

FOOD and the POOR

How can democratic local governments
reduce food insecurity in Africa?



UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

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reduce food insecurity in Africa?

Angelo Bonfiglioli
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UNCDF

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This book complements two previous books written by Angelo Bonfiglioli and published by UNCDF: *Empowering the Poor. Local Governance for Poverty Reduction* (2003); and *Lands of the Poor. Local Environmental Governance and the Decentralized Management of Natural Resources* (2004)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| IFPRI | International Food Policy Research Institute |
| LDCs | Least Developed Countries |
| LDP | Local Development Programme (UNCDF) |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| LEG | Local Environmental Governance |
| LG | Local Government |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PPP | Public-private Partnership |
| SP | Social Protection |
| UNCDF | United Nations Capital Development Fund |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNECA | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WB | World Bank |

Foreword

Since the signing of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) by world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, the gravity of poverty around the world and the urgency for more specific initiatives aimed at reducing it have greatly informed general development discourse and practices.

Among the various goals and targets of this worldwide initiative, hunger eradication certainly occupies a special place, because hunger more than other aspects of poverty directly erodes human dignity and undermines the foundations of human society. At least one-sixth of humanity is still threatened by vulnerability to hunger. Food insecurity dramatically affects millions of people both in rural areas and in urban centers of poor countries, with unacceptable human, economic, social and political consequences.


There is abundant literature concerning poverty and hunger in the world, with a continuously growing number of reports, books and websites. We hope that this new publication will make a specific contribution. While analyzing the new conceptual context of the analysis of food insecurity and extending the debate on food insecurity beyond conventional boundaries, this book highlights the specific roles that emerging democratic local governments have to play in reducing food insecurity. It also calls for a set of combined and complementary initiatives in the areas of local economic development, local environmental governance and social protection.

The publication focuses on Africa and the specific situation of food insecurity for millions of African women and men. In fact, some of its observations and recommendations are also pertinent in other contexts worldwide. The book primarily aims at stimulating further exchange and debate within the UN system and among our development partners and our national government counterparts. Its main message is that democratic processes, public reforms, fiscal measures and economic growth can be sustainable only if they do secure the livelihoods of millions of poor people, particularly in terms of reducing their vulnerability to food crises.

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is a UN agency whose investments foster a people-centred approach to development, promote good governance and reinforce human and institutional capacities. Its also aims to reduce poverty in the Least Development Countries (LDCs) by supporting pro-poor delivery of social services and infrastructure, promoting sustainable management of natural resources, and stimulating economic development at the local level. UNCDF recognizes the importance of participation of civil society as a whole at the local level and of new forms of partnership between the public and private sectors in order to allow local populations to identify solutions that address the local context.

We hope that this contribution will stimulate further action-oriented debate on the critical linkages between local governance and the reduction of poverty. This debate should discuss the need to integrate initiatives aimed at stimulating agricultural production, improving productivity of the resource base, supporting broad-based economic growth, enhancing the business investment climate, sustaining local drivers of growth, and reducing the vulnerability of the poorest sections of society to food crises through appropriate social protection measures.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Mr. Angelo Bonfiglioli, UNCDF Technical Advisor, for initiating and writing this publication. It is the third installment in his series of books on poverty-related issues (the first two being *Empowering the Poor*, which focused on local governance, and *Lands of the Poor*, which addressed issues related to the decentralized management of natural resources). All these publications were made possible by the support provided by several UNCDF colleagues, among them Kadmiel Wekwete, Roger Shotton, Ulrik Kristensen, Philippe Zysset and Adam Rogers.



Richard Weingarten
Executive Secretary
United Nations Capital Development Fund

Presentation

This book is not a manual for local government authorities, a guide for development practitioners, a discussion paper for academic researchers or a policy paper for a UN development agency. Its scope is different, although it does comprise analyses and policy elements, approaches and conceptual frameworks, development directions and methodologies. Its primary intent is to extend the debate on food security beyond its conventional boundaries, to explore new avenues and stimulate reflection by highlighting a range of interrelated issues within the wider context of decentralization, poverty reduction, sustainable natural resource management, economic development and social protection policies.

Its four key arguments may be summarized as follows:

- Chronic and transitory food insecurity should not be seen merely as a lack of food supply, or food unavailability on a national scale. Rather, they are *lack of access to food* at the community and household levels, due to both low agricultural production and low incomes, not just one or other of these factors. They are also a direct result of failed national policies, weak national and local institutions, lack of good governance, poorly focused and harmonized donor initiatives, and poor understanding of local livelihoods among policy makers.
- Household food insecurity is a complex arrangement of ‘vulnerabilities’ to livelihood shocks, *not just* vulnerability to lack of food. Hunger and deprivation are the result of accumulated losses of capital and rights, eroded financial and physical assets, social exclusion, the breakdown of social networks, lack of self-esteem and the adoption of short-term, restrictive and damaging livelihood strategies. Households are food insecure because their livelihood systems have changed and/or failed to adapt. Food-insecure households juggle different and conflicting requirements – immediate consumption, economic survival, social reproduction and future capacity to produce. And because food insecurity is an outcome of unsustainable livelihoods, it cannot be treated in isolation from wider livelihood considerations.

- Sub-national governments have a clear role to play in leading local development, despite their reduced role in the formulation of market-based economic development strategies and their lack of technical expertise. In the current context of democratic decentralization they should be considered as *embracing institutions* that can not only support planning initiatives at the local level of intervention, but also promote new forms of partnership, coordination and coherence among all local institutional stakeholders, particularly sectoral departments, community institutions and the private sector and donor community, in order to facilitate capacity building, institutional development and investment. Locally elected and democratic authorities should have a clear role in improving the livelihoods of rural communities, and hence in reducing their vulnerability to food crises.
- More specifically, sub-national governments should be seen as *providers* of a range of social, economic and environmental services aimed at mitigating the risks faced by local households and communities, increasing incomes from agriculture and natural resources, sustaining the market and creating employment, through the provision of conditional grant schemes, social transfers and capacity building assistance. Local governments need to play a key role in three areas if they are to have an impact on more sustainable livelihoods and food security: (i) *Local environmental governance*, supporting a range of sustainable practices regarding access to and use of natural resources by the poor, and concerned with the protection, rehabilitation and management of the resource base; (ii) *Local economic development*, with complementary activities intended to stimulate the local economy by diversifying rural economies, creating jobs, raising incomes and supporting well-functioning markets; and (iii) *Social protection*, with a range of initiatives to preserve the key productive assets of the poorest households and increase their chances of survival.

These arguments should be considered in the context of the broader debate about *democratic decentralization* and *food insecurity*. What does ‘food security’ mean, and how is it linked to poverty? What long-term measures are needed to prevent food insecurity, severe food shortages and malnutrition in poor rural areas? And since the main focus of this book is local democratic governments, other policy-related questions

need to be considered too: Can democratic, sub-national governments help improve the food security situation of the poor, and if so, how? Is there a specific role for them? And what are the main food security-related initiatives that local governments could stimulate, encourage and sustain in their constituencies?

These are crucial questions, for several reasons:

- Food crises are the most urgent and pressing issue facing millions of people in Africa. But is democracy really the solution for severely poverty-stricken and food insecure countries? What are the links between democracy and poverty reduction? And can democratic governance actually help achieve the key Millennium Development Goals? If democratically elected local governments are not seen as having a specific role in reducing the vulnerability of the poor to these crises, then what exactly are benefits of a democratic system?
- If democracy really is a way of empowering the poor and giving them a say in decisions about their destiny, and is therefore the preferred means of poverty reduction, what is needed in terms of an enabling institutional and political environment? And if local democratic governments do have a clear mandate in poverty reduction, what are their specific roles, competencies and limitations, and what are their irreplaceable functions?

Over the years UNCDF has acquired immense experience in local development through its *local development programme* (LDP) model, whose ‘strategic results framework’ stresses the linkages between good governance activities and multi-dimensional measures for poverty reduction. This book aims to stimulate further exchange and debate on the role of local governments with regard to food security, both within UNCDF and between UNCDF and its national and international partners, and thereby better integrate pressing livelihood concerns into the LDP model.

Overview

In recent years there have been important conceptual shifts in the thinking on food security as understanding of the diverse causes of food crises and the general context of mass famine and vulnerability to food crises has grown. Such causes include demographic growth, increasing urbanization and rural-to-urban migration, failed agricultural and market macro-policies, the effects of globalization, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the depletion of asset bases due to civil wars, natural disasters and other factors.

Socio-economic analysis has revealed that rural households can only undertake productive activities and adopt a range of *livelihood strategies* (from simple coping or adaptive measures to fully fledged growth or investment strategies) aimed at producing sustainable outcomes if they are endowed with significant assets (or forms of capital).

The recent evolution in thinking on food security has had an impact on the food security policies pursued by major international stakeholders, which have taken on board key concepts such as household vulnerability, food security, entitlement, sustainable livelihoods, capabilities and capital. The new conceptual frameworks seem to provide better insights into both the food security situation and potential policy measures, pointing up the need to replace a *single focus* on lack of food with methods such as the *livelihood approach* (or *asset-based approach*), which employs a *range of overlapping and comprehensive measures* in order to balance capabilities and assets and address livelihood failures.

Unlike the conventional 'food first' approach, which treats food security as an isolated need, the *livelihood approach* emphasizes the multidimensionality of food insecurity (low productivity, weak and unaccountable institutions, lack of access to productive resources, market failure, inadequate policies, etc.). The advantage of this approach is that it highlights the need to better understand *all* the various factors influencing local livelihoods in order to succeed in improving the availability, access to and utilization of food.

In terms of policy implications, adopting the livelihood approach as a general framework for food security also means that development measures are sustainable only if they effectively strengthen the capacity of rural households to preserve, acquire and increase various forms of productive and non-productive assets (land or livestock; education and

social networks, etc.), carry out adequate activities and adopt appropriate strategies in order to achieve their own priority goals within their own timeframe.

Food insecurity is not a stand-alone issue. Therefore, an appropriate food security-related policy should be the *result of a set of policies* aimed at stimulating agricultural production, supporting broad-based economic growth (through job creation, for instance) and reducing the vulnerability of the poorest sections of society to food crises through social protection programmes that include specific safety nets.

In short, poverty and food security can only be explained and sustainably addressed by a broad range of technical, economic, social and institutional factors.

In the current context of ongoing decentralization, legitimate and democratically elected local government authorities have been devolved a growing role in the design, programming, planning and implementation of comprehensive local development initiatives. An important and innovative paradigm shift would better highlight the new challenges facing sub-national governments, which should no longer be seen exclusively in terms of providing social services, but increasingly as the facilitators and brokers of new forms of partnership between the public and private sectors in capacity building, institutional development and economic investment. This would help strengthen the livelihoods of poverty-stricken and food insecure households by bolstering their assets and capabilities, supporting livelihood strategies, opening up employment opportunities and supporting the market.

According to the precepts of 'good governance', local authorities are not supposed to act on their own, but to establish inclusive, horizontal forms of cooperation with other local governments, consult with technical line departments, and introduce two-way vertical mechanisms of accountability with central governments and civil society community institutions. The success and sustainability of the local governance paradigm and performance of policies supporting sustainable livelihoods depend on local authorities playing a key catalytic role through extensive webs of interdependency and collective frameworks for action. The *convener power* of local governments and other local public agencies should be harnessed to bring together all local stakeholders and promote a more integrated, self-reinforcing economic process at the local level.

Sub-national governments can play a cross-sector role in three major arenas at the local level: the environment, the *economy* and *social protection*, where related activities could have a tremendous effect on local assets and livelihood strategies/activities, and thus on food security.

- Local governments need to be committed to support collective initiatives for better *local environmental governance* and to have the capacity to do so, in order to improve local conditions governing access to and use of natural resources, and to increase the productivity of the resource base through the rehabilitation, protection and management of natural resources (including agricultural intensification).
- Local governments should be fully committed to *local economic development*, and have the capacity to sustain a range of initiatives to improve and enhance the business investment climate, identify local drivers of growth and stimulate/support an entrepreneurial mentality. These initiatives should increase incomes, create jobs, support efficient markets (for both producers and consumers) and sustain the diversification of rural economies. They will also have a direct impact on the sustainability – and ultimately, the food security – of poor households.
- Finally, local authorities also need to provide parallel and complementary support for different *social protection measures* aimed at preserving the key productive assets of poorest households, enhancing their survival and supporting their diversification. (The concept of ‘social protection’ marks a shift from considering ‘safety nets’ merely as a support for people below a certain level of income or subsistence, towards a broader vision that addresses the economic growth of the poorest sections of society).

UNCDF is well positioned to make an important contribution in supporting this amplification of local government roles through its *Local Development* component. Its current comparative advantages would be further enhanced by integrating the *livelihood security* dimension into its present strategic model, the so-called ‘local development programme’ or LDP.

The leadership of local democratic institutions needs to be enhanced within a framework that stresses the key linkages between markets, assets (natural, financial and human assets and social capital), secure livelihoods and access to food.

Provided they have effective powers and sufficient fiscal resources, local governments should be able to make a difference through comprehensive and sustainable efforts to improve rural livelihoods in Africa, thereby reducing the vulnerability of millions of households to recurrent food crises and the unbearable risks of famine and mass starvation.

AFRICAN PROVERBS (FULANI WODAABE PASTORALISTS
FROM NIGER, CHAD AND CAMEROON)

Kooÿe njeewaama, gite mboji _____

Our hunger has been appeased, but our eyes are red

“Now, we are no longer struck by adversity, but we will still bear the consequences” The hard times have passed, but their consequences linger on.

Yi’igo naawɗum rufataa yitere _____

See a misfortune does not pour your eyes

“To be struck by misfortune does not mean the end of everything. Your eyes will be weeping, but they are not going to pop out of your head.” Being struck by misfortune does not mean the end of everything. You may weep, but you still have your eyes.

Maaya diifta _____

Die-and-recover your health again

“You suffered a great deal of pain, you could do no more. But then things changed unexpectedly. You were staggering under a big weight, and now you are unloaded and feel relieved” Just as the burdens seemed too huge and painful to bear, things turned around unexpectedly.

Mo mayaayi taÿtaaka _____

Who is not yet dead, is not yet hacked to pieces

“Those who are still alive, no matter what they suffered in their life, may still hope to have plenty of everything, although they may still fear the worst” For those who are still alive, however brutal and desperate life is, there is always the hope that things will get better.

Jemma no juhuri fu, no weetey _____

No matter how long the night is, the day will dawn

“As night-time is followed by day-time, your pain and your sorrow too will always be followed by contentment and enjoyment.” Just as day follows night, pain and sorrow will be followed by peace and contentment.

“

At this same time a horrible plague raged among men, namely a hidden fire which, upon whatsoever limb it toned, consumed it and severed it from the body. Many were consumed even in the space of a single night by these devouring flames... Moreover, about the same time, a most mighty famine raged for five years throughout the Roman world, so that no region could be heard of which was not hunger stricken for lack of bread, and many of the people were starved to death. In those days also, in many regions, the terrible famine compelled men to make their food not only of unclean beasts and creeping things, but even of men's, women's, and children's flesh, without regard even of kindred; for so fierce waxed this hunger that grown-up sons devoured their mothers, and mothers, forgetting their maternal love ate their babies.

”

Raoul Glaber, XI^o Century, *Historiarum libri quinque ab anno incarnationis DCCCC usque ad annum MXLIV*

“

There was such famine that countless animals died and the countryside was deserted; many people died also. There was such drought that the wheat was lost and not a blade of grass could any longer be found in the field; that year the breeds of horses for the most part died out and they have not been restored to this day.

”

Andrea Navagero, 1563,
Il viaggio fatto in Spagna.

PART I: Current analyses, concepts and policies regarding food security



This section *sets the scene* for the rest of the book, presenting the issues at stake and the various factors that help explain why a growing number of African countries, communities and households are acutely vulnerable to food crises.

As well as outlining the underlying causes and key aspects of the situation, Part 1 discusses new concepts that help assess and address these problems, and considers the policies currently pursued by major international organizations.

1 New analyses of food security

PERSISTENT CRISES, GROWING AWARENESS

Hunger is a more pervasive and persistent problem in Africa than in any other continent today. A large proportion of the African population is increasingly subject to extreme food shortages and chronic food insecurity, which are having a devastating effect on entire communities.

Worldwide, the percentage of people living in severe poverty (with incomes below \$1 per day) has fallen from 40 percent of the population in 1981 to 21 percent in 2001. This means that the number of impoverished people dropped by an estimated 400 million over 20 years,

“
One underweight and undernourished child is an individual tragedy, but multiplied by tens of millions, under-nutrition becomes a global threat to societies and to economies.

www.unicef.org

from roughly 1.5 billion to 1.1 billion – despite a 0.6 billion increase in world population during this period. This positive development was largely due to rising incomes in China and India. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, the number of people living on less than \$1 per day almost doubled between 1981 and

2001, rising from 164 million to 313 million people. Consequently, the proportion of the population subsisting below the poverty line of US\$1 a day remained almost unchanged at about 46 percent.¹

Over the past 30 years the seven countries in the *Horn of Africa* (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda) have been at risk from famine at least once in every decade. Out of a total population of almost 160 million people, some 70 million are considered as vulnerable to food crises.²

The severity of the situation is indirectly reflected in the huge sums required to tackle this problem: a recent report by NEPAD³ estimated that nearly *US\$18 billion per year* would be needed to achieve the World Food Summit goal of simply halving hunger in Africa.

Against the backdrop of the repeated crises of the last few decades, there is a *growing awareness* among development practitioners of the extreme precariousness of African livelihoods and the vulnerability of African communities to chronic food crises and mass famine.⁴ This awareness, which sometimes generates deep pessimism, has been heightened by the most recent severe famines in countries like Niger, Ethiopia and Malawi in 2005, ‘live’ broadcasts by TV channels all over the world, and a number of more trivial yet powerful catchphrases designed to mobilize resources or populist campaigns (‘23 children die every minute from hunger!’⁵ and ‘Make poverty history’).⁶

Hunger is not simply a problem that affects certain productive activities, but a failure of livelihood systems at the national level, reflecting a degree of poverty that disperses and undermines the human capital of entire countries.

One country that has grown increasingly vulnerable to food insecurity in recent years is Malawi. A recent assessment concluded that there has been “a gradual but steady deterioration of agricultural productivity per capita while eroding livelihoods. With the majority of the population depending on subsistence agriculture as their primary food source, much of the population is vulnerable to acute food insecurity from economic, climatic or other shocks”.⁷

A key assumption of a recent investigation into food security in Southern Africa is that a large proportion of individuals and households there have less food security and more limited coping strategies now than they did in 1990. (Incidentally, a second assumption highlighted the fact that this situation stems more from policy choices made between 1980 and 2000 than from exogenous factors such as drought).⁸

There is no doubt that poverty and hunger have always existed, both in Africa (see Box 1, opposite) and elsewhere. However, while ancient Europe was certainly no stranger to food shortages,⁹ the current food crises in Africa are linked to global issues of great magnitude. They are no longer uniquely local problems, but have become the most urgent and intractable issue facing those concerned with development in the 21st Century.¹⁰

BOX 1: FAMINES IN RECENT AFRICAN HISTORY

“Famine as a result of drought, locusts, and cattle plague was almost universal in tropical Africa during the late 1890s ... This period of disaster extended into the twentieth century. Between 1911 and 1927 there was not a single year without major famine over some large area of Africa ... The famine was exacerbated by new tax systems, crop exports, declining trans-Saharan commerce, and laborer migration...

From 1927 to the end of the colonial period major ‘famines that kill’, as many Africans described them, were confined to three sets of circumstances. First, there were a few severe but localized famines ... Second, Ethiopia is reported to have experienced serious famine in 1927-8, 1934-5, 1947-50, 1963 and 1957-59 ... Third, there was widespread famine during or immediately after the Second World War... Apart from these three sets of circumstances, famines causing great mortality ceased in colonial Africa from the 1920s.”

Source: Iliffe, 1987:156-8

EVOLUTIONS IN THINKING

In parallel with this awareness, recent decades have seen a significant change in the thinking on food security, as well as major conceptual and policy shifts. This evolution was mainly due to better understanding of the various factors causing both food crises and the vulnerability of entire countries to famine: demographic growth, which places extreme pressure on land resources; growing urbanization and rural-to-urban migration; the failure of agricultural and market policies; and the effects of climate change. The crisis is also linked to regional disparities in terms of labour, the effects of globalization, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the depletion of asset bases resulting from civil wars and natural disasters.

