



ON THE ROAD TO SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND HUMAN SECURITY: KEY DETERMINANTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT TO FOOD

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Introduction

Food insecurity is much more than just coping with food related matters, and that peace, social stability and human security are all at stake today. Everyone sees the legal, economic and social dimensions in addition to the human, moral, ethical and spiritual dimensions of food insecurity and the right to food.

All of us want to do our best to implement human rights of all sorts within the confines of the institutional mandates and using all possible instruments at our disposal.

If one looks at the history of the international debate on food and food security, it is important to note that the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN (FAO), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Second and Third Committee of the General Assembly, and the many debates on food summits and international meetings on food security, which have taken place for the last fifty years, have all yielded massive amounts of literature, policy options, strategic instruments, and elements of a large quantity of national, regional and global strategies.

Within this context, it would be of no surprise to you if I state that while the conceptual and legal debate regarding the right to food may continue for a long period of time, it is clear that at this moment we must open significant institutional and political spaces to implement some of its basic ingredients. The merits of some of these are incontestable and we should not waste more time. It is right now that we all need to design and implement appropriate policies and projects, on both the social and economic fronts. This will eliminate hunger and malnutrition in the world and will assist needy urban and rural households to become more secure in relation to food, to have access to productive assets and resources, and to address many other dimensions of human life.

Thus, it is fundamental that we ask ourselves a very fundamental question today. Given the many issues confronting us today, what are the specific strategic concerns that have constrained us from forming a common front on these matters?

In this brief presentation, it will not be possible to cover all possible ground. Furthermore, nobody can pretend to be too analytical at this point or able to go beyond some very general statements that would orient this debate. We are involved in an old and very charged debate, with a huge number of studies, positions and lessons learned.

My plan today is to address the following thematic areas:

First, I would like to address the notion of sustainability in agriculture, rural development, and food security. This statement is drawn from a research I conducted in the late eighties, which I strongly believe has as much validity now as it had then.

Second, I would like to summarize the key issues we have shared within the context of the Commission of Human Rights so that you can get a feel of the type of questions we are wrestling with.

Third, I would like to outline for you the strategic elements of the World Bank's strategy on these issues with the view to illustrating how we are implementing the many dimensions of the right to food.

Fourth, I would like to push the envelope at the conceptual level so that we can explore together the type of different issues and thus construct the conceptual framework that we all need in the present ‘intellectual journey’ involving the right to food. It is clear that we are far from agreeing on what this framework is.

Fifth, I would like to outline the principal elements of a strategy to attain goals and aims in addressing the linkages between poverty and food security.

Finally, I would like to share a few final thoughts.

1. The Foundations of Sustainable Development: the Case of Agriculture

In most of the recent debates and the vast literature on the right to food, there has been a major emphasis on the use of the term “sustainability” or “sustainable development”. Depending on what is meant by these terms, we may find it useful to mainstream them in our exchange on the right to food. Furthermore, since we have a major interest in supporting the implementation of the many dimensions associated with food and food security, the research results will shed light on a number of ideas and possible options.

In this context, it seems important to share some of our own research on the issue of sustainability in agriculture, food production and rural development. The lessons learned from this research are extremely important in explaining why the right to food may not be easy to implement and the extent to which food vulnerability will be present for many years to come.

The basis for this research, which was conducted in 1987, included the experience with more than 2,000 completed World Bank-assisted projects within all sectors of developing countries. From those completed projects, there was a sample of nearly 650 whose evaluation reports made some reference to sustainability. These references were made by analysts who did not have an explicit or a commonly shared definition of sustainability in the first place! Thus, each of them made a statement and evaluation of project and program sustainability based on their own judgments of the situation and on their own notions of what sustainability was all about.

Again, the analysis was carried out across all sectors of the economy and across a large spectrum of developing countries.

Based on those statements, we codified the evaluations on sustainability and many approaches were applied to analyze the existing data and information. The analysis used in this research is of the “revealed preferences approach” type, and this concluded that sustainability was equivalent to: *“attaining a balance – over space and time – across/among all forms of capital participating in the development process, and that there were principally six forms of capital: physical, financial, human, natural, institutional and cultural”*.

With this definition (of multiple forms of capital) in mind, we undertook a broad assessment of the Bank's lending behavior covering the period since World War II. Subsequently, we analyzed the key determinants of sustainability at the sector and sub-sector levels.

The results were extremely telling and these are, in my view, essential in understanding the scope of the implementation and realization of human rights. While for some sectors of the economy, such as infrastructure, it was rather easy to find the form of capital that determined the sustainability of lending and implementation (e.g., primarily physical and financial capital), for other sectors, such as agriculture and rural development and education, sustainability depended on the balance across all forms of capital!

This was a major finding then (intuitively so!), which was then corroborated by research on sustainability undertaken at the sub-sector level and at the project level. The immediate implication is that it is basically impossible to attain the aims and objectives of agricultural and rural development without looking at the allocation, accumulation and use of each and every form of capital participating in the development process. This situation renders the sustainability of these programs a major task.

In other words, policymakers must know that attaining any desirable level of sustainability in the agricultural sector will require major commitment, engagement and high performance by practically every sector or organization in development.

These findings have a major implication regarding how the subject of 'the right to food' is addressed. Everything is compounded by the fact that at the level of the ultimate beneficiary such rights affect everyone in the economy and not only those in the rural sector. What this collection of evidence suggests is that a strategy to attain progressively the right to food requires getting involved in all sectors of the economy. Weak structures in other sectors may simply ruin the possibilities of attaining the right to food and food security in general.

You should note that this research did not take account of external factors, such as globalization. Therefore, if one adds this dimension, the challenges at hand become even more intractable!

On the whole, sustainability and the type of inter-temporal choices we make in the process of wealth creation determine sustainability in all its forms. Programs for the implementation of the right to food would certainly need to be certainly multi-sectoral.

2. Issues on the Right to Food: a Summary

2.1. General Issues

At the Commission of Human Rights these past few months we have raised several issues which are worth outlining here today.

