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Development Strategies and Food and Nutrition Security in Africa

An Assessment

Franz Heidhues
Achi Atsain
Hezron Nyangito
Martine Padilla
Gérard Ghersi
Jean-Charles Le Vallée

International Food Policy Research Institute
2033 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006–1002 USA
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Foreword

Momentum is building in and around Africa today for policy action to decisively confront hunger and malnutrition. If we are to succeed, it is vital that food and nutrition security strategies be both sound and able to be implemented. Ultimately, strategies deficient in either of these two areas will be ineffectual. Lessons from past strategies provide a valuable resource in the design of future strategies, yet there is a dearth of programmatic information and rigorous evaluations of the approaches used in the past.

With this in mind, the authors of this 2020 discussion paper—Franz Heidhues, Achi Atsain, Hezron Nyangito, Martine Padilla, Gérard Ghersi, and Jean-Charles Le Vallée—review the multitude of approaches and strategies for achieving food and nutrition security in Africa within the context of development over the past four decades. They assess the extent to which these plans have been implemented and identify the key constraints and limitations, along with the priority investments needed for more effective design and implementation in the future.

This paper was commissioned for the IFPRI 2020 Africa Conference, "Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020: Prioritizing Actions, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships," which was held in Kampala, Uganda, from April 1 to April 3, 2004. There, the lessons learned from decades of successes and failures in designing and implementing strategies in and for Africa contributed to an informed and informative discussion of how to improve the implementation of action to end hunger and malnutrition. We thank the authors for setting the stage for the systematic examination of these extremely important issues and hope that this paper is only the beginning of such endeavors.

Joachim von Braun
Director General, IFPRI

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Executive Summary

Numerous strategies, policies, and programs intended to assist Africa's development have been conceived and implemented by international bodies, regional and subregional groups, and national institutions. On average, a typical developing country in Africa is assisted by about 30 aid institutions to implement these strategies, yet Africa is still far from achieving food and nutrition security. This paper examines whether those strategies and policies fit the goal of achieving food and nutrition security, how they were implemented, and why the results have been so variable and often lacking. Further, this paper considers the lessons of these projects in terms of strategy formulation and implementation, and how they can be used to effectively and sustainably reduce hunger and malnutrition.

The implementation of a strategy requires its clear formulation, a conducive policy and institutional environment, a widely shared consensus about the strategy and its measures, the human capacity for implementation, and sufficient financial resources. In order to evaluate a strategy in detail, it is necessary to address the following issues:

- Have key issues been clearly identified, properly analyzed, and located within their political, economic, and sociocultural contexts?
- Are objectives clearly defined, internally consistent, and formulated realistically, and have possible conflicts between the objectives been identified and trade-offs between them been addressed?
- Are policies and programs for achieving these objectives appropriate to, congruent with, and supportive of, the strategy?
- Is the capacity to implement the strategy available—that is, are there sufficient financial resources, the necessary human capacity, the requisite institutional framework, and adequate infrastructure?
- Has the time required for implementation been estimated realistically, taking into account the demands of institution building, education, and training?
- Have all stakeholders been included in the process of strategy development, and, in particular, have they been involved in identifying priorities, defining objectives, and in planning and implementing the strategy?
- Have the lessons of past experiences of development strategy implementation been taken into account?

In the two decades after most African countries became independent in the early 1960s there were high hopes for rapid development, and much was achieved. The overall economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa averaged 3.4 percent per year between 1961 and 1980. Agricultural development contributed enormously to overall growth and was crucial to the gains achieved in food and nutrition security. But by the end of the 1970s, the major social and economic indicators for African countries began to decline. Agricultural production dropped, resulting in massive food imports. The output of both industry and manufacturing also declined. Adverse terms of trade, the oil crisis, and the slump in the world economy exacerbated these negative trends in African economies. At the same time, domestic problems threatened the stability of many African state institutions and even the existence of some states. There were widespread coups d'état, civil strife, and ethnic violence.

Two early responses to these African socioeconomic development crises were the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN). These started from the premise that, given the limited size and capacity of the private sector, the states had to take on the dominant role in development. Thus governments drew up comprehensive five-year plans, invested in large state-run basic industries and market structures, and enacted pervasive regulations to control prices, restrict trade, and allocate credit and foreign exchange, all generally carried out with full donor support. Publicly funded programs in support of agricultural research and extension, fertilizer supply, export production and marketing, and food distribution were the essential components of this approach.

When by 1980 it had become apparent that Africa's crisis was deepening, the World Bank and IMF argued that a fundamental shift in approach was needed to stabilize African economies, increase efficiency of investment, and reinvigorate growth. Their new concept of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) implied a move away from state-dominated development to reliance on the private sector. . Food and nutrition security were addressed only indirectly in these programs through the aims of improved economic stability and higher economic growth.

In response to concerns about the deleterious impact of SAPs on health services, education, infrastructure, rural support institutions, and employment, all of which had particularly affected Africa's poor, the approach of the World Bank and donor community shifted, returning to a more balanced treatment of state and private sector functions in development, while at the same time maintaining the emphasis on efficiency in resource allocation. The Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) both emphasized the need to integrate cultural, social, political, and environmental considerations into development strategies, and to apply these considerations to reducing poverty and creating a framework for pro-poor growth. Each process was intended to be led by the countries concerned, and to be based on the partnership and participation of all stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels. The emphasis on poverty in the CDF/PRSP concept implies that agricultural and rural development were envisioned as playing vitally important roles.

Building on the CDF/PRSP process, African leaders at the turn of the century developed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This approach intended to combine African initiatives and ownership of the development process with neoliberal concepts. NEPAD supports liberalization and globalization but emphasizes that these processes need to be fair and accompanied by a leveling of the playing field for international trade. By accepting NEPAD's policy framework, African leaders jointly took responsibility for eradicating poverty and placing their countries, both individually and collectively, on the path of sustainable development and growth. Furthermore, they committed their countries to people-centered participatory development processes. The NEPAD strategy seeks to produce agriculture-led development that eliminates hunger and reduces poverty as well as food insecurity.

SAPs and PRSPs have shaped regional approaches and country policies and their implementation throughout Africa. A significant number of African countries have carried out successful programs of macroeconomic stabilization and structural reform. Reforms and retrenchment of the public sector have been carried out in numerous countries, although often at the costs of increasing unemployment—and thus vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity—and a decline in public services, even in essential areas such as health, education, and research and extension. International trade has been liberalized in many countries, and parastatal marketing boards no longer enjoy market monopolies. A major issue in most African countries remains the failure of the weak private sector in taking up the functions once performed by government marketing monopolies. A further key problem is the unevenness of the playing field in international trade, with the EU, Japan, and United States continuing to protect their markets against imports from developing countries, including those in Africa.

Many countries have formulated poverty reduction policies, with an increased emphasis on agricultural development. More progress is needed in key areas, however, such as in reducing social and economic discrimination against women, particularly in improving their access to land, credit, and input and output markets, and in fostering the education of girls. Similarly, in areas such as employment creation, natural resource protection, and governance reform, some countries have initiated encouraging measures, but much more progress is needed. The most successful reformers have been countries without war or civil unrest, and with reform processes characterized by strong political leadership and a commitment to reforms with wide domestic participation and ownership. This review makes it clear that peace and security are prerequisites for development and thus for poverty reduction. In countries that have been plagued by conflict and war, development has been pushed back by years, if not decades.

Political will and the commitment to reform within a framework of good governance are crucial features of successful reform and development. Experience has also shown that reform processes are most successful with the wide involvement and participation of people at all levels of society and across different organizations and social groups. For poverty reduction in particular, civil society and private sector groups representing the poor need to be included in the consultation, decisionmaking, and implementation process.

Capacity building must be a high priority. The very recent and still patchy experience of African countries with PRSP implementation demonstrates that capacity building requires more attention and more resources. Capacity and competence are required at all levels of African administration.

Agriculture should be returned to the top of the development agenda. The priority given to agriculture and water in NEPAD and the Maputo 2003 Declaration of the Heads of States of the African Union is encouraging in this respect. It is essential for the World Bank and bilateral donors to follow the lead of African states and support agricultural development. Prioritizing agriculture cannot be achieved without making additional resources available to these programs. Countries must act on the Maputo Declaration's target of allocating 10 percent of each country's budget to agriculture.

Governments and donors face a joint challenge to achieve greater cohesion in their approaches to the various strategies promoted by, and the requirements of, the international community. For example, monitoring poverty reduction in a given country is important within the PRSP process, but care needs to be taken not to overburden that country's capacity and institutions. Too often, donors have instituted reporting and monitoring requirements that place their internal institutional needs ahead of the needs of the recipient country. Donors need to agree on a coordinated and unified monitoring and evaluation system that serves primarily to improve policy implementation in recipient countries.

Adequate attention must be devoted to micro-level activities. The project approach dominated the development scene in Africa until the 1980s, but its limitations in nonconducive policy environments soon became obvious. Deficiencies in project environments resulted in a 180-degree shift in approach toward lending for policy programs, as opposed to extending loans for projects. This forced the private sectors of the targeted countries to take up micro-level activities. Correcting policy environments and strengthening institutional frameworks were necessary aims and remain a high priority, but development only occurs if investment, innovation, and action are carried out on farms, in households, and in villages. This means that development strategists must reaffirm the value of the project approach.

Finally, the design and implementation of good policies, as emphasized repeatedly in this review, are dependent on clear, relevant, and consistent policy objectives, financial resource availability, and human and institutional capacity. Even under these ideal circumstances, these processes often involve risks to the political and social stability of targeted countries. The speed of reform and the implementation of policies and programs must be appropriate to each country's political and social absorptive capacity.

1. Introduction

Most African countries became independent in the 1960s. The relatively positive socioeconomic performances of African countries during the "post-independence boom" years were followed by downturns, which continue in some countries to the present date. The downturns in 1973 and 1974 were principally due to the overall deterioration of international economic conditions as a result of the first oil crisis. Two fundamentally different approaches to furthering Africa's development emerged in the late 1970s and the early 1980s and were pursued simultaneously; all subsequent initiatives emerged from these two positions.

The first position was that held by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and was used to formulate the strategies that made up the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN). This position perceived Africa's colonial heritage and continued dependence on western donors as the main problems besetting future development. Thus the LPA emphasized disassociation from western donors and concentration on self-centered development, with each country orienting production toward its own markets. Development aid was seen as rightful compensation for colonial injustices. Programs formulated subsequently, such as the African Priority Program for Economic Recovery (APPER, 1986–90), followed a similar line, while also recognizing internal institutional and policy deficiencies.

The second position was based on the neoliberal understanding of economic development and was typically held by donors and international institutions (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund [IMF]). This position took concrete form in the structural adjustment programs (SAPs), with their emphasis on macroeconomic stability, elimination of market distortions, subsidies, and price controls, liberalization of trade and exchange transactions, reduction of government and elimination of parastatal activities, and encouragement of the private sector.

When the weaknesses of the SAP approach—such as the resulting social disruption, worsening income distribution, unemployment, and anti-poor biases inherent in public sector retrenchment, and its short-term orientation—became increasingly apparent in the 1990s, the World Bank extended the SAP framework to include a "social dimension." This led to the World Bank conceptualizing a more holistic approach, the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), which tries to involve all stakeholders in the development process and to integrate economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental needs. This new approach focuses on poverty reduction and emphasizes each country's ownership of its national, regional, and local government, civil society, and private sector. Transparency, accountability, and the monitoring and evaluation of performance of societal institutions are also emphasized. This strategy was integrated into the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process for each individual country—a participatory process whereby countries outline a strategy, including specific policies for reducing poverty, restoring macroeconomic equilibrium, and establishing a framework conducive to pro-poor growth. PRSPs also link the CDF to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

An initiative known as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was started by African leaders in 1999, and builds on the CDF by combining African initiatives and program ownership with neoliberal concepts. NEPAD supports liberalization and globalization but emphasizes that these processes need to be fair and simultaneous with the leveling of the international trade playing field. It calls on African leaders and governments to improve governance, eliminate corruption, facilitate the creation of democratic structures and processes, encourage a free press, and establish an independent, fair, and reliable judicial system. It also reemphasizes that agriculture and rural development are crucial to poverty reduction and food and nutrition security. NEPAD enjoys strong support from the international donor community.

These positions on development have informed all African socioeconomic development programs and have had different impacts. This paper focuses on food and nutrition security developments in Africa with an emphasis on a review of the strategies and programs that have been used and their implementation statuses, with the aim of drawing lessons from them in order to deal with the present-day food and nutrition crisis in Africa. We examine the following questions, among others: What strategies, policies, and programs have addressed or were intended to address the crisis? To what extent have individual countries in the region adopted them? And, to what extent were they implemented?

Given the multitude of strategies, policies, and approaches; the large number of countries in Africa, each with its own cultural heritage; and the diversity of ecological, economic, sociocultural, and political conditions and traditions, this paper does not aim to be comprehensive. We have instead chosen to focus on those countries and strategies that best illustrate what has been learned about strategy formulation and implementation, with a view to providing policymakers and development agencies with input that may help them to avoid repeating the ineffective policies of the past and to improve policy design and implementation in the future.

The paper is organized as follows: Chapter 1 outlines how the different paradigms have influenced the formulation of strategies for overall socioeconomic development. Chapter 2 reviews the evolution of the concept of food security from its food production focus in the 1970s to the current broader concept of food and nutrition security within the overall livelihood context. It also outlines a framework for evaluating development strategies. Development strategies emerge from particular historical contexts, so to understand today's strategies we need to review their evolution within their particular ecological, political, and socioeconomic contexts and to elucidate how and why attitudes to development have changed over time. Chapter 3 applies this approach to food and nutrition strategies, and reviews from a continental perspective the strategies, policies, and programs formulated by international institutions and regional organizations. A summary of the adoption and implementation in Africa of these strategies and programs, with a particular focus on their food and nutrition security implications, is presented in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of our review, which draw on both the successes and failures of development strategies and their implementation.

2. Food and Nutrition Security and the Evaluation of Development Strategies and Programs

Background

Food security is now defined as the situation "when all people, at all times, have physical and economical access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for a healthy and active life" (FAO 1996). However, this term has gone through stages of definition and redefinition; approaches to its definition have ranged from an emphasis on self-sufficiency to an emphasis on coping with vulnerability and risk in food and nutrition access. In the 1970s, food security was equated to adequate food production. In the 1980s, food security was considered to refer to the security of food access and availability. In the 1990s, the importance of nutrition was recognized, and hence the concept of food security was combined with that of nutrition security. In the 2000s, the concepts of food and nutrition security were integrated with vulnerability, risk coping, and risk management considerations.

Much of the recent discussion of food security has revolved around the following major topics (ODI 2002):

- What are the links between food availability, access, and nutrition, given that food availability does not ensure nutritional well-being?
- What implications do the new challenges to Africa—notably globalization, rapid urbanization, market liberalization, health and HIV/AIDS, and biotechnology—have for the food-security agenda?
- Does food security remain a useful concept for the discussion of development assistance and national policies, given the new approaches coming to the fore (for example, livelihoods analysis) and the current focus of donors on poverty reduction?
- Does food aid still have an important role in supporting food security, and how can it be shaped to support long-term food security?