According to the findings of a study published in 2005,¹¹ food insecurity in West Africa is not only due to social and economic policy dimensions, but also to other factors such as the chronic vulnerability of households in northern parts of Sahelian countries, the combined impacts of desert locusts and insufficient rainfall in 2004, and market tensions and the difficulties these create for vulnerable groups trying to gain access to food.

Recent studies also demonstrate that in global terms, AIDS epidemics (which have a severe impact on production and food security, see Box 2) are most severe in Sub-Saharan Africa, the region where food insecurity is most acute, although there are significant differences between countries.¹²

BOX 2: FOOD INSECURITY AND HIV/AIDS

Recent analysis shows that HIV/AIDS constitutes a threat to agriculture and food security in various ways:

- Direct loss of family labour (adult farm members dying of HIV/AIDS);
- Less time spent farming (due to medical needs, providing care, attending funerals) and therefore less available farm labour;
- Reduced ability to acquire enough nutritious food to lead active, healthy lives;
- Erosion of assets (used to purchase medication, etc.), reducing reinvestment in agriculture;
- People less able to engage in collective action;
- Disappearance of agricultural knowledge with the death of a generation of farmers;
- Adoption of coping mechanisms that may entail unsuitable and less productive farming techniques;
- Weakening of informal property rights;
- Less land cultivated due to reduced workforce;
- Cultivation of marginal and less productive lands;
- Lack of land for cultivation (in cases where tradition does not allow young widows to inherit their husband's land, for example).

It should also be added that AIDS accelerates the progress of tuberculosis, which is estimated to kill 30 per cent of AIDS victims in Africa and Asia; and that malaria still has a huge negative impact on food security as it often strikes during harvest time.

Sources: System-Wide Initiative for HIV/Aids and Agriculture (at the Africa Rice Centre, <http://www.warda.org/swiha/initiative.htm>); IFPRI, 2005; Gillespie ed., 2006

FOCUSING ON LOCAL SOCIAL PROCESSES

The conventional global and national perspective on food security, which essentially focused on food supply or food availability (and in the 1980s was obsessed with achieving ‘national food self-sufficiency’), has gradually been replaced by the *household and inter-household perspective*. This stresses access to food and the ‘food entitlement’ of individual households at different phases of their particular ‘developmental cycle’ and evolving livelihood strategies, and is concerned with the ways that available food is distributed between groups.¹³

However, even these localized institutional perspectives have their limitations. It has gradually emerged that households, villages and agro-ecological zones (considered as ‘units of analysis’ by researchers and ‘units of intervention’ by development practitioners) are part of much more complex institutional configurations. African societies are composed of dynamic institutions that act and interact consistently but differently in different periods of time and, most importantly, carry out essential economic activities that are deeply embedded in multidimensional social processes.¹⁴

MULTI-DIMENSIONALITIES

The theory that any shock due to harvest failure at the household level requires equivalent, compensatory food aid to offset the deficit has increasingly been questioned. A more complete view is that the magnitude of the shock varies according to the household’s assets and capabilities and the type of strategies they are able to adopt (investment, coping, adaptive or restrictive). In other words, it is now widely recognized

Food security involves inter-related issues regarding the economy, society, environment, employment and income, marketing, education, health and nutrition.

that hunger has many aspects at the national and local level; and that at the local level, households are affected by hunger or food shortages in various and unpredictable ways, from more or less transitory types of food shortage to chronic forms of hunger.

Specific efforts aimed solely at reducing undernourishment or boosting food production have been replaced by more *comprehensive attempts to address the long-term causes of poverty*, since it is poverty which is the main cause of food insecurity.¹⁵ The simplistic view that food security equates with food production – that food security problems are the result of inadequate food supplies

and can therefore be resolved by increasing investment in agriculture – has been widely replaced by a more complete understanding of the chain of causes, and the realization that increased food production alone cannot solve hunger and food insecurity.

In a parallel development, growing concern about the long-term resilience of livelihoods and even whole populations living and producing in marginal areas meant that conventional policies concentrating on food production in high potential areas gave way to a *more comprehensive livelihood approach* at the household level,

Poverty reduction is not necessarily a prerequisite for addressing food insecurity, nor is it necessarily conducive to food security for the hungry.

as the ‘food first’ approach was succeeded by the ‘sustainable livelihood’ approach.¹⁶ Rather than shaping policies according to a hierarchy of ‘basic needs’, where food needs must be satisfied first, the new approaches argue that food-insecure households

have to juggle a range of requirements – not just immediate consumption, but also future capacity to produce.¹⁷

Nowadays, the prevailing notion of food security found in academic literature (and somehow endorsed by the 1995 World Food Summit) implies that it is not only the availability and stability of supply that has to be secured, but also access to food.¹⁸ Household food insecurity is largely due to *lack of purchasing power*. Agriculture can certainly generate employment, jobs and income, especially when labour-intensive methods can be adopted; but if it is to tackle food insecurity and poverty it *needs to be accompanied* by a range of multi-sectoral measures, such as land use reforms, environmental policies, agricultural extension and research, as well as investment in human capital through health, education, etc. So while agriculture can play a fundamental role in reducing hunger by increasing the availability of affordable food and providing improved jobs and incomes that will give poor people the means to access food,¹⁹ food insecurity cannot be reduced by agriculture *alone*.

FROM SAFETY NETS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

In the 1990s, safety nets were seen as the best way of ‘attacking poverty’ and food insecurity in countries too poor to introduce comprehensive social welfare or structural adjustment programmes. Today, the focus has shifted to a broader *social protection* framework that addresses the wider sources of vulnerability, risk and deprivation rather than merely

supporting people whose income is at or below subsistence level.²⁰ The various definitions of social protection go beyond the notion of targeted income and consumption transfers for drought-affected farmers in subsistence-oriented communities, to include concepts of equity, economic growth, social empowerment and human rights.²¹ Thus, the current concept of social protection encompasses a range of public actions – directly implemented by the State with or without the private sector – that address risk, vulnerability and chronic poverty. Social protection measures essentially aim to preserve the key productive assets of the poorest households, enhancing their chances of survival and supporting diversification. And social protection must work on several levels if it is to achieve its multifaceted objectives: providing access to essential goods and services, preventing and protecting against various risks, and promoting potential and opportunities in order to break vicious circles and pervasive tendencies.²²

BEYOND THE RURAL/URBAN DIVIDE

Contrary to the conventional wisdom prevalent until the 1990s – that towns are usually better off than rural areas in terms of food security – it is now recognized that food insecurity is a major aspect of urban poverty. Urban

More than half of the African population will live in urban areas by 2025, and during the next quarter century the urban population will grow at almost twice the rate of the general population.

households are dramatically affected by food insecurity: they spend a higher proportion of their income on food than rural households; are more vulnerable to price changes and declining terms of trade (being heavily dependent on purchased food); and their poverty immediately translates into food insecurity.

Rapid urban growth is characterized by the unplanned arrival of poor migrants settling in overcrowded conditions. Urban lifestyles can lead to a breakdown of traditional family structures that impacts on dietary habits, while new arrivals are often marginalized as they have yet to integrate into the social networks that can help them meet their basic requirements. Most food has to be purchased in cities, but high levels of unemployment and food insecurity can make it difficult to find safe and affordable food.²³

The boundaries of 'rural areas' include small towns, with their commercial networks and administrative services.

From another perspective, it is worth noting that the food requirements of a growing urban population also have major repercussions on the productive rural areas and markets where traders bulk buy food supplies: reducing local food stocks, contributing to environmental degradation (larger cultivated areas in fragile lands, encroachment into grazing areas) and by increasing food prices and thus exacerbating the food insecurity of poorer households.

Although global poverty is still predominantly a rural phenomenon, the economies of rural areas and urban centres (especially rural centres and secondary towns in rural areas) are deeply intertwined.

THE 'FOOD SECURITY & GOVERNANCE' NEXUS

Food security has been a major political issue throughout human history, with famine dictating politics, war, the collapse of political institutions, coups d'état and so on.²⁴ There is a close connection between food insecurity and lack of good governance, and the belief that famines have political causes as well as environmental, economic, and livelihood ones looks beyond corrupt government officials to the way the public sector interacts with private citizens at every level of government, from sub-district and district officials right up to central government (see Box 3, opposite).²⁵

Economic growth alone is not sufficient to reduce poverty and food insecurity. This requires appropriate policies, institutions and public investment, since without good governance the benefits of economic growth may easily be captured by elites and the gap between 'the haves' and 'the have-nots' deepened.

Political and governance systems influence access to basic public goods and services related to food, agriculture, nutrition and health, because they have a profound impact on people's participation and power and on decision-making processes. The nature and development of these systems also has a profound effect on the functioning of food systems and their market and non-market components.²⁶ Consequently, the entire 'food system' may be negatively affected when a society is not built upon the key principles of good governance: accountability, human rights, transparency, and corporate governance.

Food and nutrition policy implementation requires multi-sector efforts and cooperation between central and local governments, national governments and the donor community, and among local governments, NGOs, the private sector and traditional leaders.

BOX 3: CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS OF FAMINE

Broadly speaking, there are two major aspects of current famine analysis:

- (i) Economists see famines as *economic or natural disasters* which result in food shortages that are worsened by poverty and the failure of policy, markets and relief interventions;
- (ii) Political scientists and human rights activists view famine as a *political problem*, which should be analyzed in terms of power relations and failure to secure the basic human right to food

While there is little integrated thinking across the divide, the reality is that there are different forms of famine, some of which are predominantly *economic*, and others which are predominantly *political*. Many analysts believe that famine, economic disaster and political upheaval seem to feed on each other in mutually reinforcing ways, creating a vicious circle. The corollary to this is that vulnerability to food crises may diminish as income increases and becomes reliable and more diversified, when infrastructure and markets are developed, and when national and local governments become more democratic, transparent and accountable and people can voice their real needs.²⁷

Amartya Sen observed that the history of famines reveals that they do not occur in democracies.²⁸ Freedom from famine is usually secured when this is seen as a basic right or a political imperative. Thus, famines have political causes as well as environmental, economic and livelihood ones: they are not merely due to food shortages, but also to social and economic factors, and a whole host of factors may intervene between a natural disaster and a famine. Although they may appear to occur suddenly, famines may actually be a result of the long-term failure of governance institutions, organizations and policies, and due to strategies pursued by more or less formal or powerful interest groups.

WEAK EXCHANGE SYSTEMS

The weakness of the exchange systems in certain areas, and Southern Africa in particular, is reflected in volatile and unreliable markets and the overwhelming predominance of *spot markets* rather than more complex and formalized market structures. Individual households face numerous risks when they engage in extensive non-market exchange outside their social group, and failure to develop effective large-scale organizations does not allow operators to take advantage of economies of scale (where they exist). This means that rural households have limited options for acquiring food during transitory food crises, while patterns of resource allocation based on self-provisioning for household food requirements are entrenched (often to the detriment of land and labour productivity).²⁹

FAILED MARKET POLICIES

The transition from state to private markets and services is believed to be another important factor in increasing people's vulnerability to food crises over the last two decades. It is now recognized that market liberalization reforms generally increased price risks and raised the ratios between input and output prices (see Box 4, opposite). In leading to the privatization of services, liberalization also reduced the outreach of extension services to farmers and pastoralists (especially those living in remote areas and only partially integrated into market transactions) and led to uneven private market coverage.³⁰

In situations where state delivery systems have not been replaced by viable new systems, output prices tend to fluctuate and input prices to rise, the privatized services (such as veterinary services) provide only patchy coverage, while high transport costs and low profits offer little incentive for the private sector to operate in remote or economically marginal rural areas (or even urban slums).

The growth of the so-called 'commodity economy' and expansion of the market had negative consequences in Africa, especially during the colonial and post-colonial phases, because they "proceeded at a rate far in excess of the evolution of appropriate political and legal frameworks", and because the organization of property law, land, labour and money transfers was "grossly inadequate to meet the pretensions of both governments and business enterprises". The result has been "a growing discrepancy between the apparatus of a modern state and a dominant, decentralized agricultural sector operating at low levels of productivity".³¹

BOX 4: ASPECTS OF THE COMMERCIALIZATION AND MONETIZATION OF RURAL AFRICA

“Commercialisation of rural life entails a gradual but steady passage from social networks to contracts, from reciprocity and redistribution to market mechanisms, and from public to private sources of well-being. Substituting social negotiation with contracts prompts a further round of commercialisation, which breaks down more social ties. Weakened social networks and more difficult access to public provision of social services mean weaker safety nets. Therefore, poorer households are likely to become more vulnerable to natural disasters and economic shocks... With increased commercialization of rural life, marginal households – including female-headed ones – have found it more difficult to recruit farm labour through social means, for example through the mobilization of labour groups, and have not been able to raise enough capital to do it successfully through contractual means.”

Source: Ponte, 2002:164

“Changes in patterns and methods of agricultural production in Africa have been affected not only by the logic of commercialization and population growth, but also by the changing social, economic, and political conditions under which farmers acquire and use productive resources. In Africa, over the course of the twentieth century, farmers have gained access to the means of production through exchange, negotiation and struggle in a variety of social arenas from the household to the nation. Outcomes in one arena have been shaped by contestants’ changing and differential participation in others; by relations of power, social identities, and culturally constructed definitions of authority and obligation; and by relative scarcity of land, labor, and capital. In many parts of Africa, access to rural land and fixed agricultural capital continues to be negotiated through membership in descent groups and communities – despite commercialization and some government efforts to privatize or nationalize rights to land and other forms of property. Accordingly, farmers continue to invest in social identities and status in order to maintain or improve their access to property.”

Source: Berry, 1993:200

The *liberalization of the agricultural market*, which began in the 1980s under the impulsion of the donor community and the International Monetary Fund, led to the progressive dismantling of state-controlled agricultural marketing and processing systems. It has had mixed results. The outcome for some crops and geographical areas has been positive, as the private sector has been able to serve farmers and consumers more efficiently than the previous monopoly-based public institutions. However, the elimination of pan-territorial pricing for inputs and crops has had a negative impact on food producers in remote and marginal rural areas far from main consumer markets or less well served by transport infrastructures (where private traders are reluctant to be involved in input provision). Furthermore, currency devaluations and the elimination of input subsidies prompted a general reduction in fertilizer application, which has had a negative impact on soil fertility and deforestation due to inadequate soil nutrient compensation and the extensification rather than intensification of agriculture.³²

These factors – which are extensively discussed in current literature – have all contributed to the stagnation of the agricultural economy. With no incentives to engage in market transactions, it is increasingly difficult for rural producers to purchase what they need to make up the deficit in their own food supplies.

BROKEN LINKAGES

The monetarization of the agricultural economy and rural commercialization mean that rural households now need larger, regular supplies of cash to deal with the increased cost of schooling, health, transportation and agricultural inputs and services, or to purchase more consumer goods (including items that were traditionally produced locally and are now mainly imported from Asian countries).

The gradual decline of customary labour enterprises based on family or neighbourhood ties has also increased the use of hired labour, through various arrangements that include daily or piece rates paid in cash or in kind (the latter as food crops in poorer households).

In addition to this, the ways that farmers access and use their means of production are increasingly shaped by policies, which even affect the complex patterns of division of labour, forms of exchange, controls on resources and people, and the like. Liberalization policies have had particularly marked consequences on individual households in terms of

their vulnerability to recurrent crises (including food crises), and on entire communities in terms of their internal economic stratification and social differentiation.

As a result of this, many people are left behind even where there is economic growth, since economic growth does not necessarily translate into poverty reduction.³³

LACK OF LOCAL OWNERSHIP OF POLICIES

With a few rare exceptions, national food security policies have tended to be fragmented and dictated by donor policy imperatives and priorities, as heavy reliance on external funding has given donors and their implementing partners a disproportionate influence on food policy.³⁴

This situation has been exacerbated by limited civil society involvement in policy-making, weak central government commitment to support decentralization, sub-national governments and decentralized planning mechanisms, and lack of adequate skills at the local level. It is too early to assess the impact of new aid policies and modalities on food security policies, but it should be noted that while they give national governments greater flexibility and autonomy vis-à-vis donors, new types of intervention like *general budget support* (GBS) or *sector wide approaches* (SWAps) are also likely to create new forms of re-centralization and to disempower local authorities.

2 Key concepts and definitions

In recent years researchers and experts have developed important new concepts regarding poverty and food insecurity, which have been picked up in various policy papers produced by international institutions. This chapter will give a brief outline of some of those concepts, which appear throughout this book.

Household and farming households

A household may be defined as a group of relatives (both kin and affine) who eat from the same cooking pot (*unit of consumption*), live in the same compound or nomadic camp (*unit of residence*), cultivate the same land and/or manage the same herd/flock of animals or undertake a number of economic activities together (*unit of production*), and who share a common stake in perpetuating and improving their socio-economic position from one generation to another (*unit of reproduction*).

Farming households are those that chiefly derive their livelihoods from agriculture (or livestock), utilize mainly family labour, and are characterized by partial engagement in input and output markets (which are often imperfect or incomplete).³⁵

Food security and food insecurity

The most common definition of food security is derived from a World Bank policy study undertaken in 1986: “food security is about people’s access to the food needed for an active and healthy life”.³⁶ This definition, which was adopted and enlarged at the 1996 World Food Summit, implies that household members have the capacity to secure enough food to meet their dietary needs by producing and purchasing it.³⁷

A distinction is often made between *chronic* food insecurity (the inability to meet food needs) and *transitory* food insecurity (a temporary, often severe, food shortage).³⁸ However, this distinction is often blurred, because chronically insecure households are usually the most vulner-

able to the shocks that create transitory insecurity,³⁹ and because an accumulation of transitory food crises also makes households chronically insecure.

Vulnerability

The concepts of ‘poverty’ and ‘food insecurity’ describe livelihood states at a particular point in time. ‘*Vulnerability*’, however (meaning exposure to risks and shocks, or defencelessness), is a forward-looking concept that seeks to describe “how prone individuals and families are to being unable to cope with uncertain adverse events that may happen to them”.⁴⁰ Vulnerability is therefore defined as “the exposure and sensitivity to livelihood shocks”,⁴¹ meaning that households are more or less vulnerable according to their ability to deploy their assets productively. The close concept of ‘*resilience*’ refers to the ability of a system (from an ecological or socio-economic point of view) to bounce back from shocks and revert to its initial condition.⁴²

Vulnerability can best be described as ‘living on the edge’. This graphic image conveys the sense that a small shift in balance can bring disaster, can make the difference between being able to survive and thrive or suddenly losing the ability to do so. Rising vulnerability over time, then, is a matter of how close to the edge people are being pushed by factors beyond their control.⁴³

The condition of vulnerable groups is characterized by the variation in their assets or differences in access to and control over their assets, as well as their lack of ability to use them in a productive and sustainable way. Therefore, a distinction is generally made between chronically vulnerable groups and transitorily vulnerable groups, according to the different underlying causes of their condition.

Recent analysis⁴⁴ indicates four key causes of vulnerability: growth failures, rising poverty and declining migration options; market failures in the context of market liberalization; the high incidence and continuing spread of HIV/AIDS; and politics and governance factors at regional, national and local levels. These four factors create widespread adverse impacts on people’s ability to manage risk and cope with risky events when they occur.

Capabilities

There are several dimensions to this concept, which includes:⁴⁵

- *Economic capabilities*: The ability to earn an income, to consume and to have assets, which are all key to food security, material well-being and social status;
- *Human capabilities*: Health, education, nutrition, clean water and shelter are not only core elements of well-being, but also crucial to improving livelihoods;⁴⁶
- *Political capabilities*: Human rights, a voice and some influence over public policies and political priorities (deprivation of basic political freedoms or human rights is a major aspect of poverty);
- *Socio-cultural capabilities*: Ability to participate as a valued member of a community. This also refers to social status, dignity and other cultural conditions for belonging to a society;
- *Protective capabilities*: These enable people to withstand economic and external shocks (since insecurity and vulnerability are crucial dimensions of poverty), and have strong links with all other dimensions.

Entitlements (*entitlement approach*)

According to the conceptual framework of Amartya Sen's analysis of famine, the 'entitlement approach' to food security stresses the role of four key sources of food: (i) production; (ii) employment income; (iii) trade (exchange of assets for food); and (iv) transfers (including gifts of food). Entitlement to food is gained through production, exchange (of cash, goods and services), sale of labour, transfers and assets.