The *first* is related to the significance of the rural poor and the role of agriculture and the rural sector in general. In this regard, we stated that one dimension is poverty, where the large majority of the poor people live in rural areas. If this is right, the realization of the right to food, which is so fundamental to the rural poor, involves at least two important considerations:

1. food production and productivity need to increase significantly, and probably beyond food self-sufficiency, in order for a given family to have access to its own food;
2. rural employment and the purchasing power of rural families which are not directly involved in food production must also increase.

These two conditions – i.e., an increase in agricultural productivity and in purchasing power – which are essential in understanding food security, are not trivial because they depend on many micro as well as macroeconomic factors. Understanding the economics of agricultural productivity is a must before a major debate on the realization of rights takes place. Furthermore, in some cases, an increase in land productivity may be achieved at the expense of the environment in areas where agricultural intensification implies the use of marginal lands or the destruction of forests. Therefore in many ecosystems the realization of the right to food must be sought within a strategy of environmental and ecological sustainability. Those who are most food insecure live in very environmentally fragile areas. And environmental fragility may set the limit to the possible expansion of food supplies in remote areas. In some cases there is a vicious circle of poverty, environmental degradation and food insecurity.

The *second* issue is that in many countries those most vulnerable to food insecurity and nutrition risks are often the poor or those living at subsistence levels – e.g., very low value added agricultural farming systems. However, to materialize or expand the agricultural frontier is not a simple task for many countries. This is despite the great advances in technology and the possibilities created by the so-called “green revolution”.

Third, the needed increase in income and purchasing power of rural workers requires an overall expansion of the rural sector’s (and urban sector’s) activities of a higher value added. However, for the rural sector to attract capital, it requires comparative and competitive advantages, which need to be developed in a systematic and comprehensive way. For this to happen, major attention needs to be paid to the macroeconomic environment and to the effectiveness of macro policies vis-à-vis the agricultural sector and the other sectors of the economy. These policies must be consistent with the aims of increasing rural economic activities in a sustainable way.

The *fourth* issue is that experience demonstrates that macroeconomic policies have been biased against agriculture and that, in net terms, this sector has been heavily taxed in order to maintain cheap food supplies to satisfy the needs of the urban poor and the elite. Thus, the realization of the right to food also requires that macroeconomic adjustments are consistent with an effective promotion of agricultural productivity and prosperity in the rural sector. In some cases, this implies major structural reforms.

The *fifth* is to do with the linkages to the urban poor or to those who actually do not produce food. We stated that to make such a distinction was fundamental. We know that the large majority of the population increase in the world will go to the urban centers of developing countries. Thus, it is very plausible that a large majority of the poor in need of the realization of the right to food and nutrition will be in the growing urban centers of LDCs.

The *sixth* refers to the conditions to move towards a higher level of food security and increased nutritional status derived from a significant increase in agricultural productivity, so that food surpluses can flow into where the urban poor lives. In this respect, a key factor is the effectiveness of the food distribution system. Without such a system we may forget about the realization of the Right To Food. And this demands increasing attention to market forces at play. However, for many countries (in Africa, in particular), establishing adequate food distribution systems requires major investments in infrastructure (roads, market yards, rural electrification, energy), and economic and financial policies that are consistent with the need for competition and efficiency in all their dimensions.

The *seventh* is that food security is very linked to a sustained increase in labor productivity. For example, farmers take advantage of relevant information to make some crucial decisions. These two considerations point out to a large number of important policy and program interventions, including education, training, technical assistance, and so on.

The *eighth* is that the country as a whole takes advantage of what international trade can offer in terms of food security. This is to say that the realization of the right to food should not necessarily be translated as the need for food self-sufficiency. Doing so would be an inefficient way to attain adequate levels of basic needs, as well as a costly path towards exercising existing comparative advantages.

Ninth, the government has a role to play in the realization of the right to food, particularly as regards the most vulnerable groups in society. The role of the private sector, farmers and traders must not be ignored.

The *tenth* and probably most important one is that a distinction must be made between the public and the private nature of food production, consumption and redistribution, and that the debate about the right to food is rather different from that about the right to health or the right to education. Two of these differences are related to the supply structure in the production and distribution of the needed goods and services, and to the major collective (social) impacts when these are absent and unavailable. In many respects, the supply of health and education has the main characteristics of a “public good”. This is not the case with food, although it may be similar in areas affected by acute malnutrition and poverty.

The *eleventh* issue is to do with nutrition and the internationally agreed level of nutrition. In some cases, poverty is defined in terms of a deficit in the minimum caloric or protein requirements as set by international standards. But to really address the key questions of the RTF it would be important to have some idea of the value of “calorie-income elasticity”, or the relationship between possible increases in income and corresponding changes in caloric consumption. In some countries the coefficients are relatively high, while in others they are rather low. A low calorie-income coefficient implies that increases in income will not be followed by corresponding increases in caloric consumption. When this coefficient is high, the opposite is true.

The two situations would lead to very different sets of policies and programs in the realization of the right to food. In one of these cases, such a right will be realized if income and economic growth increase in the economy. In the other (i.e., a low income elasticity), it may require direct food interventions programs and the redistribution of assets, particularly to benefit the vulnerable.

The *twelfth* is that income elasticity as regards protein consumption may be much higher than those of calories. This means that minor increases in income will increase the protein requirements significantly. Therefore, macro income policies need to be sought and direct interventions may really not be justified.

Thirteenth: that the coefficient associated with prices (price elasticity) and other market incentives are very essential and statistically significant. This implies that market distortions and unnecessary interventions (through taxes, quotas, subsidies, rules and regulations) are simply not justified as they will limit the realization of existing rights.

In addition to the above, we made the point that a special debate may be required to address the realization of the right to food of the most vulnerable. This brings us to areas of conflict, humanitarian assistance, and direct public intervention as a result of natural disaster, climate change and famines.

This is an essential subject that I will not have much time to address today, but it is certainly a matter of great concern for the Bank. In our poverty-related programs we have learned many lessons and perhaps a debate on this matter deserves another full meeting.

