

# **Eliminating Hunger**

**Strategy for achieving the Millennium  
Development Goal on hunger**

# Department for International Development

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The Department for International Development (DFID) is the UK government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The government first elected in 1997 has increased its commitment to development by strengthening the department and increasing its budget.

The central focus of the Government's policy, set out in the 1997 White Paper on International Development, is a commitment to the internationally agreed target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, together with the associated targets including basic health care provision and universal access to primary education by the same date. The second White Paper on International Development, published in December 2000, reaffirmed this commitment, while focusing specifically on how to manage the process of globalisation to benefit poor people.

DFID seeks to work in partnership with governments which are committed to the international targets, and seeks to work with business, civil society and the research community to this end. We also work with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Community.

The bulk of our assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. We are also contributing to poverty elimination and sustainable development in middle-income countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and elsewhere. DFID is also helping the transition countries in central and eastern Europe to try to ensure that the process of change brings benefits to all people and particularly to the poorest.

As well as its headquarters in London and East Kilbride, DFID has offices in many developing countries. In others, DFID works through staff based in British embassies and high commissions.

**May 2002**

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## Foreword by the Secretary of State

In 1996, the international community agreed to work together to reduce the number of hungry people in the world by half. In 2000, the importance of this goal was reaffirmed by 149 countries in the Millennium Summit Declaration. The new Millennium Development Goal to halve extreme poverty and hunger explicitly links the hunger target to that of poverty.

Yet despite commitments made in 1996, progress towards the hunger target is too slow. In many countries the number of people who are unable to obtain sufficient food is increasing. The number of people that were without sufficient food in the world in the 1990s actually grew. It is deeply shameful that hundreds of millions of people in the world still lie down for the night hungry. We urgently need to reconsider our approaches and policies to tackle hunger. We must be clear that poverty and hunger are closely linked, and that hunger is central to people's experience of poverty. Inadequate food and nutrition have profound impacts on people. Children that are malnourished have a smaller chance of survival and suffer lasting damage to their mental and physical development, and work productivity is often impaired among malnourished adults.

This paper, stimulated by the occasion of the World Food Summit: five years later to be held in Rome in June 2002, looks at some of the reasons for the unacceptably slow progress in eliminating hunger. The opportunity of the World Food Summit: five years later needs to be seized to focus on what needs to change, if we are to speed up progress in tackling hunger and reach the Millennium Development hunger target. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002 will provide another important opportunity to focus attention on practical actions needed to achieve the agreed Millennium Development goals.

Agriculture obviously has a crucial role to play in producing food, and in its storage, distribution and processing, as well as in generating jobs and contributing to livelihoods and economic development. A revitalisation of agriculture is necessary to the reduction of poverty and hunger. But it is not a sufficient condition. There are many hungry people in some food secure countries, whilst other countries that are not self sufficient in food have few problems of hunger. One of the reasons for past failures has been too much focus on agricultural development and

little attention on the ability of the poor to access reliable food supplies. In order to tackle hunger, investments are needed in a much wider range of areas, including broad economic growth, education, health, social protection, as well as in improved governance, peace and democracy.

Respect for the human rights of the poor is a theme of this paper. Poor people's perspectives need to be driving policies and plans, they need to participate in decisions in the process of tackling poverty and hunger and building sustainable livelihoods. Rights-based approaches to tackling hunger aim to empower poor people to have a say about their future.

The UK has made the Millennium Development Goals the centrepiece of its work in fighting poverty. These goals cannot be achieved without an increased effort from the international community, governments, and civil society working together. Developing countries must take the lead in this process. And where the commitment is lacking, civil society must play its key role in pressing governments to take action. The international community must provide the support for those governments that are committed to tackling hunger and poverty.

This paper, as with other earlier Target Strategy Papers produced by my Department, assesses the challenge that we face and sets out an overall approach and strategy for our involvement in achieving the development targets in a clear, focused and realistic way. It reflects a process of consultation in the United Kingdom and overseas. The paper highlights the main areas which the UK sees as important to international efforts to tackle hunger, as well as areas in which we will place our own resources. The detailed implementation of this strategy in our bilateral programme will take place at country level.

The UK Government stands ready to be judged against our delivery of this strategy. And the whole development community – governments, international agencies and civil society in all its parts – should be judged collectively against the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals on poverty and hunger.

**CLARE SHORT**

Secretary of State for International Development

## Abbreviations

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>CGIAR</b>	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DTI</b>	Department of Trade and Industry
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAC</b>	Food Aid Convention
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation
<b>FIVIMS</b>	Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems
<b>GMO</b>	Genetically Modified Organism
<b>HEA</b>	Household Economy Approach
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IADB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee for the Red Cross
<b>ICVA</b>	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFPRI</b>	International Food Policy Research Institute
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IPRs</b>	Intellectual Property Rights
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>NFIDCs</b>	Net Food Importing Developing Countries
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>SCHR</b>	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
<b>TNCs</b>	Trans-national Corporations
<b>TSP</b>	Target Strategy Paper
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>URAA</b>	Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VOICE</b>	Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WFS</b>	World Food Summit
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation

## Executive summary

The Millennium Development Summit has set a goal of reducing by half the proportion of hungry people in the world by 2015. However, progress towards achieving this goal has been slow, and the situation in many countries is actually deteriorating. The scale of the problem is huge: the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that 815 million people in the world are unable to obtain the food they need for healthy and active lives.

The causes of hunger are many, and include poverty, ill health, exclusion, conflict and natural disasters. Poverty is, however, the principal cause. The concept of “food security” focuses on people’s ability to obtain food, rather than simply on food production, which is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for tackling hunger. Policies to tackle food insecurity need to be based on a clear understanding of who is hungry and why. The design of such policies needs to take into account people’s vulnerability, the impact of shocks and the effects of trade policies. A rights-based approach to tackling food insecurity can increase political commitment, extend the involvement of poor and hungry people in policy making, support the principles of participation and inclusion of the poor, and strengthen political will by stressing the obligations of states and other duty bearers.

Poverty reduction is essential to eliminating hunger. However, poverty reduction initiatives must focus on food security if they are to meet the needs of hungry people, and they must address the issues of risk, vulnerability and the chronic and transitory aspects of food insecurity. When people are malnourished, their ability to benefit from social sector investments and respond to livelihoods enhancing opportunities is diminished.

### THE PROBLEM

#### What will the world food situation be 20 years from now?

There is currently relative optimism about the capacity of the world to produce enough food to keep up with population growth – but only if we pursue appropriate policies, maintain adequate investment in research, and work to ensure environmental sustainability. However, the persistence of food insecurity shows that global availability of food does not of itself ensure adequate access to food for all.

#### How do globalisation and trade liberalisation affect people’s ability to obtain food?

Globalisation and trade liberalisation bring both benefits and risks for poor people and for hunger reduction initiatives. Increasing market integration offers opportunities for growth, though barriers – both trade and non-trade – limit access by producers from developing countries to the markets of developed countries. On the other hand, growing market integration could increase the vulnerability of poor households to shocks in international markets.

#### What is the role of policy, institutions and good governance at national level?

Appropriate government policies in a range of sectors, allied with overall good governance, are critical for creating an environment in which people can obtain enough food. Poverty reduction frameworks are a way of linking food and poverty analysis with public policies and actions. However, they have often concentrated more on treating the symptoms of hunger than on generating sustainable economic growth, and have paid insufficient attention to risk and vulnerability.

#### Agriculture, livelihoods and food security

Food security is an overriding priority for poor people, who lack assets and depend for their survival on a wide range of resources for both consumption and sale. Activities to exploit natural resources, including agriculture, are a key part of poor people’s livelihoods. Increased agricultural production can also affect food prices, which represent a major part of poor people’s expenditure. Access to, and control of, these resources is critical to people’s food and livelihood security. Sustainable food production and livelihoods are increasingly being undermined by environmental degradation and the loss of natural habitats. More sustainable agricultural practices are needed that minimise the use of non-renewable resources and build on the knowledge and skills of farmers.

#### How are food security and nutrition related?

Nutritional status is determined by the amount and quality of food consumed and by health status. These factors are in turn influenced by household food security, intra-household food distribution, care practices (including

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feeding practices and food hygiene), environmental factors (especially sanitation and water) and health services. Communicable diseases, and HIV/AIDS in particular, have adverse effects on both nutritional status and food security.

## **What about conflict, drought and other disasters?**

Conflict, drought and other disasters are playing a major part in slowing global and national progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on hunger. Livelihood strategies may break down under such stresses.

Food aid has been an important way of responding to crises, but the flow of aid has often had more to do with food surpluses in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries than with actual needs. Food aid has had only limited success in alleviating food insecurity and malnutrition, and it can also depress local prices and local production. Its use is driven by the availability of existing sources, rather than by the choices expressed by beneficiaries and an analysis of the impact of food aid on local markets and production.

## **THE CHALLENGE – WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?**

Hunger is inextricably linked to poverty and vulnerability. Measures that reduce poverty, empower people and create an environment in which markets can work fairly will help to improve people's access to food. Efforts to achieve food security must be part of an overall drive to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development for society as a whole. However, if the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for hunger is to be achieved, we need to focus specifically on addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. The following actions will be necessary:

- Trade reforms that improve the food security of poor people should be promoted. The liberalisation of agricultural policies by both developed and developing countries, including substantial reductions in subsidies that work against local production, is critical to the elimination of hunger. But analysis of the impact of trade reform on the livelihoods of poor people must become more sophisticated.
- Investment in agriculture needs to be more precisely targeted at reducing poverty and hunger. Better domestic policies are essential if poor rural households are to benefit from agriculture. Also, we need policies to

encourage poor people to get involved in more dynamic and profitable rural non-farm activities. Owing to the pressures of environmental degradation, we need to support agricultural research and investment just to maintain current levels of production, but investment needs to focus more strongly on the issues relevant to the poor.

- Interventions to tackle malnutrition are required both in emergencies and in stable situations. Multi-sectoral efforts to improve education, health (including environmental health, especially sanitation and water, as well as health care services) and food security are needed, as well as measures to promote good care and feeding practices and improve access to key micronutrients.
- Better systems are required to cope with the impact of conflict and natural disasters. Effective investment, policies and disaster responses by governments will be critical in maintaining the availability of food, limiting price increases and supplementing household access to food.
- Food aid is vital for saving lives during humanitarian crises, but we need to find ways of using it more effectively and monitoring it more accurately. The institutional arrangements for food aid, including the role of the Food Aid Convention, need to be reviewed.
- Poor people need more effective ways of dealing with risk. Social protection can help to smooth out fluctuations in their income and can provide a safety net for the most vulnerable. The challenge is to find methods that are not only effective, but which can be implemented with sufficient coverage and time scale to make a real difference.