Unlike conventional food security approaches, the 'entitlement approach' does not try to understand famines purely from the 'supply side', and does not see rural smallholders as entirely dependent on subsistence production.⁴⁷ Rather, it explains the different sources of food by taking account of different elements such as employment income, trade, transfers and the like, and attempts to understand famines from the 'demand side'; considering how famines can occur amidst plenty, and how normally functioning markets can cause famines or food insecurity.

Livelihoods (*secure and sustainable livelihoods*)

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (both material and social resources) and activities required to secure the necessities of life (stocks, flows of food and cash to meet basic needs). Thus, livelihoods are the means of everyday support and subsistence. “A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.”⁴⁸ A livelihood is secure when ownership of or access to resources is secure, and when the income-generating activities of the household are secure.⁴⁹

Capital

The concept of capital includes:

- *Natural capital* or natural resources, including the stocks, flows and environmental services available in particular agro-ecological settings;
- *Financial or economic capital*, including savings and access to credit;
- *Physical capital*, including infrastructure and transport;
- *Human capital*, including demographic and gender structures, and the body of education, skills, knowledge and good health needed to produce effectively;
- *Social capital*, including social networks, claims, associations and more general social relationships, as well as consensual norms and relationships of legitimate authority.

Market

Although the definition of this term may seem obvious, it is critical to define the different dimensions of the ‘market’, which vary according to different points of view:

- A market is a *public place* where goods and services are traded, purchased and sold at a particular time;
- A market is a *mechanism* that allows people to use the basic tools of economics to trade (supply, demand and price);
- A market is also a *network* in which buyers and sellers interact socially to exchange goods and services for money (and is thus a social institution of exchange);
- Finally, a market is ‘a *principle* for regulating social relations’, placed under the constraint “of traditional, political, social and moral values”.⁵⁰

3 New policies

The evolution in thinking on food security has had an impact on the food security policies pursued by major international institutions, which reflect new concepts drawn from nutritional, economic or ecological sciences. Some examples are outlined below:

- In 1995 the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) first designed an initiative called the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), which aims to (i) assist national governments in running national food security programmes; and (ii) develop regional food security programmes in collaboration with regional economic organizations, mainly in the area of trade policy, including the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) initiative.⁵¹
- The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has increasingly realigned its rural development projects since 1994. Household food security is now seen as a guiding principle in the design of any project, and the importance of nutritional security is stressed through specific interventions on health and sanitation.⁵²
- One bilateral organization with a very explicit food security policy is the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which has highlighted the importance of the *sustainable livelihood approach* as a valuable tool in addressing food security, and a helpful way of shifting thinking on food security away from a purely agricultural focus to consideration of people's assets and constraints.⁵³
- Food security has been a major concern of the European Community's development cooperation policy over the past decade, with a shift in focus from projects to expand agricultural production towards a more general emphasis on food policies, rural development programmes and the complementary roles of the public and private sectors.

BOX 5: THE NEPAD FOOD SECURITY POLICY

Increasing food supply and reducing hunger is one of the three pillars of the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (the other two pillars being Land and water management, and Rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for improved market access).

The NEPAD policy highlights an emerging consensus that (i) economic growth is essential for sustainable poverty reduction; (ii) the quest for economic growth will remain illusory as long as large numbers of people remain hungry; and (iii) numerous upstream and downstream linkages mean that agricultural growth has a stronger positive impact on poverty and hunger reduction than growth in other sectors because of its potentially strong multiplier effects. Major components of NEPAD policies are:

- Preparedness and capacity to respond to emergencies, through the development of information on disasters affecting the food and agriculture sector, their causal factors and estimation of their impacts;
- Direct assistance to the most food insecure, through targeted direct feeding programmes, food-for-work, food-for-training and other types of social safety net mechanisms;
- Programmes to enhance food security through production that attempts to increase and stabilize food output and income through output intensification and diversification, as well as actions to reduce weather and other environmental and economic risks.

Source: www.nepad.org

- In 2002, USAID launched an initiative called the Agricultural Initiative to Cut Hunger in Africa (AICHA) in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Investments supporting agricultural growth within this initiative are planned through regional action plans that are linked to and harmonized with national action plans in selected high potential countries. Each plan assesses the likely impacts of proposed investments on (i) overall economic and agricultural growth, (ii) agricultural trade, (iii) intraregional trade, (iv) spillover effects through intraregional linkages in commodity and factor markets, and (v) regional growth, development and hunger and poverty reduction.⁵⁴
- Specialized programmes (such as those supported by the Belgian Survival Fund, BSF, an initiative of the Belgian Parliament, or by non-governmental organizations like Action against Hunger) explicitly finance a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring that people threatened by hunger have a chance of survival, and improving the food and nutritional security of families and local communities.

**BOX 6: DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES
ON FOOD SECURITY**

- **1970s:** Focus on food supply (as a logical response to the African famines of the early 1970s).
- **1980s:** Focus on access to food. Recognition that food insecurity is mainly due to inadequate food production or availability at the national and regional levels.
- **Early 1990s:** Structural adjustment and market liberalization believed to generate economic growth and reduce future vulnerability to food crises.
- **1990s:** Increasing emphasis on poverty reduction rather than food insecurity in international development discourse, while the safety nets approach is gradually replaced by a more comprehensive social protection approach.
- **2000s:** Following the World Food Summit in 1996, food security reasserted itself as a global policy concern (linked to social, political, economic and institutional factors), along with the first MDG, to ‘*Halve, between 1995 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger*’.

- Most multilateral and bilateral organizations adhere to the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs), a special initiative endorsed by national leaders around the world with the specific objective – among others – of halving hunger by 2025. The World Development Report 2000/2001 presented a poverty-reduction strategy focusing on three areas: promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment and enhancing security, each of which can be seen as supporting improved livelihoods and food security. Many organizations sharing a common, overarching goal of poverty eradication analyze poverty in comprehensive *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (PRSPs); however, by adopting a narrow definition of poverty (through measures related to income and/or consumption), most do not include a comprehensive analysis of the food insecurity situation, and ignore wider issues regarding access to and use of assets by the poor, vulnerability and nutrition.
- Many international agencies now stress the impact of chronic illnesses such as tuberculosis and malaria on food security and nutrition, since, like HIV/AIDS, they deplete human capital, weaken institutions and disrupt productive activities.

4 Conclusion and overview

Recent understanding of the nature of poverty⁵⁵ and keen awareness of the gravity of the situation facing rural African households have changed thinking on food insecurity and generated new approaches to food aid, highlighting the fact that food insecurity is inextricably intertwined with wider social and economic aspects of poverty and inadequate livelihoods.

BOX 7: DETERMINANTS OF FOOD INSECURITY

“An evolution of thinking has ...permeated all dimensions of food security analysis and policy making. Perhaps most significantly, food insecurity is no longer seen simply as a failure of *agriculture* to produce sufficient food at the national level, but instead as a failure of *livelihoods* to guarantee access to sufficient food at the *household* level...”

“Food insecurity in Africa is a product of low agricultural production plus low incomes, not one or the other alone, and is a consequence of policy failure as well as institutional failure”.

Source: Devereux & Maxwell, 2001:1

This has led some observers to consider the current famines as ‘new famines’: ‘new’ in that they are happening in unexpected places and have unprecedented causes, also because they are more politicized than ever before.⁵⁶ From the development point of view, it is also symptomatic of the fact that food security has become virtually *synonymous with development* in some national and local contexts.⁵⁷ This is one reason why an increasing number of analysts prefer the broader conceptual framework of ‘human security’ or ‘livelihood security’ to the narrower concept of ‘food security’.

The most common instinctive reaction to famines – increasing the amount of food per capita – may only be effective in the very short term. Many development experts believe that relief agencies often do more harm than good, despite their prodigious expenditure and high public profile, and that short-term relief policies are as likely to aggravate the problem as they are to solve it. Since famines are both political and economic issues, their eradication will require efforts to establish accountable national and local governments, strengthen the administrative tools for recognizing and responding to stress signals, and increase international cooperation.

It will also require an acknowledgement that government authority is more diffuse in today's 'network societies' (as they tend to be known by social scientists) than it was in the 'layered societies' of the past, and that there are a number of other actors that need to be taken into account, including local governments, business and industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other elements of civil society.

Thus, progress lies in bringing the fight against famine into democratic politics.

“

(In Africa) in the colonial period, (...) agricultural research and extension work was focused largely on methods to raise output per unit of land by increasing annual labor input per family. (...) The agricultural change needed in Africa today is of a different type. Since so much land is only rarely utilized for cultivation or grazing – or never utilized for any purpose – the aim should not be to raise the output of any particular piece of land. The aim must be to raise the output per unit of labor so rapidly that the marketable surplus can become sufficient to feed an increasing urban population with African-grown food, despite the fact that a share of the agricultural population will continue to leave agriculture and migrate to urban areas.

Ester Boserup, 1990, *Economic and Demographic Relationships in Development*

”

“

A double constraint has always been at the heart of Mediterranean history: poverty and uncertainty of the morrow. This is perhaps the cause of the carefulness, frugality, and industry of the people, the motives that have been behind certain, almost instinctive, forms of imperialism, which are sometimes nothing more than the search for daily bread.

Fernand Braudel, 1966, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the age of Philip I*

”

PART II:

A comprehensive framework for food security



Part II discusses a general *conceptual framework* that can be used to understand food insecurity.

This stresses the interdependency between assets, livelihood strategies and activities at the household level, and attributes the vulnerability of African communities to hunger

and food crises to a loss of assets, erosion of social capital and networks, inadequate public sector provision of public services and infrastructure, and the adoption of inappropriate livelihood strategies.

What is needed in terms of sustainable food-related policies, therefore, is an effective, decentralized approach that aims to protect and/or create assets and sustain local livelihoods.

5 Secure livelihoods as a means of tackling food crises

A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK

The general conceptual framework for food security illustrated in Diagram 8 below adapts various elements of the growing body of literature on sustainable rural livelihoods, emphasizing the linkages between *assets*, *activities*, *livelihood strategies* or choices, as well as the multiple *outcomes* (including food security) whose impact on assets triggers another sequence of links. Assets, people's strengths, can be converted into livelihood outcomes. They may also be exchanged, sacrificed, depleted or enhanced, converted (into cash to buy food, for example) and used in different combinations. An asset is a stock of capital or 'capital' wealth that may grow (or decrease) through the process of circulation.

From an economic point of view, a key distinction should be made between:

- *Non-productive assets* – valuables such as gold, jewelry and precious objects, which constitute a store of wealth that can generate 'unearned' income or be changed or pawned into productive assets when the need arises; and
- *Productive assets* – such as parcels of agricultural or urban land, workshops, trucks, human capital or livestock, which indirectly generate 'earned' income through a number of activities (primary, secondary and tertiary, or a combination of these). Thus, assets, activities and outcomes are used to measure the livelihoods of households and individuals.

Non-productive and productive assets generate a number of outcomes through specific activities. As livelihoods are the result of the linkages between assets, activities and outcomes, they can *only* be assessed by using multiple indicators to measure the combination of these three elements.

Each group of stakeholders has their own particular combination of assets, *activities and outcomes*, and the livelihoods of farming/pastoralist households should be understood in relation to this nexus. Different choices are determined by the assets and opportunities available and by local cultural values, and include a range of activities that men and women have devised to build asset bases and access to goods and services for consumption.

ASSETS AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

A livelihood-based approach to food security requires adequate *analysis* and accompanying *initiatives* related to assets and livelihood strategies.

a) Assets

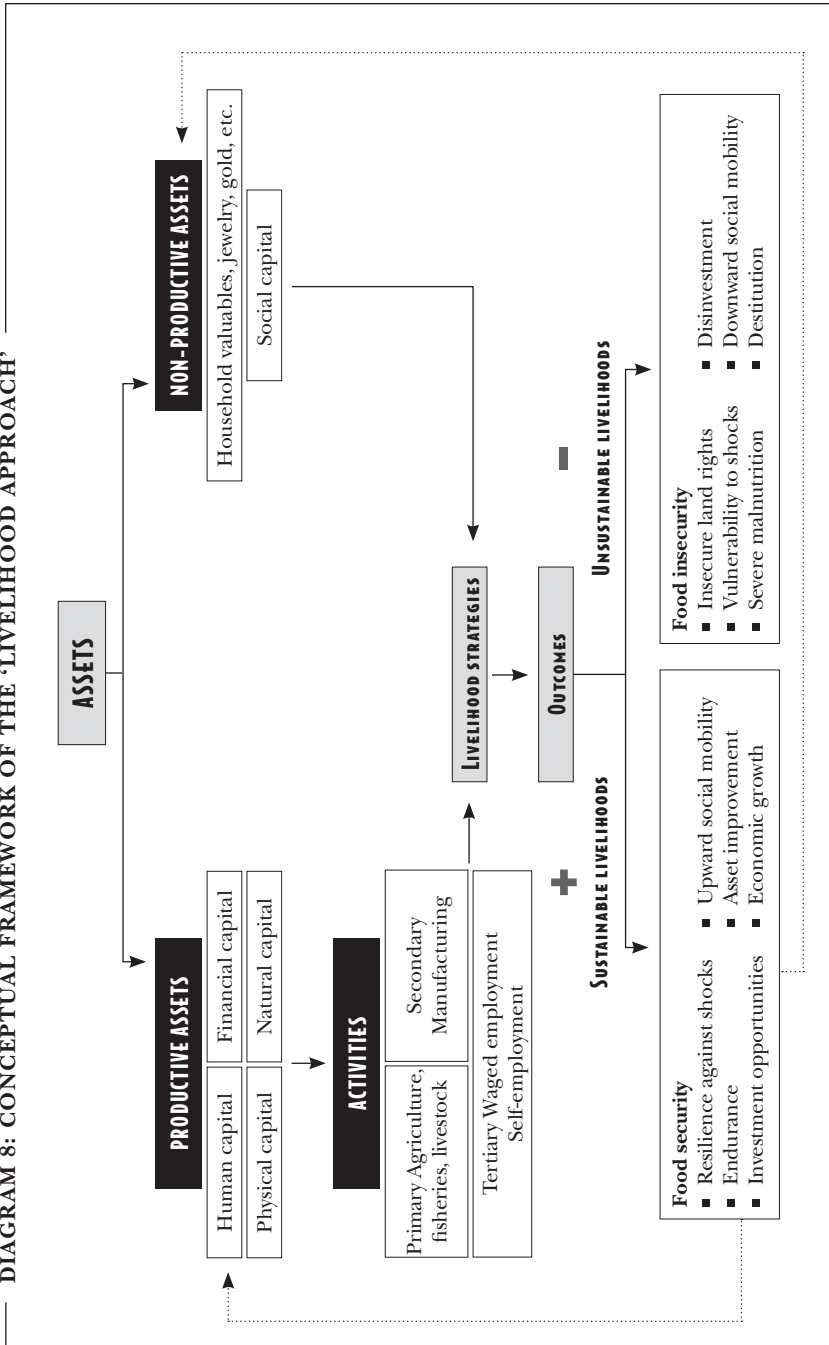
- *Analysis* should focus on the assets that households have or lack, those which they are able or unable to access, and those on which they rely. As shown in Diagram 8 opposite, household assets include land, water, trees, grazing areas, etc. (natural capital); irrigation systems, wells, canals, etc. (physical capital); education, skills, health, etc. (human capital); cash savings, livestock, jewelry (financial capital); and integration into networks and civic bonds (social capital). The viability of rural livelihoods is based on the quality and quantity of such assets.
- Once identified, these assets – which constitute the household’s opportunities, potential and constraints – need to be bolstered by sustainable *investment policies*. These should particularly attempt to: (i) deliver specific assets to households (‘public goods’, i.e. infrastructure and services); and (ii) address household diversification by supporting additional *income-generating capabilities* (as distinct from *income-earning opportunities* that may already be available at the household level) and enhancing future livelihood prospects.⁵⁸ Empowering local producers, processors and traders involves increasing the economic opportunities available to them and strengthening their ability to take advantage of these opportunities.⁵⁹

Asset categories are complementary. Thus, the financial asset base may be improved by better physical assets (road and communication networks), while secure land use rights can allow farmers to invest in technology and

Off-farm labour is an important source of income for most African smallholders. Off-farm income typically accounts for 30 to 50 per cent of total income.

ultimately lead to more productive agricultural and non-agricultural activities. Most importantly, improved assets may also directly increase the quality of local livelihoods and reduce household vulnerability to food crises.

DIAGRAM 8: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE 'LIVELIHOOD APPROACH'



b) Livelihood strategies

- *Analysis* should focus on the different categories of strategy that different types of households actually adopt (and adapt to) in specific circumstances in order to respond to economic opportunities, ecological pressure, social change and the like (see Box 9, also Appendix to Part II). It should also focus on the whole range of activities that households are able to undertake (*entitlements*) thanks to a range of *capabilities*, as well as the constraints they face (such lack of labour because children are too young to work, the family head being physically handicapped, or cultural and religious norms that prevent women from fully participating in production activities).

BOX 9: HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

Communities are internally differentiated, and *four types* of livelihood strategy can be identified according to the different categories of household found in any community. Some of these strategies may even co-exist in the same household, as different members can pursue different livelihood objectives.

- ***Investment strategies*** are pursued by *well-off* or *wealthier households* in order to enhance their current income-earning activities and income-generating opportunities. Key assets are financial capital and human capital.
- ***Adaptive strategies*** are the medium- to long-term strategies that *less poor households* may adopt. They may be conducive to significant social and economic change (such as diversification of on-farm activities, care of livestock belonging to absentee urban owners, migration of the entire household to less marginal rural areas, etc.). Key assets are land and/or livestock, and availability of family labour and/or access to external labour.

BOX 9: cont'd

- **Coping strategies** allow *poor households* to adapt to seasonal or recurrent food shortages by reducing expenditure on food, diversifying productive activities (adopting small-scale farming activities; pastoralists herding livestock owned by absentee urban owners; seasonal exodus of adults to urban centres in search of cash; pastoral migrations to different areas, etc.) or expanding the pool of earners (by withdrawing girls from school and putting them to work, for example). Key asset is family labour.
- Finally, **restrictive strategies or practices** are essentially aimed at minimizing expenditure (on food, education, health, etc.) or selling key productive assets (land, livestock, equipment).⁶⁰ These strategies are adopted by *the poorest households* because they provide a kind of short-term ‘viability’, but they are not sustainable in the long term. Such strategies are made necessary by a chronic lack of assets (or lack of access to them).

- **Policies** should address the specific needs of different categories of household, through well tailored initiatives that take account the differences between households.⁶¹ They should, therefore:
 - (i) improve household investment capacities;
 - (ii) strengthen household and community resistance and resilience;
 - (iii) preserve and augment livelihood opportunities for affected communities;
 - (iv) ensure that there are safety nets in place for those who need them.⁶²

They should also sustain a range of local livelihood objectives through the delivery of basic ‘public goods’ (education and health services, water, large physical infrastructures, etc.).

FOOD INSECURITY AS A SYMPTOM, FOOD SECURITY AS AN OUTCOME

The livelihood security approach views food insecurity as a complex arrangement of ‘vulnerabilities’, *not just* vulnerability to lack of food. Hunger and deprivation are the result of an accumulation of events: the

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A large proportion of food-insecure households depend only partially on agriculture: hunger is for them a consequence of insufficient incomes to purchase the requisite amount of food.

Tanzania, *National Strategy for Growth & Reduction of Poverty*

”

loss of assets, capital and rights, the erosion of social networks and self-esteem, and inefficient and ineffective livelihood strategies. If they are to survive, produce and reproduce, households need access to different forms of capital and must carry out a number of different, complementary and diversified

activities and adopt a range of short-, medium- and long-term strategies in order to produce the outcomes they seek.

From this perspective, the food-related activities undertaken by households should be seen in the context of *complex and dynamic livelihood strategies*. This means, among other things, that the presumed pre-eminence of food security as simply the ‘availability of food’ needs to be re-evaluated.⁶³

Therefore, from a policy point of view, food security-related measures should primarily focus on *protecting assets and sustaining existing livelihood strategies* and eventually *creating new assets*. Individual measures should be part of a *comprehensive approach* intended to sustain the productivity of the resource base (agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, etc.) and support pro-poor local economic development (creating jobs and income by stimulating-broad based economic growth).

