to the international community on the hunger condition of its citizens and subjecting violators of the RTF to international discussion and action (Eide et al. 1984: x). It has also been asserted that, adoption of the human rights framework to food “facilitates the transfer of food issues from the purely technical and academic arenas to the serious political agendas, “provides a rallying point around which to mobilize the starving masses...through which people themselves are encouraged to assert their rights” (Alston 1984: 61-62).

The value of addressing global food security from a rights-based perspective, lies in the distinct incorporation of a normative element, beyond mere descriptive and analytical framework, which can translate rhetoric to reality by strengthening international law, obligating state to pursue activities for its implementation and international institutional monitoring and supervision for its realisation. RTF provides an opportunity to address hunger as a human rights issue within the development discourse and the established norms of international law that progressively integrate the economic, social and cultural rights with civil and political rights, realising their interdependence and according them equal importance. By virtue of being included in an international treaty (ICESCR) and other international documents and instruments that express the freedom from hunger and contain authoritative statements asserting that everyone has the RTF, it is part of established international law of human rights. It broadens the horizon of global food security and expands the range of analysis of the causes of hunger and undernourishment. It enlarges the options of interventions, integrating advocacy at policy level and participation of people in decisions and choices regarding their food security requirement

The structural approach is espoused by Marchione as being most promising to ‘food as a human right’.<sup>46</sup> The structuralists point out the existence of sufficient global and

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<sup>46</sup> Five distinct approaches to action, planning and research, applied to the hunger problem that arises from the interface of the fields of food, nutrition, social science and national development have been identified by Marchione: the epidemiological approach; the ecological approach; the econometric approach; the structural approach; and the advocacy approach. He analyses these approaches to ascertain their usefulness as a means of achieving human right to food and to be free from hunger. Though none of them openly establish the RTF as a goal, they are of varying utility to those who vigorously pursue the goal of RTF (Marchione 1984: 117-130).

local food supplies and attribute the persistence of hunger to skewed distribution of productive assets, food resources and income. Influenced by mechanisms of national self-reliance as development model, they consider scarcity as a 'myth' and ecological destruction and famine as often being man-made, caused due to misuse of technology and exploitation by powerful interests (Marchione 1984: 122). However, since complete national self-reliance is both unrealistic and insufficient, it is pertinent to analyse trade and incorporation into global economy as ways to reinforce national dignity, independence, optimal food self-reliance and human rights. Structural approach, in the context of world food and hunger problems, is less concerned with the definition of hunger and focuses on the causes or conditions under which hunger is likely to occur, especially persistence of poverty, which implies lack of access to food, income, land, agricultural inputs, credits, etc. (Marchione 1984: 127-128).

The structural approach is the most appropriate to RTF because it includes the social structures in its causal analysis that encompasses the 'interrelated web of human rights violations'. It includes the means to mobilise change in expressions of needs and causes through delegitimization, while preserving conditions conducive to good nutrition and identifies both responsible structures and human actors (Marchione 1984: 130). Hence, the structural model,

can be guided to research, planning, and programmed action leading to the successful realization of the right to food and other human rights to which the right to food is closely linked. The progressive realization of the right to food can then be seen as a criterion for the evaluation of the development process. Or on the other hand, human rights can be tools in the hands of the people by which they will mobilize to realize their legitimate demands for adequate food or other necessities of a decent life...If this is done within the context of well-defined international norms backed by international institutions, the human rights system might provide the means for facilitating development (Marchione 1984: 132).

However, the structural approach's emphasis on objective indicators of malnutrition and hunger tends to 'undermine the participation rights of the people in hunger identification and participation in planning and programming, thereby blocking the realisation of the RTF and other rights. This can be addressed through mobilization

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The structural approach is premised on the understanding that societal persistence and change are rooted in the basic societal structures of societies, conflict being an inherent part of society. Social structures are hierarchical and continuous – the highest level being the structure of economic relations in global society, to the lowest level, gender relationship in the household – where the interaction between global and local structures result in change or persistence of either. Social structures being inherently unjust, interests are often contradictory pertaining to a collective action undertaken by the society, for example, the subsidization of food prices (Marchione 1984: 128).

for self-reliance through participation of the community in political and technical efforts and recovering and preserving traditional knowledge about food production, processing and consumption (Marchione 1984: 130).

The advocacy approach has gained increasing prominence in the context of global issue of the RTF, as a check to the econometric approach, which is heavily funded by bilateral and multilateral agencies, especially the IFIs. The econometric approach uses sophisticated statistical tools and is usually applied by trained economists, food and nutrition planners or nutrition economists. The conservative economic orthodoxy of viewing development primarily as GNP growth that will eventually trickle-down for the benefit of all, gave way to major shifts in priorities in the 1970s to health and nutritional needs of the rural poor. It was realised that national production targets must take into consideration social indicators and basic minimum needs of the poor. Consequently, nutrition, as one of the foremost human needs, increasingly came to the forefront as a factor in development. While causally acknowledging the link between, hunger, poverty and malnutrition, econometric researchers are officially directed towards social development goals, such as improved nutrition. Despite being methodologically rigorous in research and providing action tools, such as large-scale surveys, models, systems and national nutrition monitoring (Marchione 1984: 125), this approach fails to target groups that are most vulnerable, work out objectives that are best suited for them, and undertake cost-benefit analyses of methods of intervention that can best achieve the RTF as a component of global food security.

The advocacy approach is used by international institutions, primarily the UN system and FAO, and non-governmental networks and coalitions, highly active in food, hunger and development issues, to address conflict of interest between various actors, like corporations, producers and consumers. It assumes the existence of structures, along with the belief that reform within the existing socio-political relations is possible. Advocacy approach views food security from a particularistic perspective, identifying specific actors, agencies and their actions responsible for the conditions underlying hunger and undernourishment, and initiates definite remedial measures through mobilising stockholders, organising boycotts and maintaining public awareness. It also makes the agencies accountable regarding their application of human rights standards. However, being very specific and targeted, this approach runs

the risk of being overridden by new ways devised by corporations or agencies to achieve their ends. Since human rights violations are not isolated acts and are rooted in basic structures that reproduce them, this method suffers from the lack of ‘micro-level research in specific contexts’ (Marchione 1984: 130-131). Nevertheless, the advocacy approach is particularly apposite for generating international awareness and standard-setting for the RTF. It is a powerful means which, if creatively exploited by the UN system, can infuse the RTF agenda within the dynamics of food security debates, the mandates of the international food institutions and their policy advice to address problems of hunger and undernutrition that threaten global food security.

Advocacy and publicity at policy level are the major mechanisms available to the international community for operationalizing international human rights standards, which had previously restricted their activities to on the ground programming. From a rights-based perspective, advocacy means more than simply promoting certain ideas at the policy level. It means “holding other actors (often, but not necessarily, state actors) accountable to their obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 113) and “efforts to persuade governments to adhere more positively to the human rights instruments they have accepted; or – where such persuasion fails – to criticize the defaulting government before international public opinion...” (Eide 1984: 159). Apart from the inter-governmental organizations, a range of NGOs, both at national and international levels, are involved in advocacy regarding the basic, inviolable rights of individuals.

While equating the RTF to ‘social utopias’ (Spitz 1984: 182) is quite harsh, it will not be unreasonable to argue that, “the right to food has been treated as a useful mobilising slogan, but not as a concept deriving from the international law of human rights with the attendant obligations which that status implies” (Traylor 1984: 212). The debate over whether economic, social and cultural rights do in fact constitute real rights is a long and frustrating discussion among human rights experts and lawyers, with the conventional view according the status of ‘real’ rights only to fully justiciable rights. However, with the increasing understanding of a more integrated and interdependent relationship among the superficial categories of human rights and a more nuanced role of the state in terms of its obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the socio-economic and cultural rights, this argument loses ground. Though the

process of transiting from general commitments, standards and principles to implementation – clarifying and developing the normative content within legal instruments and ensuring efficient institutional systems and procedures – at international and state level is a slow and time-taking exercise (Eide, W.B. 2000: 341), the lack of a generally accepted understanding of the RTF is no excuse for the lack of attempts to generate it (Tomaševski 1984: 138).

To develop the normative understanding of the RTF and improve institutional approach to policy and action, cross-disciplinary communication and dialogue, such as those between legal human rights experts and development analysts and practitioners, and capacity building are important dimensions. These should be supported by empirical and policy research on processes of national and international implementation of human rights approach to food and nutrition policies and programmes. The need is to work out a concept of ‘good governance’ – “appropriate state action in tandem with civil society initiative for food systems and food security” – which provides a realistic framework to advance the RTF and nutrition as human rights (Eide, W.B. 2000: 347). In addition, “creative thinking and testing of new ways of addressing old problems under a human rights perspective, may effectively enhance political and practical action towards the realisation of food security for all” (Eide, W.B. 2000: 346). Though there exists significant disagreement over the minimum required nutritional needs and consequently the number of people suffering from nutritional deprivation, establishing the RTF for all as a full-fledged human rights norm requires determining a universally applicable minimum standard for satisfaction of nutritional needs as a binding benchmark for monitoring obligations regarding the observance of the RTF (Tomaševski 1984: 151).

Understanding RTF is intricately related to the definition of food security, measurement of hunger and malnutrition, and determination of vulnerability to hunger and malnutrition and, therefore, to food insecurity. Since food security is variously defined, determined and interpreted, disagreement persists on what constitutes adequate food over which everyone has a right. The constituents of adequate food/diet ranges from meeting basic minimum nutritional standards (determined through calorie, protein and micronutrient intake) to culturally acceptable diet, while the focus of ascertaining the same has shifted from global to national to household to the

individual. Multiple factors associated with food insecurity render a coherent and comprehensive perception of RTF increasingly difficult as more and more vulnerable groups (farmers, consumers, women, children, refugees, disabled people) join in the demand for their RTF. The amorphous definition and content of the right itself and the shifting nature of the beneficiaries leads to uncertainty regarding the obligation of the state and the international institutions in ensuring it. This however, definitely does not amount to a justification of the failure to prevent hunger and malnutrition and secure the RTF in the context of global food security. State actions can build on international advocacy to assist in realisation of the RTF.

The persistence of hunger and malnutrition in a world that is capable of providing adequate food, undoubtedly, represents the failure of achievement of the RTF and nutrition. This, however, does not diminish the importance of human rights standards and the normative assertions of the RTF as a unifying goal, though effective realisation has been inadequate and unsatisfactory at both national and international levels and violations have persisted. UN advocacy, standard-setting, guidance and monitoring is critical for the human rights approach to global food security. However, in the absence of the RTF paradigm as a binding force, there would be no rallying point to link the causes of global food security, hunger and malnourishment, with the policy prescriptions of the international institutions and the goals of national strategy. The essence of the RTF lies in providing this essential connection.

The Rights-based approach to the food problem, is not only concerned with the outcome, such as food security, but equally focuses attention on the process. It goes beyond the household level to explicitly encompass policies and external forces that constrain the livelihoods of people and the norms and obligations of extra-household actor that determine a household's achievement of food security. "A rights-based approach means to be explicit on principles, to clearly recognise and base all policies, programmes, laws, and other actions on a state's national and international human rights commitments" (Mechlem 2004: 646). States' and international institutional commitment towards realising the RTF as a national and international objective can be discerned from the trend of policy recommendations. While increasing food production constituted the traditional solution to resolve food problem, eradication of hunger, which was considered as an objective of development, became an essential

condition for development along with elimination of poverty. However, it was realised that economic development and advancing food production were of no benefit for the realisation of the RTF. The crucial issue of distribution, increasing income and purchasing power, satisfying nutritional needs, agricultural and rural development became essential components of policy advice.

Core questions have been raised about the use of food aid, which rarely addresses the underlying causes, instead only targeting the acute symptoms of poverty and food insecurity. In fact, food aid constrained by donors' political and economic objectives, in some cases, contribute to the root causes of hunger and undernourishment. Another essential issue for food aid from a human rights perspective in determining the eligibility for food aid, human needs and development needs as the criteria (Tomaševski 1984: 147). Initiated as a surplus disposal mechanism, food aid was later used to advance development in poor countries increasingly justified for emergency situations (natural or man-made disaster relief).

The overarching RTF framework bridges the gap between the causes of hunger and undernourishment and the international policy pronouncements that have been advanced to ensure global food security. The recurrence of global food crises that has increasingly rendered more people vulnerable to hunger and food insecurity indicates that an internationally coordinated system that can guarantee the RTF to the hungry and starving still remains a distant dream. Despite increasing global activism, the element of international management of food is still at a nascent and weak stage. All the pledges of common international responsibility for ensuring adequate food and nutrition security will remain insignificant unless translated into national and international policies. The rights-based approach, embodied in the RTF is, therefore, of crucial importance in international policy advice (Chapter V) and food aid (Chapter VI) regarding global food security. Policy advice to address hunger and undernutrition, including decision on food aid, must be contextualised within the paradigm of human right to adequate food.

## CHAPTER V

### Advising on Food-Related Policies

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*Study the rich and the powerful, not the poor and the powerless...not nearly enough work is being done on those who hold the power and pull the strings. As their tactics become more subtle and their public pronouncements more guarded, the need for better spade-work becomes crucial.*

- **Susan George** (1976: 289)

*The primary reason why we have failed to achieve the degree of international food security that is now possible is not nature but man. And the aspect of man that is responsible for our failure is not man as a farmer or scientist or extension worker or grain marketer or food retailer but man as a politician...to include all who influence decisions that affect production, prices, and trade of food.*

- **D. Gale Johnson** (1981: 257)

#### **Introduction**

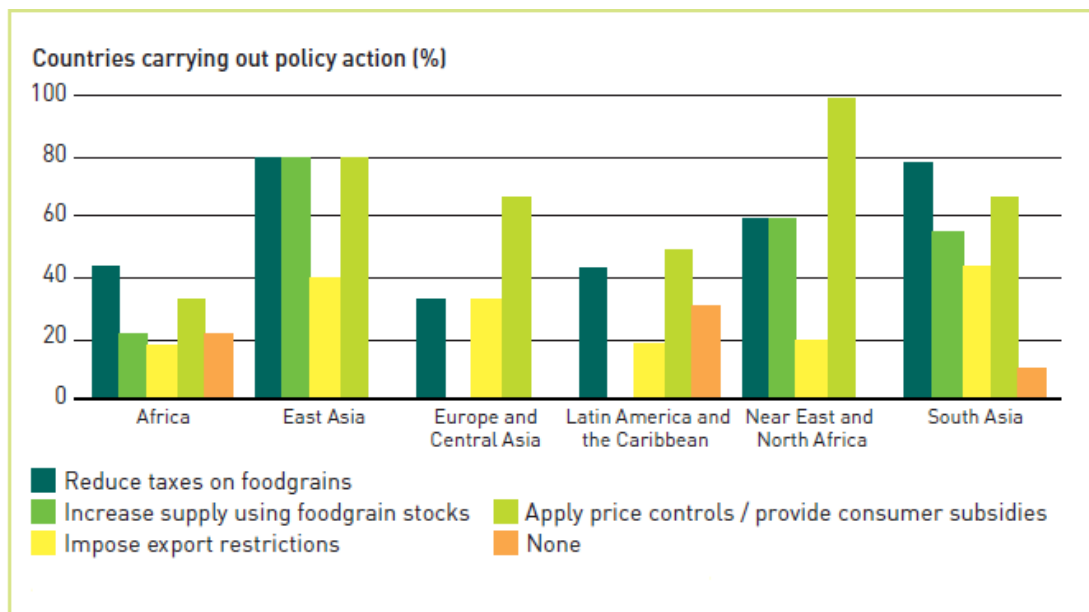
In order to combat the 2007-2008 food crisis, the following measures were called for, “immediate action, individually and through international assistance...the provision and distribution of emergency humanitarian aid without discrimination...Limiting the rapid rise in food prices by...encouraging production of local staple food products for local consumption...and introducing measure to combat speculation in food commodities...”. Attention was drawn to “the longer-term structural causes of the crisis and...the underlying causes of food insecurity...and undernutrition...” (CESCR 2008: 2-3). These policy objectives succinctly capture the broad dimensions of the international strategy that was put forward to support national food and nutritional security policy to ward off the crisis and get back on the path of development.

The initial policy response to the 2008 food crisis focussed on direct micro-level support to consumers and vulnerable groups, (cash-based transfers: distributing cash or cash vouchers; food access-based approaches: food stamps and conditional cash transfers; and food supply-based approaches: distribution of food aid) guaranteeing adequate food supply locally, while keeping consumer prices low. In addition, market-level policy measures included reduction or elimination of import tax/tariffs on food products, and imposing export restrictions, prohibitions and taxation to maintain domestic food availability. Market management policies were also adopted,



applying price control through administrative orders, restrictions on stockholding by private traders, restrictions on open market operations and subsidies to keep food affordable and drawing down stocks to stabilise supply and prices. Many developing countries provided farmers with support needed to boost food production (FAO 2008g: 32; FAO 2008d: 1-4; HLTF 2010: 16-17) (see Figure 5.1). FAO's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices designed a guide to support decision-making and development of action plans through interventions in macro-economy, trade and measures to increase consumption and production and adapting these instruments to the specific conditions within the country.<sup>1</sup> However, the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of these policy measures have not always been definitive, making it imperative to understand the real cause(s) of price shock in determining the appropriate policy response.

**Figure 5.1: Policy Actions to Address High Food Prices by Region, 2008**



Source: FAO 2008g: 32

A 'twin-track' strategy (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 14-16; HLTF 2010: 3-6, FAO 2003; FAO 2008g: 32-33) to address hunger and poverty and ensure food security has gained momentum in the UN system, akin to the 'emergency' and 'resilience' package (IFPRI 2008: 1). One track includes short-term direct measures, like food aid, grants and funding, feeding programmes, food-based safety nets etc. The other track involves supply response to promote broad-based agricultural and rural

<sup>1</sup> See, FAO (2011), *Guide for Policy and Programmatic Actions at Country Level to Address High Food Prices*, FAO's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices, Rome: FAO.

development, and increasing production through appropriate incentives and investments. This will increase food supply and create long-term sustainable income earning and employment opportunities for the poor and improve their livelihoods, thereby directly enhancing their food and nutrition access and productive potential. For significant poverty reduction, focussing on the productivity of smallholder farmers is crucial. Both components of the twin-track are complementary and mutually reinforcing, therefore, synergies must be created for them to go hand-in-hand. Their effectiveness is dependent on coherent policies and actions from national governments and the international community.

The 2008 food crisis has put the agenda of global food security high on the agenda of policy-makers, much like the previous crises of the 1970s. Transitions in world food economy, changing demand and supply conditions of the world food equation, fluctuating food prices along with uncertain food production and supplies, have dramatically extended global interdependence; no country remains insulated from the effects of these predicaments. Given the institutional architecture of global food governance, whereby international actors regulate, manipulate and influence food policies and their implementation, the viable policy options emanate from the renewed commitment from the global community. The next two sections attempt at definitional clarification of food policy, while assessing the need for a world food policy, and explore some of the approaches to global food policy.

### **What is Food Policy?**

Food policy refers to the decision-making that shapes and controls the way the world food system operate (Lang and Heasman 2004: 2). It “encompasses the collective efforts of governments to influence the decision-making environment of food producers, food consumers, and food marketing agents in order to further social objectives” (Timmer et al. 1983: 9) and is “a balanced government strategy regarding the food economy, which takes account of its interrelationships with both national and international economy” (Chambolle 1988: 435). Food policy is a ‘contested terrain’ characterised by ‘battle of interests, knowledge and beliefs’. Food policy-making is essentially a social process, shaped by a myriad of decisions and actions related to production, distribution/trade and consumption/marketing. Policies in any one sector automatically influence other sectors of the world food system. Hence, “there is no

one food policy or one food policy-maker: there are policies and policy-makers, all of which contribute to the overall process” (Lang and Heasman 2004: 13). The overall national economic policy, concerned with dividing national resources among various sectors of the economy and managing it in accordance with the political ideals and objectives of the government, include the overlapping subsets of food and agricultural policies. Agricultural policies mainly relate to production of food and non-food agricultural goods, while food policy relates to consumption and distribution along with food production, extending beyond agricultural policy (Tarrant 1980: 45-47).

Traditionally, food policy was treated as being synonymous with agricultural policy, unequivocally focussed on increasing production and farm output (Timmer 1986: 17). The implementation of food policy was assigned to departments of agriculture, which followed the ‘trickle-down’ theory of benefit distribution – “if food is available in adequate quantity, consumer nutrition and health will be an unquestioned outcome” (Underwood 1977: 243). But government policies were unable to effectively deal with hunger despite rising trends in world food availability, reflecting the inability to understand the root causes of hunger and its complex relationship with the country’s food system (Timmer 1986: 17; Berg 1986: 51-52). Eventually it was realised that the ‘trickle-down’ approach to nutrition and health did not assure effective distribution. Food policy being the responsibility of the agricultural department, gradually nutrition policy was incorporated as a minor part of the health sector/departments, more akin to social welfare (Dapice 1986: 95). Nutrition must be built into food policy analysis; assigning the implementation of policies for food production, quality and safety, and those for health and nutrition to separate ministries, each with its professional territory and interests to protect is not productive (Underwood 1977: 244; Berg 1986: 51-52).

Clearly, “food policy concerns are far more than agriculture, and there is more to agriculture than producing food” (Tansey and Worsley 2000: 214). Food production policies are required to provide adequate nutrition, generate increased employment and income; improve self-reliance; provide surplus for export to obtain foreign exchange; and develop food processing and distribution industries (IOWA State University 1977: 625), supported by food marketing and distribution policies that effectively move desired amounts and types of food from producers to consumers (IOWA State University 1977: 630). The global food system is increasingly affected

by a whole range of legislations, regulations, controls and enforcement mechanisms that have mushroomed to protect the health and safety of consumers; maintain a desired standard and quality of food products; regulate trade in agricultural and food commodities, activities of agribusiness corporations, and operation of food, labelling and consumer information; protect manufacturers from unfair competition; permit mutual and international recognition of products produced in one country; and patent the production process, manifested in everyday food products displayed in the market. These laws are complex and ever-changing in the context of shifting technical, social, economic and political demands. A host of government organisations in different countries, along with international bodies, regulate these aspects of food policy (Tansey and Worsley 2000: 198-213; IOWA State University 1977: 637).

The need for a world food policy has been emphasised because most countries have agricultural policy but no food policy. Since food is an absolute essential of life that cannot be treated as a regular tradable commodity, it is imperative that a long-term food and agricultural policy “not only reconcile the interests of consumers and producers but also the interests of agriculture and trade” (Shaw 2007: 18). Though there is no difficulty in arriving at a consensus on world food security as a political and moral intention, its realisation as a policy objective is far from uniform and easy.

### **Addressing Hunger: Policy Suggestions**

Various policy suggestions have emanated from academicians and analysts. Directing resources for promoting rapid agricultural development in poorer countries, specially production of smaller farms, and establishing international standards to govern the permission of significant food suppliers to withhold supplies and providing assurance of access to food supplies for importing nations, with provision for international consultation in the event of food shortages, were recommended as part of a global strategy to confront food-price inflation. Information sharing, open exchange of basic data on harvests and reserve stocks, would enable the countries to effectively plan their production and trade policies (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 249; 229-230).

Some policies suggest changes in diets that include modest patterns of consumption among the rich and reduced consumption of grain-intensive livestock products by the affluent minority (Brown and Eckholm 1975: 250; Power and Holenstein 1980: 18-

20). An interesting example is Norway, where reduction in the population's meat consumption was achieved through several measures that encouraged cereal and vegetable intake. Raising the price of grain fodder made it much cheaper to raise cattle on pastures. Norway, therefore, was able to achieve improving health of people and lower dependence on grain-fodder import, contributing to reduction of its food problem (Power and Holenstein 1980: 18-20).

Bergesen's growth policy approach and redistribution approach are pertinent to understanding shifts in the policy advice tendered by international institutions. The growth policy approach emphasises the supply side of the food balance; since the economic demand for food will continue to rise, therefore, the essential element of the world food problem is meeting the growing demand through increasing production, on the assumption that potential for such increase is virtually unlimited. An open trade policy and escalating exchange of goods on a worldwide scale is favoured. This approach prescribes a two-pronged agenda for the international community, that of providing adequate capital and technological inputs to accelerate food production in the developing countries and of making necessary political arrangements to facilitate expansion of world food trade (Bergesen 1978: 28-29).

The redistribution approach emphasises the satisfaction of the basic human need of food, defined in nutritional terms. The basic assumption is that food is a scarce and finite resource since ecological factors and limited supply of land and water put serious constraints on unrestricted expansion of food production. As the world food market is an integrated whole and food is limited, the way it is distributed is decisive. Over-consumption in the developed countries will exert more pressure on the world food market and reduce food availability for the developing countries at a reasonable price. Increased production can only be a part of the solution, because there is no guarantee that the hungry will have the purchasing power to pay for the available supplies, redistribution is actually the key to world food problem. The priority of this approach is national or at least regional self-sufficiency in food as part of a broader strategy of technological, economic and political self-reliance, which will lead to reduced world trade in food products, less resource transfer and more production for direct domestic consumption. National and regional actions would pertain to increasing production along with reallocation of resources to primarily meet domestic

demand to attain self-sufficiency, and international arrangements for redistributing resources, capital and food, from surplus areas to the hungry (Bergesen 1978: 29-33).

In Amartya Sen's conception, the entitlements of the affected population can be safeguarded either by enabling them to have command over food or by providing cash or by holding public food stocks and distributing actual food itself. Generating income and employment, especially through public-works, is proposed as an effective strategy to prevent loss of entitlement, leading to starvation. However, eliminating endemic deprivation involves long-term policy decisions, encompassing diverse areas, to enhance, secure and guarantee entitlements. This requires widespread promotion of participatory growth and extensive public provisioning of basic essentials for good living. The essentials include, in addition to food, provisions for basic health care, elementary education, safe drinking water, living space, basic sanitation, development of rural economy, and stabilisation of food prices etc. (Sen 1987: 14-22; Sen 1995: 57-65; Drèze and Sen 1993: 262-270; Shaw 2007: 231-232).

The Brandt Commission Report (1980)<sup>2</sup> emphasised on efforts by food-importing low-income developing countries themselves to meet their food requirements and reduce their food import bills. It highlighted the importance of agrarian reform to increase agricultural productivity and incomes of the poor, and assurance of international food security through emergency reserves, food financing facility and international grains agreement. Increasing food aid and trade liberalisation were also recommended. Substantial resource transfer from the industrialised to the developing and poor countries was put forwards as the strategy to end hunger and underdevelopment. Susan George, however, asserts that in the absence of major structural and psychological changes, achievement of food self-sufficiency by less developed countries through resource transfer could not be guaranteed. The major obstacles being, 'cash-crop imperative' and 'modernization syndrome' both of which mainly benefit the wealthier farmers and do not actually contribute to improving the hunger scenario (George 1984: 9-11).

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<sup>2</sup> An Independent Commission on International Development Issues was established in 1977 under the Willy Brandt, which came out with its report *North-South: A Programme for Survival* in 1980, in the context of international political impasse thwarting global development dialogue between the 'North' and the 'South'. It remains the most comprehensive and broad-based analysis of various international development issues, including hunger and food.

The Task Force on Hunger (UN Millennium Project 2005: 6-16) recommended a three-tier strategy for fighting hunger. Global-level intervention included effective translation of political commitments into actions. At the national level, policy reform and creation of an enabling environment was to be achieved through: integration of policies; restoring budgetary priority to agricultural and rural sectors; increasing poor people's access to land and productive resources; empowering women; creating partnership among stakeholders for effective policy implementation etc. Community-level measures included, increasing agricultural productivity of food-insecure small-scale farmers and improving nutrition for the chronically hungry and vulnerable. Applying a post-modern perspective to food policy, Simon Maxwell (1996: 162-164) focuses on recognising the diverse causes of hunger and devising strategies that are contingent on particular circumstances. Food policy must factor in the character of food insecurity in a particular country, the state capacity and political circumstances. The priority of food policy would be household and individual choices and development of livelihood options and coping strategies for communities.

It is true that in a very vital sense, individuals' experience of food security is dependent upon government policies and strategies, and economic and political power can be wielded through control over food resources. Global food security is actually a representation of the sum total of national food security, which gets reflected in the number of people living below poverty line in a country and the number of hungry and malnourished people that add up to the global hunger statistics. However, what was traditionally considered as the undisputed bastion of national governments has evolved into the 'global governance architecture of the food system', with 'inherited organizational and institutional structure' (Braun and Díaz-Bonilla 2008: 37). Food policy has increasingly become 'polycentric' (Braun and Díaz-Bonilla 2008: 26), influenced and determined by inter-governmental organisations – the UN system and its agencies, the IFIs, and regional organisations; bilateral and multilateral donors, agribusiness corporations, and NGO and CSO networks.

Domestic food, nutrition and agricultural policies are no longer independent of global trends. It would be an interesting exercise to see how international policy perspectives get translated in the actual laws/acts of individual governments and their impact on the food security of the population of the particular country. However, it is beyond the

scope and space of this study to analyse domestic food and agricultural policies of each country. The next section briefly looks at some of the broad policy perspectives at national level to draw out certain common trends pursued by governments. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the evolution international food policy through the advice rendered by international institutions, illustrated with examples from national policy legislations, wherever appropriate.

International food policy advice has tended to span over a wide range of issues and aspects that impact upon hunger and undernutrition. The objective of this chapter is to identify international policy prescriptions in the context of the changing coception of food security by international organizations. From a plethora of policy imperatives, certain broad concerns have been selected for detailed discussion to understand the trends in policy priorities of international institutions. The endeavour is to analyse the impact of international institutional policy support on food, nutrition and agricultural issues, to discern how food-related standards-setting, information dissemination and capacity building by the UN system have impacted attainment of global food security.

The policy issues discussed in detail pertain to increasing availability through food production, agricultural development and investment, and improving access through rural development, purchasing power, nutritional access and social safety nets as standard prescriptions. In addition, policies for compensatory finance for cereal imports and emergency food or finance reserve stocks are pertinent to deal with food crisis. Prioritisation of gender, and newer concerns related to food safety and quality and corporate control, like agricultural biotechnology and GMOs, and environmental issues associated with food production are included within the emerging conceptual framework of global food security. Trade liberalisation, as a particularly vexed and crucial aspect that has evolved under the GATT/WTO (briefly discussed in Chapters II and III), entailing an interesting perspective to look at global food security, has been deliberately eschewed from the present study. Similarly, broader economic policies pertaining to debt servicing, commodity price stabilization, international food pricing, reduction of taxes on food grains, consumer subsidies, export restriction etc. have not been considered in the present study. Food aid, as an immediate emergency response and for long term development related to alleviating poverty and hunger, and diminishing malnutrition is discussed in the next chapter (Chapter VI).



## **National Food Policy Initiatives**

The UDEHM asserted that “it is a fundamental responsibility of governments to work together for higher food production and a more equitable and efficient distribution of food between countries and within countries” (Paragraph 2) and recognised the need for addressing food problems “during the preparation and implementation of national plans and programmes for economic and social development” (Paragraph 3). It directed governments to “formulate appropriate food and nutrition policies integrated in over-all socio-economic and agricultural development plans” (Paragraph 2). For the developing countries, realisation of these objectives needed,

effective measures of socio-economic transformation by agrarian, tax, credit and investment policy reform and the reorganisation of rural structures, such as the reform of the conditions of ownership, the encouragement of producer and consumer co-operatives, the mobilization of the full potential human resources...for an integrated rural development and the involvement of small farmers, fishermen and landless workers in attaining the required food production and employment targets (UDEHM: Paragraph 4).

Since women are crucial to agricultural production and rural economy, it is necessary to “ensure that appropriate education, extension programmes and financial facilities are made available to women on equal terms with men” (UDEHM: Paragraph 4).

Despite the forces of globalisation, the responsibility of hunger alleviation has not shifted from the traditional governance institutions, the nation-states. The disparity in food security outcomes reflects that the causes of persistent hunger are local rather than global, governed at local and national levels (Paarlberg 2002: 50). National governments remain accountable in terms of assuring food security for their citizens through legislative measures though the policies followed by countries at various stages of economic growth and industrial development vary significantly. A national food policy has many objectives. In fact, national governments have resorted to such a variety of techniques that it has allegedly given rise to a ‘global politics of food scarcity’ (Brown and Eckholm 1975: 4). A primary domestic objective is to ensure adequate food supplies to meet demands of the people. This entails maintaining, and preferably increasing, per capita levels of food consumption through an upward food production trend, and sustaining adequate year-to-year food supplies to ward off the high degree of variation (Barker et al. 1981: 53-54). Establishment of ‘food plans’ by developing countries, describing present status of food and nutrition and prediction

of future needs, based on nutritional requirements and production programmes required to meet them is another suggested measure. By providing detailed policy implications and ways to overcome technical, institutional, socio-economic and political hurdles, food plans can attract increasing aid from the international donor community to support national food self-sufficiency efforts, which is the most durable solution to the world food problem (Mensah 1977: 209-210).

Effective policy prescription of any nation is dependent on identifying vulnerable groups. While for healthy men and women it might be sufficient for the government to guarantee employment at decent wages, infants, children, pregnant and lactating women, aged and infirm would require a completely different set of measures like, dietary supplement of specific nutrients, access to free and cooked meals, or community kitchens that offer affordable nutritious food (Mander 2009). The overall national development policy should establish a food system that

- (a) is environment enhancing and ecologically sustainable;
- (b) provides enough foodstuffs at reasonable cost to the entire population, including the poorest strata, for a nutritionally-balanced diet while remaining consonant with its cultural preferences; and
- (c) provides great enough quantities to insure national food self-sufficiency, as a guarantee against outside political manipulation through food aid or exports (George 1984: 23).

For the developed countries, policies pertaining to long-term price support, a system that protects domestic producers and consumers and makes domestic food prices respond proportionately in relation to international market prices, are particularly important. This is required to be complemented with explicit government policy that subsidizes holding of grain reserves, enabling carrying of large stocks. In developing countries, substantial portion of the population are concentrated in rural areas, dependent on agriculture and spending a major fraction of their real income on food. The most pressing obligation of these governments is to develop strategies aiming at self-sufficiency. Policies promoting growth of agricultural production will not only expand the local food source, but also increase the income of rural poor. This can be achieved through increased investment in agricultural sector, irrigation, public distribution, transport and communication, early warning systems, rural education and research; land reform; producer incentive through import substitution and reasonable minimum support price; and elimination of discriminatory trade and tariff structures (Lewis 1977: 213-215; Valdés and Castillo 1984: 28-31; Aziz 1977: 17-18).

Apart from the broad trends in national policies, countries differ in terms of certain specific policies that are introduced, based upon domestic requirement, to address particular issue or community. For example, the US Government has initiated the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative that holds promise for more attention and investment for nutrition. The Government of India (GOI) has in place the system of price support policy that incorporates minimum support prices (MSP), subsidised farm inputs, and improvement of food marketing system, along with a public food distribution system. It is in the process of enacting the Right to Food (Guarantee of Safety and Security). The Brazilian government has experienced considerable success with the *Projeto Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger Program) (see Annexure I).

It is an accepted fact that the prime aim of all governments is to maintain its tenure in office. Policy objectives are often subordinated to this constraint, tending to respond to the desires and interests of the dominant social groups that support the government. Consequently, the policies adopted by governments are frequently contradictory and inconsistent; identification of targeted groups and measures to accrue benefit to them constantly changing. Laws embodying socially desirable legislations, if contrary to the interests of the support groups, are likely to be aborted in practice, or nullified by counter opposed measures (Pearse 1980: 210; Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 615-616; Wharton 1977: 7-9). Most developing countries have been unable to formulate and put in practice consistent and distinctive agricultural and food policies that reflect the broad national interest. There is absence of 'public food systems', a protection network assuring the maintenance of everyone's nutritional conditions, all individuals are considered private food 'consumers' of a system that is essentially private. Most of these countries neither have coherent economic policies nor an effective national agricultural development planning (Pearse 1980: 210-213).

National policy mechanisms have the greatest impact on food security of countries and their success mainly depends on the efforts of the countries themselves. However, the international community can provide policy advice to facilitate countries in their pursuit of cost-effective food security interventions by strengthening their analytical capability to undertake food security assessments and formulate policy, while considering budgetary, political and administrative constraints. International donors (multilateral, bilateral and private) can provide external financial support to promote

national food security through investment, food aid, and appropriate institutional and policy changes (Lewis 1977: 215; World Bank 1986a: 49-54).

### **UN System Food Policy Advice**

The UDEHM recognised that “the eradication of hunger is a common objective of all countries and of the international community” (Paragraph 1) and “the common responsibility of the entire international community to ensure the availability at all times of adequate world supplies of basic food-stuffs...all countries should cooperate in the establishment of an effective system of world food security... (Paragraph 12). The lesson derived from the 1970s food crisis was “that the food problem of most developing countries cannot be solved by the governments of those countries alone, though they must retain the primary responsibility for it. Food has clearly emerged as a world problem and will increasingly require a framework of world policy for cooperation in production, consumption, security, trade and adjustment” (United Nations 1974b: 30). Hence, the international community has a critical role for pursuing the objectives of food security through policy measures.

### ***Increasing Food Production***

Increasing agricultural production is suggested as a generic prescription assuring food availability and self-sufficiency. Following the 1970s food crisis, the continued tendency was to discuss food security as a national problem of grain-importing countries (Leathers and Foster 2005: 123) and a global supply problem (Pottier 1999: 11). Since it is impossible, financially, ecologically and politically, for independent countries to indefinitely depend on external foreign aid for such a basic need as food, the best way to ensure adequate food supply to poorer section of developing countries is by increasing food production (Mensah 1977: 209; Olembo 1977: 146).

Any discussion on increasing prospects of food production must include the tripartite of productivity – new technologies, resource inputs and economic incentives (Wittwer 1980: 60-99). The major necessary conditions required in developing countries include – expansion of agricultural research, with a feedback mechanism between farmers and researchers so that the farmers’ needs are better reflected in research programmes; adequate supply of modern farm inputs (such as fertilisers, advanced

seed varieties, pesticides, irrigation and mechanical power); land reforms; water and soil development; extension of the irrigated and cultivated area; adequate incentives to farmers to make the required changes; liberalisation of international trade; improvements in transportation, marketing and processing institutions and facilities; and avoiding food losses (Johnson 1975: 65-76; Miljan 1980: 39-40).

The 1974-WFC described 'World Food Policy' as consisting of 'world food security policy' and 'world food production policy', neither can be effective without the other (United Nations 1974b: 18). The UDEHM emphasised increased food production in developing countries (Paragraphs 4 and 7) because of its potential to improve nutrition of small and subsistence farmers; increase rural economic activity by raising farm income and stimulating additional employment; and contribute in overall national development by expanding food export volumes and decreasing the need for food imports (United Nations 1974b: 24).

As discussed in Chapter III, the *First UN Development Decade* (1960s) and, subsequently, the Sixth (1974) and Seventh (1975) Special Session of the General Assembly reiterated the importance of increasing world food production. Expanding production remained the prescription for addressing hunger and starvation throughout 1960s and 70s, with the World Bank proclaiming in 1980 that a mere 2 percent of world grain harvest would provide enough food for over a billion people who need it (World Bank 1980: 61). Even in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis it was asserted that increasing production and productivity in the developing countries was the sustainable solution to the problem of food security (FAO 2008g: 32).

### ***Renew Interest in Agricultural Development***

Targeted investments to support agriculture and expanded external assistance in agricultural development are advanced as possible longer-term strategies to ensure global food security. Skewed agricultural development process in developing countries can increasingly lead to their dependence on the developed countries. Whereas, biased agricultural policies in developed countries can adversely impact production in developing countries. Trade in food and agriculture is increasingly linking the agricultural policies of the countries. Since focussing only on national agricultural policy is inadequate to capture the global interconnectedness of

production, marketing, distribution and consumption of food, developing international agricultural policy is imperative, certain elements of which have been put in place by the UN system agencies, the World Bank and the CAP of the EU (Harle 1978: 299).

Following the 2008 food price surge, agriculture has resurfaced as a central concern of international policy debates. A number of global initiatives attempted to revitalise agriculture, especially of smallholders, in developing countries. After decades of stagnation, aid to agriculture began to pick up. Putting agriculture high on the agenda through resilience-building technologies, training in sustainable ways of farming and strengthening grassroots institutions, increased support and resources to smallholder farmers to enhance their productivity and profitability in an environmentally sustainable manner, and according special attention to vulnerable groups such as women and tribal communities, are stressed as means to overcome the challenges to food security (Swaminathan and Nwanze 2011).

FAO is involved in every stage in agricultural planning, from the source of production to the point of consumption, including identification of the most appropriate use of land, relevant farming systems and ways of enhancing production along with ensuring the safe and efficient transfer of the harvest to the consumers through international marketing strategies. Developing country governments, multilateral and bilateral donors, financing institutions and CSOs increasingly seek FAO's guidance and technical advice on agricultural development (FAO 1980: 25-26). FAO's initial policy concentrated on techniques for increasing food production, either by extending the area under cultivation or by more intensive cultivation of the existing farms, resulting in higher yield from the same area (FAO 1985: 35).

FAO's Indicative World Plan for Agricultural Development provided an international frame of reference for governments to formulate and implement domestic agricultural policies, while its International Undertaking on World Food Security entailed commitment to ensure availability of adequate world supplies of basic foodstuffs by adopting measures to accelerate growth of food production, including food aid and trade agreements, and maintaining an internationally coordinated system of national food reserves at adequate levels (Simon and Simon 1973: 41-43; Miljan 1980: 42; FAO 1980: 62-63; Thompson 1981: 196). The FAO plan for International Agricultural Adjustment (IAA), initiated in 1973, updated and expanded through

1985,<sup>3</sup> represented a systematic attempt to monitor farm policies of developed countries to examine the impact of trade, aid and domestic policy interactions among countries on the world agricultural economy (Josling and Valdés 2004: 5-6).

During the 1980s, FAO placed great importance on supporting the development of high-yielding crop varieties by establishing national seed production centres. Closely allied were efforts to introduce water management programmes, advance better dry-land farming techniques to bring previously marginal agricultural lands into greater production, flood control measures, improved irrigational practices, enhance soil fertility and protect crops and harvests from disease and pests to increase agricultural production (FAO 1980: 27-29). The global long-term prospects for enhanced food and nutrition security through improved agricultural sustainability and rural development have been the recurrent theme in FAO, explored through, *World Agriculture*, first published in 1988, updated, amplified and extended in 1995 and 2003.<sup>4</sup>

FAO periodically publishes Policy Reviews that provide information to policy-makers and researchers.<sup>5</sup> The *Cereal Policy Review* was launched as a annual series in 1990-91, aimed at providing current developments in national cereal policies and their regional and global implications. The *Review of Basic Food Policies* (2001 and 2002), provide policy development in production, marketing, trade and consumption of cereals, oilseed and livestock products. The *Policies for Basic Food Commodities*, third review published in 2003-2004, is a reference text for historical memory, briefly describing important measures introduced by governments. In order to harmonise the national strategies within a framework of regional agricultural development strategy and identify common issues related to agricultural production, FAO, in cooperation with regional economic groupings, has integrated the national strategy papers of countries belonging to intergovernmental organizations (FAO 2000a: 48-49).

<sup>3</sup> The Resolution 2/73 – *International Agricultural Adjustment*, was adopted by the seventeenth session of the Conference of FAO, 10-29 November 1973, with Resolution 9/75 – *Strategy of International Agricultural Adjustment*, adopted by eighteenth session of the Conference of FAO, 8-27 November 1975. Progress reports were submitted bi-annually till 1991.

<sup>4</sup> See, Nikos Alexandratos (ed.) (1988), *World Agriculture Towards 2000: An FAO Study*, London: Belhaven Press; Alexandratos 1995; and Jelle Bruinsma (ed.) (2003), *World Agriculture: Towards 2015/2030 – An FAO Perspective*, Rome; London: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Earthscan.

<sup>5</sup> See, Kostas Stamoulis and Alberto Zezza (2003), *A Conceptual Framework for National Agricultural, Rural Development, and Food Security Strategies and Policies*, ESA Working Paper No. 03-17, November, Rome: Agricultural and Development Economics Division, FAO of the UN.

As discussed in Chapter III, the World Bank's engagement with the agriculture and rural sectors ebbed and flowed, beginning to significantly increase during the 1970s, under McNamara's presidency. However, the structural adjustment agenda of the 1980s drastically redirected its lending policies, specifically impacting agriculture. The liberalising prescriptions entailed encouraging agricultural production through increasing agricultural prices and investment, and freeing trade in food and agriculture. Privatisation essentially meant withdrawal of states; and removal of price distorting policies, like taxes or subsidies on agricultural products. No difference was made between cash crops and food crops as countries were to specialise in products it had comparative advantage in and import the rest. And the answer to the food problem was not food self-sufficiency but inclusion in the international market, which was supposed to increase agricultural production and export accruing not only financial benefits but also associated positive social effects. The distributive fall outs were supposed to be elimination of poverty through economic growth, freeing of state resources, impetus to private enterprises, increase in rural income, and redistribution of resources from previously protected and advantaged groups to non-protected and disadvantageous ones. The structural adjustment policy had no original aim to address hunger, except applying the old trickle-down argument (Uvin 1994: 256-258).

By the end of the 1980s, as the social effects of structural adjustments became more obvious, it was realised that the heaviest burden of structural adjustments fell on the poor and vulnerable, who had "the least economic 'fat' with which to absorb the blow" and "the least political 'muscle' to ward off that blow" (UNICEF 1989: 16). This was corroborated by evidence of rising incidence of malnutrition in Burma, Burundi, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, and the Philippines, based on which UNICEF propagated the policy of 'adjustment with a human face' (UNICEF 1989: 18). In fact, the Bank's structural adjustment policy was accused of causing agrarian crisis in developing countries. Large cuts in government investment in irrigation, rural development and infrastructure expenditures, directly hampered forces of production, leading to sluggish output, rising unemployment and jeopardising the livelihood and income of farmers and labourers, sharply reducing their purchasing power and causing "increasing pauperization and deepening hunger..." (Patnaik 2007: 224).



The trickle down theory has already been discarded as economic growth is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for poverty eradication or hunger and malnutrition. On the contrary, by opening up economies, the developing countries were made more vulnerable to unfavourable external exigencies, without any visible positive impact on rural poor. By the mid-1980s, the Bank's faith in the positive impact on poverty and rural development automatically resulting from structural adjustment got nuanced. By the end of 80s that poverty reduction became an explicit objective of adjustment policy (Uvin 1994: 258-267). The Bank's agricultural lending was marginally revived by the late 1990s and significantly renewed in the aftermath of the 2008 food crisis (World Bank 2008a; 2008b; 2009).

IFAD also gave special emphasis to increasing food production in the poorest food deficit countries, by overcoming specific obstacles, like shortage of inputs, institutional barriers or absence of reliable water; increasing output on already cropped lands; bringing new lands under cultivation; and encouraging governments to undertake policy reforms in land tenure, marketing, pricing, credit, and subsidies (Tansey 1978: 226; IFAD 1978: 7-8). Implicit in this priority was the assumption that increasing accelerated growth in production was the only way to address supply shortfalls in developing countries, along with parallel opportunities for productive employment and higher incomes of the poor food insecure people.

There is a growing consensus on the need for boosting agricultural research to devise and adapt appropriate technologies for improved production and processing, and make agricultural products of developing countries more competitive in the international markets. An encouraging development has been the establishment of the CGIAR, co-sponsored by FAO, UNDP and the World Bank, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, the USAID and several other bilateral aid agencies, foundations and international organizations. The CGIAR coordinates research and supports funding of centres and programmes across the globe that promote international effort on the production technology for important crops and related farming systems.<sup>6</sup> It also

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<sup>6</sup> CGIAR coordinates the International Wheat and Maize Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) in Mexico; the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines; the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) in Columbia; the International Potato Centre (CIP) in Peru; the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India; and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Nigeria.

strengthens local agronomic research facilities and indigenous research capabilities within the developing countries (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 235-236).

FAO assists in the planning and management of research programmes, establishing research institutes and applying the results of research to agricultural development in the developing countries. It facilitates research institutes of the developing countries to take part in its programmes and field projects, has built up world-wide research and development reference systems pertaining to food, agriculture and allied fields, and acts as a coordinating centre for basic statistics and data on current research in agriculture (FAO 1980: 52-55). In 2002, FAO and the World Bank initiated the International Assessment of Agriculture Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) as an independent, multi-stakeholder and multidisciplinary process to facilitate global consultation on assessing the importance of agriculture. The IAASTD Global Report acknowledged agriculture as ‘multifunctional’ that can be addressed by international Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology (AKST) by breaking the ‘malnutrition-poor health-low productivity cycle’ and moving from food security to food sovereignty (McIntyre et al. 2009: 2-3).

The green revolution literature supported the expansion of investment in modern agricultural technology and research. However, yield variability is influenced by many environmental and climatic factors, such as temperature and rainfall that have both direct and indirect impact on enhancing or mitigating the impact of technological changes (Barker et al. 1981: 54-55). The obituary of the green revolution was accepted following the bad harvest years of 1973-1974. With the dawning of the realisation that social change is an important associate of higher production capacity, green revolution is definitely passé (Power and Holenstein 1980: 125; George 1979: 59). It is important that improved technology be applicable in less formidable ecological condition and be consistent with local socio-economic constraints, is helpful in reduction of food losses by preservation and processing, and be suitable for use by small farmers. International agricultural research must be adequately paralleled by similar efforts in developing countries. Suitable institutions must be established for the effective transfer of improved technologies. Innovative approaches are needed for credit, price incentives and marketing services of the developing countries if they are effectively to reach the small farms. There is a growing awareness among the

developing countries that the technologies developed in the industrialized countries are not essentially the most appropriate for them, which has stimulated interest in technical cooperation among them (Miljan 1980: 31-33).

### ***Renew Interest in Agricultural Investment***

Investment in agricultural sector, particularly smallholder farmers, has visible impact on agricultural productivity, economic growth and poverty reduction. Since public and private spending in agriculture is complementary, inadequate government spending in agricultural sector seriously undermines productivity and mobilising foreign and private capital and investment. While domestic investment programmes need to place agriculture on higher priority, developing countries also require considerable expansion in foreign development assistance on concessional terms for the agricultural and rural sectors (Miljan 1980: 36-39). The 1974-WFC called for an increase from US\$ 1.5 billion per annum of existing flow of external resources to at least US\$ 5 billion per annum between 1975 and 1980 (United Nations 1974b: 8).

External financial resources are important for enhancing food security in low-income developing countries. Loans and credits approved by the World Bank, which are the major sources of external assistance for agriculture and food production rose from \$1,945 million in 1977 to \$3,052 million in 1978 (Miljan 1980: 37-38). However, there has been a substantial decline in lending by major financial institutions in the 1990s, both in absolute terms and in proportion of total loans (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 18-22) (see Table 5.1).<sup>7</sup> FAO promotes investment in agricultural development and provides vital information for the investment in human, financial and technical resources in development. Though not a funding agency, FAO promotes investment in agricultural development by helping governments to identify viable projects for investment, most urgently needed and best suited to improving the country's economy, and counsels them on preparing projects for investments. It mobilises investment support through the Technical Cooperation Programme and is mainly active during the early stages that bring projects into the investment pipeline – identification and preparation (FAO 1980: 14; 66-69).

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<sup>7</sup> Also see, Nurul Islam (2011), *Foreign Aid to Agriculture: Review of Facts and Analysis*, IFPRI Discussion Paper 01053, January, Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.

**Table 5.1: Lending for Agriculture by Principal Financing Institutions**  
(Loans approved in millions of US\$)

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>TOTAL LENDING FOR AGRICULTURE (APPROVALS)</b>											
World Bank/IDA (Fiscal Years)	3 656	3 707	3 894	3 267	3 868	2 576	2 063	3 541	2 637	2 763	1 337
AfDB/F (Calendar Years)	683	854	502	592	106	14	105	228	238	458	228
AsDB	1 242	1 035	753	361	486	897	802	1 004	421	430	1 051
IDB	319	570	735	77	210	552	580	156	122	100	311
IFAD	308	276	324	336	349	392	408	398	413	433	409
EBRD						256	268	398	204	222	327
Grand Total *	6 208	6 442	6 208	4 633	5 019	4 431	3 958	5 327	3 831	4 184	3 336
<b>AGRICULTURE AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LENDING</b>											
WB/IDA	18%	16%	18%	14%	19%	12%	10%	19%	9%	10%	9%
AfDB	21%	25%	17%	24%	7%	2%	13%	13%	14%	27%	9%
AsDB	31%	21%	15%	7%	13%	16%	14%	11%	7%	9%	18%
IDB	8%	11%	12%	1%	4%	7%	8%	3%	1%	1%	6%
EBRD						7%	8%	16%	7%	10%	13%

IFAD is 100% agriculture

\*Does not include EBRD

AfDB: African Development Bank

AsDB: Asian Development Bank

IDB: Inter-American Development Bank

EBRD: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Source: FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 22, Table 2

Agricultural investment has undergone a great change: while in the 1960s projects such as massive irrigation and drainage schemes, major construction programmes or schemes to increase the production of cash crops for exports were favoured by the financing institutions, the emphasis has now shifted to projects that recognise the needs of the mass of rural population, featuring social aspects along with economic factors in the final investment. FAO Policy Assistance and Support Service (TCSP) has created a framework for agricultural investment and through its Investment Centre, FAO helps countries in developing investment strategies to generate public and private investment in agriculture and rural development. FAO develops and maintains a database of investment in agriculture, including data and information on Agricultural Capital Stock (ACS), Foreign Investment (FDI), External Assistance to Agriculture (EAA)<sup>8</sup> and country profiles for foreign agricultural investment.