## **Measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on hunger**

Because food security is a complex phenomenon, there can be no single measure of hunger. The FAO's current "undernourishment" indicator gives a snapshot of the situation, but cannot identify the causes of hunger or assess the impact of policies. Many different sets of data are available, but the challenge is to extract information that can actually be used in policy and planning at national level – too few information systems are able to identify who is vulnerable, where they are and why they are vulnerable.

## DFID priorities for action

This paper describes a number of areas in which DFID will be working in order to contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goal on hunger. Some of these

are new departures, whereas others are issues on which DFID is already working but where a sharper focus on food security and nutrition is needed.

## The Millennium Development Goal on hunger

1. In 1996, the World Food Summit strengthened international resolve to:

*Achieve food security for all and ongoing efforts to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015.*

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, 149 countries redefined this target to:

*Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.*

This goal is explicitly linked to the goal of reducing poverty (Box 1).

2. The persistence of hunger in a world of plenty is unacceptable. Food is a human right, as formally recognised in international law<sup>1</sup> and by most countries.

3. States have primary responsibility for enabling their citizens to realise their right to food, by promoting the economic, social and institutional means that will ensure sustainable access to food. But there are obligations above state level and within states that require us all to act to eradicate hunger wherever it occurs.

4. In spite of unprecedented economic growth, technological advance and food surpluses in many countries, current progress towards meeting the hunger reduction target is too slow. FAO estimates that 815 million people – two-thirds of the world's absolute poor and mainly consisting of women and children – remain food insecure. Although there has been a decline in the number of hungry people (as defined by FAO's indicator) in some countries, particularly in East Asia, in many parts of the world their number is actually increasing. There are huge disparities between countries, as well as pockets of hunger and food insecurity within almost all countries.

5. Inspired by the preparations for the World Food Summit: five years later in June 2002, this paper looks at some of the reasons for the slow progress. It emphasises the importance of going beyond the availability of food to look at the factors preventing poor people from realising their right to food: for example, macro-economic policies, poor governance and the shocks resulting from HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and natural disasters. It suggests that faster progress will be made by adopting a more comprehensive approach that integrates food and nutrition into poverty reduction and other development strategies. This will require better methods for identifying who the hungry people are, why they are hungry and what can be done to reduce their vulnerability to hunger. More effective systems for assessing progress towards the elimination of hunger will also be necessary.

<sup>1</sup> International Declaration on Human Rights (Art 25); International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art 11); Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art 24.2c). The World Food Summit in 1996 recognised the realisation of human rights as an important way of achieving food security. Since then the High Commissioner for Human Rights has produced the first authoritative legal interpretation of the right to food, in General Comment 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

<sup>2</sup> Haddard, Lawrence (2001). *Deepening the Analysis of the Factors Behind Progress Towards WFS Targets*, IFPRI – DFID Funded Technical Support Facility to FAO's Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS).

## Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals of Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Box 1

The original “hunger target”, adopted by the World Food Summit in 1996, aimed to reduce the number of hungry people in the world by half, from approximately 800 million to 400 million in 2015. However, the Millennium Summit adopted a hunger target explicitly linked to the poverty target, aiming to reduce by half the proportion of hungry people in the world by 2015.

Some countries have made faster progress towards meeting the hunger target than others. China, India, Thailand and Indonesia have all reported a decrease in the number of undernourished people (as defined and measured by FAO). However, the situation in many other countries – such as Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and many of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa – is actually worsening, with an increase in the number of undernourished people.

Why have some countries made progress towards the targets and others dropped back? Analysis shows that the main reason for slow progress has been the impact of economic downturns, weak governance, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and other factors<sup>2</sup>. Conversely, growth in agricultural productivity has been associated with a decline in the numbers of undernourished people.

However, we need to refine our indicators of hunger. “Undernourishment” is a limited concept in that it measures only food production, modified by distribution data (see Box 2). Conceptually it is a long way from the notion of “food security”, which also covers availability, access and the ability to utilise available food. Further work is needed to improve this indicator and to use it in conjunction with the “underweight” indicator and other relevant information that better demonstrates people’s access to food (see also paragraphs 120–126).

## Understanding hunger

**6. The causes of hunger are many.** They include poverty, ill health, social and economic exclusion, conflict and natural disaster, and poor public policies and weak governance. Action to reduce hunger should be based on a clear understanding of who the hungry people are, where they are, why they are hungry and how their access to food can realistically be improved.

**7. But poverty is the principal cause of hunger.** Put simply, poor people cannot get enough food, either by growing it or by buying it. Reducing poverty will do much to reduce hunger (Box 3). But this is not the whole story. Poverty reduction programmes need to focus more explicitly on food security, nutrition, risk and vulnerability if we are to meet the Millennium Development Goal on Hunger. We need to ensure that the benefits of these programmes reach the poorest people, so that their vulnerability to failures in livelihood is reduced.

**8. Food security analysis is an approach that enables us to answer these “who, where, how many and why” questions about hunger** (Box 2). It focuses on people’s ability to obtain food, rather than just on food production or supply. This helps us to understand why, regardless of food supply, some people get enough to eat and others do not. Food production is necessary but not sufficient for food security. People may live where there is sufficient food, but may lack the income or “entitlements” to obtain it. Also, people obtain their food from many sources: their own production, purchase, the exchange of household production or labour and as gifts or relief.

**9.** A rights-based approach requires us to support processes that bring poor people’s perspectives into policy making. **Hunger is central to poor people’s experience<sup>4</sup>** and to definitions of poverty and ill health. Hunger is a symptom of extreme poverty. Poor people spend a considerable amount of time and effort on finding food every day. Hunger undermines the dignity of poor people – a fact that should never be forgotten by those who plan interventions.

**10.** There are **many dimensions to hunger**. As well as variations at regional, national and household level, there are differences in the incidence of hunger between seasons, within

countries and within households. Many people go hungry during certain seasons of the year, or during crises such as drought; in other words, they suffer from *transitory* food insecurity. Others struggle every day to find enough to eat: in other words, they are *chronically* food insecure. Inequality of access to food can manifest itself at many different levels. Within households, for example, women, children (especially girls) and elderly people are the most likely to go hungry. A rights-based approach will tackle such discrimination.

**11. People’s vulnerability to shocks is critical for understanding why some go hungry and others do not.** A food-secure household can manage its income and assets to cope with shocks. However, household crises, such as illness or the loss of a “breadwinner”, can have a major impact on food security. Factors that reduce people’s ability to participate in trade, employment and social exchanges also limit their access to food. Crises such as drought or conflict lead to economic shocks, through the failure of crops, an increase in food prices, a drop in employment opportunities or displacement.

**12. Some households are better able to withstand shocks than others.** People’s assets and social networks are critical in this respect. Households in arid areas have developed strategies for coping with drought, based on selling livestock, gathering wild foods, migration, support from family members and savings. However, these coping strategies often involve shared resources, such as rangelands and bodies of water, that can be degraded if droughts are prolonged. All assets – natural, physical, human, social and financial – are likely to be depleted during such crises.

**13. Hunger limits people’s ability to improve their lives.** Insufficient access to good quality food, poor health and inadequate care all contribute to malnutrition. Malnutrition limits people’s abilities, options and opportunities to secure a decent livelihood. It is an underlying factor in half of all deaths among children under five years of age. Moreover, poor nutrition in young children may well prevent them from ever reaching their full potential as adults. Children who are malnourished are prone to illness, and at school they are prone to absenteeism, poor performance and dropping out early. Adults who are hungry and malnourished may not be able to work effectively.

<sup>4</sup> Sharp, K. (2001). *Voices of Hunger: A desk review of issues arising from participatory analysis of poverty and food insecurity*. Commissioned by DFID.

## Some key terms used in this paper

Box 2

### Food security

When all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

### Poverty

A condition that reflects physical, social and political deprivation, as well as a lack of assets and income. It is also caused by various forms of disadvantage, such as social inferiority, physical weakness, isolation and vulnerability.

### Malnutrition

An abnormal physiological condition caused by deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in energy, protein and/or other nutrients. Manifestations include wasting (thinness), stunting (shortness) or underweight (low weight for age, due to wasting and/or stunting). Consequences include poor health, reduced cognitive ability and low work productivity. An individual's nutritional status is determined by the quantity and quality of food consumed in relation to his or her physiological requirements for nutrients and ability to utilise them. These factors are in turn influenced by health status and caring practices as well as access to food.

### “Undernourishment”

An indicator used by FAO to assess progress towards the World Food Summit goal, adopted in 1996, and the Millennium Development Goal of Poverty and Hunger. It is based on national food production figures, and is basically a measure of food availability. “Undernourishment” is a somewhat misleading term in this context, and should not be confused with underweight or malnutrition (see above).

### Hunger

Uncomfortable or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. Hunger can be experienced temporarily by people who are not food insecure, as well as by those who are. In this paper, we use “hunger” when referring in general terms to the Millennium Development Goal and to people's experience of food insecurity. However, when looking at the policy implications, it is important to identify the specific factors underlying food insecurity in different situations.

### Vulnerability

Vulnerability to food insecurity has two aspects: externally, it depends upon a person's exposure to the shocks, stresses and risks that cause food insecurity; internally, it is linked to the person's ability to cope with these shocks. The greater the exposure to shocks and stresses and the greater the inability to cope with these, the greater the vulnerability to food insecurity.<sup>3</sup>

### Rights-based approach

DFID's approach to the realisation of human rights is set out in the Human Rights Target Strategy Paper. This emphasises an approach to eliminating poverty that gives due weight to the views of poor people in policy making, draws attention to inequality and moves beyond an understanding of development as charity. It promotes the principles of participation and inclusion for poor people and the fulfilment of obligations by States and other duty bearers.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last*. IT publications.