Recognizing the distinction between food and nutrition security as well as the links between the two concepts is imperative for the success of national development strategies (Benson 2004). The secure access to food that is necessary for food security must be complemented with access to health services, education, sanitary environments, and safe water sources, among other resources, to achieve nutrition security. A much more comprehensive developmental approach is thus required to ensure that all groups in a population achieve both food and nutrition security. The following research findings on the links between food availability, food access, and nutritional well-being are relevant to Africa:

- Women's education has accounted for over 40 percent of the reduction in malnutrition over the past 25 years because of its strong influence on child nutrition. Other major factors are improvements in per capita food availability (25 percent), health, environment, and women's status (Smith and Haddad 2000). About 26 percent of the hungry have caloric intakes so low that they are unable to work or care for themselves (Millennium Project 2003).
- How food is made available is just as important as the overall supply. Strategies to boost national food production only improve food access if they raise the incomes of large numbers of rural farm and nonfarm households and reduce the consumer prices of food, particularly for net buyers.
- Agricultural market reform may improve the food security of poor consumers by improving

the private production, distribution, and processing of the types of foods consumed by them.
- A higher household income does not always translate into more and better food for all family members. If women control the household income, otherwise undernourished children are likely to benefit.

Food security is increasingly though not universally treated as a basic human right. The intertwined relationships between food security, poverty, and development have moved to the forefront on current thinking about food security, as has the recognition that long-term food security is a function of current policies and actions, such as development strategies, macroeconomic policies, trade and exchange rate policies, research and innovation policies, and modifications to institutions and infrastructure. More specifically, it remains vitally important to raise food production, create employment, and improve the institutional and policy framework for agriculture, as well as to rehabilitate and expand physical and social infrastructure in rural areas, all of which require increased and sustained investment and support for agriculture.

Typology of Food-Insecure Households and Measurement Issues

To develop a strategy for reducing hunger and undernutrition, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Hunger Task Force has broadly distinguished four major groups of food-insecure households and thus of highly vulnerable individuals by their principal means of securing food. While many households have multiple means of obtaining food, the typology focuses on their principal strategies, identifying the following four groups (with a rough approximation of their relative size):

1. Farming households (50 percent of the food-insecure)
2. Rural landless and nonfarm households (22 percent of the food-insecure)
3. Urban households (20 percent of the food-insecure)
4. Herding, fishing, and forest-dependent households (8 percent of the food-insecure)

Measuring food and nutrition insecurity is a multidimensional problem that requires accounting for both short- and long-term food and nutrition insecurity, as well as considering chronic, transitory, and periodic food and nutrition insecurity. Measures of household food and nutrition security, such as those based on surveys of dietary intake, must be compared with adequacy norms. Finally, the use of potential substitute indicators such as real wage rates, employment, price ratios, migration flows, changes in consumption structure, incidence of illness, and so forth may be appropriate at times.

Policy Challenges

Guaranteeing food and nutrition security at the micro level requires policymakers to go beyond the question of physical access at the national level, that is, whether there is sufficient food at the national level to feed all people. A number of considerations are required, including the following:

- ***Physical access at the local level***—making sure food is available in local markets and in local fields;
- ***Economic access***—addressing the question of whether households can afford to purchase the food items they need for food and nutrition security;
- ***Social access***—promoting adequate access to food for all household members;
- ***Food quality and safety***—ensuring food of sufficient diversity and safety to promote good health;
- ***Proper physiological access***—providing high-quality care and good health and sanitation environments so that ingested nutritious food results in healthy growth and development;
- ***Low risk of loss of access***—providing institutional set-ups that enable households to absorb and manage shocks, cycles, and seasonality, and reduce their vulnerability; and
- ***Access to food as a human right***—promoting the capacity of the food system to deliver needed food and to enhance the capacity of individuals to press their claims to food.

To summarize, the main determinants of food and nutrition security in Africa are the adequacy of the food supply produced by or accessible to households; access to income and markets to purchase food, as well as to land and inputs for food production; and the adequacy of sanitation, health, and feeding practices, and of the support of social claims to food. National policies must be adopted that sustain these key priorities in political processes so that they are not moved aside in times of crisis or even of strong growth. Governments have fluctuating concerns and tend to take a short-term view; for example, during a good production year, less attention is often given to food security. The evaluation of how governments have developed strategies, programs, and policies to address the above policy challenges is central to this paper. However, measuring the extent to which food security and nutrition have been achieved by the continent's regions and countries is not a focus of this paper (for such a discussion, see Benson 2004).

Evaluating Strategies, Policies, and Programs

Development strategy must be seen as inextricably linked with the identification of needs, priorities, and constraints; with the creation of action plans; and finally with the implementation of those plans. This paper focuses on the implementation of development strategies, policies, and programs in Africa. Strategies, policies, and programs have been formulated and implemented in Africa by international institutions, individual donors at the regional and subregional levels, and by institutions within African countries; all of these levels of contribution are included in this review.

The implementation of a development strategy requires its clear formulation, a conducive policy and institutional environment, a widely shared consensus about the strategy and its measures, the human capacity for implementation (including the required management capability and technical knowledge), and sufficient financial resources for agencies to carry out the strategy. Finally, agencies and stakeholders need to have adequate incentives to take the planned action. Implementation is thus inextricably linked with strategy. A strategy that fails to take these requirements into account is deficient.

How should strategies be evaluated? Implementation criteria, such as the resource and time requirements for implementation and the conditions that enable strategies and policies to be translated into action, are intended as yardsticks for evaluating and rating strategies. Our evaluations also assess whether strategies are relevant, clear, consistent, realistic, and able to be implemented; hence they involve the following considerations:

- ***Problem definition.*** Are the key issues identified, properly analyzed, linked to the historical context (in economic terms, path dependency), and located within their political, economic, sociocultural, and ecological contexts?
- ***Objectives.*** Are the objectives clearly defined, internally consistent, and formulated realistically? Are possible conflicts between the objectives identified and the required trade-offs addressed?
- ***Policies and programs.*** Are the proposed instruments for the strategy's objectives appropriate, and are these policies and programs congruent with and supportive of the strategy?
- ***Capacity to implement.*** Are the strategies backed by sufficient financial means for implementation? Are the human capacity (that is, the availability of capable and experienced personnel), the institutional set-up, and the infrastructure adequate?
- ***Time frame.*** Has the time required for implementation been estimated realistically, taking into account the requirements of institution building, education, and training?
- ***Stakeholder participation.*** With which method and to what extent were different stakeholders involved in identifying the priorities, defining the objectives, and implementing the programs of the strategy? The different types of participation include asking questions and extracting information (extractive), discussing issues, objectives, and program measures (consultative), sharing in decisionmaking about objectives and program measures, and taking on responsibilities in implementation (active).
- ***Integrating lessons from the past.*** Have past experiences been taken into account, and have measures designed to avoid earlier mistakes been implemented?

Based on our assessment of the relevant policies and strategies according to these criteria, an attempt has been made to grade them as "good," "intermediate," or "poor." This approach is not clear-cut in all cases given the information base available, and was found to be feasible only for some regions and countries.

3. The Conceptual and Strategic Responses of Various Stakeholders to the African Food Security Crises

There are numerous strategies and programs and even more aid agencies assisting individual countries in Africa; for instance, a typical developing country is assisted by 30 aid institutions (Eicher 2003). Most agencies emphasize the same priorities, pursue similar objectives, and address related issues; however, a number of agencies have specific features that deserve highlighting. In this chapter, we discuss the key features of the important strategies and programs, beginning with the response to Africa's crisis in the 1970s, then moving on to the recent strategies of international institutions and NEPAD.

Historical Perspectives: 1960–80

After independence was gained, citizens in most African countries had high hopes for rapid development. New energies were released by the end of colonialism, and African leaders were determined that their countries would catch up with the developed world. "Africans must run while the others walk" captures the spirit of those early days; no time was to be lost in overcoming ignorance, poverty, and disease. Africans were encouraged to be bold by the many who argued that Africa could find shortcuts to development. The donor community shared this optimism and contributed substantial resources.

Indeed, the first generation of African leaders, influenced by the prominent economists of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, adopted strategies focused on industrialization as the engine of economic growth and the key to transforming traditional economies. It was believed that the prospects for commodity exports were poor, and the desire to reduce dependence on manufactured imports was widespread in the continent. Agriculture was relegated to the secondary role of supplying raw materials and providing tax revenues that could finance other development.

Given the limited size of the private sector, African leaders believed that government had to play the dominant role. This view translated into the concept of the provider-state in which the government thinks and acts for individuals and is the best protector of their rights and economic welfare. As a result, and generally with full donor support, governments drew up comprehensive five-year plans, invested in large state-run core industries, and enacted pervasive regulations to control prices, restrict trade, and allocate credit and foreign exchange.

Much was initially achieved with this framework of policies. There was enormous growth in the number of trained people, major investments were made in Africa's infrastructure—roads, ports, telecommunications, and power generation and supply—and there were significant improvements in health and education. The overall economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa averaged 3.4 percent per year between 1961 and 1980 while agricultural growth, which is closely linked to food and nutrition security, averaged about 3 percent per year. As the 1970s advanced, however, African countries began to stumble; by the mid-1970s, their performance had fallen below that of other parts of the developing world. By 1980, output was actually declining. By the end of the 1980s, Sub-Saharan African countries were facing surprisingly widespread problems: high rates of population growth, low levels of investment and saving, inefficient resource use, weak institutional and human capacity, and a general decline in income and living standards. Africa's generally poor performance between 1970 and 1980 was reflected in the weak growth of the productive sectors, poor export performance, mounting debt, deteriorating social conditions, environmental degradation, and the increasing decay of institutional capacity. This poor performance further resulted in a crisis of confidence. The crisis was also visible in the high deficits of both public budgets and balances of payments, which led to significant public debt. These factors started to seriously undermine the very basis for growth and for Africa taking control of its own destiny.

This crisis prompted responses from international agencies, including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the World Bank, and a vivid debate among African leaders at OAU meetings and summits over the causes of Africa's socioeconomic decline. Some laid the blame far beyond Africa's control: bad weather, weak world commodity prices, fluctuating international interest rates, and too little aid. Others blamed policies, especially poor management of public resources and inappropriate incentives. The international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF held the view that African leaders were partly responsible for the poor economic performance of the region. These institutions stressed the importance of structural factors in the decline, especially that of high population growth.

In short, African leaders and the major international financial institutions offered contrasting analyses of the crisis. These different ideological positions led to a number of concurrent initiatives to reverse the negative trends observed toward the end of the 1970s. The first initiatives were the policies homegrown under the auspices of the OAU and formulated as strategy in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN). The second set of initiatives were policies based on the neoliberal understanding of economic development held by donors and international institutions (such as the World Bank and IMF) and were commonly referred to as structural adjustment programs (SAPs). These initiatives formed the frameworks within which food and nutrition security programs and strategies were developed in Africa during the past three decades. Most of the programs of bilateral donors and other agencies are in one way or another built on these frameworks. The focus of this paper is the OAU and ECA and World Bank and IMF programs and the subsequent initiatives.

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), 1980–85, and the Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN), 1978–90

AFPLAN and LPA both gave highest priority to the development of the agricultural and food sectors. Their goal was to substantially increase food self-sufficiency by the end of the 20th century and, since this sector was at the root of the social and economic development of most African countries, to provide the impetus for their development.

AFPLAN and LPA were based on a critical assessment of the African food situation in the 1960s and 1970s, which showed that Africa was the only continent in the world where per capita food production had declined over those two decades. This analysis also showed that the most important characteristic of the food situation was the gap between the increase in food production and the growth in population. Food production increased at 2.3 percent per year in the 1960s, yet increased at only 1.5 percent per year in the 1970s. At the same time, population growth accelerated from 2.5 percent per year in the 1960s to 2.8 percent per year in the following decade.

As a consequence, food production per capita declined by 7 percent in the 1960s, and fell by 15 percent in the 1970s. A decline in incomes, which is the major factor determining food demand, exacerbated the drop in food production, leading to an increased global deficit during this period. To close this food deficit, the region had to double its food imports between 1975 and 1980; the average ratio of food self-sufficiency of the continent, which had been estimated at 98 percent in the 1960s, dropped to 86 percent in 1980. This meant that the region was importing 14 percent of the food it was consuming in 1980, as compared with 2 percent in the 1960s. Furthermore, fluctuations in food production were large and frequent in many regions of the continent. Chronic malnutrition and famine persisted among marginal groups, including the urban poor, nomads, peasants in marginal areas, and farmers without land who, for various reasons, were not able to obtain food in sufficient quantities.

This assessment also established that Africa's food problem was both a short-term problem created by weather changes and other factors, and a long-term problem resulting mainly from the degradation of the ecosystem. Some of these causes were internal and others had their origin in the economies of non-African countries. Among the internal causes, weaknesses in African systems and organization of agricultural production, as well as in the distribution of food, inputs, and services, constrained both production and access to food for a large proportion of the population. These weaknesses included distortions in government development policies, the structure and organization of production, inadequate technologies, natural resource and environmental constraints, changes in consumer tastes, social and institutional bottlenecks, inadequate investment, failures of the distribution system, and failure to account for demographic trends and their effects. The external causes were identified mainly as distortions of the terms of trade, changing trends in food aid, and declining international aid for development.

AFPLAN provided a framework for understanding the food situation in Africa until 1990, and proposed long-term (1978–90) policies and programs for food development at national as well as intergovernmental levels. The plan particularly targeted food self-sufficiency—that is, to reduce the region's dependence on food imports—as well as to fight hunger and reduce malnutrition. African governments were encouraged to design and implement policies and projects that aimed at ensuring food self-sufficiency. At the intergovernmental level, African countries were pressed to work in common enterprises to increase food production and intraregional and regional trade.

The LPA formed the strategy for implementing AFPLAN and was adopted in April 1980 in Lagos by the heads of state and governments at their extraordinary session. The plan defined long- and medium-term (1980–85) development strategies and focused on measures that gave priority to achieving an immediate improvement of the food situation, while at the same time working toward the long-term goal of food self-sufficiency spelled out in AFPLAN. It also outlined a political direction for African governments and provided a precise framework for restructuring and transforming African agricultural and food sectors, with particular emphasis on measures that would result in reducing food losses, increasing food security, and stimulating the diversification of agricultural production (that is, into areas such as the production of tropical cereals, livestock, and fish), as well as other basic measures to improve agricultural life in rural areas.

Evaluation of LPA and AFPLAN

As African governments became more and more aware of the food crisis, they made greater efforts to implement AFPLAN and LPA with the assistance of African development organizations and international donors. Some countries reoriented their policies toward stimulating economic growth and poverty reduction and at the same time improving the incentives for agricultural and rural development. Others made substantial efforts to remedy disequilibria in the allocation of resources and other economic policy weaknesses, and to put into place research structures to support the development of techniques and innovations that would improve the efficiency of their overall system of agricultural production, with special emphasis on food production.

At the subregional and regional levels, about 50 intergovernmental organizations were involved entirely or partially in the development of African agricultural and food sectors. Some of their activities dealt with exploiting lakes and river basins (for example, the Commission of the Basin of Chad Lake). Some were programs for collective food security and food self-sufficiency, such as in the Sahel (the *Comité Permanent Inter Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel* [Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, or CILSS]), in Northern Africa (Fund of Egypt-Sudanese integration), and in Eastern and Southern Africa (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa [COMESA] and Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, or SADCC). Other programs fought plant and animal diseases. Other initiatives aimed at harmonizing agricultural price policies or attempted to improve intra-African trade, such as the creation of the Economic Community of Central Africa (CEAC).