<sup>8</sup> See, FAO (2011), *External Assistance to Agriculture (1974-2008)*, Rome: FAO Statistics Division.

Increasingly, public sources are being complemented by private investment, including foreign sources, based on their particular interests and balancing risks and rewards, like agribusiness corporations and industries with interest in agri-food and biofuels, financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds and individual entrepreneurs. Since investment policies are not well-defined and governance is rather weak, large farming investments, especially by MNCs/TNCs, are usually associated with risks of ‘land grabbing’, displacement of indigenous population, violation of rights, creating and reproducing dependence, corruption, environmental degradation, loss of livelihood and nutrition deprivation. To address these issues, FAO, IFAD, UNCTAD and the World Bank collaborated to enumerate principles for responsible agro-investment (FAO/IFAD/UNCTAD and World Bank 2010: 1).

International cooperation on agricultural policy remains disintegrated, with each institution prioritising specific issues and strategies in accordance with its mandate. The challenge remains in translating standards into concrete and positive actions, in the absence of a specific convention that facilitates improvement of international monitoring of agrarian reform issues and other land-related human rights (Plant 1984: 191). The ‘fashionable’ food production increasing policies, aiming to attain food self-sufficiency, must be approached with caution as they are rather short-term solutions (Sriplung and Heady 1977: 285) and beyond the immediate reach of most countries. With modern transport system, adherence to historic patterns of local self-sufficiency has given way to exploring the benefits of trade in food to balance food surplus and food deficit areas based on comparative advantages in food production. Hence, national food self-sufficiency is not an ultimate solution, rather “an interim, second-best solution for the imperfect world” (Lewis 1977: 211-213).

It is naïve, though common, to assume that hunger will automatically diminish with increases in food production. The effects of world wide exchange of resources are not equally beneficial to all the participants, the dynamics being heavily in favour of the already industrialised and rich countries. It is a mistake to treat food production as synonymous to consumption, the amount of food produced in the world is does not directly relate to hunger or poverty and increase in production does not automatically translate into the poor and hungry being fed because “purchasing power is the magnet that draws food, both nationally and internationally” (George 1984: 32). This is

compounded by the intractable problem of maldistribution and widespread poverty in developing countries (Power and Holenstein 1980: 23-28; Simon and Simon 1973: 25-30; Bergesen 1978: 25). The deeper causes of world food problem lie in rural poverty and a discussion on agricultural productivity cannot be divorced from rural development (Marei 1976: 94).

Simply stated, in order to eat people must either be able to grow their own food or buy it from the market. The first condition for producing food is to have land, while for the rest employment/income is the most important factor to enable them to purchase the required food. However, there would be very few self-provisioning farmers who would be capable of feeding themselves throughout the year. A major portion of the farming community needs employment to supplement their incomes. Unable to find suitable employment to supplement their incomes near their rural homes, they migrate to urban areas to swell the number of unemployed or under-paid workers in the urban areas who, handicapped by inadequate incomes, are unable to procure sufficient food for themselves. A two-pronged strategy is required to combat the conjoined problems of poverty and hunger, rural development and generating employment in the urban areas to break the vicious circle of low productivity-unemployment-low income. Food policies must address both rural and urban dimensions of development, incorporating agricultural reform and improving income/purchasing within economic growth.

### ***Rural Development***

Given the cause-effect relationship between hunger and poverty and the specific rural dimension of poverty and hunger, it is evident “that the battle for hunger and poverty alleviation will be won or lost in rural areas” (FAO/IFAD/WFP 2002: 4). Since agriculture is the main driving force of rural economy, hunger and poverty alleviation require the enhancement of income of rural poor through agricultural development. Rural and agricultural development through agrarian reform, must be accompanied by measures that effectively give purchasing power to the worst-off-people.

In most developing countries, agricultural production is dependent on small farmers and landless labourers in rural areas. Key to poverty reduction is increasing production of the vast majority of the rural poor. This can be done by providing them with adequate access to land and other productive resources, necessary technology

and physical inputs, price incentives and credit system, guaranteed access to the market at fair prices, and suitable institutions to ensure their participation in development. Purchasing arrangements will guarantee fair income to the farmer and a fair price to the urban consumer. Therefore, grass-roots level education and training is particularly important for rural development and represents an area that can greatly benefit from international assistance (George 1976: 282-285; Miljan 1980: 40).

There is a frequent tendency to reduce agricultural production and agrarian reform to strictly technical aspects and scientific skills, completely overlooking the close interrelationship between technical progress in agricultural sector and improvements in institutional framework and structural changes in the ownership of assets at the national level (Plant 1984: 190; Miljan 1980: 52; Harle 1978: 269). Food production prospects are particularly rendered doubtful in developing countries due to the scarcity of all the basic inputs – land, water, energy and fertilizer (Brown and Eckholm 1975: 241-242) and lack of participation by local people themselves in the production, agrarian reform and rural development process (Bondestam 1978: 374).

Balanced agricultural and rural development depends on land distribution (Deininger and Byerlee 2011: 14), agrarian reform policies in individual countries, enactment of rural labour legislation (Plant 1984: 191), introduction of improved land tenure and production systems, changes in the administrative and institutional framework (FAO 1980: 19), and elimination of obsolete and oppressive agrarian system. However, institutional reform, such as redistribution of land, ceilings on the size of private landholdings and allotment of land to the farmers, alone cannot produce the desired agricultural development unless supported and accompanied by appropriate material and technical prerequisites. Neither infrastructural innovation nor institutional reform should substitute each other (Bondestam 1978: 374-375). Poverty-oriented rural development also includes “the provision of gainful employment” (FAO 1980: 19).

The *Declaration on Social Progress and Development* called for “comprehensive rural development schemes to raise the levels of living of the rural populations”, emphasising on land reform (General Assembly 1969: 51-52). FAO took several noteworthy steps to support agrarian reform and land tenure, like the programmes for improving land access, arising from the World Land Reform Conference (1966). The FAO WCARRD (1979) called for formulation of appropriate national agrarian reform

and rural development strategies and their integration in overall national development strategies (Saouma 1993: 47-52; FAO 1985: 83-85). The UN Secretary General's Study on the *Regional and National Dimensions of the Right to Development as a Human Right*<sup>9</sup> drew attention to issues of agrarian reform and land ownership aimed at social justice, as a precondition for the adequate realisation of the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the UDHR and the ICESCR and stressed the practical need for a change in political and economic power structure at local and national levels for the desired transformation of agrarian society.

The essential role of agrarian reform and rural development to promote sustainable development was further reiterated in the FAO ICARRD (2006) along with the establishment of participatory land and water policies, efficient registering, titling and surveying of land holdings, improved legal, institutional and market infrastructure, and access to finance.<sup>10</sup> The FAO-CFS endorsed on 11 May 2012 the *Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Land and Fisheries and Forest*. The CFS-HLPE, with M. S. Swaminathan as the chair of the Steering Committee, submitted its report on *Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture* in 2011, discussing "the implications of large-scale international investment in land for food security in host countries" (High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition 2011: 14). FAO (with the UN and ILO) monitors programmes in land reforms in a biennial report to ECOSOC and launched the *Global Soil Partnership for Food Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation* to raise awareness, mobilise resources, motivate action and partnership for policy making, provide technical solutions and expertise for protection and management of soil

Food shortage in rural areas is a chronic phenomenon as traditional rural markets are highly fragmented and official distribution efforts are scarce. Government action relating to food security is often in terms of meeting the urban demand and a share of rural demand that it feels obliged to meet due to welfare and political considerations,

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<sup>9</sup> See the two part UN Secretary General's Study on *the Regional and National Dimensions of the Right to Development as a Human Right*, E/CN.4/1421, thirty-seventh session, Commission on Human Rights of the ECOSOC, 13 November 1980; and E/CN.4/1488, thirty-eighth session, Commission on Human Rights of the ECOSOC, 31 December 1981.

<sup>10</sup> See, *FAO's Contribution in Good Policies and Practices in Agrarian Reform and Rural Development: A brief Overview*, ICARRD 2006/INF/4; *Final Declaration*, ICARRD 2006/3; and *Report of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development*, C 2006/REP, adopted at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), Porto Alegre, 7-10 March 2006.



especially in bad crop years and in case of extreme food shortages. Government distribution efforts are largely concentrated in urban areas, for political and economic reasons and administrative imperative. While the urban population is more aggressive in terms of their capability to organise against rising food prices and demand higher wages or potentially change the government, limited man-power and concentration of policy makers in urbanised cities, cause biased benefits for urban areas and neglect of rural population. Due to improved transport, storage and handling facilities in the urban areas, per unit cost of public sector distribution of grains is also lower in comparison to rural areas that require huge subsidies for undertaking extensive distribution (Lele and Candler 1981: 109-110).

IFAD *Lending Policies and Criteria* committed contribution to development strategies and poverty reduction in rural areas, where most poor people live and work (IFAD 1978: 6). Through its agricultural and rural Sector-wide Approaches (SWPs), IFAD supports national-level policies and investments that respond to the actual needs of the rural poor people by working together with the governments and other development partners (IFAD 2006b: 16-18). IFAD has developed extensive policies to address rural poverty and promote rural development by funding small-scale rural enterprise projects in Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Senegal (Western and Central Africa), Philippines (Asia), Republic of Moldova (Eastern Europe), Columbia, Dominica, Grenada, Peru and Saint Lucia (Latin America and the Caribbean) (IFAD 2004: 4). While the main objective is to improve rural income, by providing non-farm employment, these projects also accrue non-financial services to small rural entrepreneurs. IFAD recognises rural finance, microcredit, microfinance, and a range of other financial services such as savings, remittances, leasing and insurance, as an important tool to reduce poverty in rural areas (IFAD 2009: 10).

The IFAD primarily targeted “the small and landless farmers” (IFAD 2006c: 5), and during the initial years of its operation stressed “quick-maturing projects” (IFAD 2006c: 7). Over the years, the IFAD has reworked its umbrella targeting policy “to reach the extremely poor people”, defined in each country in terms of geographical and occupational specificities (IFAD 2006c: 7-8). Increasingly it has focused on increasing domestic food production of traditional and minor crops and diversifying the income of identifies rural poverty groups (IFAD 2006c: 22-23). IFAD’s *Strategic*

*Framework 2011-2015* (2011e: 26) reiterates its focus on poor rural people and their livelihoods for improving food and nutrition security and overcoming poverty.

### ***Increasing Income and Purchasing Power***

Lack of purchasing power in the hands of the poor is one of the major hurdles standing in the way of reaching the objective of adequate food for all. Raising the real income of households will enable them to acquire enough food, which will also entail the reduction of poverty, rural development and special nutritional measures for vulnerable groups such as women and children. Hence, providing employment is most important, “the malnutrition problem could be more appropriately stated in terms of a certain number of man-years of needed jobs and not just in terms of a shortage of so many tons of grains” (Swaminathan 1975: 85).

International concern has gone beyond the food and agricultural sector to encompass policies for increasing income and food consumption of low income people through food subsidies, employment subsidies and market forces. Policies that directly influence the purchasing power or income also affect the health and nutrition of the consumer. Demand for food is more responsive to income increases in lower-income households, implying that “as household incomes increase, households increase not only the *quantity* of food that they consumed but also the *quality*” (Rogers and Coates 2002: 4). Since “it is the poor who lack access to food, alleviating food insecurity means alleviating poverty” (Tweeten 1999: 476) A relatively advanced economy can address poverty through redistribution of existing resources, while less developed countries can do so only through a high and sustained rate of economic growth, implying not only social revolution in the form of land reform, but also reorientation of their economic relations (Power and Holenstein 1980: 52; Herrmann 2007: 231).

Achieving a multidisciplinary ‘socioinstitutional change’ for economic growth is the major challenge of food security (Tweeten 1999: 486). Fostering pro-poor growth policies and programmes targeting the poor to improve their access to income and food, range from short to long term: targeted food distribution and subsidies (feeding programs, food stamps and income transfer); employment creation through public works and infrastructural development; institutional strengthening; providing credit to poor; human capital investments; stabilisation of food price and trade policies;

improving access to assets and markets; social protection and safety nets; accelerated investments in health and nutrition programs; and building social capital, and creating and enhancing assets of the rural poor (Webb and Braun 1994: 211-215; Braun and Pandya-Lorch 2007: 6-13), along with improving governance, encouraging participation and empowering the poor.

The UN geared its attention to poverty alleviation through the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy (1990)<sup>11</sup> that accorded highest priority to poverty eradication, with special focus on policies and measures to raise agricultural output, reduce hunger and malnutrition, and strengthen food security. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly adopted the First (1997-2006)<sup>12</sup> and Second Decade for Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)<sup>13</sup> to efficiently ensure co-ordinated, coherent, comprehensive and integrated national, regional and international efforts to achieve poverty eradication. Removing world poverty is the self-proclaimed mandate of the World Bank along with promoting development. The Bank held that a rapid increase in food production does not necessarily result in food security and consequently less hunger, rather food security was a matter of ‘redistributing purchasing power and resources towards those who are undernourished’. Hence, it advocated that “international support should focus on policies and investment that improve the distribution of benefits from economic growth by raising the real income of people facing chronic food insecurity and stabilizing the access to food for people facing transitory food insecurity” (World Bank 1986a: 49).

The Bank’s strategy to reduce poverty and hunger had two-fold purpose. The first was providing people vulnerable to hunger with opportunity to earn adequate income, thereby increasing their purchasing power to buy more food. The second was to ensure adequate food supply to them at stable prices through domestic production or imports (World Bank 1986a: 6; Binswanger and Landell-Mills 1995: 13-14). Specific national interventions to address chronic food insecurity include: accelerating food supply (through domestic production and imports), subsidising food prices to

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<sup>11</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/45/199 – *International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade* (forty-fifth session, 21 December 1990).

<sup>12</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/50/107 – *Observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and Proclamation of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty* (fiftieth session, 26 January 1996).

<sup>13</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/205 – *Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)* (sixty-second session, 10 March 2008).

consumers and targeting income transfers (in cash and/or in kind) (World Bank 1986a: 6-8; 28-41). Providing basic social services to the poor, like access to clean drinking water, primary education, health care and nutrition, was also added to the Bank's strategy (Binswanger and Landell-Mills 1995: 13). National policies to reduce transitory food insecurity included: stabilising domestic food supplies and prices, preparing for abrupt decline in food supply through early warning systems, direct assistance to vulnerable groups, and regional cooperation schemes (World Bank 1986a: 9-10; 42-48). Targeted interventions, as opposed to market-wide interventions, are advocated by the Bank as ideal policy option (World Bank 1986a: 29). Hence, the Bank pursued a mutually reinforcing strategy of amalgamating broad-based growth with human resource development (Binswanger and Landell-Mills 1995: 50-51).

### ***Improving Nutritional Status***

It is imperative for agricultural and rural development policies and programmes to take into account nutritional considerations and include specific components that address nutritional needs of vulnerable sections of the population. The separation of agricultural development and nutritional progress indicates "the depth of absurdity which the commoditization of food has reached in the world global economy" (Marchione 1984: 125). The 1974-WFC recognised malnutrition relief as part of an effective solution of the world food problem (United Nations 1974b: 11). Integrated project proposals for supplementary feeding of vulnerable groups, prepared in cooperation of FAO, WHO, WFP, UNICEF and the World Bank in the context of national food and nutrition policies, were recommended (United Nations 1974b: 150).

The 1974-WFC drew world wide attention to the need of looking at integrated food and nutrition policies by bringing in a new coalition of technical advisors in the arena of policy formulation (Underwood 1977: 244) and recognised the crucial problem of better distribution of food and of improving the nutrition of vulnerable and deprived groups (Marei 1976: 92). Though economic considerations usually dominate national policy decisions as the voice of the production-oriented economist and the technology-oriented agriculturalist drown those of consumer health-oriented nutritionist, a multidisciplinary coalition of decision-makers can achieve a compromise position from which policies can be formulated (Underwood 1977: 245).

Food policies affecting nutrition and health can be grouped into those affecting the quantity, diversity and safety of the available food supply, and those affecting the purchasing power of consumers (Underwood 1977: 244). Designing and implementing appropriate nutrition intervention programmes is based on identifying the specific nature of the nutrition problem and the groups/sections of people most affected and in need of assistance to remedy the situation (Pinstруп-Andersen 1986: 55; Dapice 1986: 94). 'Nutrition Programmes' are broadly similar across countries including one or more of the following interventions: monitoring and promotion of growth in children; integrated care and nutrition; promotion of breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding; nutrition education or communications for behavioural change; direct administration of deficient nutrients; supplementary feeding for women and young children; health-related services; micronutrient supplementation; and food fortification (Allen and Gillespie 2001: 69).

Apart from direct interventions, other food and agricultural policies and programmes that do not specifically aim at nutrition improvement but have significant nutrition impact call for careful assessment to facilitate incorporation of nutritional goals into the choice and design of such projects to improve their likely result on nutrition (Pinstруп-Andersen 1986: 57-60). It is essential to incorporate nutrition considerations at the formulation stage of development programmes and projects and evaluate their impact on nutritional status (Miljan 1980: 40). It has been observed that specific nutrition interventions have worked under controlled circumstances. However, large-scale nutrition interventions, having national and subnational impact, are difficult to evaluate due to complexity in isolating the effects of specific components on the improvement of nutritional status (Allen and Gillespie 2001: 69). Nutrition policies often face the difficulty of reaching all the people suffering from deprivation, shortage of personnel and the huge cost that is imposed on the governments, hence, the need for international financial and technical assistance.

Nutrition components were entirely missing from initial agricultural and rural development projects. Subsequently, many programmes were specifically designed to evaluate and redirect the effects of agricultural production programmes. Hence, the concern shifted to increasing the income or effective demand of the poor and making agricultural programmes satisfy the nutritional targets or basic food needs of the poor

(Marchione 1984: 125). It was only after the International Conference on Nutrition (1992-ICN) that the multisectoral and multifactoral nature of nutrition was emphasised and the mutually reinforcing relationship between development and agricultural policies and programmes and nutritional aspects was recognised.

FAO's initial field activities had intractable impact on nutrition (FAO 1979: 57-60), while in subsequent agricultural and rural development projects, nutritional goals or considerations were never stated as an explicit project objective, rarely influencing project design (Pinstrup-Andersen 1981: 14). Direct nutrition interventions might solve selected nutritional problems but, addressing the worsening overall nutritional situation required mainstreaming nutrition in socio-economic development plans, strategies, projects and policies. Hence, the need was recognised for deliberate inclusion and full integration of nutrition as an explicit criterion in development projects (FAO 1982: iii; Pinstrup-Andersen 1981: 1-2). FAO (1982) developed a manual of methodologies to help planners integrate food consumption and nutrition considerations in all phases of agricultural and rural development projects.

The 1992-ICN boosted nutrition-focused interventions and emphasised that a comprehensive development policy must have nutrition components ingrained in it (FAO/WHO 1992b: 29-31). The *World Declaration on Nutrition*, committed "to ensuring that development programmes and policies lead to a sustainable improvement in human welfare...and are conducive to better nutrition and health..." (Paragraph 6) and the *Plan of Action* laid out specific strategies and actions to incorporate nutritional objectives, considerations and components in development policies and programmes (FAO/WHO 1992a: 24-27). The international agencies were urged to define ways and means of prioritising nutrition-related programmes in their activities and coordinating implementation of the same (FAO/WHO 1992a: 51). Following the 1992-ICN, FAO developed guidelines for assisting countries in preparing national plans of action based on identified nutritional goals and objectives (1993) and to address and include nutrition and health issues in agricultural research, planning and programmes (2001).<sup>14</sup> It provided policy-makers and programme planners in developing countries with practical strategies to incorporate nutrition

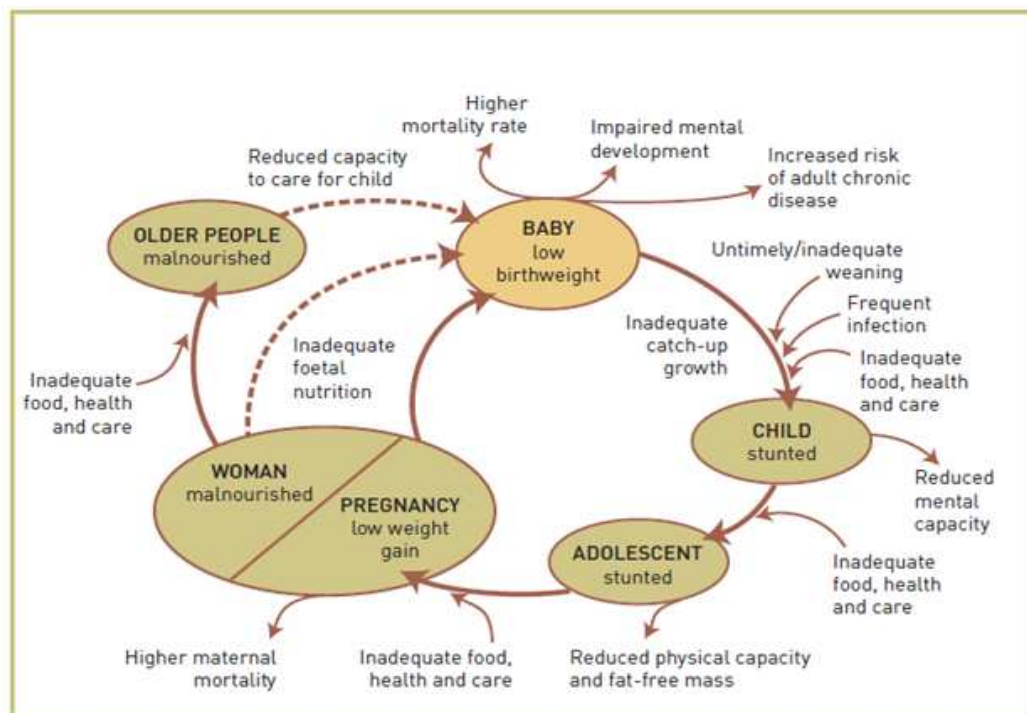
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<sup>14</sup> See, FAO *Guidelines: Developing National Plans of Action for Nutrition* (1993); and *Incorporating Nutrition Considerations into Agricultural Research Plans and Programmes – Guidelines on Resource for Advancing Nutritional Well-being* (2001), Rome: FAO of the UN.

considerations in relevant development policies, and health and nutrition workers with tools to create awareness and advocate nutrition at policy level (FAO 2004: viii-xi).

The UNSCN coordinates and monitors various nutritional policies and programmes of the UN system agencies to assist countries in incorporating nutritional objectives into national development plans. It reports on world nutrition situation by compiling the latest data and research in nutrition and integrating it with other development sectors. It provided a fresh perspective on human nutrition through the life-cycle approach to nutrition, intergenerational links between nutrition status at different stages of the life cycle (see Figure 5.2). The recognition of scientific evidence linking poor nutrition at the foetal stage (*in utero*) through childhood and adolescence, to chronic diseases later in life, highlighted the challenges in assuring nutrition security throughout the life cycle and obviated the need for sustained, long-term ameliorative programmes and policies, like the infant-feeding, breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices (ACC/SCN 2000; Allen and Gillespie 2001: 1-3).

**Figure 5.2: Impact of Hunger and Malnutrition throughout the Life Cycle**



Source: ACC/SCN 2000: 14; FAO SOFI 2004: 8

By mid-1970s, the World Bank began to view nutrition as a development problem, both a contributing factor to and a consequence of underdevelopment and poverty.

Though not a conventional sector of its activities, under McNamara, the Bank began mainstreaming nutrition in its economic-dominated investments by funding stand-alone nutritional projects (Kapur et al. 1997: 253; Sridhar 2008: 85-89).<sup>15</sup> Reutlinger and Selowsky (1976) made the first research attempt to understand the global dimension of nutrition and policy interventions by governments in low income countries and called for specific policies and programmes for nutritionally vulnerable groups. The ‘basic needs’ approach led to radical redefinition of development goals, incorporating nutrition and health components in poverty and rural development strategy as funds were disbursed for feeding and nutrition programs (Kapur et al. 1997: 346). The positive fallout of the basic needs approach was the recognition that increased food production does not have a necessary linkage to nutritional improvement and mere general economic growth cannot be relied upon to translate into improved nutritional status

Between 1977 and 1978, the Bank initiated multisectoral nutrition intervention (institution-building, supplementary feeding, food subsidies, health services, nutrition education, anaemia control, small-scale food production, food technology, water supply, and food marketing) in Brazil, Colombia, and Indonesia, all principal recipients of the Bank’ assistance. These nutrition projects were complex in design and administratively cumbersome, leading the Bank to narrowly focus the Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project, which got underway in 1980 (Berg 1987: 9-14; Reutlinger and Castillo 1994: 151-152). Apart from directly supporting nutrition projects the Bank also included nutrition components in the operation of projects in other sectors: agriculture and rural development, population, health, education, urban development. The ‘social’ lending of the Bank was institutionalised with the establishment of the Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) Department in 1979.

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<sup>15</sup> The World Bank’s conception of the nature and magnitude of hunger and malnutrition was shaped by various research studies: Marcelo Selowsky (1978), *The Economic Dimension of Malnutrition in Young Children*, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 294, October; Odin K. Knudsen and Pasquale L. Scandizzo (1979), *Nutrition and Food Needs in Developing Countries*, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 328, May; James E. Austin (1980), *Confronting Urban Malnutrition: The Design of Nutrition Programs*, World Bank Staff Occasional Papers No. 28, Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press; Rakesh Mohan, Wilhelm Wagner and Jorge Garcia (1981), *Measuring Urban Malnutrition and Poverty: A Case Study of Bogota and Cali, Colombia*, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 328, April; Alan Berg (1981), *Malnourished People: A Policy View*, World Bank Poverty and Basic Needs Series, June.



In light of the 1980 *World Development Report*, the Bank began examining nutrition in the context of its own policies, programmes and projects, and the impact of nutritional improvement on human capital and economic growth. As the Bank conceded that improved health and nutrition would accelerate economic growth and justified nutrition loans as productive investments, integrating nutritional components in agricultural and rural development projects.<sup>16</sup> The Bank stressed on nutrition in country economic and sectoral work to enable its inclusion in operational work and policy dialogues with member governments. Since the early lending to South Asia and Latin America, the Bank extended its assistance for nutrition to Africa (Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Senegal, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zambia),<sup>17</sup> China and Middle East (Iran and Yemen), incorporating food fortification along with micronutrient supplementation (Heaver 2006: 1-2; 11-12; Sridhar 2008: 89-94). However, since the agriculture and rural development projects failed to integrate nutrition as an explicit goal, success of nutrition project were constrained by the larger context of structural adjustment lending by the Bank (Berg 1987: 76-79).

Since nutrition is multifaceted and nutritional interventions are complex, an appropriate method is specific investment lending, where improving nutrition is the primary goal of a project, without having to fit nutrition into other departments, making it everybody's concern but nobody's responsibility (Berg 1987: 105-106; Heaver 2006: 25-26). The 1993 *World Development Report*, the first annual report entirely devoted to health, became the Bank's threshold framework of applying economic principles and cost-benefit analysis to the health sector. Nutrition schemes, as a component of health, also began to be evaluated using cost-effectiveness tools (Sridhar 2008: 94-95). Studies within the Bank assessed how nutritional objectives can be integrated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and social safety net programs. Though PRSPs offered an opportunity to identify country

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<sup>16</sup> The incorporation of nutrition in World Bank's agricultural and rural development projects has been discussed by Per Pinstrup-Andersen (1981), *Nutritional Consequences of Agricultural Projects: Conceptual Relationship and Assessment Approaches*, World Bank Staff Working Paper 456; Shlomo Reutlinger (1983), *Nutritional Impact of Agricultural Projects*, Agriculture and Rural Development Department Research Unit Discussion Paper 14; Alan Berg and James Austin (1984), "Nutrition Policies and Programs: A Decade of Redirection", *Food Policy*, 9 (4) November: 304-311; Alan Berg et. al. (1986), *Guidelines for Work in Nutrition*, Technical Note 86-12.

<sup>17</sup> The Bank launched food security initiative in Africa, 1988-89, including income generation, public works, nutrition interventions, capacity building, improving agricultural activities, supporting early warning systems and improved use of food aid, depending on the specific circumstances of each country. See, World Bank (1988), *The Challenge of Hunger in Africa: A Call to Action*.

nutrition profile as a development issue and incorporate specific strategies and actions to address undernutrition as components of poverty reduction, nutrition actions were successfully translated into investment and monitored plans (Shekar and Lee 2006). While price subsidies can encourage the consumption of food that improves nutrition (Alderman 2002: 11-13), food-based safety net programs can directly address the nutritional gap of vulnerable groups, like women and children (Rogers and Coates 2002: 3-4). Since 1996 the Bank has been using *Nutrition Toolkit*, to assist its staff to design and supervise effective and practicable nutrition projects.

The Bank has been the single largest source of external financial assistance for nutrition, comprising an insignificant proportion of its lending for human development. The annual lending of the Bank for HNP in 1980 was US\$ 500 million, accounting for 1 percent of its total lending, which reached to US\$ 2.4 billion by 1996, accounting for 11 percent of its total commitments (Sridhar 2008: 60). In 1999-2004, lending for nutrition projects was about US\$ 4000 million, standing at no more than 2.5 percent of lending for human development and less than 0.5 percent of total Bank lending. While in most of the commitments nutrition was included as a component, projects that made a direct contribution to nutrition amounted to only US\$ 320 million, merely 1.9 percent of Bank's human development lending (Heaver 2006: 10). The failure to scale up action in nutrition was attributed to the lack of sustained commitment from the governments, resulting in low demand for assistance in nutrition. In order to reposition nutrition higher on the development agenda, the Bank called for collaboration and coordinated actions among development partners in mainstreaming nutrition in the larger development agenda and in country strategies and approaches; enhancing investments in nutrition; and strengthening and fine-tuning delivery mechanisms (World Bank 2006: 113).

The Bank assessed the efficacy and effectiveness of both long and short route programme and policy interventions for improving nutrition. It was observed that while some nutrition programmes (dealing with low birth-weight, overweight, interaction between malnutrition and HIV/AIDs and diet-related noncommunicable diseases) did not have any tried and tested models for effective outcomes and depended on research and learning-by-doing, other nutrition programmes (dealing with child undernutrition and micronutrient malnutrition) substantially improved

nutrition outcomes, thereby substantiating their scaling-up. However, experience with nutrition policy making and implementation, dependent largely on country commitment and capacity, have been disappointing. The Bank's Poverty and Social Impact Analyses (PSIAs) are encouraged to assess the intentional and unintentional effects of development policies on nutrition outcomes (World Bank 2006: 62-93).<sup>18</sup>

In 2010, the Bank launched the *Global Action Plan* for scaling up nutrition programming, estimating the costs and financial resources required to expand delivery of a set of identified direct nutrition interventions to 100 percent coverage of targeted population in 36 countries (Horton et al. 2010: 2). Nutrition intervention could be scaled-up by financing evidence-based priority investments and research on issues of programme delivery and implementation, along with building country capacities to strengthen them (Horton et al. 2010: 51). Multi-sectoral interventions can integrate specific nutrition actions in other sectors, like food security and agriculture, health and social protection, and increase policy coherence through government-wide attention to consequences of policies in other sector on nutrition.<sup>19</sup> From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that the importance accorded to nutrition lending in the Bank has been in flux. Despite being a norm setter in the global nutrition community, political pressures, economic analysis, institutional constraints and bureaucratic incentives within the Bank contribute in shaping its nutrition policies.

Though Article 2 of IFAD's *Establishing Agreement* highlighted "the importance of improving the nutritional level of the poorest populations in developing countries and the conditions of their lives" (IFAD 1976: 4), in the initial years of operation, it did not adopt any specific approach to address nutritional concerns in its projects. It was assumed that the nutrition objective would be fulfilled within the umbrella strategy of

<sup>18</sup> The desperate neglect of maternal, newborn and child undernutrition was highlighted by "Maternal and Child Undernutrition" (2008), *The Lancet*, Special series, 371 (9608) January: 177-274. For a discussion on the political-economy approach to nutrition programmes and policies at the country level, see Marcela Natalicchio et al. (eds.) (2009), *Carrots and Sticks: The Political Economy of Nutrition Policy Reforms*, Health, Nutrition and Population Discussion Paper, February, World Bank.

<sup>19</sup> See, *Scaling Up Nutrition: A Framework for Action* (2011), A consensus document based on thinking, experience and a series of face-to-face consultation among developing countries, academic and research institutions, civil society, private sector, bilateral development agencies, UN Specialised Agencies (FAO, UNICEF, WFP, WHO), nutrition-specific collaboration organizations of the UN (SCN and REACH) and the World Bank. The consultations were hosted by the Center for Global Development, the International Conference on Nutrition, the European Commission, the UNSCN, USAID, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and the World Bank, with financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Government of Japan and the World Bank.

increasing agricultural production and income (IFAD 1978: 8). During the 1970s and early 80s, IFAD's focus was on transitory problems of food supply and on the alleviation of the symptoms of malnutrition rather than on efforts to alleviate the underlying critical aspects of malnutrition and chronic hunger.

Since the mid'1980s, IFAD added an explicit nutrition dimension to its lending portfolios by financing projects that included health and nutrition education to address hygienic feeding and eating practices. Projects related to food storage, processing and preservation were undertaken, along with enhancing income-generating components in traditional food crops and the non-agricultural sector. However, the health and nutrition objectives were treated as supplementary and not as integral components of an overall project, making them the weaker links in the development process, vying for resources and attention with other economically viable activities (IFAD 1993: 6-8). By the 1990s, IFAD began to integrate human, economic, and social objectives in designing projects that enhance nutrition. Mainstreaming nutrition in IFAD projects involved broader understanding of the dynamics of food and dietary system of the rural poor. IFAD's nutrition interventions focus on improving nutrition of farm households, through selected investment projects that strengthen household resource base, access to services and other livelihood needs, along with increasing agricultural productivity. Household food security was incorporated in IFAD's loan for Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project (India), Second Badulla Integrated Rural Development Project (Sri Lanka), Enhancing Food Security in Southern Province (Zambia) and Smallholder Dry Areas Resource Management Project (Zimbabwe), all during the 1990s. These projects aimed at enhancing household nutrition security based on relevant needs and priorities of the community (IFAD 1993: 8-11).

WFP sought to mainstream nutrition across its activities by using food to achieve: nutrition impacts to enhance the effectiveness and impact of mother-and-child health and nutrition interventions; nutritional value of WFP food through micronutrient fortification; and nutritional impact during emergencies.<sup>20</sup> In its 2012 Nutrition Policy, WFP advocated a multi-disciplinary effort to tackle undernutrition by

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<sup>20</sup> See, WFP (2004), *Food for Nutrition: Mainstreaming Nutrition in WFP*, WFP/EB.A/2004/5-A/1, Executive Board Annual Session, 24-26 May 2004; WFP (2004), *Micronutrient Fortification: WFP Experiences and Ways Forward*, WFP/EB.A/2004/5-A/2, Executive Board Annual Session, 24-26 May 2004; and WFP (2004), *Nutrition in Emergencies: WFP Experiences and Challenges*, WFP/EB.A/2004/5-A/3, Executive Board Annual Session, 24-26 May 2004.

engaging multi-stakeholders in line with national priorities, with the mission “to work with partners to fight undernutrition by ensuring physical and economic access to a nutritious, acceptable and age-appropriate diet for those who lack it and to support households and communities in utilizing food adequately...” (WFP 2012: 3). Five distinct but related areas were identified as WFP’s nutrition focus, treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (wasting), prevention of acute malnutrition, and prevention of chronic malnutrition (stunting and micronutrient deficiencies) among children and pregnant and lactating women; addressing micronutrient deficiencies among vulnerable people to reduce the risk of mortality during emergency and improve health through fortification; and strengthening nutrition focus of other programmes (general food distribution, school feeding, food-for-work, assets and training, etc.). This overall nutrition strategy was to be facilitated through an enabling environment of technical assistance and advocacy (WFP 2012: 7-8).

### ***Social Safety Net Programmes***

The 2007-2008 food, fuel and financial crises accentuated the importance and urgency of developing effective Social Safety Net (SSN) programmes.<sup>21</sup> Since food security is not contingent upon world food grain supply (Reutlinger 1977: 3-4; 1981/82: 3), it is unlikely that malnutrition will disappear in the normal course of expansion of aggregate food production. Undernutrition can be eliminated through deliberately designed policies to reallocate food and income (Reutlinger and Selowsky 1976: 7). SSN, as the short-term pillar of the twin-track approach, is useful to mitigate the immediate impact of the food crisis on the vulnerable and provide sustainable solutions to the underlying food problems (FAO 2009b: 4). SSNs are:

noncontributory programs that target the poor and vulnerable and are designed to reduce poverty and inequality, enable better human capital investments, improve social risk management, and offer social protection. They are a subset of a wider collection of policies that constitute a typical poverty reduction strategy, and are often implemented alongside contributory social insurance, social investments in health and education, land redistribution, and microfinance... (IEG 2011a: 1).

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<sup>21</sup> Social Safety Nets (SSNs) are an important component of ‘Social Protection’, which refers to a wide range of measures that provide income or other transfers to the poor to protect them against livelihood risks, with the larger aim of reducing social and economic vulnerability of marginalized groups. They can be informal or formal, the latter may be supported domestic or international resources and operated by government, private sector or NGOs. Food safety nets are a subset of SSN that aim to ensure minimum amount of food consumption and to protect households against shocks. Food aid in one of the many food safety nets (FAO 2006: 22).

SSNs can provide ‘social assistance’ – “to *increase* the livelihoods of those who lack resources” – or ‘social insurance’ – “to protect people against risks by guaranteeing that the *status quo* will be retained (or regained) in the event of a shock” (Rogers and Coates 2002: 1). They can be either food-based that increase livelihood/income (through employing able-bodied men and women in food-for-work programmes), purchasing power (through food stamps, coupons or vouchers,<sup>22</sup> consumer price subsidies) and relieve deprivation (through the direct transfer of food to individuals and households, like supplementary feeding programmes, maternal and child health feeding programmes, school feeding programmes), or cash-based, involving cash transfers or wages for public employment, and emergency feeding programmes to protect lives and livelihood following market or production disruption, armed conflicts or natural disasters (Rogers and Coates 2002: 3-7).

The SSN programmes, coordinated by governments and frequently implemented in partnership with international institutions like the World Bank, WFP and other UN system agencies and NGOs, cannot be differentiated in water-tight compartments and are often cross-cutting and overlapping, depending on the context and the specific requirement. They can function simultaneously, complementing each other, and can be applied interchangeably to respond to different needs and vulnerable sections of population. SSNs are usually instituted as a temporary response to economic shock, structural adjustments, devaluation, inflation or cutting in social spending. Ideally they must be designed to terminate when the situation normalises, however, vulnerable households in need of social support never cease to exist, especially in developing countries, making SSN programs a permanent measure to address chronic and transitory food insecurity (Rogers and Coates 2002: 2-3; FAO 2009b: 4). Since the 1990s, SSNs have been marked by four ‘core conceptual shifts’: from relief to risk management; from projects to systems; from assistance to country ownership; and from handouts to investments (FAO 2009b: 41).

The World Bank’s first sector strategy paper for social protection highlighted the need to broaden social protection agenda to encompass “all public interventions that help individuals, households and communities to manage risks or that provide support to

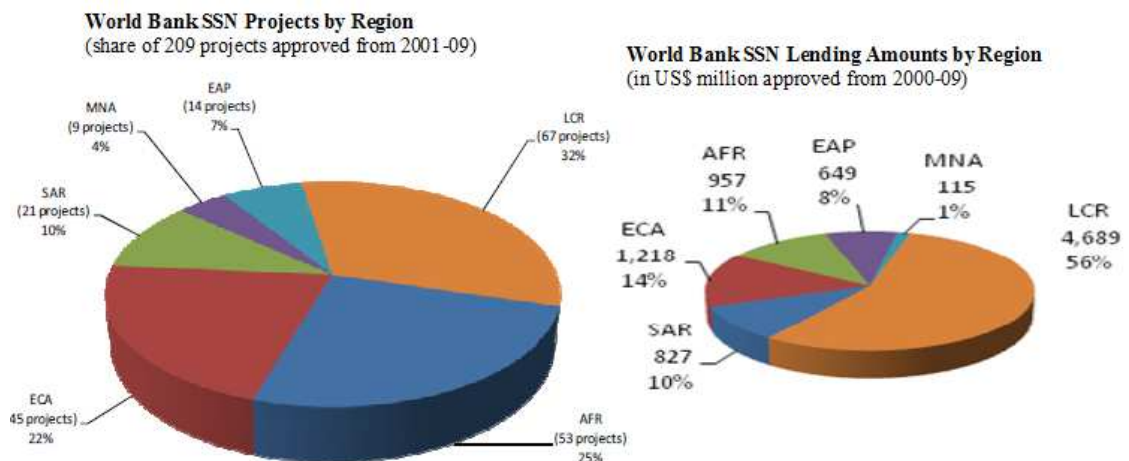
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<sup>22</sup> Food stamps and coupons (denominated either in cash value or in terms of quantity) are parallel currency, functioning like cash in the market. They can be either restricted only to food, though allowing free choice regarding the kind of food purchased, or only to particular food.

the critically poor” (World Bank 2001: ix). A new ‘social risk management’ framework was developed as a diagnostic and analytical instrument, taking into account various sources and economic characteristics of risks, to propose alternative strategies to deal with them (World Bank 2001: 9). The Bank viewed SSNs as “critical for the growth agenda” and for “reducing poverty because they support inclusive growth and provide resources to the most vulnerable in society” (IEG 2011c: 1). SSNs also serve political, social and security purposes and protection role during domestic crises in countries that are in conflict or emerging from conflicts, and in fragile state, and international crises (food fuel and financial) (IEG 2011a: 2).

The Bank’s engagement in SSNs has rapidly increased, committing more than US\$ 11.5 billion for SSNs in 244 loans in 83 countries, US\$ 60 million spent on analytic and advisory activities between 2000 and 2010 (IEG 2011c: 4) (see Figure 5.3).

**Figure 5.3: World Bank’s SSN Lending Portfolio, by Region**



LAC: Latin America; AFR: Africa; ECA: Europe and Central Asia; SAR: South Asia; EAP: East Asia and Pacific; MNA: Middle East and North Africa

Source: IEG 2011c: 11

The Bank’s SSN programmes portfolio supports unconditional cash and in-kind transfers and income-generating and human capital investment (IEG 2011a: 7-8).<sup>23</sup> It

<sup>23</sup> Unconditional cash transfers including noncontributory pension, family/child allowance and disability benefits simply have income effect of increasing the household budget. Unconditional in-kind transfers including food aid, school feeding/take-home rations, housing, energy and utility subsidies, and basic transfer (in-kind transitional safety net assistance to cover needs of people intensely affected by a natural disaster and assist them with provision of starter packs, fertilizers, tools, training, etc.) have both income and price (changing the relative values of goods consumed) effects. Income-generating programmes include workfare/public works programmes and wage/employment subsidies. Human capital investment programmes include school vouchers/scholarships, fee waivers for education and health care, conditional cash transfer in education and health (IEG 2011a: 7-8).

helps countries in developing and implementing SSNs through analytic and advisory activities (AAA), economic and sector work, and non-lending technical assistance, knowledge sharing, research and evaluation (IEG 2011c: 9). A comprehensive evaluation of the Bank-supported SSNs reveals that they focus less on addressing shocks, engage much less with low-income countries and have been unable to adequately integrate short-term project objectives in long-term results framework. An important shift was noticed from emphasis on projects that delivered social assistance benefits to assisting countries build SSN systems and institutions that can respond to poverty, risks and vulnerability within the context of the country (IEG 2011c: 79-83).

WFP views SSNs as “a distinct but complementary tool to enabling development programmes” that protect and build on the gains of the development activities to improve the livelihood of poor people directly when there is a setback or crisis (WFP 2004: 13). WFP’s SSN interventions are based on a spectrum of national factors and circumstances, ranging from countries that do not have any formal SSN to countries that have well-established and fully functional SSN as part of an integrated social protection system. WFP is active in advocating, developing management capacity, designing and implementation, and modeling improvements in the existing system (WFP 2004: 9-11). Integration of SSNs in WFP’s activities has implications for its emergency operations, and relief, recovery and development phase. While WFP’s traditional focus has been conditional transfers in the areas of asset creation, nutrition, health, training and education, WFP SSNs have emphasised participation of beneficiaries in design and implementation to ensure optimal size and timing of transfer and prevent negative impacts on other structures, incorporating gender concerns, and a clear exit strategy (WFP 2004: 16).

SSNs are controversial instruments, accused as ‘short-term palliatives’ with limited long-term benefits that create dependency. However, it has been increasingly realised that they are not only a predictable set of institutionalised mechanisms that help poor people to cope with shocks and meet their minimum consumption requirements but, also strategic tools for poverty reduction and promotion of economic growth (WFP 2004: 4; Brown and Gentilini 2006: 16). For effective implementation, SSNs must be integrated in the broader social protection strategy (Brown and Gentilini 2006: 17) and “tailored to meet context-specific conditions and constraints” (FAO 2009b: 42).



In addition, SSNs must be available in periods of need, must take a long-term perspective and be as predictable and productive as possible (WFP 2004: 8-9).

### ***International Commodity Agreement***

The problem of market instability, which is of particular concern to developing countries and to economies that are mainly dependent on earnings through international trade of primary products, was sought to be addressed through international commodity agreements (ICAs) through which a group of countries undertook to stabilise trade, supplies and prices of a commodity by consensus. International commodity agreements were projected “as instruments for promoting economic stability and growth as well as world food security” and designed to cope with the problems of market instability, especially in developing countries and in economies largely dependent on the earnings from international trade in primary products (Shaw 2007: 65-67).<sup>24</sup> Negotiations for international commodity agreement in food (wheat, sugar, coffee, cocoa, tea, olive oil) and other commodities (tin, copper and rubber) gained momentum in the 1930s, leading to five international agreements by the beginning of 1960s in wheat, sugar, coffee, olive oil, and tin.<sup>25</sup>

In view of excessive supplies, low prices and agricultural protectionism post-World War II, a number of exporting and importing countries negotiated a comprehensive International Wheat Agreement in 1934, to be administered by the Wheat Advisory Committee (the International Wheat Council, IWC since 1942). Successive wheat agreements were implemented in 1953, 1956, 1959 and 1962. However, the shortages in the stocks of exporting countries during the 1960s led to tightening of grain markets under the International Grains Agreement, negotiated by IWC and UNCTAD

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<sup>24</sup> International Commodity Agreements were envisaged to have the following objectives that could contribute to food security: raise or uphold export earnings; promote economic stability; mitigate problems of long-term adjustment in case of persistent disequilibrium between production and consumption; counteract the shrinkage of markets to primary producers; and used as instruments for intergovernmental commodity programming, taking into account both commercial and concessional trade, national policies relating to production, prices and stocks, and the close links between problems of trade, aid and development (Shaw 2007: 66). Three types of agreements that were negotiated by the 1960s were: multilateral contract agreements; international buffer stock; and export restriction agreements (Shaw 2007: 68-69).

<sup>25</sup> For details on International Commodity Agreements see Shaw 2007: 65-75; Gerda Blau (1964), *International Commodity Arrangement and Policies*, Rome: FAO of the United Nations; B. S. Chimni (1987), *International Commodity Agreement: A Legal Study*, London; New York: Croom Helm; Samuel K. Gayi (2004), “Commodity Agreements: Any Relevance in the New Multilateral Trading System”, *Seatini Bulletin*, 7 (17) 15 December: 1-8; Edward M. Leonard (1971), “Commodity Price-Fixing: The International Grains Agreement of 1967”, *Stanford Law Review*, 23 (2) January: 306-329.

in 1967, under the auspices of the GATT Kennedy Round. It consisted of two legally separate but interlinked instruments: a Wheat Trade Convention (WTC) and the Food Aid Convention (FAC). The mid-1970s again witnessed an unexpected shortfall of world grain stock due to excessive purchases by erstwhile Soviet Union and soaring of prices, leading to convening of a negotiating conference to reach an agreement on the size of reserve, individual country commitments and price levels. The 1971 WTC was extended till 1986, without any change, pending resolution of differences.

By the 1980s, regulatory commodity agreements were replaced by increasing privatisation, liberalisation, decentralisation and deregulation. The 1986 WTC expanded coverage to incorporate coarse grains, maize (corn), barley, sorghum, millet, oats, rye etc. In response to the changed international trading context, initiated by the establishment of the WTO, a new Grains Trade Convention (GTC), 1995 was established, which recognised full coverage of wheat, all coarse grains and their products, further extended to include rice (from July 2009). The International Grains Council (IGC), renamed after IWC, was established as an intergovernmental forum for cooperation, to oversee the implementation of the GTC. The GTC (1995) was included within the International Grains Agreement (1995), along with the FAC 1999 (which had replaced the FAC 1955) (IGC 1999).

FAO established eleven Intergovernmental Commodity Groups (IGGs), as sub-committees under the CCP, between 1955 and 1985, in pursuance of its mandate to promote agricultural commodity agreements, laid out in its Constitution.<sup>26</sup> The initial functions of the IGGs pertaining to stabilization, market support, development of draft international commodity agreements, operation of export quotas and setting indicative prices, gradually gave away to consultation on economic aspects of the production, marketing and consumption of the concerned commodity and review of related

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<sup>26</sup> Article 1, Paragraph 2 (f) of the FAO Constitution lays down the functions of FAO as, promoting and, where appropriate, recommending national and international action with respect to “the adoption of international policies with respect to agricultural commodity arrangements” FAO 2001a: 3-4). The following Intergovernmental Commodity Groups (IGGs) were established: Rice (1955), Cocoa (1956), Grains (1957), Citrus Fruit (1959), Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres (1963), Oilseeds, Oils and Fats (1965), Bananas (1965), Hard Fibres (1966), Wine and Vine Products (1968), Tea (1969), Meat (1970) and the Sub-Group on Hides and Skins (1985). The Sub-Group on Tropical Fruits (1997) was merged with the IGG on Bananas. Eight of these IGGs (Bananas, Citrus Fruit, Hard Fibres, Meat, Oilseeds, Oils and Fats, Rice, Tea, and the Sub-Group on Hides and Skins) were designated as International Commodity Bodies, charged with elaboration of commodity-specific global strategies and identification of areas of special significance to developing countries.

policies. Through the IGGS, FAO is engaged in improvement of information and statistics required for analysing market developments and policy decisions at national and international level, the attainment of consensus among exporters and importers, and the achievement of more orderly marketing, including appropriate stabilization and trade measures (Miljan 1980: 50; CCP 2010b: 4-5; 2012: 3-7).<sup>27</sup>

It was realised that commodity agreements in themselves were not sufficient instruments but needed simultaneous concerted efforts, like long-term lending and aid as part of the development programme; compensatory financing; and international agreements for regulation of production and access to markets. However, growth in trade, accompanied by periods of great instability in prices and available supplies of a number of commodities, renewed interest in commodity agreement, “which promise a degree of assurance of outlets for exporters and steady supplies for importers while keeping prices within a reasonable range for importers and exporters alike” (FAO 1980: 59). The main objective of commodity agreements was to provide a systematic method to adjust production and trade patterns to requirements of world demand over a longer time period (Shaw 2007: 72-73).

### ***Compensatory financing***

A poor economy, subjected to foreign exchange constraints and faced with short-term domestic food supply inadequacy (due to production shortfall or increase in food import cost) can avoid a shortfall in consumption by drawing on food reserves, increasing food aid or reducing non-food imports. However, since food reserves in such countries are usually inadequate, availability of international food aid stock is limited and the imports essential to the economy need to be maintained, the primary policy prescription to ascertain national food security is to cushion the effects of fluctuations in domestic production and prices of imported cereals on consumption by assuring the availability of supplies and financing to meet the minimum adequate consumption requirements. Hence, food financing facility is proposed as a viable option to maintain or increase imports of the poor countries to secure a minimally adequate food supply and combat short-term fluctuations in consumption levels

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<sup>27</sup> See, Committee on Commodity Problems (1999), *Role and Functioning of the Intergovernmental Commodity Groups*, Sixty-second Session, 12-15 January 1999, Rome; Committee on Commodity Problems (2001), *Review of Activities of Intergovernmental Commodity Groups*, Sixty-third Session, 6-9 March 2001, Rome.

(Green and Kirkpatrick 1981: 136-137; Huddleston et. al. 1984: 7). A food financing facility will enable the poor countries to finance unforeseen increases in their commercial food import requirement by making available concessionary finance, thereby avoiding harmful consumption adjustments. Since the IMF already has the required operational bureaucracy and therefore, could handle the necessary financing arrangements, the most desirable and feasible food financing facility was proposed by including cereal import expenditure in the IMF's existing CFF for commodity exports or by creating a separate food financing facility (Konandreas et al. 1978: 15-16; Green and Kirkpatrick 1981: 137-138). The IMF CFF has been discussed in Chapter III. Such a financing facility must be accompanied by income and price stabilization to even out consumption variations.