## The challenge of hunger

**14.** In 1993 FAO estimated that 840 million people in the world did not have enough to eat. Although this figure has now fallen to 815 million, the decrease is too slow to meet either the Millennium Development Goal on hunger or the more ambitious World Food Summit target. Many more millions of people are exposed to the risk of food shortage or of deficiencies in specific micro-nutrients. In many countries, according to FAO's indicator, the number of hungry people is actually increasing. Taking China out of the global picture, the number of "undernourished" people actually increased by 10 million during the 1990s. The largest number of hungry people live in South Asia, but the highest proportion of national populations experiencing hunger is in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. In this region, despite apparent progress in West Africa, the number of people described as "undernourished" actually rose by 50 per cent, from 125 million to 186 million,<sup>5</sup> between 1980 and 1997.

**15.** Failure to understand that food insecurity is a problem of access to food, rather than simply of production, has slowed progress in reducing the number of hungry people in the world. Food security is a multi-faceted phenomenon, and therefore policies to improve it should be multi-sectoral: it is increasingly a matter of employment strategies, social security policy and food policies relating to international trade, food marketing, subsidy programmes and relief. Tackling hunger needs to be placed in the context of broader strategies to reduce poverty, while at the same time preserving a focus on food security, nutrition and the vulnerability of poor people.

**16.** This section of the paper is based on a series of key questions, intended to deepen our understanding of food insecurity. It starts by looking at what the world food situation will be 20 years from now. Although the conclusions are cautiously optimistic, they inevitably lead on to the question of why, if there is sufficient food in the world, people still go hungry. This is due to a range of factors, from global trends in trade to national economic policies, from weak governance to inequalities in household control over assets, resources and knowledge. Drought, emergencies, conflict and HIV/AIDS play a major role in perpetuating hunger. Nutritional outcomes are determined ultimately by these factors, as well as

more immediately by health status, caring practices and food intake.

### What will the world food situation be 20 years from now?

**17.** This question has generated a heated debate that has important implications for national food security and agricultural policies. Optimists cite the success of new technologies and the fact that global food supply has so far kept pace with population growth and rising demand. Pessimists talk about the problem of ensuring the sustainability of agricultural production and question its ability to keep up with rapid population growth.

**18.** Food production has doubled in the past 40 years. Food prices have fallen by 50 per cent and are now at an all-time low (although this is partly the result of United States and European Union subsidies). The forecast is that prices will remain low, at least in the medium term.

**19.** The recent trend has been towards over-production of food in developed countries and under-production, especially in *per capita* terms, in Africa. The abundant food supplies in developed countries do not help poor people in developing countries, especially if they cannot afford to buy them. Furthermore, these large stocks of food undermine world prices and thus reduce the incentives for producers in developing countries.

**20.** However, the increases in food production appear to be slowing down and may not be sustainable. There are marked regional inequalities, evidence of high environmental costs, and concern about the need for continued technological advance to maintain current levels of productivity.

**21.** Concerns over the sustainability of increasing food production are linked to high rates of population growth, but also to more specific factors:

- a) Changes in consumer preferences: for example, a rise in the demand for meat is predicted, which will in turn increase demand for grain to feed livestock.

<sup>5</sup> FAO (2001). *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*.

- b) Increases in production have in many cases been achieved by extending the land under cultivation, often into environmentally fragile and marginal areas.
  - c) Various forms of land degradation, an increasing demand for irrigation water and the loss of biodiversity may inhibit the development of genetic resources where they are most needed.
  - d) Because of over-exploitation, world fish supplies are likely to decline over the medium to long term.
  - e) Despite recent international agreements, major climate change is inevitable. Projections suggest that the poorer parts of the world will be worst affected – those least able to cope.
22. Projections of food availability are highly sensitive to different assumptions and need to be reviewed constantly.

natural shocks, drought and conflict, will continue to occur at local, regional and national level.

24. But the question remains: why, if there is adequate food in the world now, do people continue to go hungry? Food insecurity remains a problem, but seldom because of any failure to produce sufficient food; there is hunger in countries that are self-sufficient in food or even exporters of it. When people lack the money to buy this food, their needs are not translated into market demand.

### How do globalisation and trade liberalisation affect people's ability to obtain food?

25. Globalisation is a set of complex processes leading to the greater interdependence and interconnectedness of people and states. The rapid increase in world trade is bringing about a growing integration of global markets in goods and services and is increasing competitive pressures.

## Food Security Prospects in sub-Saharan Africa

Box 3

### Poverty and hunger in sub-Saharan Africa

Poverty and hunger are getting worse in Africa. Nearly half the population of sub-Saharan Africa is living below the international poverty line. During the 1990s, the proportion living in poverty remained unchanged, but the absolute numbers grew as populations grew. Child malnutrition has also grown, from 22 million children in 1980 to 38 million in 2000, and is forecast to increase even further over the next few years. High rates of malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa are caused not just by insufficient access to food, but also by diseases such as diarrhoea, malaria, measles, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. The impact of conflict and complex political and economic crises is illustrated by the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has experienced the greatest increase of any country in the proportion of "undernourished" people since 1990–92, from 35 per cent to 64 per cent. Even in those countries that have seen decreases in the "undernourished", such as Mozambique and Angola, the proportion remained high because food supply failed to keep pace with population growth.

### The changing nature of the fight against hunger

Today, most poor people in Africa are still smallholders, with the capacity to produce some of their own food. However, an increasing number of the rural poor are landless, and some of the very poorest now live in urban areas. Conflict, climate change and drought are likely to exacerbate these trends. Improving food security will increasingly become a matter for employment strategies, social security policy and food policies relating to international trade, food marketing and subsidy programmes and relief. In other words, although agriculture will remain central to food security in sub-Saharan Africa, policies to tackle hunger will need to become increasingly multi-sectoral.

23. In summary, although agricultural production will grow more slowly than in the past, there is likely to be enough food available to meet global needs over the next 20 years – but only if we frame appropriate policies, invest sufficiently in research and infrastructure, and meet the conditions for environmental sustainability. Trade will need to play a larger role in providing food to many regions of the world. Food shortages, resulting from

This process brings risks as well as benefits for poor people and for hunger reduction initiatives. We must find out who wins and who loses from globalisation, and try to ensure that it improves the access of poor people to markets, goods and services.

### The challenge of hunger

**26.** As rural areas become more integrated into global markets, opportunities for growth will increase. However, smaller farmers and poorer households may also become more exposed to price volatility and risk during the process. The ability of these households to cope with shocks in international markets, including food markets, will depend not simply on productivity and efficiency gains at local level, but also on the trade and other policies pursued by national and foreign governments. An enabling environment and good governance, will assist these households to adjust their activities to improve their response to the opportunities that globalisation presents. Globalisation will present different opportunities to different groups.

impact they may have on the livelihoods and food security of poor people.

### What is the role of policy, institutions and good governance in tackling hunger?

**29.** The macro-economic policies of international financing institutions, as well as many of the policies of national governments, have a major influence on people's ability to obtain food. Macro-economic stability and a policy framework that fosters a healthy economy and promotes equity are both critical.

## The growing problem of urban hunger

Box 4

Poverty, poor health and sanitation and unsafe food make urban food insecurity and malnutrition an area of concern. As urban poverty and rates of urbanisation increase, the problem is likely to become increasingly important.

Furthermore, urban-rural linkages are becoming stronger, in terms of the movement of people for work and the opportunities for income and trade. Traditional distinctions between rural and urban activities are becoming blurred. For example, small scale cropping and livestock rearing are important for poor people in urban and peri-urban settings: pigs and poultry are often fed from household waste, while dairy production is growing.

A recent assessment showed that, in Russia, food insecurity is more prevalent in urban areas than in rural. Although income poverty was more common in rural areas, the private household plot contributed to better food security in these areas by yielding produce for both consumption and sale.<sup>6</sup>

As in rural areas, urban food insecurity needs to be tackled through a range of macro and micro policy initiatives, including promotion of employment and income generation opportunities, improvement of the efficiency of urban food marketing systems, and improvement of food safety, nutrition, health and child care. National policies to tackle poverty need to take into account both the rural and urban dimensions of hunger.

**27.** Globalisation has been associated with changes in production, with increasing market integration and with changes in consumer tastes in developed countries: for example, the growth in off-season fruit and vegetable production. But trade and non-trade barriers may restrict the opportunities for farmers in developing countries to produce higher-value products for export. We must not allow these barriers to hinder growth: poor farmers need support to meet developed country standards for export produce, and opportunities for post-harvest processing need to be improved.

**28.** Many developments in international trade have implications for food security: for example, changes in market access, export subsidies, domestic support, special and differential treatment and trade preferences. As trade policies continue to evolve, we must take account of the

**30.** An ever wider range of marginalised groups, including landless people, the urban poor and migrants, are affected by hunger and, as we have seen, urban food insecurity is growing (Box 4). Government policies in a range of sectors, as well as good governance, are critical for ensuring not only that people can obtain adequate food, but also that countries are adequately prepared to cope with disasters.

**31.** Poverty reduction strategies are increasingly linking poverty analysis to public policies and actions. In the past, however, such strategies often focused more on treating the symptoms of hunger rather than on generating sustainable economic growth that could reduce hunger in the long term – scant attention was paid to risk and vulnerability.

<sup>6</sup> FAO (2002). *The State of Food Security and Prospects for Improvement in the Russian Federation*.

**32.** At a national level, agriculture can support economic growth,<sup>7</sup> create jobs and ensure that food is available. Growth is essential to the eradication of poverty, and agriculture remains an important engine of growth in many developing countries, particularly in Africa, where it is still the largest source of employment and accounts for one-third of GDP and one-half of exports.

**33.** However, fewer and fewer households, districts or countries produce all – or even most – of the food they need. Even communities in the most isolated rural areas are connected with the market economy in some way or another. Therefore poor people without access to credit or some cash income cannot obtain sufficient, good quality food for a healthy life. The development of fair and efficient domestic markets – providing access to infrastructure, communications and market information – are important for enabling poor households to sell their produce and to buy food and other essentials. Well-functioning markets are also important in the response to emergencies, as they stabilise the prices of staple foods and prevent further deterioration in the purchasing power and food consumption of households (see Box 9).

### Agriculture, livelihoods and food security<sup>8</sup>

**34.** Food security is an overriding priority for poor people, who often have limited access to productive assets such as land or irrigation water. To ensure their survival they use a diversity of resources – crops, trees, livestock, fish and wildlife – for the purposes of subsistence, sale or exchange. Poor farmers often spread the risk by growing a selection of crops and different varieties of each crop. This diversification of activities helps to protect rural households from biological, climatic and other shocks. Livestock are a key asset that can be sold to contribute to household food security during seasonal or periodic stresses – 70 per cent of the world's rural poor rely directly or indirectly upon livestock, which is usually well adapted to local conditions and diseases.