The OAU General Secretariat was coordinator and supervisor of the implementation of the LPA, and hence organized seminars and produced publications focused on increasing agricultural growth. It also attempted to monitor implementation of the LPA throughout the region. For its part, UNECA insisted that assistance be provided to member countries and NGOs in order to increase their agricultural development planning and programming capacity (particularly in the areas of forest and livestock management) and to improve their food self-sufficiency and food security. The African Development Bank (ADB) approved loans to agriculture for a total amount of US$1.379 billion, representing 28.7 percent of its cumulative loans over the period 1980–90. From the mid-1970s, and especially after 1982, the ADB's loans clearly emphasized the agricultural sector, particularly the food subsector. During the course of the implementation of the LPA, the ADB's commitments to the sector rose from 27.8 percent before 1981 to 30.4 percent during the years 1982 and 1983. It is worth noting that these figures are for agriculture in general, not for the food subsector alone. The ADB also provided political and institutional support to its regional members and to subregional institutions.

It is not clear, however, to what extent the international community helped African countries to finance responses to the food crisis during 1976–86. There are indications that the World Food Council made an indirect contribution by implementing the recommendations of the World Food Conference. Similarly, FAO made indirect contributions by collaborating with African institutions such as the ADB and the Africa Rice Center (WARDA). Furthermore, many other international organizations realized that the African food crisis would wipe out all their development assistance to African countries and provided diverse indirect contributions. What is not clear is the extent to which the OAU General Secretariat was able to mobilize international support in terms of human and financial resources to address food and nutrition security.

In conclusion, AFPLAN and LPA were excellent strategies and programs for agricultural development in Africa and, by extension, for food and nutrition security. However, it is questionable whether the implementation of the programs at the level of individual countries has been successful, given the performance of the agricultural sector during this period. A review by the World Bank of Africa's rural strategy in 2002 blamed faulty policies for the limited impact of the implementation of the initiatives (World Bank 2002). It argued that the past neglect of food production, the slowness with which some countries implemented plans and resolutions, or their incapacity to do so, contributed to the poor results of the various initiatives.

OAU also observed that inadequate monitoring of these efforts aggravated the overall slowness with which the objectives of AFPLAN and LPA were pursued. Member countries did not realize that they had to report periodically to OAU, ECA, and FAO. At the same time, missions to examine the strategies and monitor progress were never undertaken as expected, because of organizational and financial difficulties and because the member countries failed to request that these missions be sent. Further, no national-level updates on the food and agriculture activities of African countries were available, although many disparate indicators of the success of implementation were available for the subregional level.

The World Bank View of the African Crisis: Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and the Washington Consensus (1980–99)

The approach of the World Bank and IMF, consisting of SAPs and stabilization policies, is one of the most important policy frameworks and has greatly influenced both strategies and programs for food and nutrition security in Africa and the framework for overall economic development. The SAP approach was the response of the World Bank and IMF to the African economic crisis of the 1970s. SAPs began to sweep across Africa in the 1980s and continued to operate throughout the 1990s. During this period, the World Bank and IMF worked closely together, with the IMF heavily involved in setting the macroeconomic development and policy agenda, while the World Bank provided structural adjustment lending.

According to World Bank (1981), the deepening of the African crisis in the 1970s was characterized by weak agricultural growth, a decline in industrial output, poor export performance, climbing debt, and deteriorating social indicators, institutions, and environment. The World Bank argued that although many African countries saw their development disrupted by sharp falls in the international prices of key commodities, the long-term fall in per capita incomes since the late 1970s could be explained largely by the declining level and efficiency of investment and the compounding of the resulting problems by accelerating population growth. External factors were not seen as the primary reasons for the crisis, although the World Bank did recognize that many countries, especially the poorer ones, suffered severe external shocks.

The World Bank and IMF also argued that the problem of low returns from investments was the main reason for Africa's decline in the 1980s. Africa's investment and operating costs were typically 50 to 100 percent above those in South Asia during this period. Weak public sector management resulted in loss-making by public enterprises, poor investment choices, and costly and unreliable infrastructure. Price distortions, especially overvalued exchange rates, government-determined prices, and subsidized credit resulted in inefficient resource allocation. Furthermore, wage costs were high relative to productivity (particularly in the franc currency zone [CFA]), even though real wages fell by 25 percent on average across Africa in the 1980s. All of these factors added heavily to the cost of doing business and discouraged investors.

The World Bank diagnosis concluded that the post-independence development efforts failed because the strategy they attempted to implement was misconceived. Governments had made a dash for modernization by copying, but not adapting, western models. The results were poorly designed investments in industry; too little attention to peasant agriculture; too much intervention in areas in which the state lacked managerial, technical, and entrepreneurial skills; and too little effort to foster grassroots development. This top-down approach had demotivated ordinary people, precisely those whose energies were most needed in the development effort.

Given the World Bank's diagnosis and the need for money and advice on development strategies from the World Bank and IMF, most African governments recognized the necessity of adopting SAPs and stabilization policies to solve the crises their countries faced. The new strategy under these policies stated clearly that if Africa was to avert hunger and provide its growing population with productive jobs and increasing incomes, its economies needed to grow by at least 4 to 5 percent per year. The primary source of this growth would, in this strategy, be agricultural production, which was itself targeted to expand annually by 4 percent. With this growth, African countries could then not only meet their own food requirements but also generate the foreign exchange needed for development.

The main elements of SAPs were their classical/neoliberal features, which emphasized instituting macroeconomic policies for reducing inflation and re-establishing economic stability, controlling budget deficits (mainly by containing government deficits/public expenditure), privatizing public sector companies and services, dissolving parastatals, eliminating subsidies, and cutting public support for social services. A typical SAP called for devaluation and trade liberalization to improve the country's balance of payments and control its foreign indebtedness; debt rescheduling and stricter debt management were usually requirements. Food and nutrition security were addressed only indirectly by this framework.

This long-term strategy envisaged a move away from earlier practices. It aimed at releasing the energies of ordinary people to enable them to take charge of their lives. For the private sector, profits would now be seen as the mark of an efficient business. Agricultural extension services would be seen as responding to farmers, not commanding them. Foreign investors would be welcomed as partners, not discouraged. The state would no longer be an entrepreneur but a promoter of private producers. The informal sector would be valued as a seedbed for entrepreneurs, not dismissed as a hotbed of racketeers. The key concept of the World Bank strategy was that successful development depends on getting most policies reasonably right and none of them hopelessly wrong, rather than on getting just a few policies perfectly right.

Evaluation of SAPs

SAPs and neoliberal policies, often called the "Washington Consensus," provoked considerable debate within development circles. Supporters argued that the reforms they put forward were essential and that reforms should be implemented sooner rather than later. Critics charged that the Washington Consensus paid insufficient attention to the social aspects of development and to the institutional weaknesses of developing countries. Further, the adjustment policies also often failed to take into account the political implications of reform and the risks these policies posed for the stability of developing countries. Development under the Washington Consensus was seen as overly economic and characterized by excessive conditionality as well as the absence of genuine ownership by the countries concerned. Since countries that failed to abide by SAP conditions were denied financial support until all conditions were met, it has often been argued that this development framework was forced on the developing world.

The impact of SAPs on Africa remains a matter of intense debate. Many empirical studies have concluded that with some exceptions (Ghana and Uganda), SAPs have typically had a negligible effect in Africa (Klasen 2003; Easterly 2000, and the literature cited therein; Mosley, Harrington, and Toye 1995). Some studies (such as Christiaensen, Demery, and Paternostro 2001) have argued that SAPs induced growth and reduced poverty in those African countries where they were successfully implemented. However, as Klasen (2003) has pointed out, these results have not been clearly linked to SAP-related macroeconomic policies.

The issue of whether the overall disappointing performance of SAPs in Africa is due to incomplete and half-hearted implementation, adverse external factors, or inappropriate policy components of the SAPs lies at the heart of the debate. A review of the available studies suggests that in most cases a combination of these three factors is at work. It is certainly true that the markets for primary producers deteriorated (Mkandawire and Soludo 1999); that there was partial, half-hearted, and "stop and go" implementation (World Bank 2001); and that there were deficiencies in sequencing, lack of coordination of policies, and inappropriate policy design (Cornia and Helleiner 1995; World Bank 2000c).

SAPs implemented in African countries were predicted to have an impact on poverty by fostering economic growth and shifting relative prices in favor of agricultural and rural areas, where most of the poor live (World Bank 1981). Given that SAPs failed to promote growth, no improvement in poverty could be expected. The impact on poverty and food security achieved through the shifting of relative agricultural prices has been mixed. The winners have been net surplus producers of agricultural products among rural households, particularly those with export crops, while the losers have been net consuming poor households and the urban poor (Christiaensen, Demery, and Paternostro 2001).

Of particular concern for poverty and food security are the fiscal measures implemented as part of SAPs. While there is wide consensus that low budget deficits are essential for achieving macroeconomic stability, there is intense debate regarding how to achieve them—that is, on the proper mix between tax increases and expenditure reduction. In many SAPs, particularly the early ones, the expenditure side of the budget had to carry the main burden. There was little room for raising tax revenues, for example through import duties, without producing conflict with the trade liberalization objective. Because of this emphasis on expenditure cuts, public support for infrastructure, education, social services, as well as for research and extension suffered, and rural areas, with their high proportion of the poor, were particularly hard hit.

In conclusion, although SAPs and stabilization policies were widely adopted in Africa, their impact on both economic development and food and nutrition security is debatable. The implementation of the policies was poor—only stop-go and half-hearted in most countries—and there has been a lack of political will to implement the policies, despite the financial support and conditions placed on that support by the promoters, mainly the World Bank and IMF.

The Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the HIPC/PRSP Approach (1999 to the present day)

In the later phases of SAP implementation, the views of strategists began to shift toward a more flexible and gradual approach to budget cutting, largely in response to criticism from African leaders, OAU, ECA, many NGOs, and scholars (Owusu 2003), with greater tolerance of short-term deficits during stabilization (Klasen 2003; Cornia and Helleiner 1995; Bevan and Adam 2001). At the same time, there was increasing recognition of the role governments play in providing the necessary support for education, health, and research and extension, most notably in agriculture, rural credit, and institutional development. It was realized that scarce public funds need to be focused more on the needs of the poor so as to increase their access to these vital services (Bevan and Adam 2001). Thus, as the 1990s approached, there were increasing calls for "adjustment with a human face," which meant renewed attention to the social dimension of development and widening the role played by the state in societal development. This broader view of development was strengthened by a series of UN conferences throughout the 1990s that dealt with such issues as gender equality, human rights, population, social development, and the environment.

In response to worldwide criticism, and as a result of a change in its top management, the World Bank started to rethink its approach in 1999. The then-new President, James Wolfensohn, a critic of SAPs, initiated a process for establishing a new development framework that would move beyond pure macroeconomic stabilization and structural transformation, and integrate a society's social, political, environmental, and cultural aspects into development. This framework would also be based on the assumption that all development agencies (governments, multilaterals, bilaterals), civil society, and the private sector must play a part in poverty reduction and equitable, sustainable development (World Bank 2003). The World Bank's CDF is based on the following four principles:

1. Development strategies should be holistic, take a long-term perspective, and be comprehensive in accounting for the economic, social, political, environmental, and cultural aspects of the society concerned.
2. Development should be results oriented. Performance should be measured not in terms of inputs such as disbursement of loans but in terms of outcomes, impacts, and results on the ground.
3. Development should be "owned" by the recipient country; development goals and strategies must be based on broad citizen participation and commitment, that is, they should not only involve national and local governments but also civil society, the private sector, and local informal groups.
4. Development should be based on country-led partnerships. Recipient countries should be in charge of managing and coordinating aid, acting through consultation and partnerships with multilaterals and donors. This approach aims to reduce donor dominance, inefficiencies, and asymmetrical power relationships, and thus donor–recipient tensions.

As the CDF took hold, the World Bank and IMF launched a new program in 1999 aimed at debt relief for 60–70 highly indebted poor countries (HIPCs), on the condition they followed poverty-oriented development programs. Following the CDF principles, governments were expected to formulate their own development strategies, articulate their priorities and policies, and integrate them into their expenditure plans using the guidance of what were known as PRSPs. Resources released through debt reduction were to be directed toward poverty reduction. PRSPs require countries to outline a strategy backed by specific policies for reducing poverty, restore macroeconomic equilibrium taking into account poverty issues in particular, and establish a framework conducive to pro-poor growth.

The PRSP process has two steps. Each country prepares an interim PRSP as a key condition for reaching the decision point (step 1). The preparation of a full PRSP, involving all stakeholders, is then a condition for reaching the completion point (step 2), which triggers debt relief and resource flow.

A key feature of the PRSP process is the emphasis on country ownership. The process moves from initial consultation with each recipient country to the countries setting their own development priorities and making and implementing the necessary decisions involved. To ensure ownership and a focus on poverty within recipient countries, the process calls for wide ranging participation of all levels of public decisionmaking and of civil society, local groups representing the poor, minorities, and the private sector. It was intended that recipient countries take the lead in managing their aid processes and coordinate donors within joint PRSP processes.

The CDF and PRSP models recognize that there is no single path to development, that its many elements need to be considered in turn, and that their relative weight and importance will vary from one situation to another. Another important aspect of the CDF and PRSP approaches is the role of gender in poverty. It specifically considers the differences between how women and men experience poverty, as well as the kinds of discriminatory practices that make women more vulnerable to poverty than men.

Because the development strategies are designed by the governments and people of developing countries and thus reflect their priorities rather than the priorities of donors, the PRSP approach requires a strong focus on strengthening the capacity of developing countries to plan and manage their own development. Local partnership is seen as a way to ensure that donor efforts respond to local priorities, and that programs or initiatives supported by development programs are sustainable, particularly once donor investments are wound down.

This approach also calls for improved donor coordination. Recipient countries bear the main responsibility for coordinating their development actions, although external partners must also ensure that their aid programs complement each other. In cases where planning and management capacity is weak, bilateral and multilateral donors must encourage the use of regular forums for coordination and the promotion of local participation. Further, the model calls for a results-based approach with improved monitoring and evaluation of development programs. Finally, the approach seeks greater cohesion among the non-aid policies of industrialized countries that can have profound effects on the developing world—for example, policies on trade, investment, and technology transfer.

In summary, the CDF and PRSP models enjoy wide acceptance among international organizations—international financial institutions and the UN—and bilateral donors, as well as in the developing world. Bilateral donors, UN agencies, and international financial institutions (IFIs) are now making efforts to put these models into practice within their project portfolios, as well as in a number of new program approaches, such as the World Bank's Africa Region Rural Strategy (ARRS), the UN's Development Assistance Framework, and instruments such as sectorwide approaches (SWAPs). The CDF informs all these efforts, draws together the principles of effective development programming, and is based on a holistic approach to development.