### ***Emergency Finance/Food Stock Reserve***

Accumulating large buffer stocks and creation of an emergency food/finance reserve have often been postulated as a solution for food crisis by contribution to stabilise the world price and supply of grains. Creation of a nationally/internationally managed system of grain reserves was called for to reduce uncontrolled fluctuations in production (available supplies) and world grain price oscillations (Johnson 1975: 56; Konandreas et al. 1987: 17; Brown and Eckholm 1974: 227; Lele and Candler 1981: 105). But there is no consensus on whether the reserve should be international, regional, or national and consist of food or be a monetary reserve.

A relief fund with sufficient financial resources could allow speedy provision of purchasing the required commodities close to the area of emergency instead of a food reserve that might not be adequately flexible and lead to mismatch in the kinds of food stocked and those demanded. However, in case of the fund, procurement at short notice of required quantities for emergency operation could come into direct competition with commercial demand and trigger rise in market prices, which in turn would diminish the relief fund's purchasing power. The alternative to have national food reserves, where governments keep a specified quantities and types of emergency food stocks either from their own supplies, or procure in advance at their own expense, taking full responsibility for maintenance and storage. It is administratively simpler, without involving clearing requirements or currency complications; can compensate farmers for loss of income due to crop failures; can be multipurpose,

addressing emergency, price fluctuation and economic development; and its practical size can be guaranteed by the concerned country (Shaw 2007: 43-44).

Nationally owned stocks act as a contingency against local food shortages and internal difficulty of distribution like transport problem; provides cushion against famine and other emergencies; counter excessive and erratic price fluctuations of staple foods caused by hoarding, speculation and panic; and offer 'elbow room' in national planning to deal with fluctuations economic development process, like inflationary pressures (Shaw 2007: 40; 61-63). On the other hand, internationally financed and supervised food stock/reserve, setting an agreed floor and ceiling price for release, can ensure effective world food security by bringing low stock levels to par. Such stock/reserve is contingent upon an early warning system that can predict world food needs, based on information volunteered by governments, and enable preparation for emergencies, caused by famines, natural calamities or civil strife (George 1976: 280).

According to FAO, it was a good economic policy for every country to hold stocks of its staple foodstuff, in between harvest in countries that are self-sufficient and till the arrival and distribution of adequate replenishments in food importing countries (Shaw 2007: 58). Developing countries require bigger stocks of staple foodstuffs because they are more liable to severe crop shortages due to natural causes; have low consumption level; have imperfect markets due to poor transport and communication, and speculation and hoarding; rely more on their production than on food imports and cultivators retain a substantial proportion of their agricultural output for personal consumption accentuating possibilities of deficit in rural and urban areas (Shaw 2007: 59). Ironically, the countries suffering from chronic malnutrition and, therefore, in the greatest need of such a reserve have the least ability to maintain them, mainly due to absence of or inadequate storage capacity (Shaw 2007: 44).

Since the beginning of the 1950s, some form of international management of global food reserves was recognised, the basic logic being using excess supplies that exceed requirements in some parts of the world to reduce hunger and starvation in other parts that were threatened by low nutrition level and famine-like situation. FAO was entrusted to report on the extent of required international assistance and communicate the same to the UN and relevant specialized agencies (General Assembly 1952: 22). The idea of a world food reserve received further impetus when the UN General

Assembly in 1954 requested FAO “to prepare a factual and comprehensive report of what has been and is being done” in connection to feasibility of, “establishing a world food reserve,” “which could contribute to relieve emergency situation and to counteract excessive price fluctuations” (General Assembly 1954: 14).

The FAO Council established a working group in 1952 to “study and explore suitable ways and means whereby an emergency food reserve can be established and made available promptly to member states threatened or affected by serious food shortages or famine” (General Assembly 1952: 22). The group of experts, appointed by FAO Council, proposed in 1953 the ‘Plan of the Three Circles’, which included:

- (a) An inner circle of financial contributors to provide the nucleus of the plan and to constitute a relief fund based on renewable financial contribution on an agreed scale;
- (b) A second circle of contributors in kind, which provided an additional reserve;
- (c) An outer circle of ad hoc participants and financial contributors to its administrative expenses, but without any other advance commitments (as quoted in Shaw 2007: 44).

According to the FAO plan, both the exporting and importing nations hold agreed minimum levels of food stocks and would equally share the responsibility for maintaining the reserve (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 228). While agricultural surpluses could be used as food aid, like the US Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, popularly known as the Public Law (PL) 480 (detailed in Chapter VI), FAO *Guiding Lines and Principles of Surplus* (1954) recommended the possibility of using international food surpluses to finance economic development in developing countries to be monitored by the CCP- CSSD.

The General Assembly, in a subsequent resolution in 1957, considered the possibility of using food reserves for famine relief and other emergency situations. It also recognised the requirement by many countries to establish national food reserves along with the difficulties faced by countries that are at initial stages of economic development due to low levels of consumption. The resolution requested

an analysis of the possibilities and desirability of promoting, by means of consultation between importing and exporting Member States, the use of surplus foodstuffs in building up national reserves to be used in accordance with internationally agreed principles:

- (a) To meet emergency situations;
- (b) To prevent excessive price increase arising as a result of a failure in local food supplies;

- (c) To prevent excessive price increases resulting from increased demand due to economic development programmes, thus facilitating the economic development of less developed (General Assembly 1957: 11-12).

In 1973, Addeke H. Boerma, the then Director-General of the FAO proposed the creation of a new system of internationally coordinated national food-reserve policies. The rationale for a world reserve of grain stocks was to ensure maintenance of a minimum level of world security against serious food shortages in periods of crop failure or natural disaster (FAO 1976: 3). The FAO International Undertaking on World Food Security (United Nations 1974b: 171-181) laid down the guidelines for establishing and holding national stocks, constituting a framework within which each country would develop its own stock policies according to its circumstances.

The shock of finding that “the global grain bin was nearly empty” in 1974 (Gilmore and Huddleston 1983: 31) stimulated food-policy thinking in the direction of the food security through national and international grain reserves. The UDEHM identified the establishment of an effective world food security system as being equivalent to ensuring “the availability at all times of adequate world supply of basic food-stuffs by way of appropriate reserves...” (Paragraph 12). The Seventh Special Session of the UN General Assembly urged all countries to “build up and maintain world food-grain reserves, to be held nationally or regionally and strategically located in developed and developing, importing and exporting countries, large enough to cover foreseeable major production shortfalls...components of wheat and rice in the total reserve should be 30 million tons” (General Assembly 1975: 8).

Though there is wide acceptance regarding grain reserves to protect the world against undue fluctuations in supplies and prices, opinions differ on the size, management and distribution of the reserve stocks, nature and function of the price provisions, inclusion of coarse grains, and the assistance to be given to developing countries in establishing reserve stocks (Aziz 1977: 17; Miljan 1980: 43). A world food reserve, internationally owned and controlled buffer stocks for food commodities, can counteract (prevent or moderate) excessive price fluctuation by absorbing supplies when they are abundant and prices are relatively low, and releasing them during scarcity when prices are relatively high. International emergency relief through stock and finance reserve must differentiate between famine situation, arising from natural causes of crop failure like drought, flood, plague, blight, earthquake, volcanic

eruptions etc., and chronic malnourishment. However, the possibility of alleviating chronic hunger and malnutrition through a buffer grain stock or finance reserve is limited because they are related to consumers' purchasing power. The practical operation of buffer stocks has certain limitations, like storability, homogeneity and capability of standardisation of the commodity, tradability in an international market, free play of market prices vis-à-vis available supply, absence domination by any one government on purchases and non-substitution of the concerned commodity by a substitute commodity outside the buffer pool (Shaw 2007: 39-42; 46-47).

### ***Gender Equality and Role of Women***

After years of neglecting women as productive agents, their critical role in agriculture, food production, processing and marketing and, therefore, food security has been increasingly realised. It has been observed that supporting women and improving their access to resources and income opportunities, especially in rural areas, goes a long way in improving the condition of the household. Various policy responses have been identified, like removing barriers to women's access to productive resources and non-farm employment; extending education, training and services; improving physical infrastructure through public works; providing home-based technology, light transport facilities, labour saving agricultural tools and processing equipments; child care services, health insurance, and social pensions (FAO/IFAD/ILO 2010: 39-48).

In the follow-up to the UN Decade for Women (1975-85), the Third World Conference on Women, 15-26 July 1985, Nairobi, recognized women's participation and central role in development and production cycle of food and agriculture, including conservation, storage, processing and marketing, particularly in agriculturally based economies.<sup>28</sup> It called for a full integration of women at all levels of development process, project cycles and technological research in food and agriculture to facilitate and enhance their key role and ensure them proper benefits and remunerations. The *Beijing Declaration*, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, 4-15 September 1995, Beijing, further reiterated ensuring "women's

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<sup>28</sup> See, United Nations (1986), *Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace*, 15-26 July 1985, Nairobi, A/CONF.116/28/Rev.1, New York: United Nations, paragraphs 174-188, pp. 43-46.



equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science, technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets...’’<sup>29</sup>

The World Bank oriented its attention towards women in 1979,<sup>30</sup> which was made stronger and more focused in 1987 with establishment of the Women in Development Division. The Bank has progressively integrated women in its analytical and lending activities (World Bank 1990: 18-21),<sup>31</sup> attempting innovative approaches to increase access to land and property, and encourage transfer of new technologies to women farmers and income-earning opportunities through a sericulture project in Jammu and Kashmir (India) and the Chile Small Farmer Services Project (Quisumbing 1994: 66). The 2008 *World Development Report* encouraged reorganisation of land in recognition of women’s rights; improving access to agricultural rural microfinance, employment opportunities, extension services, credit and financial services; facilitating small producer organisations for women; relieving domestic and cultural constraints to women’s participation through gender-sensitive agricultural projects, ensuring coordination between government agencies for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The Bank launched an action plan to advance women’s economic empowerment and opportunities, by providing access to land rights, jobs, agricultural inputs, infrastructure and financial services.<sup>32</sup> The Bank, FAO and IFAD collaborated in a *Sourcebook* to guide practitioners and technical staff in integrating gender issues in designing and implementing agricultural projects and programmes.<sup>33</sup>

Recognising the central role of women in agriculture and rural development, the FAO Conference adopted, at its 28<sup>th</sup> Session in October 1995, the revised FAO Plan of Action for Women in Development (1996-2001). It required FAO (2000a: 50) to intensify efforts in assisting member countries to improve the status and role of rural women and stipulated integration of women in agricultural and rural development in

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<sup>29</sup> See, United Nations (1986), *Report of the Fourth World Conference*, 4-15 September 1995, Beijing, A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, New York: United Nations, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> See, World Bank (1979), *Recognizing the “Invisible” Women in development” The World Bank’s Experience*, October, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

<sup>31</sup> For details on the Bank’s involvement on designing and modifying agricultural service projects for women, see Katrine A. Saito and Daphne Spurling (1992), *Developing Agricultural Extension for Women Farmers*, World Bank Discussion Papers no. 156, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

<sup>32</sup> See, World Bank (2006), *Gender Equality as Smart Economics: A World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (Fiscal years 2007-2010)*, September, Washington. DC: The World Bank.

<sup>33</sup> The World Bank/FAO/IFAD (2009), *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects. It recognized the importance of improving policy and decision-making processes to achieve sustainable livelihood and food security in rural areas that were gender responsive.

The FAO *State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11* specifically highlighted women's crucial contributions in agricultural and rural enterprise in all developing countries as farmers, workers and entrepreneurs and the serious 'gender gap' faced by them in accessing productive resources, reducing their productivity and limiting their contribution to agricultural productivity and economic growth. It was estimated that closing the gender gap in agriculture could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent, raising the total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4 percent (FAO 2010-11: 5) and bringing down the number of undernourished people by 100-150 million people (FAO 2010-11: 42). FAO sought to narrow the gender gap by eliminating discrimination against women in controlling agricultural assets like land, and accessing credit, extension and services, education (FAO 2010-11: 61-62). Putting more resources at women's disposal, will allow them a greater bargaining position in terms of economic decisions on production, consumption and investment within the household, a proven strategy to enhance food security, nutrition, education and health of the family, especially children (FAO 2010-11: 43-44).

The IFAD accords particular attention to poor rural women, who are significant for household food security, in its policy and programme targeting poverty (IFAD 1978: 23). In 2003, IFAD issued the *Framework for Gender Mainstreaming* to reduce the gaps in development opportunities between women and men and incorporate gender concerns in its operations, gender sensitivity in designing and implementing projects.<sup>34</sup> IFAD-funded projects, such as Central Kenya Dry Area Smallholder and Community Services Development Projects, Badia Rangelands Development Project operating in Central and eastern Syria, the Development of Puno-Cusco Corridor Project etc. endeavour to increase women's access to resources and decision-making, encourage their financial autonomy by providing microfinance credit, fostering new enterprises and linking markets with local economy, improve income by creating job opportunities, and educate and train women in new skills (IFAD 2011f).

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<sup>34</sup> See, IFAD (2003), *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in IFAD's Operations, Plan of Action 2003-2006*, Operationalizing the Strategic Framework for IFAD 2002-2006, approved by the Seventy-Eighth Session of the Executive Board in April 2003.

The WFP Gender Policy (2003-2007) lays down enhanced commitments to women to ensure their control over food, food assistance to training activities and increased advocacy of women's role in food security in pursuance to its larger aim of promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming.<sup>35</sup> WFP further sought targeted actions for complete gender mainstreaming in its operations through the 2009 Gender Policy<sup>36</sup> to strengthen and maintain an institutional environment and integration of gender perspective into food and nutrition policies and programmes. Incorporation of gender perspective was made mandatory in all stages of project cycle, including assessment and evaluation, and new programming priorities were identified as, addressing gender-related challenges in complex emergencies, integrating gender perspective and improving gender equality in HIV/AIDS, mother and child health and nutrition and school feeding programmes. The WFP gender policy was to be operationalised through the Corporate Action Plan<sup>37</sup> responsible for translating the gender policy into actions with verifiable indicators and targets, in addition to assigning responsibilities and indicating resource requirements.

### ***Biotechnology and Genetically Modified Food Crops***

Biotechnology, when appropriately integrated with food technologies, promises to be a powerful tool for sustainable development of agriculture and food industry (including fisheries and forestry).<sup>38</sup> However, GMOs have sparked off apprehensions regarding their impact on human health, agriculture and farming community, environment, ecology and bio-diversity, and consumer protection. The importance of consumer protection was highlighted in the 1974-WFC (United Nations 1974b: 159-162) and recognised by the UN *Guidelines for Consumer Protection*, 1985, subsequently expanded in 1999 by the Committee of Sustainable Development,<sup>39</sup> and the 1992-ICN *Plan of Action* (FAO/WHO 1992a: 33-35). The need to conserve and

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<sup>35</sup> See, WFP (2002), *Gender Policy (2003-2007): Enhanced Commitments to Women to Ensure Food Security*, WFP/EB.3/2002/4-A, Executive Board, Third Regular session, October 2002.

<sup>36</sup> See, WFP (2009), *Gender Policy: Promoting Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Addressing Food and Nutrition Challenges*, WFP/EB.1/2009/5-A/Rev.1, Executive Board, First Regular Session, 9-11 February 2009.

<sup>37</sup> See, WFP (2009), *WFP Gender Policy: Corporate Action Plan (2010-2011)*, WFP/EB.2/2009/4-C, Executive Board, Second Regular Session, 9-13 November 2009.

<sup>38</sup> See *FAO Statement on Biotechnology* (March 2000), available at: <http://www.fao.org/biotech/fao-statement-on-biotechnology/en/>

<sup>39</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/39/248 – *Consumer Protection* (thirty-sixth session, 9 April 1985).

sustainably use agricultural genetic resources, developed by farming communities for sustaining and furthering developing food and agricultural production, and enable the consumers to make informed choices, have generated international regulatory framework for monitoring genetic resources and labelling practices.

Intergovernmental control over biotechnology and GM foods has developed under the auspices of the UN system. FAO has played a central role in initiating action to collect, conserve, evaluate and document the genetic qualities existing in highly variable crop varieties. It has provided a secretariat for the International Board for Plan Genetic Resources (IBPGR) since 1974, recommended standards for long-term seed conservation, engineering and designing seed storage facilities, and sponsored the development of international computerised record to store and make available data on genetic resources (FAO 1980: 42; Saouma 1993: 90-51). The FAO *International Undertaking on Plan Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (1983), monitored by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, harmonises access and socio-economic interest of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

FAO Intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, broadened from the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (CPGR) in 1995, is a major international forum for development of policies and negotiations of agreements on genetic resources (FAO 2000a: 35-36). In 1996, 150 countries adopted the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at the Leipzig International Technical Conference. The first *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* was also submitted at the Leipzig Conference. The 30th Session of the FAO Conference, held in 1999, endorsed genetic resources as a high-priority area and stressed the importance of a binding instrument that would regulate access to and the sharing of benefits from plant genetic resources (FAO 2000a: 36).

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), established a legally binding framework for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.<sup>40</sup> Subsequent negotiations and adoption of the Global Plan of Action at the 1996

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<sup>40</sup> The full text of the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992), signed at the 1992 Earth Summit, entered into force on 29 December 1993, is available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf>

Leipzig International Technical Conference, culminated in the adoption of the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* in 2001 in harmony with the CBD, entering into force on 29 June 2004. The Conference of the Parties to the CBD adopted the *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety* on 29 January 2000, to govern the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology, the *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources* on 29 October 2010, and supplementary conventions. In a *Statement on Biotechnology* issued in March 2000, FAO recognised the potential of genetic engineering in increasing agricultural production and productivity. However, concerned about the potential risks posed on human and animal health, and the environment, FAO supported a science-based evaluation system to objectively determine the benefits and risks of each GMO, calling for cautious case-by-case approach to address legitimate concerns of each product and process.

While the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) could apply to GMOs, there is no international agreement specifically governing trade in food and food aid containing GMOs. The UN policy vested the decision pertaining to acceptance of GM commodities in the recipient countries, while WFP policy requires all donated food to meet safety standards of both the donor and recipient countries, and all applicable international standards, guidelines and recommendations. In the context of the controversial use of GM maize as food aid by WFP in Southern Africa in 2002, FAO and WHO held that no formal safety assessment of GM foods had been undertaken by them, but expressed confidence that the principal country of origin has applied its established national food safety risk assessment procedures to certify their safety for human consumption, along with assurance that it was unlikely to present any human health risk.<sup>41</sup> The World Bank saw considerable hope in biotechnology and devised innovative funding mechanisms and programmes to incorporate it. It encouraged developing countries to increase the rate of preparation of biotechnology programs that require financial support. The Bank provided increased support for agricultural biotechnology by

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<sup>41</sup> See, *UN Statement on the use of GM Foods as Food Aid in Southern Africa* (August 2002), joint statement released by UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa on behalf of FAO, WHO and WFP. Also see, *WFP Policy on Donations of Foods Derived from Biotechnology* (2003), WFP/EB.A/2003/5-B/Rev.1, Executive Board Annual Session, 28-30 May 2003.

incorporating additional biotechnology component in national agricultural research projects supported by it, encouraging participation from private sector, and providing funds for international agricultural research centres to increase their biotechnology research capacity (World Bank 1991: 34).

The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC),<sup>42</sup> approved by FAO, under the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), providing normative-operative synergy, is formal and legally binding to be implemented by governments to protect their cultivated and wild plant resources and plant industries from harmful pests, while ensuring that these measures are not used as unjustified international trade barriers. The 1986 GATT Uruguay Round recognised it as a standard-setting organization for the SPS Agreement. The IPPC evolved from an international treaty into a dynamic body with standard-setting responsibilities directly linked with regulating multilateral trade (FAO 2000a: 34-35). The FAO/WHO CAC established an ad hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (1999-2003 and 2005-2009) to provide guidelines, standards and recommendations for foods derived from biotechnology through scientific evidence and risk analysis. The Task Force formulated *Guidelines for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants* in 2003,<sup>43</sup> along with other guidelines, before being dissolved in 2008.

The international agreements, embodied in the FAO/WHO CAC and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, while attempting to balance the benefits of the new technologies with the risks to people and environment, are seen as enforcing 'one-size-fits-all' regulatory procedures and standards for agricultural biotechnology. Primarily motivated by the need to establish new, or elaborate existing food policy and control regimes, these regulations adversely impact the choices of the developing countries in relation to GM crops and food since they have fewer institutional and scientific resources to draw upon. However, as no scientific innovations and technologies is correct for all people in all places at all times, and particularly in case

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<sup>42</sup> *The International Plant Protection Convention* (IPPC) was adopted by FAO on 6 December 1951 and came into force in April 1951. It was amended on 28 November 1979 and further revised on 17 November 1997, and finally entered into force on 2 October 2005. Since 1992, the IPPC Secretariat is housed at the FAO Rome headquarters.

<sup>43</sup> *The Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants* (2003) CAC/GL 45-2003, is available at: [ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/guide\\_plants\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/es/esn/food/guide_plants_en.pdf)

of GM crops is it difficult to concretely predict its evolution and impact on food security, it is alleged that such regulatory policies impede the development, adoption, commercialisation and trade in agricultural biotechnology, by establishing barriers and burdensome regulations to the new products, which have the ability to enhance food security (Millstone and Zwanenberg 2003: 655; Bobo 2007: 937-940). Since the impact of GMOs are local, granting autonomy to individual developing countries to establish its own regulatory standards is seen as more prudent to avoid tensions between domestic objectives and commitments arising from international agreements. Some multilateral collaboration might be necessary given the limited financial and human resources of these countries (Millstone and Zwanenberg 2003: 655-656).

Organic agriculture is postulated as an alternative to GMOs, building on traditional knowledge and combining modern scientific methods to make production sustainable and eco-friendly. Since it relies on local renewable resources, organic farming reduces rural communities' dependence and vulnerability to external factors and is suitable to smallholder farmers. The FAO/WHO CAC (2002: 3) defines organic agriculture as:

a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agroecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It emphasizes the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs, taking into account the regional conditions require locally adapted systems. This is accomplished by using, where possible, cultural, biological and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials...

While marketing, certification and organic labels are required to distinguish products that are produced by organic agriculture principles, a joint research by UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity-building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development advanced organic agriculture as conducive to food security in Africa.<sup>44</sup> However, doubts have been expressed on the long-term sustainability of intensive agriculture and production on commercial scale through total organic farming.

FAO, International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) and UNCTAD convened a Task Force on Harmonisation and Equivalence in Organic Agriculture (2003-2008), to facilitate dialogue between public and private institutions

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<sup>44</sup> UNEP-UNCTAD (2008), *Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Africa*, September, is available at: [http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/publications/UNCTAD\\_DITC\\_TED\\_2007\\_15.pdf](http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/publications/UNCTAD_DITC_TED_2007_15.pdf)  
UNEP-UNCTAD (2008), *Best Practices for Organic Policy. What developing country Governments can do to promote the organic agriculture sector*, February, is available at: [http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/publications/Best\\_Practices\\_UNCTAD\\_DITC\\_TED\\_2007\\_3.pdf](http://www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf/publications/Best_Practices_UNCTAD_DITC_TED_2007_3.pdf)

(intergovernmental, governmental and civil society) and bring greater international coherence to reduce technical barriers to organic trade and regulatory activities in the organic agriculture sector. The FAO Organic Agriculture Programme, developed since 1999, seeks to build capacities of member countries in organic production, processing, certification and marketing to attain long-term goal of food security. The FAO Inter-Departmental Working Group on Organic Agriculture, established to initiate and implement inter-disciplinary action in organic agriculture, organised an International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Rome, 3-5 May 2007, to explore the potential contribution of organic agriculture to food availability, accessibility, utilization, supply stability, and sustainable food security.

Unprecedented increase in technological advances, corporatisation, extension of international markets, foreign investment and organizational changes affecting food and agricultural systems, have generated concerns regarding monitoring and ensuring food quality and standards, and ethical dynamics. Biases against the poor and erosion of biodiversity, threatening cultural identity and diversity, are perhaps the most common ethical issues in food and agriculture, particularly due to activities of agribusiness corporations and push for biotechnology and biofuels. Recognising these as areas for inter-disciplinary actions, FAO established an internal Committee and a Sub-Committee on Ethics in Food and Agriculture to oversee its work, and appointed a Panel of eminent Experts in Ethics and Food and Agriculture to address and advice on ethical question in FAO's field of expertise.<sup>45</sup> The most controversial and broadest array of ethical issues was that of GMOs. In view of confusing claims and counter-claims by scientists, media and agribusiness corporations, FAO (2001b: 25-26) stressed the need for precise and effective risk management and communication.

The three international institutions involved with labelling of GM foods are the FAO/WHO CAC (Committee on Food Labelling and Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on foods derived from biotechnology), the Cartagena Protocol and the WTO, where the issue eludes consensus and remains a sensitive one. Based on the prevailing socio-economic and political climate of a country or region, different governments have responded to GM crops in varied ways through establishing regulatory process

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<sup>45</sup> See, FAO (2001), *Ethical Issues in Food and Agriculture*, FAO Ethics Series, and reports of the Panel of Eminent Experts on Ethics in Food and Agriculture (2000-2003 and 2004-2007).



to approve new varieties and monitor the effects. The aggressive American industrial push for GM crops suffered a backlash due to failing enthusiasm of the European farmers, primarily due to consumer fear in the wake of ‘mad cow disease’ in Great Britain and dioxin-tainted foods from Belgium. Anti-GM protests, particularly vocal in Europe in order to gain consumer confidence, pushed the EU (earlier Community) to establish a 1 per cent threshold for contamination of unmodified foods with GMOs.<sup>46</sup> While Egypt has stopped the import of genetically engineered wheat, Spain has imposed moratorium on genetically modified organisms and Japan has made health testing of GM foods mandatory since April 2000, several countries including Austria, Brazil, China, South Korea, Angola, Sweden, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the EU have banned GM foods (Whitman 2000: 8-12).

Mechanisms for labelling of GM foods and food products, requiring food processors, retailers and producers to display whether their products contain GMO, is critical to not only inform consumers but also for the purpose of importing processed foods.<sup>47</sup> Labelling requirement for foods derived from biotechnology was recognised in US Food and Drug Administration’s 1992 Statement of Policy.<sup>48</sup> The EU introduced labelling policies in 1997, further refined in 2003, requiring its member to mark all packaged foods containing GM corn and soy.<sup>49</sup> Labelling regulations were adopted by non-European food-importing countries, with varying degree of enforcement – mandatory or voluntary, either on the process or on the product (see Table 5.2). The outcome of labelling remains contested in terms of the burden/cost involved in implementation and consumer and farmer benefit. Expected opposition arise from

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<sup>46</sup> See John Hodgson (1999), “EC says 1% is Acceptable GMO “contamination””, *Nature Biotechnology*, 17 (12) December: 1155-1156. For a detailed discussion on the European-American debate on food derived from biotechnology and GMOs, see Poli 2004: 626-629.

<sup>47</sup> For a comprehensive understanding of the existing international labeling policies, see Colin A. Carter and Guillaume P. Gruère (2003), *International Approaches to the Labeling of Genetically Modified Foods*, Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, Davis: University of California (Agricultural Issues Center, and Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics); Gruère and Rao (2007).

<sup>48</sup> See, *Statement of Policy – Foods Derives from New Plant Varieties* (1992), Guidance to industry for foods derived from new plant varieties, US Food and Drug Administration Federal Register, Volume 57, Number 104, Department of Health and Human Services. It is alleged that the policy’s permissive regulatory approach was a response to political pressure, achieved by exploiting gaps in scientific knowledge, clever interpretation of existing food laws and limited public involvement in the policy process. See, David L. Pelletier (2006), “FDA’s Regulations of Genetically Engineered Foods: Scientific, Legal and Political Dimensions”, *Food Policy*, 31 (6) December: 570-591.

<sup>49</sup> See Regulation (EC) No. 258/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 1997 concerning novel foods and novel food ingredients, and Regulation (EC) No. 1830/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2003 concerning the traceability and labelling of genetically modified organisms and the traceability of food and feed products produced from genetically modified organisms and amending Directive 2001/18/EC.

MNC's, involved in agribusiness, insisting on voluntary labelling, based on demands of free markets. Consumer interest groups demand mandatory labelling, based partly on consumers' right to information and choice, and partly on the unreliability of corporations at self-compliance with existing safety regulations. Very few developing countries have actually been able to effectively implement labelling regulations.

**Table 5.2: Type of Labelling Policies and Degree of Enforcement**  
(as of February 2007)

	Countries with enforced labelling policies	Countries with partially enforced or non-enforced labelling policies	Countries with plans to introduce a labelling policy
Mandatory Labelling	Australia, China, EU, New Zealand, Norway, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan	Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Indonesia, Mauritius, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Thailand (partial), Ukraine, Vietnam	Bolivia, Cameroon, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, India, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines (voluntary), Singapore, Uganda, UAE, Uruguay, Zambia
Voluntary Labeling	Canada, Hong Kong, South Africa, USA	-	-

Source: Gruère and Rao 2007: 52, Table 1

India, a member of the WTO, a ratifying member of the Bio-safety Protocol and an active member of the Codex Alimentarius, has also made a move to certify and label GM food crop for large scale trial on a case-by-case basis. The commercial release and cultivation of any GM products require the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and should adhere to the Biosafety Regulatory Mechanisms for GMO and Products Thereof, determined by the Department of Biotechnology (Ministry of Science and Technology). In 2002, Bt cotton (*bacillus thuringiensis*) was approved for commercialisation in India, resulting in an evident leap in cotton production that turned India into a major cotton exporter (Bansal and Gruère 2010: 1; Mahadevappa 2010). Other GM crops waiting in pipeline for field trials and approval include: rice, cauliflower, tomato, groundnut, cabbage, potato, lady's finger, corn and brinjal.

Bt brinjal, developed and promoted by US agribusiness company, Monsanto, and its Indian partner the Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company (Mahyco), the first GM food crop to be considered for commercialisation in India, had a more controversial fate. Despite approval by the GEAC, following strong opposition by environmentalists, farmers, scientists, political parties and consumers, an indefinite and open-ended moratorium was put on Bt Brinjal, owing to uncertain effects on people, public health, socio-economy, bio-safety and environment.<sup>50</sup> The National Biodiversity Authority of India (NBA)<sup>51</sup>, after a year-long investigation, found the Monsanto guilty of bio-piracy and violation of the *Biological Diversity Act, 2002*,<sup>52</sup> for allegedly accessing several varieties of brinjal to develop the genetically modified version, without prior permission from the NBA. Caution needed to be exercised because a food crop was involved and it was also feared that such an approval will allow the MNCs to monopolise brinjal cultivation in India and threaten indigenous brinjal varieties.

The GOI issued two draft rules in 2006 directing compulsory labelling and approval requirement of GM food and the products derived thereof in the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules (1955).<sup>53</sup> The threat of illegal proliferation of Bt varieties and GM foods point towards the need for an independent biotechnology regulation and a transparent testing and certifying system that propelled the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Bill, 2011. The BRAI, proposed to be under the Ministry of Science and Technology, would be the sole agency responsible for regulating GMOs throughout the country, including research, transport, manufacture, import and use. It is being opposed on the grounds that it will make the clearance of GM crops in India easy by lowering the bar for approval and would act as an agency to stimulate investment in biotechnology rather than upholding the standards of GM regulation.

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<sup>50</sup> See Kavitha Kuruganti (2006), "Biosafety and beyond: GM Crops in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41 (40) 7-13 October: 4245-4247.

<sup>51</sup> National Biodiversity Authority of India (NBA) was established in 2003 by the Government of India at Chennai (Tamil Nadu) for pursuing the implementation of the *Biological Diversity Act, 2002*.

<sup>52</sup> Full text of the Act can be accessed at:

[http://www.nbaindia.org/act/pdf/Biological\\_Diversity\\_Act\\_2002.pdf](http://www.nbaindia.org/act/pdf/Biological_Diversity_Act_2002.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Draft rule 37-E *Labeling of Genetically Modified Food* requires mandatory labeling of all primary or processed foods, food ingredients, or food additives derived from a GM food, indicating that the food has been subjected to genetic modification, and labels for imported GM foods must indicate the status of approval in the country of origin.

### ***Environment and Climate Change***

The international institutional setting to address food security and climate change linkages include the IPCC, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),<sup>54</sup> the Kyoto Protocol<sup>55</sup> and Agenda 21 (sustainable agriculture and rural development).<sup>56</sup> The UNFCCC provided an overall policy framework for addressing climate change issues. According to Article 2 of the UNFCCC, achievement of the ultimate objective of the Conventions, “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” should be “within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.”

Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD), prioritised maintenance and improvement of high potential agricultural lands to support an expanding population through agrarian reform, participation, income diversification, land conservation and improved management of resources. SARD envisaged international technical and scientific cooperation based on participation from rural people, national governments and the private sector. It identified 12 programmes areas (specifying the basis for action, objectives, activities to be undertaken and the means of implementation) to increase sustainable food production and enhance food security, with FAO as the task manager.<sup>57</sup> These involved ensuring stable supplies of nutritionally adequate food, access to those supplies by vulnerable groups and production for markets through education initiative, economic incentives and development of appropriate and new technologies; alleviation of poverty through income generation; and natural resource management and environmental protection.

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<sup>54</sup> The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* was negotiated and adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit, entering into force on 21 March 1994. Along with the UNFCCC, the 1992 Earth Summit also adopted the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as a formal treaty.

<sup>55</sup> The *Kyoto Protocol* to the UNFCCC (1997) was adopted on 11 December 1997, entered into force on 16 February 2005.

<sup>56</sup> Agenda 21 (the UN Programme of Action from Rio) was adopted by 1992 Earth Summit, along with the Rio Declaration and the Statement on Forest Principles, as non-binding statements.

<sup>57</sup> Along with Chapter 14, FAO is also task manager for other land-related chapters of Agenda 21: Chapter 10 on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources; Chapter 11 on Combating Deforestation; and Chapter 13 on Sustainable Mountain Development. FAO is also partner in implementing several chapters of Agenda 21, notably, Chapter 12 on Combating Desertification and Drought; Chapter 15 on Biological Diversity; Chapter 17 on Oceans and Seas; Chapter 18 on Freshwater; and Chapter 19 on Toxic Chemicals.

The CSD, at its Eighth session, initiated the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture,<sup>58</sup> involving four key stakeholders – representatives of agribusiness, trade unions from the agriculture sectors, NGOs and farmers, including representatives of indigenous people, youth, scientists and women. The 2002-WSSD further reaffirmed the principles of 1992 Earth Summit, reviewed the implementation of Agenda 21, and recommended strengthening and improvement of coordination among existing initiatives to enhance sustainable agricultural production and food security. Increasing food security, productivity, availability, affordability and security, in environmentally suitable way, constituted a fundamental component of the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD. It called for strengthening institutional arrangements at all levels to enhance integration of sustainable development policies and programmes, and collaboration within the UN system, among regional commissions and between governmental and non-governmental actors.<sup>59</sup>

FAO's environmental activities are linked with sectoral programmes and projects. An Inter-Departmental Working Group was established in 1969 to develop and coordinate environmental programmes of FAO in an integrated manner, which was strengthened by the establishment of the Environment Programme Coordinating Unit as its executing secretariat, following the UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 (FAO 1980: 50). It looked at the possibility of encouraging farmers by providing incentives to reduce the negative side-effects, while meeting the growing demands of food and fibre changes, bringing about changes in agricultural practices that might contribute to addressing environmental problems generated both within and outside agriculture (FAO 2007: 9-11). The FAO and the UNFCCC/IPCC advocate a strategic approach to protecting food security, integrating adaptation to and mitigation of climate change (FAO 2008a: 31-69; IPCC 1995: 25-42; IPCC 2007: 56-62).

IFAD collaborates with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), an independent financial organization that funds projects and programmes in developing countries, related to biodiversity, land degradation, agro-chemical pollutants etc., to protect

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<sup>58</sup> See, *Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture*, E/CN.17/2000/3, adopted at the Eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 24 April-5 May 2000. Also see "Chapter II: Chairman's Summary of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Agriculture", in *Report on the Eight Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development* (30 April 1999 and 24 April-5 May 2000), E/CN.17/2000/20, ECOSOC Official Records, 2000, Supplement No. 9, pp. 38-47.

<sup>59</sup> See, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, 26 August-4 September 2002, Johannesburg, South Africa, A.CONF.199.20.

global environment, through an IFAD-GFF Unit, established in 2004. IFAD has adopted a *Climate Change Strategy* (2010) and *Environment and Natural Resource Management Policy* (2011). Climate-related IFAD-supported projects have been undertaken in Mongolia (Livestock Sector Adaptation Project), Kenya (Mount Kenya East Pilot Project for Natural Resource Management), Bangladesh (Special Assistance Project for Natural Resource Management), Sudan (Western Sudan Resource Management Programme), Ethiopia (Pastoral Community Development Project), and Mali (Kidal Integrated Rural Development Programme) (IFAD 2010a: 12).

WFP operations have not formally integrated long-term climate change risks, however, many of its activities in progress support climate variability, either as a positive secondary outcome or co-benefit of actions undertaken to stabilise food security. WFP's food assistance programmes that support soil and water conservation, watershed rehabilitation, reforestation, and sustainable agriculture projects have associated climate change benefits. A review of WFP's emergency interventions, recovery and rehabilitation work, development programmes and operations for capacity building highlights the following entry points for it to foster climate-related adaptation and mitigation: response to climate-related hunger crises and disasters; disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness; community-based adaptation; social protection and safety nets; mitigation; and advocacy and public policy (Urquhart 2010: 8-9). The linkage between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in WFP was reiterated in its policy on climate change that explores ways for partnering with FAO and IFAD to promote better risk assessment, early warning, preparedness, response and rehabilitation in high-risk food-insecure countries.<sup>60</sup>

Despite being an old factor in world diplomacy, the globalisation of food has not been accompanied by global policy coordination (Nau 1978: 776). There may be as many policy approaches as there are observers of the world food problem and enthusiasts of global food security. Just as causes of hunger vary across sectors, actors, processes and dimensions, so does policy advice to deal with them. This can be attributed to the fact that decision-makers engaged in food policy at national and international levels view and focus on the food problem from the perspective of their subjective

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<sup>60</sup> See, WFP (2011), *Climate Change and Hunger: Towards a WFP Policy on Climate Change*, WFP/EB.A/2011/5-F, Executive Board Annual Session, 6-10 June 2011.

interest and their contextual orientation, which vary dramatically. This can lead to both duplicity of efforts and a wide range of options. While multiplicity can thwart progress towards achieving a coordinated dialogue and comprehensive policy approach, it can also draw attention to diverse and varied measures, providing a rich platter of alternatives to select from according to need and suitability, either to address a specific concern or adapt to country circumstances.

### **Nuances of National and International Institutional Food Policy Initiatives**

Will it be more effective to conceptualise and analyse food issues from a global perspective, or are regional and national level approaches more appropriate to address food problems and ensure food and nutrition security?

There is no doubt that the dynamics of food production, distribution and consumption is deeply influenced by local and regional variations, however, the individual need for food is a global constant and the increasing incidence of hunger is a threat to global food security. The dynamics of global food security has transcended national boundaries as food aid and trade policies are influenced by international actors and examining the food problem only from national and regional perspective will be extremely narrow. In the absence of a comprehensive analysis and plan of action that approaches food as a global system, national and regional commitments will be rendered irrelevant (Thompson 1981: 202). “Global approaches often have the virtue of breadth and coherence, at the expense of oversimplification and detachment from behavioural dynamics; lower-level approaches buy clear views of the trees at the risk of losing sight of the forests” (Thompson 1981: 203). Both the approaches can be effectively integrated, supplementing and complementing each other, to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of global food security.

Achievement of food and nutrition security requires coordinated policies and actions at the national and international levels. An integrated analytical framework of food policy analysis connects statistical data (on patterns of food production, marketing and consumption, domestic price structure relative to international prices, and international trade) with the process of decision-making in food system, intervened by economic and political forces and technical signals from both national and international markets (Timmer et al. 1983: 10; Timmer 1986: 18).

There exists a general agreement among national and international actors on the agenda of achieving food and nutrition security. But, the experience of hunger is a local phenomenon and internationally bargained and coordinated, food policies are nationally decided and implemented. National governments, especially in developing countries, are not passive recipients of international institutional policy advice. Though constrained by international or systemic factors, their actual behaviour in terms of agricultural policies cannot be solely explained through these constraints. The developed countries, on the other hand, influence policy outcomes in accordance with their interests, mainly owing to their financial contributions. Since “policies, like resources, are fungible, and resistant governments can yield to one type of policy while pursuing their objectives by some other policy” (Paul Streeten as quoted in Uvin 1994: 248), national governments have considerable scope of manoeuvring the international system. Hence, it is favourable to adopt “a nuanced and balanced analysis of government policies, which integrates the analysis of international as well as domestic constraints; which, in other words, takes into account system-level as well as actor-level factors, internal and external processes” (Uvin 1994: 251).

The problems of global food security are complex, vast and urgent and can be solved only if national efforts are supported by international assistance and cooperation (Krishnaswamy 1963: 8-9). Since governments are mainly responsible at the national level, development strategies must be formulated with clearly defined components for achieving food and nutrition security. International community can supplement national efforts by adjusting their procedures and management to the needs of the countries; improving internal co-ordination of donor agencies’ actions; and providing training and advice to strengthen the countries’ capacities to plan and manage their policies and programmes. Apart from technical solutions, effective actions to resolve the world food problem require cohesive global governance, political will and resource commitments (Shaw 2007: 458; Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 51; Mayor and Bindé 2001: 221). While most countries do not have a food policy that is distinct from an agricultural policy, the international community has failed to demonstrate a unified approach to address agricultural and food issues, and develop world food security system in which, through coordinated policies, improved arrangements for emergencies, food aid, harmonious trade and production policies, the world would achieve a better balance between demand and supply of food (Marei 1976: 100).



A world food policy might appear to be a misleading term. Without an effective supranational authority, the implementation of inter-governmental agreements entirely rest on the concurrence with national policy. Even participation in apparently multilateral actions such as a commodity agreement is actually premised on national policy objectives. Thus, “discussion of international policy must be at root a discussion of national actions and reactions” (Josling 1980: 47). Food resources can be used by governments in international diplomacy to influence international food markets, and economic and political relationships beyond markets (Nau 1978: 777) and “as governmental decisions affecting global food relations become more explicit, conflicts and bargains among governments will define the limits, tasks and rules of acceptable global food management” (Nau 1978: 778-779).

Despite the undeniable primacy of international declarations and policy advice, governments receive very little practical assistance in policy/decisions-making relating to food security. The standard global models of food security espoused by international institutions are based on assumptions that expect them to be universally applicable – across countries, continents and a range of different and changing policy objectives, institutional development, infrastructure, data availability and cereal demands (Lele and Candler 1981: 117-118; Pottier 1999: 16; Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 615). Food issues being multisectorally interconnected and interdependent, the impact of policy decisions will vary between and within locations and over time. However, policy design and implementation seldom appreciate and reflect the interlinkages between biological, nutritional, ecological, social, cultural, economic and political aspects of food, and agricultural production, distribution, marketing, consumption, income, poverty, trade and aid relationships. Since centrally designed policies are not experienced similarly, with equal intensity, across locations and regions, ignoring local resource and power dynamics will render policy interventions ineffective. It is imperative to simultaneously integrate the multiple aspects of food into the policy framework (Pottier 1999: 16-27).

However, international schemes of food security fail to consider that ‘food security’ entails different conceptions for different sections of the world. There cannot be a uniform food policy for all the developing countries or developed countries as envisaged by a global food policy paradigm. Hence, it cannot be assertively stated

what a particular country should or should not do to solve its food problem, nor is it permissible to strictly separate national policies from international action. For example, the ASEAN countries – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand – are mainly dependent on rice as their staple diet and ‘food security’ for them is synonymous to security of rice supply (Siamwalla 1981: 79; Marei 1976: 88). Norman E. Borlaug (1975: 17) made an interesting suggestion of locking up in a room all Cabinet Ministers and the heads of Planning Commissions, for fourteen days without food and without water for the last three days, when they debate policy in the hope of generating more realistic food and agricultural policies.

For international food security schemes to be effective and responsive to the needs of the recipient countries, they are required to be tailored to the individual country circumstances and needs. Extensive local research can inform rural food security models regarding improvement of drought-resistant crops production, input supply, marketing, communications network and farm household storage that are context-specific and integral for rural development (Lele and Candler 1981: 118). Global one-size-fits-all solutions to address hunger and undernourishment are hardly viable, policy prescriptions varying in terms of context and country. Inclusion of all actors at all levels of policy-making is important to improve designing, monitoring and implementing food policies. At the national government levels, combined skills and efforts of all relevant ministries, commissions and technical departments is essential for effective, integrated and cross-sectoral initiatives. Participation of CSO/NGOs agribusiness corporations and farmers’ and consumers’ organisations at regional, national and local levels of policy-making process will enrich the policy outcomes. The structures of global governance and international institutions create the environment in which decision-making on food policies take place. The inter-governmental organisations allow interactions among stakeholders are critical for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of food security policy as an issue cutting across several sectors and having multiple dimensions (FAO 2009b: 46-47).

In an interesting assessment of the policies, strategies and interventions of the UN system and the World Bank, it was observed that, “there is a general deficiency in analysis of the extent and the underlying causality of food insecurity and vulnerability, and of the poverty of specific population groups” (FAO-FIVIMS 2003:

3). Based on the review of 50 Common Country Assessment (CCA)<sup>61</sup> report of the UN and 25 World Bank PRSPs, covering regions with widely varied development statuses, undertaken by FAO-FIVIMS initiative, it emerged that priority setting and analysis of food security, vulnerability and poverty were not consistent with policies, strategies and interventions aimed at alleviating them. Moreover, duplication between CCA reports and PRSPs were observed since both started from different perspectives, involving different stakeholders seldom relying on information and data contained in the other, yet resulting in similar outcomes in terms of development priorities. Hence, an “integrated framework to address food insecurity and vulnerability, and poverty in CCA reports and PRSPs” was strongly recommended (FAO-FIVIMS 2003: 37-38).

The IFIs, concerned mainly with the balance of payments and servicing of the burdensome foreign debts, emphasise on export-oriented development models, while exercising strong pressure on the governments of the developing countries to cut food subsidies and eliminate cheap food policies for the marginal rural and urban poor. With lands for subsistence agriculture becoming progressively less available and wages declining when price of the export product falls drastically on international commodity markets, the poor find themselves caught in a vicious circle. Hence, multiple structural changes are necessary, like land reform more genuinely adapted to the needs of the small and tenant farmers and landless labourers, along with radical agrarian changes in credit, marketing and pricing mechanisms in order to favour the interests of the small producer of food crops for domestic consumption rather than the large agro-export producers (Plant 1984: 188-189).

It is alleged that UN system’s emphasis on increasing agricultural production has been bereft of political and social considerations of food security. Those who exert power and influence decision-making within the UN system and IFIs on development theory and practice in general, and food, nutrition and agricultural policy in particular, are guided by economic concerns and not convinced about social and political change as being pivotal to ensure food security. The barriers for improving food security of the poor people of the world are neither scientific nor economic, but are political in

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<sup>61</sup> The UN Development Group Office established Common Country Assessment (CCA) process as a national follow-up tool for international summits. It acts as a planning framework for the development operations of the UN system at the country level by describing the evolution of the national situation and compiling information from a wide array of sources and organizations to facilitate an in-dept analysis of development problems (FAO-FIVIMS 2003: 2).

nature. Hence, to abolish the ‘twin scourges’ of hunger and poverty, food policy decision must factor in political decisions, social reform plans, economic and ecological considerations, combined with science, technology, free flow of information and improved communication, as fundamentally significant components of sound development that enable vulnerable people to move out of poverty, hunger and malnutrition (Simon and Simon 1973: 31; George 1979: 59; Harle 1978: 269; Johnson 1975: 79; Sachs 1975: 80; Marei 1976: 37).

It is evident from the persistence of acute global food crisis that despite substantial increase in knowledge and experimentation, critical gap exists between the potential and the actual. The possible explanation could be ignoring the role of ‘professional politicians’, “the persons who must adopt, finance, advocate, and defend the policies, programs, and projects recommended by the scientific and technical professionals” (Wharton 1977: 5-6). Food policy decisions are made by politicians, based on technical advice from professionals, economists, scientists, agriculturalists etc., who prioritise available technologies that can be used to influence food supply and existence of organizational structure that can be assigned the responsibility of implementation (Underwood 1977: 243). Indeed, power and politics are critical factors, sometimes of such overriding importance as to constitute a constraint on achievement of food security and nutritional improvement (Omawale 1984: 4). Hence, addressing global food problem requires an understanding of issues and process by the national political leadership and international community, an earnest commitment of resources and political will to back up the understanding and commitment. At the same time, it is important not to allow discussions on food and nutrition security to degenerate into political and ideological disputes, where hunger is used to manoeuvre decisions that actually impact the poor vulnerable to hunger.

## **Conclusion**

The nature of the UN system’s approach to food security policy advice and practice has hardly followed a uniform trajectory. Distinctive phases of prioritising different aspects of food policy in relation to world events, particularly in the face of a crisis, are discernable. Since the end of World War II till the 1960s, the world food situation was considered satisfactory – ‘tolerable if not ideal’. In the mid-1960s, assumptions of rapid population growth overtaking food production led to forecasts of doom. By the

end of 1960, ‘wonder wheat’ and ‘miracle rice’ of the green revolution turned this pessimism into optimism. However, harvest failures during 1972-74 shattered the promise made by the green revolution and once more the world food situation looked grim. The harvests of 1976-77 again led to predictions regarding ‘wheat glut’ (Harle 1978: 265). Since then, food-related issues somewhat remained overshadowed in the international context till the 2008 crisis in the absence of an imminent threat of a food crisis that required urgent action. In the intervening decades many developmental experiments were undertaken, with food, agriculture and nutrition being given sparse attention by international institutions, except for the momentous 1992-ICN, 1996-WFS, adoption of the MDGs and 2006 FAO-ICARRD.

The emphasis on increasing production through agricultural development during the 1970s was reflective of the concerns arising from unsuccessful efforts to achieve stability of supply. In the post-World War II context, industrialization became a craze, especially by the newly independent developing countries, at the expense of agricultural development, encouraged by the developed/advanced countries. Between 1960s-80s, virtually all the IBRD loans were directed to manufacturing industry and economic infrastructure in developing countries and not to agriculture. This was compounded by the unfulfilled promise of the green revolution, especially in South Asia. Increased food production through agricultural development, vitally connected to global food security, was developed as a response to the combined impact of these factors, and the failure of the ‘trickle-down’ approach to economic development. However, increasing production is not only about getting sufficient food to feed the expanding population, but also feeding them nutritionally appropriate food.

The dominant development strategy of structural adjustment during the 1980s stressed the necessity of liberalisation and privatisation and state withdrawal from all sectors of the economy, including agriculture. Investments in the agricultural sector witnessed a downfall as attention was diverted to debt servicing. This trend continued till the mid-1990s when the counter-productive impact of IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programmes placed poverty reduction, rural development and nutrition improvement high on the international agenda, focussing on the sections of society that are most vulnerable to food insecurity, women, children and the poorest, and securing their access to income and food through social safety. After almost a hiatus

of three decades, food problem surfaced in its most severe form, taking the international community by surprise. The 2008 food crisis brought renewed interest in agricultural development and investment as indispensable associates of global food security, in addition to emergent challenges of biotechnology and GMO, biofuels and environmental sustainability. Applying Bergesen's approaches, the initial international policy advice was markedly focused on the 'growth policy approach', which eventually gave way to the 'redistribution approach'.

Considering the policy objectives themselves, the conventional near-universal policy preference of the UN system has been increasing agricultural production, pursued by countries with the aim to achieve food self-sufficiency. It often failed to realise that many countries export food to earn foreign exchange, while many of its citizens who lack the necessary purchasing power go without adequate diets. National self-sufficiency in food production does not by itself guarantee all citizens the RTF. Preventing hunger depends on national and international policies that enable people to either have the means to produce or purchase adequate food, cause food to be available for purchase in the quantities required for good nutrition, and build capacity to effectively handle disasters (Omawale 1984: 4). Short-term solutions based on the creation of food reserves and transfer of resources from rich to poor countries, contain the potential of increasing dependence, unless the transfer mechanisms are thoroughly revised and made multilateral, hence, the true solution of the food problem must be sought in a comprehensive process of social, economic and ecologically sound development that directly attacks rural and urban poverty (Sachs 1975: 80).

Despite international consensus on increasing food production as a panacea to global food problem, such policies vary greatly among countries, the consequent food and agricultural outcomes are also vastly different. Each country designs its food production policies predominantly within the national context to achieve domestic objectives. However, domestic politics of food production is intricately linked with global food security outcomes; the objectives internationally pursued by countries are connected with their domestic food policies, conversely, domestic processes mitigate the impact of international outcomes on hunger (Uvin 1994: 25-49).