**35.** Activities that exploit natural resources, particularly agriculture, are vital to the livelihoods of poor people: they are a source of food, income and wages, and they stimulate local economies – food vendors, traders,

artisans and others. Levels of agricultural production affect the price of food, which is the major item of expenditure for both urban and rural poor people. Links between urban and rural areas are important: for example, urban dwellers are a source of remittances to rural areas, and vice versa.

**36.** Central to people's livelihood strategies is access to, and control of, resources. Policies to improve the management of natural resources can help to bring about sustained improvements in food security. Land is a particularly important resource, and inequitable or insecure land tenure often has a significant impact on rural poverty and hunger. Without security of tenure, farmers may be vulnerable to displacement and will have little incentive to practise more sustainable agriculture.

**37.** Increasingly, water security and food security are linked. Sustainable food production, and hence livelihoods, can be difficult where there is a shortage of water for human and livestock consumption, and where the potential for small-scale irrigation and water harvesting is either limited or unexplored.

**38.** Similarly, there are links between food security and environmental degradation. Much of the natural biodiversity that is so important for food security is being lost, compromising future production and livelihood opportunities. More sustainable management of natural resources, including agricultural practices, can contribute to local food security.

**39.** Although still of critical importance, farming on its own is increasingly unable to guarantee survival in rural areas. The rural non-farm economy is significant both for the purchasing power of the poor and for their food security. Non-farm income<sup>9</sup> constitutes an important and growing part of rural income – over 40 per cent in Africa and Latin America, and over 30 per cent in Asia.<sup>10</sup> In turn, the rural non-farm economy can contribute to the agricultural sector, through agro-processing and the distribution and the provision of farm inputs.<sup>11</sup> Clearly, farm and non-farm sources of income are closely linked.

**40.** Poor households have diversified into a wide range of activities. Increasingly, people are moving from

<sup>7</sup> Irz, X., Lin Lin., Thirtle, C. and Wiggins, S. (2001). "Agricultural productivity growth and poverty alleviation." *Development Policy Review*, 19 (4): 449-466.

<sup>8</sup> See also DFID's Consultation Document "Better Livelihoods for Poor People: the role of agriculture" (2002). Agriculture is taken in its broadest sense, including the production, processing and marketing of crops and livestock, from producer to consumer.

<sup>9</sup> Non-farm income sources include those derived from wage-paying activities and self-employment in commerce, manufacturing and other services – whether within the formal or non-formal sectors.

<sup>10</sup> Reardon, T., Stamoulis, K., Baliscan, A., Cruz, M. E., Berdegue, J. and Banks, B. (1998). "Rural non-farm income in developing countries", in *The State of Food and Agriculture*, FAO.

<sup>11</sup> Carney, D. (ed) (1998). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: what contribution can we make?* DFID, London.

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rural areas into urban areas to seek work, and as we have seen, the distinctions between rural and urban activities are becoming blurred.

**41.** The reasons for this rural diversification are well understood: they include the desire to spread risk, to cope

sustainable agricultural practices that make minimum use of non-renewable inputs and maximum use of the knowledge and skills of farmers. These practices are also important in promoting a collective approach to shared problems, such as the management of pests, watersheds, forests and credit.

## **The impact of HIV/AIDS and illness on food security**

Box 5

Illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria seriously limit the ability of households, governments, civil society and other actors to tackle hunger, and are thus hindering progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on hunger.

The ill health and death caused by HIV/AIDS threatens livelihoods, depletes human capital and disrupts social support networks, institutions and organisations. Families affected by HIV/AIDS are more likely to resort to asset stripping (natural and financial) in order to survive or to meet the costs of medical treatment. The loss of economically active adults increases dependency ratios and the number of orphans, and decreases earning capacity and the availability of farm labour. HIV/AIDS can hinder rural growth by preventing the transfer of technical information about managing natural resources: when parents die young, this information is not transferred from adult to child, thus creating new challenges for extension systems.

In its turn, food insecurity contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Low rural incomes, food insecurity and vulnerability can drive women and children into the sex trade, creating a vicious circle of poverty, food insecurity and HIV/AIDS. Gender relationships are distorted: providing sexual services in exchange for cash or goods often becomes a survival strategy for women.

At the level of the individual, the cycle of malnutrition and disease has disastrous implications. People with HIV, like those with other diseases, have higher nutritional requirements than those who are well. When they become malnourished they become more susceptible to other infections; these in turn tend to depress appetite, impair nutrient absorption and undermine their immune system. By the same token, better nutrition may help slow the progression of disease.

Policies for food security, agriculture and rural development must all take into account the consequences of HIV/AIDS, such as the loss of labour, the changes in livelihood strategies and the reduction of capacity in local organisations. Interventions aimed at preventing HIV and promoting food security will be most effective when linked to strategies that tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability: poverty, limited access to resources, marginalisation and gender inequalities.

with shocks and seasonal food insecurity and to enhance livelihoods through trading and employment. However, the policy implications of rural diversification are not always followed through: we need to give diversification more support if we are to enable local people to produce more and cope with uncertainty.

**42.** Technological innovation will continue to make a vital contribution to food production. We need to develop technologies that can reduce the impact of shocks and support the livelihoods of poor people: for example,

**43.** Improved varieties of crops, livestock and fish need to be developed, with characteristics that are of particular value to poor people. Modern biotechnologies offer one means of achieving this, but there is still considerable potential in more traditional approaches to selection and improvement. Developing countries must be given the capacity to make informed decisions about their choice of technology, and to manage the safe development and use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)<sup>12</sup> should they choose to adopt them.

<sup>12</sup>The UK is pressing for the early entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which lays down international rules covering the safe transboundary movement of LMOs (Living Modified Organisms – essentially the same as GMOs). The Protocol aims to ensure that developed and developing countries alike can take informed decisions about the import of GMOs and any possible adverse effects. It also provides channels for financial and technical assistance to help build capacity for biosafety in developing countries.

**44.** The market power of transnational companies has raised concern that the claiming of intellectual property rights will deny developing countries access to vital new technologies and inhibit their ability to innovate. The fear that traditional varieties will be patented is unfounded, as patents can only be obtained for new technical contributions, but there are other areas of concern: excessively broad patents, inadequate research exemptions and restrictive licensing practices can all hinder access to new technologies by developing countries. Yet without the protection that patents and other intellectual property rights provide, private companies will not invest in the development of the new products needed to improve food production. Patent systems need to strike a balance between commercial incentives and access to technology.

### How are food insecurity and malnutrition related?

**45.** Food security is only one determinant of nutritional status, which is also influenced by environmental health factors, health services and caring practices.

**46.** Care practices that affect nutritional status include breastfeeding, weaning, hygiene practices and health care-seeking behaviours. Caring practices can in turn be affected by food insecurity and ill health and vice versa. For example, food insecure households may spend more time gathering food, water and fuel and less time on care and feeding of children. Adults, when sick, have less time and ability to care for children.

**47.** The variety and quality of the diet are important aspects of food security. A wider variety of food consumed means a diet richer in essential nutrients. Micronutrient malnutrition can result from diets deficient in vitamins and minerals. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 250 million children are vitamin A deficient.

**48.** Illness can depress the appetite and thus reduce the absorption of nutrients. Conditions such as diarrhoea, especially in children, can lead to malnutrition even if there is adequate food available in the household. Diseases that affect adults – especially HIV/AIDS, which in many countries is spreading rapidly among young people – not only damage the nutritional status of those infected but also threaten livelihoods and food security more generally (see Box 5).

**49.** Educational status and nutrition are closely linked. Because of its positive effect on child nutrition,<sup>13</sup> the education of women has been responsible for more than 40 per cent of the reduction in malnutrition over the past 25 years; improving the availability of food has accounted for only 25 per cent.

**50.** The distribution of food within households also affects nutritional status. Gender and age are often the critical determinants: men may be given priority over women and boys over girls, and those who are old or are unable to undertake productive or paid work may get the smallest shares of the available food. So even when a household apparently has enough food, individual members might not be getting sufficient to meet their needs. Moreover, even if there is enough food, there may be insufficient fuel or water to cook it properly.

**51.** Households that face periodic hunger develop a complex range of responses. As the food insecurity becomes more severe, these responses become less reversible and more threatening to livelihoods. However, rather than selling their assets, poor households may decide to preserve their productive capacity and reduce their food intake instead.

**52.** Food safety has major implications not only for public health and nutrition, but also for domestic and international trade. Unsafe food is a serious threat to health in both developed and developing countries, and can also contribute to malnutrition.

### What about conflict, drought and other disasters?

**53.** Conflict, drought and other disasters have played a major role in slowing global and national progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Shocks, whether caused by natural disasters or conflict, can fundamentally affect people's livelihoods and the wider availability of assets. Furthermore, climate change could exacerbate the impact of natural disasters. Under such stresses, the more vulnerable livelihood strategies may break down, particularly among people who are displaced from their homes.

**54.** Conflict is a major cause of food crises. It disrupts lives and livelihoods, destroys societies and economies, and reduces access to basic services. Conflict often leads to

<sup>13</sup> Pinstrup-Anderson, P., Pandya-Lorch, R. and Rosegrant, M. W. (1999). *World Food Prospects: Critical Issues of the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. IFPRI.

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large-scale population displacement and the abuse of human rights, and can leave a legacy of social and ethnic division that may last for generations.

**55.** Most wars now take place in the poorest countries – and within states rather than between them. Most of their victims are poor people, and most of those killed, hurt or disabled are civilians. If we are to meet the targets for sustainable international development, including the reduction of hunger, we must work to reduce the incidence, duration and destructiveness of conflict.

### What role does food aid play in improving food security?

**56.** The flows of food aid throughout the world are very variable, and in recent years they have been declining as a proportion of overseas development assistance. The international Food Aid Convention, set up to ensure stable and predictable minimum levels of food aid globally,<sup>14</sup> has been relatively ineffective in achieving its aim. Levels of food aid have more to do with food surpluses in OECD countries than with actual need.

**57.** Food aid is in many circumstances a sub-optimal resource. Its effectiveness in addressing hunger and malnutrition has been limited. Programme food aid, where food aid is monetised to provide balance of payments and budgetary support, has rarely done much to improve food security. In emergencies, timely and well-targeted food aid can save lives and protect vulnerable people, but if it is to improve nutritional status, it must be complemented by action to enhance food quality and health status. Food aid

can also have negative impacts: for example, it can depress local prices and production in food-deficit countries. It often has high transaction costs.