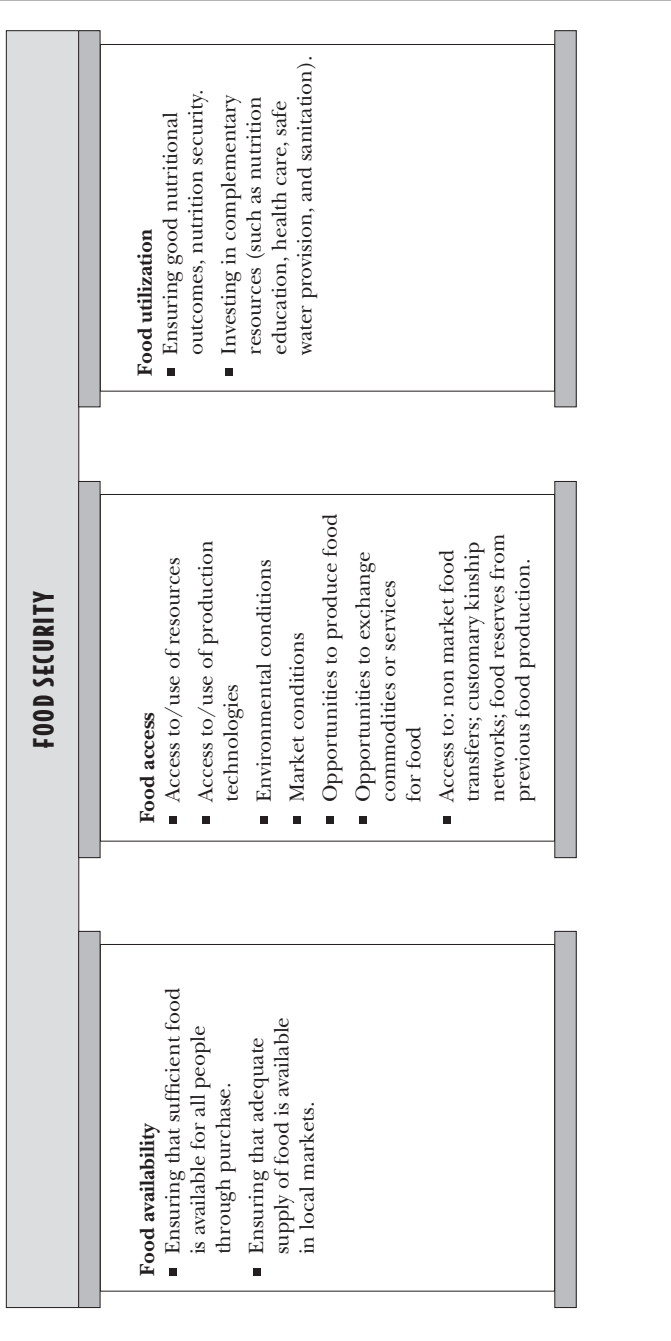
6 Dimensions of the approach

THE THREE PILLARS OF THE LIVELIHOOD SECURITY APPROACH

The three essential components of the food security paradigm – food availability, food access and food utilization – are illustrated in Diagram 10, pg. 50. Of these, *food access* appears to be the key pillar of the livelihood security approach: in this regard, food insecurity is a product of both low agricultural production and low incomes. The seminal work of Amartya Sen (1981) on poverty and famines cited above made a critical distinction between (i) the *availability* of food and (ii) people's access to food: people's entitlement to food arises from their assets, stores, networks and skills, their own production, the sale of their produce and labour, and from transfers.

Individual households are food insecure when their combined entitlements do not allow them to acquire their minimum food requirements. Increasing national food production will not increase food security for those without effective entitlements to that food, because the problem lies not in the availability of food, but in access to it.⁶⁴

DIAGRAM 10: THE THREE PILLARS OF THE FOOD SECURITY PARADIGM



COMPREHENSIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

It has already been noted that it is misleading to treat food security as an independent, fundamental need isolated from wider livelihood

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Starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food to eat.

It is not the characteristic of there being not enough food to eat.

Sen, 1981

”

considerations.⁶⁵ Poverty and food insecurity can only be explained (and addressed) by a whole range of technical, economic, social and institutional factors. Analysis of contemporary food crises confirms the complexity of these factors: famines, and even annual or seasonal food shortages, cannot be

attributed to single causes. Rather, they reflect a failure of food production, market and trade networks and policies and institutions.⁶⁶ Food security is therefore an outcome of sustainable livelihoods, and the livelihood approach situates food needs within the wider set of needs that drive people's actions.⁶⁷ It is known, for instance, that people may decide to go hungry in the short-term in order to preserve assets or meet other objectives in the longer term.⁶⁸

A review of the events linked to the hunger affecting Southern African countries in 2001–2003 (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe) concluded that it represented a crisis in *access* to food as much as in the availability of food *supplies*. This crisis was largely due to the increasing poverty and vulnerability of the previous decade and the run-down of public and private stocks. Thus, the events of 2001–2003 should be seen more as a *tipping point* than a crisis in the overall development trajectory envisaged for the region by governments and the international community.⁶⁹

In this regard, access to food is a pre-condition of food security. With the exception of major droughts, wars or famine conditions, there is generally enough food available to meet the minimum needs of most rural populations, and it is often plentiful in urban areas. The real problem lies in the fact that there is no guarantee that every segment of the population will have sufficient or timely access to these food supplies.

Given the variety of underlying factors explaining livelihood insecurity, livelihoods (and thus food security) can only be improved through a range of *well defined, clear, inter-related and complementary measures*.⁷⁰ It will be argued later that these initiatives should include support for local

economic development, intensification of agricultural activities, creation of off-farm employment in rural areas, protection and management of natural resources, social protection, and the like.

While this long-term vision should not be used as an excuse for inaction in the short-term (not directly attacking food insecurity in emergencies, for example), it does clearly indicate that these are complex issues that call for comprehensive measures rather than *quick fixes*. Granted, there are still gaps that require careful thinking and research, but the emphasis should be on ‘learning-by-doing’, with the parallel development and maintenance of a strong monitoring and evaluation system.⁷¹

It has already been argued that food insecurity should not be considered as a stand-alone ‘sector’ with its own ministry, delivery systems and clearly defined outputs. Nor should it be considered synonymous with agricultural production. State action to promote food security should involve a range of policies and programmes in the health, education, economic, social and agricultural sectors. A clear policy agenda and effective systems for inter-institutional collaboration are needed to coordinate the multiplicity of actors involved in food security. Public sector agencies need the financial, human and administrative capacity to carry out their mandates; and for genuinely sustainable progress towards food security, this all needs to be achieved within an economic strategy that promotes growth and increased agricultural productivity and creates livelihood opportunities for the poor. This is a very tall order for any developing country.⁷²

What is needed, therefore, is a *harmonized and integrated* approach to food security. Food security is only one component of nutritional well-being; investment in health, sanitation and education are also crucial in reducing infectious diseases and poor health and fighting malnutrition. Furthermore, food security is linked to food systems, which not only entail the production of food, but *also* its processing, distribution, access, use, recycling and waste.

Apart from its obvious role in humanitarian emergencies, the use of ‘food aid’ is increasingly questioned on the basis that: (i) development food aid has proved relatively ineffective in combating poverty (poor targeting) and improving the nutritional and health status of vulnerable people; (ii) food aid depresses local prices and production

in food-deficit countries; (iii) even in emergencies, alternative solutions (such as ‘cash transfers’) might be cheaper and more appropriate. There is now a strong belief that although food aid is necessary in some emergencies, it can never tackle the real causes of hunger and chronic poverty. Humanitarian assistance to Africa may have increased from US\$946 million in 1976 to over US\$3 billion in 2003,⁷³ but there has been no growth in investment attacking the roots of the problem.⁷⁴ Furthermore, food aid is now inextricably linked to the donor countries’ own policies and economic interests.⁷⁵ While there is no doubt about the need to address a situation where millions of people lack economic access to sufficient food, it is debatable whether ‘food security’ on its own is a useful concept in development assistance and national policies, and whether it should be linked to new approaches (such as decentralized development, land reforms, access to credit, new aid policies stressing local ownership, etc.) and the general focus on poverty reduction. Much of the recent emphasis on food aid was prompted by faulty diagnoses that linked hunger to food shortages but completely underestimated the importance of conflicts, poorly functioning markets, increased poverty, agricultural mismanagement and neglect, unfair international trade rules and the threats of HIV/AIDS and climate change.⁷⁶

Finally, *institutions and institutional arrangements* play a critical role in a livelihood approach to food security, since they determine the types of access that households (and individuals) have to different types of capital. The 1996 World Food Summit clearly stressed the importance of ‘an enabling political, social and economic environment’ conducive ‘to achieving sustainable food security’. Institutions have a key role in creating such an environment: from the *customary* institutions that determine how the rights of one group over a given resource relate to the rights of another group, to the sectoral ministries and line departments that define local formal arrangements concerning optimal use of resources and services, civil society that allows interest groups to fully participate in decisions regarding access to and use of resources and, finally, the *local government authorities* that may be responsible for overall coordination and defining differential models for different social categories.

ASSESSING AND MONITORING FOOD SECURITY

The *Rapid Appraisal* (RA) methodologies employed to assess the situation of different populations and communities not only provide useful insights into research on local livelihoods and the identities of the food-insecure (see Box 11), but can also feed into the design of food security interventions. Whether such methods are appropriate in any given case is determined by the degree of precision required, the characteristics of the population being investigated, the ability of the fieldworkers and various other aspects.⁷⁷

BOX 11: WHO ARE THE FOOD-INSECURE AND THE VULNERABLE TO FOOD CRISES?

Recent literature has identified three groups of food-insecure in Africa:

1. A large group of asset-poor people in rural areas who farm, but are often net purchasers of food. These people lack the resources either to produce enough to feed themselves or to generate enough income to buy their residual food requirements. This group includes a disproportionate number of female-headed households and households in war-torn and environmentally disrupted areas.
2. Landless labourers, whose numbers are increasing in Africa. Landless households are almost entirely dependent on labour markets or traditional, kin-based exchange systems to secure their income and food.
3. Urban households with unemployed or, more frequently, underemployed family members. These groups typically have low levels of education and skill training, and are often only employed on a temporary basis.

Jayne et al., 2005

BOX 11: cont'd

In the specific case of Southern Africa, groups that should be considered vulnerable to food crises are those:

- With low incomes who cannot save, accumulate assets, buy insurance premiums or maintain social relations and civic behaviour that entitle them to reciprocal help or state assistance (this includes paying taxes and national insurance);
- Who live in areas that suffer more frequent extreme natural phenomena, such as arid and semi-arid lands, unstable hillsides, etc.;
- Who live in communities and states where conflict, discrimination, volatile markets and abrupt policy changes are frequent occurrences;
- Whose income depends on activities that are particularly susceptible to hazards;
- Who are incapacitated or immobile and therefore unable to pursue certain coping strategies;
- Who cannot draw on social entitlements due to discrimination, or are otherwise prevented from employing certain coping measures. In other words, those whose *rights* are attenuated.

See FFSSA, 2004:6

A dynamic presentation of reality showing the conditions regulating access to and use of resources and the dynamics and volume of adaptive, coping and investment strategies, etc. can be obtained through more comprehensive baseline studies that present desegregated data according to production system, gender, age, socio-economic group and livelihood.

For instance, vulnerability assessments undertaken during recent Southern African food security crises confirmed the full range of coping behaviours that have been observed in other places and other times.⁷⁸ At the household level these included reducing expenditure on non-food items, substituting foods (cassava for maize), preparing smaller or fewer meals, using food to pay for casual labour, collecting and consuming larger proportions of wild food, limiting participation in social networks and reducing social expenditure, increasing sales of livestock (including productive animals), withdrawing children from school, increasing prostitution, mostly of young females, and borrowing from private moneylenders at very unfavourable conditions.

Monitoring is a major and complex element of food security initiatives, as measuring should take place at different levels: the national, regional, local, community, household and even intra-household levels. There is also increasing emphasis on the fact that a single indicator cannot be applied at all levels or in all situations.

Food security cannot be measured in isolation or through very simplistic, quantitative indicators such as past and present consumption inputs. More comprehensive measurement is needed, which focuses on local perceptions and livelihood security as well as assets, capital and capabilities. In other words, the best indicators for effective and pertinent monitoring of a household's food security situation are those that focus on its assets, activities and strategies, rather than simply on consumption models and calories.

However, very few of the methods currently used to measure food insecurity reflect its multidimensional nature, take account of the different levels at which it occurs or apply different approaches and methodologies to the problem.

7 Conclusion and overview

The livelihood security approach emphasizes the fact that food security (which was conventionally considered as the amount of food consumed, its nutritional quality, and reliability of access to food over time) is only one desired outcome of household livelihood strategies. This approach is also known as the ‘asset-based approach, since it addresses assets and livelihood strategies/activities at the household level; reflecting the importance of different forms of assets and capital and a parallel focus on the long-term accumulated weaknesses that make some people more vulnerable and food insecure than others.⁷⁹

This approach focuses on better access to education, health and water, land use security, the acquisition of land titles or land use agreements, and access to technology and advisory services, communications and credit, which are all crucial elements in enabling the rural poor to increase their incomes and eventually achieve food security. Policies aimed at increasing access to assets are fundamental for broad-based growth and poverty reduction.

Food security must be seen as one important element of a sustainable livelihood paradigm.

The advantage of this approach is that, in highlighting the need to better understand *all* the various factors influencing livelihoods in order to strengthen availability, access and utilization of food successfully, it helps identify the range of systemic factors, triggers and operational contexts affecting food security in a way that can contribute to policy choices.⁸⁰

By providing a complex picture of local realities and identifying local drivers of growth (see Box 12, pg. 58), the livelihood security approach shows that “the reasons some households are food insecure are rooted in the ways entire livelihood systems have changed and adapted or failed to adapt, to challenges from the ecological and economic environment, including shocks such as drought. Food security is thus usefully seen as one important element of a sustainable livelihood.”⁸²

BOX 12: ASSETS AS DRIVERS OF GROWTH

“The asset-based approach is an appropriate conceptual framework for organizing thinking about poor rural households ... and for identifying drivers of poverty-reducing growth. The asset-based approach considers linkages between households’ portfolios of productive, social and locational assets, the policy, institutional and risk context, their behavior as expressed in their livelihood strategies, and outcomes in terms of well-being. For economic growth to be poverty-reducing in a sustainable manner, it is critical to have a better understanding of poor households’ asset portfolios, and how assets interact with the context to influence the selection of livelihood strategies which, in turn, determine well-being.”

“Drivers of growth” are thus “the assets and combinations of assets needed by different types of households in different geographical areas to take advantage of economic opportunities and improve their well-being over time.” These assets have different relative contributions, different “combinations of productive, social, and location-specific assets ... help poor households take advantage of prospects for poverty-reducing growth.” Therefore, by “examining the role of assets in achieving development objectives, it is possible to direct policy reforms and investments in a manner that has sustainable impacts on poverty reduction.”

Source: Siegel, 2005

Efforts focus on harnessing the diversity of livelihoods and addressing the systemic conditions that restrict the ability of the poor to overcome poverty by increasing farm productivity or food security.⁸² In this regard, an important aspect of policy consists of drawing on *what already works* in communities where proactive responses are under way and maximizing the lessons learned from community innovations as to *what works where* and *why*.⁸³

Therefore, sustainable livelihoods can only be achieved if:

- The *institutions* that govern livelihoods are favourable: this includes not only government reforms and policies or donor/NGO interventions, but also local government rules and norms on specific issues such as common property resource management, the transparency

and accountability of local planning and budgeting systems and decision-making processes, the control and allocation of resources between genders and generations, conflict prevention and management, support to local economic development, the role of the private sector and the like.

- Social, political and institutional contexts effectively allow people to construct their livelihoods on the resources provided by the many types of capital available. Livelihood strategies are multiple, dynamic and shaped by the choices actors make in light of their resources and constraints.⁸⁴

Appendix to Part II

TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS, CATEGORIES OF LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

Using the example of the agricultural and agro-pastoral population of the District of M. in Northern Tanzania, Table 13, pg.62-66 employs *Rapid Rural Appraisal* methodology to distinguish three main categories of rural household: poor or very poor households; poor but resilient households; well-off and/or wealthy households.

Each category of household has its own assets and adopts a number of specific livelihood strategies/activities. Potential development strategies are not uniform, and should be adapted to each category of household in order to reduce their *vulnerability* to economic and food crises, increase their *resilience* or strengthen their *potential*.

Indirectly, these tables provide key indicators for monitoring the poverty/well-being of the different categories of household.

Please note that this approach focuses on households, not areas, and therefore does not distinguish between higher potential areas and lower potential areas.

**TABLE 13: ASSETS, LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES AND LIVELIHOOD-RELATED MEASURES
(BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD)**

| Category | Natural and physical assets | Human and social assets | Livelihood strategies | Major livelihood security-related measures |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>1. Poor and very poor households trapped in a downward spiral from poverty to destitution</p> <p>In the area surveyed, these households may represent up to 50% – 75% of the total population.</p> <p>These households have low to very low prospects of upward mobility</p> | <p>Small and scattered parcels of fragile and poor quality land (mainly acquired through inheritance)</p> <p>Regular erosion of capital through sales of productive land or livestock</p> <p>Limited use of agricultural inputs (such as chemical fertilizers or improved seeds) due to lack of money, inaccessibility of inhabited areas or disinterested traders</p> | <p>Low or very low levels of education among household members</p> <p>Low <i>social capital</i>, i.e. weak integration into civil networks and community social support groups (hence poor social benefits due to low social investment)</p> | <p>The bulk of family food crop production is reserved for internal consumption. However, large proportions of food crops may be sold in unfavourable conditions (<i>distress sales</i>) in post-harvest periods in order to meet urgent monetary needs</p> <p>Household members seek on- and off-farm <i>salariat jobs</i> in rural areas and/or <i>seasonal migration</i> to urban centres</p> | <p>Major development <i>objectives</i> are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reducing the household's vulnerability to recurrent ecological and food crises ■ Stopping the gradual erosion of household assets (including social capital) ■ Providing agricultural services and inputs (including use of targeted agricultural subsidies) ■ Gradually supporting sustainable <i>ex-ante</i> management strategies |

| Category | Natural and physical assets | Human and social assets | Livelihood strategies | Major livelihood security-related measures |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Their vulnerability to food crises is severe to chronic (usually achieving a degree of food security in only 3 to 6 months of the year)</p> | <p>No electricity, no piped water, no telephone lines, no use of mobile phones. No capacity for savings</p> | <p>Participation in <i>territorial organizations</i> shaped by common cultural values and social norms; however, lack of capital prevents individual households from participating in economically meaningful activities of <i>self-selected grassroots groups</i> Lack of collateral and trust inhibit access to credit</p> | <p>Importance of <i>ex-post livelihood strategies (or restrictive strategies)</i> aimed at simply ensuring survival and somehow preventing the household from falling into destitution. These include: disinvestment of productive capital (sale of land or productive animals), withdrawing children, particularly girls, from school; reducing the quantity and quality of family meals; borrowing from moneylenders; collecting wild food; illegal activities, etc.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raising rural income through non-agricultural economic activities (i.e. reducing local vulnerability by creating diverse income streams) ■ Social transfers: support to small self-help units of collective action (embryonic micro-enterprises) ■ Social protection: labour-intensive methods (for construction and maintenance of physical infrastructures, provision of environmental services, sanitation, garbage collection, production of locally improved materials, etc.) in order to generate income |