Evaluation of the CDF and PRSPs

Implementation of the CDF only began in 1999; hence it is perhaps too early to evaluate its outcomes. The World Bank's Operation Evaluation Department (OED) has instead evaluated the extent to which CDF principles have been implemented in six countries chosen as case studies, three of which are in Africa: Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Uganda. The following discussion draws on this evaluation (World Bank 2003).

The CDF's long-term holistic development framework was intended to become operational by identifying clear and affordable priorities and linking them to the central budget process. Of all the countries studied, "only Uganda follows such a process of costing and setting priorities and linking them to a medium expenditure framework" (World Bank 2003, xix). Such a process requires the availability of sufficient know-how, competence, and institutional capacity. The evaluation thus calls on donors to provide sustained, long-term support for capacity building, public sector reforms, and institutional strengthening.

Most donor agencies and recipient governments do not have the internal structures and processes that are conducive for the cross-sectoral dialogue and multisector programs required by a holistic approach. Such an approach is often further hampered by prevailing departmental thinking and intersector competition in donor agencies.

The CDF's results-based orientation is intended to shift attention to results on the ground; however, the evaluation found that the weak capacity of public service providers and institutions significantly constrained the implementation of this principle. Inadequate incentives and fragile accountability structures further hampered efforts to install a "results culture" in the daily operations of governments. In addition, the complex reporting and monitoring requirements of donors placed undue burdens on recipient governments. Donors continued to pursue "complex, special-purpose approaches with unwieldy indicators that conform more to donors' reporting requirements than to what is needed to manage national service delivery" (World Bank 2003, xx). The demand in the CDF for country ownership of the development process is not novel. However, the evaluation found that country ownership was too narrowly based when consultations were confined to the ministerial level. Parliaments, local governments, civil society, and the private sector have regularly been bypassed, and those who lack an organized voice, such as women, the landless, and minorities, have been left out entirely. To the extent that CDF principles are applied to PRSP processes, their approval by the boards of the World Bank and IMF (if funded by a Poverty Reduction Support Credit [PRSC] or Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility [PRGF]) have tended to limit the options of countries and to inhibit their full ownership of their development processes.

The PRSP process has, despite its short history, assumed a significance far beyond the need for countries to fulfill the HIPC-1 (decision point) and HIPC-2 (completion point) conditions. First, it has become a key frame of reference for both multilateral and bilateral donors. Second, the PRSP process has led the World Bank and IMF to introduce new lending facilities in the form of the PRSC and PRGF programs, respectively. Third, PRSPs address three critical problems:

1. fragmentation of and inconsistencies in donors' development assistance behavior;
2. governance and institution deficiencies in recipient countries; and
3. weaknesses in the legitimacy and institutionalization of participatory decision processes within countries.

On the basis of an evaluation of the PRSPs of eight African countries in 2000/01, Booth (2003, 135) concluded that "there is also a distinct possibility that PRSPs will make a real difference." He also emphasized that the PRSP process requires support, strengthening of its weaknesses, and expansion if that optimistic view is to become a long-term reality.

First and foremost, PRSPs need to emphasize and allocate more resources to capacity building at all levels, including resources for budgeting processes and financial accountability monitoring, for sector level priority setting and policy formulation, and at the local and micro level administration, project evaluation, and management.

Second, many PRSP processes are still heavily focused on the "capital city" and fail to involve regional authorities and local institutions and groups. Within government, responsibilities are diffuse, and line ministries are not involved—or even fighting for influence—in the PRSP process. Parliaments are often even less involved, which is also true of civil society, private sector stakeholders, and local representatives (Eberle 2001). If ownership of PRSP processes is to be broadly based, participation needs to be institutionalized more effectively. Parliaments, regional and local representatives, as well as private sector and civil society groups, all need to be made part of the consultation, decisionmaking, and implementation process. Moreover, the role of the World Bank and IMF approval process in releasing PRSC and PRGF funds needs to be clarified; at present it is seen as discouraging participation and limiting true recipient country ownership.

Third, increasing the openness of agreements with PRGF or PRSC would encourage participation. These agreements tend to be treated as secret, often without justification; they are thus not widely disseminated, which creates the image of exclusion, secrecy, distrust, and the evasion of accountability.

Fourth, it was found that the monitoring of many PRSP processes remains weak and progress in monitoring patchy. One reason may be that stakeholders are not convinced that the monitoring system is feeding evidence back into policy decisionmaking. It follows that monitoring processes are seen merely as technical matters that are best handled by national statistical services. Monitoring PRSP processes should be seen as a strategic task with a short time horizon that can provide information to poverty reduction programs. Monitoring should focus on tracking the delivery of financial and other inputs to poverty reduction programs and in particular to food- and nutrition-related programs (Booth 2003).

In conclusion, the commitment to reduce poverty expressed by governments at the World Food Summit and in the Millennium Development Goals and PRSPs has shifted attention to rural people and to agriculture. Most of Africa's poor are engaged in farming, and without a development push in agriculture, poverty reduction efforts are futile. After a period of declining support for agricultural and rural development, African governments now place increasing attention on enlarged public and private investment programs to foster agricultural and rural growth (World Bank 2002). Thus, the PRSPs can improve food and nutrition security in Africa if the identified needs and programs are implemented by governments and stakeholders.

Recent African Agricultural and Rural Development Initiatives

Two high-profile agricultural production/food security initiatives are currently underway in Africa: FAO's Special Program for Food Security (SPFS); and the World Bank's Africa Region Rural Strategy (ARRS). Another noteworthy initiative, the Sasakawa–Global 2000 Food Production Initiative, has been helping farmers to raise food production since 1986.[1] These initiatives are discussed below.

FAO's Special Program for Food Security (SPFS)

FAO developed a program of special support for agriculture, known as the Special Program for Food Security (SPFS), in 1996. The program is now operational in 62 countries. Its objectives are to help low-income food-deficit countries to increase food production and productivity on a sustainable basis, reduce annual fluctuations in food supply, and improve access to food (FAO/DFID 2001). It seeks to generate rural income and employment, reduce poverty, and enhance social and gender equality.

SPFS has four key components: (1) water/moisture management and irrigation; (2) crop intensification and productivity increases through the development of a technology package providing improved seeds, fertilizers, and plant protection, combined with extension and farm management advice; (3) diversification of the range of products to reduce ecological, market, food supply, and nutrition risks; and (4) policy and institution creation to improve incentives for and access to agricultural services, infrastructure, and knowledge. The program focuses initially on high-potential areas and employs the farmer field school extension model, with outreach demonstrating the effect of innovations to interested farmers through farmers' groups.

A recent evaluation of the program (FAO 2002) concluded that SPFS has helped to raise national consciousness about food and nutrition security in the targeted countries. SPFS has moved attention back to agriculture and its role in enhancing food and nutrition security, as well as to poverty reduction in rural areas. Its participatory approach recognizes the importance of demand orientation in technology

[1] The Sasakawa–Global 2000 program combined the financial backing of Mr. Sasakawa with agricultural know-how in the form of technical packages comprising manual fertilizer and improved seeds, and then supported their transfer to farmers. It gradually expanded from its original base in Ghana, Sudan, and Zambia to about 12 countries, and is continuing its efforts to develop a technology package that is sufficiently attractive to farmers to achieve a wide impact in Africa.

design, and of linking national concerns with local-level actions. It also recognizes that solving the food security problem requires a multifaceted and integrated strategy involving water management, crop intensification and diversification, and institutional development.

This evaluation also produced important lessons for future agricultural support programs. First, the focus on high-potential areas renders upscaling and replication difficult, given Africa's ecological diversity and the predominance of ecologically and economically marginal areas. The high-potential focus also highlights national, as opposed to household, food security, and thus tends to weaken the poverty reduction orientation of the program. Second, SPFS makes extensive use of subsidies to encourage technology adoption, which raises concerns about the sustainability of the program and its replicability on a wider scale. Therefore, the innovation package approach must be handled flexibly, as farmers often prefer partial adoption, and the guidelines and information the approach produces must be use oriented, easily accessible, and adapted to the local communication tradition.

Spread over 62 countries, SPFS has had only a weak impact at the individual country level in improving household food and nutrition security and a practically unnoticeable impact on national policies. Further, donors do not seem to have modified their aid strategies as a result of SPFS (FAO 2002).

The World Bank's Africa Region Rural Strategy (ARRS)

The World Bank's development efforts in the 1980s and 1990s were guided by the SAP approach, and hence focused largely on stabilizing the macroeconomic environment, reforming macroeconomic policies and institutional frameworks within countries, and investing in health and education. Support for agriculture became partly neglected as a result. In nominal terms, World Bank lending to agricultural and rural development dropped by 75 percent between 1990 and 2000, and the number of new projects fell from 23 to just 8. As a proportion of total lending to Africa, the rural sector's share declined from 28 percent in 1990 to 10 percent in 2000. Recognizing that Africa's population remains predominantly rural and that measures to reduce poverty are most needed in rural areas, ARRS aims to correct the neglect of agriculture in previous SAPs. ARRS is building on a growing consensus that macroeconomic stability and institutional reforms are necessary but not sufficient to generate the widely shared growth required for effective poverty reduction.

This approach emphasizes the essential role of the private sector in production and trade, liberalization of markets, enhancement of the activity of local governments and private firms in public service provision, participation of community and producer organizations, and transparency and accountability in the use of public funds. It places a high priority on the following considerations:

- raising agricultural productivity and increasing investment in all factors contributing to agriculture, particularly research and education;
- reversing the degradation of natural resources, improving soil fertility and water management, and protecting forests, wetlands, and rangelands;
- rehabilitating and expanding rural infrastructure services (transportation, water supply and sanitation, energy, and communication) and improving access to them for the rural poor;
- meeting the Millennium Development Goals for education by building schools, training teachers, and providing textbooks for 80 million children during the next 15 years; and
- increasing health services to achieve the goals of reducing infant and child mortality by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters by 2015 (this component is closely integrated with the World Bank's special program for coping with and preventing HIV/AIDS in Africa).

In designing specific programs, ARRS particularly emphasizes land rights for women, the inclusion of women in community development programs, and improving women's access to agricultural services, farming inputs, and markets (World Bank 2002).

ARRS is too new for its performance to be assessed. Therefore this review is limited to examining whether the preconditions for successful implementation have been established. ARRS is implemented mainly through the PRSP process, which emphasizes productivity growth in agriculture, natural resource conservation, rural infrastructure and institution building, and improving health and education in rural areas. The strategy's objectives are relevant to and consistent with poverty reduction and food and nutrition security improvement. Many of these components require specialized expertise in agricultural production and rural institution building. If bank and bilateral donors focus their staffing and recruitment policies on this requirement, agricultural development may regain its potential for improving food and nutrition security.

NEPAD's Response to the Present Crisis in Africa

The present crisis in Africa is a major challenge for the international community as well as for Africa's leadership. In response, African leaders assembled in Sirte, Libya, in September 1999 to search for a paradigm shift in the way Africa conducts its affairs. A consensus emerged that what was needed was a holistic, integrated, and coordinated agenda for the regeneration of the African continent. Given the evidence that the continent was failing on every front, ranging from economic management to social stability to adoption of new technologies to capacity building, African leaders agreed on a new development agenda for African renewal. What finally emerged from their deliberations was NEPAD's strategic framework document.

The African leaders formally adopted the vision, principles, objectives, goals, and priorities outlined in the NEPAD document at the OAU Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001. This new initiative aimed to build on the CDF–PRSP process, and amalgamates African initiative and ownership of the development process with neoliberal concepts. NEPAD supports liberalization and globalization if the process is fair and the playing field of international trade is level. By endorsing NEPAD's policy framework, African leaders jointly accepted responsibility for eradicating poverty and placing their countries, both individually and collectively, on the path of sustainable development and growth. At the same time, they committed themselves to principles, values, priorities, and standards of governance that are in line with international best practice. Furthermore, they committed themselves to people-centered, participative development processes.

Within NEPAD's overall vision, its vision for agriculture seeks to maximize the contribution of Africa's largest economic sector to achieving a self-reliant and productive Africa that can participate fully in the world economy. The NEPAD strategy aims for agriculture-led development that eliminates hunger and reduces food insecurity and poverty, thereby opening the way for an expansion of exports, and that puts the continent on an improved economic growth path within an overall strategy of sustainable development and the preservation of the natural resource base. NEPAD's strategy consists of the following aims:

- improving the productivity of agriculture, with particular attention to small-scale and women farmers;
- ensuring food security for all people, and increasing the access of the poor to adequate food and nutrition;
- promoting measures against natural resource degradation, and encouraging production methods that are environmentally sustainable;
- integrating the rural poor into the market economy and providing them with better access to national and export markets;
- transforming Africa into a net exporter of agricultural products; and
- making Africa a strategic player in agricultural science and technology development.

None of these goals for African agriculture are new. These goals have been proclaimed in every strategy that African leaders have designed or adopted with the aims of resolving the food crisis and reversing the effects of poverty. What does appear to be new is the high recognition of these goals by the African leaders who currently drive the implementation of NEPAD's strategy. The new emphasis and priority given to agriculture and water within NEPAD and in the 2003 Maputo Declaration of the Heads of States of the African Union is also encouraging in this respect. The Lagos Plan of Action and initiatives of the past did not have the benefit of such strong political leadership in their implementation phase. To ensure its full success, NEPAD must integrate lessons from OAU's past involvements in initiatives conceived or adopted by African leaders.

The International Trade Context

The WTO Agreements

Africa's food and nutrition status has also been affected by international developments in trade, in particular by the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements. The WTO agreements, which were one outcome of the Uruguay Round (UR) of multilateral trade completed in 1993, resulted in particular in radical changes in the global environment for agricultural development and trade. These agreements provide the institutional setting and rules that govern broad agricultural production policies and agricultural trade relations among countries. These reforms are important for most African countries because agriculture remains their dominant economic sector.

The main thrust of the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is to remove production- and trade-distorting practices and thus facilitate a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system. The Uruguay Round addressed market distortions by banning some previous protectionist practices, and developed new rules described by the AoA for other practices. The main goals of the AoA are to improve market access and to reduce domestic support measures and export subsidies.

Market Access: Under these agreements, all member countries of the WTO are required to substitute quantitative trade restrictions by tariffs, bind their tariffs against further increases, and reduce them over time (by 24 percent over an eight-year period for developing countries). The agreements also require that all duties and charges applying a bound tariff be included in the schedule of commitments. This requirement ensures that a bound tariff concession is not nullified by the imposition of other duties or charges. Countries are required to provide information on the products subject to tariffication and about their current minimum access conditions, where minimum access is defined as 3 percent of domestic consumption in the base years, rising to 5 percent by 2004. When current access is already above the required minimum, no further import provision is required.

Most countries in Africa have done away with nontariff barriers as required by the AoA, but at the same time developed countries have adopted sanitary and phytosanitary standards as well as technical barriers to trade. While developed countries are using the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards Agreement to limit access to commodities from developing countries, most developing countries find it difficult to meet the standards of this agreement because of numerous problems with implementation and their lack of technical capacity. The emerging use of standards related to labor, environment, competition, and investment by developed countries can be seen as a way to create barriers to trade for commodities from developing countries.