The world food policy emerging from the 1974-WFC, broadly rested on measures for expanding food production; distribution and consumption programmes directed

towards improving nutrition; and actions to strengthen world food security (food information and early warning system; International Undertaking on World Food Security; emergency reserves; and food aid). Most of these concentrated on the supply side of the crisis and paid little attention to lack of effective demand and protraction of chronic hunger and malnutrition as part of the world food problem (Tarrant 1980: 279). The 1974-WFC policy outcomes appear as lofty goals devoid of any practical road-map to achieve them. Moreover, ‘to strengthen world food security’ (United Nations 1974b: 165) would imply that there is a world food security system already in place. But there is no indication as to what this entails, what its constituent elements are and how it would become stronger with the recommended policies.

Modern national and international food transportation and distribution ensure “that food scarcity is allocated according to income levels, with scarcity concentrated among the world’s poor” (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 12). Hence, policies to alleviate food and hunger involve more complex socio-political and economic predicaments and a strong commitment to these changes on the part of the governments and the international community. Since addressing world hunger has largely been the prerogative of persons trained in food and health related disciplines of agriculture, nutritional science, dietetics, biochemistry and medicine, analysis and planning of food systems and policies rarely reflect concepts and methods derived from the social sciences. The limitations of such perspective have been recognised with the increasing convergence between the scientific food- and health-related disciplines and the social science disciplines of economics, political science, anthropology and sociology. Attempts to unite “the development of agricultural economics with actions designed to meet the nutritional needs of people – a reuniting of food as an economic commodity, with food as a nutritional substance” has coincided with “a recognition by some food researchers, planners, and advocates that most widespread nutritional deficiency problems are embedded in the social fabric of the communities, national societies, and global systems in which they are found” (Marchione 1984: 117).

Shift in international attention from the traditional approach is also evident in terms of focus on productivity of smallholder farmers and rural development, signifying positive steps towards improving income-distribution patterns and spreading the benefits of economic progress among the poorest groups. Governments have

reoriented their national policies towards such ends. Incorporation of gender equality, plant genetic resources protection, labelling rules, food quality and standard controls and environmental sustainability of production process in the food policy process indicate mirroring of emerging issues, the role of agribusiness corporations, consumer concerns, and biotechnological innovations. The complementarity of international institutional policy support and national initiatives cannot be exaggerated.

Finally, an impartial assessment of the operations of the UN system and the World Bank reveals certain common elements as well as a visible difference between the nature and impact of the policy advice rendered by them. FAO policy prescriptions are akin to food-related standards-setting, information dissemination and capacity building. Despite their non-legal and non-obligatory nature, FAO through its various guidelines and manuals highlights the issues pertinent to food security and enables awareness generation and information building for the countries. The Bank's policy priorities impact national policies and food and nutrition programmes more obviously. Through its lending for agriculture, nutrition, SSNs, it directly intervenes in national policies through loan conditionality and structural adjustment prescriptions. IFAD and WFP have more practical and operational experience in comparison to the normative expertise of FAO. However, the Bank, IFAD and WFP are constrained by donor preferences, the dominance of countries that financially contribute being reflected more clearly in their policy objectives. Certain common trends are discernable in the policy advice rendered by all the institutions, like addressing mainstreaming nutrition, gender, and climate concerns in their policies and programmes, while giving precedence to agricultural and rural development. The emphasis of focus might vary depending on the mandate and characteristics of the institution itself.

Most of the international organizations accept in their documents that poverty, patterns, socio-economic development and concentration of power, wealth, incomes and means of production in the hands of relatively few are interrelated causes that result in hunger and malnutrition in poor countries. However, proposals for action do not reflect such analytical understanding. In the absence of a coherent world food policy and an effective international implementation system, the global food situation threatens to remain crisis-ridden and dominated by powerful nations and corporation at the disadvantage of the poor and hungry, who continue to be dependent on the



vagaries of world food market, the risk of insufficient supplies and unaffordable prices, precluding the alternative of relying on their own resources for agricultural production and self-reliance.

The focal point of responsibility and accountability for ensuring food security of the people rests on the governments of each country, its strategic priorities and policies. But it is also beyond any doubt that the goal of global food security can only be achieved by all countries working together. The most prudent policy approach seems to be coordinating and harmonising national policies, on the one hand, and integrating global policies and institutions for food (Nau 1978: 807-808) being mindful about local contexts and differences of approach. Threats to ‘food sovereignty’, “defined as the right of peoples and sovereign states to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies”, in terms of global food systems challenging the local systems known to sustain livelihood (McIntyre et al. 2009: 10) must be harmonised. Global food security rests on the achievement of this fine balance between an internationally coordinated policy framework that is smartly tailored by country governments to address the larger goals of addressing hunger and malnutrition, along with cooperating with international institutions in devising innovative strategies in the national context to address priorities and needs specific to the country.

Among the plethora of international policy prescriptions discussed in this chapter, food aid is the primary mechanism to immediately respond to food crisis and avoid loss of human lives. It can also be used for longer-term development and welfare purposes that address poverty and rural development by improving people’s access to income, food and nutrition. WFP is the largest multilateral institution involved in providing relief and assisting countries in food-related emergency, disaster prevention and preparedness and, promoting food security through development programmes. Food aid, however, is one of the most controversial policy options for ascertaining global food security. The next chapter engages with the discourse of food aid and the evolution of WFP in response to changing expectations from food aid outcomes.

## CHAPTER VI

### Deciding and Delivering Food Aid

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*Food aid can be understood as all food supported interventions aimed at improving the food security of poor people in the short and long term, whether funded via international, national, public and private resources...*

- **Berlin Statement** (2003: 2)

*Food aid is widely regarded as a “necessary evil”: necessary to avert hunger in places where household food security has been compromised, but evil because it is suspected of undermining incentives for local production, thereby creating structural dependency on food aid.*

- **Getaw Tadesse and Gerald Shively** (2009: 942)

#### Introduction

In the face of the 2007-2008 crisis, “distribution of emergency humanitarian aid without discrimination...provided in cash resources wherever possible”, taking care to ensure that “food is purchased locally wherever possible and that it does not become a disincentive for local production”, were called for (CESCR 2008: 2-3). The rising food and energy prices pushed around 36 countries to crisis in 2008, a majority of them (21 countries) in Africa, requiring external assistance. It also negatively impacted food aid as a response to food emergency by stretching food aid budgets thin due to per unit rise in cost of transportation (FAO 2008f: 109).

The food security situation was ‘acute and deteriorating’ in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia during 2008 as a result of global high food prices as an additional 100 million people were pushed into hunger and malnutrition in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, a situation that was expected to continue. And continue it did, as food prices continued to increase sharply in Honduras, Haiti, Mauritania and Southern Sudan, and in Yemen, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinée Bissau and Ethiopia<sup>1</sup> causing decline in purchasing power and food intake below the minimum requirement of the

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<sup>1</sup> See, World Food Programme, *Global Update Food Security Monitoring*, June-September, 2009, First Issue, at: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp209292.pdf>; *Prices and Food Security: Special Issue*, Global Update Food Security Monitoring, January-March 2011, available at: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp234060.pdf>; and *Prices and Food Security: Special Issue*, Global Update Food Security Monitoring, April-June 2011, available at: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp238240.pdf>

most vulnerable households. This ‘silent tsunami’ of 2008 was termed as ‘the biggest challenge that WFP faced in its 45-year history’.<sup>2</sup>

Food aid was mainly intended to address the short-run vulnerabilities of individuals and households. The response to the crisis targeted the most vulnerable countries and people (FAO 2008f: 117; FAO 2008g: 41), sought to remove impediments to trade (HLTF 2008: 7), enhance and increase the accessibility of emergency food assistance, nutrition interventions and safety nets, and increasing local food purchase (HLTF 2008: 8; HLTF 2010: 11), promote global and regional agreements to ensure free flow of food (HLTF 2010: 11), and provide reliable food aid and stronger food import financing that could potentially calm markets (Braun et al. 2008: 8). WFP revolutionised food aid, not only to provide immediate crisis relief, but also as “an investment in developing countries that is sensitive to local markets” (Braun et al. 2008: 15) through WFP (2008) *Strategic Plan 2008-2013*.

As a response to 2008 high food prices, WFP launched the Emergency Market Mitigation Account, with contributions totalling to US\$ 1.032 billion, which enabled delivery of four million metric tons of food to more than 102 million people in 78 countries (WFP 2009a: 4). It allocated an additional US\$ 1.2 billion in food assistance to 62 countries hardest hit by the food crisis due to high food prices, began emergency food assistance in Afghanistan and launched urban school feeding in Monrovia, in collaboration with the Government of Liberia, for 150,000 children short of food.<sup>3</sup> WFP marked an additional US\$ 7 million to expand social safety nets for highly vulnerable populations in Mozambique and supported the Ethiopian National Productive Safety Net Programme to reach 8.3 million people (Braun et al. 2008: 16).

However, in 2008, food aid volumes fell to their lowest levels in 40 years even as number of countries requiring emergency assistance has grown, indicating that though food aid is an important component of emergency response, but it cannot be the basis of a durable food security strategy (FAO 2008f: 101; 117). The low food aid volume is accompanied by increasing dependence on grain imports by a significant

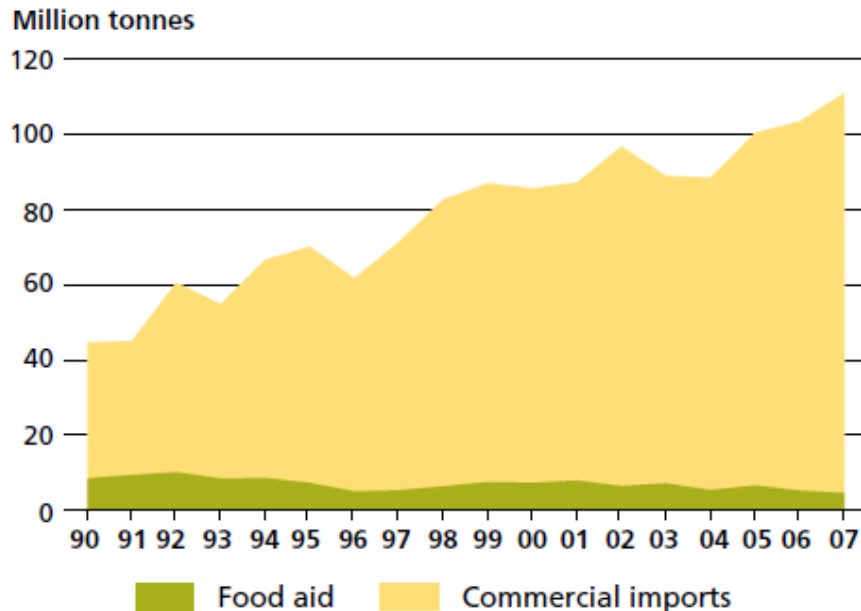
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<sup>2</sup> See, World Food Programme News, “WFP says high food prices a silent tsunami, affecting every continent”, 22 April 2008.

<sup>3</sup> See, World Food Programme News, “World Food Crisis Summit: WFP scales up urgent food assistance in 62 countries worldwide”, 6 April 2008; “WFP food distribution begins for Afghans hit by high food prices”, 3 June 2008; and “WFP scales up Liberia school feeding for over half a million children”, 18 September 2008.

number of poor developing countries and increased reliance on food import (see Figure 6.1), while keeping prices affordable for consumers, depressed agricultural growth and exposed countries to international market volatility (FAO 2009b: 6.1).

**Figure 6.1: Increasing Dependence of Developing Countries on Grain Imports, 1990-2007**



Source: FAO 2009b: 22, Figure 13

Nevertheless, food aid is at the heart of immediate food security, regularly sought as the first-response during a food crisis, mostly characterised by widespread lack of access to food rather than absolute shortfall in food availability. Food aid is also an efficient means to combat hunger, when availability and accessibility of food in uncertain or limited. Apart from domestic production, import capacity and existence of food stocks, food supply is also determined by food aid. Aid allocation is premised on the comparative need of the recipients, preferably channelled through multilateral channel (WFP). Though imperative during emergency situations for preventing acute hunger and undernourishment from turning into chronic food insecurity, food aid remains one of the most contested international interventions, indispensable and controversial at the same time. Before delving into the details of the relationship between food aid and global food security and the role of WFP, it is pertinent to delineate the semantics of food aid, emergency relief versus developmental purposes, and bilateral and multilateral channelising. The next section aims to clarify the meaning and operation of food aid, by way of setting the stage for ensuing detailed discussions on its effectiveness and efficacy for addressing hunger and malnutrition.

## **What is Food Aid?**

International food aid is identified as ‘a vital complementary financing mechanism’ of ‘food assistance’, where domestic resources have proved insufficient, particularly in low-income countries. ‘Food assistance’ refers to a broader strategy involving all actions undertaken by national governments, often in collaboration with NGOs/CSOs and external aid, when necessary, to alleviate chronic hunger and improve nutritional status of citizens those in need and saving lives of people affected by emergencies. National food assistance remains the ‘linchpin of sustainable efforts to combat world hunger’, either through free distribution of food or at a subsidised rate to a targeted section of the population. All forms of food assistance, though not exclusively, are mainly the responsibility of national governments, the international community providing the enabling environment (FAO 1996a).

The definition of food aid has evoked many debates and discussions. Though ‘food aid’ is commonly, but inaccurately, used to refer to “the donation of food to recipient individuals and households” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 5), three core characteristics, distinguish food aid from other forms of assistance: international sourcing; concessional resources; and in the form of or for the provision of food. “Without some cross-border flow of food or cash for the purchase of food and without there being a significant grant element, the flow is simply not food aid. Food aid is thus as much an issue of procurement as one of distribution, and it is most fundamentally an entry into nations’ balance of payments” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 5-6). The *Berlin Statement* expanded the definition of food aid to include, “all related international and domestic actions and programmes, and the role of non-food resources brought to bear jointly with food to address key elements of hunger problems” and highlighted the importance of food aid policies to “respect and promote the human right to food” by being a reliable source of support in emergencies and assisting countries in need only after they have exhausted their own food resources (Berlin Statement 2003: 2). The way food aid is defined carries significant policy implications in terms of objectives and outcomes for both donors and recipients (Clay and Stokke 2000b: 21).

Food aid signifies international transfer of resources, provided mostly as grants or concessional sales – providing substantial levels of grain on soft terms, a loan, a credit or a sale below normal market price or a free gift or donation, crucial to avert hunger

and starvation among the poorest section of the world population. In case of a developing country lacking foreign exchange capability to buy needed food on commercial markets, concessional sale remains the only alternative to widespread malnutrition, or even economic and political collapse (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 233-234; Singer et al. 1987: 160). Food aid is subjected to two sources of uncertainty: first is the general uncertainty regarding its dependence on donors' priorities, motives and objectives; the second more specific uncertainty emerges from the inextricable connection between food aid, agricultural supply situation in donor countries and international food market conditions (Clay and Stokke 2000b: 38).

Six types of foreign aid are distinguished: humanitarian, subsistence, military, bribery, prestige foreign aid, and foreign aid for economic development (Morgenthau 1962: 301). The most acceptable use of food aid is for short-term humanitarian assistance in response to emergency caused by famine and natural or man-made disasters that temporarily cause problem of food availability (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 1; Hoddinott et al. 2007: 22-23; Singer et al. 1987: 81-86). The aim of food aid for emergency food relief is to strengthen international capacity to respond to disaster relief with adequate amounts of food, early identification of potential food needs, mobilisation of adequate resources, and quick delivery of food to stricken areas. An emergency food reserve stock established under the control of the international community, with the assurance of the availability of foodstuffs to be released, is also significant to meet emergency needs (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 231).

Even though emergencies represent transitory food insecurity, they “undermine long-term development and cause loss of human and physical capital from which it may take years to recover” (World Bank 1986a: 42). The sudden dramatic collapse of food availability and accessibility can have permanent repercussions. Hence, “timely delivery of food to acutely food-insecure people relieves pressure to liquidate scarce productive assets, enabling recipients to resume progress towards a fully secure livelihood as soon as the shock passes” (FAO 2006: 47). Food aid as an instinctive response for emergency situations might not be the most appropriate intervention, often resulting in very narrowly focussed interventions, it is definitely necessary. Effective and efficient emergency relief is based on sound early warning system, emergency needs assessment practices, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Over

the years, WFP has become a dominant player in emergency food aid, distributing locally much of the aid through NGO partners.

Each emergency is a unique situation; nevertheless, three broad classes of emergencies can be discerned. Sudden-onset emergencies are mainly caused by natural disasters (earthquake, cyclone, tsunami, hurricanes, and flood) that strike with little or no warning, also arising from disease epidemics or violence. Examples: Asian Tsunami (2004) and Pakistan earthquake (2005). Slow-onset emergencies emerge gradually and predictably over time due to climate change (drought), macroeconomic crises (hyperinflation or financial crisis), conflict or disease pandemics that develop slowly (HIV/AIDS). Examples: drought and locusts in Sahel (2004-2005) and southern Africa (2002-2003), and floods in Bangladesh (1954, 1974, 1988, 1998). Complex and protracted crises are a subset of Slow-onset emergencies, where huge sections of population face acute threat to life and livelihood over an extended time-period, while government fails to provide adequate protection or support. Such emergencies are closely associated with violent conflict or political instability, like war between Eritrea and Ethiopia (1998-200), persistent conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan, Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO 2006: 48-62).

In addition to emergencies, prolonged food relief is necessary for chronically drought and poverty stricken or war ravaged nations. Food aid can be used as a subset of 'food safety nets' (which itself is a component of social safety net) to prevent short-term shocks from having permanent consequences. Food aid as food safety nets can be food-access based, provided as unconditional cash transfer to beneficiary households, conditional cash transfer based on school attendance or health examination, cash that must be spent on food, or through food stamps or vouchers, when adequate food is available and food markets are functioning reasonably well, and lack of access is the main cause of hunger. It can be food-supply based provided as either as food-for-work or food and nutritional supplements to particularly vulnerable members of the household through school feeding, when there is inadequate or unavailable food supply or food markets are not working well (FAO 2006: 22-28).

Food aid is also used as a strategy for promoting broader development, which enable people to move out of poverty traps through asset accumulation ('cargo net'), as distinguished from safety net that avert people from falling into poverty traps through

asset protection. Food aid for development is programmed through a variety of instruments, like supplementary feeding for maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN), food for education or school feeding programs (SFP), food-for-work (FFW), and food for participation in agricultural activities, training, microfinance, etc. The actual developmental outcome of food aid is, however, doubtful and contingent upon the source of assistance, the intended beneficiaries, sustainability of the activity and the extent to which the underlying causes of hunger, poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity are being addressed (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 128-133).

Food aid as a food safety net and development aid goes beyond mere emergency relief to provide longer-term asset protection and accumulation that reduce vulnerability to shocks that traditionally cause food insecurity. This type of non-emergency food aid can be transferred as program food aid, without targeting or tying to any specific project, to reduce recipient countries' foreign exchange cost (of importing food or capital goods), provide budgetary support, and help in balance of payment deficits. In some cases donors impose conditions on how the food is to be distributed. The programme approach also generates local currency through sale of food aid commodities in local markets, which can then be used to purchase local food or cover project costs or finance development related activities. In most cases donors impose conditionality, varying from military to diplomatic matters, to restrict the use of proceeds from the sale of food aid (placed in a counterpart fund) to be used for specific development interventions or changing macroeconomic, trade or agricultural policies or generating rural income. Though cheaper than commercial imports, almost all of program aid is sold to consumers, either at subsidised prices or through rationing systems (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 13; Raikes 1988: 171; Singer et al. 1987: 91-93).

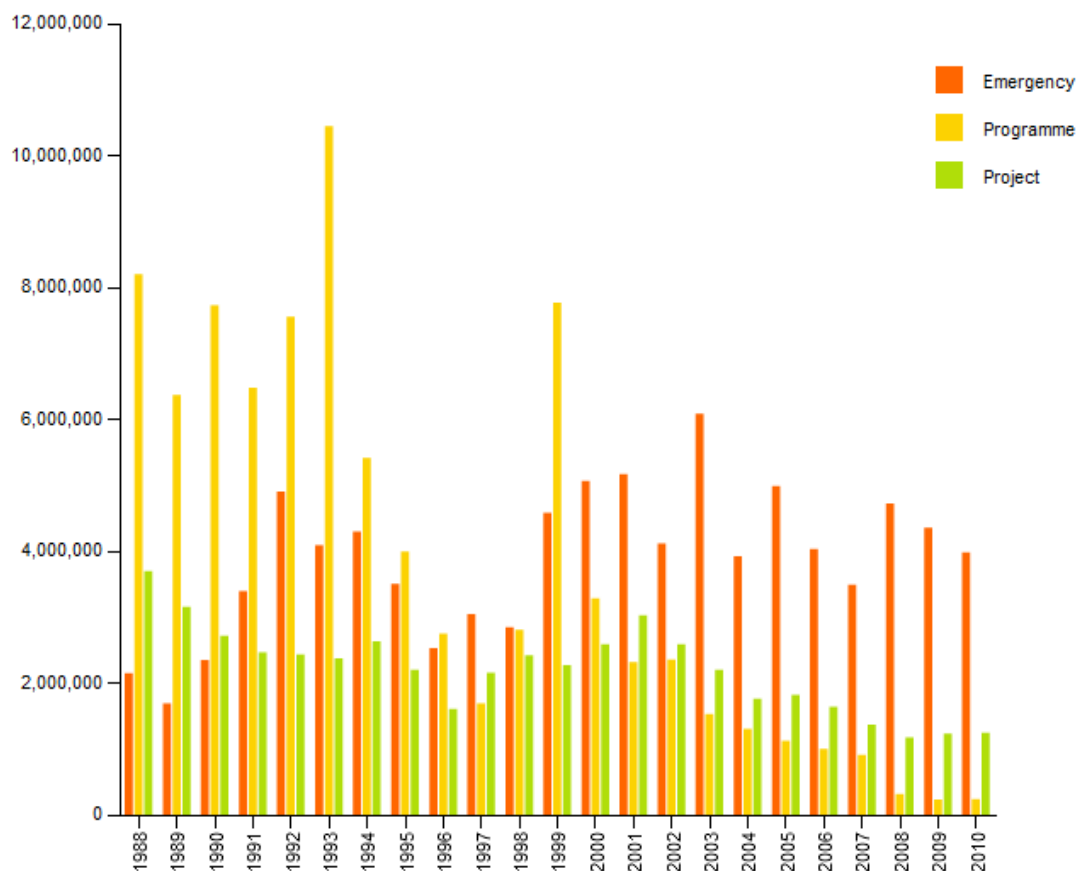
The most common kind of grant assistance is project food aid, tied to implementation of development projects mutually agreed upon by donors and recipients, usually targeting specific beneficiaries. Project aid can be free or conditional, intended to promote agricultural or broader economic development, and food and nutrition security. In development activities, like building dam or electric power station, road or highway etc., food is used as payment for workers (FFW projects), or for nutrition and health projects through supplementary feeding centres designed for vulnerable groups, such as children and women (SFP and MCHN projects). Thus, project food



aid can be used for human resource development, socio-economic infrastructural development, projects of directly productive nature (development, improvement, settlement of land, agrarian reform, crop production and diversification, animal, forestry and fisheries development etc.) and price stabilisation and national food reserve projects (Singer et al. 1987: 93-100). Project aid is typically favoured by multilateral institutions, like WFP or NGOs operating in the recipient countries.

Historically, programme food aid has been the most dominant, accounting for an average of about three-quarters of total food aid in the 1960s and nearly three-fifths between 1975-76 and 1994-95 (FAO 1996a). Till mid-1980s programme aid accounted for half of all food aid, gradually declining to about 20 percent of total aid (FAO 2006: 14). Except for 1984-85 and 1985-86, the share of project food aid in total food aid has been higher than that of emergency food aid till 1990-91 (FAO 1996a). However, since then, there has been an evidently growing thrust towards emergency food aid since the 1990s (see Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2: Food Aid Quantities Delivered by Type, 1988-2010 (in metric tons)**



Source: WFP International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS): <http://www.wfp.org/fais/>

The non-emergency food aid distribution is extremely amorphous, with overlapping purposes and activities. The major difference among these types of food aid is the amount of emphasis placed on targeting, which is important to assure that “the right kind of food in the right quantity” reaches “the right people in the right place at the right time” and “only to those people who actually need it” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 155). While emergency food aid is most targeted, program food aid targets is most diffused, project aid falling somewhere in between, depending on the design of individual projects. Targeting is important for food aid effectiveness and depends on collection, synthesis and dissemination of information related to early warning and genesis of food crises. FAO-GIEWS and WFP-VAM Unit monitor both national and global situation to track food insecurity.

Resources for food aid can be in the form of conditional/unconditional in-kind or cash transfers or cash donations earmarked for purchase of foods in surplus regions for distribution elsewhere or in the recipient country itself. The choice between ‘cheque’ and ‘food’ as preferred form of aid has generated several opposing views. Aid in cash is best when food is available, but individuals and households lack purchasing power to acquire adequate food (Singer et al. 1987: 52). Untied financial aid can allow recipients to purchase the required food, along with goods and services that are judged most useful by them, while food aid can be ‘doubly tied’ to a particular type of food source or a specific type of food commodity (Cathie 1982: 4). Food aid, when given for famine relief or emergencies, is superior to untied financial aid. However, when given for general development purpose or project, food aid can potentially create problems for agricultural production and economic growth for both donor and recipient countries and is inferior to untied financial aid (Cathie 1982: 157). Though appropriateness cannot be predetermined, a variety of factors influence the choice of cash or food, including the objectives of the programme, market conditions, cost effectiveness and efficiency of transfer, administrative capacity, robustness of delivery mechanism and preference of beneficiaries (Gentilini 2007: 8-16).

Aid in cash may be used for projects that might not be relevant for hunger alleviation or be detrimental to domestic agriculture (like industrialisation or military purposes) (Tarrant 1980: 269-270). It has also been empirically established that the poor tend to have higher propensity to consume food as a result of food transfers than equivalent

cash transfers (Gentilini 2007: 6). Food aid in-kind is preferable than cash because it is less likely to be misappropriated. Within households, women are more likely to control food aid resources than cash and channel the same to the vulnerable family members, mainly children. Coarse grain etc., typically transferred through food aid and considered low-status in terms of quality and of less market value is usually self-targeting. Especially in emergency situations, when market operations are severely disturbed, direct food distribution is the only way to relieve people from distress (ACC/SCN 1993: 5-6; Rogers and Coates 2002: 1-2; 4-5).

Neither donors nor recipients have been very rigid in their choice between cash and food, many donors providing cash instead of in-kind aid resources, while some donors allowing the selling (monetisation) of a certain percentage of the in-kind food aid commodities by the government or recipients for administrative and operational convenience and specific requirement of some projects. Since a sharp distinction between financial and food aid is blurred and can be detrimental, it is best to judge food aid on its own merit rather than on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis in comparison to financial aid (Singer et al. 1987: 48; 197).

Monetization enables sale of food commodities provided in the recipient countries to commercial traders on the open market, and using the proceeds to finance development budget, programmes and projects, not directly related to the provision of food to hungry people. The motivation for monetisation in many cases is the recipient's demand for cash rather than food. Opinions are divided on the use of monetization as an effective tool of international food aid. Supporters advance it as the most flexible use of food aid, whereby proceeds can be used for activities that complement provision of food, health services, agricultural development, local capacity building, education etc. Opponents reason that monetisation is an inefficient form of transfer accompanied by market displacement effects, and prefer direct distribution as a better option to target the hungry poor, especially in situations of food insecurity caused due to inefficient food market operations and high food prices (Shaw 2001: 198-199; Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 136).

Monetisation is justified when direct distribution of food aid seems inappropriate for the poor and cost of food delivery and internal administration in recipient countries are not conducive for direct distribution. The benefits of monetisation depend on local

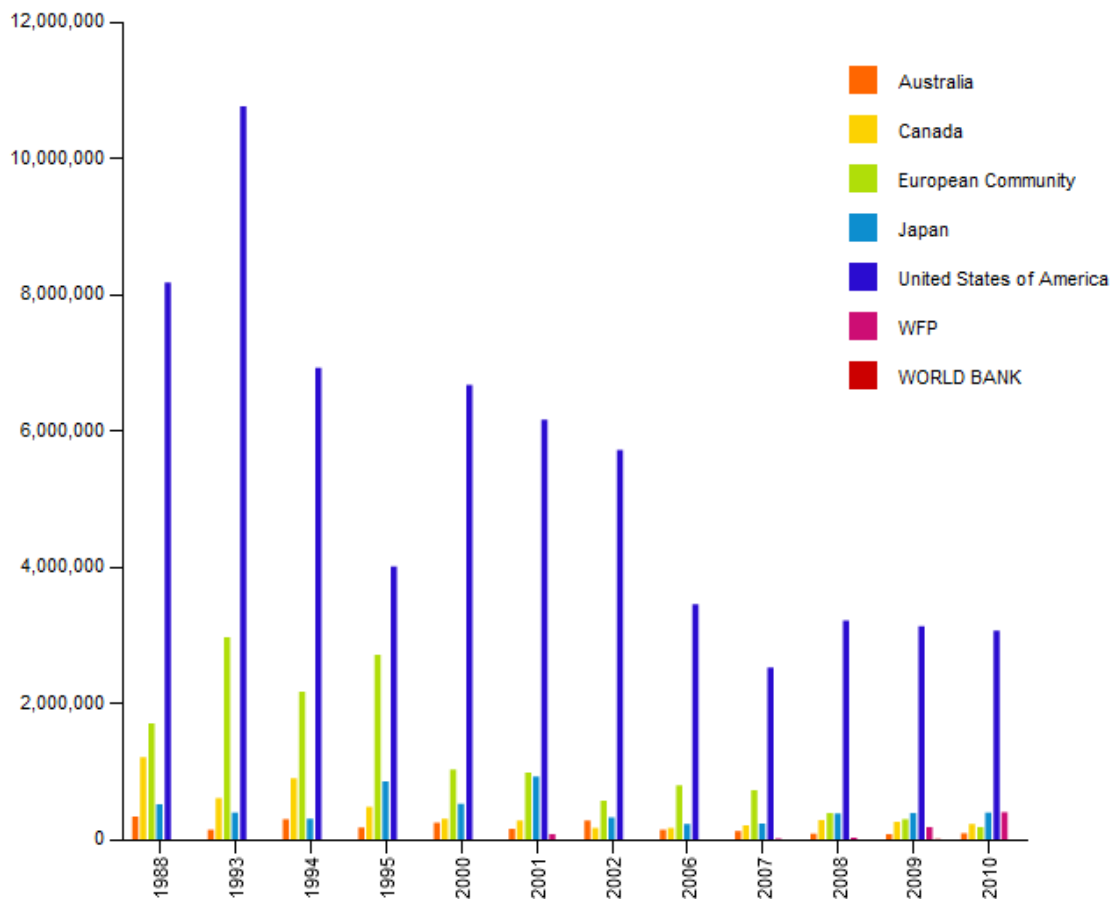
conditions – stable currencies and well-functioning markets – and effective channelisation of funds to target groups. Since these conditions are typically absent in developing countries that are recipients of food aid projects, transferring cash from funds generated by monetisation, without adequately increasing supplies, might cause local food prices to rise. Moreover, monetisation funds are usually placed by recipient governments in the general budget, without specifically placing them under poverty or hunger alleviation overhead (Shaw 2001: 200-201). Since monetisation seems to work in very restrictive circumstances, it is better to replace it with cash resources rather than giving food aid, which is then transformed into cash. Direct, in-kind and free distribution of food aid to beneficiaries continues to be the preferred option.

There is no fixed list of commodities that is used as food aid, but ideally the ‘food basket’ should constitute specific (adequate) amount of (protein-calorie) energy in accordance with the broad nutritional needs, and correspond as closely as possible to the dietary habits of the recipient population. However, in practice, various compromises decide the commodities chosen for food aid: non availability of the requested commodity with the donors at the right time or in appropriate quantity; varying nutritional requirement; limited shelf-life of certain commodities; local transport and storage capacity; local availability of some commodities for purchase, which need not be included in the basket of external sources; and advance decision-making prior to request for requirement to avoid delays in delivery (Singer et al. 1987: 103). Effectiveness of food aid is dependent upon the logistics of the delivery chain of food aid, which is affected by constrains of time, cost of delivery, commodity availability and loss (Singer et al. 1987: 121-134).

Food aid can be provided through bilateral (government-to-government or agreements between donor countries and private voluntary agencies) or multilateral channels (aid from donor countries is routed to inter-governmental institutions, the World Bank or UN agencies – WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, which then administers it within recipient countries through private voluntary agencies). The marked shift towards emergency food aid has been accompanied by a move towards multilateral distribution. Till the 1972-74 crisis, major portion of food aid was distributed bilaterally, mainly by the US, which has accounted for 50-60 percent of total annual cereal food aid (reflecting the dominance of program aid), and funding around 50 percent of WFP food aid

operation. Since the 1980s, a substantial portion of global food aid is multilaterally channelled through WFP, which is responsible for 40-50 per cent of global food aid (FAO 2006: 11; Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 14) (see Figure 6.3). While US's foreign assistance is administered through review and coordination between programme planners of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), specialised committee of the OECD, groups the main donors of the world and provides a forum for defining, monitoring and discussing on aid for development.

**Figure 6.3: Cereal Food Aid Quantities, by Donor Countries, 1988-2010**  
(in metric tons)

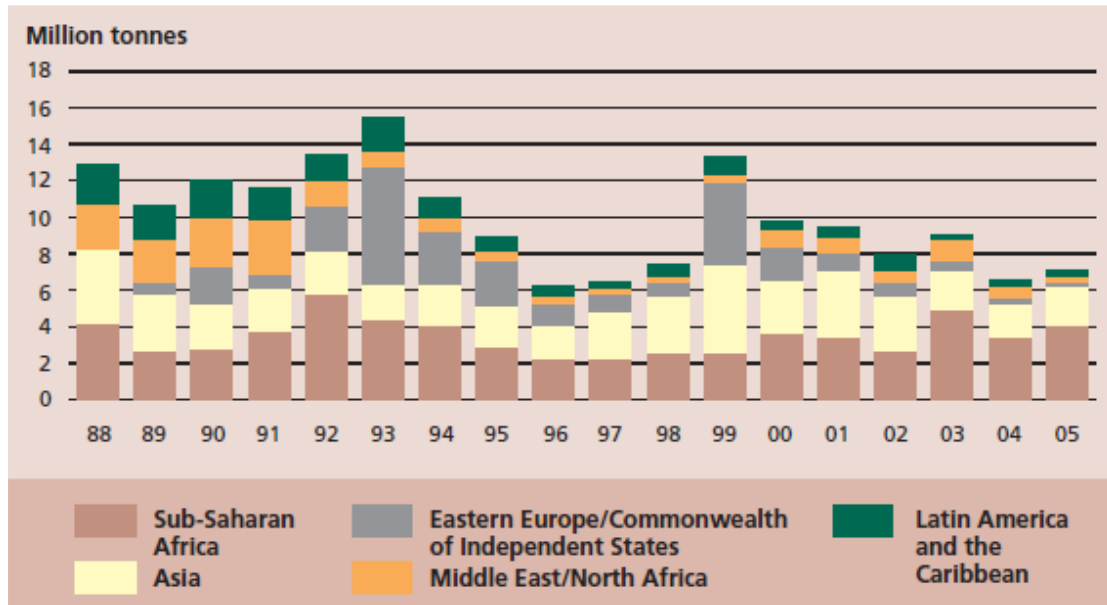


Source: WFP International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS): <http://www.wfp.org/fais/>

The geographical distribution of food aid has also undergone dramatic shifts. As a number of large-scale recipients of food aid from Asia and Latin America (India, Pakistan, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia) reduced their receipts since 1960s, aid flows began to trickle towards Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, which receives the majority of cereal food aid. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, substantial

portion of aid went to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), while shipments to Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East and North Africa have witnessed gradual decline since late 1980s (FAO 2006: 13) (see Figure 6.4).

**Figure 6.4: Cereal Food Aid Quantities, by Recipient Countries, 1988-2005**  
(in metric tons)



Source: FAO 2006: 13, Figure 4

The rapid growth of the UN WFP as one of the largest source of multilateral food aid, its creation and continuation exclusively based on global food aid, not only reflects growing disengagement from bilateral aid, but also declining domestic surpluses. The rest of the chapter discusses the development of the food aid paradigm as a policy intervention to address hunger. Since the main objective of the present study is to look at global food security through international institutions, its scope does not allow detailed discussion on the bilateral channel of food aid, despite being an interesting aspect of food aid and external assistance in general. Bilateral aid is discussed in the context of the US to understand the beginning of international food aid and its subsequent use to pursue domestic self-interest and not so honourable purposes, “if there is a single main cause for inappropriate use of food aid for the expressed purpose of reducing hunger and its structural causes, it is surely the complex set of subsidies and interest groups that comprise American farm policy” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 26). The altruistic justification of multilateral aid, administered through international agencies by pooling in resources from various donor countries, emerges from its potential to dilute the donor-centric motivation of bilateral aid.

The main focus is on the evolution of multilateral food aid under the aegis of the UN system, the Food Aid Convention (FAC) as the governing mechanism and the WFP as the institutionalised structure for operationalisation. Given its exclusive agenda and mandate of food aid, this chapter discusses in details only WFP, precluding other UN agencies and IFIs that also deal with external aid. WFP's innovative position in the debate between development and emergency relief use of food aid is sought to be highlighted. Though individual food aid safety nets, projects and programmes (MCHN, SFP, FFW, etc.) constitute interesting case studies to understand the nuances of food aid, they have been excluded from the scope of the present discussion. Undoubtedly, external assistance and more specifically food aid have been mired in controversies regarding potential impact on hunger and undernutrition and effectiveness in ascertaining food security, both as an immediate disaster relief and in the long-term development perspective. The last section attempts to examine these controversies surrounding food aid vis-à-vis the larger debates on external assistance. The main objectives are to understand whether food aid represents an ad hoc response or a long-term measure to ensure global food security. The factors that influence decisions on food aid and its delivery through WFP are contextualised within the global governance of food aid and the need for continuance of multilateral food aid.

### **The Beginning of Food Aid: Bilateral Aid**

“The USA created food aid as we know it today, has supplied the overwhelming bulk of the aid that has been given, and has a major voice in world food aid policies and practices” (Stevens 1979: 26). The origins of food aid can be traced back to US's special post-war relief credits between 1918 (signing on the Armistice that marked the end of World War I) and 1919 (signing of the Treaty of Versailles), and from 1919 to 1925, when about 6.23 million tons of food was shipped for European reconstruction, establishing a precedence for such operations (Shaw 2007: 12). The internal agricultural policy of US from the 1930s, with massive governmental intervention in the agricultural sector enabled American farmers to prosperously emerge from the World War II (Cathie 1982: 8). Following the War, the US provided large quantities of food as post-war relief and reconstruction for Western Europe and Japan, under the Marshall Plan (European Recovery Programme) – a total aid package of \$13.5 billion, a quarter of which was committed in food, feed and fertilizer – supplied between

1948-1953, amounting to the largest transfer of bilateral aid in history, averting possibility of famines in these regions (Shaw 2007: 14; Charlton 1997: 3).

Following this, the US assumed a continuous global role in food aid. In 1955, US food aid amounted to US\$ 385 million, which peaked in 1980 at US\$ 1,307 million (Singer et al. 1987: 19-20). From 1954 to 1972, the cumulative value of US food and other agricultural aid stood at \$ 23.6 billion (Gustafsson 1978: 97) and between 1965 and 1972, the US provided 84 percent of all food aid (Power and Holenstein 1980: 57). In the mid 1960s, food aid shipments of nearly 10 million tons were provided by the US for two subsequent years to India during famine-like situation due to crop failure (Brown and Eckholm 1975: 27). However, food aid during this period was primarily an instrument of surplus disposal, used to simultaneously serve a variety of economic and diplomatic purposes. Food transfers tended to be temporary measures to attain short-term goals, without being properly integrated into development assistance programmes. Scarce attention was devoted to analysing the wider development impact of food aid allocations and they were greeted with suspicion by development officials (Shaw 2007: 12-14; Charlton 1997: 3).

As European countries began to emerge from the ravages of war and develop their agricultural production, demand for US food aid declined and competition increased. However, enormous food stocks remained in government inventory as a combined result of farm price support and innovation of new technologies. The momentous Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, widely known as Public Law 480 (PL 480),<sup>4</sup> was passed by US Congress in 1954 to provide a legal basis to the US food aid programme, under which most of its food assistance has been handled since

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<sup>4</sup> PL 480 operates under three different conditions, funded annually and supplement by Congress appropriations, further sharpened by the 1990 Farm Bill. Under Title I aid, accounting for two-thirds of shipment, agricultural surpluses were sold at concessional credit terms to developing country governments payable in return for dollars or the local currency of the recipient and the governments could re-sell the food in their own countries. These sales were to provide 'counterpart funds' deposited for use by the US or by the country itself with US approval and permission. In 1966 PL 480 was amended to provide for progressively switching all Title I sales from local currency to hard cash and the 1996 Farm Bill allowed sales to be made to private entities in recipient countries. As donation became more popular since the 1990s, it declined and is not presently funded. Title II food aid was provided on grant basis or donations to governments, voluntary agencies and the UN WFP for urgent emergency and development needs. It includes nearly half share of WFP resources contributed by the USA. Title III aid provides for surplus goods to developing countries that were generally sold to generate funds to support long-term economic development and food security programs to be implemented by developing country governments. Title IV aid, added in 1959, provided for long-term sale of surplus food and agricultural goods for payments in dollars or in convertible currency over of period of upto twenty years with interest. Title III and IV have ceased to exist since 1994.



then (Power and Holenstein 1980: 57; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 160-161; Gustafsson 1978: 97-102; Shaw 2001: 31-32; Singer et al. 1987: 22-25). In a way, “PL 480 institutionalized a procedure for shipping surplus agricultural commodities abroad, which had previously been embodied in various short-term measures”, like the Marshall Plan (Raikes 1988: 173). While the stated purpose of the Act was “to increase the consumption of United States agricultural commodities in foreign countries, to improve the foreign relations of the United States...” (George 1976: 196), President Eisenhower said that the legislation would “lay the basis for a permanent expansion of our exports of agricultural products with lasting benefits to ourselves and peoples of other lands”.<sup>5</sup> It was renamed Food for Peace Act in 2008. The US also introduced Food for Progress (1985) involving donations of agricultural commodities to help developing countries and emerging democracies to introduce and expand free enterprise and competition in their agricultural sector, and the Food for Education (2002) (McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Programme) involves donations of food commodities to low income countries for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition.

As a ‘marriage of convenience’, the PL 480 was both popular and controversial. It undoubtedly brought substantial relief for the developing countries, but the primary purpose of the law was to provide a systematic outlet to dispose of surplus cereal production as a consequence of improved agricultural technology and policies, and build future commercial markets for US agricultural commodities, at the same time saving itself from mounting commercial expenses of holding food stock and political awkwardness of domestic agricultural reform (Power and Holenstein 1980: 57-59; Brown and Eckholm 1974: 64; Wallenstein 1978: 67-69; Shaw 2007: 49).

In 1966, the ‘surplus’ concept was dropped from the PL 480 rationale in favour of gradual conversion to donor sales. Certain ‘self-help measures’ were added, to which the recipient governments were obliged to commit when they contracted for PL 480 aid, amounting to an unwarranted leverage by the US on their development priorities (George 1976: 203; Cathie 1982: 20-21). Though varying slightly from country to country, these measures mainly included ‘creating a favourable environment for

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<sup>5</sup> See, US Agency for International Development, *Celebrating Food for Peace 1954-2004*, available at: [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/ffp/FFP\\_50thAv\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/FFP_50thAv_Brochure.pdf)

private enterprise and investment' and 'development of the agricultural chemical, farm machinery and equipment, transportation and other necessary industries', and the use of 'available technical know-how' as well as programmes to 'control population growth', which gave US leverage to push HYV seeds, mechanisation, fertilisers and pesticides (George 1976: 204). However, the approval of 3.7 million metric ton food aid for Russia in 1998-1999, exceeding the sum of all US food aid in the preceding two years, reiterates the persistence of food aid for surplus disposal, and export and trade promotion purposes (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 28).

The US government's food aid programs have always aimed to advance self-serving goals of surplus disposal, export promotion and geopolitical leverage to benefit privileged domestic interest groups. While the rhetoric of American food aid has always emphasized its altruistic appearance, the design and use of US food aid programs have always been driven primarily by donor-oriented concerns, not by recipient needs or rights (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 35).

As US food aid competed with locally produced food, causing delay and even deterring agricultural development in the developing countries, PL 480 became an instrument to build economic dependence of recipient country on the US (Bondestam 1978: 258-259). The accumulation of counterpart fund generated by PL 480 was used to finance research in recipient countries, most of which turned out to be detrimental for the latter and used for the benefit and furtherance of the economic interest of the US. A number of studies were devoted to the development of plant varieties resistant to diseases prevalent in the US and to carry out research on oral contraceptives and aborting techniques, evidently displaying US priority of family planning in the recipient countries. Counterpart funds was used for translation of scientific works into English, teacher exchange programmes and bilingual education. Perhaps its most repugnant use was 'common defense' spending, which provided the US a handy guide for its political priorities. By the 1973 amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, future use of these funds for military spending was prohibited unless specifically authorised by the Congress (George 1976: 204-205). The 'Humphrey Amendment' to PL 480, introduced in 1974, required a substantial share of US food aid to be given for humanitarian purposes, altering its proportion of grant basis from 39 percent in 1973 to 70 percent in 1975-76 (Cathie 1982: 22).

The practical allocation of food aid under PL 480 hardly followed the declared intention of direct food assistance to the poorest countries in the world, the major part

being concentrated in a few countries. A substantial part of the initial aid under PL 480 went to economically more developed countries, like Japan and Italy. With aid to European countries shrinking to insignificance, local currency sales and grants were emphasised to alleviate hunger and assist economic development in developing countries, like Brazil, India and Pakistan, through short-term bilateral agreements, followed by longer agreements involving some planning (Shaw 2007: 49-51). By 1974, Asia had become the primary destination of US food aid, five among the top eleven recipient of food aid, were Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, South Korea and Pakistan), while the rest of agricultural assistance was channelled to countries with a military treaty or alliance with the US, therefore, also receiving US military aid (South Vietnam, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Israel and Chile). Africa, with most of world's poor people, never received more than 10 per cent of aid (Gustafsson 1978: 99-101; George 1976: 207-209; Cathie 1982: 22-23).

In fact, PL 480 established a relationship between US domestic agricultural and foreign policy interests, with the underlying self-interest for halting the spread of communism by extending economic assistance in the form of food aid (Shaw 2001: 31). PL 480 was used as a tool to manipulate developing countries by rewarding governments that were pro-US and military allies and punishing the communist or former Soviet supporters (Gustafsson 1978: 123-124; Bondestam 1978: 259-260). During mid-1960s, Indonesia received substantial amount of US food when President Suharto began encouraging foreign investment in the Indonesian economy (Gustafsson 1978: 124). The case of Chile in 1973 exposes America's political manoeuvring through the PL 480. While the US State Department rejected Allende government's request of buying wheat in cash in July 1973, when the military junta took over after two months, the US was willing to give food aid. In fact, in 1975, US food aid to Chile went up to \$ 65 million, which was more than four times the amount that was given to the rest of Latin America (Bondestam 1978: 260-261).

It is almost impossible to separate the economic and political aims of PL 480. The US food aid policy has been a prominent factor in furthering its foreign policy and military intervention in Vietnam and South East Asia (Cathie 1982: 24). In fact, between 1968 and 1973, South Vietnam alone received 20 times the value of food aid combinedly received by the most severely drought-affected five African states

(Stevens 1979: 15). Only 'friendly countries' were entitled to receive any food aid (under Title II), with specific provisions made in 1966 to exclude from this category any nations permitting trade with North Vietnam or Cuba. An amendment provided for 'termination of [food] programs in countries where damage or destruction by mob action of US property' had occurred and the country concerned has not taken firm steps to prevent the same or to pay the damages. Moreover, the US channelled only a minor portion of (Title II) aid through UN WFP, majority being given through private charitable organizations (George 1976: 204).

In 1974, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Jordan and Israel, obviously not among the neediest, received half of the wheat supplied from the US. In the same year food was channelled to Egypt as a reward for political opposition to the former Soviet Union. The following year, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, whose need for food were incomparably higher, received less than one-fifth of total food aid from the US. Reaction to serious famines in politically less sensitive regions was rather slow. The serious drought in Sahel during 1972-73 and the consequent starvation of its nomadic population elicited near indifference in terms of disbursing adequate food aid supplies (Gustafsson 1978: 123; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 160), which clearly depended on the judgement of the donor country on the greater or lesser strategic importance of recipients (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 159). Such strong political attachment of PL 480 raised grave questions regarding its humanitarian content (Bondestam 1978: 257).

The pattern of using food aid for geopolitically strategic foreign policy objectives by the US persists, evident in the cases of North Korea (since 1994, interrupted in between and again resumed in 2002) and Afghanistan (2001-2002). While diplomatic negotiations on North Korea's nuclear programme and general demilitarisation of the peninsula were premised on food, in Afghanistan food aid was used to improve US's image that was increasingly gaining negative media coverage due to military assault on the Taliban regime (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 39). After attending to broader foreign policy and national security objectives, limited resources seem to be left for actual relief assistance, authentic economic development where it is needed and nutritional accounting. Therefore, while donors might prefer bilateral food aid, such forms of concessional sales are not in the best interest of the recipient countries, who usually preferring multilateral disbursements.

International cooperation through multilateral aid seeks to overcome the shortcomings associated with bilateral food aid. Unlike bilateral aid, food aid through multilateral channels is mainly given as grants and not sold to recipient governments, is accompanied by other assistance and allows some voice to the recipient countries in planning and controlling such operations, thus, reducing the options of using food as a tool or weapon to pursue geopolitical, economic or domestic self-interest of the donor countries (Gustafsson 1978: 124). Multilateral procurement and distribution of food aid have the advantage of being more cost-effective than uncoordinated bilateral aid (H. W. Singer's *Foreword* in Shaw 2001: x-xi). Multilateral aid is less politically partisan in comparison to bilateral aid, which being related to donors' domestic economic and national foreign policy, is overtly politically oriented. Though both type of aid can use economic and social criteria for allocating food resources, these predominate in multilateral operations that emphasise on alleviating poverty and malnutrition, while political considerations override other criteria in bilateral programmes, thereby, making a case for multilateral aid institution (Cathie 1982: 1-2). The rapid growth of multilateral food aid flows evidently suggests it to be the preferred channel over bilateral transactions, with WFP increasingly taking up a large share of the global food aid deliveries (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2).

**Table 6.1: Percentage of Global Food Aid Deliveries by Channel, 2002-2010**

Food Aid Deliveries by Channel	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010*
Bilateral	32	21	23	23	21	22	10	6	6
Multilateral	40	48	52	54	54	54	64	66	64

\* Data are provisional

Source: Compiled from *Food Aid Flows (2006-2011)*, WFP International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS): <http://www.wfp.org/fais/>

**Table 6.2: WFP's Share of Global Food Aid Deliveries, 2002-2010**  
(million metric tons)

Food Aid Deliveries	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010*
Global Food Aid Deliveries	9.4	10.2	7.3	8.2	7.0	6.0	6.5	6.1	5.7
WFP Share of total	3.7	4.8	3.7	4.4	3.8	3.1	4.0	3.8	3.6

\* Data are provisional

Source: Compiled from *Food Aid Flows (2006-2011)*, WFP International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS): <http://www.wfp.org/fais/>

## Evolution of Multilateral Food Aid

“What began largely as a bilateral disposal operation to liquidate unwanted and burden-some surplus stocks of agricultural commodities in North America has evolved into an international food aid system with an expanding multilateral component” (E. Saouma’s *Foreword* in Blau et al. 1985: v). At the end of World War II, the accumulation of large-scale agricultural surplus in North America and the need to restore food productivity in war-ravaged regions drove the international community to explore the possibility of transforming food surpluses into food aid. The first international discussion on food aid took place in the Seventh Session of the Conference of FAO in November 1953, in fulfillment of FAO’s constitutional purpose of “distribution of all food and agricultural products” (FAO 2001a: 3).<sup>6</sup>

The Conference of the FAO (1953) saw the foremost remedy in ‘courageous policies for increasing consumption’ and recognised the need for full consideration of the possible international repercussions of such measures, including the effects not only on competing exporters of identical or related products, but also on production and economic development within receiving regions”.<sup>7</sup> Noting that the necessary mechanism for such consultation existed within FAO through the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP), the Conference of FAO requested it to consider:

- (i) The most suitable means of disposing of surpluses including proposals for setting up consultative machinery through which the disposal of agricultural surpluses can be facilitated;
- (ii) The principles which should be observed by Member Nations in order that the disposal of surpluses be made without harmful interference with normal patterns of production and international trade.