TABLE 13: cont'd

| Category | Natural and physical assets | Human and social assets | Livelihood strategies | Major food security-related measures |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>2. Poor but resilient households that may fall into poverty but may also move up the socio-economic ladder</p> <p>In the poor areas surveyed, these households may represent between 25% – 35% of the total population</p> <p>Food crop production covers <i>about 8-10 months</i> consumption (dropping to <i>5-7 months</i> in deficit years)</p> | <p>Average amount of family land estimated at about 1 ha, with parcels more or less scattered over large areas (in moderate to high potential agro-ecological zones)</p> <p>Land obtained through inheritance and acquisition</p> <p>Limited to low use of agricultural inputs (due to lack of availability and/or soaring prices)</p> <p>Moderate to low agricultural productivity and moderate returns on labour</p> | <p>Moderate level of education among household members</p> <p>Low to moderate <i>social capital</i> (integration into some civil networks and community social support groups)</p> <p>Social capital (civil security, community social support, etc.) may be increased through the gradual integration of the household into more or less vibrant social networks (this requires some social investment)</p> | <p>Adoption of '<i>coping behaviours</i>' or '<i>ex ante risk management strategies</i>'. These include: building up assets to create buffers against uncertain events, diversifying on- and off-farm activities, accumulating assets, building up stores, making savings and nurturing social networks, growing drought-resistant crops, purchasing livestock.</p> | <p>Major development objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sustaining the household's endurance and resilience, ■ Strengthening ongoing diversification of the household economy ■ Providing agricultural services and inputs ■ Creating employment and building appropriate capacities and technical skills ■ Strengthening existing <i>ex-ante risk management strategies</i> (marketing opportunities in the smallholder sector) |

| Category | Natural and physical assets | Human and social assets | Livelihood strategies | Major food security-related measures |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Different layers or sub-categories (according to the quality and volume of assets and education of household members)</p> <p>Only a small percentage meet the conditions permitting upward social mobility</p> | <p>Rental or ownership of bicycles, carts or cars (for income-generating activities)</p> <p>Moderate capacity for savings</p> | <p>Use of some collateral in order to access credit</p> | <p>A large proportion of household production is for consumption. Moderate to significant involvement in market transactions (up to 60% – 70% of food crop production may be sold, in addition to cash crops such as cotton.</p> <p>Variety of coping strategies and adaptive strategies provide a certain degree of <i>resilience</i></p> <p>Moderate participation in public-private partnership (PPP) networks based on clusters of commodity chain communities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sustaining value-adding processing industries ■ Providing business and managerial skills ■ Communicating information on the market ■ Securing access to social infrastructure and services, ■ Supporting PPPs at the local level ■ Supporting upstream and downstream production and marketing linkages (strong multiplier effects) ■ Allowing access to ‘<i>venture capital</i>’ |

TABLE 13: cont'd

| Category | Natural and physical assets | Human and social assets | Livelihood strategies | Major food security-related measures |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <p>3. Moderately well-off or relatively wealthy households, with different degrees of involvement in market transactions and family-based semi-commercial enterprises</p> <p>In the poor areas surveyed, these households may represent <10% of the total population</p> <p>Moderate opportunities for upward social mobility</p> <p>Different layers or sub-categories (according to the quality and volume of assets, education of household members and participation in the right networks, etc.)</p> | <p>Large land assets (relatively accessible areas and fertile soils)</p> <p>Land mostly acquired by acquisition (through investment)</p> <p>Ownership and use of cars and trucks (for productive purposes)</p> <p>Large use of hired labour force</p> | <p>Relatively high levels of education among individual members of these households (especially the younger generation)</p> <p>High social capital, increasing through moderate to high social investment</p> <p>Patronage relations within a network of dependent/client households, with relevant political benefits</p> | <p>A moderate to high/very high degree of livelihood security achieved through interdependent non-farm and farm components</p> <p>Complex growth strategy involving investments in business enterprises, fisheries, agro-business, food processing, etc. through virtuous spirals of accumulation</p> <p>Choice of a multi-faceted, market-driven and diversified economy, where agriculture and livestock husbandry are not the only (or even the most important) engines of economic growth</p> | <p>Major development <i>objectives</i> for these households are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting small and medium enterprises through planning and delivery of physical infrastructure ■ Establishing networks providing regular access to banking services ■ Supporting production technologies that permit higher yields and returns at existing producer prices ■ Supporting different forms of public-private partnerships (enterprises that would participate in the delivery of basic services to poor households) ■ Providing regular information on markets and market trends (through appropriate means, including e-government) |

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Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization, and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped, potential.

E.F. Schumacher, 1973 *Small is Beautiful, Economics as if People Mattered*

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*L'évolution de l'économie entraînait une véritable révision des valeurs sociales »
(The evolution of the economy was leading to a real change of social values)*

Marc Bloch, 1939
*La société féodale.
La formation des liens
de dépendance*

”

PART III:

Local governments and food security



Part III considers *local government leadership* in the design, planning and implementation of a comprehensive approach to securing local livelihoods and, ultimately, achieving a certain degree of food security. Local governments have little direct

engagement in productive activities and lack the technical expertise required to plan and implement a wide range of activities. However, they are *embracing institutions* that may not only support planning initiatives at the local level of intervention, but also promote partnership, coordination and coherence among all local institutional stakeholders.

Sub-national governments can play a catalytic, cross-sector role in two major domains at the local level, *the environment and the economy*. Pursuing a range of activities across these two domains could have a tremendous effect on local assets and livelihood strategies/activities, and thus on food security.

8 Local governments and local development

Two food security perspectives are usually adopted at the national level: the *geographical perspective*, which divides a country into a number of areas corresponding to its administrative units (provinces, districts); and the *functional perspective*, which identifies specific population sub-groups and is particularly important for planning adequate measures based on available knowledge and information on local systems.⁸⁵

There is also a *third perspective*, however, which combines elements of the first two and allows local stakeholders within specific socio-territorial boundaries to design, plan and implement more comprehensive approaches to securing local livelihoods and, ultimately, to achieve a certain degree of food security under the *leadership of legitimate and democratically elected local governments*.

National governments in many African countries are increasingly devolving authority (power and resources) to sub-national and local governments, in the context of democratic and decentralized systems,

Sustained poverty reduction not only requires equitable growth, but also political power for poor people.

evolving legal frameworks and processes and new trends towards privatization. The basic principle of empowering local stakeholders has seen a parallel emphasis on the key roles of community institutions, the private sector, civil society and user groups in supporting local economies. However, it is

also acknowledged that while this new political direction may afford poor people greater opportunities for political expression, it may also deepen inequality and, in the absence of accountable and democratic organizations, drown out the voices of the poor and food insecure.

The decentralization process affects a number of key domains related to local social and economic development through the key principles of good governance:⁸⁶

- *Subsidiarity*: the efficient transfer of specific powers to local stakeholders, with activities planned and implemented at the level closest to the grassroots, on the basis of the comparative advantage of each institution (whereby a higher authority should only act if a lower authority cannot act or has proved its inability to do so). The assumption is that low-level governments are likely to be more aware of local livelihood priorities and the household food insecurity situation, and to adjust measures accordingly.

Highly decentralized and community-driven approaches, with strong private sector involvement, hold great potential for avoiding difficulties in the coordination and execution of multi-sectoral programs.

Gillespie ed. 2006

- *Complementarity*: the ways that each institutional level operates within its own particular arena and according to its own responsibilities while connecting with other levels above and below it.
- *Equity*: acknowledging regional differences and disparities and avoiding giving advantages to geographical areas whose rich or potentially rich natural resources sustain more secure livelihoods and higher levels of food security.

Market-based economic development strategies have reduced the direct engagement of local governments in productive activities. However, while they lack the technical expertise required to plan and implement a wide range of activities (which the private sector or community institutions are better placed to tackle), their legitimacy and accountability does give local governments clear comparative advantages, in that they may consistently move decision-making closer to those affected by it.

**BOX 14: HOW CAN DEMOCRACY AND DECENTRALIZATION
ADVANCE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT?**

“Democratic governance is valuable in its own right. But it can also advance human development, for three reasons. First, enjoying political freedom and participating in the decisions that shape one’s life are fundamental human rights: they are part of human development in their own right. ... Second, democracy helps protect people from economic and political catastrophes such as famines and descents into chaos... Democracies also contribute to political stability, providing open space for political opposition and handovers of power. Third, democratic governance can trigger a virtuous cycle of development—as political freedom empowers people to press for policies that expand social and economic opportunities, and as open debates help communities shape their priorities.”

UNDP. 2002

“Decentralization can be a powerful tool for moving decision-making closer to those affected by it. Doing so can strengthen the links and accountability between policymakers and citizens—local governments are potentially more accountable to local demands. It can also strengthen them between policymakers and providers—local governments are potentially more able to monitor providers. But local governments should not be romanticized. Like national governments they are vulnerable to capture—and this might be easier for local elites on a local scale”.

World Development Report 2004

Generally speaking, the reforms initiated and implemented by the public sector can have an enormous impact on local livelihoods, mainly through consistent support to the agriculture sector, support for well-functioning and integrated markets, the creation of a good investment climate and provision of economic infrastructure and social services. In terms of household economies, policy reforms can change the context and income-generating potential of assets: investment can add new assets or increase the efficiency of existing household assets, and also improve the capacity of households to manage risk.⁸⁷

Although agriculture is a private sector activity, it is uniquely dependent on good governance, *wise public investments* and carefully focused *public policy*. This will be a major topic of the forthcoming World Bank *World Development Report 2008* (to be published in 2007), which will focus on Agriculture and Development. Specific public sector interventions may be required for a pro-poor orientation of growth, which may not be deliverable by market forces alone, while private sector activities alone are unlikely to achieve environmental goals. The special characteristics of the sector in terms of spatial dispersion and isolation, lack of “collateralizable assets” and vulnerability to climatic shocks leads to high transactions costs and risks and widespread market failures. For these reasons, the public sector generally has a greater role to play in agriculture than in other sectors of the economy, particularly at the early stages of development. The report will argue that public policy should concentrate on capturing the new growth opportunities available to agriculture on the one hand, and on the other, on capturing opportunities in other sectors of the economy to help people exit agriculture.⁸⁸

SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS AS EMBRACING INSTITUTIONS

Sub-national governments should be considered as *embracing institutions* that not only support planning initiatives at the local level of interven-

Local government leadership can only be meaningful and efficient if it actively promotes the full involvement of all local public and private stakeholders in decision-making.

tion, but also promote good governance, partnership, coordination and coherence among all local institutional stakeholders, particularly technical and sectoral departments, community organizations and the private sector, as well as the donor community. Private sector growth can be aided or impeded by government actions at the local level, which can improve the

local business climate and significantly contribute to its growth by reducing public sector impediments to economic activity and facilitating public investment and services to targeted sectors.⁸⁹

Poverty is often the result of inequality between the regions or localities to which power is being devolved. Decentralized authorities can guarantee more equitable representation for deprived areas within national systems and ensure a *fairer distribution of resources* across various areas.⁹⁰ In this context, and with responses to food shortages no longer

focusing on emergency aid but on a broader range of development options, the role of a decentralized planning system becomes crucial.⁹¹

The *allocative and productive* efficiency of local governments is an important factor in translating the major orientations of poverty reduction strategies into local social, economic and cultural realities.

While highly centralized states cannot respond flexibly or efficiently to localized food crises, local governments are better placed to mobilize local energies to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – a process known as *localizing MDGs*. Decentralized authorities are not only more efficient in finding appropriate solutions to local problems, but also in adapting schemes devised at higher levels to distinctive conditions and needs within local arenas (bringing in local knowledge and harmonizing them with often quite constructive local arrangements for managing resources and addressing needs).⁹²

Within the governance framework, local authorities do not act on their own, but are required to establish *horizontal forms* of cooperation with other local governments and to consult with technical line departments. Thus, local policies aimed at supporting sustainable livelihoods rely on *extensive webs of interdependency and collective frameworks* for action involving accountable local authorities, appropriate line departments, influential and responsive customary leaders and a dynamic civil society.

This will also support the model of enterprise based on a value-chain model.⁹³

The *World Food Summit Plan of Action* highlights the need to “develop policy-making, legislative and implementation processes that are democratic, transparent, participatory, empowering, responsive to changing circumstances and most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all”. Finally, one of its recommendations is “to strengthen local government institutions in rural areas and provide them with adequate resources, decision-making authority and mechanisms for grassroots participation”.⁹⁴

The underlying economic development of particular localities and regions is still critically dependent on central government interventions. However, lessons from the past clearly indicate that the quasi-exclusive dominance of central government in all spheres of economic life

contributes to the underdevelopment of the social and economic fabric of localities.⁹⁵ The problem with the presence of the State in rural communities is that is palpable but unpredictable.⁹⁶

Local governments (and other local public agencies), on the other hand, may exercise a crucial *convening power*, bringing together all local stakeholders and promoting a more integrated, self-reinforcing economic process at the local level.⁹⁷

However, there are also major constraints to the leadership of local democratic governments, which are mainly due to lack of clarity about their precise roles (especially with regard to the economy), poor institutionalization of functions and responsibilities in terms of social and economic development; weak mechanisms for accountability (both upwards and downwards); and a general ambivalence about the key issue of democracy in poverty reduction.

9 The specific roles of local governments

Sub-national governments can be called upon to play a catalytic, cross-sector role in three major areas at the local level: the *environment, the economy and social protection*. A range of well-combined and well-integrated initiatives can have a tremendous effect on local assets and livelihood strategies and activities, and thus on food security.

a) Local environmental governance

The strong links between poverty and the environment call for a focus on the needs of those whose livelihoods depend on natural resources and environmental services.⁹⁸ Local governments should be fully committed to supporting initiatives aimed at *improving local environmental governance* (defined in Box 15, pg. 78), and have the capacity to do so. With the active involvement of all local stakeholders, such initiatives can support the rehabilitation, protection and management of (productive and renewable) natural resources, increase the productivity of the resource base and improve land use.⁹⁹

Accelerating pro-poor growth through improved use of the resource base (*agriculture-cum-environment*) is an important pathway to poverty reduction and food security (the first MDG), since progress in agriculture is also critical to the environmental agenda (MDG 7).

Agriculture is part of broader land use and resource management.

BOX 15: DEFINING LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Local environmental governance (LEG) is concerned with:

- The quality, effectiveness and efficiency of environmental stewardship led by local administrations, and its transparency and accountability;
- The manner in which environmental powers and authority are exercised at the local level;
- Institutional development, regulatory frameworks and capacity building;
- A range of technical measures regarding water, soils, forest, grazing areas and halieutic resources appropriate to different agro-ecological systems.

See Bonfiglioli, 2004

Good environmental governance is essential to develop, strengthen and consolidate democracy in the world's poorest nations, because it is a prerequisite for the poor to realize greater income from the environment.¹⁰⁰ Patterns and institutions of governance are usually critical

Environment and governance are dynamic elements in the global effort to localize the Millennium Development Goals.

factors determining how effectively the poor can harness ecosystems for their livelihoods: policies and laws can protect the rights of the poor, responsive institutions can promote their interests, and appropriate technical initiatives can improve their use of resources. By not acknowledging the importance of the links between the environment and the livelihoods of the rural poor, many poverty reduction programmes have failed to tap the full potential of ecosystems as a wealth-creating asset for the poor. Income from ecosystems (*environmental income*) can constitute a fundamental stepping-stone in the economic empowerment of the rural poor.¹⁰¹

Specific 'transmission mechanisms' provide critical links between agricultural performance (particularly increased productivity) and progress in reducing poverty. Improved agricultural practices (in soil fertility, for example) can have a direct and immediate impact on rural incomes; improved land-use practices result in cheaper food for both the urban and rural poor; agricultural income can contribute to growth

and generate economic opportunities in the non-farm sector; and agriculture stimulates and sustains economic transition by favouring a shift towards a broader manufacturing and service base.¹⁰²

b) Local economic development

Local governments should be fully committed to sustaining a range of initiatives to support local economic development (LED, which is defined in Box 16), and have the institutional capacity to do so.

The LED paradigm usually covers three main arenas: (i) *Locality development initiatives* (overall planning and management of the economic and physical development of an area); (ii) *Pro-poor, community-based economic development* (in both rural and urban settings); and (iii) *Business or enterprise development*, with initiatives that directly target and involve small and medium enterprises and clusters of enterprises.¹⁰³

BOX 16: DEFINING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local economic development (LED) is:

- About local people working together to achieve sustainable economic growth that brings economic benefits and quality of life improvements for all in the community (*World Bank, 2004*)
- A process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation
www.worldbank.org/urban/led
- A participatory process by which local people, governments, civil society and the private sector establish different forms of partnerships and work together to manage local resources and access external resources in order to stimulate local commercial activities (with impacts on job creation, business development and increased government revenues).

UNCDF documentation

The combined effect of these initiatives is to increase income, create jobs, sustain efficient markets (for both producers and consumers) and support diversification of the rural economy.¹⁰⁴ They also have a direct impact on the sustainability of local livelihoods and, ultimately, on the food insecurity of poor households.¹⁰⁵

The LED approach is based on a number of hypotheses. For instance, it is assumed that public investment in basic infrastructure (such as roads, water supply and telecommunications) can facilitate local business activities; that improving the local business enabling environment may lower the entry costs and risks associated with business development; and that increasing the responsiveness and accountability of public sector decision-making and administration may reduce corruption and other rent-seeking behaviours, which often suffocate private sector activity.¹⁰⁶

Markets

LED is primarily about markets. In market-based economic growth, well-functioning *markets* for agricultural inputs, commodities and processed goods are crucial elements of a local economic development paradigm aimed at reducing poverty and improving food security.

In poor economies, the market involves two closely related processes: market development and economic growth through markets. When markets do not work properly, non-market mechanisms need support in order to secure available, accessible and affordable food supplies.¹⁰⁷

“
_____”
*Market-oriented business ecosystems
comprise many forms of private enterprise
coexisting in a symbiotic relationship.*

UN, 2004

”

Since food security cannot be ensured by markets alone, governments at all levels need to retain an important role in guaranteeing contract enforcement, enacting and enforcing grading and quality control standards,

maintaining public health and safety, and implementing credible and sustainable policies that provide a favourable environment for savings and investment and transparent incentives for consumers and producers.¹⁰⁸

The development of markets has far-reaching impacts on food security because of their impact on household food production, options for (and prices in) household exchange, local food production, the ability of food markets to meet demand, and the wealth (incomes and stores) required to import food into the area.¹⁰⁹

Investment climate

LED is also about creating and sustaining an enabling environment for good business. Governments at all levels have a key role in this crucial element of growth and poverty reduction, and investment climate reforms are essential in stimulating economic growth – which in turn generates opportunities for poor people to have more productive jobs and higher incomes. These reforms are mainly intended to provide a sound legal and regulatory framework that promotes private sector competition, strengthens governance, overcomes bureaucratic inefficiencies and improves access to key financial and infrastructure services.¹¹⁰

A good investment climate can provide opportunities and incentives for community institutions, micro-, small and medium entrepreneurs and large firms and multinationals to make productive investments and create employment (see Box 17). Support for networks can help create an entrepreneurial climate where coaching, mentoring and learning is encouraged and links between companies strengthened.¹¹¹

BOX 17: A GOOD INVESTMENT CLIMATE

“Government policies and behaviors play a key role in shaping the investment climate. While governments have limited influence on factors such as geography, they have more decisive influence on the security of property rights, approaches to regulation and taxation (both at and within the border), the provision of infrastructure, the functioning of finance and labor markets, and broader governance features such as corruption. Improving government policies and behaviors that shape the investment climate drives growth and reduces poverty.”

“The investment climate reflects the many location-specific factors that shape the opportunities and incentives for firms to invest productively, create jobs, and expand. A good investment climate is not just about generating profits for firms... it improves outcomes for society as a whole. That means that some costs and risks are properly borne by firms. And competition plays a key role in spurring innovation and productivity and ensuring that the benefits of productivity improvements are shared with workers and consumers.”

Source: Excerpts from the World Development Report 2005

Public-private partnerships at the local level

Finally, LED is about different forms of linkages and partnership between the public and private sectors (see Box 18 for more details). In this regard, local governments can support *innovative forms of public-private partnerships*, such as contracts for services, delegated management arrangements, joint venture arrangements or concession arrangements.¹¹² This may involve construction support funding, or co-funding the provision of economic infrastructures like roads, bridges, markets, slaughterhouses, fish-landing sites, agricultural storage facilities – in other words, all the infrastructures that facilitate the creation of assets and access to assets, and which can support local livelihood strategies.

By stressing collaboration between the public and private sectors as a means of achieving a particular goal, PPPs aim to combine public concerns about equity with private principles of efficiency, cost-effectiveness and responsiveness to consumer needs.

BOX 18: ABOUT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

“Private actions and public-private partnerships fall into two categories. They are commercial transactions driven by market incentives, developed as part of a corporation’s evolving business and commercial strategy, which nonetheless have strong implications for development. Or they are specifically structured as innovative efforts to apply private sector principles and approaches to developmental problems. From a different perspective, these innovative private sector activities are either purely private-private interactions or they fall more obviously into the area of public-private partnerships”.

Source: UN, 2004

“Public-private partnerships are often perceived as a middle ground between full privatisation and state ownership. They allow governments to tap into the resources, financial and human, of the private sector while still hanging on to ownership and control over the asset. However, governments should be aware that public-private partnerships are not a ‘light’ version of privatisation. Public-private partnerships involve capacities and commitment from all sides as much as do privatisation and other forms of private sector participation”.