2.2. On the Policy Context

As I have already mentioned, in addition to these issues we have also characterized the policy context within which the debate on right to food is taking place. Here are some of the highlights:

In a world superabundant in food production, it is really hard to accept that there are around 800 million people who do not have the minimum nutritional requirements. Some people have already called this situation unethical and immoral.

In addition, we have 1.5 billion people living on less than one dollar a day and half of the world population earning less than two dollars a day. Central to the quality of the realization of the right to food and nutrition is the fact that half of the world’s population does not have access to drinking water and sanitation.

Thus, it is important to address some of the broader policy questions:

- *The world knows how to produce food.* The real problem is to create access for those in need and the conditions for an adequate food distribution system. All of this will require focusing on major distributional and equity policies in developing countries, on increasing the income and purchasing power of the poor, and on creating the conditions for the realization of all rights.
- *Policies at the national level do count and count in very significant ways.* These include both economic policies and social and institutional policies. They involve listening to the poor, allowing them to construct their own destiny, and strengthening all systems to minimize the existing process of economic and social exclusion. For all this to happen, new governance structures must be put in place, accompanied by efficient participatory systems. Empowering the poor must take the center stage.
- *Taking advantage of international trade.* Food security is very different from food self-sufficiency, and their corresponding strategies lead to very different policies and results. Many advocates of the right to food seem to favor the latter rather than the former. But experience overwhelmingly shows the importance of taking advantage of international trade. It is the country's purchasing power that will in the end determine the true realization of rights. To ignore the benefits of trade is to foreclose a major option available to developing countries and the poor.
- *Political commitment at the international and national levels is essential.* This has been said so many times that it sounds like either a broken record or a non-starter. If there were a political commitment at these levels, then we would not even need to debate the realization of right to food. So, why is it that such commitment is so difficult to attain? We could speculate quite a bit on the matter but, in my personal view, a key to this whole situation is the realization by many that rather difficult and complex decisions are called for. And, for many policymakers this is not on!

The realization of the right to food requires adequate institutions for the poor. These need to be designed and managed by the poor and this may mean major changes in approaches to technical assistance and institutional development.

We believe that the intellectual journey for mainstreaming or realizing the right to food is far from over. The positions are not really clear and most remain solely at the advocacy level. Mainstreaming human rights to development, to health, to education, to food, to nutrition... is not a trivial proposition. It is imperative that we are conceptually clean and that we remove ourselves from propositions that are simply dead-end streets for those who have to make decisions in this area.

2.3. Structural Adjustment Programs

Theoretically, adjustment programs can directly affect the living conditions of a population in two ways: through absorption reduction (that is, reductions in consumption, government expenditures and investment), and through expenditure switching, generally from the non-tradable to the tradable sector. The effects of these two broad policy changes on the living conditions of the poor are not easy to trace.

First of all, there is much confusion in the debate on the effect of adjustment on the poor about who the poor really are. When the focus is on the direct impact of such measures, such as the reduction of public employment or of general food price subsidies – both closely related to the political sustainability of adjustment – the groups referred to as “the poor” are most often low-wage civil servants and city-dwellers who depend entirely on the market for their food products. However, in most countries public wage earners are considerably better off than the population in the lowest 20 or 30 per cent of the income distribution who live mostly in rural areas.

Moreover, to the extent that these rural poor are net producers of food crops, increased food prices will actually benefit them. Thus, a sharp distinction needs to be made between those who are directly hurt by new policy measures (say “the new poor”) and those who are poor prior to such adjustment.

To understand the results of the study, we need to know the different categories of adjusting countries:

- *IAL* (Intensely adjusting countries): Those that received three or more structural adjustment loans (SALs) or had two completed SALs. Lending started in or before 1985;
- “*Pre-1986*”: Countries that received less than three SALs but were included in the program before 1985;
- “*Post-1986*”: Countries that received adjustment loans after 1985 (1986–88).

Countries which did not receive SALs can be divided into two groups:

- *NAL+* : Those that had an increase in average annual per capita GDP growth during the period 1980–87;
- *NAL-* : Those that had a decrease in average annual per capita GDP growth during the period 1980–87.

Here are the results of the relationship between structural adjustment and food production, under nutrition and protein intake.

Under-nutrition. According to the FAO definition (Third World Survey), under-nutrition is defined in terms of inadequacy of diet, that is to say in calorie intake, which continues over a long period, and results in either loss of normal body weight or reduction in physical activity or both. In the intensely adjusting countries the degree of under-nutrition seems to have increased slightly between 1980 and 1983 and decreased between 1983 and 1986. Although a similar pattern is followed by the “Pre-1986” countries, the

value of under-nutrition index for them in 1986 remained higher than in 1980. “Post-1985” countries experienced a steady improvement in the degree of under nutrition between 1980 and 1986. *NAL+* countries also experienced an improvement in nutrition status during the eighties, but the situation for *NAL-* countries remained grim and may actually have been worse in 1986 than in 1980.

Protein intake. The intensely adjusting countries show a slight improvement in per capita protein consumption between 1980 and 1986. For the “Pre-1986” countries the protein consumption declined until 1984 and then increased in 1985 and 1986. Among the non-adjusting countries, per capita protein consumption in *NAL+* countries increased continuously during 1980–86. Thus, per capita protein consumption displays the same pattern as the under-nutrition index discussed above.

During a period of falling incomes, it is probable that many poor households would consume more inferior foods. Such food items contain less protein but more calories. Therefore, the ratio of protein to calories consumed may provide a good indicator of a people’s changing living standards. The average of this ratio for various country classifications shows a remarkably stable value over time, indicating a very close relationship between calorie and protein intakes. These results suggest that the consumption pattern of countries at the aggregated level did not change much during the 1980–86 period.

To summarize, while the food production data show in the aggregate some modest improvement of per capita production over time, the under-nutrition results clearly indicate that this progress is insufficient. Moreover, an increasing number of countries show a decline in per capita food production. In Africa, the number of countries with negative growth rates in per capita food production increased from 15 per cent in 1981 to 26 per cent in 1987. This decline is a cause for great concern in those countries where malnutrition is already a severe problem. Under-nutrition increased in one-third of the African countries, that is to say in a region where malnutrition was already widespread. Protein intake shows generally some modest improvements, while the protein/calorie intake ratio appears essentially flat in all country groupings. The average patterns for adjusting countries are essentially the same as for non-adjusting countries.