**58.** Food aid has also had very mixed results in the development context. It can be effective as an income transfer, particularly when well targeted. However, it has rarely been effective in improving nutrition and household food security.<sup>15</sup> Public works programmes can achieve lasting developmental impacts, but the record is variable; they are most likely to succeed where communities select and design the projects themselves. Supplementary feeding as part of health programmes has had little impact on malnutrition, and can over-stretch the capacity of existing health staff. School feeding programmes have brought about some long-term improvements in enrolment and attendance, but their impact on nutrition has been limited.

**59.** The monitoring of food aid's impact in both the emergency and development contexts has tended to be inadequate. Debates about the merits of cash versus in-kind transfers are influenced more by the availability of resources than by the preferences of beneficiaries or by any analysis of local economic impact. There is relatively little discussion of the advantages of using different inputs in public works and other social protection programmes. Cash transfers in particular can be effective in situations where markets work well, as they stimulate local opportunities for production and trade. Where cash transfers have been used in emergencies, they have usually succeeded in improving access to food, with few negative effects such as food price inflation.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>The international Food Aid Convention (FAC) started in 1967 as a mechanism to share international responsibility for supporting food aid. It is a legal international agreement that lays down minimum annual food aid commitments either in terms of total tonnage or market value. Signatories comprise the major grain exporting countries as well as some grain importers.

<sup>15</sup>Devereux, S. (2002). *Social Protection for the poor: lessons from recent international experience*, IDS Working Paper No 142; Pillai, N. "Food Aid for Development? A Review of the Evidence" in *Food Aid and Human Security* by Clay, E and Stokke, O. (2000); Ahmed, A. U. and del Ninno, C. (2001). *Food for Education Program in Bangladesh: An Evaluation of its Impact on Educational Attainment and Food Security*. IFPRI, Washington DC, USA.

<sup>16</sup>Peppiatt, D., Mitchell, J. and Holzmann, P. (2000). *Buying Power: the use of cash transfers in emergencies*. British Red Cross, London.

## Eliminating hunger – what needs to be done?

**60.** This section identifies the actions that the international community, national governments, civil society and the private sector need to take to ensure that the Millennium Development Hunger goal is met.

**61.** In view of the wide diversity in the livelihood strategies, capabilities and vulnerabilities of poor people, the following paragraphs can at best provide a road map for policy development, focusing on those areas where some impact on hunger can be expected. Measures aimed at reducing poverty, empowering poor people and creating an environment in which markets work fairly will help to reduce vulnerability and improve poor people's access to food. Efforts to achieve food security must be set within the overall goal of poverty reduction and the achievement of sustainable development for society as a whole.

### Ensuring trade reforms that strengthen the food security of the poor

**62. We need more effective trade strategies for reducing poverty and empowering poor people.**

Trade strategies and negotiating positions need to be informed by a clear understanding of the relative strengths for domestic production and export in the medium and long term as well as the short term.

**63. Markets should operate more efficiently and effectively at local, national and international level.**

Trade needs to be conducted within a legal and regulatory framework that serves the interests of all market participants at all levels. Transparent, rules-based systems are therefore required, with capacity to monitor adherence and systems for enforcement. The participation of developing countries in ensuring adherence to World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules should be encouraged.

**64. Better methods are needed for tracking the impact of changes in international trade on the livelihoods of the poor.** Impact assessments should be based on an understanding of livelihood systems and a disaggregated analysis of who is affected. Existing quantitative methods are largely inadequate, partly because of the difficulty of obtaining disaggregated data. New approaches are needed that draw upon both qualitative and quantitative sources and an understanding of vulnerability. For the governments of countries with problems of food security, these impact assessments should be an important contribution to policy formulation. People involved in systems that monitor poverty and hunger should give a higher priority to providing quality information on matters relevant to trade policy.

**65. The liberalisation of agriculture by both developed and developing countries, coupled with substantial reductions in subsidies, is critical to the elimination of hunger.** Some progress has been made outside the WTO in improving market access for developing countries: for example, the Everything But Arms initiative will give all Least Developed Countries duty-free access to the EU. However, these and other developing countries still face substantial trade barriers, which have limited growth in the export of both primary commodities and value-added processed goods (Box 6). The launch of the Doha Development Round in May 2002 has provided an agenda for further market liberalisation. A priority must be to ensure that negotiations result in significant improvements in market access for developing countries.

**66. However, we must also recognise the importance of tariff revenues to developing countries.** Any move to reduce these tariffs should therefore show due restraint.

## The impact of trade barriers on developing country access to markets

Box 6

The host of barriers to external markets that developing countries face have limited their ability to develop their export trade. These include applied tariffs sometimes higher than 100 per cent for agricultural goods, as well as non-tariff barriers, such as unjustifiably high food standards. Access to OECD country markets for developing countries should therefore be significantly improved.

Exports of particular importance to developing countries are agricultural products and labour-intensive items such as textiles and clothing. To help agriculture, the very high tariff rates should be substantially lowered, as should the agricultural support provided in developed countries (estimated to have totalled \$327 billion in 2000). The importance of this support to farmers varies, but can be substantial: for example, the support for OECD rice production – a key developing country product – covers 80 per cent of farm receipts, thus effectively excluding developing country exports. Many developing countries say that this level of support is preventing them from competing fairly with developed country production. For labour intensive manufactures, tariff peaks and escalation need to be addressed, in order to provide developing countries with the necessary access to markets.

To illustrate the importance of tariff cuts, **the World Bank estimates that a 50 per cent cut in tariffs by both developed and developing countries would bring gains in the order of \$150 billion to the developing countries** – around three times what they receive in aid. In addition, developing countries should recognise the potential of trade between themselves for encouraging export growth, and should therefore reduce their own tariff barriers. South-South trade has increased from around 20 per cent of all agricultural exports to approximately one third today.

### 67. Support to increase the capacity of vulnerable countries to cope with price shocks.

Price ‘spikes’ have occurred in world cereal markets and are likely to recur in future. Attempts to mitigate the impact of such shocks within the framework of the WTO have been unsuccessful (Box 7). However, the problem could be dealt with by providing compensatory finance through the international financing institutions.

**68. Action to protect vulnerable countries from the problems associated with transition to a system of liberalised trade.** Some developing countries in the WTO are asking to be allowed to use special measures (such as safeguards during times of import surges) to prevent liberalisation from having adverse effects on poor people. This has been proposed under a “Development Box” and under “Special and Differential Treatment”. Developing countries should have appropriate measures at their disposal to ensure that poverty reduction is achieved in the context of further liberalisation of agricultural trade.

**69. International disciplines guiding the provision of food aid, particularly those in the Agreement on Agriculture, should be strengthened.**

The current WTO classification of Net Food Importing Developing Countries (NFIDCs) has created a very diverse group. Devising more objective and observable criteria for this group would help to strengthen the disciplines that guide the provision of food aid.

**70. Better understanding of the implications of UK and European policy.** Apart from the far-reaching implications of the Common Agricultural Policy for food production in developing countries, we must be aware of how the incorporation of food safety concerns in the UK and Europe into food policy affects the capacity of producers in poor countries to participate in international markets. Food consumption trends in developed countries also affect the vulnerability of agricultural sectors elsewhere: for example, the increased consumption of fish on health grounds depletes fish stocks. Co-ordinated policy responses to such trends are imperative

**71. Maintain Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) as the most credible intergovernmental mechanism for addressing food safety and quality.** Countries are encouraged to take into account Codex food standards when developing national standards.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>The *Codex Alimentarius* or food code is considered the principal global reference point for consumers, food producers and processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade. It was established by the Conference of FAO and by the World Health Assembly in the early 1960s. It sets standards on food quality and safety, and is thus responsible for food standards for commodities and codes of hygienic or technology practice. In addition, the Commission evaluates pesticides, limits for pesticide residues, guidelines for contaminants, as well as evaluating food additives and veterinary drugs.

**72. Ensure a greater coherence among international agreements on the use of natural resources (such as fisheries and forestry) and a more effective implementation of these agreements.**

Capacity at all levels to monitor the implementation of trade agreements should be enhanced, particularly where they concern the exploitation of shared resources on which poor people depend for both food and income.

supported mechanism for mainstreaming trade and defining capacity building needs. Capacity at all levels to introduce trade reforms and complementary social and economic policies to reduce poverty and improve food security should be enhanced.

### Reducing poverty and vulnerability

**74. Since hunger is closely linked with poverty, strategies to reduce poverty will often improve food security.** Poor rural and urban people need secure and

## The Marrakech Agreement

Box 7

The Marrakech Agreement (1994) was a response to concerns about the possibly negative effects of the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (URAA) on the least advanced and net food importing countries (NFIDCs). It was feared that the liberalisation of agricultural trade would lead to a rise in world food prices and subsequent increases in food import bills. Broadly, signatories agreed to:

- Review levels of food aid to ensure that they would be sufficient to meet needs during the transition period.
- Ensure that an increasing proportion of basic foodstuffs goes to NFIDCs and LDCs in fully grant form or appropriate concessionary terms.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to NFIDCs and LDCs in order to improve agricultural productivity and infrastructure.

In practice, cereal prices have fallen to historical lows, although this is partly explained by continued US and European subsidies. The impact of full trade liberalisation on food prices is still a matter of concern. However, increasing the flows of food aid should not be the automatic response to future price increases.

Following the launch of a new trade round at Doha, the Marrakech Agreement is now being re-examined by an inter-agency panel of financial and commodity experts. This will look at ways to improve the access of least developed and WTO net food importing countries to funds that will help solve short-term problems in financing basic food imports. The panel will report back to the WTO by 30 June 2002.

**73. Ensure coherence between trade reforms and national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.** In Least Developed Countries (LDCs), this means strengthening the World Trade Organisation/World Bank/International Monetary Fund/United Nations Development Programme-

sustainable livelihoods, with adequate assets and buffers against shocks. Poor nations need buoyant economies, in order to provide jobs, acquire agricultural inputs and purchase food where necessary. Supporting a diversity of rural livelihoods is a key element in this. It will include the development of human capital, infrastructure and markets, micro-finance, insurance and asset building (Box 8).