Source: Thoenen, 2006

c) Social protection

After the environment and the economy, the third area where local governments can make comprehensive efforts to secure local livelihoods, and thus access to food, is *social protection*. Social protection initiatives complete environmental and economic measures in that they

Social protection encompasses a range of public investments directly addressing risks, vulnerability and chronic poverty.

should essentially aim to preserve the key productive assets of the poorest households, enhance their survival and diversification, and focus on social justice and transforming social conditions.¹¹³ As noted in Part I, the current concept of social protection marks a shift from merely considering safety nets as a support for people below a certain level of income or subsistence, towards a view that addresses the wider sources of vulnerability, risk and deprivation faced by poor people.¹¹⁴ In this regard, social protection has an economic dimension, and is a way of spurring economic growth. A comprehensive definition of social protection (presented in Box 19) takes account of the variety of livelihoods and the differences between households and communities.

BOX 19: DEFINING SOCIAL PROTECTION (SP)

“Social protection is the set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide: social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse.”

Source: Devereux S & Sabates-Wheeler R., 2004

Social protection can be supported through labour market interventions, pensions, targeted social funds or conventional social safety nets (the latter are more restricted, since they are designed to provide targeted support to the poorest sections of the population after economic downturns, natural disasters, conflicts, etc.). At least three types of social protection measures can be distinguished, with the categories below suggesting graded interventions:¹¹⁵

- *Preventive measures*, which directly seek to avert deprivation by providing incentives and means to the poor. These include supporting self-insurance through savings, social transfers (see Box 20), assistance on income risk management, labour-intensive programmes generating employment (see Box 21, pg. 86), support to community-based risk-sharing, and the introduction of insurance products tailored to poor contexts.
- *Protective measures*, which provide broad-based social protection for economically vulnerable groups (social insurance and various safety nets), guaranteeing relief from deprivation at a minimally accepted and feasible standard of living.
- *Promotional measures*, which enhance real incomes and capabilities through a range of targeted livelihood-enhancing programmes for households and individuals. These include micro-finance and school feeding initiatives.

In most social protection and safety net programmes, the provision of funds and definition of eligibility criteria are the responsibility of central government. However, as local needs may greatly vary across the country, this carries a risk that ineligible households or communities may benefit from such initiatives.

Local authorities, on the other hand, have clear comparative advantages in targeting and identifying eligible beneficiaries, as they have better knowledge of local realities, may rely on local social cohesion and solidarity, and can allocate benefits in a consultative process.

BOX 20: SOCIAL TRANSFERS

Social transfers are a crucial element of the various actions related to social protection. They generally take the form of cash provided to households or individuals deemed eligible by society on account of their vulnerability or poverty. (These *cash transfers* are usually the preferred option in households lacking an adult labour force, such as those headed by women with many children, widows and the disabled). Generally speaking, social transfers help poor households manage the risks of their livelihoods. To be effective, they need to be regular and predictable grants (in Bangladesh, for example, the disabled receive a little over US\$ 2 per month), should be integrated into a strategic

BOX 20: cont'd

social protection framework and be part of a wider poverty reduction strategy and/or social policy. They also need to be planned and *mainstreamed* into *normal development plans* and integrated into other social protection measures, such as insurance schemes and social funds. Finally, social transfers should be demand-driven, employment-focused and preferably self-targeted.¹¹⁶

Social transfers are not considered as a simple ‘social welfare’ measure, since they can have a profound economic impact and help create productive assets, generate local markets, increase incomes and create jobs. They can also enhance the capacity of the poor and vulnerable to manage economic and social risks, such as unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age.¹¹⁷ For instance, they can give poor households with some productive capacity the confidence to undertake risky activities, as they know they will have a minimum income to fall back on. Because of these transfers, households have less need to sell their productive assets, are more able to delay sales of produce and so obtain better prices, are able to make investments in small-scale productive activities and assets (thereby setting in motion a potential multiplier effect), and finally, are able to improve their nutrition so that members can undertake productive activities.

Social transfers can help tackle hunger too: since cash is more portable than food, it is simpler to put in place a system of social transfers in food crisis situations than it is to administer food aid (moreover, unlike food aid, social transfers do not distort local food markets or impact negatively on producers).

Social transfers can also increase incomes, improve the education and health of the poorest families (through *conditional* cash transfers), promote gender equity and help empower poor people, as well as contribute to the growth and development of local markets. Social transfers leave the poor free to decide how to care for their own families, as they can decide how much should be used to buy food or other essentials and how much to invest in healthcare, education and other productive activities. By guaranteeing a predictable minimum income, social transfers provide the poor with a basic level of security, increasing their ability to plan for the future and adopt a longer-term vision. ►

BOX 20: cont'd

Social transfers are particularly important for women and girls, who are disproportionately represented among the extreme poor and more likely to be beneficiaries. Finally, social transfers may well be a more cost-effective option than other initiatives currently used to address chronic poverty, offering a cheaper and more effective alternative to humanitarian assistance.¹¹⁸

Non-state actors are often deployed in the actual delivery of social transfers. For instance, the banking system can be used in cases where banks are close to a large proportion of potential beneficiaries, while 'village banks' can provide a wide range of financial services to local communities and cover part of their costs by charging for delivering cash transfers. Elsewhere, distribution points like post offices (as in India), schools or health clinics have been used. In Zambia, government employees (teachers, etc.) collect cash from the bank and deliver it to beneficiaries in their communities, receiving a small stipend for this service. The private sector has also been used to provide these services – in Namibia, following the privatization of the social pensions system in 1996, convoys of vehicles with cash-dispensing machines protected by armed guards took cash to remote and small communities.

**BOX 21: WORK PROGRAMMES USING
LABOUR-INTENSIVE METHODS**

Work programmes are an integral part of social protection measures. Regarded as *public workfare*, they can provide considerable benefits as they combine elements of social transfers with an insurance function, offering a safety net to those in the labour market. Work programmes using the *labour-intensive public works* method (cash-for-work schemes where payments are based on the local wage rate for unskilled daily labour) generally involve the construction and maintenance of local collective services, environmental services (watershed, biodiversity conservation, wildlife protection, etc.), sanitation, garbage collection, provision of key agricultural inputs and production of locally improved materials, etc.

BOX 21: cont'd

These methods can reduce the risks for food insecure households, both directly through wage earnings in the short run and indirectly through income flows in the long run. As well as providing essential services to the community, they can inject money into the local economy and create opportunities to expand it, build collective and household assets, generate investment in farming and non-farming activities, and support basic household survival and coping strategies, especially in terms of food security. By facilitating the emergence of *collective units of action*, these methodologies may also help strengthen local social capital and enhance solidarity, improve individual and collective self-esteem, encourage a positive *entrepreneurial mentality* and, most importantly, improve every aspect of people's quality of life.

One of the most well known work programmes is the *Employment Guarantee Scheme* in Maharashtra State, India, which encouraged farmers to plant more high-yield (rather than drought-tolerant) crop varieties than farmers in neighbouring states. The same approach also inspired a large nationwide programme in Ethiopia, where a collection of measures ranging from labour market interventions and publicly mandated unemployment or old-age insurance to targeted income support, improved or protected human capital, protected assets, improved markets and encouraged loan repayments, etc. In Bangladesh, a new programme launched in 2002 called *Targeting the Ultra-poor* (TUP) developed new and better options for sustainable livelihoods, addressing socio-political constraints at various levels through a combination of approaches – both promotional (asset grants, skills training, etc.) and protective (stipends, health services, etc.).

Sources: Middlebrook, 2003; <http://www.BRACresearch.org>; www.ifpri.org; Huda et al., 2005

COMMON CROSS-CUTTING MEASURES

For each of these three areas – the environment, the economy and social protection – distinct and complementary activities with important potential impacts on local livelihoods and food security may be identified within a complete *road map*.

Implementation of all or part of the road map involves a number of accompanying or cross-cutting measures, whose importance should be noted even though they are not discussed here. These include: (a) building the technical and managerial capacities of local authorities and other stakeholders (community organizations and the public and private sectors); and (b) strengthening fiscal decentralization in order to provide local authorities with the financial facilities needed to support local development.¹¹⁹ Institutional development, capacity building and capital investment are all common components or dimensions of environmental, economic and social protection initiatives.

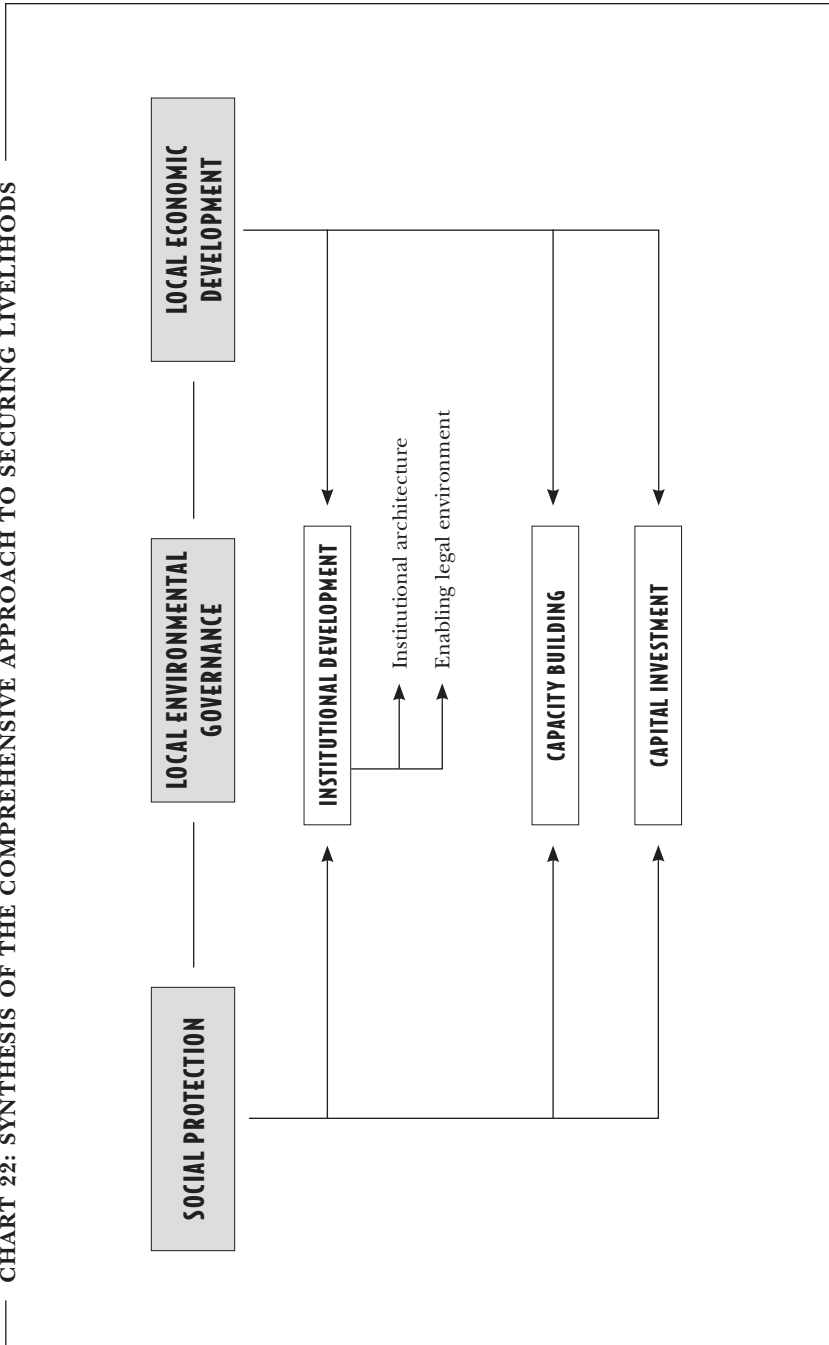
a) Institutional development

The primary concern of institutional development is the specific role of sub-national governments in creating and/or strengthening *an appropriate institutional architecture* to support the development of local economies, local environmental governance and social protection initiatives.

Among other things, this includes task forces, working groups, *ad hoc* committees, environmental committees (composed of representatives of user group associations and community institutions), private service providers and *forums of local economic stakeholders* (made up of representative of the public and private sectors, small and medium enterprises, line ministries) and the like.

With support from the local authorities, each of these bodies has different functions in planning, implementing, delivering, financing or co-financing, procuring and monitoring appropriate initiatives, as well as managing and maintaining economic infrastructures (linking private enterprises with market infrastructure, for example) and specific services (garbage collection, waste management, conservation, wildlife protection, social transfers, organizing work programmes and even tax collection, etc.).

CHART 22: SYNTHESIS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO SECURING LIVELIHOODS



However, institutional development is also about sub-national governments supporting *an enabling legal environment* through the definition and enforcement of sound legal arrangements and regulatory frameworks and appropriate regulations or local by-laws regarding *who* is doing *what* and *how* to develop the local economy and manage the resource base.

“

Predictable rules ensure that entrepreneurs have open access to markets and can do business efficiently.

UN, 2004

”

Local authorities have clear roles in improving the processes and procedures governing businesses, and removing complex, badly managed, expensive and unnecessary business regulations.¹²⁰ In many countries, the absence of policies and reg-

ulations (including property systems) at the local level precludes an enabling environment for business, with detrimental impacts on the private sector. Clear policies and regulations, on the other hand, can facilitate equitable and appropriate investment/development, encourage community-based initiatives and stimulate the creation of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. The poor in developing countries lack an integrated formal property system, and this makes it impossible for them to leverage their informal ownership into the capital needed for enterprise (as collateral for credit). This is the main argument of a well-known study by de Soto on ‘the mystery of capital’, explaining why small-scale farmers are trapped in subsistence agriculture.

Private sector activity is severely restricted by the lack of market opportunities, resources to invest, reasonable returns on investment and acceptable risks.¹²¹ Simple, fair, effective and transparent regulatory and enforcement procedures, the application of the rule of law to economic actors and the suppression of public sector corruption can greatly facilitate local business activity.¹²² Supporting governments at all levels in the creation of an enabling legal environment entails:

- Developing market-related regulations, including contract enforcement and private investment, measures to reduce local barriers to market entry (including relaxing and simplifying regulatory requirements where possible) and measures such as property titling and protecting property rights.
- Defining and supporting appropriate models of public-private partnerships (PPPs) at the local level.

- Creating a *supportive local business climate*, through private sector-friendly regulatory regimes, risk-mitigating measures,¹²³ reduced costs and barriers, strategically guided programmes of public investment, public service provision and public-private partnerships.
- Enforcing labour laws and employment guarantees (with minimum wages for rural workers, for instance).
- Identifying measures that facilitate employment creation, by: (i) marketing the district through information management and sharing; (ii) lessening the bureaucratic burden associated with business permits and licensing; and (iii) spatial planning and land allocation.
- Providing adequate support to enterprises (especially micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises operating in agro-business, transport, trading, etc.) or community-based self-help groups (embryonic micro-enterprises) through a range of appropriate incentives. This support could be provided in the context of entrepreneurial networks.
- Preparing and enforcing guidelines concerning the creation, objectives, rights and obligations of user groups (water user associations, marketing groups and committees, road maintenance committees and the like).
- Establishing procedures that will: (a) help legitimize local user organizations through formal, legal recognition; (b) help strengthen local informal land rights and thus create greater security for local user organizations; (c) provide local user organizations with legal means of calling central state and local government bodies to account; (d) help ensure that the State respects and enforces the rights of local user organizations to control and manage the resources on their lands and exclude certain parties from using them.¹²⁴
- Supporting local user groups in preparing sustainable, enforceable and flexible local by-laws and land use regulations at village or inter-village level, and their endorsement as legal instruments; regulations

When land rights are uncertain, people have little incentive to invest in or conserve land.

concerning local ownership of economic facilities; competitive and transparent bidding systems for the private sector (allowing closer involvement in the management of infrastructures).

- Promulgating local legislation aimed at providing resource tenure or co-management rights where needed, with attention to land rights for women and incentives such as property rights for poor farmers involved in natural resource conservation.
- Offering concrete incentives to local micro-finance institutions to encourage the creation of appropriate micro-credit schemes at the local level.
- Defining the accountability mechanisms and financial procedures needed to successfully manage environmental resources and convey resources to user groups.
- Promulgating regulations regarding costs and market barriers, to allow low-income producers to commercialize natural resource products and services.

b) Capacity building

A core concept of the livelihoods approach (presented in Box 23 opposite) is investment in people (*human capital*) through local capacity building, in order to strengthen:

- (i) The capacity of *sub-national governments* to plan, coordinate, promote, manage, and assess local development policies and strategies, by convening local stakeholders in an inclusive and participatory manner and by adhering to the principles of good governance;
- (ii) The capacity of local entrepreneurs, civil society associations, community-based institutions, user groups, farmers' associations, small and medium enterprises or agro-dealers to participate in decision-making regarding the planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable economic initiatives for poverty reduction. Local producers need to learn about these processes and acquire the competencies needed to run their businesses; while poor households require assistance to allow them to change their production systems and encourage the emergence of micro- and small *self-help units of collective action* (embryonic micro-enterprises).

BOX 23: INVESTING IN PEOPLE

“People are a key resource for the private sector. The capacity and productivity of workers and managers are closely associated with their level of education. Health status also has a significant influence on the productivity of labor. Thus the quality and availability of general health and education services, typically provided by the public sector at local level, contribute to private sector growth.”

“Investment in specific workplace relevant skills, through vocational education and training/re-training programs, is widely held to be a critical component of local economic development programs. General business administration and management training are particularly important in regions where formal sector enterprises have historically constituted a relatively small segment of the economy. Sector specific training also facilitates the growth of enterprises in response to strategic opportunities characteristic of a given locale and the re-deployment of skilled but redundant personnel from declining sectors to growing ones.”

Source: Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005:27

One of the major challenges will be to link capacity building initiatives with poverty reduction. This will call for specific knowledge of appropriate planning, programming and budgeting methodologies (such as ‘*performance budgeting*’, ‘*participatory budgeting*’ and ‘*gender budgeting*’), financial management, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as entrepreneurship, managerial skills and the like.

c) Capital investment

The environment, the economy and social protection need to be supported by regular and predictable local government funding or co-funding – sustainable investment that may be secured by establishing strategic partnerships with the private sector. (For examples of local government investment in agriculture/environment and local economic development, see Appendix 2 to Part III, page 99).

One of the basic assumptions of the livelihood approach is that, in order to develop, the rural economy needs a range of interventions supporting both agricultural investment and other forms of income generation in rural areas (including *environmental income*).¹²⁵

Expanding the economic base of rural households is a priority, through non-farm and non-agricultural activities and the creation of pro-poor jobs, delivery of community services and promotion of self-help and economic empowerment.

The key strategy, therefore, is not simply to raise farm output, but to improve farm productivity and off-farm economic growth in order to create diverse income streams, thereby reducing local vulnerability by making households less susceptible to natural crises.

Rural women in particular require substantial assistance and investment, as various social and cultural factors make them less mobile than men, less likely to leave rural areas in search of temporary urban jobs and more involved in part-time off-farm rural activities.¹²⁶ The use of labour-intensive methods and improved local materials should be strongly promoted and encouraged for the poorest households in the context of a wider social protection programme.

10 Conclusion and overview

Recent thinking suggests that another dimension should be added to the conventional definition of a food-secure society, one that stresses “physical and economic access to food for an active and healthy lifestyle” (see Chapter 2). Thus, a food secure society is one that has not only reached a certain *food norm*, but has also developed “the *internal structures* that will enable it to sustain the norm in the face of crises threatening to lower the achieved level of food consumption”, in other words, the structures that allow individuals and groups to withstand (inevitable) shocks.¹²⁷ Societies not only need economic structures like markets, but also require political and administrative institutions that can empower their citizens – such as democratic sub-national governments and community-based organizations.

As the suppliers of infrastructures, providers of basic social services, collectors of taxes and regulators of land, buildings and activities, local authorities are already deeply involved in local economic activities that impact on local livelihoods.

Under the sectoral model of deconcentrated services, where specialized units assume responsibility for particular functions (education, health and sanitation, roads, water supply, land-use regulation, etc.), many local governments already allocate funds to the service delivery programmes for which they are responsible, complementing transfers from central government with resources mobilized internally through general taxation and fees levied on service delivery.¹²⁸

Being poor or food insecure also means being powerless. Combating poverty and food insecurity also means empowering the poor and the food insecure.