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<sup>6</sup> The first decade of FAO’s functional history (1953-1962) in the context of food surplus and food deficit has been captured by Gerda Blau’s *Disposal of Agricultural Surpluses*, which “demonstrates with rigorous economic logic the possibilities of bridging the gap between the immediate desire to find additional outlets for surpluses on the one hand, and the equally urgent need for long-term measures to foster growth and combat hunger on the other”, Mordecai Ezekiel’s *Uses of Agricultural Surpluses to Finance Economic Development in Underdeveloped Countries – A pilot Study in India*, which introduces the systematic distinction between assistance to projects and general development programmes and is considered as “a forerunner of today’s balance-of-payments and budgetary support role of food aid”, and B. R. Sen’s *Development through Food Aid – A Strategy for Surplus Utilization*, which “set out the requirements for an expanded programme of food aid for development, national food reserves and emergency relief, as well as possible multilateral functions and arrangements” (Blau et al. 1985: vii-xi).

<sup>7</sup> See, Food and Agriculture Organization (1953), *Report of the Conference of FAO*, Seventh session, 23 November-11 December 1953, Rome.

The Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD) was established in 1954 as subsidiary to the FAO-CCP, mandated “to monitor international shipments of agricultural commodities used as food aid in order to minimize the harmful impact of these shipments on commercial trade and agricultural production”.<sup>8</sup> One of its earliest activities was the drafting of the *Guiding Lines and Principles of Surplus Disposal*, which despite not being legally binding, provide ‘consultative obligations’. CSSD’s terms of reference, amended by the CCP at its twenty-third session and restated at its thirty-first and forty-fourth sessions, relate to: reviewing the developments in disposal of agricultural surpluses; assisting member nations to develop suitable means of surplus disposal; providing a consultative forum for examining any difficulties in adhering to the *Guidelines and Principles* and to promote their observance by issuing notifications of food aid transactions of member nations.

The *Guidelines and Principles* were supposed to safeguard commercial transactions by curtailing ‘overt and blatant’ dumping of surplus agricultural commodities through food aid transaction. Expressed in broad terms these principles embodied the concepts of additionality, orderly disposal and voluntary consultations (Cathie 1982: 53-54). They provided ‘an international code of behaviour’ for surplus disposal agreed by FAO members and played an important role in shaping multilateral food aid operations, while the consultative machinery kept the scope open for their reappraisal and redefinition (Cathie 1982: 60). Over the years, the CSSD “developed a comprehensive set of rules and procedures designed to assist aid-supplying countries to account for and identify the flow of food aid shipments” (CCP 2010a: 1).

These rules, upon subsequent revision, were embodied in the 2001 edition of the handbook, *Reporting Procedures and Consultative Obligations under the FAO Principles of Surplus Disposal*, to protect “exporters from any harmful effects that may occur to their commercial markets as a result of the shipments of food aid” (FAO 2001c: 16). The CSSD meets quarterly “to keep track of the continual flow of food aid” (CCP 2010a: 1) reported to it, though some work is done bilaterally between formal meetings. A list of ‘Register of Transactions’ was agreed upon, constituting as

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<sup>8</sup> See, Food and Agriculture Organization Governing and Statutory Bodies Web site, Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD), available at: [http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsb-search/detail/en/?dyna\\_fef\[backuri\]=%2Funfao%2Fgovbodies%2Fgsb-search%2Fresult%2Fen%2F%3Fno\\_cache%3D1&dyna\\_fef\[uid\]=312](http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsb-search/detail/en/?dyna_fef[backuri]=%2Funfao%2Fgovbodies%2Fgsb-search%2Fresult%2Fen%2F%3Fno_cache%3D1&dyna_fef[uid]=312)

food aid under CSSD responsibility, obliging aid-suppliers to *ex post facto* notification, some requiring pre notification, consultation and establishment of Usual Marketing Requirements (UMRS). The CSSD and WFP collaborated to arrange special consultation procedures for WFP development projects and develop guidelines to notify the CSSD, where applicable, as part of notification, of any UMRs negotiated with recipients involving selling of food aid in open markets (FAO 2001c: 14-15).

The UN General Assembly in 1960 invited FAO, the UN Secretary-General and appropriate specialised agencies to establish procedures “by which, with assistance of the United Nations system, the largest practicable quantities of surplus food may be made available on mutually agreeable terms as a transitional measure against hunger, such procedures to be compatible with desirable agricultural development as a contribution to economic development in the less developed countries and without prejudice to bilateral arrangements for this purpose” (General Assembly 1960: 8). This signalled the initiation of international momentum for a multilateral system of food aid, while maintaining the sanctity of bilateral arrangements.

Subsequent UN General Assembly Resolutions consolidated the role of food aid, reiterating the importance of multilateral food aid.<sup>9</sup> The UN General Assembly further stressed the importance of food aid “for humanitarian purposes as well as a contribution to economic and social progress in communities with a food deficit and for emergency requirements”, while bringing the special competence and experience of the WFP to bear upon “cooperation with interested organisations of the UN system in the further adaptation of multilateral food aid operations...” (General Assembly 1968: 36) and recommended member states to constructively use food supplies in excess of commercial demands “to meet the unsatisfied food needs of people in the developing countries and to assist in their economic and social development”, while increasingly “directing a greater proportion of food aid through multilateral channels”, placing special emphasis on using WFP (General Assembly 1970: 54-55).

In the context of 1972-74 food crisis, the UN perceived the clear need for “food aid and food transfers on concessional terms from developed to developing countries” to

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<sup>9</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A.RES/2096 (XX) – *Programme of Studies on Multilateral Food Aid* (twentieth session, 20 December 1965); and Resolution A.RES/2300 (XXII) – *Multilateral Food Aid* (twenty-second session, 12 December 1967).



continue ‘atleast for the next decade’ (United Nations 1974b: 187). Food aid was accepted as a long-term policy for providing security against emergencies and food shortages, fighting hunger and malnutrition, and assisting accelerated economic development (United Nations 1974b: 187-188). The UDEHM recognised the “common responsibility of the entire international community to...cooperate in the establishment of an effective system of world food security by”, “cooperating in the provision of food aid for meeting emergency nutritional needs as well as for stimulating rural employment through development projects” (Paragraph 12).

*An Improved Policy for Food Aid* (Resolution XVIII), adopted by the 1974-WFC, recommended that “all donor countries accept and implement the concept of forward planning of “food aid”, make all efforts to provide commodities and/or financial assistance that will ensure in physical terms at least 10 million tons of grains as food aid, starting from 1975, and also to provide adequate quantities of other food commodities” (United Nations 1975: 15), urging all donors to,

- (a) channel a more significant proportion of food aid through the WFP,
- (b) consider increasing progressively the grant component in their bilateral food aid programmes,
- (c) consider contributing part of any food aid repayments to supplementary nutrition programmes and emergency relief, and
- (d) provide, as appropriate, to food aid programmes additional cash resources for commodity purchases from developing countries to the maximum extent possible (United Nations 1975: 16).

There is an apparent transcendence of the purpose of food aid from transitory surplus disposal to a much broader and enduring requirement to address emergencies and in the interim till developing countries are able to address their problem of food shortages through the ultimate solution of increased production and self-sufficiency. The 1974-WFC marked a turning point that paved the way for articulation of a general set of policy principles and institutionalized donor aid policies. The food aid community arrived at a consensus to programme food aid for achieving long-term results related to nutritional needs and economic development in developing countries (Shaw 2007: 85). The conceptualisation of food aid as ‘a development resource’ “helped to move food aid into the “mainstream” of development assistance and hence gain greater respectability as a resource transfer”, “which could be linked to such goals as improvement in agricultural production, enhancement of food security, and facilitation of broader development objectives” (Charlton 1997: 2-3). The Seventh

Special Session of the UN General Assembly (1975) recommended the establishment of an International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR), to be placed at the disposal of WFP to strengthen its capacity to deal with a crisis situation in developing countries, with a target of no less than 500,000 tons of cereals (General Assembly 1975: 8-9).

Guideline 15 of the *FAO-Voluntary Guidelines* to support the progressive realisation of the RTF (2005) provides for consistency of international food-aid transactions with agreed international standards and their support for national efforts by recipient countries to achieve food security. These guidelines, essentially voluntary in nature, imply a moral obligation for the international community, and FAO's endorsement provide them with substantial degree of legitimacy.<sup>10</sup> Within the overall UN-FAO framework that recognise food aid as a continual policy response for global food security, addressing both immediate emergency concerns and long-term development problems, the FAC was envisaged as the international mechanism governing food aid and WFP was established as a multilateral institution to channel global food aid.

### ***Governance of Multilateral Food Aid: The Food Aid Convention (FAC)***

The Food Aid Convention (FAC) is the only existing international convention regulating food aid, originating as part of the International Grain Arrangement negotiated during the 'Kennedy Round' of tariff negotiations in the GATT, July-August 1967. The initial 18 signatories to the FAC included all the then major wheat-exporting countries, and one grain-exporting developing country (Argentina) and some of the most important grain importers. The FAC has been subsequently renewed in 1971, 1980, 1986, 1995, the latest being the FAC of 1999, prolonged through ad

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<sup>10</sup> Guideline 15 of the *Voluntary Guidelines* to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, lays down that:

International food-aid transactions, including bilateral food aid that is monetized, should be carried out in a manner consistent with the FAO Principles of Surplus Disposal and Consultative Obligation, the Food Aid Convention and the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, and should meet the internationally agreed food safety standards, bearing in mind local circumstances, dietary traditions and culture (FAO 2005: 27).

It also calls upon the donor states to:

ensure that their food aid policies support national efforts by recipient States to achieve food security, and base their food aid provisions on sound needs assessment, targeting especially food insecure and vulnerable groups. In this context, donor States should provide assistance in a manner that takes into account food safety, the importance of not disrupting local food production and the nutritional and dietary needs and cultures of recipient populations. Food aid should be provided with a clear exit strategy and avoid the creation of dependency. Donors should promote increased use of local and regional commercial markets to meet food needs in famine-prone countries and reduce dependence on food aid" (FAO 2005: 27).

hoc extensions.<sup>11</sup> A renegotiation of the FAC was initiated in June 2004, which got stalled pending the conclusion of the WTO Doha agricultural negotiations that is expected to address trade-related food aid issues. Hence, the existing Convention was extended, most recently with effect from 1 July 2009. The primary objective of the FAC has been to provide a financial and nutritional safety net to protect recipient developing countries from potential fluctuations in annual shipments of food aid by guaranteeing a certain minimum flow of food aid to them (Benson 2000: 102-103).

According to Article I of the 1999 FAC, its objectives are “to contribute to world food security and to improve the ability of the international community to respond to emergency food situations and other food needs of developing countries”, by making available appropriate levels of food aid on a predictable basis and ensuring that food assistance is directed to the alleviation of poverty and hunger, particularly of the most vulnerable groups, and is consistent with agricultural development of the recipient country. It also provides for “a framework for co-operation, co-ordination and information-sharing among members on food aid related matters to achieve greater efficiency in all aspects of food aid operations and better coherence between food aid and other policy instruments”. The FAC is administered by the Food Aid Committee (henceforth Committee), using the services of the London-based Secretariat of the IGC. It receives periodic reports on the amount, content, channelling, and terms of food aid contributions by members; reviews the purchase of grains financed by cash contributions; examines the way in which obligations have been fulfilled; and exchanges information on food aid functioning and its impact on food production in recipient countries (Hoddinott et al. 2007: 6).

Under the FAC, the signatory parties are legally committed to contribute a specified annual minimum amount (tons) of wheat, coarse grains or cash equivalent in aid to developing countries with the greatest need. The amount of food aid specified by FAC is regardless of fluctuations in production, world food prices and stock, minimum

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<sup>11</sup> The Food Aid Committee on 13 June 2000 adopted the Rules and Procedure under the FAC 1999, subsequently amended by the Committee at its Ninety-second Session (13 June 2005), Ninety-fifth Session (5 December 2006) and at its One-hundredth Session (5 June 2009). The FAC 1999 replaced the FAC 1995 and is a constituent part of the International Grains Agreement, 1995 along with the Grains Trade Convention, 1995. The donor countries include: the EU, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, Switzerland and the US. The eligible recipients are: least-developed countries, low-income countries, lower middle-income countries, and other countries included in the WTO list of Net Food-Importing Developing Countries at the time of the negotiation of the FAC.

commitments determined by calculations involving donors' grain production, consumption and GDP per capita. As the Conventions have been renegotiated over the years, the amount of food guaranteed has also changed.<sup>12</sup> In 2009-2010, FAC food aid operations were 6.9 metric tons (wheat equivalent) (see Table 6.3).<sup>13</sup>

**Table 6.3: Food Aid Convention 1999 – Annual Operations:  
2000/01 – 2009/10\* (July/June)**

metric tons: wheat equivalent											
DONOR	annual commitment	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
ARGENTINA	35,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AUSTRALIA	150,000	251,865	245,828	203,820	177,984	168,083	180,667	114,530	216,726	163,857	165,081
CANADA	420,000	307,575	412,082	499,382	351,168	437,341	448,534	474,438	520,903	551,475	524,148
EUROPEAN UNION b)	tonnage: 1,320,000 + value: €130,000,000	2,337,508	1,836,717	1,980,781	2,218,065	2,151,958	2,853,063	2,488,053	2,178,310	2,263,456	1,691,765
JAPAN	300,00	637,749	531,755	666,910	580,953	578,261	354,289	318,964	428,301	556,078	691,326
NORWAY	30,000	85,876	74,318	144,927	165,510	145,586	196,034	179,408	102,955	89,382	62,774
SWITZERLAND	40,000	54,169	58,042	67,892	69,689	71,854	61,608	71,051	69,872	59,368	47,861
UNITED STATES	2,500,000	6,798,280	7,124,407	6,054,197	5,801,724	5,363,186	4,830,710	3,869,162	3,630,343	4,256,834	3,745,514
<b>TOTAL a)</b>		<b>10,473,022</b>	<b>10,283,149</b>	<b>9,617,909</b>	<b>9,365,093</b>	<b>8,916,269</b>	<b>8,924,904</b>	<b>7,515,606</b>	<b>7,147,410</b>	<b>7,940,450</b>	<b>6,928,469</b>

\* These figures refer to the wheat equivalent of actual shipments completed during the years shown, including EU value commitments (as estimated by IGC Secretariat). They are not adjusted for any product limits under Article IV of the FAC 1999 and do not necessarily represent the performance of members in relation to their annual commitments.

a) Includes contribution under IEFIR Immediate Response Account (IRA), as reported by WFP.

b) And EU member States. Shipments include estimated tonnage under FAC "value" contributions.

Source: *International Grains Council 2011: 1*; and

<http://www.foodaidconvention.org/en/index/Summarytable.aspx>

The FAC represents a guarantee of an international legal commitment to minimum food aid levels for the recipient countries. It has been argued that selection of foodstuffs, wheat and coarse grain, provided under the FAC is too narrow and

<sup>12</sup> First Convention (1967): minimum annual food aid commitments of 4.3 million tonnes. Second Convention (1971): minimum annual food aid commitments of 4.2 million tonnes. Third Convention (1980), annual food aid commitments significantly increased to 7.6 million tonnes, reflecting the commitments made at the 1974-WFC to provide 10 million tonnes of food aid annually, which remained largely unchanged under Fourth Convention (1986) at 7.5 million tonnes. Fifth Convention (1995) witnessed sharp decline of minimum annual commitments to 5.4 million tonnes, largely due to reduction in commitments by the US and Canada. Sixth Convention (1999) permitted donors to express commitments in tonnage or in value terms (used to cover transport and other operational costs associated with food aid and the purchase of the commodity) or a combination of the two. Though tonnage commitment fell to 4.9 million under the present Convention, the EU provided additional ECUS 130 [ECU or the European Currency Unit was used to denote a 'basket' of currency (the composition of the basket has evolved over time through the expansion of the EU) that was used by the EU member states as an internal accounting unit, replaced by the Euro in January 1999, at par (i.e., at 1:1 ratio)] million in value terms, equivalent to some 0.6 million tonnes of cereals, which brought the total commitment to 5.5 million tonnes (Benson 2000: 103-105).

<sup>13</sup> For details of FAC operations in 2009/10, see International Grains Council 2011: 2-138, Table 2.

restricted in amount, and does not take into account requirement of micro-nutrients, like vitamins, iodine, iron etc. Over the years, the FAC has become more flexible in terms of the commodities covered and the way they are acquired.<sup>14</sup>

In order to improve the effectiveness and quality of food aid, donor operations have increasingly resorted to local and regional purchases or procurement from other developing countries, mainly channelled multilaterally. The donors are responsible for covering transportation, operational and delivery costs of food aid, especially during emergencies in least developed countries. Members are encouraged to provide food aid in grant form, instead of concessional sales, and to delink food aid from export promotion. Though food aid under FAC was provided entirely on grant basis, it encouraged channelling of food aid through multilateral institutions, particularly the WFP. However, the raised expectations of large-scale increase in WFP resources proved to be unfounded. During the first three years of the 1967 FAC, only 5-6 percent of the total FAC shipments of grains were channelled annually through the WFP. While Scandinavian countries channelled their relatively small FAC contribution through WFP, major donors contributed either meagre or none of their contribution to WFP (Shaw 2007: 76). Though there is no court or punitive actions for countries that do not deliver their promises, mostly all countries have successfully adhered to their commitments made under the FAC.

The FAC has several limitations, which raise serious doubts about its credibility in establishing an effective safety net (Berlin Statement 2003: 5; Benson 2000: 102). While the donors' food or equivalent cash commitments are expressed in terms of either tons of wheat equivalents, the value of the wheat equivalent or a combination of both, the FAC does not specify how the quantities of other commodities are to be converted into wheat equivalents. A separate document, the FAC's *Rules of Procedure* contains the conversion factors by which non-wheat food aid is converted into wheat equivalent, albeit in a very vague form, "the use of prices to calculate equivalences and the declaration of commitments in value terms undercuts the FAC's

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<sup>14</sup> The 1980 FAC included rice, while the 1995 FAC included pulses. The composition of FAC donations has been further widened by 1999 FAC to included non-grain food products, including edible oil, pulses, root crops (cassava, yam, round potatoes, sweet potatoes), and other items such as seeds for eligible products. There has been a significant inclusion of micronutrients, iodised salt, sugar, and skimmed milk powder, along with blended foods that are part of traditional diet of vulnerable groups or supplementary feeding programmes. (Shaw 2007: 76; Benson 2000: 105-106).

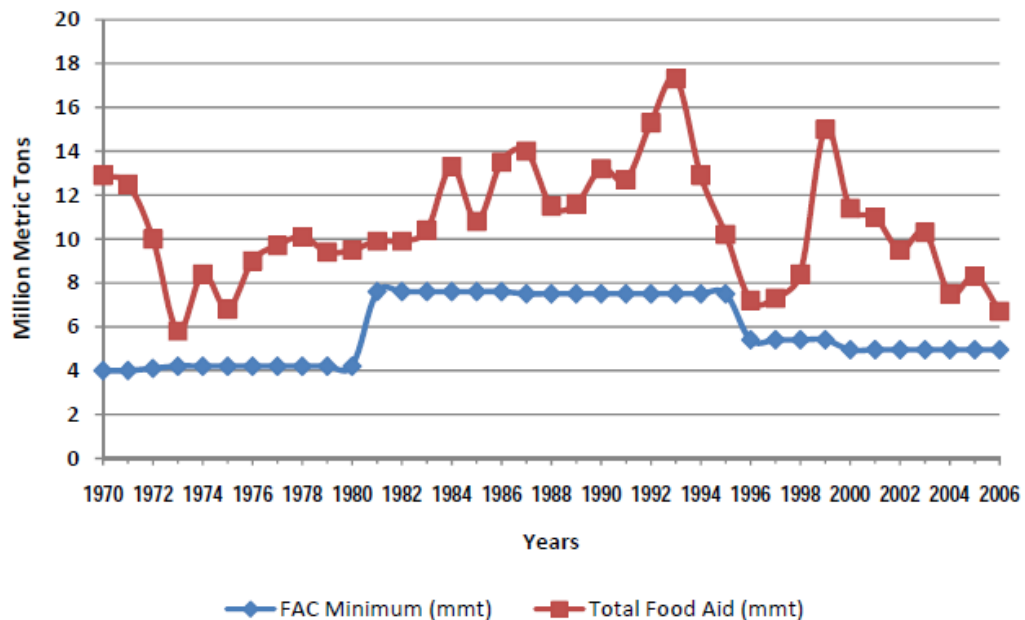
guarantee of a fixed quantity of food” (Hoddinott et al. 2007: 8-9). The aid provided under the FAC is not supported by technical or other assistance to ensure its effectiveness. There is lack of systematic evaluation mechanisms to examine performance of individual donors pertaining to their commitments or overall performance in relation to objectives, and absence of impact assessment undertaken to ensure food aid effectiveness (Hoddinott et al. 2007:12; Benson 2000 106).

Only the FAC donor signatories participate in its policy and practice discussions, in complete exclusion of recipient country government and NGOs. Though WFP, FAO, WTO, OECD and UNCTAD representatives are allowed to attend as observers, in practice they can only attend session when Committee members have requested their presence. There is little transparency in FAC operations as there is little public information regarding its deliberations (Hoddinott et al. 2007:12-13). It is also alleged that the FAC has not been an effective coordinating mechanism for global food aid, with “limited and unsatisfactory impact in reducing fluctuations or setting minimum levels of food aid needs” (Berlin Statement 2003: 5), because actual flows have often exceeded minimum commitments by considerable amounts. The possible explanation could be that the FAC minimum commitments were deliberately kept low “to provide an effective floor preventing downward fluctuations in food aid shipments following poor harvests in donor countries” (Benson 2000: 108).

Though the FAC played an important role during the 1972-74 world food crisis by maintaining a steady flow of around 4 million tonnes of food aid as donors continued to honour their minimum tonnage obligations (Benson 2000 107-108), the quantities of food aid provided subsequently have been too small, with reductions at crucial periods, leading to the assertion that the FAC “has contributed little to international food security” (Benson 2000: 116) (see Figure 6.5). Suggestions have made to shift the emphasis of the FAC away from minimum quantitative commitment (tonnage or value terms) towards some form of obligation linked to need, along with introduction of mechanisms for continual assessment of the FAC assistance (Shaw 2007: 76; Benson 2000: 118). There is also a suggestion that food aid be accompanied by an ‘International Code of Conduct’ at national and international levels to strengthen accountability, effectiveness, fairness, transparency and monitoring (Berlin Statement 2003: 5). While complete elimination of the FAC is an extreme option, renegotiation

has been suggested to bring about more reliable food aid and provide an opportunity to enhance commitment, flexibility and nutritional effectiveness of food assistance under the FAC (Hoddinott et al. 2007: 25-31; Braun et al. 2008: 8; HLTF 2010: 11).

**Figure 6.5: FAC Commitments and Food Aid Flows, 1970-2006**



Source: Hoddinott et al. 2007: 33, Figure 1

Multilateral food aid has been sponsored and coordinated by various UN agencies. Apart from WFP, UN agencies such as OCHA, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNDP, WHO, etc., and the IDA have food aid in their sphere of activities. Between 1987 and 1991, the average annual flow from UN agencies to nutrition and related sectors, excluding agriculture, was estimated around US\$ 5 billion, of which US\$ 3 billion was from the World Bank and US\$ 2 billion was from other UN agencies. In 1994, WFP provided food aid to 57 million people in a resource transfer involving three million tons of food (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 42-43). International NGOs, like Action Aid, Oxfam, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); US-based non-profit organisations, like World Vision, Catholic Relief Service (CRS) Save the Children, Mercy Corps, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) etc., along with many local private organisation in the recipient countries have managed multilateral food aid. However, in the present study, multilateral food aid exclusively focuses on WFP.

The coming of age of multilateral food aid policy was signalled by the establishment of WFP in 1963, after many years of plans and proposals. Since WFP is the vanguard

of UN system's food aid architecture, the next section discusses multilateral aid through the organizational and operational evolution of WFP (initiated in Chapter III). Looking at international food aid through the prism of WFP helps demystify some broader debates on aid effectiveness, donor's ambivalence, procurement procedures, disbursement of aid for emergency response or promoting development, cash versus food versus voucher, the composition quality and nutrition of the food distributed as aid, recipient self reliance or dependency, coordination among various aid agencies, and the involvement of national governments and NGOs. Without discounting their importance, the scope of the study and the paucity of space do not allow an in-depth analysis of WFP's multifaceted activities, or a project-by-project (FFW, MCHN, SFP) assessment and evaluation of its impact. The main objective is to draw out trends in the functioning of WFP, changes in priority and the context motivating such reorientation, covering the process of decision-making to actual delivery of food aid, to understand its role in addressing the larger concerns relating to food aid.

### ***Institutionalisation of Multilateral Food Aid: World Food Programme (WFP)***

The UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), established in November 1943 (discontinued in 1946), represents in real terms the first attempt at creating a multilateral relief agency dealing with food aid and to attempt international cooperation to prevent famine. However, WFP "went on to become a pioneer in the structural evolution of food aid," exemplifying the "feasibility and special advantages of a multilateral food aid programme..." (Singer et al. 1987: 26-29). The establishment of multilateral or international agencies to pool aid from various countries and administer it was in obvious response to the opportunistic scope allowed by bilateral aid to pursue donors' self-interest. However, the parallel Resolutions establishing the WFP<sup>15</sup> clearly mentioned that it "in no way prejudices the bilateral agreements between developed and developing countries", recognising that the ultimate solution to "problem of food deficiency lies in self-sustaining economic growth of the economies of the less developed countries to the point that

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<sup>15</sup> WFP was established by parallel resolutions adopted at the eleventh session of the Conference of FAO (Resolution 1/61: *Utilization of Food Surpluses – World Food Program*, 24 November 1961) and the Sixteenth session of the General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/1714 (XVI) – *World Food Programme*, 19 December 1961), based on the FAO Director-General's report, *Development through Food – A Strategy for Surplus Utilization* and the report of UN Secretary-General, *the Role of the United Nations and the appropriate specialized agencies in facilitating the best possible use of food surpluses for the economic development of the less developed countries*.



they find it possible to meet their food requirements from their food-producing industries or from the proceeds of their expanding export trade”.

A joint UN and FAO *Inter-Agency Study on Multilateral Food Aid* (1968), undertaken pursuant to the parallel UN General Assembly and Conference of FAO Resolutions of 1965 continuing the WFP,<sup>16</sup> identified food aid for four purposes based on estimating the needs of the developing countries. These purposes, economically determined needs (gap between domestic production and demand that a developing country is unable to import without disrupting its economic development), multipurpose national food reserves, emergency food aid and nutrition improvement programmes, needed different institutional arrangement for supplies. The WFP was considered as the institutional arrangements for coordinating and expanding multilateral food aid, with information and consultative contributions from the UN system (Shaw 2001 75-76).

As discussed in Chapter III, WFP has witnessed dramatic operational and administrative shifts in the years of its existence. The evolution of WFP must be contextualised within the international circumstances – the food crises of the 1970s and man-made disasters of the 1990s, and the development of food aid as development assistance and international emergency response. These changes had a profound impact on WFP as an aid agency. Food aid began with the purpose of channelising agricultural over-production by major food-exporting countries, and in the initial decade of its establishment, operating under the FAO-CSSD *Guiding Lines and Principles*, WFP was expected to make constructive use of surplus agricultural commodities as food aid to avert famine, stimulate agricultural production in the poor recipient counties, and to pay for labour employed in infrastructural projects and other development activities, while avoiding the potentially destructive fallouts of dumping unwanted surpluses that could not be disposed off commercially, impeding agricultural development and trade (Abbott 1992: 4; Shaw 2001: 20). It was to examine the use of food aid for different types of development projects, in supplement to bilateral food aid, instead of being competitive. During this period, WFP was a relatively marginal actor in the global food aid system.

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<sup>16</sup> The WFP was continued by parallel resolutions adopted at the Thirteenth session of the Conference of FAO (Resolution 4/65 – *Continuation of the World Food Program*, 6 December 1965), and the Twentieth session of the General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/2095 (XX) – *Continuation of the World Food Program*, 20 December 1965).

Food aid witnessed a fundamental change by the early 1970s, increasingly called up to address under-production in the developing world. This led to the deliberate production of food for aid and the need to pool resources and share costs reflecting the changed objective of food aid. However, with the bulk of food aid being concentrated under the US PL 480, WFP itself facing resource crunch, was kept small and non-competitive, restricted to supporting development projects through food aid (along with a very modest allocation for emergency aid). Making a virtue out of this necessity, WFP pioneered the 'project' approach to food aid, labour-intensive food-for-work programmes and human resource development programmes on nutrition, education, health and training for the vulnerable groups, providing a new dimension to international food aid policy (Shaw 2001: 37-40; 68; Cathie 1982: 70).

WFP priorities were poor and food-insecure people in rural areas in food-deficit least-developed countries, with the aim of providing nutritional improvement of the most vulnerable groups, like women and children and food and agricultural development. Development projects had specific objectives and target groups; direct distribution of food commodities to identified beneficiaries; and government ownership and responsibility of aid utilisation in support of the implementation of their own development plans, with WFP only extending supervisory, advisory and training assistance (Shaw 2001: 3-4). Its role gained increasing prominence, with continued growth both in terms of the size and scope of its operations and the additional responsibilities assigned to it in the 1970s, transforming it "into an increasingly important and central actor in the global food aid system" (Charlton 1992: 633).

During the first ten years of its operation, 80 percent of WFP resources were directed to social and economic development projects in the recipient countries (Cathie 1982: 81), while only 15 percent of total expenditure, US\$ 110.9 million, was disbursed as aid in emergencies (WFP 1973: 6). The tenth anniversary publication of the WFP noted that out of the total US\$ 890.3 million resources made available to it till 31 December 1972, 82 percent, US\$ 725.8 million was disbursed by the end of 1971. Development projects received 66 percent of disbursements, raising the annual amount from US\$ 1.2 million in 1963 to US\$ 1.54.8 million in 1972, total commitments made to development projects by the end of 1972 stood at US\$ 1,194.2 million (WFP 1973: 5-6) and food aid was given for 540 development projects in 94

countries (WFP 1973: 69). A total of 159 emergency operations in 76 countries were supported by WFP during this period, the largest being in Africa (64), followed by North Africa and Near East region (34), Asia (32), Latin America (23) and Southern Europe (6), approximately providing emergency assistance to 38 million people. India (US\$ 17.3 million) and Pakistan (US\$ 18.2 million) individually received the highest amount of WFP emergency aid. Drought-related emergencies received the largest commitment of emergency aid (44 percent), followed by emergencies due to natural disasters (33 percent) and man-made emergencies (23 percent) (WFP 1973: 7-8)

However, many WFP projects during the experimental years were not well planned and conceived in haste and in 1974, many planned development projects were suspended or cancelled and some projects in progress were discontinued, due to rising prices of both commodities and freight. The then WFP Executive Director, Dr. Francisco Aquino remarked that the tripling of many commodity prices since 1972 resulted in an estimated shrinkage of the WFP's 'food basket' by about 40 per cent, seriously affecting the programme's ability to meet its commitments (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 67). Nevertheless the WFP "continued to develop and refine the project approach as the central approach to multilateral food aid" (Cathie 1982: 70).

The broad categories of WFP development projects included agricultural and rural development projects,<sup>17</sup> which received nearly two-third of WFP commitments during the first three decades of its operation, while the rest went for human resource development.<sup>18</sup> Aid supplied for development projects can lead to nutrition improvement, income transfer, incentivise farmers, children and educational institutions, help farmers tide over from traditional farming systems, and budgetary and policy support for recipient governments (Shaw 2001: 83-87; WFP 1973: 9). The primary type of development project is public-work or FFW (food for assets) projects, simultaneously providing access to food and work, infrastructural development and asset accumulation. Based on the objectives and their intended effects on target

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<sup>17</sup> WFP agricultural and rural development projects included: land development and improvement; land settlement; food reserve and price stabilisation schemes; forestry; fisheries; and animal production and dairy development. Other project categories included: with a minor amount for industry, mining and power works; public utilities (housing, transport, communications); and community development.

<sup>18</sup> WFP human resource development projects included: feeding nutritionally vulnerable groups, especially targeting children and pregnant and nursing women through supplementary feeding for mothers, infants and young children, and school meals programmes for primary school children; hospitals and public health projects; primary, secondary and higher and adult education and literacy courses; and training at all levels.

groups, FFW can be relief programs, long-term employment programs, income augmenting programs and low cost infrastructure programs (World Bank 1976: 14). Human resource development projects include supplementary nutritional feeding directed at pregnant and lactating women and young children through MCHN services both in emergencies and post-emergency situations. It aims to provide a range of basic health services to mothers and children, including vaccinations, growth monitoring, pre-and post-natal care, and nutritious food, including blended foods, vitamin A and iron supplements.<sup>19</sup> Providing school meals (in-school meals and take-home rations) through SFP, constitutes the other major human resource development project, which provides nourishment to school children through fortified blended foods, acts as a safety net for poor families and help keep children in schools.<sup>20</sup>

Successful completion of WFP projects varied radically across countries, dependent upon prior knowledge of the local conditions to allow designing and modifying the project according to local needs and conditions, based on realistic targets. WFP project performance has also been uneven across projects, with mixed results. While the FFW national irrigation project in Egypt positively illustrated the value of directly giving food for consumption as an aid to labour-intensive project, the Sudanese water hyacinth project had to be abandoned as food aid did not adequately incentivise the work force (Cathie 1982: 84-86). During the first ten years, WFP itself admitted that half of its social and economic projects failed either due to poor planning or inadequate organisation and supervision by recipient countries (Cathie 1982: 97).

In general, WFP-assisted school feeding programmes have been regarded as the most successful type of development project, followed by projects for construction and improvement of rural infrastructure, conducted on community development basis. The least successful were nutrition-improvement programmes for mothers and pre-school children. The factors determining WFP's impact on aid effectiveness are ambivalence among donor governments, proper integration of WFP projects with policies, programmes and objectives of the recipient countries, efficient targeting to ensure outreach to the poor and food-insecure, ensuring people and community participation,

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<sup>19</sup> See, *Reaching Mothers and Children at Critical Times of their Lives*, WFP/EB.3/97/3-B, Executive Board, Third Regular Session, 20-23 October 1997, Rome.

<sup>20</sup> See, *WFP School Feeding Policy*, WFP/EB.2/2009/4-A, Executive Board, Second Regular Session, 9-13 November 2009, Rome.

access to markets, proper transport, logistics and modalities, and innovative coordination with other aid agencies (Shaw 2001: 138-144). The WFP, since 1995, has used targeted school feeding programs as an incentive to increase girl's attendance and enrolment in schools by shifting focus to areas where they were notably lower than boys'.<sup>21</sup>

The founding Resolutions of the WFP (see footnote 15) called upon it to pay attention to "establishing adequate and orderly procedures on a world basis for meeting emergency food needs and emergencies inherent in chronic malnutrition (this could include the establishment of food reserve)". The first three years of experiment did witness many requests for emergency assistance and relatively high emergency allocation in comparison to development projects. However, being ill-equipped in the absence of an emergency reserve, adequate transport and logistics facilities, WFP increasingly realised its incapability of swift response and, therefore, restricted its emergency role. Limited cash resource at WFP's disposal during the initial years further constrained its ability and efficiency in the face of emergencies (Shaw 2001: 150). Subsequent strengthening of long-term development food aid was accompanied by a sharp bias against short-term emergency food aid.

The principle aim was to move the majority of food aid giving toward the achievement of long-term improvements in the economic development and food security of the recipient country... Emergency food was increasingly seen as a residual component of the food aid regime which would be allocated only in the most pressing of cases (Charlton 1997: 3).

Though in periods of large-scale famines in India (1966-67) and Sahel (1973), WFP channelled its resources to meet the urgent requirement of the affected areas (Cathie 1982: 81) emergency operations were by and large allocated very modest proportions of WFP resources during the first 30 years of its operation. While one-fourth of the pledged commodities to WFP was assigned for emergencies in the first year, this was subsequently revised to US\$ 7 million reserved for emergency food needs at the beginning of each year, extendable by another US\$ 3 million, if needed. This was further amended and WFP's governing body was to decide the amount of WFP resources to be reserved to meet emergency food needs, with the option of request for additional amounts being made by the Executive Director (Shaw 2001: 147).

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<sup>21</sup> See, *Operational Guidelines for WFP Assistance to Education through School Feeding*, WFP Document SCP 15/INF/3, 23 October 1995.

Prompt decision-making during an emergency within WFP was further thwarted in the initial years as the establishing Resolutions vested the FAO Director-General with the responsibility of authorising WFP emergency food aid. In 1962, the operational responsibility for emergency operations was delegated to WFP Executive Director, restricted to recommending the FAO Director General. It was only in 1992 that WFP Executive Director was given the responsibility of approving WFP emergency aid upto a level that is determined by its governing body. Requests above this level required joint approval of WFP Executive Director and FAO Director-General, after consultation with other bodies involved to ensure coordination. Since each emergency is different in nature and magnitude, definite rules for WFP emergency assistance were impractical, the amount of assistance depending upon the nature and duration of emergency, number of affected people, resources at the disposal of the government and other sources. Enlisting the assistance of local NGOs for emergency food distribution has proved to be particularly prudent (Shaw 2001: 151).

The 1990s brought about a complete overhaul in the rationale for food aid, with an unprecedented escalation in number, scale and duration of man-made disasters, civil wars, genocide, and ethnic cleansing. These disasters were large and complex as hostile parties obstructed food delivery, threatening malnutrition and starvation. Emergency operations are difficult in the absence of or very little government support, and difficult to coordinate with bilateral or multilateral donors. The new working arrangements between UNHCR and WFP, progressively started from 1992, based on the overlap in their mandates, envisaged them to work together to address food security and related needs of refugees.<sup>22</sup> Food aid was required for the process of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development when the afflicted people eventually returned back (Shaw 2001: 175-176).

Correspondingly, there was a significant shift in WFP focus from development to emergency relief (see Table 6.4), evident in the changing character of aid flows towards humanitarian crises, lower-income countries, with higher levels of food insecurity, and substantial involvement in previously insignificant recipients – North Korea and East Timor, the Democratic Republic of Congo, West African States; and

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<sup>22</sup> The 1985 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNHCR and WFP was revised in 1994 and 1997, superseded by the July 2002 revision, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/45fa6a8b2.pdf>

Europe and the CIS (Clay 2003: 701). The *Mexico Declaration of the World Food Council*<sup>23</sup> established the IEFR as a continuing reserve placed under WFP, with annual replenishment determined by the governing body (Miljan 1980: 46; Shaw 2007: 159-160). In 1989 a special subset of WFP's regular resources was instituted to respond to protracted refugees and displaced persons (PROs), renamed as the Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (PRROs). IEFR's response to urgent food relief needs was speeded up by adding in 1991 an Immediate Response Account (IRA), a purely cash facility with an annual target of US\$ 30 million, enabling rapid food purchases close to the scene of emergency.

**Table 6.4: WFP Commitments by Emergency Operations\*, 1963/75-1995**  
(values in US\$ million)

Year	Total Commitments**		Sudden Natural Disasters			Drought/Crop Failures			Man-made Disasters		
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Percentage	Number	Value	Percentage	Number	Value	Percentage
1963-75	21	209.1	80	73.7	35	79	86.1	41	60	49.3	24
1980	62	191.5	7	10.1	5	23	61.8	32	32	119.6	62
1985	55	230.4	5	9.4	4	21	71.6	31	29	149.4	65
1990	32	131.6	5	4.2	3	10	29.8	23	17	97.6	74
1991	44	390.8	5	6.7	2	13	141	36	26	242.9	62
1992	55	896.8	6	7.2	1	14	517.1	58	35	372.5	41
1993	54	737.5	4	5.3	1	5	31.0	4	45	701.2	95
1994	45	857.9	1	0.7	-	9	177.2	21	35	680.0	79
1995	23	665.2	3	14.4	2	6	81.0	12	14	569.9	86

\* Expansions of emergency operations are not included

\*\* Excludes commitments for protracted refugee and displaced person operations from 1989

Source: Shaw 2001: 155

With the steady growth in WFP's emergency operations over the years, it has emerged as the key international channel for distribution of food aid for relief, which absorbed a major portion of its resources, and coordinator of large-scale and complex emergency food relief operations. Eventually, it transcended from natural disaster to providing the bulk of its relief and emergency assistance to victims of man-made emergencies in developing countries, giving food aid a humanitarian dimension. These human conflicts were primarily within countries than between them and often protracted in nature, resulting in an ever increasing share of WFP commitments made for refugees and displaced persons and their protracted relief and recovery.

<sup>23</sup> See, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/33/90 – *Mexico Declaration of the World Food Council* (Thirty-third session, 15 December 1978).

Apart from the dramatic rise in emergency operations in its assistance portfolio, WFP also witnessed profound structural and administrative transformation during the 1990s. It committed to implement ‘the programme approach’ as the underlying strategy, set forth in the Country Strategy Outline, prepared in consultation with multilateral and bilateral food aid donors, technical agencies and NGOs (WFP 1994b). WFP’s share of food aid for development fluctuated considerably during the 1990s, peaking at US\$ 398,391,047 in 1993 and then slashed down to US\$ 278,817,226 in 1996. Compare this with WFP’s expenditure for emergency operations, which peaked at US\$ 865,820,423 in 1993, marginally reduced to US\$ 715,398,564 (WFP 1997b). There has been no reversal in trend of WFP’s operational expenditure – declining for development and increasing for relief (see Table 6.5).

**Table 6.5: WFP Operational Expenditures<sup>1</sup> by Programme Category, 1997-2008**  
(in thousand US\$)

Year	Development (Agricultural and Rural Development, and Human Resource Development) <sup>2,3</sup>	Relief (Emergency and PRRO) <sup>4,5</sup>	Special Operations <sup>6</sup>
1997	334,693	704,251	20,590
1999	248,448	1,089,295	34,147
2000	184,996	920,310	25,856
2003	228,678	2,811,441	82,796
2005	258,884	2,283,892	196,724
2007	309,318	2,005,656	166,244
2008	292,112	2,733,744	200,252
2009	275,906	3,239,887	176,364

1. Excludes programme support and administrative costs
2. Agriculture and Rural Development includes: agricultural production, food reserves, rural infrastructure and settlement
3. Human Resource Development includes: Mother and Child Health Centres and primary schools, literacy training and other education
4. Emergency includes: drought/crop failure, man-made disasters and sudden natural disasters
5. PRRO (Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations) include: Protracted displaced persons operations, protracted refugee operations, sudden natural disasters
6. Special Operations involves logistics and infrastructure work, designed to overcome operational bottlenecks

*Source: Compiled from WFP Annual Reports, 2000-2009*

A ‘double-whammy’ (Shaw 2001: 228) effect of evident resources diversion from development to emergency relief in the context of the abrupt fall in WFP’s resources due to the rising need for cash to undertake emergency operations (see Table 6.6).



**Table 6.6: Contributions to WFP by Programme Category, 2007-2014**  
(in thousand US\$)

	Development	IEFR/Emergencies	IRA	PRROs	SOPs	Others*
2000	226,384	1,030,111	17,963	380,603	25,760	70,305
2001	270,001	1,035,985	12,393	510,185	55,307	20,369
2002	215,549	1,048,034	12,540	469,603	37,113	24,657
2003	240,302	1,389,106	19,357	824,449	76,259	50,556
2004	276,191	1,109,389	25,039	616,388	94,962	83,815
2005	268,963	755,959	18,651	1,381,147	262,412	79,354
2006	247,956	1,043,663	31,921	1,094,783	202,949	83,685
2007	276,952	827,776	26,901	1,324,566	162,199	86,981
2009	406,213	1,346,697	59,506	2,312,240	171,980	745,182
2010	238,250	1,484,451	43,970	1,777,317	152,181	326,116

IEFR: International Emergency Food Reserve

IRA: Immediate Response Account

PRROs: Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations

SOPs: Special Operations

\*Others: Contribution to Trust Funds, Special Accounts and General Fund

Source: Compiled from WFP Annual Reports, 2000-2010

A comprehensive Tripartite Evaluation, conducted during 1992-93 to review the way in which the WFP handled the food aid that is channeled through it,<sup>24</sup> analysed its mandate; governance; working relationships with recipient governments, UN system and NGOs; resources; organization and management; and its role as a relief organization and as a development agency. The evaluation was ‘well impressed’ by WFP’s relief performance and put forward ‘incremental improvement rather than radical changes’, while upholding that “it is in the interest of all countries, both donors and recipients, to maintain and strengthen WFP as the principal international organisation for handling food relief” (Governments of Canada, Netherlands and Norway 1994: 179-180). As a development agency, WFP was found to be “much less successful in coping with the strictly developmental aspects of its project”, with several weaknesses in project design, unsatisfactory targeting of food aid to the poorest areas and the poorest people, inadequate technical content and unplanned phasing out of projects (Governments of Canada, Netherlands and Norway 1994: 180). However, instead of winding up the WFP, the evaluation focussed on improving

<sup>24</sup> The Tripartite Evaluation was carried out by the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Bergen, Norway, and sponsored in collaboration by the development aid authorities of governments of Canada (Canadian International Development Agency), the Netherlands (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Norway (Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs). For details, see: Faaland et al. 2000: 221-255 and Shaw 2001: 245-246.

its effectiveness and efficiency either by geographically reducing the number of countries in which WFP operated or by sectorally limiting its activities by focussing on a narrower band of projects or phasing out development projects (Governments of Canada, Netherlands and Norway 1994: 181-182). The evaluation saw “the value of retaining WFP as a hybrid organisation. If relief is accepted as the main focus there is still a strong case for continuing – as a minimum development profile – an active programme oriented towards disaster preparedness, mitigation and rehabilitation” (Governments of Canada, Netherlands and Norway 1994: 184).

Emergency food aid is ‘a highly emotive subject’ (Shaw 2001: 1986) as natural disasters and conflicts attract widespread media coverage that contribute to generate the popular perception of WFP as a humanitarian relief agency (Clay 2003: 702). The 1994 *Mission Statement*<sup>25</sup> reiterated the orientation of WFP’s governing policies “towards the objectives of eradicating hunger and poverty” and, along with the WFP *General Regulations* 2010, identified the purpose of WFP as “to aid in economic and social development, concentrating its efforts and resources on the neediest people and country” (WFP 2010c: 5). However, both the 1994 *Mission Statement* and the WFP *General Regulations* 2010, held that the purpose of WFP was also “to meet refugee and other emergency and protracted relief food needs, and associated logistics support” and “to assist in the continuum from emergency relief to development by giving priority to supporting disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation and post-disaster rehabilitation activities” (WFP 2010c: 5-6).

Providing emergency food relief is both conceptually and operationally complex. Reviewing the definition of emergencies, which was first adopted by the Inter-Governmental Committee in 1970 and subsequently endorsed by the WFP-CFA in 1986, the WFP (2005a: 9) defined for its purposes, emergencies as,

urgent situations in which there is a clear evidence that an event or series of events has occurred which causes human suffering or imminently threatens human lives or livelihoods and which the government concerned has not the means to remedy; and it is a demonstrably abnormal event or series of events which produces dislocation in the life of a community on an exceptional scale.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The WFP *Mission Statement* (1994) is available at: <http://www.wfp.org/about/mission-statement>

<sup>26</sup> The event or series of events may comprise one or a combination of the following:

- a) sudden calamities such as earthquakes, floods, locust infestations and similar unforeseen disasters;
- b) human-made emergencies resulting in an influx of refugees or the internal displacement of populations or in the suffering of otherwise affected populations;

WFP was enjoined to “systematically assess and analyse livelihood-related issues in emergencies and...strengthen staff capacity to design, implement and monitor programmes that save lives and livelihoods...build synergies between its emergency and longer-term interventions and...strengthen partnerships with community-based organisations” (WFP 2003: 3). Finally, since the overall objective of emergency operations is to restore pre-emergency capacity of recipient populations and governments to access food and deal with future crises, a strategically planned ‘exit strategy’<sup>27</sup> with governments and other partners, explicitly stated at the onset of an emergency operation, can facilitate better outcomes (WFP 2005b: 4).<sup>28</sup>

WFP’s ‘dual mandate’ in the relief-cum-development strategy entails the use of food aid to facilitate ‘transition from crisis to recovery’. While the emergency operation (EPOMs) category has been restricted to responding only to “acute emergency needs and only in exceptional circumstances exceeding a period of two years”, within 18 months, a ‘recovery strategy’ (covering a period upto three years) is required to be prepared to guide WFP’s support for protracted relief and recovery (PRRO) from crisis (WFP 2010a: 10-11). Emergency food aid can be a ‘double-edged sword’ during man-made disasters, indispensable for saving lives but a potential source of power and manipulation. Hence, integration of emergency relief within the national legislative, executive and financial framework, along with participation from local administration is extremely crucial for speedy implementation (Shaw 2001: 181-182). Building partnerships and coordination within a multilateral framework is a essential for effective emergency aid. For example, disaster impact can be mitigated and timely and rapid emergency action can be greatly improved through accurate information and early warning, for which WFP cooperates with the FAO-GIEWS. The crucial

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- c) food scarcity conditions owing to slow-onset events such as drought, crop failures, pests, and diseases that result in an erosion of communities and vulnerable populations’ capacity to meet their food needs;
  - d) severe food access or availability conditions resulting from sudden economic shocks, market failure, or economic collapse – and that result in an erosion of communities’ and vulnerable populations’ capacity to meet their food needs; and
  - e) a complex emergency for which the Government of the affected country or the Secretary-General of the United Nations has requested the support of WFP (WFP 2005a: 9).

<sup>27</sup> An ‘exit strategy’ from an emergency operation means either a phase-out (withdrawal of WFP assistance from an emergency operation or from a country) or a shift to longer-term programmes to protect and improve livelihoods and resilience (WFP 2005b: 3).

<sup>28</sup> Also see, *Food and Nutrition Needs in Emergencies* (2002), guidelines jointly developed by UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO as practical tool for assessing, estimating and monitoring the food and nutrition needs of population in emergencies and aimed at field staff involved in planning and delivering food aid for emergency-affected population for coordinated and effective action.

aspects of emergency food aid are to understand the precise nature and cause of disaster, decide whether food aid is the best possible response, proper targeting, and provision of adequate and appropriate food rations, accompanied by non-food items.

WFP renovated its overall policies in development programme (DEV) to concentrate on urgent needs of the poorest, most food-insecure people who have been bypassed by the 'conventional processes of development'. "Each and every WFP development intervention will use assistance with food consumption to encourage investment, and leave behind a lasting assets – a physical asset or human capital – which will help the community or household after the food is gone" (WFP 1999a: 16). Its development activities were limited to five priority areas, selected and combined in accordance with specific circumstance and national strategies of the recipient country:

- Enabling young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs;
- Enabling poor households to invest in human capital through education and training;
- Making it possible for poor families to gain and preserve assets;
- Mitigating the effects of natural disasters, in areas vulnerable to recurring crisis of this kind; and
- Enabling households which depend on degraded natural resources for their food security to shift to more sustainable livelihoods (WFP 1999b: 10-16).

It further directed geographic targeting to food-insecure areas within recipient countries; timeliness – providing assistance at the right time and phasing out when food aid is no longer needed; use of participatory approaches; seeking partnerships; emphasising cost-effectiveness and focussing on results; strengthening information management and analysis; and applying more rigour in design to raise the quality of WFP-assisted development projects (WFP 1999b: 16-18).

In the initial decade of WFP's operations (1963-1972), North Africa and the Near East received the largest proportion (41 percent) of aid, with the high point reaching in 1968 (49 per cent). Asia and the Pacific received 28 per cent of aid, with India accounting for 10 per cent, the maximum amount allowable under WFP rule of country donation. South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa received 17 percent of aid, while Latin America accounted for 13 percent (Cathie 1982: 46-47) (see Table 6.7).

**Table 6.7: WFP Development Commitments by Region, 1963/75-1995**  
(values in US\$ million)

Year	Total Commitments (Value)	Sub-Saharan Africa		South and East Asia		Latin America and the Caribbean		Europe, Middle East and the CIS	
		Value	Percentage	Value	Percentage	Value	Percentage	Value	Percentage
1963-75	1,822	323	18	570	31	245	13	685	38
1980	479	152	32	113	23	85	18	129	27
1985	642	192	30	328	37	62	10	151	23
1990	480	143	30	164	34	113	24	60	12
1995	248	58	23	143	58	30	12	17	7

\*CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

Source: Shaw 2001: 84

WFP has decidedly allocated at least 50 percent of its development resources to least developed countries and at least 90 percent to LIFDCs, including least developed countries. No country was to receive more than 10 percent of available development resources, and 10 percent of resources was kept aside to meet either additional needs of these countries or special needs of non- low-income, food-deficit countries (WFP 2002a: 4). Over the years, WFP operations have shifted to Sub-Saharan Africa as the main recipient of its development assistance, followed by South and East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe, the Middle East and the CIS (see Table 6.8).