## Tackling hunger through a livelihoods approach to reducing poverty

Box 8

The Eastern India Rainfed Farming Project shows how a multi-sectoral 'livelihoods approach' to poverty reduction can have dramatic impact on food security. It uses participatory methods to enhance the livelihoods of poor rural people in the states of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Groups of farmers, including the poorest, have contributed their local knowledge and practical experience to crop improvement, which has resulted in substantial increases in yield. In other areas, the project worked with poor farmers to identify seasonal aquaculture options that fitted in with their other livelihood strategies. The production of popular fish species proved viable and spread rapidly in areas where poor farmers had access to seasonal ponds, but had previously had neither the knowledge nor the skills to engage in aquaculture. Another key element was the use of the project to change the focus of extension organisations, encouraging them to improve communications with the poorest farmers.

In a recent review, farmers described the benefits of the project: for example, the seasonal aquaculture activities had improved nutrition, reduced migration and enabled the income from group ponds to be used for village development. Considerable benefits have also come from increased dialogue within farmers' groups and from better access to financial services. This combination of strengthening existing activities with supporting the diversification of livelihoods has meant that people are better able to survive the 'hungry months'. Fewer are forced to migrate to look for work.

**75. If serious progress is to be made in tackling hunger, the profile of food and nutrition within poverty reduction strategies must be raised.** Poverty reduction strategies are creating frameworks within which poverty analysis can be linked to public policies and actions. However, they often use a rather narrow definition of poverty, based on income or consumption, that ignores the wider dimensions of vulnerability, assets, livelihoods and nutrition. The focus should be on ensuring that vulnerable households have secure access to food, rather than on national self-sufficiency in food. Operational guidance is needed on how to include food security and nutrition in poverty reduction processes. Some of these processes attempt to include the perspectives of poor people, which highlight hunger. Integrating these perspectives into policies and investments would make a rights-based approach a reality.

**76. Key areas of domestic policy should be reviewed to ascertain their impact on food security.** Most of the current programmes to reduce poverty will do something to improve food security, but most are not explicitly designed to have a direct impact on hunger. The policy areas in question include macro-economics and liberalisation, the improvement of agricultural productivity, the management of water and other natural resources, decentralisation, local government and public finance, and education, health and social policy. Policies supporting the protection and accumulation of assets, the reduction of

production risks, safety nets and public transfers are more likely to be designed with food security objectives in mind. Assessment of the impact of all these policies needs to be improved if they are to be effective.

**77. Build the capacity of policy makers and civil society to analyse poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition** – particularly as regards the above policy areas and their role in reducing hunger. There is a place for specific research into the impact of alternative policies and public spending patterns on people's ability to obtain food.

**78. Improvements in domestic markets** will be vital to increasing the food security of poor consumers, as they will enhance the production, distribution and processing of food. Fair and efficient markets will also help in the diversification of activities, and will enable poor households to increase their incomes by selling primary and processed products.

### Agriculture, livelihoods and food security

**79.** Agriculture contributes to food security both as a source of income, employment and security and by ensuring sufficient supplies of food. In some places, particularly the more remote rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>18</sup> significant numbers of households still rely on agriculture for their subsistence. But these households represent only one model – most poor people depend on a wide range of strategies to raise the income they need to

<sup>18</sup> In Burkina Faso and Ghana 'food crop farmers' represent both largest and poorest groups amongst the poor (Burkina Faso PRSP 2001; Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2002)

purchase food, and these strategies often span rural and urban areas. Policy therefore needs to take account of the interests of both producers and consumers, and of the importance of markets to people's livelihoods. This means enhancing the demand side of the equation as well as the supply side.

**80. We need to review the roles and responsibilities of the state, the private sector and civil society in creating an environment where agriculture can help to reduce poverty and hunger and improve livelihoods for poor people.** The most immediate gains are likely to come from improving the domestic policy and the incentive framework for agriculture in developing countries, and from a greater coherence in the agriculture and trade policies of developed countries.

**81. Improved domestic policies are essential if poor rural households are to benefit from investing their resources in agriculture.** For example, poor people need to be guaranteed secure access to land, assets and services, and to fair and efficient markets for their produce. Systems are needed to ensure that poor people have a say in the organisations and policies that shape their food security and livelihoods.

**82. We need to investigate the factors that prevent poor people from engaging in more dynamic and profitable rural non-farm activities.** We should use policy and programmes to address these factors: for example, by improving education and skills training, and by ensuring that information on markets and technologies is accessible to the rural poor.

**83. Continuing public and private sector investment in research, technology and knowledge is required.** A strong case needs to be made for public-private partnerships that promote productivity and access to markets for small-scale producers. Poor people's prospects of deriving benefits from biotechnology could be significantly improved through public/private partnerships that involve preferential licensing agreements to enable proprietary technologies to be used to help the poor.

**84. We need agricultural investment that is relevant to the needs of poor and hungry people.** As pressures on land increase, pests and diseases evolve and climate change begins to make its mark, continuing investment in agricultural research and technology is

needed just to maintain yields at their current levels. We should encourage sustainable agricultural practices that meet the needs of poor people and have a positive impact on the environment. Particular attention needs to be paid to the linkages between water and food security, and to strengthening livelihoods and the management of natural resources in areas where water is scarce.

**85. Effective systems are needed to enable poor people to cope with income fluctuations and risk.** Systems of social protection are needed that can help to smooth out seasonal and annual fluctuations in income, in addition to acting as a safety net for the most vulnerable people. Alongside formal social security systems, these might include crop insurance, savings and credit schemes, public works using cash, food, agricultural inputs or other inputs as payment, livestock restocking and off-take programmes. The challenge is to find systems that are effective and can be implemented with enough coverage and over a long enough time scale to make a significant difference to the lives of poor people.

**86. Policies must take into account the growing impact of HIV/AIDS on food security, livelihoods and nutrition.** From a rights perspective – and especially from the point of view of gender equity – it is important to reduce the vulnerability of poor people to HIV/AIDS. Policies on food security, agriculture and rural development need to take into account the impact of HIV/AIDS (Box 5) by helping rural communities to adapt to new conditions, particularly in view of the changes in the availability of labour. Interventions to prevent or to mitigate HIV will be most effective when linked to strategies that address the underlying causes of vulnerability: poverty, access to resources, marginalisation and gender inequalities.

### Interventions to improve nutrition for poor people

**87.** A broad range of policy areas impact on nutrition and food security and contribute to poverty reduction, including sanitation, water, health, education and child and maternal care. Progress in these areas often depends upon the extent to which human rights are realised.<sup>19</sup> Failure to tackle malnutrition in children during their first two years can mean permanently impaired growth and unfulfilled potential. Nutrition interventions can help to tackle poverty by increasing economic productivity and therefore incomes, and by reducing the severity and frequency of shocks due to illness.

<sup>19</sup> These sectors are treated more fully in DFID's "Strategies for achieving the international development targets".

### Eliminating hunger – what needs to be done?

**88. In particular, we need interventions to prevent micro-nutrient deficiencies of public health importance among poor people.** The approach will differ according to the setting, but these interventions will often include the iodisation of salt. Other forms of food fortification may be warranted if they are effective in reaching the poor. Periodic provision of vitamin A supplements to children is appropriate in many populations in which vitamin A deficiency is common. Measures to promote dietary diversification may be appropriate in some situations.

**89. It is vital to raise educational levels, particularly of girls. Health and nutrition interventions, including information about health and nutrition, can be channelled through schools.** To ensure impact however, evidence-based approaches should be chosen and programme implementation must be of high quality.

### Conflict, drought and other disasters

**90. Conflict and disasters have a major impact on lives and livelihoods, and affect the poorest people disproportionately.** They slow progress towards eliminating poverty and hunger. Short-term responses are often essential to save lives, but they must be combined with measures to build local capacity to respond to disasters.

**91. Droughts and other climate-related crises erode people's assets and ability to cope.** In view of the potential impact of climate change on the frequency, duration and intensity of natural disasters, we need to be better prepared to cope with drought, floods and other crises.

**92. The management of drought requires an understanding of its impact on the assets of households and their ability to cope.** We need to identify a range of activities that can minimise the impact of drought on people's livelihoods.

**93. Effective government investment, policies and disaster response will be critical in maintaining the availability of food, limiting price increases and supplementing household access to food** (Box 9). The people who are most affected will need food and non-food

relief, although generally for a limited period only. This will help to prevent food crises and to reduce the impact on livelihoods. But these measures must be accompanied by long-term policies to reduce vulnerability: for example, concerning land tenure, the sustainable management of water and other natural resources, the functioning of fair and efficient markets, agricultural research and development, livelihood diversification, and asset building.

**94. We need specific measures for managing the impact of drought and other climate-related events.** These should include early warning systems to monitor the cumulative impact of shocks on livelihoods, as well as measures to strengthen people's ability to cope with such shocks. We need to pay particular attention to pastoral areas, which are often marginalised by development investment and where, as a result, disaster response systems are often underdeveloped.

**95. In view of the fact that conflict is a major cause of food crises, there is an overwhelming need for peace and physical security.** Conflict reduction strategies, like poverty and hunger reduction strategies, need to be integrated into wider development activities. They need to address the fact that many local conflicts are caused, or at least exacerbated, by competition for natural resources such as water. Good governance, the protection of human rights, accessible justice and personal security are essential.

**96. Conflict reduction strategies must be integrated into country, regional and global programmes.** Programmes need to be supplemented by a range of methods for reducing the impact of conflict on poor people. Some of these should address short-term humanitarian crises, and will involve the distribution of food. The majority will involve strengthening civil society, promoting human rights, reforming the security sector and improving international mechanisms for settling disputes.

**97. Humanitarian response is increasingly concentrated on emergencies that have a political, diplomatic and military dimension as well as a humanitarian one.** We must make greater efforts to meet the needs of communities affected by emergencies that do not have such a high international profile.

## Public and private response to disaster: the 1998 flood in Bangladesh<sup>20</sup>

Box 9

The 1998 floods in Bangladesh caused severe damage to the vital rice crop and threatened the food security of tens of millions of households. Yet the government's response, combined with the coping strategies of poor people, prevented a major food crisis.

By August 1998, it was clear that there would be a major shortfall in rice production. Although donors responded by providing food aid, most of this did not arrive until December 1998. Existing public stocks were used for the targeted distribution of food aid, but quantities were limited.