However, local governments should also have a clear and more explicit *leadership* role in setting up local development strategies, highlighting environmental and economic opportunities, creating upstream linkages, overseeing governance arrangements and fiscal management, securing local livelihoods

and promoting social protection, and hence reducing vulnerability to food crises. More specifically, they should have a role in creating *enabling institutional and legal environments* conducive to enterprise development and growth, and supporting *capacity building*.

Local authorities could enforce grading and quality control standards, maintain public health and safety, help achieve economies of scale and solve problems of territorial scope, and implement policies that create a favourable environment for savings and investment (with adequate incentives for consumers and producers).

They could also create the conditions that would allow poor households to generate more income from agricultural activities and environmental goods and services (sustainable forest use, grazing areas, lakes and rivers, etc.).

In the context of new forms of public-private partnership, the *participatory budgeting process* is an interesting tool that local authorities could use to strengthen public-private partnerships on environmental and economic issues and to focus on local priority needs (such as food security). This tool is generally seen as one of several formal elements of accountability. Beyond priority setting and resource allocation, the best participatory budgeting initiatives include mechanisms that bring local people (often representatives of communities or service beneficiaries) and local officials together to monitor resource use and the quality of services.¹²⁹

Finally, supporting economic growth in agriculture, production and commerce would enable local governments to *mobilize local resources* to finance public service provision (through fees for services, local government taxes and voluntary contributions).

However, it is also important not to romanticize the role of local governments and community institutions. Firstly, the scope of the problem may not correspond with the boundaries of political and administrative jurisdictions (the territory under the mandate of local authorities); and secondly, there are risks entailed in this approach which are largely due to:

- *Lack of good local governance* (corruption among local officials, capture of public funds by local élites, inequitable allocation of funds, etc.);
- *Low local technical capacity* (partly due to the multi-sectoral aspect of the livelihood approach);

- *Institutional weaknesses* (failure to accompany the transfer of responsibilities with adequate financial resources; laws and regulations that do not clarify responsibilities, models of collaboration or accountability mechanisms, and which create constraints to service provision);
- *Imposition of taxes* (local authorities may be tempted to seek additional revenues by imposing indiscriminate and regressive taxes on local businesses because they have little or no share of central finances).¹³⁰

There are, however, many *measures aimed at mitigating all these risks*, through the adoption and enforcement of transparent and accountable principles, capacity building programmes and institutional development. For instance, the technical expertise within sectoral departments (agriculture, engineering, economics, management, conservation, etc.) should be systematically deployed to ensure adequate and sustainable outputs, while horizontal linkages between local governments can also help resolve supra-territorial problems.

Appendix I to Part III

IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH LED & LEG

Programmes aimed at supporting local economic development (LED) and local environmental governance (LEG) ultimately address poverty and local livelihood insecurity, particularly food insecurity, by improving local productive activities, facilitating the diversification of household economic activities and creating jobs and incomes.

In rural areas or rural-urban centres this approach revolves around three basic assumptions:

- Agriculture is an essential element of the local economy. Therefore, capital investment in land use and community-based management, protection and rehabilitation of productive natural resources has to be seen as a key element of pro-poor local economic development measures.
- However, agriculture is not and cannot serve as ‘the sole engine’ of poverty-reducing growth in the rural economy. More balanced and integrated multi-sectoral and spatial economic activities allow certain forms of upward mobility to some households. These activities need to be supported by better linking supply and demand with non-agricultural activities in rural areas, strengthening rural-urban linkages and developing the market in a pro-poor manner. This is an explicit recognition of what economists call *the pluri-active nature of the rural economy* – a notion that refers to the multiple activities that take place in rural areas, the sectoral and spatial linkages and the heterogeneity of areas and households.
- A large proportion of rural households are critically dependent on extra-agricultural income and food markets for a minimum basket of food and non-food items.

Diagram 24 opposite is a graphic representation of the general impact that a range of measures to support the local environment and local economy can have on household and community food security in terms of production, access to and use of food. It also points to a number of general policies, regulatory frameworks, accompanying measures and initiatives (shown in the border around the diagram) that gradually need to be put in place to sustain specific initiatives at the local level.

Three major categories of initiative are highlighted in the diagram:

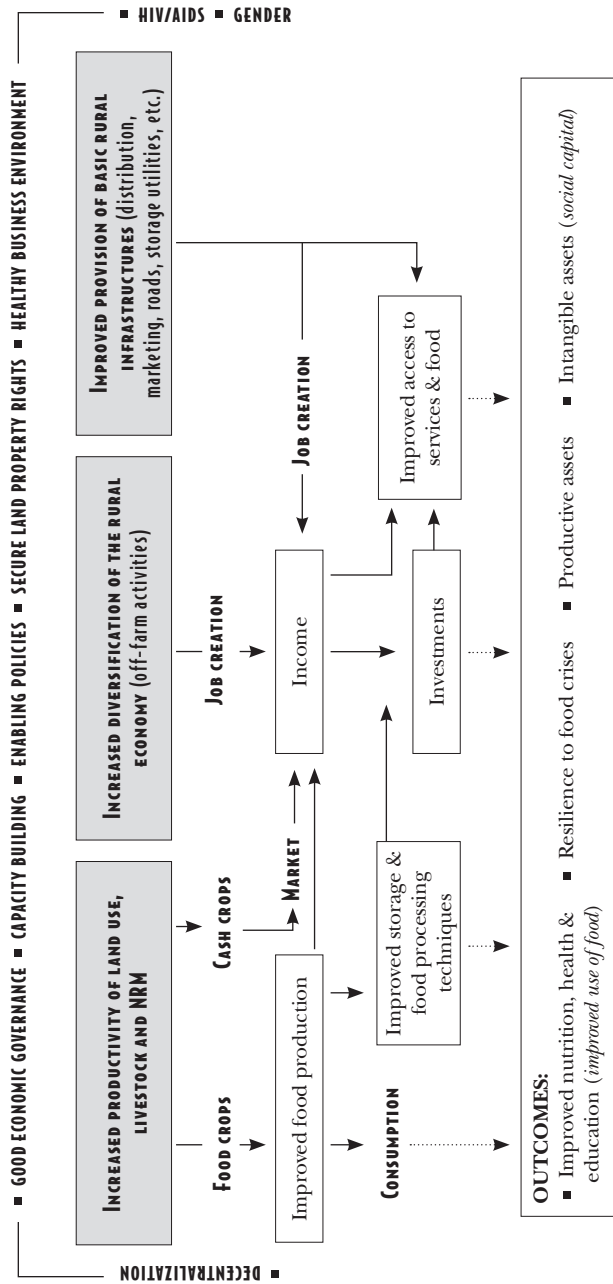
- (i) Initiatives aimed at improving the productivity of land-use and management of natural resources, with a direct impact on food production (food crops for internal household consumption and for the market; cash crops).
- (ii) Initiatives aimed at diversifying the rural economy, especially through support to a range of non-farm and non-agricultural activities that have a direct impact in terms of improving local living conditions and creating pro-poor employment, the delivery of key services and promotion of self-help.
- (iii) General initiatives aimed at supporting the overall planning and management of the economic and physical development of an area.

However, it should be pointed out that:

- Increased involvement in off-farm activities does not necessarily lead to increased levels of income from these activities (as sustainable livelihood strategies depend on returns on capital and labour);¹³¹
- “Poverty reduction not only requires efficient markets, but also sustained and broad-based increases in productivity. Productivity growth, in turn, requires investment in technological and organizational innovation.”¹³²

DIAGRAM 24: PRO-POOR LIVELIHOOD-RELATED INVESTMENTS

How measures related to local economic development and local environmental governance can impact on local livelihoods and food security



Appendix II

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

a) Investments supporting LEG

Coordinating a participatory and comprehensive environmental planning cycle

Helping village communities and user groups set up local environmental schemes and providing them with seed funding

Setting up projects that are outside the competence of individual village communities (by commissioning feasibility studies and tendering for contracts)

Supporting basic assessment of the causes of land use-related conflicts, organizing training on conflict prevention and management for local community leaders, and assisting with enforcement procedures

Providing short-term targeted subsidies to facilitate increased access to inorganic fertilizers through public investment

Stimulating the development of private distribution networks for these inputs, focusing on rural agro-dealers

Encouraging farmers to adopt water conservation and management techniques by matching appropriate technology to local conditions

Using cash for high intensity labour programmes aimed at poor households

Delegating the implementation of environmental activities to local communities (with concrete incentives). Activities include: protection and management of watersheds; rehabilitation of lakes, ponds or large springs; reforestation and management of large forest zones; construction and/or maintenance of rural trails or livestock corridors; promoting farmer-based seed enterprises; establishing self-managed rural markets (e.g., firewood); creating village nurseries and plantations producing local vegetable species; etc.

b) Investments supporting LED

Supporting efforts to build, upgrade and maintain transport infrastructure (feeder and other roads, ports, etc.) and transportation services

Promoting measures to create or rehabilitate storage facilities, especially for agricultural products and inputs (staple crops, seeds, fertilizers, etc.),

Promoting measures to build and operate electricity grids and alternative or renewable generating systems

Promoting and assisting the development of small processing facilities for agricultural products

Establishing and controlling cadastral registries

Establishing and maintaining rural markets

Establishing rural market information points in open-air markets, where farmers, processors, middlemen and traders can get daily updates on the market price of crops, livestock and agricultural inputs

Supporting a broad communication strategy aimed at making public-private partnerships more transparent

Investing in communications infrastructure, organizing information around groups with common interests and maintaining a profit motive for service suppliers

Using information technologies to improve the effectiveness of market-related extension programmes

“

History tells us that the most successful cures for poverty come from within. Foreign aid can help, but like windfall wealth, can also hurt. It can discourage effort and plant a crippling sense of incapacity. As the African saying has it, “The hand that receives is always under the one that gives.” No, what counts is work, thrift, honesty, patience, tenacity. To people haunted by misery and hunger, that may add up to selfish indifference. But at bottom, no empowerment is so effective as self-empowerment.

David Landes, 1998, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*.
Why some are so rich and some so poor

”

“

Democracy is essentially a means, a utilitarian device for safeguarding internal peace and individual freedom. As such it is by no means infallible or certain.

F.A. Hayek, 1944, *The Road to Serfdom*

”

“

Democracy can resist the authoritarian threat if it is transformed from a passive ‘spectator democracy’ into an active ‘participatory democracy’ – in which the affairs of the community are as close and as important to the individual citizens as their private affairs or, better, in which the well-being of the community becomes each citizen’s private concern. By participating in the community, people find life becomes more interesting and stimulating. Indeed, a true political democracy can be defined as one in which life is just that, interesting.

Erich Fromm, 1976,
To Have or to Be

”

PART IV:

Looking forward



In conclusion, Part IV argues that UNCDF has an important contribution to make in helping to secure local livelihoods and make rural households less vulnerable to food crises and famines, within its mandate of supporting local development in the

poorest countries and in line with the lessons learned from its current model of *local development programmes*.

Its main role would be to assist local democratic governments to play a key catalytic role in supporting pro-poor environmental and economic measures with a direct impact on local livelihoods.

11 New challenges for UNCDF

DIMENSIONS OF THE CURRENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) aims to contribute to poverty reduction in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) through its *local development programme* (LDP) – a flexible strategic model designed to support local development, presented in Box 25. The ‘strategic results framework’ of this specialized UN agency implicitly stresses the linkages between good governance activities and multi-dimensional measures to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty. Its interventions are characterized by a model of local governance based on building partnerships with national governments, local authorities, community organizations and the private sector in programme countries.

BOX 25: THE UNCDF MODEL OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Local Development Programme (LDP) is a generic term for a local programming strategy or comprehensive strategic tool that gives local stakeholders (local democratic authorities and local civil society) power and resources in the context of decentralization. Successfully piloted by UNCDF in some 30 countries (mostly in Africa), it has had a substantial impact on local service delivery, local capacities and poverty reduction, as well on national policies.

The LDP strategy of building local capacities aims to:

- develop improved procedures and systems (for local planning/budgeting, etc.) that will be managed by local bodies and thereby enhance the pro-poor delivery performance of those bodies;
- introduce these alongside real budgetary resources, allowing real-time learning-by-doing. ►

BOX 25: cont'd

LDPs aim to promote more effective, efficient, equitable and accountable infrastructure and service delivery through rural local governments, by twinning innovations in funding mechanisms with other capacity development innovations in planning, budgeting, delivery and accountability arrangements. These innovations are piloted through reforms that are designed within the current institutional framework as far as possible, and which can therefore be used as a basis for promoting wider national policy change and replication.

An LDP has four distinct features:

- *Sub-national institutional focus*: Supporting the institutional development of sub-national government and community institutions and their inter-relations in selected areas
- *Innovation in practice and procedures*: Improving procedures and practices for local planning and budgeting, procurement, implementation, management and monitoring and – overall – enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of local bodies in poverty reduction-related activities
- *Performance-linked funding facility*: Providing local governments with a development budget support facility that allows regular, transparent and sustainable allocations to local bodies and is tied to agreed measures of local performance, as an incentive for local capacity building
- *Policy impact*: Agreeing to pilot activities that are ‘policy-relevant’, and which can be scaled up, working as far as possible through statutory bodies and procedures (rather than creating parallel structures), to assist both the reform and implementation of national policy on decentralization and local governance, fiscal decentralization and local service delivery, and local public sector reform.

Therefore, the general objective of the LDP model is to demonstrate that sound institutional arrangements, together with increased opportunities for better economic performance and sustainable rural livelihoods, can empower the poor, strengthen their participation in local political life and decision-making and improve their conditions.

Some current LDPs deal more or less directly with livelihood security in general, and food security in particular. Their major livelihood-related components address human capital through investment in social services and economic infrastructures such as schools and health centres.

For instance, since the end of the 1990s, LDPs in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Burkina Faso and Mali have supported the construction of feeder roads, mainly through the intensive use of local labour (especially the poor and the food insecure).

In Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Eritrea, Viet Nam and Bangladesh, LDPs have explicitly supported agriculture-related measures with a potential impact on food production.

There is also a new generation of projects (in Mali and Rwanda, for example) that highlight a comprehensive approach to sustainable natural resource management, involving local governments in supporting institutions, establishing regulatory frameworks and disseminating good practices and techniques.

Some LDPs have also attempted to assist local authorities in explicitly promoting activities to improve the situation of the food insecure. In Niger, for example, local councils have supported the creation of a grass-roots network of cereal banks, along with capacity-building measures for their management committees. And during the recent severe famine in Niger, LDPs helped local councils revise their investment budgets and purchase local stocks of food that people could buy through the cereal bank network.

In parallel with this, the LDP model has already addressed some key aspects of LED in many initiatives, especially in terms of the planning and implementation of public economic infrastructures (roads, markets, etc.), training of local contractors and the *ad hoc* use of private service providers.

WAYS FORWARD

It has to be said, however, that the LDP model *has not yet fully addressed* a number of specific issues facing local governments in the design, planning and implementation of a more comprehensive approach to securing local livelihoods by sustaining local economies, supporting environmental governance, enhancing social protection and, ultimately, achieving food security.

An innovative shift would better highlight the new challenges for local authorities.

- This would see sub-national governments as *providers of a range of social, economic and environmental services*, and as *facilitators and brokers* of new forms of partnership for capacity building, institutional development and investment by the public and private sectors. Within an enhanced governance paradigm, the services thus provided would aim to increase incomes from agriculture and natural resources, industry, employment, commerce and the like, through the provision of conditional grant schemes, social transfers and capacity building assistance.
- Sub-national governments should also be the *facilitators and brokers* of new forms of partnership between the public and private sectors, through the provision of conditional grant schemes and assistance for capacity building, institutional development and investment.

Strategic planning for local economic development has often been neglected in municipal planning processes.¹³³ In a favourable legal climate, a more integrated approach to local development steered by local

Local authorities can promote coalitions of producers, community associations, user groups and local enterprises around specific social, environmental and economic priorities.

authorities could increase the opportunities for local communities and households, associations, micro-, small and medium-enterprises, user groups and firms to invest, produce and sell goods and services and acquire assets. They would also be able to increase their ability to capitalize on these opportunities, through access to capital, knowledge and skills, technology and inputs, support services and markets. Local livelihoods would then be strengthened in

sustainable ways, through the creation of assets and employment, and support for capacity building, local livelihood strategies and the market. The challenge of reducing food insecurity for a majority of people could then be faced in a sustainable way.

The international development context is highly favourable to these approaches, particularly as there is widespread recognition of the enormous potential that agriculture holds for rural populations in developing countries.

Improving the poor performance of Africa's agricultural sector is seen as the key to addressing hunger and poverty. There is increasing evidence that enhancing agricultural productivity is the critical entry point in designing effective poverty reduction strategies, and that investments in agriculture are likely to favour the poor more than similar investments in manufacturing.¹³⁴

In the right conditions, agriculture can be an effective instrument for economic development, especially development that favours the poor. This requires strategies that will unlock agricultural growth in order to reduce poverty, exploit new opportunities for agricultural growth, enhance its pro-poor character, facilitate favourable exits from agriculture and achieve environmentally sustainable agricultural growth.¹³⁵

HELPING THE TRANSITION

Previous poverty reduction and food security strategies paid insufficient attention to the role of sub-national authorities and the importance of environmental and economic governance. Earlier models of economic growth for poverty reduction focused on industrialization, large-scale agriculture and commercial fishing, without fully appreciating the realities of rural livelihoods.

Historically, rural households and communities in Africa have always combined different degrees of *commodity production and subsistence*. Contrary to the conventional representation of African reality, purely subsistence-oriented or self-sufficient farming or pastoral communities have never existed.

Therefore, policies supporting the transition from a subsistence to a commodity economy (or commercial farming) should not be seen as being outside the traditional livelihoods framework. This transition is not so much “a leap from one kind of economy to another”, it is rather “a quantum jump, a shift in degree along the continuum from self-sufficiency to greater economic interdependence through the expansion of the market”.¹³⁶

This transition may be eased or facilitated by external forces such as the public sector, which can provide suitable infrastructure at the local level in terms of markets, transport and storage facilities, market information, communication and the like.

12 Growth and democracy

So it seems that the way forward lies in assisting local governments to play an increasing – and crucial – catalytic role in creating a pro-poor environment. This highlights the linkages between *economic growth and democracy* and brings us full circle, back to the question raised at the beginning of this book: does democratic decentralization help reduce poverty and achieve food security?

First of all, it should be pointed out that democratic decentralization has to take place within a given legal, institutional, financial and social context, and be rooted in civic values and forms of engagement if it is to work properly and achieve its intended results. (See Box 26, pg. 114 for more on this).

Secondly, democracy – which is seen both as “a form of government and a political value” – cannot hope to provide “a compelling or realistic recipe for organizing the political or economic relations” within a given country or between countries.¹³⁷

Thirdly, the real world is complex and ambivalent. So, while democracy can indeed promote social and economic development and advance human development, it does not do so automatically. Democracy, or democratic decentralization, is not a panacea. There is no clear evidence of a linear relationship between democratic decentralization, local governance and poverty reduction, or between democracy and allocative efficiency.¹³⁸

Finally, in Africa and elsewhere today, issues like famine or food supply are inseparable from politics, and cannot be addressed in a sustainable manner without political commitment and democratic reform.

**BOX 26: DOES DEMOCRACY WORK? —
WHAT DOES IT NEED IN ORDER TO WORK?**

Debate

“When people outside the democracy assistance community take an interest in democracy aid ... they usually arrive quickly at a basic question, “does it work?” This question bubbled up to the surface in policy circles again and again over the past decades, finding little resolution and being posed each time as though for the first time. Despite thousands of democracy projects carried out in dozens of countries, billions of dollars spent, and endless reports by aid providers, there is surprisingly little conventional wisdom on the utility of democracy aid. Instead, one encounters passionate assertions from democracy promoters that such assistance is critical to the future of democracy worldwide and questioning, even derisive comments from sceptics who say that democracy cannot be exported.”

Source: Carothers, 1999:303

Funds, powers and accountability mechanisms

“If democratic decentralization is to work reasonably well, decentralized authorities must be provided with: (a) *adequate funds* to accomplish important tasks; (b) *adequate powers* to make decisions required to complete such tasks; and (c) *reliable accountability mechanisms* – to ensure both the accountability of elected representatives to citizens, and the accountability of bureaucrats to elected representatives. In the absence of any one of these things, decentralized systems will founder.”