Domestic Support: The provisions of the AoA divide support measures into three groups: green, blue, and amber box measures. Green box measures are agricultural production measures with minimum trade distortion, such as agricultural extension and research services, which are permitted by the Agreement. Blue box measures include indirect subsidies related to production quotas, such as payments to farmers to reduce production, which lead to trade distortion. These measures are to be reduced gradually with the aim of their total elimination in the future. Amber box measures are direct subsidies of agricultural production such as input subsidies. These measures are not permitted by the Agreement and are to be gradually reduced and eventually eliminated. Finally, the special differential treatment clause allows developing countries to use production subsidies under special circumstances, such as in poverty programs for disadvantaged regions. The least-developed countries are exempt from the AoA requirements of the domestic support provisions.

The emerging consensus is that most developed countries have managed to package their substantial support commitments into the blue and green box categories, enabling them to provide support to farmers of as much as 80 percent of the value of agricultural production. Developing countries and, in particular, African countries have been less adept at using such opportunities for exemptions from requirements to reduce aggregate measures of support. They have also underestimated the importance of aggregate measures of support, thus excluding measures that should have been included either in green box submissions or as part of the de minimis exemption—that is, the minimum level of allowable domestic support, in value terms, that is not subject to reduction. Worse still, programs such as SAPs led many developing countries to reduce levels of agricultural support, and this has affected agricultural production. The combination of these factors has had adverse effects on African agriculture and on Africa's food and nutrition security.

Export Subsidies: The AoA permits export subsidies on agricultural products but imposes constraints on using them liberally, and member countries have made commitments to reduce these subsidies. The base period for computing export subsidies was 1986–90. Subsidies must be reduced from the base by 24 percent (for developing countries) over an eight-year period, during which time the subsidies cannot be increased. Subsidies that reduce costs relating to export marketing and internal transportation are exempt from these considerations for developing countries, although no new subsidies can be introduced. Export subsidies can, however, be countervailed by importing countries if they cause serious injury to their domestic industries.

For many African countries, the key issue in export subsidies is under use since few African countries provided export subsidies at the time of signing the AoA. The indirect effects of the heavy use of export subsidies by developed countries can be substantial. These subsidies encourage surpluses of agricultural products in the world market, which depress prices and therefore make products from Africa less competitive. However, net food exporters benefit from the low prices that result from export subsidies. Countries can face higher import bills once subsidies are withdrawn, which is likely to negatively affect food and nutrition security.

Other Issues: The AoA has three other elements that are important to African countries. First, it contains new rules on sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Although intended only to protect food safety as well as animal and plant health, applications of the rules can constitute unfair technical barriers to trade when used indiscriminately. Provision is also made for technical assistance for developing countries to help them comply with standards imposed by importing countries, which could lead to increased exports and therefore to improvements in food and nutrition security.

Second, the agreement includes special and differential treatment for developing countries and least-developed countries, granting them 10 years to implement their reduction commitments. Further, least-developed countries are not required to make reduction commitments in any of the following three areas: market access, domestic support, and export subsidies.

Third, the Marrakech Declaration, which addresses the special difficulties of least-developed countries and net-food-importing developing countries, proposed that support be provided to these countries if they suffer sharply increased food import bills following reductions in food export subsidies by developed countries. However, there were no operational mechanisms developed for implementing this decision.

In conclusion, while African countries have moved toward liberalization and the opening of markets, industrialized countries are still protecting important sectors and markets, notably those in agriculture. African countries are increasing the pressure on industrialized countries—particularly the EU, Japan, and the United States—to lower the protection levels in these markets. The uneven playing field of international trade constrains the export and production potential of African producers, reduces employment and income, especially in rural areas, and thus negatively affects Africa's food and nutrition security.

4. Evaluation of Subregional and National Programs, Strategies, and Policies

Africa remains in crisis today. Hunger and poverty are a major threat to many people there, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Over 300 million Africans live on less than US$1 a day. More than a quarter of the population of Africa, about 200 million people, are chronically hungry, 30 million require emergency food and agricultural assistance in any one year, and in 2003 about 14 million people were on the brink of starvation in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) alone. It is expected that the number of undernourished people in Sub-Saharan Africa will increase from 180 million in 1995–97 to 184 million in 2015. This stands in sharp contrast to the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger and poverty by 2015.

These negative trends are associated with the elusiveness of economic growth, especially in agriculture, persistent conflicts, and the rampant HIV/AIDS epidemic. However, a closer look at the region reveals some variability among countries and subregions. For example, in northern Africa, both the prevalence and the absolute number of people who are malnourished have been decreasing, and several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, and Tanzania) have introduced policies that have successfully combated either hunger or malnutrition, or both.

There are especially difficult situations in central, southern, and eastern Africa, where violent conflicts and HIV/AIDS epidemics thwart all efforts to establish food and nutrition security. In northern Africa, the south–north migratory streams, coupled with rapid urbanization in the south of the Mediterranean region, are likely to intensify in coming years. The disparities between north and south show up in substantial differences in human development indicators such as illiteracy rates, sanitation, child mortality, and life expectancy. The average GDP per capita today is five times higher in the northern Mediterranean countries than in the south. Similarly, agricultural labor productivity is currently five times less in the south.

Further, with only a few exceptions, all the countries in eastern and southern Africa have per capita incomes lower than the average for low-income countries, estimated at US$430, as well as poverty rates that are over 40 percent. With regard to the prevalence of undernutrition in this region, only Namibia, Swaziland, and Uganda had prevalences lower than 25 percent, which is the average for least-developed countries. In central Africa, the number of undernourished went up from 22 million people in 1992 to 45 million in 2000, which is a 100 percent growth rate in malnutrition. The regional hunger and malnutrition rate in central Africa is 57 percent.

At the same time, most African economies are heavily dependent on agriculture as their main source of livelihood and many have the natural resources to support these activities. In eastern and southern Africa, for example, more then 90 percent of potentially arable land is unexploited. Central Africa contains the second-largest forested area in the world and agriculture is the principal economic activity, accounting for 67 percent of all employment, 28 percent of GDP, and 5 percent of all exports. However, agricultural exports fell from US$1.4 billion in 1980 to US$0.72 billion in 2002, while agricultural imports grew from US$0.95 billion in 1998 to US$1.6 billion in 2002. Seven of the 11 countries in central Africa have experienced conflict, which is contributing to the poor performances of their agricultural sectors.

In addition to the strategies discussed in earlier chapters, a number of food security programs have been designed and implemented in Africa through regional economic organizations. In eastern and southern Africa, for instance, SADC and the countries belonging to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have undertaken regional efforts in food and nutrition security. In central Africa, food and nutrition security programs have centered around the efforts by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and its Regional Programme of Food Security (PRSA). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has also taken steps to address the food security situation in its member countries. The following sections provide more detailed descriptions of some of these initiatives.

Subregional Initiatives

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

SADC was established in Lusaka, Zambia, on April 1, 1980, following the adoption of the Lusaka Declaration. Its main objective is to promote regional cooperation in economic development among member states.

SADC's Food Security Program is the implementation of a food security strategy that addresses both the supply and demand sides of the food security issue by focusing on household economies and vulnerable groups. The program comprises a number of national and regional projects that help member states improve regional, national, and household food security. It encourages activities that increase the ability of all people to acquire an adequate diet through improved productivity and increased incomes, especially for the rural population, and is based on wise use and long-term conservation of the region's natural resource base. The Food Security Program has several regional projects that include an early warning system, remote sensing, food security training, small-scale seed production, a food security database, vulnerability assessment, and a food and nutritional information system. These projects are implemented by member states with funding and technical assistance from various donors.

Much has been achieved in SADC in terms of food security since its inception in April 1980. In particular, the small-scale seed production project has been successful and led to the development of a number of seed varieties catering to the different climatic conditions in SADC. Other achievements have been in training, disaster management, information management, and emergency operations. However, the financing of projects remains problematic and weaknesses in the individual countries' implementation of the programs may be responsible for the problems in food security and nutrition in the region.

Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

The treaty establishing COMESA was signed on November 5, 1993, in Kampala, Uganda, and was ratified a year later in Lilongwe, Malawi. COMESA was formed to replace the former Preferential Trade Area (PTA), which had existed since 1981. Food and nutrition security are coordinated by the agriculture, trade, and customs unit of COMESA. A new program for regional agricultural trade promotion and food security was proposed in 2003 and is technically coordinated by the committee on agriculture.

COMESA and its predecessor, PTA, have produced significant achievements in the areas of trade, customs, transport, development finance, and technical cooperation. Impressive progress has also been made in the productive sectors of industry and agriculture. However, COMESA member countries face frequent food insecurity as a result of the confluence over a long period of time of several factors. Droughts, floods, and related natural disasters have been some of the major causes of food insecurity, exacerbated by other factors such as conflict, poverty, and HIV/AIDS. The region has been unable to adequately respond to the continued recurrence of climate-induced disasters, despite the existence of a well-assembled body of knowledge and early warning systems. For example, the Horn of Africa is prone to food famine almost every four years.

The region has developed a food security program that builds on the 1992 FAO-approved Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), which was created to assist COMESA in formulating a regional food security program. This project identified a number of priority intervention areas for enhancing food security in member states, but these interventions have not proceeded because of a lack of financial resources.

COMESA has a draft regional agricultural strategy that was presented and discussed during the meeting of the COMESA committee on agriculture in June 2000. The committee recommended that this document be revised to focus on those areas that are better addressed at the regional rather than at the national level. There is a provision in the abovementioned TCP to improve this strategy, but it will nevertheless require further refinement and periodic updating in the future. Furthermore, once the strategy is finalized, an action plan and program will still need to be formulated for its implementation.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Regional Programme of Food Security (PRSA)

ECCAS was established on October 18, 1983, by the members of the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) and the members of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes States (Burundi, Rwanda, and Zaire), as well as by Sao Tome and Principe. ECCAS began operation in 1985 with the goals of promoting regional economic cooperation and establishing a Central African Common Market. Since 1992, however, the activities of ECCAS have been limited due to the nonpayment of fees by its member states.

Among the major challenges to the establishment of food and nutrition security in central Africa are the dependence of its member countries on imported food, primarily due to the urban demand associated largely with a rural exodus to urban areas, and inadequate domestic production due to the low productivity of their agriculture sectors. With the assistance of international donors, ECCAS intends to mobilize an amount estimated at about US$20.1 billion to finance the Regional Programme of Food Security (PRSA).

The ECCAS ministers of agriculture argue that a PRSA must be implemented to increase agricultural productivity and to contribute to the creation of a food reserve. The program should also stabilize internal and external markets, which in turn would help strengthen trade and promote various export crops. The important elements of this regional integration are macroeconomic liberalization and the provision of incentives for commerce and private enterprise through a supportive legislative, fiscal, financial, and institutional framework that is favorable to private agents.

The latest PRSA has a mid-term time frame (2003–07) and includes components that address implementation capacity, such as partnering in technological support, coordination, and implementation. It also emphasizes stakeholder participation and commitments in accordance with NEPAD. Our recommendations for the implementation of this PRSA are summarized as follows:

1. Advocacy, participation, and research should be the favored implementation strategies for all implementers, and increased incentives lead to improved implementation. Better collaboration between government, the private sector, civil society, and farmer organizations in the implementation of food security programs is strongly encouraged. Nongovernmental and civil society organizations work best when they are treated as partners by governments. These organizations can provide essential assistance to governments willing to invest in public goods and mobilize local participation in both the planning and construction phases. Local participation is crucial to ensuring affordable maintenance and successful management of public goods through a greater sense of local ownership.
2. Governments need to address policy imbalances by shifting their reform priorities toward agriculture: agriculture and nutrition need a much more focused, sustained, and long-term approach.
3. The experience of Cameroon (see Box 1) shows that the interconnectedness of food policy and other sectors makes it necessary for countries to put a policy-coordinating mechanism in place to reduce nonimplementation of programs and inefficiency. Consequently, research must be pursued not only within sectors such as population, agriculture, and the environment but also into the

Box 1—Food security strategy in Cameroon

Cameroon's sustainable development is threatened by its agricultural practices, high birth rates, and forest exploitation. The country has recognized the linkages between food insecurity, demographic pressure, and environmental degradation. Thanks to the recognition of these linkages and of the sources of pressure on sustainable development, policymakers have developed cross-sectoral population, agricultural, and environmental policies and programs. These policies address (1) human development, particularly family planning through education and societal change, accompanied by measures for poverty reduction and for achieving gender equality; (2) agricultural and rural development, through investment in productivity and intensification, advocating market-oriented production and access to credit, and reforming pricing policy; and (3) environmental management, through improving natural resource management, protecting biodiversity, forests, and land cover, and encouraging stakeholder participation and adoption of new technologies.Support from international partners is critical to the successful implementation of these policies, as are good governance and strong administrative frameworks. The country's poor human capital and institutional framework has led, however, to the lack of implementation of demographic policies. Another bottleneck has been the lack of infrastructure for coordinating policies and actions in each of the population, agriculture, and environment sectors. Further, the nutritional dimension of food security has not been addressed. Nonetheless, the country's increased awareness of the interconnectedness of these sectors has enabled the state to adopt a multisectoral approach to food security.

interactions between sectors. Greater investment in human capacity building is also required, given the interdisciplinary aspects of food and nutrition security recognized by the Regional Programme of Food Security (PRSA) and demonstrated by the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA's) experiences in Cameroon.

4. There is a lack of statistically supported evidence that could be used to inform policy- and decisionmakers about progress in implementation, especially for nutrition. Implementation actions must be monitored and evaluated through a common database for the countries of the region, which would allow comparisons between its departments and countries.

National Programs, Strategies, and Policies

As has been discussed, food insecurity and malnutrition remain major challenges for most countries in the region. At the policy level, issues of nutrition continue to be crowded out by the emphasis on poverty reduction and food security; however, more agricultural production does not necessarily produce better nutrition. When agricultural produce is sold and the income is used for nonhunger-related expenditure, the malnourished continue to suffer. Further, increased food consumption does not translate into better nutrition because the consumed food may lack essential nutrients.

The following subsections briefly examine the recent policies that have both directly and indirectly improved food and nutrition security in Africa. For the most part, this analysis is based on the experiences of countries in southern and eastern Africa as well as those of a number of northern African countries. Although we at first analyze these regions individually, the concluding section of this chapter ties our findings together.

Macroeconomic Policies

Many African governments have been implementing macroeconomic adjustment programs in association with the World Bank and IMF for as long as two decades, but the success of SAPs in Africa has been mixed. Most of these reforms were adopted under

World Bank/IMF-funded programs, such as economic recovery programs in Tanzania and Uganda; SAPs and the enhanced structural facility programs in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda; and fiscal restructuring and deregulation programs in Malawi. More recently, most countries in eastern and southern Africa have adopted the medium-term expenditure framework to further consolidate their macroeconomic reforms. The overall objective of these reforms has been to achieve macroeconomic stability by ensuring low inflation rates and high economic growth rates. Attaining these objectives would open up further income-generating opportunities for the population and fortify their purchasing power, and thus promote food and nutrition security.

Some countries, such as Botswana, Mozambique, and Uganda, have carried out successful programs of macroeconomic adjustment and structural reform, and have achieved high and sustained economic growth and low inflation. However, the high levels of economic growth at the national level hide the huge segments of the economy that have not enjoyed any benefits. Other countries like Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia have not achieved high levels of economic growth, although their inflationary levels have been stabilized.