A look at the individual country data does not reveal a clear pattern. For instance, in nine out of the eleven *LAL* countries in Africa the under-nutrition index went up between 1980 and 1983–84. In nine out of eleven it went down between 1983–84 and 1986. Despite this reversal, seven *LAL* countries showed more under-nutrition in 1986 than in 1980. The nine *NAL* countries in Africa look very much the same: deterioration in six countries between 1980 and 1983–84; improvement in six countries after 1983–84. But the situation in 1986 was worse than in 1980 in six out of nine *NAL* countries.

What is perhaps most surprising is not the lack of evidence that adjustment programs have contributed to malnutrition, but the failure of adjusting countries to show a better performance in this area than the group of non-adjusting countries, many of which suffered equally severe recessions, drought and other external shocks. Given that some severely

constrained countries managed to improve their nutritional status during the eighties, it appears that much more can be done to improve nutritional status in adjusting, as well as in non-adjusting, countries.

3. The World Bank Role and Assistance Programs

3.1. Poverty, Food Security, and the Right to Food

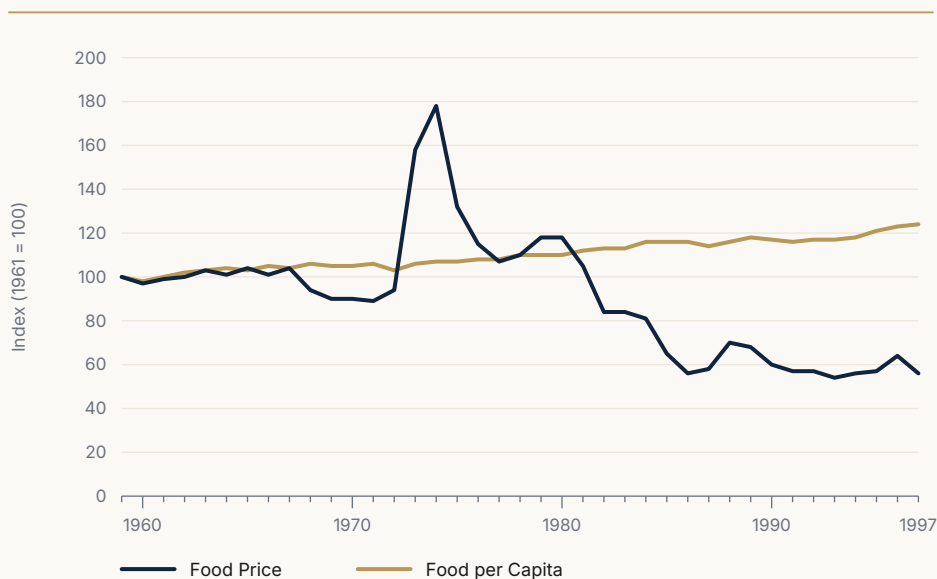
3.1.1. *The Rural Linkage*

1.2 billion of the world's population live on less than \$1 a day, a figure that has declined minimally over the last decade. Such abject poverty consigns most of these people to a life of food insecurity. Current estimates by FAO are that 792 million people are undernourished in the developing world and 34 million in the developed world.

The paradox of the poverty and food insecurity numbers is that around 75 per cent of the world's poor live in rural areas, the source of our food supplies. Today, world food supplies are more than adequate; some estimate that we have sufficient food to feed about 12 billion people, around twice the world population. Prices are at their lowest levels since 1960 – in fact per capita food prices in 1997 were just 60 per cent of their level in 1959 (Fig. 1).

Figure 1

Global Index of Food per Capita and Food Prices, 1959–1997



Source IFPRI & WRI, 2001.

Tomorrow may be a different story. We expect world food demand to more than double in the next 30 to 50 years as we add another 2.5 billion people to the world's population. Increases will probably be even greater if we are successful in the fight against poverty. Without increases in agricultural production, world food prices will undoubtedly rise significantly.

So today we have a double challenge in relation to food security. Firstly, we must address poverty, the principle reason for current levels of food insecurity despite low prices and abundant supplies. Secondly, we need to keep an eye on the future and increase agricultural productivity. We need to address this today because securing productivity gains is a long gestation activity.

This suggests two things: substantial investment in rural areas, home to the majority of the poor, and substantial investments in agriculture which for most low incomes countries is still the engine of growth.

The bad news is that today we do not see a commitment to either of these activities but we do appear to be heading for a new dawn. In 1998 just 1.1 per cent of government expenditures in the MNA region was devoted to agriculture although 42 per cent of their population lived in rural areas. In South Asia, the comparative figures were 5.4 per cent of government expenditures on agriculture at a time when 67 per cent of the labor force worked in agriculture. In sub-Saharan Africa, where agriculture is the staple for many economies, less than 4 per cent of government expenditures goes to agriculture. In all regions there have been declines in the ratio of government expenditures to agriculture since 1990.

These figures are inconsistent with rural poverty reduction and improvements in rural dwellers access to adequate food. Yet rural dwellers often lack political influence to garner investments which still show an urban bias because of the weight of political influence. At the global level, there is unwarranted complacency driven by abundant food supplies and low food prices.

Could declines in government expenditure be justified on the grounds that bi- and multi-lateral donors and international finance institutions have concentrated their grants and lending on activities in agriculture? This, in fact, is not the case. Since 1990 agricultural lending has fallen, in some cases by two thirds, for all the development banks.

The World Bank is also part of the problem. It is still the largest provider of agricultural loans, providing about 20 per cent of all assistance to agriculture related activities, but its own lending has fallen by over 30 per cent since 1990.