**Table 6.8: WFP Direct Expenditures by Region, 1997-2008**  
(in thousand US\$)

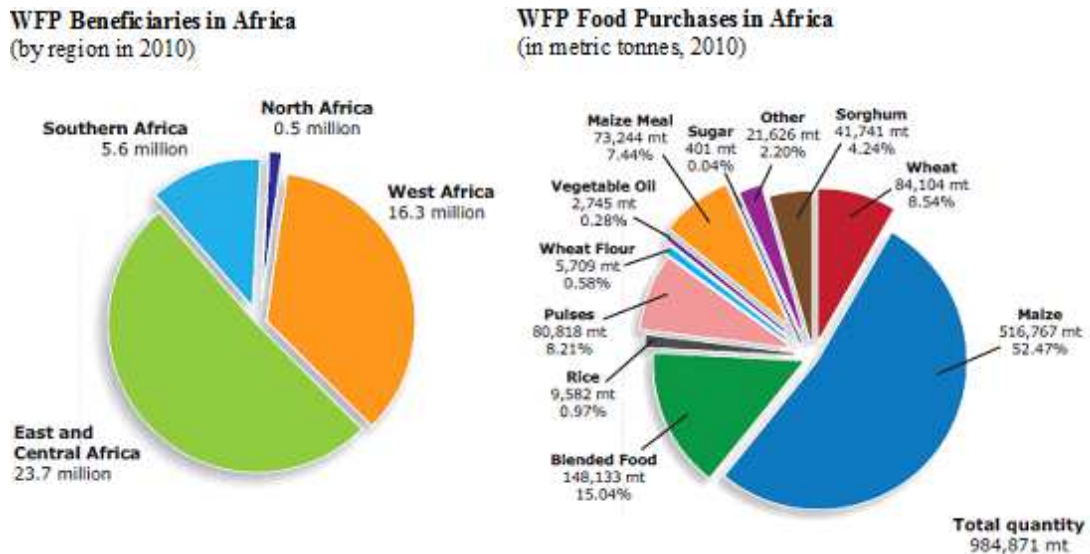
Year	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia	Europe and CIS	Latin America and the Caribbean	Middle East and North Africa
1997	502,674	356,145	78,156	52,755	83,528
1999	633,456	480,392	139,077	117,830	54,504
2000	637,459	338,669	84,012	42,032	48,667
2003	899,374	454,316	86,787	40,253	71,817
2005	2,042,876	516,254	35,874	73,480	84,116
2007	1,831,640	484,657	33,603	178,219	117,065
2008	2,214,246	690,747	37,747	258,692	159,130
2009	2,519,433	763,435	50,432	242,982	175,183

\*CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

Source: Compiled from WFP Annual Reports, 2000-2009

Even today, “Africa is at the heart” of WFP’s operations, accounting for more than 50 percent of its global assistance; in 2010 approximately US\$ 2.3 billion out of total US\$ 4 billion expenditure was allocated for Africa (WFP 2010e: 1) (see Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.6: World Food Programme in Africa, 2010



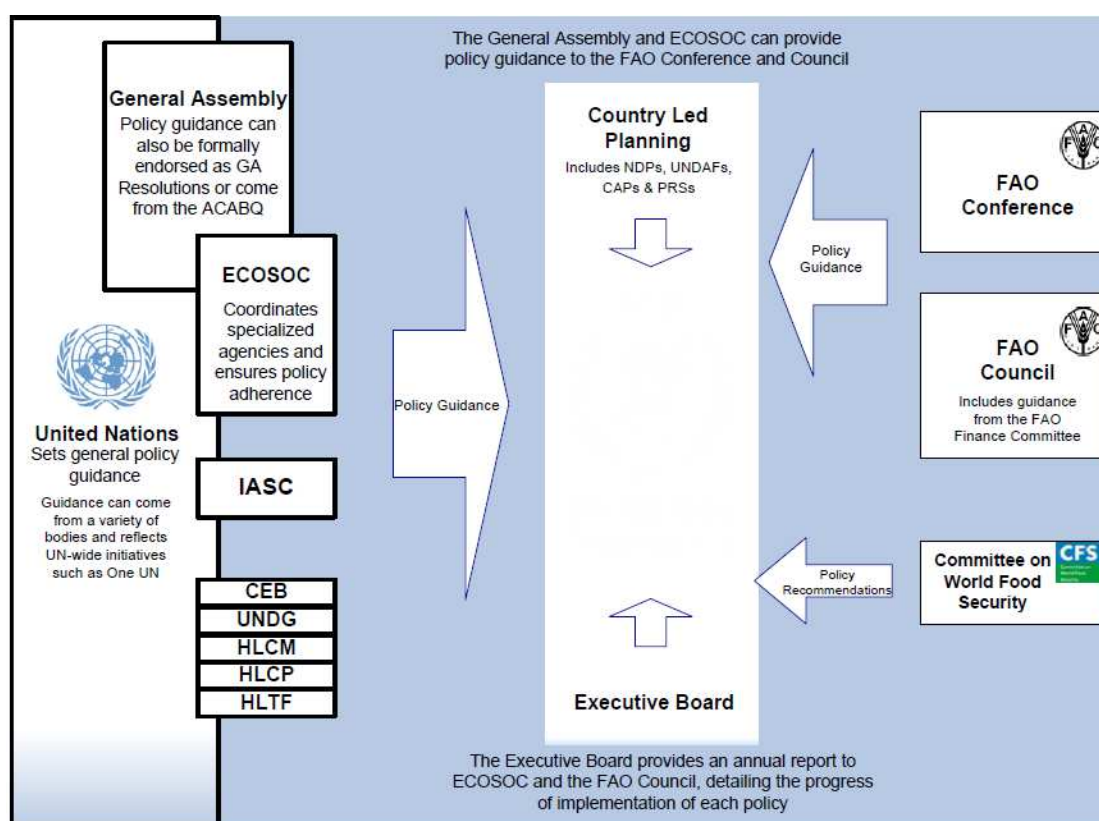
Source: WFP 2010e: 2-6

During the first three decades, the largest share of WFP assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and South Asia went for emergency operations, while Asia and the Pacific region received assistance mainly for productive projects and to meet disasters resulting from droughts, and Latin America and the Caribbean assistance was for human resource development. Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa received relatively small portions of emergency aid. Asian countries have been able to take steps to mitigate and cope with natural disasters without depending much on international emergency aid. Sub-Saharan Africa, however, has continued to witness multiple emergencies (prolonged drought in the Sahelian countries of West Africa in the 1970s, famine-like condition in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s, and South Africa drought in the early 1990s, along with Nigerian Civil war in 1968, Kampuchean civil war between 1975 and 1979, and Rwandan civil strife in 1994) and without much coping strategies, thereby receiving most of WFP's emergency aid (Shaw 2001: 83; 157-159).

Decision-making and policy formulation in WFP is a complex process, influenced, guided and determined by a variety of internal and external factors (see Figure 6.7). Apart from the overall policy guidance provided by the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC, Conference of FAO and Council of FAO, within the WFP strategic policy guidance is provided by the Policy Committee and the Executive Policy Council makes decision based on those recommendations. The WFP policy development

process includes: policy conception, policy-making, policy implementation and policy evaluation (WFP 2011d: 4-8). In an attempt to codify and simplify WFP policies, the Consolidated Framework of WFP policies was reproduced in a compendium (organised in five sections: development, emergencies, linking relief and development, cross cutting, and resourcing) (WFP 2002a), which was to be kept updated and accessible to serve as a relevant governance tool, with annual review by the Executive Board to inform the development of its plan of work and identify new policies in the context of its work (WFP 2002b: 5-6).<sup>29</sup>

**Figure 6.7: World Food Programme Policy Process**



ACABQ: Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

CEB: Chief Executives Board for Coordination

HCLM: High-level Committee on Management

HLCP: High-level Committee on Programmes

HLTF: High-level Task Force

IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

NDP: National Development Plan

PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

UNDG: United Nations Development Group

Source: WFP Policy Formulation 2011: 4

<sup>29</sup> The Consolidated Framework of WFP Policies have been annually updated since 2005: WFP/EB.2/2005/4-D/Rev.1 (November 2005); WFP/EB.2/2006/4-E (November 2006); WFP/EB.2/2007/4-D (October 2007); WFP/EB.2/2008/4-F (October 2008); and WFP/EB.2/2009/4-D (November 2009).

The composition of resources at WFP's disposal and the manner in which they are made available by donors have impacted its operational activities. Its sources come from entirely voluntary contributions in appropriate commodities, cash and acceptable services, received from member governments of the UN and FAO, other inter-governmental bodies, appropriate public sources and NGOs. Additional WFP resources come from the FAC and the IEFER, including the IRA. However, faced with declining resources and cash crunch, unconventional funding sources were explored since late 1990s, including private sector and the World Bank (Shaw 2001: 188). Commodities contributions to WFP include, different types of cereals, pulses, dairy products, fats and oils, meat, sugar, and blended foods, their 'appropriateness' determined by WFP-donor discussions, and the value of the commodity contribution computed by the WFP governing body on the basis of prevailing market prices at the time of making the contribution (Shaw 2001: 189-190). Recognising that WFP projects' effectiveness would be greatly enhanced if food aid was accompanied by non-food items (NFIs),<sup>30</sup> the NFIs unit was established in 1974. A special account was created for this purpose to which donors mainly provided in-kind NFIs or contributed in cash to purchase the required items. WFP continues to provide NFIs and logistics support on an ad hoc basis (Shaw 2001: 79; 192-93).

Resource management in WFP is a complicated issue, often criticised of inflexibility. Donors announce their voluntary contributions (regular resources) in 'pledging conferences' held a year in advance of the biennium during which they are to be used, and contributions are made for two years. Pledging targets for each biennium is decided by the WFP governing body, formally approved by ECOSOC and Council of FAO, endorsed by UN General Assembly and Conference of FAO. Several resource channels exist to address specific requirements, with separate terms and conditions, to which contributions can be made: FAC, IRA, PRO, IEFER, special emergencies account that handles contributions to specific large-scale and complex international emergency operations, NFIs, etc. These non-interchangeable accounts are individually managed by the WFP Secretariat (Shaw 2001: 191-193). During the initial years of its operations, WFP consistently and increasingly suffered from the 'Achilles heel' of shortage of cash resources (Shaw 2001: 193) since most of the large donors did not

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<sup>30</sup> Non-food items (NFIs) include: fertilisers, pesticides, insecticides and fumigation materials, farm machinery, transportation trucks, storage and packaging equipments, kitchen and canteen apparatuses, tools and materials needed to implement development projects.



adhere to providing one-third of their contribution in cash and services. However, WFP's share of resources committed as cash has been steadily rising (WFP 1997a: 9).

In a circumstance when global food aid flows are declining dramatically as donors increasingly prefer to give cash, selling scarce in-kind food aid commodities in open market becomes hard to rationalize. With the rise in its cash resources, WFP moved towards purchasing food in domestic local markets of developing countries, rendering monetisation largely irrelevant. WFP's 'restricted approach' to monetization permits limited and case-specific open-market sale only in exceptional situations when the Executive Board agrees on it being the best option (WFP 2002a: 13), closely monitored by its governing body and the FAO-CSSD *Guidelines and Principles* (Shaw 2001: 198). It is prohibited to "undertake projects involving open-market monetization to fund activities that are not related to direct food assistance, and where the generation of funds in the primary objective" (WFP 2010a: 17) (see Table 6.9).

**Table 6.9: Scale of Monetization in WFP Development Projects, 1963-96**

	Total commitments	Commodity sales	Proportion sold (%)
1963-1987	20.4 million tons	3.1 million tons	150.0
1987-1990	US\$2,283 million	US\$296.4 million	13.3
1991-1996	US\$1,612 million	US\$209.2 million	13.0

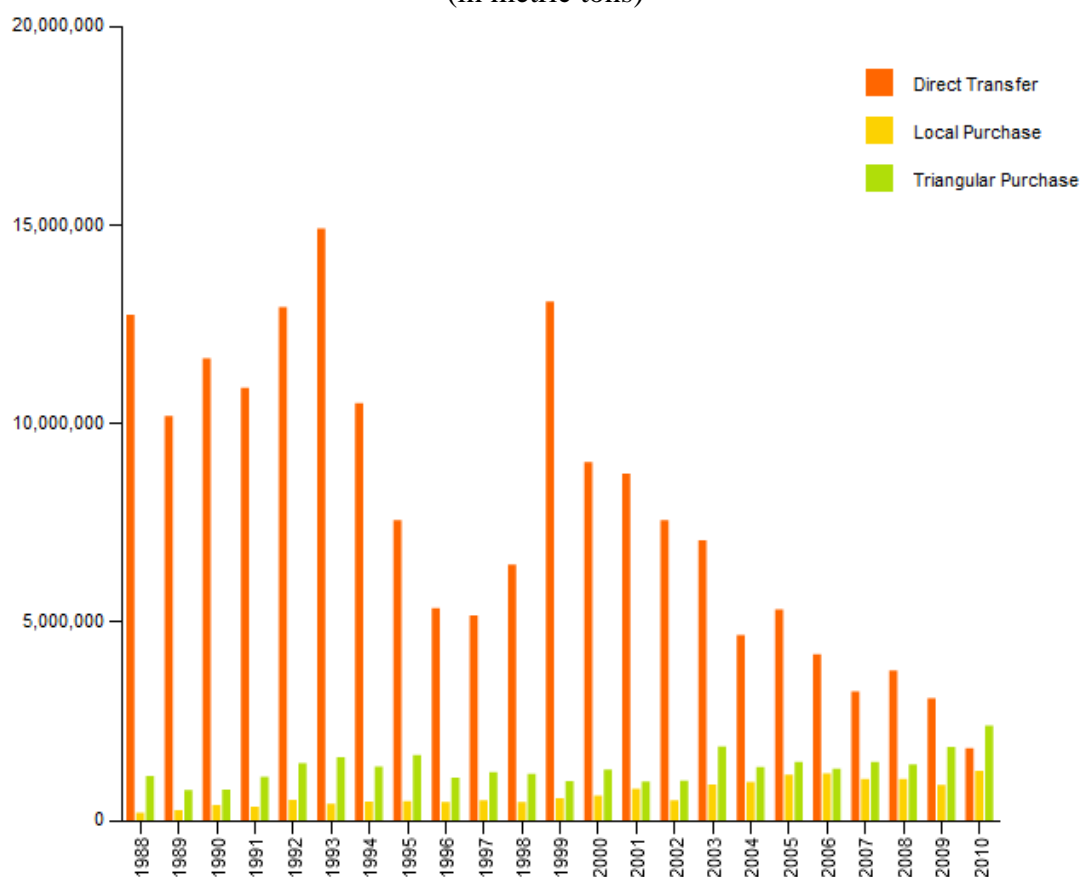
Source: WFP 1997a: 5

WFP's food procurement activities is governed under the General Rule XII and entails the responsibility of optimum use of resources (General Rule XII.4), safeguarding commercial markets (General Rule XII.5), and safeguarding exporters, international trade, and producers in recipient countries (General Rule XII.6) (WFP 2010c: 20). According to WFP procurement policy, "the main objective of WFP's food procurement is to ensure that appropriate food commodities are available to the beneficiaries in a timely and cost-efficient manner. Consistent with this, WFP purchases must also be fair and transparent" (WFP 2006: 7).<sup>31</sup> In addition to directly procuring food from donor countries (world market transaction) and shipping it to

<sup>31</sup> See, *Local Purchases of Food and Non-Food Items*, WFP/EB.A/98/8-B, Executive Board, Annual Session, 18-21 May 1998, Rome: WFP; and *Review of the Methodology on Local Purchases*, WFP/EB.3/99/10-A, Executive Board, Third Regular Session, 19-22 October 1999, Rome: WFP.

recipient countries to source food aid, other modalities used by WFP to procure and transfer food aid resources to beneficiaries include ‘triangular transactions’ (food procurement from one developing country for use within another developing country; ‘regional purchases’ (a sub-set of triangular transaction occurring between developing countries in the same geographic region or subregion), ‘local purchases’ or commodity purchases (food procurement from the food aid recipient country for use within that country) (WFP 2006: 8) (Figure 6.8), and commodity exchange, in which a particular food commodity supplied as food aid to a developing country is exchanged for another commodity produced in that country to be used as food aid.

**Figure 6.8: WFP’s Procurement and Delivery Modes, 1998-2010**  
(in metric tons)

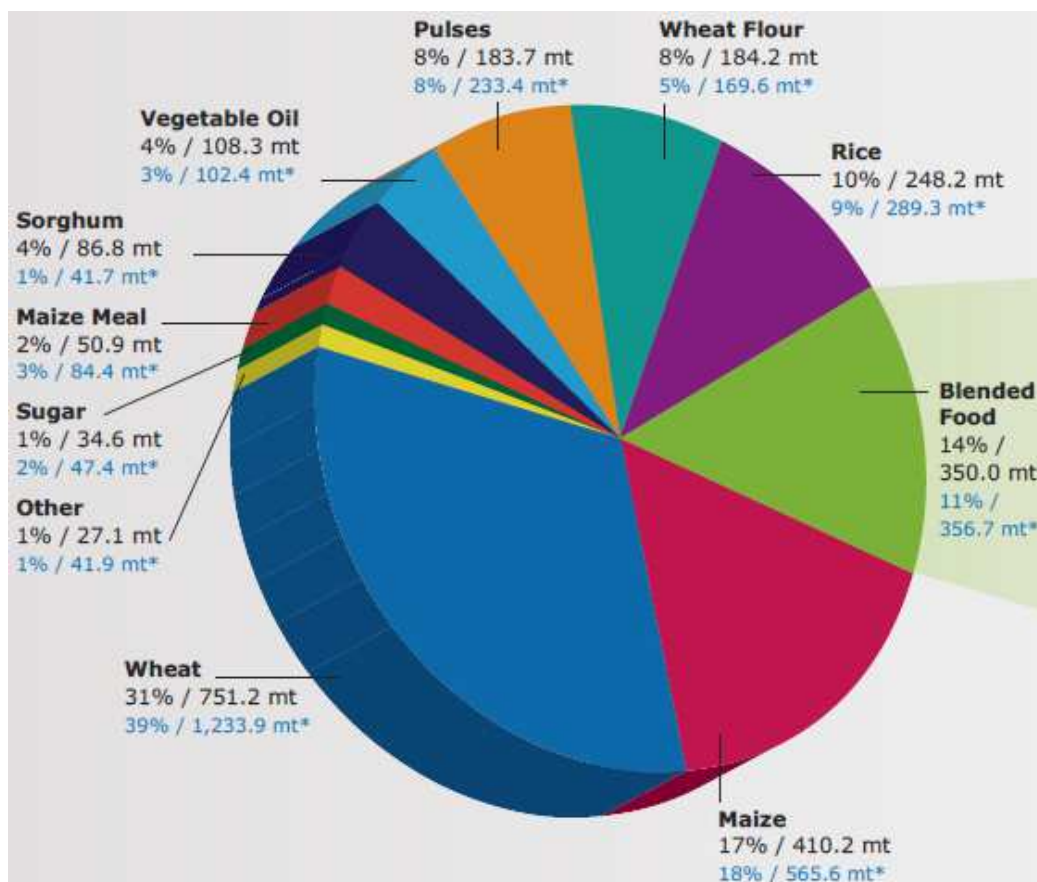


Source: WFP International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS): <http://www.wfp.org/fais/>

Food procurement as a means of supplying food aid remained relatively low, increasing only since 2000, registering significantly high levels in 2003 and overtaking direct transfer in 2010. From an average of US\$ 63.4 million in the early 1980s, WFP’s food purchases in developing countries grew to US\$ 90.6 million in 1990 to further US\$ 683.7 million in 2004 (WFP 2006: 9). Despite being rhetorically

popular, with market development as the implicit objective, the use of local and triangular purchases in practice has been rather limited in relation to direct transfer. Their success and the amount of food actually purchased in developing countries for use as food aid depends on timely and untied cash contributions from donors that allows WFP to procure internationally, regionally or locally (Shaw 2001: 203-204). In 2011, WFP made a total purchase of 2.4 million metric tonnes of food, costing US\$ 1.23 billion (WFP 2011c: 3) (see Figure 6.9).

**Figure 6.9: WFP Procurement in 2011, by commodities**  
(percentage of total quantity 2,435.2 thousand metric tonnes)



Source: WFP 2011c: 2

Food was purchased from 87 countries; 71 percent from a group of 70 countries ranging from least developed to lower-middle income and 29 per cent from 17 developed countries (WFP 2011c: 5-8). Among the top fifteen countries from which WFP purchased food in 2011, the developing countries were: Pakistan (ranked 3), India (ranked 4), Ethiopia (ranked 10), Malawi (ranked 11) and Brazil (ranked 12), while developed countries of Russian Federation (ranked 1), Italy (ranked 5), Belgium (ranked 8) and France (ranked 9) (see Tables 6.10 and 6.11).

**Table 6.10: Origin of Goods in 2011**  
(by OECD-DAC, category of countries)

DAC Category	Quantity mt	% mt	Value (US\$ thousand)	% US\$
LDC	632,411	26%	267,378	22%
LIC	66,466	3%	27,230	2%
LMIC	656,697	27%	378,470	31%
UMIC	383,308	16%	196,615	16%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,738,863</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>869,694</b>	<b>71%</b>
Developed	696,339	28%	362,338	29%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,435,202</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,232,032</b>	<b>100%</b>

LDC: Least Developed Countries

LIC: Other Low-Income Countries (per capita GNI < UD\$ 1,005 in 2010)

LMIC: Lower Middle-Income Countries (per capita GNI < UD\$ 1,006 – 3,975 in 2010)

UMIC: Upper Middle-Income Countries (per capita GNI < UD\$ 3,975 – 12,275 in 2010)

Source: WFP 2011c: 5

**Table 6.11: Top Fifteen Countries of Food Origin, 2011**  
ranked by value (in value terms US\$)

Country	Quantity (in metric tonnes)	Value (in US\$ thousand)	Percentage
<b>Russian Federation</b>	421,332	135,191	10.97
<b>Indonesia</b>	95,112	117,984	9.5
<b>Pakistan</b>	202,409	80,211	6.51
<b>India</b>	198,251	75,842	6.16
<b>Italy</b>	91,445	62,808	5.10
<b>Turkey</b>	99,232	56,368	4.58
<b>South Africa</b>	109,683	53,361	4.33
<b>Belgium</b>	71,629	50,577	4.11
<b>France</b>	15,374	50,178	4.07
<b>Ethiopia</b>	85,293	42,685	3.46
<b>Malawi</b>	108,630	40,031	3.25
<b>Brazil</b>	74,222	27,449	2.23
<b>Honduras</b>	30,068	23,782	1.93
<b>Kenya</b>	57,961	22,867	1.86
<b>Sudan</b>	61,264	21,574	1.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,721,905</b>	<b>860,908</b>	<b>69.88</b>

Russian Federation, Italy, Belgium and France are classified as developed countries, while rest are classified as developing countries according to OECD-DAC, 2011-2013

Source: WFP 2011c: 6-9

The WFP general procurement policy is to purchase from 'pre-qualified suppliers through a competitive bidding process', which guarantees best price and transparency, analysing the cost of the commodity as well as transportation and handling cost up to the delivery point. Preference is given to purchasing from developing countries, provided other conditions are equal. Often conditions specified or restrictions imposed by donor or recipient countries on origin, destination, quality, marking, and packaging limit the flexibility of the purchase (WFP 2011c: 1). WFP uses the Forward Purchase Facility (FPF), a US\$ 150 million revolving fund, to purchase commodities in advance to ensure steady flow and reduced response time.

Building on local procurement process, in September 2008, the P4P initiative was launched to steer WFP's purchasing power towards connecting smallholder farmers to developed suitable agricultural markets access, supporting them in selling food surpluses at fair prices and increasing their share of market price. WFP P4P projects have been initiated in Rwanda as part of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development, in the United Republic of Tanzania jointly with Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, and in Mozambique with FAO and IFAD as partners (WFP 2011a: 18). The basic strategy of P4P is to create a demand for the food staples grown by small farmers. Between 2001 and 2007, WFP purchased about US\$ 1.5 billion of food commodities from Africa alone (WFP 2009b: 75).

In order to deliver food to the poor and hungry, timely and quickly in case of emergency and disaster relief operations, cost-effective transportation from point of entry to final destination, food storage, including spoilage and theft, and logistics are vital to release more resources for food. Considerable energy and resources have been devoted by WFP to expand its logistical capacity and improve the efficacy of its operations (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 170-171). WFP's internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) and Landside Transport, Storage and Handling (LTSH) costs of food deliveries in least developed countries and refugee operations, managing and operating fleets of trucks and trailers for surface transportation, ocean shipping, inland and ocean freight have accounted for huge expenditures. A common WFP Logistics and Coordination Unit (WFP-LCU) was established as an inter-agency service to facilitate cost-effective and timely logistics services, information, assessment and coordination for complex and large-scale emergencies.

Since 2009, WFP has deployed targeted cash transfers and food vouchers for populations who are unable to afford food. While cash transfer provides targeted beneficiary groups (poor and hungry people or households) with money or bank transfers to spend as they wish, vouchers (commodity or cash) can be exchanged in selected shops for fixed quantities of specified foods or for a choice of specified food items with the equivalent cash value of the voucher. They can be unconditional or impose requirements on beneficiaries to participate in work, training or attend school or health centre (WFP 2009a: vii). The first WFP cash/voucher programme was launched in Africa (Bukina Faso) in February 2009 (WFP 2009c: 2). Cash/voucher transfers inject money in local economies, especially in urban areas, where market infrastructure are functioning but some people are too poor to buy food, in turn stimulating badly hit local commercial sector. As flexible form of food assistance, they reduce cost of transporting and storing food stocks (WFP 2010b: 28).

Cash and voucher transfers were expanded to 15 countries in 2010 (WFP 2011a: 4), with the number of projects rising from 5 in 2008 (US\$ 5.4 million in value) to 35 in 2010 (US\$ 140 million in value) (WFP 2011a: 28). Latest technological advances are used, like text messages on mobile phones to Iraqi refugees in Syria that act as ‘virtual voucher’ at selected government grocery stores (WFP 2010b: 28-29) or electronic coupons/swipe card (‘digital food’) to Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip redeemable at selected shops (WFP 2011a: 27). According to WFP, cash and vouchers transfers are most effective to ensure improved food/nutrition intake, using local shops and market suppliers (WFP 2009a: vii), however, they cannot replace income-generating opportunities and technology-dependent methods presuppose that poor beneficiaries possess mobile phones and are aware of using electronic gadgets.

WFP clearly has a significant comparative advantage over bilateral food aid, however, its efficacy can be compromised due to heavy dependence on US contribution, which is evidently supply-driven and geopolitically motivated (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 65), resulting in potentially destabilising repercussions. During its first decade (1963-74), WFP received from the US around 44 per cent of its contribution (Gustafsson 1978: 102-120), which accounted for 65 percent of total resources by 2001 (Clay 2003: 706), signalling effective reliance on US resources, making WFP too dependent on a single donor, a trend that has continued till recent years (see Table 6.12).

**Table 6.12: Contributions to WFP by Selected Countries: Comparative Figures 1998-2012 (in US\$)**

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
<b>USA</b>	873,050,525	795,676,450	938, 184,599	1,065,019,807	1,123,290,755	2,070,434,473	1,564,509,553	515,773,222
<b>European Commission</b>	184,644,687	117,794,061	177,326,417	200,500,745	265,762,058	355,494,328	289,928,300	104,604,467
<b>Canada</b>	67,116,203	51,849,281	52,661,860	89,993,577	149,372,753	275,392,315	285,529,466	251,332,047
<b>Japan</b>	123,746,510	260,098,730	92,895,679	135,729,626	71,386,212	178,322,882	214,578,989	126,998,409
<b>United Kingdom</b>	80,211,787	60,055,898	95,717,938	115,883,885	100,371,690	168,960,902	157,126,608	47,598,565
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	-	2,961,922	4,245,787	3,345,325	29,695,335	503,546,083	38,829,259	500,000
<b>Germany</b>	61,778,997	46,750,330	60,920,190	65,330,766	59,679,909	100,747,467	95,417,390	31,777,116
<b>Australia</b>	60,670,362	53,785,990	50,391,569	41,496,882	60,578,102	107,929,064	83,929,841	68,945,727
<b>Spain</b>	2,724,642	3,256,071	2,607,166	17,466,086	16,992,778	117,459,755	82,634,668	-
<b>Sweden</b>	29,511,350	30,77,985	31,224,059	44,540,171	58,520,165	81,707,956	91,016,858	81,970,835
<b>Netherlands</b>	45,531,951	62,8000,864	58,794,913	77,479,149	80,023,084	117,504,938	74,424,231	1,428,571
<b>Denmark</b>	43,384,247	41,922,329	40,158,192	43,435,885	43,817,077	56,599,226	40,914,557	33,047,023
<b>Switzerland</b>	21,334,347	21,735,350	24,154,530	32,627,568	33,506,603	45,288,218	42,984,615	37,598,007
<b>Finland</b>	13,801,172	15,218,899	17,443,508	17,999,972	18,318,689	28,256,633	26,438,704	10,883,006
<b>Italy</b>	10,632,498	19,936,478	41,787,371	47,928,778	12,392,022	101,794,434	26,442,360	9,422,697
<b>Norway</b>	36,984,019	32,802,558	45,714,412	54,851,978	51,341,842	53,466,460	43,939,157	2,816,888
<b>Belgium</b>	16,907,623	6,283,602	5,831,423	11,704,586	11,132,455	24,784,250	37,348,796	800,000
<b>France</b>	24,741,861	26,170,223	14,457,141	30,423,718	25,324,603	40,369,304	19,998,701	17,435,680
<b>Brazil</b>	-	-	-	-	-	1,440,694	12,773,712	74,509,971
<b>India</b>	960,000	953,153	7,444,108	23,598,928	6,757,889	16,378,482	12,774,648	1990,315
<b>China</b>	1,133,532	4,549,980	1,250,000	4,852,641	1,800,314	9,575,850	4,059,791	-
<b>World Bank</b>	-	-	-	-	54,809,800	11,142,763	6,092,726	-
<b>Private Donors</b>	3,741,059	5,434,703	4,822,410	21,691,524	55,035,014	143,856,527	142,622,863	17,147,529

\* Private contribution does not include extraordinary gifts in kind such as advertising

Source: Compiled from WFP Annual Reports 1998-2011 and Contributions Reports, available at: <http://www.wfp.org/about/donors>

WFP faces ‘double-bureaucracy’ problems since administratively all its food aid needs to be scrutinised both by its own bureaucracy and that of its donors, particularly a serious problem with the US, which “has consistently tended to view the WFP as an extension of its own bilateral programme (Raikes 1988: 175; Wallerstein 1980: 178). Historically, the US has been the only donor that imposed bilateral constraints on a multilateral agency. The terms of its participation in WFP required the US Agency for International Development country mission to clear a WFP request for assistance if US commodities were involved, to check for contravention with the technical provisions of PL 480 or conflict with general US policy of assisting a developing country. The US also insisted on transporting its food aid commodities in US ships, three-quarter of which was required to consist of bagged, fortified or processed products, raising fears of ‘bilateralization’ (Shaw 2001: 64), “the gradual erosion of the multilateral character of the WFP” (Clay 2003: 697), and “the degree to which the apparent multilateralization of food aid is real, rather than just a façade for bilateral donations increasingly dispensed through WFP” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 64).

The growing concern regarding ‘bilateralization’ of humanitarian response to emergencies has also resulted from “the growing use of earmarked contributions to multilateral agencies (i.e., flows restricted by a donor for use only in a particular destination) in an effort to increase bilateral donor visibility and to exert greater political control over the use of donated resources” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 64), for example, specifically targeting a particular emergency like in southern Africa (2002-03), Afghanistan (2001), Horn of Africa (1999-2000 and 2002-03). Thus, WFP can only marginally distance itself from the potentially parochial interests of the bilateral donors and has limited ability to avoid donor country politics because it depends almost entirely on donors for contributions (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 62-63). Though it has been evidenced that multilateral management of international food aid can make an actual difference to the food situation, “it can never be a foundation for a national level food security strategy” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 62-65).

However, in the context of changes in its policies over the years, the WFP *Strategic Plan 2008-2013* marks a historic shift in its transition from a food aid to a ‘food assistance’ agency, “using more nuanced and market-sensitive set of tools to respond to critical hunger needs”, with the goal of reducing dependency and supporting



national and international effort to ensure long-term solution (WFP 2008: 3). This ‘revolution’ from food aid to food assistance was based on several ‘innovations’ undertaken by the WFP to overcome hunger around the world, using a mixture of instruments, such as vouchers, cash transfers, food transfers and insurance, to focus on the thematic areas of agriculture and markets (through Purchase for Progress), disaster risk reduction and livelihoods, nutrition, food technology, HIV/AIDS, education and gender (WFP 2010d).

WFP represents a ‘success story’ (H. W. Singer’s *Foreword* in Shaw 2001: ix; Clay 2003: 707) within the UN system, growing from a small three-year experiment into a separate agency with global presence. To a certain extent, WFP has lent food aid the multilateral dimension that was required to ‘depoliticise’ the bilateral biases and use it for both emergency purposes and well as an instrument for promoting objectives of development, signifying international burden sharing with no political or commercial motives. It has stimulated the international community “to remove the artificial dichotomy between emergency and development assistance” (H. W. Singer’s *Foreword* in Shaw 2001: x-xi). The continued need for emergency assistance can be reduced if food security for the poor and vulnerable population is assured through programmes that generate employment, income and assets. Thus, disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation, and post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation activities form a part of development assistance in poorest countries, while FFW schemes are used for reconstruction and rehabilitation after termination of emergency aid. Since disasters cannot be seen in isolation from their impacts on larger development goals, emergency aid is used for immediate relief, supporting food security measures and reinforcing long-term development (Shaw 2001: 177-178).

In a changed global food system, in which food aid is characterised by the relatively marginal importance, uncertain flow of resources dependent of surplus availability and prices in donor countries, used mainly for humanitarian purposes and increasingly bilateralised, WFP’s responsive institutional change resembles “adaptation as an apparently piecemeal process of adjustment” (Clay 2003: 697). Its emergency operations modalities “evolved pragmatically in reaction to specific events and agency experiences in increasingly large and complex humanitarian operations”, precluding any “grand design, or inter-agency attempt to rethink the modalities of

emergency food aid on a global scale that might be required by the growing number and scale of humanitarian crises” (Clay 2003: 704). An urgent need was voiced for a strong WFP, “without the WFP or with only a weak WFP in future, the solemn international promise of reducing the number of... undernourished people by half by the year 2015 certainly cannot be met” (Faaland et al. 2000: 255). The 2007-2008 food crises provide an appropriate impetus for the WFP to rethink its role in food assistance, as distinguished from food aid, in the context of broad national strategies of poverty reduction, human development and disaster relief.

### **The Food Aid Controversy**

Food aid has been “one of the most complex and misunderstood instruments of contemporary international policy” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 1), caught between the political and commercial motives of the donors and the essential value of food aid. The debates surrounding food aid can be contextualised within the larger debate on foreign aid, which “has at times been a spectacular success – and an unmitigated failure” (Dollar and Pritchett 1998: 1). While external assistance for humanitarian/emergency purposes seldom attracts opposition, integrating aid within recipient countries’ objectives and development plans raises hesitation and uncertainty of outcomes. Whether foreign development aid<sup>32</sup> can actually develop the recipient country and its effectiveness in achieving economic and/or humanitarian targets, reducing poverty and inequality, and promoting overall growth, in addition to the “assumption that foreign aid is an instrument of foreign policy” (Morgenthau 1962: 301) raises further controversy regarding the motives and success of aid.

Though humanitarian aid per se is not political, it can perform political functions when operating within a political context. Foreign aid for economic development in particular raises issues of practical manipulation. According to Morgenthau (1962: 307), the potential for successful operation of foreign aid for economic development is much smaller than anticipated. Unless oriented towards the political conditions within which it must operate, foreign aid for economic purposes may turn out to be

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<sup>32</sup> Development aid is also referred to as: development cooperation, development assistance, technical assistance (in which engineers, agronomists and other experts are sent to developing countries at the expense of the donor government), international aid, overseas aid, and official development assistance (ODA), provided on a long-term basis (as money or technical assistance) for poverty alleviation in poor and developing countries, distinguished from humanitarian assistance that is provided during natural calamities to save and protect people in distress

different from what it was intended to be. The general assertion is that on an average foreign aid has been partially or little successful in reducing poverty and promoting growth, either due to poor performance of bureaucracies or absence of good economic policy environments in receiving countries (Burnside and Dollar 2000: 864) or due to the pattern of foreign aid flows dictated by political and strategic considerations.

An inefficient, economically closed, mismanaged non-democratic former colony politically friendly to its former colonizer, receives more foreign aid than another country with similar level of poverty, a superior policy stance, but without a past as a colony...certain donors...respond to the “correct” incentives, namely income levels, good institutions of the receiving countries, and openness. Other countries...give to former colonies tied by political alliances, without much regard to other factors, including poverty levels or choice of politico-economic regimes (Alesina and Dollar 2000: 33-34).

While it aid might not seem to be “a fundamentally decisive factor for development” compared to domestic savings, inequality or governance (Roodman 2007: 275), Jeffrey Sachs (2005: 250) asserts the inevitability of targeted investments backed by donor aid to break the poverty trap. In the absence of donor funding, it is simply not possible to fund necessary investments and raise the level of capital per person. Thus, financial assistance can facilitate better growth in good policy environments and in developing countries with sound economic management, improvements in economic institutions and policies in these countries being the key to poverty reduction (Dollar and Pritchett 1998: 2-3). While bilateral aid does not significantly favour good economic policy, strongly related to government consumption rather than investing for domestic output, multilaterally managed aid is largely allocated in favour of good policy. Hence, systematic conditioning of aid on quality of economic policies in recipient developing countries is likely to increase its impact on their growth (Burnside and Dollar 2000: 864). The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005) laid out five principles for donors and partner countries to increase the impact of aid: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing results and mutual accountability.<sup>33</sup>

Turning attention specifically to debates about food aid, Doornbos (2000: 351) has correctly and comprehensively observed that,

the continuity and repetition of the arguments produce a kind of ‘déjà vu’ effect: there is ongoing discussion about the ‘additionality’ versus ‘fungibility’ of food aid; about food aid as a ‘resource’ as opposed to a ‘tool’; about food aid for ‘relief’

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<sup>33</sup> The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005) and the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008), are available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>

as opposed to ‘development’; on the pros and cons of monetisation; on the risks of disincentive effects and chronic aid dependency as opposed to enhancing agricultural self-sufficiency and national food security...With respect to most of these issues, the arguments advanced have remained essentially the same and appear to have become routinised; when revisiting the discussion one is struck by how little the debate has moved forward...

Despite this predicament, the discussion below attempts to capture some of the oft repeated contentions that nuance the understanding of food aid as a policy option to ensure global food security, in the light of WFP’s attempt to multilateralise food aid.

Food aid cannot be detached from the donors’ politico-economic and commercial self-interest having marginal humanitarian impulses. While inadequate agricultural production and widely prevalent hunger in the developing countries ensure the continuity of demand for food aid, the donors’ quest for economic, political and military dominance and outlet for overproduction determine the varying extent of supply of their food aid activities. Food aid serves the donors’ primary economic interest to dispose of their agricultural surpluses and therefore, is resource-driven, based on the availability of surplus food commodities, rather than on the interests or needs of the recipients. Bilateral aid entails greater possibilities of using food as a tool, a weapon against the recipient countries and to further the goals of the donor states as food aid policies are constructed to follow the general foreign, domestic and economic policy lines of the donor (Gustafsson 1978: 94-95, 124-125; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 160). The geopolitical and strategic interests in providing food aid undermine its potential as an instrument to address food insecurity.

Food aid is managed both by bilateral and multilateral agencies, with heavy involvement from NGOs, and private sector and agribusiness corporations. The sheer involvement of so many actors in food aid makes it difficult to gauge the multiplicity of motivations that are at work. Hence, “food aid targeting gets distorted by food aid’s political dependence on multiple masters, who often cause food to be overused or misused as a resource in order to serve donors’ parochial interests” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 1-3). Though food aid per se is not problematic, either as an instrument of humanitarian relief or development, it can never be free of politics,

by attempting to use food aid...in pursuit of donor-oriented objectives for which it is inherently ill-suited, donors have compromised food aid’s effectiveness in accomplishing most goals well, particularly the humanitarian objectives that underpin most public rhetoric in support of food aid. This ineffectiveness sparks

disputes among donors, especially in disagreements over the effects of food aid on commercial trade in foodstuffs (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 19).

International food aid is particularly considered as pernicious because it emerged as an indirect and secondary outcome of agricultural protectionist policies pursued by the developed countries (especially US), resulting in surplus holdings, and continued to increase the leverage that donors can exert on poor recipient countries (Stevens 1979: 13; Cathie 1982: 11). Since food aid invariably takes place between unequal parties, it would be naïve to expect that it would be premised solely on humanitarian objective. Rather food aid programmes are dominated by political and commercial considerations, far removed from any moral obligation or recognition of poverty and hunger. Food aid is “a somewhat cynical cover for grossly self-serving, non-humanitarian objectives” (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 4), actually “part of a system of papering over the cracks...Food aid brings temporary relief and benefit but the underlying cause of hunger continue in existence...” (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 65). For example, the problem of poverty as the most fundamental causal explanation of hunger and food insecurity is an extremely difficult one for food aid to deal with. Operating within a strongly distorted economic system, which donors or aid agencies are largely powerless to change, food aid ends up helping the better-off segments of society more than it helps the poor. There is a deep dilemma: the poor are in great need, but efforts to alleviate that need are likely to strengthen the very structure that maintains poverty (Murdoch 1980: 266- 267).

The by-product of readily available food supplies for alleviation of food shortages is the obvious temptation by the recipient governments to overlook, neglect and postpone their own agricultural production, which involves economic and agrarian reform and structural changes. Food aid disrupts the commercial export markets of the developing countries and discourages expansion of agricultural output by destabilising and depressing food market prices. It has been a long-term policy concern that by blunting incentives for domestic food production and self-reliance, food aid increases indebtedness and the probability of food dependency on donors by the recipient household, community or nation (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 230-231; Murdoch 1980: 263; Tuomi 1978: 2; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 158; FAO 2006: 34-40; Srinivasan 1989: 41; Power and Hostenstein 1980: 59; George 1984: 13; Shaw 2001: 35; Tarrant 1980: 256; Singer et al. 1987: 183-189). The dependence of less

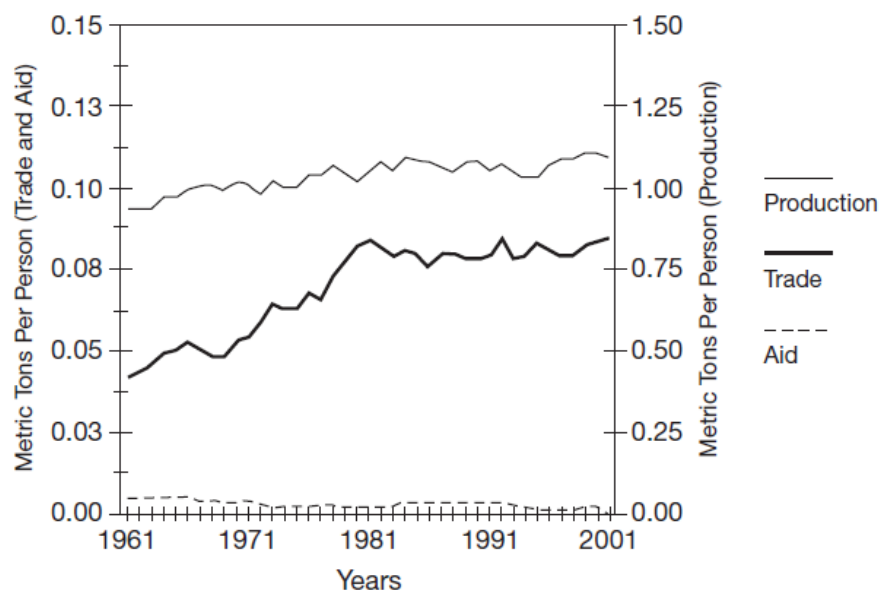
developed countries on imports has two critical implications: firstly, food security of these countries becomes greatly dependent on output in the few big producing countries; and secondly, imports constitute a serious strain on the balance of payment of these countries, widely affecting the overall development process (Marei 1976: 12). Food as aid comes with the 'risk of abrupt withdrawal' (Raikes 1988: 171) and uncertainty regarding the regularity of reliable supply (Tarrant 1980: 268-269).

Food aid is also used to promote exports and gain new markets for the donor's agricultural and other exports. Countries facing food shortages are initially given aid philanthropically or on concessional terms with the expectation that eventually they will be able to buy on commercial terms. Therefore, food aid may be used as a dumping measure, with commercial sale replacing the donations or concessional sales (Tuomi 1978: 2-3). For example, Italy, Spain, Japan and Philippines, which were notable recipients of US PL 480, gradually changed into commercial purchasers of US agricultural products. During the 1960s, while the value of US government programme to Latin America, Caribbean and Africa decreased substantially, at the same time, the value of commercial agricultural sale to every developed region of the world increased considerable (Gustafsson 1978: 122; Bondestam 1978: 259).

Challenging the conventional dependency syndrome attached with food aid, Barrett and Maxwell (2005: 180-181), opine that "claims of dependency seem to have the direction of causality wrong", definitely 'overblown as a concern of food aid'. Given the modest volume of food aid transferred, it constitutes only a small percentage of individual household's consumption or income and represents a further miniscule part of the recipient country's overall food supply to make them dependent upon it or establish any direct line of causality. In addition, the cost involved in transferring this rather small quantity of food aid fails to bring any positive budgetary or stock advantage for the donors. The validity of the market-creating function of food aid is also critiqued as being extremely limited. The early food aid recipients that became commercial importers (Japan, West Germany, Taiwan, South Korea and Portugal) had experienced sharp rise in their income. Other major aid recipients of (PL 480) food aid (India, Vietnam, Brazil, Spain and Poland) rather than becoming grain importers represent competition in international food market (Uvin 1994: 136).

The original purpose of using food aid as a tool for surplus disposal is still evident in the inverse relationship between the volume of food aid and world cereal prices and stocks. The steep rise in world cereal prices in the 1970s transformed the relative abundance of food aid during the 1950s and 60s to the relative scarcity during 1970-74 as food aid volumes fell by half (Cathie 1982: 12). In the mid-1990s, sharp reduction in surplus stock due to agricultural policy reforms in several cereal producing countries together with harvest shortfall led to spike in world cereal prices accompanied by drop in food aid (FAO 2006: 10-11). The same was repeated during the 2007-2008 price rise accompanied by plunge in aid volume. A comparison of the trends in domestic production and commercial trade flows as with food aid flows explicates how the latter ‘pales’, its limited volume incapable of replacing either production or trade as sources of food, except for brief periods and in very localised situations (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 6) (see Figure 6.10).

**Figure 6.10: Global Annual Food Flows: Production, Trade and Aid, 1961-2001**



*Source: Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 7, Figure 1.2*

Increased external aid not only fails to address the real obstacles to food security, but rather promotes mechanisms of external domination (MNCs/TNCs and the developed countries) and internal domination by privileged urban minorities or political elite (Dumont 1975: 33). The commercial interests of the MNCs/TNCs (to either sell agricultural products and expertise or to produce exportable agricultural goods more cheaply) are frequently aided by donor governments by encouraging tied aid. While the US bilateral food aid was legally conditioned upon the recipients' acceptance of

green revolution type techniques, the OECD-DAC gave over half its agricultural assistance to cash crop, not food crop, projects (George 1984: 32).

Moreover, food aid is dominated by the governments of the developed countries, who are interested in encouraging dependency by promoting projects that rely on equipments procurable only from the industrialised countries. Hence, food aid tied with development projects, mostly in the form of foreign exchange, has reordered the priorities of developing countries around large-scale, capital-intensive and import-intensive projects with heavy import content. Aid agencies themselves have gone into the business of generating projects, since quick resource transfer to developing countries is difficult due to administrative and technical delays and their difficulty and absorbing such transfers. External food aid has deemphasised the creation of employment and has benefited mainly a small minority of industrialists, thereby increasing income inequality and greater dependence on industrial countries, thwarting the development of more suitable indigenous technology. Few food aid-induced development projects allocate the necessary time for detailed research and necessary consultations required for local participation, which would also entail building up of rural organization to enable their members to speak without fear of reprisal from powerful local interests (Murdoch 1980: 263-264; George 1984: 36).

Political dimensions of food aid, its relationship with political stability, have also generated opposing views. On the one hand it is argued that since food aid has rarely been used in support of fundamental structural changes in social conditions, land reform or cooperative ventures with small landholders or peasants that might threaten to jeopardise the privileges of their influential elites, it is used to maintain the stability of reactionary and repressive regimes (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 165; Power and Holenstein 1980: 59). The other spectrum of the argument is that by significantly increasing food availability, food aid promotes political stability since it helps recipient government to stay in power by averting popular unrest or social upheaval (riots, demonstrations, strikes, etc.) that might be triggered due to food price hike or discontent regarding erosion of purchasing power. However, since food aid constitutes only a minor fraction of domestic food availability in recipient countries, hence, its capacity to forestall collective violence by affecting food availability seems unlikely (Uvin 1994: 165-168).



Refusal by governments to accept food aid in emergency situations has provoked strong reactions, in certain cases, leading to the fall of the concerned regime. For example, the unwillingness of the Indira Gandhi government to officially recognise the widespread famine in India in 1972-73 in order to avoid admitting the failure of their crucial agricultural policies and temporarily save the face of the government at the cost of the lives of the poor. WFP and other aid agencies were not allowed to even distribute their reserve food stocks within the country. The Indira Gandhi led congress was defeated in the subsequent General Elections. In a similar situation, Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia denied the existence of famine in Wollo province in 1973, causing the death of several thousand people. The revolution that followed saw the dethroning of the Emperor (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 164).

External food aid is also criticised for not respecting the nutritional needs of the targeted people, and not adhering to food safety standards (accepted by the Codex Alimentarius). Except in circumstances of acute food shortage, where food aid has been critical in ensuring adequate food availability, food aid interventions have rarely had a demonstrable positive nutritional impact on the recipients (Pillai 2000: 217). It has been observed that the composition of emergency food aid is unlikely to address malnutrition, continually provided at substantially lower levels than the agreed norm necessary to avoid undernutrition (Shoham et al. 2000: 149). Assessing the impact of food aid on nutritional and health status of an individual food aid recipient is difficult, if not impossible, as nutritional status is influenced by many factors other than dietary intake. Food aid generally fails to make a significant contribution to necessary nutritional variety (micronutrients) of a balanced diet necessary for healthy and active life. Besides, nutritional impact of food aid is also frustrated by poor access to health care, sanitation and clean drinking water (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 176-178)

Food provided through aid may turn out to be culturally unsuitable for the taste, eating patterns or dietary habits of the population concerned (Dumont and Cohen 1980: 162-163) or result in change of taste or traditional consumption pattern (Singer et al. 1987: 189). The donor-oriented logic of export promotion also involves efforts to change consumer preference by introducing new food and stimulating demand for previously unfamiliar foods. For example, during Sahelian food crisis of mid-1970s and mid-1980s, massive food aid shipment of wheat and rice prompted shift from

indigenous coarse grains (millet and sorghum) to an increase in the demand for wheat, while local wheat production covered only 2 percent of the requirements. Similarly, food aid deliveries in the pastoral regions of the Horn of Africa during the 1990s have changed dietary patterns from protein-rich animal products to carbohydrate-rich grains (mainly wheat) (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 181-182). Sometimes, unknown and inappropriate food is provided as aid, like shipments of tomato sauce for the starving people of Bangladesh, which was eventually sold in the market to purchase more suitable food. Food aid, provided as wheat for Sri Lanka, which is a rice-eating country and grows no wheat, led to inculcating a taste for bread, which could be sustained only by further food aid or commercial imports (Tarrant 1980: 270-271).

In most cases, food aid does not reach the people most in need. In Bangladesh, donations rarely reached the people most in need, major portion of food aid being sold to the better-off population to provide a substantial part of the national budget (George 1984: 35). Problems of distribution of food aid, wastage or losses during transit, use for other purposes instead of relieving the poor from hunger, lack of organisation and knowledge, and corruption have become integral to aid programmes, causing misuse of food aid. Black marketing of the food received as aid is also a prevalent practice. While the 1973 Sahelian famine affected the nomads most severely, the sedentary population received most of the aid (Bondestam 1978: 252).

The essential question pertaining to food aid is its direct impact on food security, whether it actually alleviates hunger. Programme and project food aid are additionally confronted by their indirect and longer-term impact on poverty, and agricultural and economic development, eventually on hunger (Uvin 1994: 156). The dichotomy between programme and project food aid is somewhat ambiguous, instead of being alternative, they can complement each other (Schneider 1978: 2021). In many circumstances the distinction between food aid to relieve outright crisis and to address chronic poverty and development tends to get lost, however, in the context of food crises (emergency condition created by natural disaster, war or extreme food shortages and lack of purchasing power) the effects of food aid on human well-being are most evident (Schubert 1986: 186).