The government of Bangladesh therefore encouraged the private sector to import rice. Efforts had already been made to encourage private sector trade and investment in infrastructure, creating efficient cereal markets that were able to respond quickly to the production shortfall. This played a major role in stabilising cereal prices after the floods.

Government transfers, through the free distribution of food aid as well as targeted feeding programmes, improved household food security and helped to maintain the nutritional status of children in the targeted households. However, the aftermath of the flooding created serious health problems for children. This, combined with the difficulty of obtaining food and of providing proper care for children because of the disruption caused by the flooding, led to increases in child malnutrition. Children who became stunted during this time may never recover fully from the consequences of the flood.

Many households borrowed from the private sector as a coping strategy after the flood. However, this had a negative impact on food security and economic growth in the medium term, as it led to households becoming even more indebted.

### The appropriate use of food aid

**98. Emergency food aid is a legitimate and valuable response to crises.** It is essential for mitigating the impact of natural disasters and for preventing suffering.

**99. However, each emergency requires an individual response.** Aid agencies must consider whether resource transfers are the most appropriate response, and if they are, whether they are most appropriately provided in the form of cash, food or other support. Food aid should be appropriate, targeted and timely, and care should be taken to not to undermine local production and marketing.

**100. The use of food aid in conflict zones must be handled sensitively.** Since the diversion of food aid can prolong the conflict, there should be systems to ensure that this does not happen. In such situations, it is important to adhere to internationally agreed humanitarian principles.

**101. Apart from during acute emergencies, food aid should be provided only after careful consideration.** In many cases, food aid is less desirable than other methods of transfer or payment. The reasons are given in paragraph 57-59 and include the high transaction costs, the possible negative impacts on markets, and the inconclusive evidence for its impact on hunger and malnutrition.

**102. Where markets are weak and food is scarce, food aid programmes that are well designed and targeted and promote gender equity can help to protect livelihoods.** But they must be based on two essential pieces of research: an assessment of local economic conditions and the likely impact of food aid on local markets; and a consultation with the intended beneficiaries on their preferred method of transfer or payment. We need to improve our understanding of the range of payment methods appropriate for creating safety nets, and their comparative advantages in different situations. Food aid should be supported by other forms of assistance.

<sup>20</sup> Del Ninno, C., Dorosh, P.A. and Smith, Lisa C. (2001). "Public policy, markets and household coping strategies in Bangladesh: Avoiding a food security crisis following the 1998 flood." Paper prepared for Conference on "Crisis and Disasters: Measurement and Mitigation of their Human Costs", Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 13-14 Nov 2001.

## Eliminating hunger – what needs to be done?

**103. Timely and well-targeted food aid during slow-onset emergencies can help to protect and rebuild people's livelihoods.** Food aid can help to prevent malnutrition, and can reduce people's need to resort to asset disposal or migration. But it can never be a substitute for tackling the root causes of hunger and chronic poverty. Prolonged food aid to countries suffering from persistent poverty or conflict will not solve the underlying causes of vulnerability, and may even exacerbate them.

**104. Food aid programming must be based on a rigorous assessment of humanitarian need unconnected with the availability of agricultural surpluses in developed countries.** Providing food aid as a means of disposing of food surpluses is counter-productive. The food aid should be purchased locally wherever possible, in order to strengthen local production while at the same time ensuring that local markets are not undermined.

**105. We need better integration of developmental and emergency issues in policy and programming.** In emergency responses, we need to take account of developmental issues from a very early stage: for example, reducing vulnerability, developing capacities and promoting participation and sustainability. Equally, we need to ensure that development strategies such as national poverty reduction initiatives pay greater attention to people's vulnerability to emergencies.

**106. We need better mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of food aid.** Although food aid can save lives and reduce hunger during crises, the monitoring of its impact is often inadequate. Late and inflexible relief can hamper the recovery of local economies affected by disaster. To inform future interventions, we need better

methods of needs assessment and impact monitoring.

**107. The institutional arrangements for providing food aid should be reviewed.** Most of the existing arrangements date from a period when food aid was a major element of development co-operation. They need to be reviewed to ensure that they are effective in meeting global humanitarian needs.

**108. The performance of the Food Aid Convention should be reviewed and its role should be reassessed.** The role of the Food Aid Convention should include: ensuring that food aid does not adversely affect producers in developing countries; focusing on improving accountability to an adequate level of response in humanitarian crises; promoting the disconnection of food aid from agricultural surpluses and encouraging local and regional purchases.

**109.** Other areas for reform are:

- To integrate the issue of food imports (as discussed at Marrakech) into the more general liberalisation of trade. Food security should be treated as part of the wider move towards encouraging growth that will benefit poor people, not as a separate problem of food import.
- To evaluate the integration of food aid into the European Union's wider food security programming. The findings should be used to strengthen its food security and poverty reduction interventions.
- To strengthen the World Food Programme's institutional capacity to deliver effective humanitarian assistance.

All these reforms will require greater co-operation between donors and greater coherence in their food aid policies.

## Measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on hunger

**110.** Measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on hunger is crucial, as it will give us a better understanding of what works and what does not work when tackling hunger. The international community must ensure that effective monitoring systems are in place, and that policy and planning decisions are based on a range of relevant information.

**111.** Food security poses special problems for measurement. Hungry people are particularly difficult to observe when they are at their most vulnerable: for example, during natural disaster or conflict. The problem is often compounded by insufficient or poor-quality data.

**112.** Since hunger has many dimensions, there can be no single measure of it. Measuring food security at different levels – from the international to the household, and even within households – requires a range of different approaches. Locally identified and owned targets need to be linked wherever possible to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal.

**113.** The Millennium Development Goal on “hunger” has two indicators. FAO is responsible for the “undernourishment” indicator. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) are responsible for measuring the “underweight” indicator using anthropometry in children under 5. When analysed together, these findings will contribute to our understanding of progress towards the hunger goal.

**114.** The World Food Summit in 1996 led to the establishment of the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS). This is an inter-agency initiative that aims to promote collaboration and improve food security analysis at global and national levels. There is considerable potential for strengthening FIVIMS and linking it to improved monitoring of poverty reduction at national level.

**115.** The “undernourishment” indicator for measuring progress towards the hunger target (see box 2) is rather misleadingly named, as it is a measure of food availability rather than of access to food.

**116.** This indicator needs improvement. It is based mainly on production statistics, which tend to under-record important food sources such as local root crops and indigenous vegetables and fruits. It is inappropriate for identifying who is vulnerable, where they are and why they are hungry.

**117.** There are many sets of data at national level – poverty assessments, Living Standards Measurement Surveys, Household Income and Expenditure surveys, National Consumption Surveys – that can provide useful information about food security. The challenge is to extract this information and use it to inform decision making.

**118.** Below the national level, there are livelihood-based approaches to monitoring food security that aim to identify the causes of hunger and vulnerability. The challenge here is to integrate these approaches into monitoring and decision making at national level. They can be useful in demonstrating the vulnerability of poor people to shocks and how these shocks affect food security. Box 10 describes two such approaches.

**119.** A nation’s capacity to track progress in tackling poverty and hunger is often limited. Initiatives to raise the profile of statistics in governments and to build capacity, such as FIVIMS and PARIS21,<sup>21</sup> should be encouraged.

**120. Action is required at international level to refine the methods used for measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal.** This will require measures that better accommodate the many dimensions of food security: that is, indicators of access as well as of food availability and nutritional status.

<sup>21</sup> PARIS21 (Partnerships in statistics for development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century) is an international process to build statistical capacity as the foundation for effective development policies. The PARIS21 Consortium has representation from both countries and donors with the long-term objectives of (a) developing an evidence-based culture for setting and monitoring policy; and (b) developing well-managed statistical systems, utilising available resources effectively.

## Livelihoods Approaches to Monitoring Food Security

Box 10

A recent **Participatory Living Standards Assessment** carried out in Mongolia used livelihoods approaches to improve the understanding of poverty at national level.<sup>22</sup> This was an opportunity to bring the voices of rural and urban people into national policy making. The assessment highlighted the links between urban and rural poverty, and drew attention to the various sources of insecurity and vulnerability – those related to the weather as well as those that have been exacerbated by structural changes in livelihoods and the impact of public policy. Risk management emerges as a major priority for pastoral people, including better management of pastureland and an improved response to drought and harsh winter conditions.

The **household economy approach** (HEA) is a way of analysing the impact of shocks on household income and food supply and on the ability of different groups to cope.<sup>23</sup> It is based on a quantitative description of the normal sources of income and assets for households in defined wealth groups and populations, and the relationship of the population to the wider market and non-market economy. The approach enables us to estimate household access to food and non-food goods, using standardised field assessment and analytic tools, and can be applied at either local or national level.

The World Food Programme, United States Agency for International Development's Famine Early Warning System, Operation Lifeline Sudan and other agencies now routinely use this approach. An example of its application was a survey in Northern Tanzania in 1999 to assess the effect of drought. It was found that even if nothing were done, virtually all households would be able to survive, albeit at a cost to their longer-term livelihoods, as they would be obliged to sell off some assets. Most people would have been unable to maintain their expenditure on salt, soap and other basic necessities and would have been unable to meet school fees and health charges.

**121. We need to do more to capture the complexity of hunger and to use the knowledge of poor people to inform policy.** The disaggregation of data by livelihood or socio-economic group, age and sex will enhance its value for policy making and programming.

**122. Nutritional status indicators give a comprehensive measure of well being, and are particularly useful in identifying vulnerable people.** Special attention should be paid to indicators of the nutritional status of young children and of women of reproductive age, as poor nutrition at these times of life has lasting effects. We need to improve the coverage of nutritional information at a national level, linking it to other indicators and using the results to inform the analysis of trends in hunger.

**123. Better systems for monitoring food insecurity, vulnerability and nutrition are needed to assess the impact of poverty reduction.** We should develop systems to integrate food issues and measurement into poverty reduction processes and to co-ordinate national poverty and food security monitoring systems under the Paris21 initiative. This will demand closer relationships between those involved in monitoring food security, through FIVIMS initiatives and the Millennium Development Goals, and those involved in poverty reduction.

**124. The integration of livelihoods approaches into national food and nutrition monitoring systems will improve our understanding of how shocks can create food insecurity, particularly among vulnerable groups.** There needs to be support for the development of qualitative approaches, based on livelihoods analysis, for assessing who is vulnerable. The information produced should be used to inform decision making at national level.