The good news is that a broad swathe of donors have now recognized the precipitous declines in lending to agriculture. The World Bank has currently revitalized its own rural development strategy, emphasizing the need to invest in rural space if we are to achieve the international development targets on poverty reduction. This includes broad based investment in, on, and off farm employment generation; the creation and upgrading of rural infrastructure, both physical and social; investments in institutional capacity; and investments in improving agricultural productivity. The European Commission, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, IFAD, the GTZ, the DFID

Lending for Agriculture by Principal Financing Institutions

	1990	1995	1999
<i>Total lending for agriculture (approvals)</i>			
World Bank/IDA (Fiscal Years)	3656	2752	2528
AfDB/F	683	14	458
AsDB	1242	897	430
IDB	319	552	100
IFAD	308	392	433
EBRD	n. a.	256	222
Grand Total	6208	4863	4171
<i>Agriculture as percentage of total lending</i>			
World Bank/IDA	18 %	12 %	9 %
AfDB/F	21 %	2 %	27 %
AsDB	31 %	16 %	9 %
IDB	8 %	7 %	1 %
EBRD	0 %	7 %	10 %

Note All figures on lending are based on calendar years except for the World Bank/IDA.

Source Committee on World Food Security, *Mobilizing Resources to Fight Hunger*, Twenty-seventh session, Rome, 28 May – 1 June 2001 (CFS:2001/Inf. 7), p. 31.

and AusAID have all renewed their rural development strategies within the last two years, and FAO is currently revising its strategy. There is also a renewed emphasis among agencies on working together, as evidenced by recent meetings of the World Bank with IFAD and the European Commission to further joint activities in our client countries.

3.1.2. Globalization and Trade

Ultimately, if we are to address poverty we must secure economic growth. Without economic growth, the only route to poverty reduction is redistribution, which is generally politically infeasible due to politically powerful interest groups. Economic growth, in tandem with policies which ensure that the benefits of that growth are secured by the poor, is the optimal strategy.

In the present globalization debate, the issue is not whether globalization impoverishes the developing world but whether that world is missing the benefits that globalization can bring in a good policy environment. Those developing countries which have embraced globalization since the 1980s have enjoyed average per capita GDP growth rates of 5 per cent, compared to just 2.2 per cent for developed countries, and a mere 1.4 per cent for the non-globalizing countries.

One factor of importance so that developing countries can enjoy the benefits of globalization is that the playing field with regard to international trade is fair. This is particularly important for agriculture and food trade, which constitutes just 10 per cent of overall

world merchandise trade, but which are the primary exports of many low-income countries. The World Bank has been vocal in a number of international fora on the issue of agricultural protection in the OECD, a practice which harms low income countries.

OECD subsidies to agriculture in the year 2000 amounted to \$327 billion, not far short of a billion dollars a day – almost \$900 million a day. In 1999, bi and multi-lateral development assistance to developing countries amounted to just \$51.3 billion, or a little over half of one day's agricultural subsidies!

The latest forecasts from IFPRI's IMPACT model indicate that business as usual will mean an increase in the numbers of malnourished children by 2020, from 33 million in 1997 to 39 million in 2020. Yet with an increased investment expenditure of just \$10 billion a year this number would be reduced by 22 per cent to 17 million children, still too many but a significant achievement. It could be achieved with the equivalent of 11 days' worth of OECD agricultural subsidies.

If the OECD countries were to remove their agriculture and food trade protection there would be an annual gain of nearly \$12 billion for developing countries.

However, protectionism is also rife in developing countries, often to protect low-income urban consumers at the cost of their own poorer farmers. If developing countries removed their own protectionist policies and liberalized their own trade policies, they would gain \$31.4 billion in aggregate.

Recognizing that the resources of the OECD countries to both negotiate and challenge agreements under the WTO far exceeds that of our developing country clients, the World Bank is spearheading a capacity building project to enable developing country policymakers:

- to identify the costs and benefits of agricultural protection;
- to identify which of their citizens would gain and which would lose from liberalization;
- to design adequate safety nets to protect losers in a transition;
- to identify and negotiate their positions within the WTO;
- to assess and implement standards set under the WTO in areas such as SPS;
- to develop regional cooperation and support networks to pool resources and capacity;
- with training on tools for negotiation, the evaluation of options, and the preparation of proposals and strategy.

More liberal international markets have a downside for many developing countries in that they are exposed to greater risk in terms of price volatility. This is a particular issue when countries are dependent on a few agricultural commodity exports where global supplies are subject to the vagaries of nature. This is true of more than fifty developing countries. Price volatility was the most significant determinant of export earnings in the 1970 to 1995 period. Between 1983 and 2000 the prices of many commodities fluctuated from below 50 per cent to above 150 per cent of their average prices.

Erratic export earnings make it difficult for countries to anticipate their revenue streams and public spending decisions, thus often undermining government provided safety nets which assure food access for the poor. Weak financial markets and low asset bases also make it difficult for farmers to protect their own livelihoods when prices are volatile. The absence of an insurance mechanism in such a circumstance makes farmers less likely to grow high value crops for international markets which may suffer more price volatility, and this deprives them of an opportunity to escape poverty.

The World Bank is a core member and host of the secretariat of the International Task Force on *Commodity Risk Management*. The task force proposes an international intermediary to facilitate access to price risk instruments, which are simple, user friendly, and already available in risk management markets. In essence, the intermediary would facilitate access to commodity price insurance for a premium determined by the level of price protection (either a floor or ceiling) and the time horizon covered by the insurance (typically less than a crop year for agricultural products and up to five years for metals and oils). Price insurance is the preferred risk management instrument because the purchaser does not have to lock in a price for a commodity in advance of the transaction and thus benefits from favorable price movements. This can be a purely financial transaction not subject to the physical trade of the commodity.

3.1.3. Food Self-Sufficiency – Food Stabilization Programs

Expensive generalized food subsidy programs should be avoided as invariably they transfer far more to the wealthy than to those in need and represent vast drains on government finances. Systems of targeted transfers to the poor are to be preferred.

India provides a classic example of a country which has pursued food security with a rice self-sufficiency policy and an extensive subsidized food distribution program. In essence, India has tried to ensure all its citizens have the right to food. While India has done much to reduce its poverty levels and the Green Revolution secured rapid increases in agricultural productivity, the level of malnutrition among children below five years of age is three times higher than in China and more than 75 per cent greater than sub-Saharan Africa. With almost 20 per cent of the world's children, India has more than 40 per cent of the world's malnourished children. Yet India has an extensive public food distribution system and many food-based transfer programs.