Reforms in the financial sector have led to an increase in the number of financial institutions in numerous African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia. In many of these countries, however, these increases have not been accompanied by increases in savings and domestic investment. Access to credit is generally poor because of high interest rates and tight lending conditions. The costs of doing business remain high in many countries because of poor communication, high electricity charges, and poor security services. Revenue performance is still poor in most countries, because of a narrow tax base, noncompliance, and corruption. The fiscal situations of most African countries are characterized by high deficits and heavy aid dependency.

The countries of northern Africa have been in transition toward market economies for more than 10 years in association with the World Bank and IMF. In addition to the restoration of macroeconomic stability and balance of payments equilibrium, SAPs have aimed at a reorganization of the economies of these countries through the liberalization of production and market systems, including the liberalization of prices, abolition of subsidies, dismantling of state intervention and marketing, and the privatization of land.

In northern Africa, the stabilization policies implemented to control government expenditure were appropriate. However, the priorities of government expenditure should also have been redefined; education, training, health prevention and care—that is, the bases of human development—should not be left behind. The liberalization of foreign trade has led to internal competition between imported and home products, and exports are confronted with nontariff barriers established by importing countries. After a period of improvement, trade and budget deficits still prevail.

The food and nutrition security strategies of all African countries were defined by the macroeconomic policies implicit in agricultural programs. The disparities in implementation of macroeconomic policy may be responsible for the differences in food and nutrition status between the countries of the region. However, in many countries, food deficits are visible not at the national level but at the household level. Thus, good performance at the macro level may mask weaknesses in food and nutrition at the household level.

International Trade

Like the macroeconomic policy reforms, trade liberalization efforts were initiated under World Bank and IMF programs. Further, membership of various regional trade blocs such as SADC, the East African Community (EAC), COMESA, and international trade organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) has led African countries to adopt multilateral trade liberalization policies. Several countries enjoy the EU preferential arrangement for Sub-Saharan Africa under the Lomé Agreement between African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries and the EU, as well as general preferential trade arrangements with many developed countries. In northern Africa, Algeria reached agreements with the EU for freer trade, ensuring that its exports to the EU benefit from a complete elimination of customs duties, and that imports from the EU will be progressively liberalized. Egypt participates in the U.S.-Egyptian Partnership Agreement, the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), COMESA, and the Euro-Egyptian Partnership.

International trade has been liberalized in most African countries, price controls have been removed, and the once monopolistic marketing boards no longer enjoy market monopoly. Some countries have carried out aggressive export promotion and encouraged foreign investment (Botswana, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia). Most countries have also removed quantitative restrictions and lowered tariff barriers. In general, trade liberalization ensures free importing of food from the rest of the world during food deficits, as well as higher incomes for local exporters. Freer trade was thought likely to enhance food security and has indeed made it possible to import foodstuffs from other countries whenever a country has a deficit. It has also benefited those consumers who can now access foodstuffs more cheaply, but it has hurt producers, who now face stiff competition from cheap imports, which lowers their incomes and is thus detrimental to food and nutrition security.

In most countries the private sector has failed to adequately take up the role once played by government marketing monopolies, which has created bottlenecks in the marketing of food products, although there has been an increase in the number of private business players in some countries (such as Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda). In northern Africa, the number of private agencies is increasing, but their actions are also strongly influenced by regulations and limits on market access and by support measures benefiting national producers.

Since the second half of the 1990s, the Mediterranean basin has attracted a great deal of attention from multinational agro-industrial groups. Foreign investors now control nearly one-third of national market shares. The multinational groups bring not only their technology but also their management methods and international distribution networks. The presence of multinational groups is an advantage for the companies of host countries faced with the nontariff barriers of international trade and with barriers to entering the world food oligopoly.

The liberalization of international trade and the commitment to globalization in northern Africa were made without careful analysis of the possible consequences; these strategies were mainly seen from the perspective of intensifying trade exchanges with Europe. To promote trade with European countries substantial European funds have been made available to help upgrade companies so they can meet European safety and quality standards, but such upgrading is unaffordable for many companies (especially in Algeria and Egypt), given the enormous changes needed in financial management and human resources, the investment required, and the importance of training both executives and employees. As a result, northern African countries are disillusioned about the promised expansion of exports to Europe and increasingly use devices that enable the circumvention of the difficulties of gaining market access in Europe.

On the other hand, the potential for internal and regional trade has not yet been fully exploited. Neighboring countries are far less demanding in quality standards and product sophistication, and could thus be important trading partners.

Public Sector Reforms

Broad reforms were carried out in the civil services of most African countries under the World Bank and IMF programs. The overall objective of these public sector reforms was to improve the efficiency and productivity of civil service. The reforms included cutting the size of civil service, and thus lowering the wage bill, which would enable governments to devote more resources to areas that would directly improve the welfare of the people, such as education, health, and infrastructure improvement. Other public sector reforms included the introduction of cost sharing in the provision of some essential services to bring down government expenditure, and the privatization of government parastatals with the aim of enhancing their efficiency by placing them in private hands and thus reducing the burden on the state treasury. The improved delivery of essential human capital investment in health and education, along with strengthening of the private sector, would, it was hoped, in turn facilitate the achievement of overall food and nutrition security in the region.

However, in many countries the public sector reforms have been slow and incomplete, and have often exacerbated, rather than improved, food security. In some countries, the large-scale retrenchment of civil service employees left many families without a source of income and hence vulnerable to food insecurity. In others, the reluctance of the state to be sidelined or its inability to create a sufficient number of alternative jobs produced hesitancy in public sector retrenchment. In Egypt, for instance, retrenchment has been reversed, and the public sector has even expanded in an effort to reduce the unemployment rate. In many cases, the public sector constitutes an impediment to the ongoing liberalization and privatization reforms because these reforms threaten civil servants' job security (Ayad 2002).

In many instances, the private sector did not come onstream until after the dissolution of the parastatal companies, so unemployment grew. Lacking the financial means and the capacity to organize such a complex restructuring process, northern African countries have generally been unable to set up structures in the private sector that could replace the dismantled public structures. Further, in the absence of civil society groups, northern African states have not had a public dismission of the role of the state in their development process. Redefinition of the role of the state remains to be carried out in these countries, and the mentalities of civil servants must evolve accordingly.

Public sector retrenchments have also negatively affected the delivery of services by governments, such as medical and extension services. The resources freed up by retrenchment have rarely been translated into increases in public sector investment. In fact, public expenditures have mainly decreased in the sectors of major importance for human development—namely research, education, and health. The figures for social welfare expenditure show that priorities vary from country to country, especially with regard to health care and housing. Algeria is one of the countries that has opted for a very strong social policy, but most others are yet to shift their focus toward the poor and disadvantaged.

In particular, food and nutrition security have not generally benefited significantly from public reforms. However, the constraints on social expenditure in the SAP framework have recently led to a re-examination of this problem and the encouragement of private sector participation in the area of education and health services. Thus, private schools have proliferated, as have private clinics and even universities (all formerly forbidden in Egypt, for example). Continued engagement by the private sector may translate into job creation, lower prices, expanding markets, better provision of basic services, and subsequent improvements in food security in Africa.

Poverty Reduction Policies

The links between poverty and hunger are unambiguous, which means that poverty alleviation efforts must play a major role in securing access to food and proper nutrition for all. For almost all African countries, local initiatives to fight poverty have been outlined in PRSPs, as well as in other national programs and action plans. African countries have committed to eradicating poverty, as stated in the Millennium Development Goals. Most countries in the region have also signed the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, which committed them to halving the number of undernourished people by no later than 2015, mainly by fighting poverty, which was identified in the declaration as a major cause of food insecurity. Very broad measures to achieve these goals were outlined in this declaration, including restoring and maintaining high levels of economic growth, improving governance, increasing income opportunities for the poor, improving quality of life, and improving equity.

The countries in eastern and southern Africa have very high levels of poverty and have adopted the goals of accelerated economic growth and greater equity in the distribution of national wealth. Except for a small number of countries (Botswana, Mozambique, and Uganda), however, these countries have not achieved high and sustained economic growth, and all these countries have shown poor equity performance. In northern Africa, on the other hand, extreme poverty has been successfully limited; only about 2.5 percent of the population lives on less than US$1 per day.

Algeria's efforts to reduce poverty during the past decade demonstrate that targeted anti-poverty policies can be successful. Social policy reforms were introduced that aimed to solidify the financial situation of the social security system, gradually eliminate food subsidies, establish a system of unemployment insurance and a compensation system for workers dismissed from state-owned companies, and identify the underprivileged members of the population and provide them assistance within the framework of the social development fund. However, inadequate targeting, the absence of follow-up, the policy of setting quotas per municipality, and the large proportion of unwarranted beneficiaries have limited the extent to which the ultimate objectives of this program—that is, to help the most vulnerable members of the population—have been achieved.

Morocco has also adopted various anti-poverty measures, with programs aiming to open up poor rural areas by improving their infrastructure. Such measures can be effective if poverty-oriented development projects are matched by microcredit and are efficient. However, even in northern African countries, poverty has been increasing since the mid-1980s, especially in Algeria and Morocco, because of a decline in real wages, increasing income disparities, and growing underemployment (Economic Research Forum 2002). Moreover, recent economic policies have reduced some of the practices of mutual aid and led to increased disparities.

The main focus of the poverty reduction strategies of most countries has been employment creation. Policy reforms have aimed at increasing employment opportunities, as well as developing the rural areas where the majority of the poor live, in various ways, including facilitating growth in agriculture through improvement of extension services, promoting nonfarm employment opportunities, and improving rural infrastructure. These reforms have had mixed direct and indirect effects on employment. Institutional reforms have had serious direct negative effects, while the associated competition-enhancing policies have had mixed effects, with some causing contraction of employment and others having expansionary effects. Further, real wages have declined during the adjustment period in most countries; this decline has had negative effects on food security. In some countries, such as Egypt and Morocco, job creation was expected to improve as a result of the microcredit programs supported by the Social Fund of Development. The results of these programs remain disappointing, however, principally because of the lack of the management skills necessary for their implementation.

Unemployment is becoming a major problem in Africa, in part because of the negative impact of public sector policies. The hope placed in measures to boost employment creation through liberalization and privatization remains unrewarded. Employment enhancement schemes have so far proved inadequate. In Algeria, the main emphasis has been on temporary employment; in Egypt, the number of poorly paid civil servants has increased; and in Tunisia, these schemes have promoted vocational training, but graduates are released into unemployment. Moreover, given the very low salaries, individuals have been compelled to take on several jobs simultaneously.

As long as private companies cannot offer sufficient jobs to absorb those released by public companies or utilities, there can only ever be faint hope of a solution. The task of creating a satisfactory employment environment is considerable and can only be undertaken as a long-term project. The risks of civil uprisings and the growth of religious extremism will increase if liberalization does not improve living conditions, and particularly levels of employment.

Other poverty reduction efforts have included the empowerment of women, assisting the most vulnerable groups of the population with food and income subsidies, and investing in core infrastructure. Women are discriminated against in many countries. Although women form the bulk of the farming population in these countries, they have less access to productive resources and opportunities, as well as to the benefits of their work. To combat discrimination against women, women's rights activist groups have been created in some countries, such as in Kenya and Uganda. Some governments have established legislation to integrate women's empowerment into the overall framework for national development; in Kenya, for example, legislation has been passed at the national level to address issues of gender equality. Northern Africa is one of the least-favored areas in terms of gender disparity: on average only 31 percent of women are employed. Major reforms are needed in this region to improve the status of women and achieve the goals of poverty reduction and improved nutrition and food security.

Production Support Policies

Production support policies were part of the World Bank and IMF programs for various countries and addressed broad areas such as research and extension, investment, infrastructure, finance and market institutions, land markets, input subsidies, and output pricing and marketing. The overall focus of these liberalization policies was aimed at increasing competition so as to bring down the cost of inputs, create incentives for producers through freer market access, and increase incentives for local and foreign investors. This approach aimed to address food insecurity directly by providing cheaper access to production inputs, bringing down the prices of foodstuffs, and creating more income-generating opportunities.

In eastern and southern Africa, input subsidies and price controls have progressively been phased out in most countries (Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). Price decontrols were approached with hesitation, especially for staple foods (for example, maize in Kenya), and there were some policy reversals, but by now these decontrols have largely been completed. As a result of these reforms, most countries have developed policy frameworks focusing on agriculture, such as in Uganda (see Box 2). In other countries, specific food security policies have been developed, such as in Kenya (see Box 3). Most of these policies include reforms that aim to support the agricultural sector and thus to implicitly ensure food and nutrition security.

In northern Africa, the increasing support for agricultural and food production during the past two decades is a result of radical changes in the role of the state. Liberalization has affected both government enterprises (parastatals, administrations, and marketing institutions) and the private or semi-private sector.

Egyptian agricultural policy reform began with the SAP established in 1987 and continued into the 1990s (Siam 2003; DAI 2002). The delivery of all crops to governmental bodies was obligatory until 1987. In 1987, the marketing of crops (except cotton, rice, and sugarcane) was liberalized. At the beginning of the 1990s, reforms liberalized the marketing of rice, eliminated subsidies for agricultural inputs (chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and seeds), liberalized the markets for agricultural inputs, eliminated subsidies on the interest rate of agricultural credits, and abolished compulsory crop rotation. During the second half of the 1990s, further reforms liberalized the marketing of cotton and the prices of land and farm rents. Thus, from 1987 to 1997, state intervention in agriculture fell drastically, mainly via the privatization of governmental bodies and the progressive closing down of "offices" (state marketing organizations). Today, only two crops are still under state control—sugar and rice. The liberalization of agricultural policies was accomplished while under protection from foreign trade.

In post-independence Morocco, agricultural strategies continued the policies established during the colonial period (Doukkali 2003; Arndt and Tyner 2003). Of these policies, the goal of reaching 1 million irrigated hectares by the year 2000 had the most significant effect on Moroccan agriculture. The increase during the 1970s in the price of phosphates, of which Morocco was the world's leading exporter, allowed for substantial state intervention in the agricultural and food industries. In 1986, Tunisia embarked on its first SAP, which consisted of a series of reforms, including increases in the prices of key farm products and the elimination of subsidies for agricultural inputs. Production prices for grains increased up to levels surpassing international prices, and subsidies for fertilizers, herbicides, seeds, and cattle feed were gradually eliminated. At the same time, large public investments in the agricultural sector continued to occur; the most important investment was in irrigation infrastructure and the installation of public irrigation systems (35 percent of the total volume of financing).

Box 2—Agricultural policy in Uganda

Uganda's current agricultural policy is enshrined in the Programme for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA), a holistic strategic framework for increasing agricultural productivity, eradicating poverty, and improving food security through multisectoral interventions. PMA's objectives are to increase the incomes and improve the quality of life of poor rural smallholder subsistence farmers, improve household food security, provide gainful employment, and promote sustainable use and management of natural resources. PMA hinges on eradicating poverty and food insecurity by transforming rural smallholder subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture. The broad strategies for achieving the objectives of PMA include:

- making poverty eradication the overriding objective of agricultural development;
- decentralizing service delivery to lower levels of local government;
- removing direct government involvement in the commercial aspects of agriculture and establishing incentives to attract private sector participation;
- supporting the dissemination and adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies through agricultural extension services;
- guaranteeing food security by increasing production for the market and improving incomes;
- ensuring that all intervention programs are gender-focused and gender-responsive;
- promoting a two-way planning and budgeting process by empowering local governments; and
- ensuring the coordination of the multisectoral interventions that aim to remove constraints on agricultural modernization.