Emergency food aid has usually been hailed as having positive impact on the incidence of hunger and an obvious humanitarian aspect. Since disruptions already

exist, emergency food aid is less likely to affect normal production and marketing in recipient countries. The less developed countries are usually reluctant to admit a famine situation and when they do, starvation is already underway. The donors must acknowledge the urgency and commit necessary resources. International organisations and NGOs ultimately are dependent on the governments for food aid. Administrative constraints also limit the efficiency of emergency food aid. At the end of donors, delays in delivery thwart the timeliness and speed of relief, while at the end of recipients, absence of or inadequate infrastructure, human resource, logistics and management create problems of storage, transportation and distribution leave ample scope for poor coordination, corruption, loss, spoilage and misappropriation, which can be catastrophic (Uvin 1994: 158-160).

In some emergency situations, food might not necessarily be the most important commodity needed. Shelter and healthcare might be more urgently required. Also, if country stocks of food have not been adversely affected by the disaster, large quantities of food aid may disrupt local markets and prices, with long-term effects on producers (Tarrant 1980: 266-267). For example, in the aftermath of an earthquake in Guatemala (1976), none of the harvest was damaged and all the grains were retrieved from the individual collapsed houses, yet around 25,000 tonnes of cereal, with another 5,000 tonne released from aid agency stores, flowed into the country that caused a glut and depression of prices for producers (Singer et al. 1987: 177). While substantial controversy exists regarding the usefulness of food aid to support development, either as programme aid or as resource for development projects, there is a strong agreement about the need to supply hungry people with food and not much controversy exists about the potential use of food aid in emergency. However, in-kind food aid is not necessarily the only condition for achieving this objective, financial aid could also be used to procure the necessary food supply (Faaland et al. 2000: 222; 237).

Regardless of mixed motivations and objectives that are associated with food aid, and the conventional wisdom that it undermines domestic food production incentives and thereby slows down the poor countries approach towards self-reliance, food aid has undoubtedly fed, kept alive and functioning (not necessarily at optimal levels) food-insecure and destitute people during emergency, due to its ready availability. Food aid has also addressed long-term problems of poor and hungry people by encouraging

economic growth in developing countries through labour-intensive programmes that generate income (Murdoch 1980: 262-264; Shaw 2001: 35). Food aid has contributed to “avert starvation...improve recipients’ quality of life either directly through nutritional supplementation or indirectly, through the transfer of income” (ACC/SCN 1993: 17-18). If administered as grants, without unreasonable conditions attached and distributed more equitably, food aid can further, instead of retarding, domestic food self-reliance and help build a reliable food security system, structured on adequate and well managed country-based food stocks (Lewis 1977: 216).

Food aid reduces a country’s need to import food, thereby freeing up scarce resources (foreign exchange) to import agricultural inputs (farming and transport equipments, fuel, chemical fertilisers, etc.), crucial for future productivity (George 1976: 279; Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 188; Tarrant 1980: 258). For recipient countries, the proceeds from the sale of food received as aid can generate government income and make substantial contribution to the total budget, a portion of which can be used for development purposes (Tarrant 1980: 257) by recipient governments to buy local food for distribution through projects, FFW, MCH or SFP, which can be assessed for more direct benefits. The use of local food through monetisation incentivises local producers by increasing the demand for domestic produce and prevents taste change of recipients by providing locally acceptable food (Tarrant 1980: 264).

While the developing countries are in the process of attaining self-sufficiency through increased agricultural production, food aid plays a vital role in the interim period by providing emergency relief in combating hunger and malnutrition and promoting economic and social development (Miljan 1980: 45). Instead of being a by-product of surplus disposal intentions, or other geopolitical or economic objective of the donor, it is important that food aid have an intrinsic goal and purpose, like assuring food and nutrition security for hungry and undernourished people, especially the most vulnerable, supporting the efforts of developing countries in advancing their own food production and other developmental parameters that contribute to increasing income and purchasing power necessary to buy adequate amount of food, and assisting in the transition from negative to positive food production policies (Hannah 1977: 107).

When credibly tied with initiation of growth-promoting policies and distribution conditionalities, food aid can provide impetus to reform policies that are detrimental

to growth. However, the use of food aid for policy reform and adjustment must be carefully planned to avoid encouragement of inappropriate policies, with a credible 'exit strategy' (Srinivasan 1989: 41; 62; Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 191-192). The effectiveness of food aid can be enhanced by proper design, choice of commodities, and flexibility of exchange between aid commodity and local output. Purchase of food within the recipient country or region using direct cash contribution is encouraged to prevent food aid from disrupting local markets, investment and production and to promote local agricultural development, strengthen regional and local markets and ensure sustained food security. However, local purchases "must be guided by careful assessment of availability, potential price effects, food safety and comparative costs" (Berlin Statement 2003: 4).

Evidently, food aid has generated little controversy when deployed for humanitarian emergencies. The use of food aid for long-term development purposes and economic growth have been rather contentious, likely to fall prey to donor objectives and self-interest as it provides more scope for penetrating the recipient countries' economic and development strategy. Whether food aid can actually address the fundamental causes of hunger and poverty remains to be conclusively ascertained, hence, its ability to ascertain global food security remains elusive.

## **Conclusion**

Food aid has witnessed much change in character; essentially beginning as a surplus disposal mechanism, food aid shifted to a 'development first' purpose in the first thirty years after World War II (Hopkins 1984: 345) to further evolve into a policy tool, primarily aimed at emergency (humanitarian) relief (though non-emergency development purposes also persisted) and more recently addressing food crises arising due to price rise. A parallel trend has been the increasing preference for multilateral channel of food aid dissemination. Beginning almost exclusively as a bilateral channel of disposal of agricultural surpluses, guided and regulated by internationally agreed rules, food aid policy evolved towards multilateralism to target poor and vulnerable population on the basis of need and urgency. However, the precise definition of food aid, the core concepts involved, sourcing and channelisation, commodities included, purposes and distribution criteria are largely ambiguous, left to case-by-case interpretation by donors and recipients. The multiplicity of actors involved in the food

aid process, each having specific perspective, agenda and method of working, further rendering an assessment of the effectiveness of food aid complicated and difficult.

The classical sense of food aid has undergone transformation in many spheres. There is visible reduction of donors providing food aid from their own agricultural production, rather preferring to give cash for purchase of food, locally or regionally. Concessional imports, triangular commodity purchases, monetisation, and commodity exchange have been developed within the food aid paradigm. Assistance is also disbursed as cash/vouchers rather than in-kind food if circumstances so demand. Food aid is being targeted to protracted refugees and displaced persons and emergency operations have been broadened to include disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation and post-disaster rehabilitation activities. Shifts are also discernable in the nature of donor-recipient relations that characterise food aid. Increasingly recipient countries are becoming vocal and critical, refusing to be relegated to the receiving end and a marginal position, and demanding greater say on the decision-making and delivery of food aid through a dialogue that reflects the development in their own expertise for need assessment and response mechanisms (Doornbos 2000: 352).

The subject of food is urgent, persistent and complex, going beyond sheer economic and political calculations. However, food aid shipments declined from a maximum of 16.8 million tons of cereals in 1964-65 to an annual average level of 14 million tons between 1965-66 and 1969-70. There was further sharp reduction to 9 million tons in 1972-73 to less than 7 million tons in 1973-74. Food aid as the share of total aid flows to developing countries, accounting for 30 to 45 percent between 1954 and 1969 (United Nations 1974b: 187), witnessed drastic decline since 1970s, from 16 per cent of total aid in 1975 to 4 percent by 1995 (Clay and Stokke 2000b: 27-28), a trend that continued through 1993-94 and 2006-07 (FAO 2008f), making it a an instable and uncertain player in global food security. The declining levels of food aid, lower commitments in value terms, coupled with increasing grain prices, do not augur well for global food security (FAO 2006). Hence, among the policies to fight world hunger, food aid is typically rendered a place of secondary importance, instead “a far more complex structure called world food security is sought to be created on the principle of interdependence among all nations and the cooperative sharing of burden in times of an international food crisis” (Fonseca 1983: 41).

Many critics “damn international aid as wasteful, ineffective, even negative to welfare in the countries that receive it” (Abbott 1992: ix). It has been repeatedly and unanimously asserted that food aid should be orientated towards enabling countries and individuals to become self-reliant, having embedded within it the most basic objective of its own elimination (Shaw 2001: 1-2). The ultimate objective of food aid as the “elimination of the need for food aid itself” has been continually emphasised by the FAC and WFP.<sup>34</sup> “The ultimate mission of food aid is much more than just a palliative to salvage a limited number of disaster-stricken people; its challenge is to work itself out of the need to provide food aid at all, by making those aided self-reliant as producers or buyers of food” (Singer et al. 1987: 1-2).

Stevens (1979: 197) views food aid as ‘curate’s egg’, not inherently an unsatisfactory form of assistance but certainly not an adequate substitute for agricultural development in recipient countries. Given the global nature and magnitude of the food problem, relief operations through shipments of food by international agencies, or through bilateral agreements, do not constitute a solution (Marei 1976: 26-27). In fact, “food aid is too simple and unidimensional an answer to the complex problem of hunger, involving political, economic, social and health factors” (Uvin 1994: 158). Even in regions afflicted by continual hunger and poverty, food aid is only a temporary and limited solution. It cannot be treated as a magic potion or a permanent panacea for eliminating hunger and malnutrition and cannot replace economic growth and development (Brown and Eckholm 1974: 233; Dumont and Cohen 1980: 158).

Despite being highly controversial, food aid has become a permanent feature of international assistance (Cathie 1982: 1), an inevitable instrument in the broader strategy for addressing immediate acute food insecurity and chronic poverty, when the populations are threatened by starvation and hunger due to poor harvests, natural calamities, war or conflict, along with promoting long term development and resource transfer, when supported by appropriate economic policies of recipient governments. Conceivably, the effectiveness and necessity of food aid is highest in addressing acute humanitarian emergencies, with limited application as safety net assurance and even modest in support for cargo net interventions (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 195).

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<sup>34</sup> See, Preamble to the *Food Aid Convention*, 1999, available at: <http://www.foodaidconvention.org/Pdf/convention/iga1995.pdf>.

Policies stressing short-term, disaster-related food aid that directly provide relief to the poorest, who are actually at risk, are considered more beneficial than long-term institutionalised aid programme (George 1984: 35).

The difficulties with operation of food aid and its somewhat uncertain outcomes does not amount to an outright dismissal of the instrument of food aid as it is, but the challenge is to devise ways and means to ameliorate these ambiguities (Schneider 1978: 19). A more 'practical' suggestion is to make it work for the best, by improving the administration and effectiveness of food aid (Raikes 1988: 170-171). The conventional condemnation of food aid by academicians and economists has given way to a more 'differentiated view' of judging the effectiveness food aid in terms of actual impact in specific and varied situations, and growing realisation that the crux of the problem is regarding the management of food aid that is integrated in both donors' and recipients' coherent assistance and development policies (Schneider 1978: 5). Food aid must be viewed on a continuing basis, as an integral component of the long-term policy that seeks to balance supply and demand, by shifting from fluctuating surplus disposal to objectives of nutrition, employment and development (Marei 1976: 90-100). Recasting the role of food aid involves realising its potential as an instrument for satisfying basic human rights and advancing human and economic development (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 194).

The general policy orientation of the recipient countries and their administrative implication may be an obstacle for the implementation of food aid (Schneider 1978: 14) and, therefore, what can be achieved through food aid is largely dependent on the development strategies pursued by the recipient countries themselves (Schneider 1978: 6) and will vary according to the political, social, and economic characteristics of both the donors and the recipients (Stevens 1979: 208). The long-term orientation of food aid should emphasise on the quality of development planning and policies in recipient countries (Singer et al. 1987: 202), the need to tailor aid activities according to country needs and sector activities (Dollar and Pritchett 1998: 5) and integrate food aid policies into production and aid policies of the donor countries and the general food and development policies of the recipients (Schneider 1978: 29-30). In order to improve food aid's role in an overall food security strategy,

the use of food aid must always be in support of – not instead of – other longer-term strategies and investments to reduce chronic poverty and vulnerability. And



food aid must be utilized in ways that complement – not undermine – these strategies. Applicability should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Food aid deliveries should be governed by adequate international mechanisms and triggered by accurate information about both the nature of food crises, and the magnitude of food requirements, together with requirements for other necessary interventions (Barrett and Maxwell 2005: 198).

In the context the enormous expansion in WFP's functional and operational mandate over the years, it is argued that WFP's performance has been relatively unsatisfactory, with no clear evidence to support that multilateral channel performs better than bilateral (Gabbert and Weikard 2000: 213). The factors influencing decision-making within WFP have not always been benevolent and the delivery of food aid through WFP is bureaucracy-ridden, with long time-lags between the approval, sanction and actual deliverance of food aid (Fonseca 1983: 33; 39). While WFP has proved its mantle in support for food security during emergencies and crises, its role as a 'development agency' has often raised doubts, since it has been unable to convincingly show that its food-based development projects have been successful and efficient in support of development (Schulthes 2000: 257; Faaland et al. 2000: 222).

However, much of the cynicism associated with food aid can be surmounted by multilateralisation of food aid by WFP, which has clear advantage of coordinating food aid operations of various donors and the international community as a whole, while tiding over their parochial motivations and self-centered objectives. It is asserted that by making extensive and creative use of food aid procurement and distribution modalities, and allocating resources based on recipients' needs rather than donors' (geopolitical, economic, fiscal, domestic farm policy and trade promotion) concerns, multilateral aid is more effective in reaching the intended beneficiaries in a timely and cost-effective manner (Barrett and Heisey 2002: 479-480). Multilateral channelling of food aid by WFP induces donors to synchronize contributions and avoid passing the buck. While WFP has achieved "both progressivity and stabilization objectives, albeit only modestly given the limited resources available", it is indeed "an effective means of providing a modest safety net against insufficient food availability" (Barrett and Heisey 2002: 489-490). Hence, an expanded role for multilateral food aid, channelised through WFP, has been advocated.

Though "the multilateral share of food aid through the UN system, chiefly the WFP, is now firmly established" (Singer et al. 1987: 204), the international mechanism of

governing food aid, is criticised as “dysfunctional and outdated” and thus, “ineffective” (Barrett and Maxwell 2006: 106). The FAC lacks effective monitoring mechanism to enforce signatories’ compliance with the agreed terms. Composed of only donor countries as members, the FAC is incompetent to address the multitude of issues involving recipient countries and operational agencies. WFP as the primary multilateral institution with greatest technical expertise in food aid does not have any formal role in international global food aid governance (Barrett and Maxwell 2006: 106), which seems to resemble “a patchwork quilt of institutions and agreements... characterized by overlapping mandates, differing degrees of authority and legitimacy, varied levels of transparency in decision making, and problematic stakeholder representation” (Hoddinott et al. 2007: 4). This is evident from the multiple bodies that deal with food aid: WFP Executive Board; the FAO-CFS; the FAO-CSSD; the WTO; and the Food Aid Committee (monitoring the FAC), inevitably raising issues of coherence (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 42; Clay and Stokke 2000b: 43).

Fixing responsibility and accountability, and setting global targets are, therefore, major problems for international food aid. In the absence of a distinct forum or body to consider a major international or national crisis and undertake overall policy reviews and negotiations, the food aid domain is in a urgent need for change (Clay and Stokke 2000b: 43). An interesting option has been suggested “to provide other funding agencies such as UNDP, the World Bank, IFAD or the regional development banks with a “food window” permitting them to manage a certain amount of food aid directly and incorporate it in their own projects” (Governments of Canada, Netherlands and Norway 1994: 181).

The challenge for food aid policy is to design appropriate mechanism to ensure just distribution of international food that is beneficial for the recipient countries and help them to achieve self-sufficiency. Revitalising WFP as the multilateral channel of food aid, especially building upon its role as a link between relief and development can improve food aid’s potential to address hunger and undernourishment. Food aid’s effectiveness can be enhanced by focussing attention to emergency situations, including natural disasters and conflicts, delivering timely and swift response through well-developed early warning and information systems, and appropriate targeting of those who are most affected and in need, in which WFP has a unrivalled role. It can

set the process of food aid in motion, sometimes even pre-emptively, when adequately supported by agility on part of the donors to commit necessary resources. In addition, improved transportation and storage facilities, along with effective distribution mechanisms through engaging local NGOs and experienced in-field practitioners on part of the recipient countries is pivotal for food aid's efficiency, where WFP's partnerships can come to play for a positive outcome.

It is equally important to contextualise food aid within broader food and agricultural policy that is suited to the recipient country conditions, linked with longer-term national development objectives and action, preventing vulnerable population from falling into destitution through poverty reduction strategies, infrastructural development and building human capital. Food aid must not disrupt local agricultural production, markets, or investments, while being mindful of the nutritional needs of the recipients, the eating habits and cultural acceptability of the food provided in aid and adherence to food safety standards. WFP has sought to achieve this by enmeshing emergency relief with development purposes, facilitating smooth transition from crisis to growth as an ingenious strategy to balance the pros and cons of food aid. However, WFP needs to work its way out of donor-dependency, based on the amount of their contributions, to more effectively channelise multilateral aid and address food insecurity. A disputed but indispensable policy response to hunger and malnutrition – a 'necessary evil' – food aid can be used in favour of global food security by exploiting WFP's multilateral advantages to obliterate at least some of the controversial cynicism associated with food aid.

## CHAPTER VII

### Conclusion

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#### Analytical Synthesis

Despite numerous initiatives by international institutions, why the world is still food insecure and hunger and undernutrition continue to persist? Are the international organizations merely advancing ad hoc arrangements based on a symptomatic understanding of the issues, rather than addressing the root causes of the problem?

Global food security has indisputably emerged as one of the most dominant concerns of the international community, a magnetic theme around which a myriad of inter-governmental multilateral, regional and non-governmental international institutional agendas and activities converge, resulting in the setting up of the global food regime. Despite being functionally specific, the principles and norms of the global food regime affect diverse policies and activities – agriculture, rural development, food trade and aid etc. It is formal since its principles, norms and rules are shaped and spread by formal UN system organizations that legislate, enforce and uphold the procedures, explicitly codified in treaties, conventions and agreement. International ‘principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures’ of the food regime both influence and are manifested in international food diplomacy. They affect the interconnected dimensions of the world food problem and transactions related to food production, distribution and consumption, and constrain and regularise behaviour of participants (food actors and institutions) in the global food system (Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 598; Puchala and Hopkins 1982: 259-260).

Within the broad rubric of the global food regime, the international food aid regime has, over the years, emerged as a ‘blend’ of original surplus disposal and development-oriented aid.<sup>1</sup> Emergency relief has strengthened its humanitarian character, the turning points being the 1972-1974 world food crisis (Hopkins 1984:

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<sup>1</sup> The founding principles that governed food aid regime till the 1970s were: providing food from donor’ surplus stock; as additional food to recipient countries; through short-tem commitments based on the political and economic goals of donors; directly to feed hungry people. The new principles that emerged after 1974-WFC challenged the old ones but did not displace them: supplying food more efficiently; in substitution to recipients’ food imports; using longer-term commitments; and to enable developmental investments (Hopkins 1984: 346-348).

345; Uvin 1994: 140) and the rising human conflicts in the 1990s. The food aid regime contains “reasonably stable arrangements that govern action in the giving and receiving of food aid”, making “it harder for participants to follow immediate and ad hoc calculations of their interests” (Hopkins 1984: 345). The developmental and humanitarian food aid regime significantly influence donors’ cost-benefit analysis in giving food aid, constraining their scope of manoeuvring the definition of their interests; and encouraging non-self interested behaviour (Uvin 1994: 153).

Though increasingly complex, the food aid regime has proved to be adaptable, reconfiguring its emphasis to newer concerns, by reforming principles, rules and practices. International deliberations (undertaken by the UN system at various conferences) facilitated the emergence of a consensus regarding the desirable norms, which provided the momentum for change and led to multilateral institutionalisation of the food regime (FAC and WFP). The reshaped norms of the food aid regime allow resource transfer to take into account the effects of the aid on the recipient country’s economy and food system and signify a shift from an American-cantered locus to a more international dimension (Hopkins 1992: 226-227, 263-264).

The global food regime has evolved and changed over time; new norms have challenged the priority of markets and overemphasis on managing surpluses, diverting attention towards food as a component of development planning. Priorities and perspectives include rural modernisation and adequate nutrition as central to human rights, chronic hunger, equity in food distribution, international investments, food security and self-reliance, food as insurance and not surplus disposal, stable food markets, widely published comprehensive information etc. (Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 604; Puchala and Hopkins 1978: 861; 1982: 268; Young 1982: 290-291). Although there appears to exist a “well-developed and articulated set of institutions comprising a global food regime at the international level” (Thompson 1981: 191), it remains doubtful whether the UN system and its food organizations – FAO, WFP and IFAD, increasingly supported by World Bank’s involvement, constitute a regime and whether they have made any significant impact on the world food problem.

The role of the UN system in food security constitutes a policy ‘regime’ negotiated around the interests and preferences of the powerful states. For example, in 1961, the nascent WFP was restricted only to distribution of project food aid for emergency

operations and prohibited to handle programme food aid for development purposes (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 48). According to Thompson (1981: 197),

it is hard to detect a significant impact of the FAO or other agencies in terms of bread-and-butter issues like production, distribution, prices, or consumption patterns. Production remains hostage to the vagaries of climate, national and regional policies on prices, and expectations about what the market will bear. Distribution remains a function of market conditions, relative wealth and poverty within a country, and national policies. Price is determined by the combination of market factors as well as custom, culture and tradition.

There is a distinct rift between the BWIs and other UN agencies, the former exerting more influence and power and, therefore, usurping the major share of funding for macro-economic measures, the latter receiving reduced funds for human resource development (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 50). The BWIs appear to have considerable room for manoeuvring through their policy advice, as evident in their structural adjustment conditionality (Uvin 1994: 243). International attempts to ensure global food and nutrition security represents a tale of “good intention... depicting a civilization that now seems able to live with the ignominy and shame of knowing that a large number of its citizens continue to live in hunger and poverty, while the knowledge, resources and repeated commitment to end this scrounge exists”, precluding any tangible determination to end this paradox (Shaw 2007: 461).

Global organisations have been alleged to be “outdated and do not serve effectively food safety, global health, and food security of the poor” (Braun and Díaz-Bonilla 2008: 37) and an ‘improbable source of governance’ through a global food regime (Thompson 1981: 198). The roots of their ineffectiveness lie in their marginal position, both in terms of potential power to influence national decisions on food issues and to effect the concrete conceptual, political and economic transactions that constitutes the dynamics of world food problem (Thompson 1981: 192). International institutions are used by states to pursue their interests in specific issue areas and a handful of powerful national governments retain the prerogative to determine the rules of the game (especially trade and aid flows) (Puchala and Hopkins 1982: 269).

Does this imply that the UN system and its food organisations are irrelevant to global food security? If they completely eliminate issues of food from their mandate and operations would things remain the same?

Though each of the international food institutions have wielded significant influence in improving the global food regime, they have been unable to make any striking contributions towards world food production and distribution problems as was originally hoped for (Talbot 1991: 343). Shaw (2007: 23) points out that,

apart from the IBRD and the IMF, which were designed to facilitate the solution of financial problems at the international level, the functions of the other UN Specialized agencies were limited almost entirely to the accumulation and interpretation of facts and to make recommendations. Neither singly nor in combination were they able to take measures to translate their recommendations fully into actions... No UN agency had the requisite authority and funds for carrying out co-ordinated international action.

In the absence of any supranational authority and regulation, “formal coordination, multilateral action and international organization are notably weak in the global food system” (Puchala and Hopkins 1978: 857). Most of the UN agencies are criticised as not being equipped to handle the growing complexity of the world food problem. This is further exacerbated the problem of institutional incoherence, and lack of cooperation and coordination (Shaw 2007: 384).

A more optimistic approach sees these organisations as having “functioned effectively, with some positive results”, having optimal organisational structure “in terms of balancing the interests of the competing factions, while at the same time facilitating some constructive actions” (Talbot and Moyer 1987: 364). There also seems some scope for manoeuvre by international organizations, which are “much more important than being merely the reflection of powerful states” (Uvin 1994: 284). The UN system is lauded for fuelling international activism in addressing issues of evolving concern, like food, by generating research and developing international networks involving scholars, experts, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs, the food organisations especially providing ‘intelligence capability for decision makers’ (Thompson 1981: 204)

The UN system’s strengths lie in global goal/target/standard-setting, by defining and measuring hunger, micro-nutrient deficiency, food quality etc.; collecting, analysing and disseminating information and statistical data on world cereal supply, food balance sheets, extent of global chronic hunger and nutrition situation; and advising policymakers on effective strategies. It morally persuades potential donors and channels substantial flow of national and international resources to food, nutrition

and agricultural sectors in developing countries through aid programmes, either through direct transfer or capacity-building, and coordinates food and nutrition activities of national and international agencies, both governmental and NGOs. The UN system generates awareness through advocacy, consensus-building, providing common perception of the problem and establishing best practices to address them by holding international conferences and summits and adopting declarations committing to achieve food and nutrition security – maintaining growth of world food supplies, improving humanitarian aid and dealing with social security implications of chronic hunger and malnutrition. It acts as a forum to bring together member countries on a common table for preparing and negotiating international treaties, and conventions, occasionally with specific policy implications, in the fields of RTF and food security (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 41, 45; Shaw 2007: 276).

The plethora of UN conferences are, however, often criticised for being a waste of resources, eluding consensus and any tangible outcomes to address the food problem, undertaken only as channels and excuses to exercise regulation. They are rendered as an ‘irrelevant form of diplomatic activity’ and dismissed as ‘a babel of voices, a confusion of tongues’ that do not serve any useful purpose or have ‘little more than contemporary froth’ in international politics (Shaw 2007: 275). There seems to be a ‘feeling of conference fatigue’ (Shaw 2007: 348) as UN conferences typically issue general statements of intent that are not legally binding on the members or the participants, thereby failing to translate them into actionable targets with legal force (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 46; Shaw 2007: 276). In the context of a FAO high-level conference in Rome held in June 2008, on the global food emergency, M. S. Swaminathan (2008) opined that such high-profile international conferences are limited in their practical implications.

It has become a trend in such conferences for heads of governments/states from Africa and other developing countries to participate in large numbers. In contrast, the industrialised countries tend to be represented either by their ambassadors in Rome or senior officials. It has also become customary in such large international political gatherings for developing countries to bail both rich countries and the WTO for not responding to their needs adequately and at the right time. The industrialised countries, in turn, stress that developing countries normally neglect their farmers and also exhibit a deficit in governance and surplus in corruption. At the end of the meeting, a few small gestures of immediate assistance will be forthcoming along with volumes of advice, but the long-term problems will remain under the carpet. The entire exercise, involving considerable expenditure, ultimately becomes a forum for photo opportunity and media cynicism. The poor



nations and the poor in all nations will suffer most from the inaction associated with such a blame game.

Contrary to the assertion that effective issue linkage would result in varied outcomes of political bargaining, the food issue has important intellectual, ideological and practical linkages, with little varied outcome, which is usually biased towards preferences of strong and financially powerful states, like the US (Uvin 1994: 283). Numerous Resolutions adopted by the UN system on issues related to global food security led to nothing more than calls for further studies, the main reason being continued reluctance by developed states to approve measures that could potentially weaken their national initiatives and power (Shaw 2007: 36). Thus, governments with greater capabilities are able to influence and impose their will on food-related regimes and structures and are in fact pivotal in establishing the pattern of behaviour within existing networks and institutions.

It is asserted that many global food problems can be effectively addressed by a higher degree of formalization of the food regime, along with continued and accelerated efforts by the participants to substantially reform the norms of food regime, and make international organizations more authoritative, efficient and equipped to command resources (Hopkins and Puchala 1978: 610, 856). The ‘principle of multilateralization’ is suggested as being fundamental to a new and stable global food regime, necessarily preceding the norms and practices it promises to allow (Puchala and Hopkins 1978: 866). Further, a new regime must involve a major redistribution of power and influence in the world food system, and must incorporate a poverty-oriented food regime (Bergesen 1978: 286).

Has complex interdependence in food and hunger issues resulted in the expected outcome of increasing international cooperation? What are the problems and prospects of UN system’s inter-agency coordination and coherence on food security?

No international organisation is self-sufficient and “organizational activities and outcomes are accounted for by the context in which the organization is embedded” (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978: 39). Inter-organizational cooperation can be explained by the need for preserving access to resource flows and continued operation and survival by responding to the demands of the external environment. Increasing inter-organisational engagement and interdependence impact the ability of each

organization to achieve its desired outcome. Evolution of an inter-governmental organization's relations with other organisation is "part of its efforts to adapt to changing demands and uncertainties in its environment" (Charlton 1992: 665).

Achieving coordination and common policies among separate and autonomous entities of the UN system has always been difficult as each agency has a large degree on autonomy, distinct mandate, constitution, governing body, funding arrangement and location (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 42). While "functional decentralisation, with wide freedom of action for individual Agencies in their respective technical tasks, has been a source of great strength and vitality to the UN System", however, "it has also given rise...to a quite crucial need for co-ordination" (Hill 1966: 104). One of the major structural weaknesses of the UN system is that the specialised agencies "constitutionally lack effective co-ordination in the sense of any centralised control or direction...at best all they have is a measure of administrative co-ordination" (Williams 1987: 17). The very nature of the UN activities involves interrelated aspects of economic and social development, which require concerted action through a network of institutional arrangements. Since many agencies have overlapping terms of reference, it becomes difficult to accurately define the mandate and role of each institution and to fix definite responsibility upon any of them.

The initiation of UN Development Decades since the 1960s, through which the UN strove to undertake worldwide development, further intensified the need for coordination (Williams 1987: 107; Hill 1966: 118). While achieving central regulation and coordination of the UN system, at functional, administrative, staffing and financial levels, has been a persistent problem, restraining inter-agency rivalry, particularly competition for limited funds, and to secure cooperation among the various agencies in promoting development remains a major challenge. This is evident in case of the mushrooming maze of food-related international institutions, further complicating the achievement of global food security. The absence of any authority to allot lead responsibility within the UN system to organise international cooperation and coordinate activities of the various agencies pertaining to different aspects of the food issue, adversely impacts operational economy and efficiency and achieving an effective outcome in terms of ensuring global food security.

For example, during the 1984-85 African food crisis, four multilateral funds were involved, apart from various bilateral public and private emergency relief aid. FAO set up a fund for dealing with irrigation schemes; WFP created a fund for food aid; the World Bank was running a fund for long-term agricultural development; and IFAD had a fund for financing peasant farmers. In addition, the UN established a temporary Office of Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) in New York to coordinate all these activities. Nevertheless, when the OEOA Director accepted donation from the Netherlands government to buy rice seed for Chad, the then Director-General of FAO, formally complained to him on grounds that seed-buying fell within FAO's purview. FAO also had a protracted argument with WFP regarding the authorisation of food aid shipments to Africa. The FAO Director-General did not attend the OEOA meeting, especially called for coordinating the donors' programmes of help to Africa, while FAO held its own meeting of donors (Williams 1987: 111).

It emerges that the UN system's administration, is ridden with politico-bureaucratic tussles, internal squabbling and turf wars over budgets, posts and ownership of initiatives. Organizational competition renders expectation of coordination unrealistic, while institutional hierarchies make it difficult for the UN to be flexible and innovative. The UN's food-related goals have been criticised as being vague and over-ambitious, while the operational performance of its different food agencies as being extremely uneven. There have been overlapping and, at times, conflicting policy advice, uneven operational performance and lack of integration. Absence of central leadership on many global issues has been a typical problem of the UN system. The personality, nationality, political inclination and economic priorities of the executive heads determine the character and functioning of the agency, they being the authorised channel of communication on policy and administrative matters between the governing bodies and the secretariats. In the UN system, food security appears to have become 'everybody's business' but 'nobody's responsibility' (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 41-42, 45-47; Shaw 2007: 276).

Describing food security as a "development-related, non-strategic, usually 'low politics' issue", Uvin (1994: 2) asserts that the 'international hunger regime' has been relatively neglected in the larger international development outcome. Development institutions accord very less attention to hunger, their dominant objective being

economic growth and at best agricultural and rural development; eradication of hunger is an incidental fallout (Uvin 1994: 73-74). However, in the light of the discussions in the previous chapters, clearly the issues of food and hunger are no longer obscure to the international community. Reforming the UN vis-à-vis food-related issues must be contextualised within the discussion of wider UN system reform. The major themes are the limits of political and economic power of the UN, need for stronger cohesive and coordinated action throughout the UN, encouraging decentralisation of decision-making to UN country offices and strengthening national capacity, and avoiding the domination by major donor countries.

A two-pronged option has been proposed by Maxwell and Shaw (1995: 41-42; 50-51) for improving the UN system's capacity to deal with the food problems. The minimal or gradualist principle will leave the basic UN structure and mandate untouched, while focussing on strengthening of coordinating bodies, integration of initiatives (policy operations and guidance), better implementation of action programs and administrative reform of UN agencies.<sup>2</sup> The more ambitious evolutionary or radical principle involve systematic review of the mandates of the UN bodies to prominently feature food security issues and the RTF, expand and centralise funds, and strengthening the political control of the General Assembly, the ECOSOC, and the executive leadership of the Secretary-General, in addition to the proposals in the minimal option. These arrangements will facilitate a single food security policy of the UN system, with resource allocated for implementation across the system based on comparative advantage of agencies. There seems to be little intelligence in setting up a new separate institution with special mandate on food that subsumes the agendas of all the other agencies. Nor is it prudent to locate a coordinating or supervisory body in any single UN agency that is constrained by sectoral mandate and membership. A more feasible option could be to revamp and reorient a institution within the broader UN structure, like the UNSCN or a branch of the CEB, reporting to the ECOSOC, to specifically envelop issues related to food security, cutting across other related bodies.

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<sup>2</sup> The gradualist agenda includes: establishing food security as one of the major standing items on the agenda of the ACC/SCN; broadening and strengthening the ACC/SCN; providing a small permanent secretariat for the Joint consultative Group on Policy (JCGP); including food security as a common item in country strategy notes and in the field-level programmes of the UN agencies; making food security a major goal in the policies and programmes of the BWIs and WTO; strengthening coordination with bilateral programmes, private sector and NGOs; deciding priority initiatives for the General Assembly and the concerned UN agencies based on annual progress report; and administrative re-engineering to define and replicate best practices (Maxwell and Shaw 1995: 51).

## **Towards an International Institutional Strategy for Global Food Security**

The variables of the present study, food as the issue of concern and international institutions as actors influencing it, have both undergone dramatic temporal shifts that have not only redefined their dynamics and architecture independently, but have also significantly influenced the equation of their relationship. A comparative analysis of the mandates and functioning of these international organisations – FAO, WFP, IFAD and the World Bank – reveal the differences in their approach and handling of the food issues, which causes problems of coherence and coordination.

Problems of hunger and famine have been a constant concern that progressively determined socio-economic and political relationships. Post-World War II world was characterised by food surpluses in few developed countries used to address the situation of food shortage in the developing countries. Simultaneously, powerful actors emerged in the international arena, including international organisations and large multinational and agribusiness food corporations, which challenged the established dominance of state governments in these spheres. As traditional channels of production and patterns of consumption were systematically destroyed by forces of globalisation, giving way to market-oriented demand and supply of food and leading to increasing commercialization and control of the food chain and changing food habits, the focus switched to the importance of ensuring access by poor people to the food they needed through increasing employment and purchasing power.

Food is not simply an economic commodity, but has been turned into both economic and political tool according to the interests of the powerful, whether the industrialised developed countries and the MNCs/TNCs in the international context, or the landed and ruling elites within individual countries. The food problem is not only an outcome of unequal distribution of wealth and power, but also maintains, strengthens and perpetuates these inequalities. In that sense,

Food is one of the most complex economic, political and moral problems...Despite a great deal of discussion and debate...the underlying issues are still very confused and different groups of people in different parts of the world continue to look at the food problem from their own particular angle. The food situation itself and forecasts about its future are clouded by so many imponderables that predictions swing from deep pessimism to cautious optimism (Aziz 1977: 15).

Food-related production, distribution and consumption patterns and the causes and consequences of hunger vary widely across time and geographical area. The world food system has evolved significantly, increasingly involving numerous aspects and actors, giving rise to the need for ‘global food security’, a multidimensional, multi-sectoral and multifaceted concept that emerged in the international lexicon since the 1970s. Global food security, determined by availability, accessibility, utilisation and stability, is associated with a multitude of factors, related to processes of development and globalisation, ranging from population growth, food production, agricultural and rural development, poverty, employment, income and purchasing power, role of women, trade liberalisation and food aid, to emerging concerns of climate change and environment, biofuels, agricultural biotechnology and genetically modified crops, which have contributed to compounding the predicament. This also renders difficult agreement on ways of achieving food security through effective policy prescription. It is beyond any doubt that a consistent and long-term upward shift is occurring in world food prices, largely superseding the growth in income of several hundred million of the world’s poorest people, forcing their purchasing power farther below the level necessary to obtain even the basic minimum adequate amount of food.

Food and agricultural issues have garnered international attention since 1945, institutionalised by the establishment of FAO, while food aid was given a multilateral dimension by WFP since 1963, the IFAD factored in investments for agriculture and rural development since 1977. While these institutions had specific food mandates, albeit encompassing significantly different dimensions of the issue and differing substantially in terms of operational activities, of particular interest is the gradual branching of the World Bank into food, agriculture and nutrition sectors, which were not a part of its original foundational functions. International institutional anxiety over ascertaining global food security was triggered by the 1973-74 food crisis and the subsequent 1974-WFC, which were the major turning points in the evolution of the understanding of the issue and the realising the potential of the UN system to address it, largely in support of state activities. The international activism that was generated in the 1970s turned lukewarm quickly since the world was not threatened by any imminent possibility of food crisis, largely resulting in a sense of complacency within the international institutions in terms of prioritisation of food among other agendas.

The 2007-2008 global food crises rang the alarm bells for the international community, which again launched a combat on world hunger and malnutrition. The response of the UN system, represented in the present study, is characterised by multiplicity of specialised agencies, funds and programmes, varying in size, structure, scope, independent budgetary allocation, each having precise mandates, motivations, governing bodies and operational bureaucracy. Despite concurring on the objective of global food security and sharing near-similar membership, the international institutional architecture of food seems to be fragmented, both in terms of prioritising the issue in their agendas and in their approaches to address hunger and malnutrition, frustrating the possibility of an international institutional food security strategy.

Global food security is in need of change in global governance and institutional reform. While declaratory changes in policy objectives and targets run the risk of being reduced to mere rhetorical statements, at worst being tactics for evading more substantial change in mandates and actions, institutional adaptation, signifying modification in modalities and practices, has been in response to short-term influences rather than as part of longer-term rethinking of purpose and strategy. The more ambitious and radical (read unrealistic) option involving coherent and wider blueprint to reconfigure the architecture of international institutions to address problems of food security might serve as a precondition for a practical institutional revamp. Pending that, 'adaptation and local optimisation' remain the only viable strategies for change to cope with challenges of governance emanating from within international institution concerned with food security (Clay and Stokke 2000a: 382-385).

The strong undercurrent of the principle of Westphalian nation-state sovereignty constraining their scope, the UN agencies are hardly prepared to challenge the existing mandate and take robust initiatives on their own. However, in order to avoid becoming redundant, different agencies have tried to respond to the changing international context through a process of problem redefinition by organizational 'adaptation' and/or 'learning' (Haas 1993: 2-3). 'Adaptation' is when change occurs by addition of new activities without questioning the underlying principle or values upon which the organization undergoing the change is based (Knight 2000: 51). Conversely, 'learning' occurs when the ultimate purposes of the organization are

redefined and its ends are questioned, preceded by the accumulation and analysis of consensual knowledge provided by epistemic communities (Knight 2000: 56).

Most ‘habit-driven organizations’ can adapt, but only a few seem to be able to learn. Organizations, because they adapt and sometimes even learn, permit change to occur even if they do not actively favour it (Haas 1993: 43-46). According to Haas, adaptation can occur through ‘incremental growth’, as actors add new tasks to older ones without any change in the organization’s decision-making dynamics or mode of choosing and/or ‘turbulent non-growth’ that involves major changes in organizational decision-making; ends no longer cohere, internal consensus on both ends and means disintegrates. He associates learning with ‘managed interdependence’, in which the purposes of the organization are re-examined (Haas 1993: 4) and occurs only when the dominant coalition changes (Haas 1993: 128).

The international institutions have, over the decades, made significant attempts to address problems of hunger and undernutrition, re-conceptualising food security as well as shaping the global debates around food-related issues. At the same time, FAO, WFP, IFAD and the World Bank have evolved “not along lines rigidly set by their creators and definitively stated in constitutional documents, but in response to a dynamic process that combines the propulsive and directive impulses of trends running through the political context and of purposes injected by participants in their operations” (Claude 1956: 6). They have innovatively interpreted their founding purposes, increasingly treading into food-related areas that were not their intended functions, undergoing profound transformation in terms of organisational structure and expanded operational mandates and “moving in directions unwilled and unanticipated by their founders or by any particular generation of their operators” (Claude 1956: 15). The UN food agencies and the World Bank definitely represent organisational adaptation vis-à-vis the dominant themes of the food issue, without really changing the ultimate organisational purpose, instead accommodating emerging concerns within their functional domain to justify their continued existence in a drastically changed world than in which they were founded.

This is probably most evident in case of the Bank’s incremental incorporation of agriculture, nutrition and social safety sectors within its lending operations, far removed from the traditional infrastructural development lending. This shift is also a



consequence of the changing perception of development itself. However, the Bank is equally criticised for worsening the food situation for the vulnerable population, by lending for projects that directly impede their livelihood or through structural adjustment loans, which forces the governments to undertake policies that indirectly affect the food security of the poor people. The Bank, as a typical financial institute, is fundamentally different from the UN food agencies in its approach to food security. Though it has explicitly included food within its lending portfolio, apart from agriculture, nutrition and SSN lending that relate to food security, its agendas are neither determined by need nor are human rights based. However, given the immense economic influence it wields over developing countries policies, its enormous financial clout and bureaucratic strength, the Bank contains the potential to address food security in a more effective manner.

IFAD is a much smaller institution compared to the Bank, and is functionally more specific in its lending for agricultural and rural development, a subset of the Bank's lending operations. IFAD's ingenuity lies in penetrating the remotest of locations and targeting the poorest population in addressing food security. It has also expanded its lending mandate to incorporate rural development, promoting productivity of small-scale farmers, emphasising the role of women in agriculture etc., thereby carving out a niche areas for itself. WFP is unique in terms of its channelisation of multilateral food aid. Over the years, it has made food aid a permanent feature of international policy, has adapted its activities in relation to increasing demands for emergency humanitarian assistance, and has assumed the intermediate role of supporting countries in transiting from emergency situations to overall development. In terms of its procurement and disbursement policies, WFP has incorporated many novel attributes, like local purchases, using technology in food aid, etc. WFP is probably the most visible of all the food organisations having a practical and discernable impact on food security of poor and vulnerable people, when emergency strikes. However, its development role is controversial as is aid effectiveness for overall food security.

FAO is the only international organisation that has a specific food mandate spanning over almost every aspect of the issue. It has incrementally adapted itself by adding newer concerns to its original purposes and functions. Organisationally as well, FAO has undergone restructuring to make it more streamlined, decentralised, cost-effective,

and efficient. It remains unchallenged in terms of information gathering, data analysis and dissemination of knowledge. However, beyond international standard-setting and advising governments on policies, in practical terms it seems to have no authoritative power to undertake concrete food security measures. Apart from its statistics and projections being quoted widely in almost every analysis of the world food problem, it has been accepted as an organisation that has limited impact in terms of ameliorating the food problems, other than suggesting guidelines that are voluntary for governments. Nevertheless, its contribution in generating awareness and international governmental and non-governmental activism cannot be discounted. It is largely because of the efforts of FAO that food has been put in the international agenda, FAO playing an important role in the establishment of WFP and IFAD, and undertaking collaborative ventures to better address the various dimensions of the food problem.

The right to adequate food has been recognised since the inception of the UN and the adoption of the UDHR. The UN system in general and FAO have vigorously advocated the RTF, developing its normative content and interpreting the legal obligations emanating for the states and the international community to recognise it. However, situated within the larger debates regarding hierarchy of rights and the non-justiciable nature of socio-economic and cultural rights, the RTF lacks specific implementation mechanisms that can hold the state and other organisations responsible for its violation. International instruments for realising RTF are limited to states' reports, which are far from reflecting the actual situation, and the supervisory and monitoring mechanisms of the UN do not have any enforceable powers. The RTF largely remains an international standard that is advocated by the UN and FAO, with very few states really featuring it in their constitutional and legislative policies.

Though states have the prerogative of decision-making regarding food, agriculture and nutrition policies that ultimately ascertain the food security of their citizens, the international institutions have assumed a significant role in advising the governments on policies. The UN food organisations and the World Bank have definitive impact on government policy making in various advisory capacities. While the policy implications of IFAD and the Bank are arguably more, given the financial nature of their functioning, WFP mainly features policy priorities within its operational focus. FAO's technical cooperation and procedural guidelines, though voluntary in nature,

inform countries regarding issues of emerging concern related to food and help them in formulating food related policies and programmes reflecting those issues.

There has been a discernable shift in international policy concerns from population to food production to poverty to income and purchasing power to nutrition status analogous to the dominant perception of the causal factors of food insecurity. Contemporary concerns of climate change, biofuels, and agricultural biotechnology have also resulted in policy prescriptions by the international institutions. Agriculture, rural development, nutrition and SSNs have emerged as priority policies for the poorest sections of the people. In coping with the global food problem, the internal as well as the international problem of distribution must be dealt with, along with the fact that food, agricultural and nutrition issues are inextricably intertwined that need to be comprehensively addressed through multidisciplinary approach.

Multilateral food aid has undergone dramatic transformations in its purposes, largely under the auspices of WFP. Initially used to promote development, food aid has almost uni-dimensionally shifted its focus to emergency humanitarian relief. This can be largely attributed to the controversial nature of bilateral food aid that cannot be divested from donor interests and strategies and food aid for promoting development, which do not have clearly identifiable impact on improving the food security of the people. Food aid for emergency is the least controversial and, therefore, probably WFP has gradually shifted its focus to humanitarian purposes of food aid. However, this does not mean that WFP has relinquished its developmental food aid purposes. Instead WFP has redefined its purpose as a 'continuum' from emergency relief to development. Decision making on food aid still remains the prerogative of the donors, though their overt geo-political, economic, foreign policy and commercial objectives are diluted by multilateral delivery of food aid, which also, in a way, ascertains that food aid reaches the right people at the right time in right quantity so that their food security is not jeopardised.

Despite the proliferation and consolidation of the international institutional architecture hunger and malnutrition not only persists but has been increasing in incidence, raising questions regarding whether food has been given the requisite urgency and priority in the agendas of these organisation. An internationally coordinated system that can guarantee food supplies to the hungry and starving still

remains a distant dream as was evident in the 2007-2008 crises. It is pertinent to ask whether the present precarious world food situation is a result of the failure of international institutions to devise an effective food regime, incorporating norms on RTF, policy-making and food aid that can persuade government policies in the direction of achieving food security. International attention to global food problem has been incidental, in the face of an imminent crisis, there is a sudden surge of interest in food security, however, as the urgency diminishes, interest in food-related issues recede to take a backseat. Such a crisis-driven approach contains the inherent risk of ad hoc and inadequate institutional response. Despite many collaborative efforts on areas of common concern, there has been no strategic or institutional attempt to streamline the efforts of the UN food agencies and the World Bank to bring about coherence and cooperation among these varied organisations.

Undoubtedly, there are too many institutional arrangements, UN agencies, IFIs, regional organisation and NGOs, that are directly or indirectly involved in food and nutrition objectives that are fundamentally different in their approach and handling of the issues. This leads to duplication of responsibilities and overlapping mandates and frustrates the possibility of arriving at an institutional framework for global food security that is effective and efficient. Given the complicated and interrelated nature of the food problem itself, strict compartmentalization of the causes of the global food problem is impossible. None of the UN agencies alone are competent or equipped to address all the interrelated dimensions of global food security. Consequently, a clear division of labour among these institutions on various issues related to food, nutrition and agriculture has become next to impossible. Strict compartmentalisation of institutional mandates is further rendered difficult since the organisations themselves incrementally adapt their purposes and functions. Nevertheless, each of these organisations does have a clear USP in specific areas, which can be further honed. The key idea is to use the UN system to the best advantage in harmonising the efforts towards right to food, policy advice and food aid to achieve global food security.

Reposition of coordinating responsibility and supervisory authority for global food and nutrition security in a single international agency might seem implausible. However, the various interdependent dimensions of food and hunger can be holistically addressed through a core mechanism (preferably an existing body can

restructured or improvised to assume this function, without adding a new one to the prevailing web of institutions) to bring together diverse pieces of the global food security puzzle, agree on a common understanding of the problem and priorities, and monitor and evaluate national and international actions. In addition, assessing the interconnections between the UN system, the IFIs, and other regional and non-governmental institutions involved in issues related to food security is also pivotal to achieving a comprehensive advantage to deal with increasing incidence of hunger.

The contemporary world food situation is 'unpredictable and fragile', susceptible to quick and sudden changes (Shaw 2007: 115), while global food security remains elusive, despite continued initiatives and efforts by the national governments and the international community. Experiences of hunger and undernutrition are more specific at national, community, household and individual levels. The states are primarily responsible for realisation of the right to adequate, undertaking national policy-making on food, agriculture and nutrition issues, and channelising resources for food aid. No country can morally and strategically permit its poor citizens to die of hunger, in total neglect, without developmental efforts to ascertain adequate availability and accessibility of food for them. However, the complex of global food security, representing complex interdependence, has both given rise to international food organisations and gets, in turn, influenced by them. The conventional responsibility of the states to ascertain food security for its citizens gets nuanced in light of the present study, symptomatic of both globalisation of the food system and multiplicity of actors that have bearing on issues of hunger, agriculture and nutrition.

The UN food organizations and the World Bank have been pivotal in the development of global food regime, intersecting with the human rights and international aid regime. They have assumed increasing significance in their own capacity to formulate norms, rules and principles through advocacy, advising and deliverance that impact right to food, policy-making and food aid. These norms, rules and principles inform national food security initiatives as well as get shaped by governments' perspectives.

Though as a non-traditional threat to human security, food has transcended the territorial confinement to evolve as an agenda of the UN system, it is usually accorded secondary status in inter-state discussions, which remain preoccupied with defence and strategic relations. Hence, food security needs prioritisation vis-à-vis other

threats. The international institutions seem to depend on the visibility aspect, being incidentally driven to respond to food crises situations, lacking a more sustained interest in food security. However, a realistic assessment of international institutional impact on global food security must take into account the multi-dimensionality and complexity of the issue, and recognition of the fact that the UN system is but one player among many actors and factors that together determine food security outcomes.

States as members of the international institutions determine the overall agenda, direction of activities and budgetary allocations. The state having the highest financial resources under its control wields the strongest voice in determining the direction of these institutions. The UN system food agencies and the World Bank are constrained both by their mandates, and the demands and dominance of member countries. “The United Nations is an agency subject to utilization by states for such purposes as they may jointly decide to pursue or competitively succeed in imposing upon it” (Claude 1956: 7). Hence, international organization must be viewed as “a process under way, to be studied with a view to understanding its causes and effects, its progress and limitations, its problems and prospects” (Claude 1956: 4), while bearing in mind that international organizations “are neither sacred nor diabolic ideological inventions, but a part of the political and administrative apparatus of human society made necessary by the complexity of interdependence of that society” (Claude 1956: 5).

International organisations by themselves cannot lead to a decline in the incidence of hunger. However, within their limited playing-field and the varying degree of “ambitiousness of the activities that they undertake to perform” (Claude 1956: 4), FAO, WFP, IFAD and the World Bank can improve the situation through right to food advocacy, policy advice to states and deliverance of food aid. For example, conceptualising the normative content of the right to food and putting it on the international human rights framework marks a huge shift in the understanding global food security. Similarly, multilateral channelling of food aid holds the promise of addressing food insecurity of the most vulnerable groups, especially during emergencies. The appropriate approach is not to relate to the UN system as “an idealistic scheme on trial’ or a object of ‘reverence or reverse’ but to its ‘utility’ as ‘a political institution’ and the ‘approval or disapproval of the policies that they serve’ (Claude 1956: 5) in relation to global food security.

## **ANNEXURE I: National Food Policy Initiatives**

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### **INDIA**

Since independence in 1947, the Government of India's (GOI) food and agricultural policy have included price support policy, incorporating minimum support prices (MSP), subsidised farm inputs, and improvement of food marketing system, which provide price assurance to producers, and the open market operations, used to maintain inter-and intra-year price stability, in addition to initiating several schemes and programmes to address food and nutrition insecurity of targeted groups at both central and state level.<sup>1</sup> These policy initiatives could be withdrawn or reduced at anytime and the state was not responsible for them to include all needy people. As a result of vociferous civil society campaigns, public interest litigation and Supreme Court directions,<sup>2</sup> the benefits arising from these schemes have been acknowledged as legal entitlements.