In 1997/8 it is estimated that the central and state governments of India spent \$3.5 billion on food-based transfer programs. The central food subsidy bill alone amounted to \$2.1, which rose another \$0.1 billion in 1998/99. This level of resources should have made a considerable impact on food insecurity in India but in fact the impact was minimal. There were many problems common to many state controlled stabilization and distribution programs. Initially there was almost no targeting to the poor in the public distribution system although targeting was introduced in 1997. A World Bank study estimated that even if all food grains in the public distribution system were to reach the poor, it would cost 1.13 rupees to transfer 1 rupee worth of food grain. If 30 per cent of grains "leaked" from the system (there were estimates of 36 per cent and 31 per cent at the national level),

then the cost would rise to 1.62 rupees to transfer 1 rupee of food grain, and if 20 per cent of it did not reach the poor, also likely, then the cost of transferring 1 rupee of food grain would rise to 2.27 rupees. Thus, it costs more than twice as much to deliver a rupee's worth of grain to the poor than the value of the grain they receive.

3.2. Examples of the World Bank's Activities

3.2.1. *Biotech and the RTF*

The biotechnology toolkit is extensive and has much to offer to increase food security, leaving aside the controversy of genetic engineering. Examples of advances made without genetic engineering include the following.

China accounts for 85 per cent of global sweet potato. It grows on poor soil but its viruses destroy the yields. In 2000, farmers increased yields 30–40 per cent on 800,000 hectares of soil by using virus-free cuttings without extra fertilizer, pesticides, or genetic improvements. The technique was introduced by CIP and adapted by the Shandong Academy of Agricultural Sciences. With this technique, poor farmers can gain a sevenfold rate of return on inputs.

Grass pea is often the only plant that can survive drought. Consumption in small quantities is harmless to humans but a steady diet of grass pea over three months, as is typical in a drought, usually results in an irreversible paralysis of the leg muscles. However, in drought consumers face the unenviable choice of starvation or paralysis. ICARDA recently created grass pea varieties with toxins reduced to a safe level for human consumption.

After more than thirty years of research, CIMMYT developed maize varieties with nearly twice as much protein as conventional plants, and a nearly 10 per cent higher yield. These offer a more balanced set of amino acids than was previously the case and a nutritive value almost equivalent to cow's milk. The new varieties are now grown on more than a million hectares worldwide. The two scientists responsible for their breeding were awarded the World Food Prize in 2000.

The Green Revolution has largely by-passed Africa. However, that may be about to change as regards rice. Scientists at WARDA have successfully crossed traditional African rice with a high-yielding Asian rice to produce NERICAS – New Rice for Africa. Molecular biology tools were used to obtain the successful crosses which in many cases have a far higher protein content than either the African or Asian parent. They combine the best that both parents have to offer – the yield of the Asian parent, and the drought and acid soil tolerance of the African parent, along with a broad leaf which shades out weeds – important to women and children who supply much of the labor in weeding. An added bonus for women is that the crop is taller making it easier to harvest with a child on your back! The new rice also has a shorter maturation, allowing a second cover crop to be grown, a protection for the lean season, and positive effects on soil fertility.

In 1997, 116 farmers in Guinea took part in the field trials but by 2000 the technology was spreading rapidly – more than 20,000 farmers on more than 5,000 hectares were involved.

The World Bank is a key member of a new consortium which aims to promote the new rice across the West Africa region, and subsequently into southern and eastern Africa.

West Africa current imports cost around \$1 billion, so successful adoption will result in substantial foreign exchange savings. The crop is also disseminated through community based seed replication programs – not a large multinational!

3.2.2. The Women's Judicial Reform Project in Ecuador

In April 1995, a \$10.7 million loan was approved for the Ecuador Judicial Reform Project, including a sub-project for women, totaling \$256,780 over two years to create five women's legal aid clinics in three major cities to help women secure their legal rights. The clinics have been operated by NGOs so successfully that demand has outstripped supply. Women use the clinics to obtain protection from domestic abuse, securing injunctions/restraining orders in 2–3 days as opposed to the weeks needed by private lawyers, and obtaining child support 20–50 per cent higher than private lawyers. These services have assisted more than 17,000 women and more than 50,000 indirect beneficiaries – generally the children whose welfare and food security benefited from the child support achieved.

3.2.3. North-East Brazil Rural Development and Rural Poverty Alleviation Programs (1985–Present)

The Rural Poverty Alleviation programs in north-east Brazil helped state governments to reduce rural poverty and its consequences by: providing basic social and economic infrastructure and employment and income generating opportunities for the rural poor; decentralizing resource allocation and decision making to local levels; and leveraging resources mobilized at community and municipal levels. The project provides funds directly to community groups and progressively builds the capacity of municipalities through participation on municipal development committees.

3.2.4. Sodic Land Reclamation in India

A growing concern in Uttar Pradesh, where agriculture represents 40 per cent of GDP and 75 per cent of employment, is the declining productivity of food grains, especially rice and wheat, mainly due to water-induced land degradation such as sodification, groundwater depletion, and loss of soil fertility. Sodification, especially in poorly managed irrigated areas, has left an estimated 1.25 million hectares of land completely barren. A further 1.25 million hectares of low-yielding salt-affected lands cover about 10 per cent of the net cultivated area of Uttar Pradesh.

When the land becomes sodic, it is too salty to farm. The weather of Uttar Pradesh, which alternates between heavy monsoons and prolonged dry periods, makes sodification worse. Where drainage is blocked – naturally, or by roads and canals – surface water accumulates and evaporates, leaving sodium ions from the salts to form an electrochemical bond with clay particles in the soils, creating toxic salts.

In 1993, the state, its farmers and communities, and the World Bank, joined together to address these problems and create sustainable solutions.

A key part of the project was assuring land tenure for the farmers. Staff worked with thousands of formerly landless farmers to divide the land into parcels and to negotiate the complex process of ensuring clear title.