A National Agricultural Advisory Service has been created to coordinate the provision of services to subsistence farmers.

Source: Opolot, Wandera, and Abdala (2003).

In northern Africa, SAP commitments specify three objectives: (1) agriculture should be liberalized, (2) agricultural productivity should be raised, and (3) agriculture should be export oriented. The resulting programs and policies must be consistent with these objectives. Heavy public investment in water resources and the end of state monopolies together with the liberalization of prices have led to significant progress. However, agricultural development policy needs to take into account the impact on the sustainability of renewable resources (lands, water) and also the constraints of the external markets, such as nontariff barriers and strict product standards.

The privatization of formerly state or parastatal companies has significantly transformed agricultural activities in northern African countries. Autonomous decisionmaking has allowed farmers to reorient their production (Egypt) and exporters to develop more active export strategies (Morocco). Liberalizing external trade has improved the agricultural balance of the countries studied. Farmers in this region have demonstrated a good capacity to adapt, in spite of their poverty.

Food Policies

Some northern African countries have subsidized basic products as part of their food policy, hoping that these measures could improve food security without the need for significant social reform or for questioning the foundations of the economy. Although the SAPs required the progressive elimination of these subsidies, some basic products still benefit from state support or regulation: bread and grain in Algeria; soft wheat, hard wheat, olive oil, and milk in Tunisia; and soft wheat, vegetable oil, and sugar in Morocco. These products have been judged too

Box 3—Food security strategy in Kenya

Food security is of paramount importance to Kenyan development policy, as is reflected by its central position in several recent policy documents and plans. The objective of Kenyan food policy is to maintain a position of broad food self-sufficiency so that scarce foreign exchange resources are not used on food imports. This objective was the rationale behind the government's long-term reliance in the 1960s and 1970s on agricultural policies such as the application of input subsidies and the controlled marketing of food commodities.

Kenya's policy reforms aimed to develop the agricultural sector, and were broad enough to include trade and production support. Trade policy reforms and SAPs were used in the 1980s to liberalize markets that had previously been dominated by government controls. As far as agriculture was concerned, the aim of the SAPs was to dismantle the government monopoly on the marketing of agricultural commodities; remove the associated price controls; and end government control over the importing, pricing, and distribution of farm inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds, pesticides, vaccines, and machinery. As a result, the input markets have been liberalized and the country has developed a network of agricultural input markets. The monopoly on output marketing previously held by parastatals such as the National Cereals Produce Board has been dismantled, and private sector and farmer organizations are now taking the lead in organizing the marketing of these products.The implementation of these reforms met with significant covert and overt resistance in the 1980s but proceeded with greater commitment from 1993 onwards. Although the reforms have helped to bring about macroeconomic changes, they have been less successful in stimulating agricultural growth. The appropriate complementary policy components and sequencing of the reform measures were often missing. For example, no institutional framework was established for the efficient operation of markets, and no system of rights and obligations was created to knit society together and respond to citizen needs. The Kenyan government seems to have equated liberalization and privatization with an abdication of its responsibility for economic development. After the many years of government monopolies in production and marketing had ended, private entrepreneurs lacked the managerial skills, financial capacity, and physical infrastructure to take over. These factors may have played an important role in compromising the response of the agricultural sector to policy reforms.The food insecurity and poverty situation in Kenya may also be due to the poor performance of agriculture in recent years, because this sector dominates the Kenyan economy. The full potential of the agricultural sector is yet to be realized, although in recent years the development of nontraditional exports such as horticultural products have contributed significantly to agricultural growth and therefore to food security. The major challenges to the agricultural sector include low farm-level productivity, poor marketing, lack of infrastructure, limited access to credit, and the high costs of farm inputs. The sector is also affected by lags in the reform of policy and legal frameworks, which are not yet in line with those associated with a liberalized economy.

Source: Nyangito et al. (2003).

strategic for the liberalization of their prices. Egypt also continues to subsidize a number of products heavily within its green card system: bread (56 percent), wheat flour (50 percent), sugar (55 percent), and oil (56 percent). Red card beneficiaries can buy sugar subsidized at 32 percent and oil at 38 percent. These food subsidies represented 4.5 percent of government expenditure in 2000.

In Algeria, the objectives of food policy were to reduce food dependence and to provide the population with a well-balanced diet. The products benefiting from food aid, such as flour, legumes, milk, oil, semolina, and sugar make up the bulk of the daily diet of the population. Financing the gap between the equilibrium price (import price) and the consumer price has for a long time been accomplished through general foodstuffs support, chargeable to the state budget.

Maintaining generalized food subsidies is not justified, because high-income groups benefit more from them than low-income groups. For example, the red card system in Egypt should be abolished. Targeting the needy should be a required procedure, provided the costs of this targeting can be contained. Since subsidies are generally not applied to the most nutritional products, it appears that political economy plays a key role in subsidy targeting. Thus food policy, including subsidization, is often geared not toward food security but toward achieving internal stability, and to removing some of the burden from social policies. In the trade-off between the rural sector, which benefits from high producer prices, and the urban sector, which benefits from low prices, governments have so far favored the urban sector. Food subsidies have thus not promoted stronger local demand for local products but have caused countries to become more dependent on foreign trade, while at the same time also burdening their budgets.

Governance

Governance plays a critical role in the achievement of food and nutrition security. Countries that have well-developed governance structures have achieved better levels of food and nutrition security because such structures facilitate the overseeing of the development process, and thus make it less susceptible to corruption. Insecurity and corruption are high on the list of factors constraining private participation in economic activities in the region. Good governance is particularly important for the poor. If the poor have opportunities to exercise their political and civil rights, governments are more attuned to their needs and demands, and, among other effects, are more likely to focus on better allocation and use of resources for food and security programs. Finally, the absence of armed conflict is a fundamental component of good governance and a prerequisite of sound food and nutrition policy. The focus of African governance initiatives has varied, depending on which aspect of governance required the most attention at the time.

Measures aimed at improving governance were adopted under World Bank/IMF initiatives, international initiatives (such as the UN conventions on international corruption), and domestic programs such as PRSPs and anticorruption strategies. Although most African countries have fared poorly in combating corruption, some hope remains. Botswana has over the years been ranked among the least corrupt nations in the world and the best in Africa, but other countries rank very poorly. Nonetheless, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda have also attempted to implement reforms aiming to rid the judiciary, police, and civil service of corruption and inefficiency. Their overall objectives were to improve security, lower the cost of doing business, speed up the process of dispensing justice, and establish a relatively predictable and stable environment for investment.

Successful policy reform has usually only been made possible by strong political leadership, such as in Uganda after the 1986 change of government, the sustained democratic leadership of Botswana, and the democratic governance in Mozambique that has persisted since 1992 when war ended. Reform is also only successful where there is government commitment to the reforms, and where there is a wider domestic ownership of the reforms (for example, in Uganda). Some of the less successful reformers experienced stiff internal resistance to reforms or external hostility due to overall national policies, such as the socialism of Tanzania. Other countries, like Kenya, have expressed reluctance to reform but have also only achieved poor management of their economies.

In northern Africa, policy reforms aimed to modernize the public sector and encourage a civil society to emerge on the basis of privatization. However, their policies and programs do not go far enough in clarifying and adapting the rules for the legal and banking sectors. Thus while this process has been steadily progressing in Algeria and in Tunisia, it is still lagging behind in Egypt and Morocco. The capacity to implement these changes is constrained by cultural attitudes and the difficulty of modifying long-lasting management practices. The time span allowed for these changes is generally too short. Moreover the level and type of training available for civil servants and entrepreneurs are not suited to the management methods of a private enterprise in a liberal market context. The state apparatus, laws and regulations (at different levels, such as trading, business start-up, and credits), and the modes of governance were geared in these countries to centralized decisionmaking and have turned out to be significant barriers to liberalization.

Many countries in Africa have instituted significant measures to ensure democratic governance, such as creating multiparty democracy and encouraging greater political tolerance. But in some regions such as northern Africa, the peoples' participation in decisionmaking is close to zero. Indeed, according to usual practices, the new rules and programs are decided at the highest levels of government. This is not surprising, given that there are no independent professional organizations, and the organizations that do exist are subject to heavy state control, partly because of fear of political opposition. It is only very recently in Algeria and Morocco that it has become possible to express any opposition.

Lastly, many countries in Africa are experiencing violent conflicts in their territories. Central Africa is especially plagued by conflict, which renders economic and social development activities impossible and endangers the food and nutrition security of large parts of the population. In November 2003, the UN introduced a report on the conflict-plagued ECCAS (United Nations Security Council 2003) and called on the Security Council to assist the area in its efforts to stabilize itself and build peace and democracy. In this report, submitted to the UN Secretary General and later forwarded to the Security Council, the mission concluded that the root causes of the current situation in the central African subregion can be traced to at least two main internal sources—the crisis in governance and the widespread poverty, which have, in several cases, been compounded by external factors.

Conflicts are often triggered or exacerbated by poor governance practices, such as lack of accountability and transparency, impunity, exclusion, socioeconomic marginalization, and the absence of the rule of law and respect for human rights. Yet encouraging examples do exist. Some countries, such as Mozambique and Uganda, came out of long periods of civil war and are on the path to full recovery. Other countries, like Zimbabwe, however, are slipping back into political turmoil with a risk of exclusion by the international community.

Human Capital Formation

Most governments recognize that human capital development is the key to poverty reduction and have therefore implemented programs in the central areas of education, health, nutrition, and family planning. These reforms have typically been carried out under country development programs, World Bank/IMF-initiated programs, and UN international conventions. The overall objective of these reforms in human capital has been to enable citizens to have better access to services and to promote better use of productive resources, and thus improve the food and nutritional status of the population.

Most African countries have increased their budgetary allocations to social services; however most indicators of human capital for these countries rank poorly compared with those of other developing countries. Illiteracy levels remain high, access to health services is poor, sanitation is poor, and access to modern family planning methods has shown only marginal improvement. With regard to health, the national health plans of various countries have set clear goals for improving the health status of their citizens. Measures that emphasize preventive or promotive rural health services with community-level management have been outlined, for example in Kenya and Uganda. The government of Botswana has set up a national health scheme that gives all citizens access to basic medical care. With regards to education, some countries have initiated free or universal primary education programs (such as Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda), but in most of Africa basic education is inadequate and not available to all. In spite of serious efforts in the field of schooling, the level of illiteracy remains significant.

The approach to human capital formation has been biased in two directions. First governments have addressed the training of executives, but largely neglected the education and basic training of the population. The policies and programs of northern African countries favor better schooling, particularly for the rural population, but they also favor expensive private education that is inaccessible to a large number of poor people. Second, the serious problems of gender discrimination mentioned above are widely ignored. The capacity to implement needed reforms to reduce the biases is weak because access to good-quality training is limited.

Most countries have invested in research and extension services with the aim of improving the human capacity to increase agricultural production. These efforts contribute to increased food and nutrition security only if well tailored to the issues. For example, the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, a parastatal established by Parliament in 1979, dominates research and extension in Kenya. Yet, although Kenya's agricultural research system is strong, the lack of progress in increasing total factor productivity in agriculture suggests there are weaknesses in subsequent technology development and transfer, which have been attributed in particular to weaknesses in priority setting, financing, management, and interagency linkages.

Natural Resource Management Policies

The combination of increasing population and stagnating yields often forces farmers onto new lands, either forests or other lands poorly suited for agriculture, causing deforestation and land degradation. Poor people are the most adversely affected by lack or loss of access to critical natural resources, unsustainable use practices, and environmental degradation. Therefore, national environmental concerns must be addressed to prevent such developments and promote sustainable agricultural practices. In addition, securing access to land for farmers facilitates such practices, and enhances their food and nutrition security.

Long-term economic and ecological issues should be of major concern in African development, but sustainable development is not among the main concerns of those in charge of resource management. There is a conflict between agricultural policies aimed at intensification and environmental policies. Subsidies for water use, price supports for water-consuming products, and promotion of tourism are factors liable to affect sustainable water management. In northern Africa, so far only Algeria's Plan of Development includes natural resource management policies. Unmonitored liberalization risks are also intensifying the pressure on scarce natural resources. This problem is likely to undermine efforts to increase local production and reduce food dependence. Public sector research needs to give higher priority to natural resource management, which is particularly important for marginal areas and fragile environments. The lessons of the past have hardly been considered; some lands are already unusable because of excessive intensification, agrochemical treatment, or grazing, and some cities face increasing water shortages.

However, many countries have adopted measures aimed at protecting the environment and attempted to establish early warning systems as well as disaster and emergency coordination units, realizing that the livelihoods of most rural people in Africa are dependent on natural resources. Furthermore, some countries have established national environmental authorities to oversee environmental conservation (for example, Kenya and Uganda). In Malawi, the national environmental policy emphasizes a community-based natural resource management approach. Under this approach, communities control their own natural resources, which discourages individual overuse and reduces damage due to external factors. Similarly, the environmental support program in Zambia aims at supporting community-based programs. Environmental protection in Zambia has been hindered, however, by weak law enforcement capacity and corruption.

Several countries in eastern and southern Africa have also attempted land reforms to improve access and enhance security by instituting stable land tenure, but these reforms have often met with resistance. In Zambia, a land bill intended to convert customary ownership to private ownership was rejected by parliament. In Zimbabwe, land reforms (through eviction of white settlers from their land with the intent to redistribute it to the natives) have been highly controversial and met with stiff opposition, especially internationally. In Kenya, a presidential commission was set up to look into the problem of land access, but its recommendations are yet to be implemented. In some countries such as Mozambique, land markets are poorly developed, with most land being vested in the government. In 2002, the government of Botswana engaged consultants to review the country's land policy. The aim of the new land policy was to integrate and consolidate all existing policies, procedures, and programs used in administration, management, development, acquisition, and disposal of land in the country. The report has yet to be considered by the government. In general, land policy is crucial for food and nutrition security and needs to be given serious attention.

The progress toward sustainable development is slow in northern Africa. In Algeria, the conservation of natural resources became a political priority only with the National Plan for Agricultural Development, established in 2001, and, more specifically, with the report on "Environment and Sustainable Development (PNAE-DD)." This report focuses on inefficient water use, land degradation, deforestation, desertification, and erosion (Bedrani 2003). In Egypt and Morocco although environmental concerns have been widely acknowledged, specific and relevant programs to address these concerns do not exist. Companies in favor of the conservation of natural resources are still hesitant to take resource protection measures. In Tunisia, water management is the main area of concern. The country's 10-year plan, which started in 1990, aimed essentially to transport water for irrigated agriculture and to provide drinking water for the population, rather than to save water or increase efficiency. The Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture fosters water-saving techniques and pays a subsidy for drip irrigation equipment, amounting to 40 to 60 percent of its total cost.

Summary

Our closer look at individual African countries and subregions has shown that the progress toward food and nutrition security has not been consistent throughout Africa. Since the root causes of poverty and hunger vary from country to country, highly context-specific policies and strategies are required. Recommendations for African governments and other agencies with respect to hunger alleviation should therefore be based on the particular features of the subregion or country in question.