Source: Manor, 2006

BOX 26: cont'd

Underlying civic settings

In order to work, new institutions of democracy must be rooted in “norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement”, which are “embodied” in mutual aid societies, cooperatives, unions, etc. These “horizontal civic bonds” should have high levels of economic and institutional performance. “Although we are accustomed to thinking of the state and the market as alternative mechanisms for solving social problems ... *both states and markets operate more efficiently in civic settings.*”

Source: From Putman, 1993:181

Expanded capabilities

“Promoting democratic politics means expanding capabilities such as education, to enable people to play a more effective role in such politics, and fostering the development of civil society groups and other informal institutions to help democratic institutions better represent the people.”

UNDP, 2002

Thus, the answers to key questions about democracy and development do not depend on a single variable, but on complex interconnections between politics, society and the economy; they are shaped by internal and external forces, cultural civic values and traditions, and future prospects.

From a more pragmatic perspective, poverty and food insecurity should be considered as *local* problems, as should lack of good governance. Therefore, it is also at the *local level* that the ‘poverty reduction (food security) / economic growth / democratic governance’ equation may be adequately conjugated. Local, democratically elected and accountable government authorities now have clearer comparative advantages than before in maintaining cross-sector, localized and sustainable approaches to securing livelihoods and improving food security.

Therefore, the hypothesis that democracy may help poverty reduction is certainly a strong one. However, we should remember the old dialectic wisdom that we need to consider “not only what happens if a particular hypothesis is true, but also what happens if it is not true”.¹³⁹ This means that the opposite assumption cannot be completely excluded: that it is possible that economic growth, poverty reduction and food security could be achieved more rapidly and more efficiently within a non-democratic or non-democratically decentralized political structure.

In conclusion, to use the language of *game theory*, reducing food insecurity is a *nonzero sum game* (as is reducing poverty or improving democracy): one player’s payoff is not the negative of the other, one contestants’ gain is not the other’s loss. If food insecurity is defined as insufficient access to food, then tackling food insecurity will necessarily entail losers and winners. If, on the other hand, food insecurity is linked to the failure of local livelihoods, the weakness of collective livelihood strategies, exclusion from public services, lack of markets and other infrastructures, lack of governance and inclusive decision-making, or unfavourable business climates and the like, then food insecurity is a nonzero sum game: numerous players may have entirely overlapping interests, and all kinds of local stakeholders stand to benefit from collaboration on collective efforts to address the situation. This is what democratic local governments can make a difference.

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Endnotes

PART I

- ¹ World Resources, 2005.
- ² <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003>
- ³ The 'New Partnership for Africa's Development' initiative (www.nepad.org).
- ⁴ For instance, recent research by IFPRI (quoted by FFSSA, 2004) shows that if the countries of Southern Africa continue with the agricultural and food policies they have pursued up to now, poverty, food insecurity and child malnutrition will worsen significantly, resources will become more degraded, land productivity will further decline in many areas and the region will become increasingly vulnerable to famine.
- ⁵ See the *World Hunger Campaign* at www.care.org: "Every minute of every day, somewhere in the world, 21 children die of malnutrition and preventable diseases".
- ⁶ <http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/>
- ⁷ Sahley et al., 2005.
- ⁸ FFSSA 2004.
- ⁹ In Europe too, during the Middle Ages "Famine was a permanent danger in a traditional agrarian system, where yields were scant, the number of crops limited, transport difficult, food stocks meager and storage inadequate. A crop failure or an increase in the population was immediately followed by hunger, for even if grain was brought in from other regions, the inevitable price increases made it too expensive for most family budgets. In the Middle Ages the threat of famine was permanent; even at times of agricultural prosperity and increased grain production, the annals of the period abound in descriptions, frequently exaggerated, of famines. Most of them, however, remained local" (Geremek, 1997:98).
- ¹⁰ Devereux & Maxwell, 2001:2. The authors also argue that "poverty and hunger are getting worse in Africa, but better almost everywhere else".
- ¹¹ *Food insecurity in West Africa. Why now again? What has been done? What still has to be done?* Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat 2005, [Available in www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/36/35350637.pdf].
- ¹² Gillespie ed., 2006.
- ¹³ Contrary to the conventional wisdom prevailing in the 1980s, it is now widely recognized that national food self-sufficiency is a poor proxy for household access to food. In most cases, about 20 to 30 percent of the population consumes less than 80 percent of their caloric requirements even when per capita food supply exceeds 100 percent of requirements (Jayne, 1995).
- ¹⁴ On this, see Berry, 1993. Famines, droughts, and cattle plagues may have dramatic and contradictory effects on local livelihoods. Against the backdrop of the ecological and economic crises of the last decades, the livelihoods of African nomadic pastoralists like the Wodaabe of Niger, for instance, have taken uncertain and contradictory paths: the same constraints have led some groups of households to opt for *agricultural sedentarization*, while others have *become more nomadic*, embarking on longer-range pastoral migrations. These choices are not neutral, as they may finally favour (or inhibit) new social affiliations and alliances, the adoption of specific survival and coping strategies, and higher involvement in or retreat from market transactions (see Bonfiglioli, 1986).
- ¹⁵ Devereux & Maxwell eds., 2004: 95.

- ¹⁶ See Devereux & Maxwell ed., 2001: 14.
- ¹⁷ Davies S., 1996: 18.
- ¹⁸ Clay E. & Stokke O. eds., 2000.
- ¹⁹ DFID 2004: 8.
- ²⁰ FFSSA 2004:49.
- ²¹ Here are some of the definitions: 'Social protection refers to the public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society' (*Overseas Development Institute, ODI*); 'Social protection is a collection of measures to improve or protect human capital, ranging from labor market interventions, publicly mandated unemployment or old-age insurance to targeted income support. Social protection interventions assist individuals, households, and communities to better manage the income risks that leave people vulnerable' (www.worldbank.org). Social protection is 'the provision of benefits to households and individuals through public or collective arrangements to protect against low or declining living standards' (*International Labour Office, ILO*); 'Social protection can guarantee access to essential goods and services, promote active socio-economic security, and advance individual and social potentials for poverty reduction and sustainable development' (*Bonilla García & Gruat/ ILO, 2003*); "Social protection is defined as 'the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income'" (*Asian Development Bank, ADB*).
- ²² Bonilla García & Gruat/ ILO 2003.
- ²³ See www.fao.org
- ²⁴ In ancient history the Athenian empire was created due to the need for a guaranteed grain supply; the Empire fell because it was dependent on corn from the Black Sea and forced to surrender when it was cut off from that region (Bowra, quoted in Thomas, 1981:79). Grain supply was also an issue of intense political importance in the old Roman Empire, where the State became increasingly involved in a wide range of activities supporting the supply of corn – which eventually included a fixed monthly ration of about 45 kg of free grain for every eligible citizen (subsequently changed to loaves of bread). The end of free food supplies resulted in widespread famine, a drastic reduction in the Roman population and the eventual collapse of the Roman Empire (Reader, 2004:56-58; Thomas, 1981:75). In one final example from recent African history, the 1974 military coup in Niger was a direct consequence of the civic unrest created by the famine of 1973-1974.
- ²⁵ Ellis, 2002.
- ²⁶ IFPRI 2005.
- ²⁷ Prompting one analyst to pose the intriguing question: "Are the 'new famines' more 'political' than historical famines, or are we simply recognizing the centrality of political factors more than before?" (Devereux et al., quoted in FFSSA 2004:7).
- ²⁸ Sen, 1981.
- ²⁹ Jayne, 1995 for all this paragraph.
- ³⁰ Ellis, 2002.
- ³¹ Hart, 1982:14.
- ³² See Ponte, 2002.
- ³³ In Latin America, for instance, the number of people living in poverty has increased in the last decade even as the GDP per capita has increased.

- ³⁴ Devereux, 2005, gives the example of Niger, where the Government's appeals for emergency assistance in late 2004 were ignored, despite having done everything the international community asked of it, from economic liberalization to political reforms. Instead, it had to impose a 19 per cent tax hike on food staples (flour, milk and sugar) in early 2005 as an IMF conditionality for budget support (although these taxes were revoked following protest marches in the country's capital, Niamey, when demonstrators carried signs reading 'We're hungry, help us'). This intervention also resonates uncomfortably with IMF advice to the government of Malawi to sell its Strategic Grain Reserve just before the 2002 famine.
- ³⁵ See Ellis, 1996:13.
- ³⁶ Thirty-two definitions of food security have been identified by researchers (see Maxwell & Smith, quoted in Davies, 1996: 15).
- ³⁷ There is food security '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 lifestyle' (www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/economic/esa/fs_en.htm)
- ³⁸ World Bank 1986.
- ³⁹ Davies, 1996: 16.
- ⁴⁰ Ellis F., 2002.
- ⁴¹ Devereux, S., 2000.
- ⁴² According to Ellis, 2002, sensitivity refers to the magnitude of a system's response to an external event (a livelihood system is 'sensitive' if small change in the price of food crops rapidly causes undernutrition in the human population.
- ⁴³ Ellis, 2002:2-3.
- ⁴⁴ Ellis, 2002.
- ⁴⁵ See OECD 2002:26.
- ⁴⁶ According to UNICEF, the term "undernutrition is defined as the outcome of insufficient food intake (hunger) and repeated infectious diseases. Undernutrition includes being underweight for one's age, too short for one's age (stunted), dangerously thin (wasted), and deficient in vitamins and minerals (micronutrient malnutrition). When individuals are undernourished, they can no longer maintain natural bodily capacities, such as growth, resisting infections and recovering from disease, learning and physical work, and pregnancy and lactation in women. Poor feeding of infants and young children, especially the lack of optimal breastfeeding and responsive complementary feeding, along with such illnesses as diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria and HIV/AIDS, often exacerbated by helminths, are major causes of undernutrition" (UNICEF, 2006).
- ⁴⁷ The notion of 'subsistence' or 'subsistence farmer' should be considered as "a derogatory, confusing and old-fashioned term which is best avoided since it is often held to imply both household self-sufficiency and no crop-selling, in short 'aboriginal equilibrium'" (Hill, 1986: 180).
- ⁴⁸ Scoones, 1998.
- ⁴⁹ Chambers, 1 quoted in Davies, 1996: 18.
- ⁵⁰ Sachs, 1992.
- ⁵¹ For more information on the FAO/SPFS see www.fao.org/sfps
- ⁵² For more information on IFAD policy on food security see www.ifad.org/hfs
- ⁵³ See www.dfid.gov.uk. See also DFID 2002.
- ⁵⁴ See: <http://www.ifpri.org/themes/aicha.htm>

⁵⁵ Definitions of poverty, and thus proposed poverty reduction policies, differ significantly between the two World Development Reports produced at either end of the past decade [World Bank, 1990 and 2001]. While the 1990 report viewed poverty primarily in monetary terms, that of 2001 sees it as multifaceted deprivation of not only income, but also the capabilities to achieve full human potential. From this perspective, poverty is not merely a matter of reduced income or consumption, but amounts to a state of relative powerlessness and exclusion from decision-making processes. Poverty manifests itself in low levels of education, high rates of mortality and poor health – factors that also contribute to poverty [World Bank 2001: 31]. For more on this, see Green, 2006.

⁵⁶ Devereux et al., 2002: Although Sen argues that famines do not happen in democracies, Devereux et al. point to ‘new famines’ in countries like Niger, Ethiopia or Malawi, which have all embarked on a democratic transformation of their structures (although it has to be said that the quality of the democratization processes in Niger and Ethiopia is debatable).

⁵⁷ See Sahley et al., 2005.

PART II

⁵⁸ Ellis, 2000: 74.

⁵⁹ Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005: 27.

⁶⁰ In the context of the impact of HIV/AIDS on local livelihoods, it has been reported that land acquisition by better-off households is likely to increase as widows and orphans fail to retain access and/or ownership rights to land after the death of the husband/father (Gillespie ed., 2006).

⁶¹ See also Appendix to Part II.

⁶² Gillespie ed., 2006.

⁶³ Davies, 1996:18.

⁶⁴ This simple argument was reconfirmed during the 2005 food crisis in Niger, when urban markets and traders warehouses were filled with grain.

⁶⁵ In the 1970s, for instance, hunger, and particularly famine, appeared to be a result of an acute food shortage that could best be addressed through steps to increase the production and distribution of food. In the early 1980s the idea that famines are caused by harvest failures alone was disputed, and supplanted by explanations based on failures of ‘entitlements’, i.e. the inability of individuals to access the food they need due to poverty (DFID 2004).

⁶⁶ In a discussion on the 2005 food crisis in Niger, *The Economist* (2005) states: “If mass hunger were simply the result of there not being enough food to eat, the remedy would be obvious: more food. The emergency rations now being shipped, flown and trucked into the Sahel are indeed necessary and urgent by the time hunger and destitution are acute and widespread. But if mass hunger begins with a collapse in purchasing power, rather than a shortage of food, it does not take an airlift to prevent it. What is needed is a way to restore lost purchasing power, for example, offering employment, at a suitable wage, on public works. The market respects demand, not need. But give the needy enough pull in the market, and the market will do most of the rest.”

⁶⁷ Swift & Hamilton, 2001:92.

⁶⁸ Maxwell S. & Frankenberger T., 1992: 4.

⁶⁹ ODI 2004.

⁷⁰ Swift & Hamilton (2000:9) highlight the fact that the “sustainable livelihood approach has a number of weaknesses”, including the fact that it has so far been good at identifying problems, but less good at finding solutions .

- ⁷¹ Sahley et al., 2005.
- ⁷² Hence the provocative statement that because food security management requires better collaboration across sectors, disciplines and institutions, “food security is too important and too complex to be left to specialist ministries such as Agriculture” (Devereux S. & Maxwell S. ed., 2003). In the specific context of Malawi, for example, a recent study concluded that “it is doubtful whether the Ministry of Agriculture (has) the political capital and the technical capacity to coordinate the food security policy” – a narrow perspective that is prevalent in many African countries (see the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in Burundi, for just one of many examples).
- ⁷³ According to *Development Initiatives (2004-05) ‘Global Humanitarian Assistance’*.
- ⁷⁴ For instance, a recent ODI report found that only 17% of the non-food needs identified in the 2005-2006 UN appeal for Kenya were funded, compared with 46% of food needs. In Malawi and Zambia in 2002/2003, donors overreacted to a projected food deficit and flooded the market with aid, undermining prices and hurting local producers (Devereux, 2002, ‘State of Disaster’, Action Aid). It has also been pointed out that food aid is extremely expensive compared to commercial imports and locally produced food: for example, in 2003 maize food aid in Malawi was estimated to cost US\$ 450 per tonne, compared with US\$ 220 per tonne for commercial imports and less than US\$ 50 per tonne for maize produced domestically using free inputs (Levy, quoted by FFSSA 2004:32).
- ⁷⁵ The buying up of food stocks for use as foreign aid is therefore a form of domestic subsidy that can actively harm farmers in the developing world (Mayne, 2006). The biggest donor, the United States, provides most of its food aid in kind, but current law stipulates that all food aid provided by the US Agency for International Development has to be grown by American farmers and the bulk of it shipped on vessels flying the US flag.
- ⁷⁶ See also Mayne, 2006.
- ⁷⁷ See Bergeron, 1999.
- ⁷⁸ See www.sadc.int.
- ⁷⁹ Swift & Hamilton, 2001: 82.
- ⁸⁰ See FFSSA 2004:7.
- ⁸¹ Swift & Hamilton, 2000:90.
- ⁸² OECD 2002: 37.
- ⁸³ Gillespie ed., 2006.
- ⁸⁴ Swift & Hamilton, 2000:82.

PART III

- ⁸⁵ Devereux, 2000: 218.
- ⁸⁶ In the context of Southern Africa, it has been pointed out that *Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS)* tend to be more detailed on tangible and programmable actions such as investments in roads, education and health, but much less specific about softer and less tangible advances in governance, such as creating an enabling environment for investment (FFSSA 2004:46). This observation also holds true for other African countries.
- ⁸⁷ Siegel, 2005.
- ⁸⁸ www.worldbank.org/wdrs
- ⁸⁹ Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005: 27.
- ⁹⁰ Manor, 2005.
- ⁹¹ Davies, 1996: 307.
- ⁹² Manor, *ibid*.

- ⁹³ A value-chain may be defined as a string of companies working together to satisfy market demands. It typically consists of primary supplier(s) of value (product or service) and many other secondary suppliers (that add to the value offered to consumers).
- ⁹⁴ Plan of Action, Objective 3.5 (b).
- ⁹⁵ Helmsing, 2001.
- ⁹⁶ Berry, 1993: 46.
- ⁹⁷ Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005.
- ⁹⁸ World Bank 2002.
- ⁹⁹ Major partners from the sectoral ministries and departments that provide technical expertise and backstopping are the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock, Ministry of Environment, Chambers of agriculture, public and private financial institutions, NGOs (specializing in agriculture), private entrepreneurs, etc.
- ¹⁰⁰ World Resources 2005.
- ¹⁰¹ DFID 2004b.
- ¹⁰² DFID 2004b.
- ¹⁰³ See Helmsing, 2000, for example.
- ¹⁰⁴ Major partners from the sectoral ministries and departments that provide technical expertise and backstopping are the Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Communication, Chambers of commerce, public and private financial institutions, NGOs (specializing in trade and trade-related legal issues, commerce and markets), private entrepreneurs, etc.
- ¹⁰⁵ See Appendix to Part III regarding the impact of local economic development-related initiatives on food insecurity.
- ¹⁰⁶ Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005:9.
- ¹⁰⁷ Poulton & Dorward, 2003.
- ¹⁰⁸ IFPRI 2005.
- ¹⁰⁹ FFSSA 2004:25.
- ¹¹⁰ <http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/economics.nsf/Content/IC-InvestmentClimate>
- ¹¹¹ UN 2004: 27.
- ¹¹² According to the FAO/ODI model.
- ¹¹³ Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004.
- ¹¹⁴ FFSSA 2004:49.
- ¹¹⁵ See Dercon, 2005, and Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004, on this topic.
- ¹¹⁶ Middlebrook, 2003.
- ¹¹⁷ UNDP 2006.
- ¹¹⁸ DFID 2005.
- ¹¹⁹ See UNCDF 2003; UNCDF 2006.
- ¹²⁰ Swinburn, 2006:5.
- ¹²¹ Cromwell, 2004.
- ¹²² See Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005:28.
- ¹²³ FFSSA 2004:31 identifies four categories of risk: (i) *production risks* (from natural shocks, mechanical failures, etc.); (ii) *market price risks* (from changes in supply and demand); (iii) *economic coordination risks* (due to the absence of suppliers or buyers when needed); (iv) *risks of opportunism* (due to monopolistic market power being used to make business unattractive or uncertain controls and rent-seeking).
- ¹²⁴ UNCDF 2004:83.
- ¹²⁵ According to World Resources 2005, 'environmental income' is the value derived in cash or direct use from ecosystem goods and services. It is the sum of two important income streams: wild income (from wild or uncultivated natural systems, such as forests, marine and inland fisheries, reefs, wetlands, and grasslands) and agricultural income (from agro-ecosystems, i.e. all agricultural lands, such as croplands, pastures or orchards. Among the poor, most agricultural income is generated through small-scale agriculture).

¹²⁶ ‘Agricultural’ or ‘farm’ incomes are derived from the production or gathering of unprocessed natural resources, crops, livestock, forest or fish products; while ‘non-agricultural’ or ‘non-farm’ incomes are all other sources of income derived from processing, transporting or trading unprocessed agricultural, forest and fish products, etc. Non-agricultural enterprises may be undertaken anywhere (at home, on the farm, in town or abroad), on any scale (from huge factories to single individuals) and using any kind of technology; and may provide participants with profit or labour income (wages or salary). (See Barrett et al., op cit. 2001).

¹²⁷ See FFSSA 2004: 4 (quoting Oshaug).

¹²⁸ Many local governments deliver services beyond their legal remit as a result of pressure from their constituents: organizing schools and clinics on their own initiative, serving as advocates for their constituencies and lobbying ministerial departments to increase the coverage and improve the quality of the services they provide to local communities (see Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005:34).

¹²⁹ Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005: 34.

¹³⁰ FFSSA 2004:47.

¹³¹ Ponte, 2002:157.

¹³² Jayne et al., 2005.

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¹³³ Helling & Serrano & Warren, 2005:34.

¹³⁴ Christiaensen et al., 2006.

¹³⁵ See forthcoming World Development Report 2008 in www.worldbank.org/wdrs

¹³⁶ Hart, 1982:9.

¹³⁷ Dunn, 2005:17.

¹³⁸ UNCDF 2003:43.

¹³⁹ From Plato (*Parmenides*).