The GOI officially procures and distributes essential commodities (wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene) to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families through a network of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) on a recurring basis, called the Public Distribution System (PDS), jointly operated by the Central (procurement, storage, transportation, bulk allocation of foodgrains, etc) and State Governments (distribution and operation, including allocation within the State, identification of families below poverty line, issue of ration cards, supervision and monitoring the functioning of FPSs). The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), launched in 1997, introduced a two-tier subsidised pricing system, specially targeting the really poor and vulnerable sections of society,<sup>3</sup> offering 20 kgs foodgrains to BPL families at half the economic cost, while Above Poverty Line (APL) families, who did not have a fixed entitlement to foodgrains, were supplied grains at their economic cost. The States were to identify BPL families by involving Gram Panchayats and Nagar Palikas, formulate distribution arrangements and implement them in transparent and accountable manner. The *Antyodaya Anna Yojana* (AAY) introduced a third tier in December 2000, providing highly subsidised foodgrains to poorest-of-the-poor among the BPL families, the scale of allocation being 35 kg of food grains per household per month at the rate of ₹2 a kg for wheat and ₹3 a kg for rice. In 2000-2001, the *Annapurna* scheme was launched to provide indigent senior citizens of 65 years and above with

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10 kgs of foodgrains per person, per month, at no cost. The Gram Panchayats is responsible for identifying beneficiaries and implementing the scheme.

The PDS is widely criticised for targeting errors and exclusion of large number of actually poor individuals and households due to conceptual problem of inappropriate definition of income poverty and absence of regular official estimates of the actual incomes of households, urban bias, marginal coverage of States with high concentration of rural poor, operational and administrative problems, lack of transparent and accountable delivery arrangements, ineffective monitoring, leakages, diversion, corruption and inefficiency. The FPSs were not uniformly located, did not receive regular supplies and were often in the hands of fraudulent private dealers and intermediaries, who siphon off grains for selling at higher prices in the open.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the attainment of an inclusive approach to food security is almost unanimously attached to universal public distribution,<sup>5</sup> based on argument on the Right to Food as a fundamental right of all citizens (drawing from the “Right to Life”, Article 21, of the Indian Constitution).<sup>6</sup> However, the nutritional dimension is still debatable, because universal PDS does not assure nutritious food and related support, especially for the marginalised and vulnerable groups, requiring specific programmes.

President Pratibha Devisingh Patil, in her address to the Parliament, 4 June 2009, proposed to “enact a new law -- the National Food Security Act -- that will provide a statutory basis for a framework which assures food security for all. Every family below the poverty line in rural as well as urban areas will be entitled, by law, to 25 kilograms of rice or wheat per month at ₹3 per kilogram. This legislation will also be used to bring about broader systemic reform in the public distribution system”.<sup>7</sup> Such legislation can potentially make freedom from hunger and malnutrition and access to adequate food fundamental rights by offering a comprehensive guarantee of food security for the poor as the legal obligation of government, a major step to address poverty-induced endemic hunger in India.

The first draft Right to Food (Guarantee of Safety and Security) Bill or the National Food Security Bill, prepared by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution), was subsequently discussed and revised by the National Advisory Council (NAC),<sup>8</sup> and the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM). The NAC finalised the *National Food Security Bill*,



2011 on 22 June 2011.<sup>9</sup> It recognised the ‘right to access of food security’ and advocated a ‘life-cycle approach’ of “access to adequate and appropriate food throughout the life cycle of a human being from pregnancy to old age...”, including entitlement for pregnant and nursing women, children in 0-6 years age group, mid-day meal, prevention and treatment of malnutrition, identification and relief of persons and households living in starvation, and entitlements for special groups, such as destitute persons, urban homeless, migrants and their families. It provided for,

- identification of ‘Priority’ and ‘General’ households in rural and urban areas by State governments, based on notified criteria of the Central government and issue them appropriate ‘Ration Cards’;
- legally entitling 90% rural and 50% urban households to subsidised foodgrains;
- a minimum of 7 kgs of foodgrains per person per month at a ₹3 per kg for rice, ₹2 per kg for wheat and ₹1 per kg for millet (at 2011-11 rates, not to be revised upward for a minimum period of 10 years from the date of notification of the Act) for the Priority Households (46% in rural and 28% in areas);
- 4 kgs of foodgrains per person per month at a price not exceeding 50 per cent of the MSP for all the General Households
- setting up of a National Food Commission and State Food Commissions to investigate complaints regarding violations of the provisions of the Bill or denial of entitlement, impose penalty or compensation, advise on framing appropriate schemes and their implementation, monitor starvation conditions, identify natural or man-made emergency threatening food security;
- putting in place ‘an online Centralized Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System’, with Grievance Redressal Officers at the district and block levels, and a toll-free telephone helpline to register grievances;
- opening of anganwadis, nutritional rehabilitation centres, community kitchens and destitute feeding centres.

According to the NAC Bill, the Central government is to make available the foodgrains to State Governments, which are responsible for distribution to various categories of households through FPSs under the PDS at the district level. It envisages a role for the gram sabha and the urban local bodies in conducting social audits at various levels of all the schemes and appointment of Vigilance Committees to

monitor the delivery of the schemes and entitlements contained in the Bill. The NAC Bill includes efforts towards revitalization of agriculture and promotion of agrarian reform; promotion of decentralised food production, procurement and distribution systems; attending to small farmers; increasing investment in agriculture, research and development; diversifying commodities under the PDS; progressive realisation of access to drinking water, vitamin A, iodine and iron supplementation, sanitation, health care, crèche facilities; raising nutrition level and standard of living; and special support for children without responsible adult protection, adolescent girls, aged, disabled, single women and persons suffering from HIV/AIDS, leprosy and TB.

The conceptual issues critical to the provisions of an effective food security law, relate to, “how much to give, at what prices, and to whom”.<sup>10</sup> While the first two have generated relatively less controversy, the scale and scope of the proposed law has been consistently debated upon in light of doubts expressed regarding the determination of its beneficiaries, defining, identifying and counting the poor.<sup>11</sup> Based on differing methodologies, four alternative of determining poverty line exists in India: the Planning Commission estimates; the Tendulkar Committee report; the N. C. Saxena Committee report; and the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) figure. If the Planning Commission figures are accepted for the proposed Act, the other three official committee reports are tersely disregarded, making it appear as though the search is for the lowest BPL figure since the other three poverty estimates are higher than that of the Planning Commission.<sup>12</sup>

The Planning Commission refused to accept many proposals advanced by the NAC. An Expert Committee on National Food Security Bill, headed by Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairman of Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC), GOI, was formed to examine the proposals made by the NAC.<sup>13</sup> The Final Report of the Expert Committee (January 2011) and the *Economic Outlook 2011/12* (July 2011), provided suggestions on: determining entitlement and implementation through distribution of foodgrains.<sup>14</sup> In sharp divergence from the NAC Bill, the Expert Committee,

- rejected legal guarantees of food entitlement for APL or ‘general category’ families, as unfeasible under the PDS;

- restricted ‘legally-assured delivery of foodgrains’ for really needy households<sup>15</sup> at ₹2 per kg for wheat and ₹3 per kg for rice, covering the rest through ‘an executive order with a varying quantum depending on availability of foodgrains’;
- suggested selling of foodgrains to the non-entitled or APL households at the MSP, which will facilitate in keeping the market prices of foodgrains under check and benefit the non-BPL category;
- recommended ‘systemic reform’ of the PDS through: comprehensive computerization of the PDS at all-India level, beginning from grain allocation to final delivery to the targeted people; and introduction of smart cards for the beneficiaries, containing details regarding their entitlement, enabling them to access any store to purchase food;
- endeavoured to bring uniformity by suggesting the State governments as being in the best placed to identify the targeted households given their proximity to the field situation and awareness regarding local nuances and realities.

Following strong disagreements between the NAC, the Planning Commission and the Rangarajan Committee, the EGoM finalised the *National Food Security Bill*<sup>16</sup> in July 2011 to be examined by the Law Ministry and the Chief Ministers, before being placed to the Parliament. It did not contain any of the NAC proposals pertaining to the life-cycle approach or the integrated grievance redressal mechanism. In pursuance to ensuing debate, the Department of Food and Public Distribution revised its first draft to incorporate the ‘life cycle approach’ and nutritional dimension.

- It covers 75 per cent households in rural areas and 50 per cent in urban areas, a total of 68 per cent of the country’s population;
- It puts a cap on BPL households at 46 per cent in rural areas and 28 per cent in urban areas;
- The prerogative of deciding the number of families eligible for the priority BPL for each State lies with the Central Government;
- It ensures as a legal right a monthly quota of 7 kgs of foodgrains per person for ‘priority sector’ BPL families at the rate of ₹3 for rice, ₹2 for wheat and ₹1 for millet per kg, and 3 kgs of foodgrains per person for APL families at half of the MSP given to farmers for wheat and rice, with the Central government reserving the rights to change these prices at any time.

In May 2011, the GOI undertook to conduct a Socio-Economic and Caste Census in the rural and urban areas, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and the Registrar General of India, to pave way for identifying households living below poverty line in rural and urban areas. The Planning Commission proposed the linking of food security and the PDS with the Unique Identification Number (UID–AADHAAR) based smart card system, provided to every citizen based on demographic and biometric information, enabling portability in identification and a centralised registration system, which can be used in any FPSs, providing the consumers benefit of choice and crediting the subsidy amount to the shopkeeper. Aadhaar can be used for identifying and targeting beneficiaries for PDS, thereby eliminating forgery and duplication, and for authenticating entitlement, enabling the government to guarantee food delivery to the poor through PDS. Though country-wide implementation might not seem possible, Aadhaar can be a powerful instrument for the government to streamline the PDS and make it more effective.<sup>17</sup>

The Bill is commendable in its effort to include government schemes and programmes for vulnerable groups, like women and children. If translated into law, instead of their present status as government schemes, they cannot be withdrawn or diluted and people will have the right to move the courts for failure by government or public officials to provide the same.<sup>18</sup> However, the entire financial burden for these schemes was to be borne by respective State governments, while the Central government retains all decisive powers. By putting a blanket cap on the number of BPL families in rural and urban areas, the bill disregards BPL coverage made by individual State governments based on their own estimates and reduces the number of beneficiaries. The pricing proposed in the Bill is also higher than the existing price benefits in many states. Moreover, the individual-based quota system, while appearing reasonable, actually penalises poor families with fewer children; a family of four will now receive 28 kgs of foodgrains, instead of previous 35 kgs. It is suggested that a fairer approach would have been to keep minimum allocation at 35 kg for a family of average five members, subjected to increase by certain amount per additional person.<sup>19</sup> The provisions for the APL families are also way below a dignified level of entitlement.

The Bill contains a provision for “cash transfer, food coupons, among others, to the targeted beneficiaries in lieu of their foodgrain entitlement...in areas and manner to

be prescribed by the Central Government” [Schedule IV, 3(g)], which not only leaves the State governments without much choice,<sup>20</sup> but also eventually might substitute the foodgrains under PDS with cash transfers, whose effectiveness in actually translating into food for the needy remains debatable. The PDS guarantees a floor price to farmers for their produce and stabilises prices by moving food grains to scarcity areas, in addition to supplying food to consumers. Replacement of PDS by cash transfers will not only deprive farming families of remunerative price but will also dilute the price stabilisation capacities of the government, thereby worsening food security.<sup>21</sup>

In response to the controversial provisions contained in the government’s draft of the proposed law, the ‘Right to Food Campaign’, an informal network of organizations and individuals, working towards the realisation of the right to food in India, formulated an alternative draft “Food Entitlements Act, 2009”.<sup>22</sup> According to the campaign, the EGoM draft does not include any commitment towards nutritional security nor does it foresee an integrated process of production, procurement, storage and distribution as a part of food security. Moreover, it was pointed out that giving cash to people, “without ensuring proper food availability was putting people at the mercy of food retailers and cartels which could lead to greater corruption than the projected leakages in the PDS, apart from putting farmers at risk”.<sup>23</sup>

The proposed Bill seemed plagued by determining the extension of entitlement cover. It has been suggested to structure the Bill to provide both ‘common and differentiated entitlement’. While the common entitlements, available to everyone, include universal public distribution system, clean drinking water, sanitation and primary healthcare, the differentiated entitlement, restricted to the economically weaker families, can make available staple grains at subsidised price.<sup>24</sup> This is contingent upon the debate on the identification of the poor and the flawed devices of determining the poverty line itself. BPL is defined in India in the most austere manner, the main purpose being to identify households eligible for food support through the PDS. The official poverty line actually measures destitution, since under-nutrition rates are much higher than poverty estimates and an extremely meagre consumption basket can be brought at that poverty line. Hence, while “statistical poverty lines should not become real-life eligibility criteria for food entitlements”, combining universalisation with “cost-saving measures such as decentralised procurement, self-management of Fair Price

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Shops by gram panchayats, and a range of transparency safeguards” is suggested to avoid the enormous increase in food subsidy entailed by a universal PDS.<sup>25</sup>

Implementation of the right to food through entitlements enumerated in the Bill must be supported by increasing agricultural production, especially of small farm holders, equitable and sustainable food systems, improving purchasing power of people and including security of means of livelihood, like the right to work and social security.<sup>26</sup> The Bill can achieve poverty eradication and hunger elimination through an integrated system of monitoring and ‘deliver as one’ approach, where national and state initiatives involve local efforts at village and district levels, to build community food security delivery system to improve efficiency and control corruption.<sup>27</sup> It could be path breaking in making the right to food a binding obligation on government officials to reach sufficient food to every citizen who needs it and provisions to hold them accountable for failure to do so, redistribute resources from those with means and privilege to those who are dispossessed, accumulate requisite resources to reach food to every needy mouth, accessed with dignity, ascertain that the food is nutritious and sufficient for active and healthy life, and summon ethical and political conviction to pursue these.<sup>28</sup> Claims of achieving total food security has not been made by many countries and India is preceded by very few in introducing a legislation to guarantee it. Hence, making freedom from hunger and undernutrition a legal right is quite a bold approach in India, with its sheer magnanimity of population, especially poor people.

In India, the market for agricultural produce and commodities is regulated by the *Agriculture Produce Marketing (Regulation) (APMC) Act*, enacted by state governments legislations. The *Food Safety and Standards Act (2006)* consolidates multiple food laws in India<sup>29</sup> and provides for the establishment of a single reference point for all matters relating to food safety and standards through an independent statutory Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). This Act ensures improved quality of food for consumers by laying down specific regulations for packaging and labelling of foods, and the manufacture, distribution and sale or import of any novel food, genetically modified, irradiated or organic food, foods for special dietary uses, health supplements, proprietary foods etc. It protects consumers by restricting misleading, deceiving or contravenes advertisements of any food, and fraudulent unfair trade practices that promote sale, supply, use and consumption of

sub-standard, unrequired, misbranded, contaminated, unsafe food. It lays down the procedure for licensing and registration of food business by making operators, packers, manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and sellers, liable for ensuring adherence to the rules and regulations contained in the Act at all stages of production, processing, import, distribution and sale of food articles. It directs state government to appoint the Commissioner of Food Safety for the State to ascertain efficient implementation of the requirements contained in the Act and provides provisions relating to offences, penalty, punishment and compensation. This Act initiates a novel approach to food safety in India and integrates it with international standards.

## **BRAZIL**

National mobilisation around the concepts of hunger and food insecurity developed in Brazil during the 1980s with initiatives both from government – the Ministry of Agriculture prepared a document ‘Food Security – Proposal for a Policy to Fight Hunger’ in 1985 – and civil society – organising the first National Food and Nutrition Conference (CNAN) in 1986, followed by awareness raising campaign, Citizenship Action against Hunger and Poverty and for Life, by the civil society in 1993.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, upon his election in 2003, made food and nutrition security a priority government of strategy through the *Projeto Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger Program, ZHP) and pledged in his inaugural speech,

We are going to create appropriate conditions for all people in our country to have three decent meals a day, everyday, without having to depend on donations from anybody. Brazil can no longer put up with so much inequality. We need to eradicate hunger, extreme poverty, and social exclusion. Our war is not meant to kill anyone – it is meant to save lives.<sup>30</sup>

The first proposal for ZHP, formulated in 2001 by Instituto Cidadania (the Citizenship Institute), was subsequently elaborated and developed as a collection of initiatives and programmes to ensure sustainable process of local development and food and nutritional security for people who are vulnerable to food insecurity in the poorer areas. The Special Ministry of Food Security and Hunger Combat (Ministério Especial de Segurança Alimentar, MESA) [transformed as the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS) in 2004], was created within the Office of the President to coordinate these activities.<sup>31</sup> The ZHP was described as:

a strategy of the Federal Government to ensure the human right to adequate food, giving priority to people facing difficulties to access food. This initiative is an element of its efforts to promote food and nutrition security and contribute to eradicating extreme poverty and ensuring citizenship rights to population segments that are more vulnerable to hunger.<sup>32</sup>

The initial focus of ZHP was on the rural and non-metropolitan population of the Northeast region, the poorest region of Brazil, with the base line as R\$ 71.53 per month. A Unified Household Registry of households (Cadúnico – Cadastro Único)<sup>33</sup> was created by the federal government through a decree in 2001, under the MDS, to identify, register and update data of families, based on socio-economic diagnosis and family income, for selecting beneficiaries of government social programmes.<sup>34</sup> Each family was given a Social Identification Number and an electronic benefit.

In 2002, the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme funded 3 projects (amounting to US\$1.1 million) of the ZHP for background studies; policy formulation; development of monitoring and evaluation system; and devising participatory methodologies for reaching the most vulnerable groups in Brazil. In December 2003, the FAO and the Brazilian government signed an agreement for US\$5.8 million.<sup>35</sup> Hailed for providing the universal right to adequate food and applying targeting methods to benefit the neediest, the ZHP is a comprehensive strategy involving four priority areas,

- providing access to food through conditional cash transfer, the Bolsa Familia Programme (BFP); food and nutrition through the National School Feeding Programme (Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar) (PNAE), Food to Specific Populations, Distribution of Vitamin A and Iron, Food and Nutrition of Indigenous People, Food and Nutrition Education, System of Food and Nutritional Surveillance (SISVAN), and tax incentives through Support Programme for Workers (PAT); local and regional Network of Public Utilities for Food Security and Nutrition (RedSAN) consisting of community kitchens, low-price restaurants, food banks, urban agriculture, street fairs and markets; and Water Cisterns
- strengthening of family agriculture through the National Programme to Strengthen Family Farming (PRONAF) and the Food Acquisition Programme for Family Farming (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos, PAA)
- third and fourth component being income generation and promotion of partnership with private sector and civil society for social control, articulation, mobilisation.<sup>36</sup>



The BFP (family grant), launched in 2003, integrated four cash transfers programs (Bolsa Escola, Bolsa Alimentação, Cartão Alimentação and Auxílio Gas) under the MDS. It provided conditional cash transfers to the poorest families, if they meet certain conditions, like school attendance of children, infant immunisation and pre- and post-natal care. The BFP fulfilled two objectives: reducing present poverty and inequality and ensuring food security by direct money transfer to poor families; and providing incentives for poor families to build their own human capital by making future generations more educated and healthier. It targeted two groups: the ‘extreme poor’ (households with less than US\$17 or R\$60 per capita monthly income) and the ‘moderately poor’ (households with per capita monthly income between US\$17 and 34 or R\$60 and 120). Cash transfer ranged between US\$7-45 (R\$15 to 95), depending on the composition and income of the household, preferably made to the women in the family.<sup>37</sup> It received support from the World Bank, which approved US\$572 million loan in June 2004 for consolidating the first phase of the BFP,<sup>38</sup> and a further US\$200 million loan in September 2010 to strengthen the BFP.<sup>39</sup>

The unique feature of the BFP lies in its decentralised implementation. While the MDS manages the policy and supervision of the program, the municipalities are responsible for registering local families in the programme (through the federal government’s Union Registry) and monitoring the conditions supposed to be followed by beneficiaries. The Caixa Econômica Federal (savings/credit union organization) is the operating agent responsible for consolidating and managing the national registry database for social programmes and the Union Registry. It assigns unique Social Identification Number to registered individuals and makes direct monthly payments to their electronic benefit cards through its banking network. The Ministries of education and health are responsible for establishing technical and operation guidelines regarding school attendance and health conditionalities, monitoring and consolidating conditionality compliance information and reporting to MDS. The State governments extend technical support and training to municipalities and the formal oversight and control of the BFP is carried out by – the General Controllers Office (CGU), the Federal Audits Court (TCU) and the Office of the Public Prosecutor (MP).<sup>40</sup>

An increase in enrolment of rural children in primary and secondary education was witnessed, though there was no positive impact on their academic advancement. Child

immunisation data also showed dismal improvement. These could be due to the absence or lack of appropriate resources and investments to ensure the supply of services, like schools and health clinics. However, the BFP, costing just 0.5 to 0.8 per cent of the country's GDP, helped reduce rural child undernutrition (under 5 years) from 15 in 1996 to 7 per cent in 2007. It is estimated to have raised participant's income by 21 per cent, reduced poverty severity (the degree to which poor families fall below poverty line) by 19 per cent and brought down Gini Index (income inequality) by 21 per cent between 1995 and 2004.<sup>41</sup> The BFP approximately covered 11.1 million families (around 46 million people) as of June 2006, representing 100 per cent of the poor and 25 per cent of the Brazilian population.<sup>42</sup>

The ZHP also addressed food and nutritional by strengthening and supporting 'family farmers', who form the bulk of rural people engaged in agriculture, producing basic foodstuffs for domestic markets and comprise a major share of socio-economically marginalised the food-insecure population, through PRONAF, created in 1995 under the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA). Nationwide loans with lowest interest rates, crop insurance and technical assistance are provided under PRONAF, through public banks, to cover yearly costs or long-term investment in agriculture, agro-industry or other rural activities. The PAA, created in 2003 and jointly funded by the MDA and the MDS, provides foodstuff for vulnerable populations along with promoting social inclusion in rural areas, implemented by the National Food Supply Company (CONAB), a public company under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA), states and municipalities. The PAA targets food producers by facilitating market access for family farmers through "by means of the government's direct purchase of various agricultural goods at market prices and by providing financial resources to be used as net capital by family farmers' organisations" and food consumers by setting up "public food stocks to regulate prices and for the purposes of donations to institutions dealing with food-insecure populations". It creates and strengthens short food chains, 'local food-security circuits', by supporting and diversifying local production according to local food habits.<sup>43</sup>

In Brazil, the Organic Law of Food and Nutrition Security (LOSAN) was enacted in 2006, stating the human right to adequate food, and a constitutional amendment was approved in the National Congress in February 2010, which included the right to food

among the Brazilian social rights. As a result of the joint effort of the government and civil society, the National Food and Nutritional Security Policy (PNSAN) was established in 2010 to ensure the human right to adequate food, and the National Food and Nutritional Security System (SISAN) was created to promote public-sector multi-stakeholder approach through coordination mechanism with social participation and accountability. These initiatives broaden the scope of the ZHP by making it possible to include other issues in the food-security policy framework and ensuring a follow-up mechanism, while legally enshrining government action on food and nutritional security as state policy, continuing even if future governments fail to maintain ZHP.<sup>44</sup>

The evident success of Brazil's food security food and nutritional security framework lies in the drop of the percentage of population living on less than US\$1.25 a day from 25.6 in 1990 to 4.8 in 2008. Also, the number of households facing some degree of food insecurity declined from 34.9 to 30.2 percent between 2004 and 2009.<sup>45</sup> However, national level achievements conceal wide internal disparities in terms of regions, urban and rural areas, and race. While the North and the Northeast regions continue to have most critical socio-economic conditions, it is alleged that the food security schemes have worked better in rural areas because urban poverty in Brazil is complicated, requiring additional law and order interventions for violence, drugs, family breakdown and child labour. The success of such an integrated set of policies depended on coordination and mobilisation at different levels of government (federal, state, municipal and local), along with multiple groups like the civil society, church groups and private sector for administration and implementation.<sup>46</sup>

It is alleged that the ZHP emphasise securing short-term improvement in nutritional aspects rather than the underlying causes of hunger and, thus, in the long run carries the risk of creating dependency. Monitoring of conditionalities seems difficult and selection of vulnerable population remains contentious since income is usually the only available criterion for determination. The information in the Unified Household Registry contains the inherent shortcoming of becoming obsolete very quickly and requires periodical updating. Such social welfare program invariably runs the risk of fraud and leakages. Hence, the need for training and education are recognised for the effective participation and efficient functioning of these local councils.

Nevertheless, international interest in and wide media coverage of Brazil's food and nutritional security programme, especially the BFP, and possible adaptation and replication<sup>47</sup> are rooted in aspects of continuity and innovation; size and rapid expansion; impressive targeting accuracy; significant impact on poverty and inequality; decentralised implementation; and a unifying force in social policy.<sup>48</sup> In recognition of his initiatives to fight hunger, the WFP conferred Lula da Silva with the 2011 World Food Prize. A new form of food security governance is exemplified in Brazil through popular participation and local democracy, establishment of local tripartite (government, private sector and civil society) social councils. These bold and innovative policies are widely credited for reducing poverty and malnutrition,<sup>49</sup> and demonstrating that social policies can go beyond assistance and become active tools of social and economic transformation. Implementation of food security policy not only requires laws and programmes, but also building a strong institutional framework, designing multi-sectoral coordination and funding, and developing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation through social control and participation.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the Kishori Shakti Yojna, the Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls, and the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (under the Ministry of Women and Child Development); the Mid-day Meals Programme and the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (under the Ministry of Human Resource Development); the National Rural Health Mission and the National Urban Health Mission (under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare); Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna, the National Food Security Mission and the National Horticulture Mission (under the Ministry of Agriculture); the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission, the Total Sanitation Campaign; the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojna and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (under the Ministry of Rural Development); and the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), the Antyodaya Anna Yojna (AAY) and Annapurna (under the Ministry of Food).

<sup>2</sup> Interim orders by the Supreme Court of India in the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL, Rajasthan) vs. Union of India and Others, Civil Writ Petition 196, 2001, compiled by the 'Right to Food Campaign', available at: <http://www.righttofoodindia.org/data/scordersprimeratoolforaction.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Such as landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans/craftsmen such as potters, tapers, weavers, black-smith, carpenters etc. in the rural areas and slum dwellers and persons earning their livelihood on daily basis in the informal sector like potters, rickshaw-pullers, cart-pullers, fruit and flower sellers on the pavement etc. in urban areas.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Drèze and Reetika Khera, "PDS Leakages: The Plot Thickens", *The Hindu*, 13 August 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Madhura Swaminathan, "Public Distribution System and Social Exclusion", *The Hindu*, 7 May 2008; Zoya Hasan, "Legislating Against Hunger", *The Hindu*, 27 August 2009; Utsa Patnaik, "The Early Kalidasa Syndrome", *The Hindu*, 13 September 2010; Jean Drèze, "Poverty Estimates vs Food Entitlements", *The Hindu*, 24 February 2010 (a); Jean Drèze, "The Task of Making the PDS Work", *The Hindu*, 8 July 2010 (b); Drèze, Jean, "Mending the Food Security Act", *The Hindu*, 24 May 2011; P. Sainath, "Food Security – of APL, BPL & IPL", *The Hindu*, 6 July 2010; Brinda Karat, "For Inclusive Approach to Food Security", *The Hindu*, 30 June 2009; Brinda Karat, "Detracting from Entitlement", *The Hindu*, 26 July 2010.

<sup>6</sup> In India, the right to food is considered as "one of the basic economic and social rights to achieve substantive democracy, and without it political democracy is incomplete. It is directly linked to the

right to life, a fundamental human right enshrined in the Constitution and conceivably all human rights conceptions” (Hasan 2009).

<sup>7</sup> The President of India’s address is available at: <http://presidentofindia.nic.in/sp040609.html>

<sup>8</sup> The NAC was established by the GOI in March 2010, under the Chairmanship of Ms. Sonia Gandhi, to provide the Government with policy and legislative inputs with special focus on social policy and the rights of the disadvantages groups. Other NAC members are: Prof M. S. Swaminathan; Dr Ram Dayal Munda; Dr. Narendra Jadhav; Prof. Pramod Tandon; Ms. Aruna Roy; Shri Madhav Gadgil; Shri Naresh C. Saxena; Dr. A. K. Shiva Kumar; Shri Deep Joshi; Ms. Anu Aga; Ms. Farah Naqvi; Shri Harsh Mander; and Ms. Mirai Chatterjee. The NAC serves as the Government’s civil society interface through which it endeavours to access the expertise and experience of distinguished professionals, drawn from diverse fields of development activity, and to connect to a larger network of Research Organizations, NGOs and Social Action and Advocacy Groups.

<sup>9</sup> See, the draft NAC *National Food security Bill, 2011* at: [http://nac.nic.in/foodsecurity/nfsb\\_final.pdf](http://nac.nic.in/foodsecurity/nfsb_final.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Hasan 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Rahul Lahoti and Sanjay G. Reddy, “Right to Food Act: Essential But Inadequate”, *The Hindu*, 28 July 2009; M. S. Swaminathan, “Pathway to Food Security for All”, *The Hindu*, 29 March 2010; Drèze 2010 (b).

<sup>12</sup> Sainath 2010.

<sup>13</sup> The Expert Committee members were: Kaushik Basu (Chief Economic Advisor to the Finance Ministry), Sushma Nath (Expenditure Secretary), P. K. Basu (Agriculture Secretary), B. C. Gupta (Food Secretary), a representative from the Planning Commission and the Registrar-General of India.

<sup>14</sup> Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council (2011), *Report of the Expert Committee on National Food Security Bill*, January, Prime Minister’s Office, available at: [http://eac.gov.in/reports/rep\\_NFSB.pdf](http://eac.gov.in/reports/rep_NFSB.pdf); and *Economic Outlook 2011/12*, July, Prime Minister’s Office, available at: <http://pib.nic.in/archieve/others/2011/aug/d2011080101.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> The really needy households “may be defined as the percentage of population below the official poverty line + 10 per cent of the BPL population. Using the Tendulkar poverty line, this works out to 46 per cent rural and 28 per cent urban population. These percentages are the same as those recommended by the NAC for categorization as the ‘priority’ households. This captures not only the poor but also some at the margin...” (*Report of the Expert Committee 2011: 11*).

<sup>16</sup> Department of Food and Public Distribution (2011), *The National Food Security Bill, 2011*, September, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (revised draft), is available at: [http://fcamin.nic.in/dfpd\\_html/Draft\\_National\\_Food\\_Security\\_Bill.pdf](http://fcamin.nic.in/dfpd_html/Draft_National_Food_Security_Bill.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Planning Commission (2010), *Envisioning a Role for Aadhaar in the Public Distribution System*, Working Paper – version 1, 24 June 2010, Unique Identification Authority of India, available at: [http://uidai.gov.in/UID\\_PDF/Working\\_Papers/Circulated\\_Aadhaar\\_PDS\\_Note.pdf](http://uidai.gov.in/UID_PDF/Working_Papers/Circulated_Aadhaar_PDS_Note.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Harsh Mander, “For the Wretched of Our Earth”, *The Hindu*, Sunday Magazine, 28 March 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Brinda Karat, “Food Security Bill Needs Amendments”, *The Hindu*, 23 July 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Karat 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Mander 2010

<sup>22</sup> The Right to Food Campaign (2009), *Draft Food Entitlements Act, 2009*, Draft 12 September 2009, available at: [http://www.righttofoodindia.org/data/rtf\\_act\\_draft\\_charter\\_sept09.pdf](http://www.righttofoodindia.org/data/rtf_act_draft_charter_sept09.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Gargi Parsai, “Right to Food Campaign Calls for ‘Action’ against Draft Food Bill”, *The Hindu*, 3 August 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Swaminathan 2010

<sup>25</sup> Drèze 2010 (a).

<sup>26</sup> Hasan 2009

<sup>27</sup> Swaminathan 2010

<sup>28</sup> Harsh Mander, “Exiling Hunger from Every Home”, *The Hindu*, Sunday Magazine, 5 July 2009; Mander 2010.

<sup>29</sup> **Multiple Food Laws in India Subsumed under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**

Title of the Food Law	Implementing Ministry
The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 (37 of 1954)	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
The Fruit Products Order, 1955	Ministry of Food Processing Industries
The Meat Food Products Order, 1973	Ministry of Food Processing Industries
The Vegetable Oil Products (Control) Order, 1947	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution

The Edible Oils Packaging (Regulation) Order, 1998	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution
The Solvent Extracted Oil, De oiled Meal, and Edible Flour (Control) Order, 1967	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution
The Milk and Milk Products Order, 1992	Ministry of Agriculture
Any other order issued under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 relating to food	Inter-ministerial. Using the powers under the Act, various Ministries/Departments of the Central Government of India have issued Control Orders.

<sup>30</sup> José da Silva; Mauro Eduardo Del Grossi and Caio Galvão de França (eds.) (2011), *The Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) Program: The Brazilian Experience*, Brasília: Ministry of Agrarian Development, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Belik and Mauro Del Grossi (2003), *Brazil's Zero Hunger Program in the Context of Social Policy*, Paper prepared for the 25th International Conference of Agricultural Economists in Durban, South Africa, August 2003, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Food and Agriculture Organizations Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (2011), "The Zero Hunger Program: Main Lessons", in José da Silva; Mauro Eduardo Del Grossi and Caio Galvão de França (eds.), pp. 143-159.

<sup>33</sup> The Unified Household Registry was compiled by the Federal Savings Bank (Caixa Econômica Federal), jointly with the municipality offices, local governments, religious entities and other groups.

<sup>34</sup> Some of these government programmes are: Bolsa Renda (income help); Bolsa Escola (scholarships), Ministry of Education; Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil (Child Labor Eradication Program), Ministry of Social Development; Agente Jovem (young agent); Programa Cartão Alimentação (food consumption), earswhile Ministry of Food Security; Bolsa Alimentação (health care), Ministry of health; Auxilio Gas, Ministry of Mines & Energy.

<sup>35</sup> Ruth Kattumuri (2011), *Food Security and the Targeted Public Distribution System in India*, Asia Research Centre Working Paper 38, London School of Economics and Political Science, available at: [www2.lse.ac.uk/asiaResearchCentre/files/ARCWP38-Kattumuri.pdf](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/asiaResearchCentre/files/ARCWP38-Kattumuri.pdf), pp.8-9

<sup>36</sup> Danuta Chmielewska and Darana Souza (2011), *The Food Security Policy Context in Brazil*, Country Study number 22, June, Brazil: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (jointly supported by the Poverty Practice, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP, and the Government of Brazil, available at: <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCCountryStudy22.pdf>; Cecilia Rocha (2009), "Developments in National Policies for Food and Nutrition Security in Brazil", *Development Policy Review*, 27 (1) January: 51-66.

<sup>37</sup> Kathy Lindert (2006), "Brazil: Bolsa Familia Program – Scaling-up Transfers for the Poor", in *Managing for Development Results Principles in Action: Sourcebook on Emerging Good Practice*, First Edition, March, available at: <http://www.mfdr.org/sourcebook/6-1brazil-bolsafamilia.pdf>, p. 68

<sup>38</sup> For details on the World Bank's first phase of loan for BFP see: <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P087713>

<sup>39</sup> For details on the World Bank's second phase of loan for BFP see: <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P101504>

<sup>40</sup> Kathy Lindert, et al. (2007), *The Nuts and Bolts of Brazil's Bolsa Família Program: Implementing Conditional Cash Transfers in a Decentralized Context*, Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 709, May, Washington, DC: World Bank, pp. 20-21.

<sup>41</sup> Rocha 2009: 55-56; Adriana Veiga Aranha (2011), "Fome Zero: A Project Turned into a Government Strategy", in José da Silva; Mauro Eduardo Del Grossi and Caio Galvão de França (eds.), pp. 87-111.

<sup>42</sup> Lindert et al. 2007: 18.

<sup>43</sup> Chmielewska and Souza 2011:14-18.

<sup>44</sup> Chmielewska and Souza 2011:7.

<sup>45</sup> Chmielewska and Souza 2011:30.

<sup>46</sup> Kattumuri 2011: 9.

<sup>47</sup> Almost 20 countries, including Mexico, Chile, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, Morocco and New York City (Opportunity NYC) have modeled programmes based on the BFP.

<sup>48</sup> Lindert et al. 2007: 116-117.

<sup>49</sup> Rocha 2009: 51; and da Silv, Grossi and França 2011: 9.

## **ANNEXURE II: Field Study Report (25 March – 29 April 2011)**

The field study was undertaken from 25 March to 29 April 2011, at the UN Headquarters (New York) and the World Bank office (Washington, DC) and discussions were held with officials of both the organisations. The UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the UN Archives and Record Management Section (ARMS), the World Bank Archives and the Joint World Bank and IMF Library were visited for relevant documents and records. Food-related non-profit organisations and think-tanks were visited and discussions were held with researchers and staff there.

### **NEW YORK [25 March – 09 April 2011]**

- Attended seminar on “The resurgent Global Food Crisis: Causes and Implications”, held at UNDP, New York, on 29 March 2011. Speakers: Jayati Ghosh and C. P. Chandrasekhar.

<b>Institution Visited</b>	<b>Resource person</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
<b>Permanent Mission of India to UN</b> 235 East, 43rd Street, New York, NY - 10017	Randhir K. Jaiswal, First Secretary, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Committee, G-77, Economic and Development Issues, Investment, ECOSOC, Health, ICPD, Kimberley Process	<a href="mailto:randhir.un@gmail.com">randhir.un@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:dsams@mea.gov.in">dsams@mea.gov.in</a>	8 April 2011
<b>United Nations Development Programme</b> One United Nations Plaza New York, NY 10017	Thangavel Palanivel (Chief Economist and Chief Regional Strategy and Policy Unit, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific)	<a href="mailto:thangavel.palanivel@undp.org">thangavel.palanivel@undp.org</a>	29 March 2011
	Shantanu Mukherjee (Policy Adviser, Microeconomics MDG Support Team, Poverty Group Bureau for Development Policy)	<a href="mailto:shantanu.mukherjee@undp.org">shantanu.mukherjee@undp.org</a>	31 March 2011
	Julia Kercher (Policy Specialist, Human Rights Based Approaches, Poverty Group, UNDP - Bureau for Development Policy)	<a href="mailto:julia.kercher@undp.org">julia.kercher@undp.org</a>	5 April 2011
<b>United Nations University</b> Two United	S. Chidambaranathan (Special Advisor to the Rector, United Nations	<a href="mailto:nathan@unu.edu">nathan@unu.edu</a>	

Nations Plaza Room DC2-2060 New York, NY 10017	University)  Luna Abu-Khadra (Representative of the Rector, United Nations University)	<a href="mailto:luna@unu.edu">luna@unu.edu</a>	
<b>UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)</b> Two United Nations Plaza Room DC2-2280 New York, NY 10017	Dr. Chantal Line Carpentier (Sustainable Development Officer and Major Groups Programme Coordinator, Division of Sustainable Development)  Diana Alarcón (Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Development Strategy and Policy Analysis Division, Development Policy and Analysis Division)	<a href="mailto:carpentier@un.org">carpentier@un.org</a>	31 March 2011  6 April 2011
<b>Secretary- General High Level Task Force on Food Security</b> Two United Nations Plaza New York, NY 10017	Ellen Funch (Liaison with Office of the Secretary General, UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, Coordination Team)  Gabriel Ferrero (Policy Advisor, UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, Coordination Team)	<a href="mailto:ellen.funch@undp.org">ellen.funch@undp.org</a>	6 April 2011  6 April 2011
<b>International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)</b> Two United Nations Plaza Room 1128-29 New York, NY 10017	Xenia von Lilien (Liaison and Public Information Officer, IFAD North American Liaison Office, New York)	<a href="mailto:ifad@un.org">ifad@un.org</a>	5 April 2011
<b>World Food Programme (WFP)</b> 733 3rd Avenue Room 2300 New York, NY 10017	Karin Manente (Senior External Relations Officer, World Food Programme)  Henk-Jan Brinkman (Chief, Policy, Planning and Application Branch, Peace- building Support Office, United Nations) (Former Senior Advisor for Economic	<a href="mailto:karin.manente@wfp.org">karin.manente@wfp.org</a>  <a href="mailto:brinkman@un.org">brinkman@un.org</a>	8 April 2011  9 April 2011



	Policy, World Food Programme)		
<b>Dag Hammarskjöld Library</b>	Elizabeth N. Mwarage	<a href="mailto:unreference@un.org">unreference@un.org</a>	
<b>UN Archives and Record Management Section (UN-ARMS)</b> ARMS FF-109 United Nations New York, NY 10017	Romain Ledauphin	<a href="mailto:ledauphin@un.org">ledauphin@un.org</a>	
<b>The Global Policy Forum</b> 777 UN Plaza, Suite 3D New York, NY 10017	Melissa Martin (Associate, Global Policy Forum)  Dr. James A. Paul (Executive Director, Global Policy Forum)  David M. Weaver (Senior Advisor to the Executive Director, with specialization for Global Advocacy, Church World Service)  Ryan D. Smith (Presbyterian Representative to the UN), Presbyterian Ministry at the UN	<a href="mailto:melissamartin@globalpolicy.org">melissamartin@globalpolicy.org</a>  <a href="mailto:james.paul@globalpolicy.org">james.paul@globalpolicy.org</a>  <a href="mailto:dweaver@churchworldservice.org">dweaver@churchworldservice.org</a>  <a href="mailto:ryan.smith@pcusa.org">ryan.smith@pcusa.org</a>	Held discussion on 30 March 2011
<b>The Hunger Project</b> 5 Union Square West New York, NY 10003	Dr. John Coonrod (Vice President, Strategy and Impact)	<a href="mailto:jc@thp.org">jc@thp.org</a>	1 April 2011
<b>New York University</b> 70 Washington Square South, NY 10012	Dr. Gabriella M. Petrick (Assistant Professor Food Studies, Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health)	<a href="mailto:gabriella.petrick@nyu.edu">gabriella.petrick@nyu.edu</a>	4 April 2011
<b>New York Public Library</b>			

**WASHINGTON DC [10 April – 29 April 2011]**

Attended the CSO Sessions of the World Bank – IMF Spring Meetings 2011:

- “World Bank-Civil Society Roundtable on Food Price Volatility”, held at MC 13-121, on 14 April 2011. Speakers: Robert Zoellick (President, The World Bank Group); Agnes Matilda Kalibata (State Minister for Agriculture, Rwanda); Sam Worthington (CEO, InerAction); David Nabarro (UN Special Representative, HLTF Coordinator); Peter Jeranyama (President, AAAPD, African Diaspora); Hugh Bredenkamp (Deputy Director, Strategy, Policy, Review Department, IMF); Neil Watkins (Policy Director, Action Aid); Julie Howard (Deputy Food Security Coordinator, USAID); Inger Anderson (Vice President for Sustainable Development); Ray Offenheiser (President, Oxfam).
- “Food Crisis Open Forum: Help Finding Solutions to the Global Food Crisis”, held at the Preston Auditorium (MC Building), on 15 April 2011. Panels on “The Food Burden” and “Feeding a Hungry World – the Solutions?”. Panellists: Agnes Matilda Kalibata (State Minister for Agriculture, Rwanda); Tom Arnold (CEO, Concern Worldwide); Inger Anderson (Vice President for Sustainable Development); Calestous Juma (Professor and Author, Harvard Kennedy School); Lindiwe Majele Sibanda (CEO, FANRPAN); Josette Sheeran (Head, World Food Programme); Gavin Maruire (Agriculture Markets Columnist, Thomson Reuters); Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Managing Director, World Bank), Scott Loarie (Post Doctoral Fellow, Carnegie Institution); David Beckmann (President, Bread for the World); Abdolreza Abbassian (Grain Analyst, FAO); Tom Erickson (VP Government and Industry Affairs, Bunge North America).
- “Democratizing Development through Open Data”, held at MC 2-800 on 15 April 2011. Panel I: Gunilla Carisson (Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden); Shaida Badiie (Director, Development Data Group, World Bank Group); Karin Christiansen (Director, Publish What You Find); Ian Soloman (U. S. Executive Director, World Bank Group). Panel II: Aleem Walji (Manager, Innovation Practice, World Bank Institute); Michael Koch (Director for Financial Management, CFP, World Bank Group); Jean-Louis Sarbib (AidData); Simon Parrish (Aidinfo); Sanjay Pradhan (Vice President, World Bank Institute).
- “Winds of Change: Will they Bring a New Paradigm to Development Assistance”, held at MC C1-100 on 15 April 2011. Speakers: Dennis Whittle (Co-founder, GlobalGiving.org); Joel Selanikio (CEO and Co-founder, DataDyne); Solome Lemma (Programme Officer for Africa at the Global Fund for Children); Dayna Brown (Director of the Listening Project for CDA Collaborative Learning Projects); Heather Baser (Internationally recognized expert in capacity development); Tom Grubisich (Independent Consultant); Jennifer Lentfer (Online Community Manner CDRA).
- “Pathways out of Extreme Poverty: New Approaches”, held at IFC Building, 2121 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, FL-103 on 15 April 2011. Speakers: Anne Hastings (Director, Fonkoze); Margaret Grosh (Lead Social Protection Specialist, World Bank Group); Syed Hashemi (Director, BRAC Development Institute, and Senior Advisor, CGAP); Alexia Latortue (Deputy CEO, CGAP).

Attended “The Atlantic Food Summit”, held at the Ronald Reagan Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20004, on 26 April 2011.

- Keynote Remarks: Kathleen Merrigan (Deputy Secretary, U. S. Department of Agriculture).
- Panel Discussion: Sustainable Agriculture. Featuring: Sarah Alexander (Director of the Environment Practice, the Keystone Center); Nina Fedoroff (President, American Association for the Advancement of Sciences); Gary Hirshberg (Chief Executive Offices, Stonyfield farm); and Molly Jahn (Professor at the College of Agricultural and Life Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison).
- Keynote Interview: Sam Kass (Assistant Chef, The White House).
- Panel Discussion: Global Food Safety, Access and Affordability. Featuring: José André (Chef and Owner, ThinkFoodGroup); Franz Fischler (Former Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, the European Union); Jim McGovern (Representative, U. S. House of representatives).
- Panel Discussion: A Closer Look at Consumer Choice, Nutrition, and Policy. Featuring: Ezekiel Emanuel (Chair of the Clinical Center Department of Bioethics, National Institutes of Health); Jennifer Grossman (Senior Vice President, Dole Nutrition Institute); Scott Kahan (Co-Director, George Washington University Weight management Center); Susan Needy (President and Chief Executive Officer, American Beverage Association).
- Keynote Interview: Michael Taylor (Deputy Commissioner for Foods, Food and Drug Administration).
- Keynote Interview: Alice Waters (Chef and Owner, Chez Panisse).

Institution Visited	Resource person	Contact	Date of Interview
<b>World Bank</b> 1818 H Street, NW Washington, DC 20433	William John Martin (Research Manager, Agriculture and Rural Development, Development Research Group)	<a href="mailto:wmartin1@worldbank.org">wmartin1@worldbank.org</a>	20 April 2011
	Shivva Makki (Senior Economist, Development Economics – Research Support)	<a href="mailto:smakki@worldbank.org">smakki@worldbank.org</a>	22 April 2011
	Dr. Richard Cambridge (Adviser, African Diaspora Program, Office of the Regional Vice President, Africa Region)	<a href="mailto:rcambridge@worldbank.org">rcambridge@worldbank.org</a>	25 April 2011
	Hassan Zaman (Lead Economist, Poverty Reduction Group)	<a href="mailto:hzaman@worldbank.org">hzaman@worldbank.org</a>	22 April 2011
	Mark Cackler (Manager, Agriculture and Rural	<a href="mailto:mcackler@worldbank.org">mcackler@worldbank.org</a>	28 April 2011

	Development Department)  Marc Sadler (Team Leader, Agriculture Risk Management Team, Agriculture and Rural Development Department)  Yurie Tanimichi Hoberg (Senior Economist, Agriculture and Rural Development, also on the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP Coordination Unit)	<a href="mailto:msadler@worldbank.org">msadler@worldbank.org</a>  <a href="mailto:ytanimichi@worldbank.org">ytanimichi@worldbank.org</a>	29 April 2011  21 April 2011
<b>World Bank Archives</b>	Bertha F. Wilson	<a href="mailto:wbaccess@worldbank.org">wbaccess@worldbank.org</a>	Case Number AI0522
<b>Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)</b> 2175 K Street, NW, Suite 500 Washington DC 20037	Gabriel Laizer (Strategic Partnerships and Outreach Coordinator)	<a href="mailto:Gabriel.Laizer@fao.org">Gabriel.Laizer@fao.org</a>	27 April 2011
<b>World Food Program (WFP)</b> 2175 K Street, NW, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20037	Allan Jury (Director, US Relations Office)	<a href="mailto:allan.jury@wfp.org">allan.jury@wfp.org</a>	25 April 2011
<b>Congressional Hunger Centre</b> Hall of the States Building, 400 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite G100 Washington, DC 20001	Margaret M. Zeigler (Deputy Director)  Emily Byers (Co-Director, Policy and Special Initiatives, Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows Program)	<a href="mailto:mzeigler@hungercenter.org">mzeigler@hungercenter.org</a>  <a href="mailto:ebyers@hungercenter.org">ebyers@hungercenter.org</a>	13 April 2011
<b>MercyCorps</b> 1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW, Suite 809 Washington, DC 20036	Penelope S. Anderson (Director of Food Security)  Heather Hanson (Director of Policy and Advocacy)	<a href="mailto:panderson@dc.mercycorps.org">panderson@dc.mercycorps.org</a>  <a href="mailto:hhanson@dc.mercycorps.org">hhanson@dc.mercycorps.org</a>	18 April 2011  27 April 2011

<b>Action Aid</b> 1420 K Street, NW, Suite 900 Washington, DC 20005	Neil Watkins (Director of Policy and Campaigns)	<a href="mailto:neil.watkins@actionaid.org">neil.watkins@actionaid.org</a>	18 April 2011
<b>OXFAM America</b> 1100 15th Street NW, Suite 6000 Washington, DC 20005	Dr. Marc J. Cohen (Senior Researcher, Humanitarian Policy)	<a href="mailto:mcohen@oxfamamerica.org">mcohen@oxfamamerica.org</a>	20 April 2011
<b>International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)</b> 2033 K St, NW Washington, DC 20006-1002	Guillaume P. Gruere (Research Fellow, Environment and Production Technology Division)	<a href="mailto:g.gruere@cgiar.org">g.gruere@cgiar.org</a>	21 April 2011
	Valerie Rhoe (Program Coordinator, Development Strategy and Governance Division)	<a href="mailto:v.rhoe@cgiar.org">v.rhoe@cgiar.org</a>	21 April 2011
	Eduardo Maruyama (Research Fellow, Markets, Trade and Institutions Division)	<a href="mailto:e.maruyama@cgiar.org">e.maruyama@cgiar.org</a>	22 April 2011
	Debdutta Sengupta (Research Analyst, Environment and Production Technology Division)	<a href="mailto:d.sengupta@cgiar.org">d.sengupta@cgiar.org</a>	
	Luzma Marina Alvare (Head, Library & Knowledge Management)	<a href="mailto:l.alvare@cgiar.org">l.alvare@cgiar.org</a>	
<b>Bread for the World Institute on Hunger and Development</b> 425 3rd Street, SW, Suite 1200 Washington, DC 20024	Asma Lateef (Director)	<a href="mailto:alateef@bread.org">alateef@bread.org</a>	28 April 2011
<b>Levinson &amp; Associates</b> 50 F Street, NW, Suite 900	Ellen Levinson (President, Levinson and Associates; and Executive Director at Alliance for Global Food	<a href="mailto:elevinson@elevinson.com">elevinson@elevinson.com</a>	20 April 2011

Washington, DC 20001	Security)		
<b>Lambert Associates</b> 5105 Yuma Street, NW Washington, DC 20016	David P. Lambert (Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Politics, School of Arts and Science, The Catholic University of America, Bill Clinton's appointee to the Rome food Institutions)	<a href="mailto:lambertdp@yahoo.com">lambertdp@yahoo.com</a>	26 April 2011
<b>U. S. Department of State</b> EEB/TPP/ABT 2201 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20520	Jack A. Bobo (Senior Advisor for Biotechnology)	<a href="mailto:boboja@state.gov">boboja@state.gov</a>	21 April 2011
Dr. Nurul Islam (Research Fellow Emeritus, former senior policy advisor to IFPRI Director General, former Assistant Director General of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, Economic and Social Policy Department, Deputy Chairman of the Bangladesh Planning Commission, Chairman of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Director of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, and Chairman of the Department of Economics at Dhaka University)		<a href="mailto:n.islam@cgiar.org">n.islam@cgiar.org</a>	22 April 2011
Michael M. Cernea (Research Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs at George Washington University; Former World Bank Senior Adviser; Senior Rural Sociologist and Sociology Advisor in Social Policy/Sociology, in the Agriculture and Rural Development Department)		<a href="mailto:cernea.m@gmail.com">cernea.m@gmail.com</a>	Intervie wed over phone
Prof. Richard Skolnik (Lecturer in Global Health at George Washington University; Former World Bank Director for Health and Education for South Asia)		<a href="mailto:rskolnik@verizon.net">rskolnik@verizon.net</a>	27 April 2011
Steve Hansch (Board of World Hunger Education Service, trustee of Relief International, of Partners for Development (PfD), and of the Center for Peacebuilding International (CPBI)		<a href="mailto:shansch@verizon.net">shansch@verizon.net</a>	23 April 2011
<b>Library of Congress</b>			

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(\*Indicates primary source)

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