A more systematic grading of countries' policies, strategies, programs, and action plans based on the criteria outlined in the conceptual framework in Chapter 2 and the review in this chapter has been attempted for eastern and southern Africa, as summarized in Table 1, and for northern Africa as shown in Table 2. For central Africa, which has suffered most severely from conflict and devastating destruction in recent decades, and where the international community has shown little interest, only a general assessment has been possible.

It is apparent that the overall performance of these programs and strategies for eastern and southern African countries is intermediate to good, and for northern Africa, intermediate. In northern Africa, although the main macroeconomic balances have been restored, economic development has been sluggish and accompanied by high unemployment, a decline in real wages, and gender discrimination. The liberalization of the economy and the retrenchment of the state, particularly in social sectors, has resulted in the appearance of a new type of poverty and its accompanying social problems. While extreme poverty has disappeared, a wider and more diffuse type of poverty has emerged with adverse effects on food and nutrition security in the region. This assessment indicates that there have been remarkable achievements, but also that there is room for improvement in their implementation, which is essential if food and nutrition security are to be achieved in these regions.

Attention to food and nutrition has improved, and political will has been mobilized. The central African countries are now making a renewed effort to ensure greater food and nutrition security, and are showing increasing willingness to collaborate. The

Table 1—Eastern and southern Africa: Grading of policies, strategies, programs, and action plans

Policy category	Grading	Remarks
Macroeconomic	Good	• Dependent mostly on conditions set by donors/external pressures • Commitment to implementation of programs varies
International trade	Good	• Built on global conditions, taking into account a changing world trade environment • Inadequate stakeholder involvement and therefore some resistance and complaints, mostly from the farming community
Public sector reforms	Intermediate	• Significant reductions in the number of civil service employees, but slow progress in privatization of public enterprises, and inadequate implementation of employment policies and programs
Poverty reduction strategies	Intermediate	• Policies and programs well developed but inadequate implementation, a reflection of capacity constraints
Production support	Intermediate	• Policy and program changes mostly responding to external pressures· Inadequate implementation frameworks and low levels of stakeholder involvement
Governance	Poor	• Only a few countries have shown serious commitment to implementation, but external pressure has induced most countries to develop systems to deal with governance problems
Human capital formation	Good	• Policies and programs high on agenda for most countries, but successful implementation limited by financial constraints; most programs are donor driven
Natural resource management	Intermediate	• Policies and programs given priority in recent times, but some areas such as early warning systems still weak

Source: Devised by authors.

various agencies and stakeholders should take advantage of this wave of spirited and galvanized political will, which is an important foundation of successful policymaking and implementation. To ensure the achievement of sustainable food and nutrition security by 2020, the subregion needs good governance, investment in public goods, analytical tools, research, capacity building, partnership building, and added collaboration from all agencies and stakeholders. The latest PRSA for central Africa, for example, meets most of these evaluation criteria and is thus considered "good."

Table 2—Northern Africa: Grading of policies, strategies, programs, and action plans

Policy category	Grading	Remarks
Macroeconomic policies	Intermediate	• Well identified problems and clearly defined objectives • Formulation of policies and programs and implementation deficient • Involvement of stakeholders minimal
International trade	Intermediate to good	• Policies and programs with well defined objectives generally implemented as scheduled • Little participation by stakeholders
Public sector reforms	Intermediate	• Objectives clear and consistent, but implementation of policies and programs met heavy resistance • Much remains to be done
Poverty reduction strategies	Intermediate	• Efforts made also involving stakeholders; policies and programs less clear • Feedback of lessons learned lacking
Production support	Good	• High on the priority list of most countries; action taken also in response to external pressure
Governance	Poor to intermediate	• Problems and objectives recognized, but policies and programs half-hearted and capacity to implement inadequate
Human capital formation	Poor	• Objectives and policies and programs partly inconsistent • Constraints in capacity to implement within time frame set
Natural resource management	Very poor	• Little attention given to the issue • Policies and programs not well defined • Stakeholders participation minimal and implementation deficient

Source: Devised by authors.

5. Conclusion

After decades of sluggish growth and economic decline in many African countries, there are signs that some of these countries have succeeded in reversing the trend. There have been remarkable successes, particularly in establishing macroeconomic stability, liberalizing trade, moving exchange rates to more realistic levels, and removing price controls and marketing board monopolies. There have also been improvements in social services and efforts in human capital formation, although financial constraints have prevented fully satisfactory progress.

Peace and security are a *conditio sine qua non* for any progress in development. Where wars, civil unrest, insecurity, large numbers of refugees, and warlords dominate the scene, as has been the case in central Africa, no development can be expected. In these situations, restoring peace, resolving conflicts, and establishing the rule of law should have the highest priority for the countries concerned and for the international community. For the many countries plagued by conflict, these measures need to be accompanied by postconflict support. For example, where large numbers of people have fled and assembled in refugee camps, it is critical to pursue resettlement under safe conditions and provide infrastructure and start-up resources for re-establishing a basis for their lives.

Successes in socioeconomic development and by extension in food and nutrition security have been achieved in countries with strong leadership and the political will to address the key problems. Where political will has been lacking and where no serious attempts have been made to address food crises, such as in the early response strategies the Lagos Plan of Action and the Regional Food Plan for Africa, the crises deepened and often reached desperate proportions. Stiff internal resistance to reforms has also hampered implementation, however, particularly where public sector retrenchment resulted in job and income losses, making many families vulnerable to food insecurity.

Good governance, the rule of law, and a reliable and independent judicial system are preconditions for decentralization, community empowerment, and privatization. Private sector initiatives, entrepreneurial activity, and ownership by local people cannot be expected in an environment of arbitrariness, corruption, lawlessness, and insecurity. Some countries have formed anticorruption bodies and have initiated serious programs to fight corruption. Where corruption of public administration, arbitrariness, and extortion by state powers are prevalent, enforcing accountability and strengthening law enforcement is of prime importance. Where the political system excludes large numbers of people, particularly the poor, women, and landless, from participating in political decisionmaking, it is essential to strengthen democratic processes.

Related to good governance is broadly based country ownership of development. Although country ownership is not a novel issue, it has been neglected in many policies. Even in the more recent PRSP process, where country ownership was specifically advocated, it was too narrowly based. Consultations have too often been confined to the ministerial level; parliaments, local governments, civil society, and private sector organizations have regularly been bypassed and those who lack an organized voice, such as women, the landless, and minorities have been left out entirely. If ownership (such as of PRSPs) is to be broadly based, participation needs to be institutionalized more effectively. Parliaments, regional and local representatives, and civil society and private sector groups need to be included in the consultation, decision, and implementation processes. This approach also requires changes in the practices of donors. Donors' governmental or board approval procedures, their conditions and processes for releasing funds, and their tendency to micromanage aid programs have discouraged participation and local ownership.

Capacity building is also a high priority. The very recent and still patchy experience with PRSP implementation demonstrates that there is a need for greater emphasis on capacity building at all levels: in budgeting processes, in linking budgets to long-term national strategies, and in financial accountability monitoring at the macroeconomic level; in priority setting and policy formulation at the sector level; and in local administration and in project evaluation and management at the local and micro levels. Capacity building needs to include all levels of education; primary education should be made universal, and the neglect of secondary and tertiary education by many African countries should be addressed. Lack of finance has played a decisive role. Apart from rebuilding the university capacity, there is a need to provide adequate working conditions for graduates and postgraduates to avoid their migration to countries with more attractive working environments. For example, nowadays scientists without computers and access to the Internet are isolated and will be unable to link up with the science community and new scientific developments.

Agriculture needs to be returned to the top of the development agenda. The priority given to agriculture and water under NEPAD and in the 2003 Maputo Declaration of the Heads of States of the African Union is encouraging in this respect. The World Bank and bilateral donors must follow the lead of African states and support their agricultural development initiatives. The World Bank's Africa Region Rural Strategy is showing the way in emphasizing productivity growth in agriculture, natural resource conservation, rural infrastructure and institution building, and health and education in rural areas. The strategy's objectives are relevant for and consistent with poverty reduction and food and nutrition security improvement. Many of these components require specialized expertise in agricultural production and rural institution building. If the World Bank and bilateral donors move their staffing and recruitment policies in this direction, agricultural development will have a good chance to regain the impetus it needs to enhance food and nutrition security.

The specific support needs of agriculture are manifold. Agricultural research and extension are crucial to Africa's agricultural development, which needs a steady stream of research to support agricultural innovation. Research must focus on productivity-increasing technologies, including biotechnologies, and the development of drought-tolerant and pest-resistant varieties, and at the same time be directed at natural resource conservation. Moreover, in many countries agriculture suffers from additional constraints: insecure property rights, poor infrastructure that constrains domestic markets, unreliable food chains, and lack of rural development activities to increase the purchasing power of rural people and thus strengthen regional markets.

Strengthening agricultural research and extension requires reform of research policies and support for extension institutions that involve private sector and farmer organizations. Soil fertility, water management, and water use efficiency are in general crucial to raising agricultural productivity in a sustainable manner. Involving farmers in the innovation process through participatory technology development is essential to ensure that the innovations are suitable for their needs. This requires strengthened institutions and the involvement of civil society and farmers groups at the local level; building farmer organizations and coordinating the civil society groups in support of innovative adoption processes remains a challenge for the future.

Raising agricultural productivity needs to be closely linked with support programs for rural health, particularly for fighting HIV/AIDS, and with efforts to enhance the empowerment of women and to improve their access to education, land and water, production factors, and markets.

Prioritizing agriculture cannot be carried out without additional resources. The Maputo Declaration's target of allocating 10 percent of the budget to agriculture needs to be translated into reality. Governments and donors must achieve greater cohesion in their approaches to the various strategies that governments have been urged to implement by the international community. Monitoring poverty reduction within the PRSP process is important. In many countries, assistance has been provided for flexible and decentralized monitoring of poverty. At the same time, care needs to be taken not to overburden a targeted country's capacity and institutions. Donors have too often instituted reporting and monitoring requirements that serve their internal institutional needs ahead of the needs of the recipient country. Donors need to agree on a coordinated and unified monitoring and evaluation system that serves to improve policy implementation in recipient countries.

Micro-level activities require more attention. While the project approach dominated the development scene in Africa until the 1980s, from industrialization via import substitution to agricultural and rural development projects, its limitations in a nonconducive policy environment have become increasingly obvious. Deficiency in project environments led to an about-face regarding policy lending, leaving the private sector to pick up the micro-level activities. SAPs, the CDF, PRSPs, and other strategies share an emphasis on policy- and institution-strengthening activities, but few of the strategies discuss projects. Correcting the policy environment and strengthening institutional frameworks remains a high priority; however, development takes place only if there are investments, innovations, and actions carried out on farms, in households, and in villages. This means that the development approach must again recognize the value of the project concept.

Many African countries have made substantial progress toward liberalizing trade, and their call to Japan, the EU, and the United States to level the international trade playing field and reduce protection of their agricultural and other sectors is more than justified. Still, the pressure to further open up African markets continues. The European–Mediterranean Free Trade Zone is a case well worth studying; it provides valuable lessons for a model of development among unequal partners. The northern African countries' experience after seven years shows that opening up to international trade exposes agricultural producers and processors of poor countries to stiff international competition, pushing many of them to lower-quality and less remunerative segments of markets. Based on the northern African experience, there is increasing skepticism about the positive effects of a too-rapid opening up of poor countries' markets to full international competition. A study by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development has found that the rural sectors of the less-developed Mediterranean countries, if exposed rapidly and without adequate preparation to European competition, are likely to decline (BMZ 2001). Under existing technological institutional and infrastructure conditions, local rural producers will be pushed out of their own markets, and, lacking other opportunities, rural people will suffer unemployment and there will be an increase in rural–urban migration. Food and nutrition security will also suffer.

The experience of Asia's emerging economies seems to confirm this conclusion. The lesson is that opening up the markets of poor African countries to international trade and competition with advanced countries requires a carefully synchronized policy of raising the competitiveness of producers, improving rural infrastructure, and strengthening rural and trade-promoting institutions. Increasing exposure to world market competition and building the competitiveness of local producers need to go hand in hand.

Finally, the design of good policies and their implementation is, of course, a matter of clarity, relevance, and consistency in policy objectives, of financial resource availability, and of human and institutional capacity. Yet there are often associated risks of such programs to a targeted country's political and social stability. Thus the speed of reforms and the implementation of policies and programs need to be adapted to each country's political and social absorptive capacity.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFPLAN	Regional Food Plan for Africa
ARRS	Africa Region Rural Strategy
AoA	Agreement on Agriculture
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CEMAC	*Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale* [Central African Economic and Monetary Community]
CFA	Franc Currency Zone
CILSS	*Comité Permanent Inter Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel* [Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel]
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMPRES	Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Fund
ESP	Environmental Support Program
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IDA	International Development Agency
IFIs	international financial institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LPA	Lagos Plan of Action
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMA	Programme for Modernization of Agriculture
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRSA	Regional Programme of Food Security
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
PTA	Preferential Trade Area
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SPFS	Special Program for Food Security
SWAPS	sectorwide approaches
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WARDA	The Africa Rice Center
WTO	World Trade Organization

About the Authors

Franz Heidhues is professor at the University of Hohenheim, Center for Tropical Agriculture in Stuttgart, Germany. He conducts research on poverty, rural development, and natural resource management; food and nutrition security; and rural finance, primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Before joining the University of Hohenheim Heidhues worked at the World Bank. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Muenster, Germany.

Achi Atsain is professor of economics and econometrics at the University of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, senior research fellow at the Ivorian Center for Economic and Social Research, and president of the West African Economic Association. An IFPRI Board member, Atsain was a member of Parliament for 10 years. His research has focused on macroeconomics, regional integration, and sustainable development in West Africa, though more recently he has focused on the issue of good governance. Atsain holds a Ph.D. in economics from the State University of New York, Albany, USA.

Hezron Nyangito is a principal policy analyst and head of the Productive Sector Division at the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) in Nairobi. He has wide experience in policy research and analysis focusing on development economics with particular emphasis on agricultural and rural development and international trade. Hezron is also a senior lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nairobi and the coordinator of IFPRI's 2020 Vision Network in Kenya. He holds a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

Martine Padilla is a development economist and policy analyst at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute in Montpellier, France. As a senior researcher, she manages the Agro-food Department in addition to teaching and managing M.Sc. training on public choice in agriculture and food. Padilla holds a Ph.D. in economics and is accredited to supervise researchers from the University of Montpellier I.

Gérard Ghersi is director of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies at the Institute of Montpellier, where he conducts research on the analysis of the agri-food system and on food policies. He is also a professor at Laval University in Québec, Canada, where he is head of the Department of Rural Economy and director of the International Cooperation Centre. Ghersi holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Montpellier I , France.

Jean-Charles Le Vallée is an agricultural economist, agronomist, ecologist, and nutritionist. He has worked as a food security specialist with several universities, consulting firms, the Canadian government, FAO, IFPRI, and the World Bank. He has taught at Cornell University, coordinated Canada's Food Security Bureau, and has been the food security guide for the Development Gateway Foundation since its inception. Le Vallée is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in food security at Carleton University.