**125. The links between information and decision making should be strengthened.** National and local capacity for collecting, analysing and responding to information needs to be improved. Food security methodologies should be designed with the participation of the people who will use the information, to ensure that it really does contribute to decision making. Overall, there is a need for more sharing of information and tried and tested methodologies.

**126. A special effort is needed to support early warning systems and disaster preparedness measures,** and to ensure that there is a link between information and response in these settings (see also paragraph 94).

<sup>22</sup> National Statistical Office of Mongolia and the World Bank (2001), *Mongolia: Participatory Living Standards Assessment*

<sup>23</sup> Save the Children (2000), *The Household Economy Approach: a resource manual for practitioners*. Save the Children Development Manual No 6

## Organisational issues and lesson learning

**127. To meet the challenge of hunger, governments, the private sector, the development community and civil society will have to work together more effectively.** We need: better collaboration across sectors, disciplines and institutions; more coherence between macro-economic policies and food security objectives; and more support for organisations representing poor and hungry people.

**128.** Suggested reforms relating to food aid and the WTO have already been discussed. However, changes are also overdue within the key UN institutions concerned with food. **Although FAO is the lead UN agency in the fight against hunger, the involvement of other parts of the UN system is needed if the Millennium Development Goal on hunger is to be met.** FAO must work with these other agencies – not just the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), but the wider UN family as well – and create a consensus on what is required to achieve the goal.

**129. FAO should do more to provide information and advice on food security at both national and international level.**<sup>24</sup> It needs to improve its monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goal, working closely with UNICEF and WHO, who own the “underweight” indicator.

**130. The co-ordination of international effort will require a shared analysis of the problems and a commitment to speeding up progress towards the hunger goal.** Some progress has already been made in ‘untying’ aid and in promoting co-ordinated action among multilateral and bilateral agencies involved in nationally led

development – but much more needs to be done.

**131. Public action has a significant role to play, particularly when vulnerability and hunger are severe.** The international community should help national governments to develop policies to meet the needs of people facing food insecurity. Civil society groups can assist by reporting failures to respond to humanitarian need.

**132. Civil society should be supported in developing new ways to tackle food insecurity and in promoting the rights of poor people to adequate food and nutrition.** Civil society can do much to help the international community ensure that the voices of poor and hungry people are heard at all levels of decision making. Poor people, especially women, should be given a greater role in the planning, implementation and monitoring of food security programmes.

**133. New approaches are needed to tackling food insecurity and speeding up progress towards the hunger and poverty goals.** We should pay greater attention to the political dimension of food insecurity. International efforts in conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict rehabilitation are a major priority. Good governance, accountable national leadership and a well-developed civil society all play a role in tackling hunger.

**134. We need to bring together at national and international level experience of what works and what does not work.** The division of responsibilities and institutional mandates make the exchange of information and the learning of lessons more difficult.

<sup>24</sup> Within the UN system FAO provides policy advice on food and agriculture, and contributes with WHO, UNICEF, IFAD and others, under the aegis of the UN System Nutrition Forum (formerly the UN Sub-Committee on Nutrition) to the development of inter-agency thinking on human nutrition.

## DFID priorities for action

**135.** This section describes the key actions that DFID will take, in conjunction with its partners, to help meet the hunger target by 2015. DFID should encourage a more co-ordinated response in all areas, both internally as well as amongst governments, development agencies and civil society.

**136.** Some of the work identified here is already under way, although it may require a greater investment of resources and a sharper focus on food security. Areas for new work are also proposed here.

**137.** If these priorities are to be met, DFID needs to introduce better ways of cross-sectoral working. The balance between international policy work and country-level initiatives and bilateral programmes must be examined, and organisational capacity should be centrally reviewed. A focal point is required for food and nutrition policy within DFID. Closer collaboration with other departments in Whitehall will be needed to ensure that policies relating to food security and nutrition and to progress towards the Millennium Development Goal are coherent.

**138.** DFID needs to carry out further work to turn these priorities into action. It will produce an action plan following the World Food Summit: five years later to guide activities over the next three to five years.

**139. Promote a shared analysis of the causes of hunger and malnutrition and of progress towards eliminating hunger.**

### Ongoing initiatives

- At country level, support research into the causes of chronic food insecurity, malnutrition and vulnerability, and into appropriate solutions.
- Support international capacity to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals on poverty and hunger. Improve methods of measuring the impact of policies on food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. Support new approaches and stimulate debate about what works and what does not.

### Areas of new work

- Ensure consistency of approach within DFID and across UK government departments, particularly the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), to issues relating to hunger.
- Work to integrate an understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS into analysis of and solutions to food insecurity and malnutrition, promote effective multi-sectoral prevention strategies and identify feasible and cost-effective mitigation measures.

**140. Better integration of food security into poverty reduction efforts**

### Ongoing initiatives

- Support the development of social protection mechanisms for poor people – in particular, safety nets that reduce vulnerability to economic shocks and strengthen the livelihoods of those who are chronically food insecure.

### Areas of new work

- Work with national governments to include an analysis of vulnerability, assets, livelihoods and nutrition in poverty reduction processes.
- Support research into the impact of key policies and public spending on poverty and food security, particularly among the poorest groups. Work with the World Bank to increase the coverage of food and nutrition issues in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Source Book, including the development of indicators.

**141. Promoting trade reforms that improve the food security of poor people**

### Ongoing initiatives

- Achieving the following measures of support for food security and rural development in developing countries during the next WTO trade round:<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Further discussion on how to define a development round are provided in DFID's consultation document "As Good as our Word: building a development round" (DFID, 2002)

- Significant progress in liberalisation and in opening up access to agricultural markets by all members, but especially developed countries.
- Substantial cuts by developed countries in agricultural support that distorts trade, and its replacement by support that does not distort trade.
- Large reductions in all forms of export support and the untying of food aid from agricultural surpluses in developed countries.
- Support for food security and rural development in developing countries to ensure that liberalisation reduces poverty (for example, Special and Differential Treatment).
- Significant reductions in non-agricultural tariffs by all members, including those on textiles and clothing.
- Building the capacity of developing countries to negotiate on trade and food safety standards; providing training in food safety.

### Areas of new work

- Encourage FAO, as the lead agency for food and agriculture, to make sure that WTO negotiations take into account the need to help vulnerable people overcome any adverse consequences of trade reform.
- Support the development of methods to assess how trade reforms affect the livelihoods of poor people, and use the findings to design trade reforms that favour the poor.
- Find ways of ensuring that intellectual property regimes encourage the diffusion of new technologies in developing countries.

#### **142. Promoting a policy and institutional environment that enables poor people to derive better livelihoods from agriculture and rural growth<sup>26</sup>**

#### Ongoing initiatives

- Build national capacity to improve governance, to reform agricultural policy and to strengthen institutions that can protect the rights of people who use natural resources, create incentives for private sector investment and foster small-scale enterprises.

- Support efforts to build rural infrastructure and to introduce sustainable models for rural service delivery (including technology, finance, insurance and business advice) that are accessible to poor households.
- Invest in agricultural research and technology through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and other parts of the global research system; promote the use of proven technologies.
- Promote better management of natural resources, so that they help to reduce poverty and hunger by improving access to food, water and incomes.

### Areas of new work

- Work with governments and other players in various African countries to incorporate the above initiatives into policies to tackle poverty and hunger. This will involve building capacity to address future issues of growth, market fragmentation, structure and investment.
- At country level, identify opportunities to diversify employment and income and to add value to agriculture and products based on natural resources.

#### **143. Better nutritional outcomes for poor people and improved food safety<sup>27</sup>**

#### Ongoing initiatives

- At country level, make cost-effective interventions to prevent micro-nutrient deficiencies among poor people.
- Identify school and community based education approaches that have a demonstrable impact on health and nutrition.

### Areas of new work

- In view of the importance of nutrition in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, look at the part that DFID could play by drawing on existing work on health, livelihoods, poverty and hunger reduction.
- Encourage a wider understanding of the importance of food safety and its implications for food security, nutrition and the health of the poor people.

<sup>26</sup> The implementation of DFID's Target Strategy Paper *Addressing the water crisis – healthier and more productive lives for poor people*; and DFID's *Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy* contribute directly to this aim.

<sup>27</sup> The implementation of DFID's health, education, water and human rights strategies, as outlined in the Target Strategy Papers, contribute directly to this objective.

DFID priorities for action**144. Better response to drought, conflict and emergencies****Ongoing initiatives**

- Support the inclusion of conflict reduction measures into national, regional and global strategies.
- Support the development of policies and programmes that strengthen drought resilience and contingency planning.
- Encourage the untying of food aid programmes from domestic agricultural surpluses in the EU and under the Food Aid Convention.
- Help build the capacity of the World Food Programme to deliver food aid effectively, particularly during humanitarian responses.
- Support efforts to improve needs assessment in emergencies and to use monitoring of the impact of food aid to inform planning.
- Promote the use of the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response<sup>28</sup> to improve quality and accountability in humanitarian responses.

**Areas of new work**

- Review with other signatories the performance of the Food Aid Convention and make recommendations about its future role.
- Together with other development agencies, review the impact of school feeding programmes on food security and nutrition, and on educational objectives, and identify under what conditions school feeding is most effective as social protection.
- Update internal guidance on food aid objectives and programming.

**145. Better systems for identifying who is hungry, where they are and why they are hungry****Ongoing work**

- Support efforts to refine the “undernourishment” indicator and to complement it with other indicators. In particular:
  - Support follow up to the FIVIMS Technical Symposium on Food Deprivation and Undernourishment in June 2002
  - Bringing together the results of different measures of food security (for example, nutrition, food availability, food access) to track progress towards the Millennium Development Goal.
- By means of livelihood analyses, bring broader perspectives to existing methods of monitoring poverty and to policy and planning at national level.
- Encourage other players with the necessary expertise to build national and local capacity to monitor food security and poverty and to use the information in decision-making.

**Areas of new work**

- Support FIVIMS as an international initiative for improving the global monitoring of food security and for building capacity at a national level.
- Support initiatives to integrate the monitoring of food security into the monitoring of poverty reduction strategies, through FIVIMS and other structures.
- Support research into the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of information systems, particularly during humanitarian crises.

<sup>28</sup> These were produced under the Sphere project, a programme of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) and InterAction with VOICE, ICRC and ICVA. They are a set of universal minimum standards in five core areas of humanitarian assistance, water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter and site planning and health services.

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