On their own lands, farmers provided most of the arduous labor. They followed these phases of the reclamation process: testing the soil, digging surface drainage, building tube-wells, applying the gypsum and water for leaching, flushing with good-quality groundwater, planting crops, and regularly continuing to flush salts from the link drains.

Within six months, farmers experienced improved agricultural productivity and higher incomes. Yields of rice and wheat doubled original project estimates, wage rates doubled, and land values quadrupled. Farmers planted income-generating high-value crops, animal husbandry improved, and fewer farmers abandoned the fields to seek work in nearby cities.

Farmers' groups made all the decisions and did virtually all of the work: 175,000 families, all small and marginal farmers, worked together to reclaim their lands; among them 50,000 previously landless laborers.

Project staff helped establish women's savings and credit groups to supplement family incomes. Banks then began to offer the groups credit for dairy farming, sewing, tree nurseries, and trading. Loan repayments have been prompt; arrears are negligible. Some groups have lent their savings to other farmers so they could meet some of the crop production costs.

Farmers launched private sector micro-businesses to provide inputs and services like seeds and tree seedlings, agricultural extension, and soil testing. They have also continued cultivating reclaimed lands even after the withdrawal of project assistance, a strong measure of project sustainability.

The Results of reclamation: by March 1997, a total of 34,000 hectares had been reclaimed, or 49 per cent of the revised area to be treated by 2001. A total of 200,000 mostly poor families will benefit by the end of the project, equivalent to about 1.1 million persons. To date, approximately 16,000 poor, landless families have been allotted about 6,700 hectares under former government control for reclamation and cultivation. Roughly 17,000 hectares have been brought under cultivation for the first time. Cropping intensity has increased from 37 per cent to about 200 percent on average. Yields of wheat and rice on reclaimed land are double the projections made at project appraisal, and crop diversification has started. In some areas, land values have quadrupled after reclamation, and wage rates have doubled, reflecting increased economic activity.

3.2.5. Turkey Watershed Management

In 1990, to address the challenge, Turkey and the World Bank began work on a project to restore sustainable land-use management to degraded watersheds and increase the incomes of those living in the upper watershed of the Euphrates.

Provincial rural development agencies worked together for the first time, and also formed solid technical partnership with farmers, working directly with local communities

divided into micro-catchments. Micro-catchments are the ecologically-determined sub-units of watersheds, comprised of anywhere from three to 10 villages and 3,000 to 7,000 people.

From the outset, the project has involved a high level of villager participation. During a series of meetings, community participants examined the use of natural resources and agricultural production, as well as related problems in their own micro-catchments.

Communities then chose from a “menu” of options developed by project staff, but based on community knowledge, made up of various treatments. These treatments coupled long-term benefits – such as forestry, range, and conservation activities – with short- and medium-term benefits related to irrigated crops, fallow reduction, horticultural crops, medicinal and aromatic crops, and forages.

Once they had come up with a plan, community members not only helped implement the project but also contributed to payment.

Initial data show that range management has been successful, as measured by the reduction in the number of grazing animals, a substantial increase in fodder trees, increased adaptation of dry-land and irrigated forages, and a shift to stall feeding. Indicative of the project’s success in improving family incomes is that out-migration has declined in several villages, and some family members are returning from the cities to project areas.

4. The Intellectual Journey and New Challenges

In this brief section I would like to outline a set of challenges that face our intellectual journey – for the time being one that is rather slow moving. Here are some of these challenges:

4.1. Definition and More Definitions

How we define these rights in their broadest sense is of fundamental importance. We are fully aware of the conventions, commentaries and other materials that have served as a basis for this dialogue. But we already know that there are large gaps with regard to concepts, interpretations, projections to economic policies and programs, issues of judicial enforcement, and many others. In some instances we have left these differences and conceptual gaps behind as some decision-makers are more interested in the implementation of these rights than in having more debates at that level.

There are some serious limitations to this approach. One of these is related to the way in which the “policy dialogue” with client countries is brought about without really agreeing on the nature and scope of such dialogue. Even in those practical areas of human rights’ implementation the picture is not very clear. One example is that of institutional responsibilities and the corresponding impacts on alternative forms of governance to see these rights complied with. It is clear that as we see the many and multi-sectoral conditions which have to be met to attain the aims and goals with regard to the rights to food, actions are needed in almost all sectors of the economy. In the end, it is a matter of defining a new

style of development altogether rather than moving at the margin. This is difficult to do and few countries are willing to go through these institutional reforms. This is in addition to the fact that these reforms will take a great deal of time.

4.2. Human Rights and Wealth Creation

The full integration of the elements linked to the right to food and the rest of the economy will come about when we focus on the very intricate relationship that exists between human rights and the creation of wealth. If this connection and integration is not made, it will be difficult to attain many of the human rights-related objectives.

We have discussed these issues at length in the UN debates on the right to development. Furthermore, we have in many ways tried to illustrate the situation using the extensive experience we have had on mainstreaming sustainability in economic development. The intellectual journey on environmental, social and economic sustainability provides a good example of what is needed in the area of human rights. In this respect, a great deal of effort has been allocated to linking the concept and practice of sustainability to the process of wealth creation. Notions of “natural capital” have been central to this journey to make sure that the theory of capital has the room to embrace this new element of the paradigm on sustainability.

This debate has not taken place in the case of human rights. And, as long as this is the case, there will always be misunderstandings and a reluctance to mainstream the right to food into the other dimensions of policy-making.

4.3. The Public and Private Good Nature of Food

It is here that the notion of public goods must be understood. These are goods that everyone may have access to, and whose consumption by some should not diminish their potential, or actual, consumption by others. Close to this debate is the one on “external effects” (i.e., externalities), which arise from not providing these goods and letting the market operate to produce a desired outcome. One negative externality often used as an example is that of (market-based) industrialization which ends up by creating pollution. Another example is that of not having the health services people need to prevent diseases; in this case, the lack in the provision of that public good (health services) will cause major negative externalities (the spread of communicable diseases).

In most debates about human rights and their justification, most of the attention is paid to the public good nature of the element in question. And the arguments that justify the assignment of rights respond to that nature. While it is clear that the government has a role to play in the realization of the right to food, especially as regards the most vulnerable groups in society, the role of the private sector – farmers and traders – must not be ignored.

We must bring out the major differences that exist between the right to food and the right to health and primary education. One of the differences is related to the supply structure in the production and distribution of the needed goods and services. Another is related to the major collective (social) impacts attained when these are absent and unavailable. In

many respects, the supply of health and education has the main characteristics of a “public good”. This is not the case with food, although it may be similar in areas affected by acute malnutrition and poverty.

The important point here is that policy-makers must not forget the “private good” nature of food production and supplies. And, in this context, experience shows that governments are poor substitutes for farmers and traders. In fact, government interference with market forces has proven disastrous in most cases. Over the past few decades, competitiveness at the national and international levels has resulted in a significant decline in the price of basic food staples. And many countries are taking advantage of this situation. Therefore, competitiveness seems to be an important condition for the realization of the right to food.

4.4. The Economics of Nutrition

While not an expert on nutrition myself, let me just share a couple of important economic considerations in the realization of the right to an internationally agreed level of nutrition.

During the late seventies, we did a lot of research on the economics of nutrition, and some of the basic findings may be useful to this discussion today. Central to this research was to estimate the number of poor people in specific countries and in the world at large. This was known as “counting the poor”. The research was based on a specific definition of poverty: as a deficit in the minimum caloric or protein requirements as set by international standards. In so doing, we used very detailed household surveys and sophisticated statistical techniques.

Here are a few important findings that may be still relevant to a debate on the realization of the right to food:

- *first*, in the realization of the right to food it is crucial to have some idea of the value of the “calorie-income elasticity”;
- *second*, the income elasticity regarding protein consumption, if I remember correctly, was always relatively high;
- *third*, the coefficient associated with prices (price elasticity) and other market incentives proved to be essential and statistically significant.

This implies that market distortions and unnecessary interventions (through taxes, quotas, subsidies, rules and regulations) are simply not justified as they will limit the realization of existing rights.

All the above goes to show that economics really matters in the realization of the right to an acceptable level of nutrition. Also, if direct intervention programs are called for, these need to be carefully scrutinized and assessed before they are launched.

Such issues represent a small sample of many others that we all need to address if the right to food is to end up by being central to economic policy-making in most countries.

5. Elements of a Strategy in Implementing the Right to Food

Experience demonstrates that we cannot leave this room thinking that countries are ready to mainstream the right to food and human rights in general into economic development. There are a number of key conditions for success. Today, I would like to focus mainly on the institutional and political dimensions: what I have called “The Rule of Fourteen”.

5.1. Human Rights and Equity

First, on human rights and equity: we are here today because major violations of rights are observed in the world, and thus the realization of the right to food of necessity touches upon complex equity issues and concerns. These equity and distributional concerns are linked to the ownership of assets, disparity in income levels, and spatial and inter-temporal distortions in accessibility and quality.

In many cases the solutions, or the rules to follow, are not trivial. But it is certain that countries need a major political consensus to make progress. I would like to emphasize here the importance of addressing intergenerational equity and distributional issues because these play a central role in any human development strategy. There is an important question we all need to reflect on: How can we mainstream human rights so as to address the concerns of future generations as well?

5.2. Human Rights and Empowerment

Any implementation of civil, political, economic, social or cultural rights, the right to food included, means significant shifts in empowerment. This may be empowerment of different groups in society or among different organizations. The realization of rights by definition means creating new forms of empowerment, and empowerment of people and organizations creates deep political and cultural demands for change. Thus, to empower the poor is not problem-free for many societies. Empowering women and youth is also problematic for many countries. And, a lack of it has been a principal source of social conflict and instability.

Balancing or shifting power is often accompanied by enormous resistance, particularly in those countries where class structures, caste systems, and some ingrained cultural beliefs are not always ready for drastic change.

5.3. Human Rights and Governance

But even in cases where societies have decided to address the equity and empowerment related issues resulting from the realization of rights, these cannot be conceived in a vacuum. An essential ingredient is that of governance.

The major problem facing many countries today is the lack of adequate governance structures. In fact, there is a crisis of confidence in most types of governance structures. This has resulted in a constant move of the pendulum from one extreme to the other – for example, from the public to the private sectors – without creating the foundations for gov-

ernance structures that are capable of mainstreaming right to food in economic development. Little research has been carried out to look into the correspondence between alternative forms of governance and human rights. Just think about the possible alternative ways of providing basic health services to a given population, in which the public sector, the private sector, the community as a whole, NGOs and others are bound to participate. We are faced with a complex matrix of options and priorities without well-established governance structures.

Simply said, it would be impossible to adequately address human rights obligations without proper governance structures. And these must be designed to benefit the poor and the hungry.

5.4. Human Rights and Institutions

The issues of governance lead to questions of institutional capacity in developing countries. In practice, the implementation of rights is confronted by extremely weak justice systems, particularly in relation to the poor, the powerless and minorities. And this is not solely the domain of legal structures within countries: the right to food has opened new doors for added responsibilities on the part of ministries, parliaments, unions and other organizations.

The debate on rights has become the concern of all organizations and this is a very new dimension in decision-making. Thus, an inefficient Ministry of Agriculture, for example, may be as critical of human right violations – including the right to food – as it is of the inefficiencies of the Ministries of the Economy and of Justice. Given the bad experience with capacity-building and institutional development, the subject of institutional development today will remain a cliffhanger for any discussion on mainstreaming.

5.5. Human Rights and Affordability

I am sure you would agree with me that to attain the aims embraced by the right to food, economics and finance do matter. More specifically, that a debate on affordability is central to the debate on mainstreaming if the discussion is not to be left at the conceptual level. Focusing on affordability and who actually pays for the realization of rights, when their application is expected to be universal, raises many intricate political, economic and ethical dilemmas. For example, there are some who claim that everyone needs to have access to a minimum level of food, health care, basic education and housing, independently of the beneficiary's level of income.

There is a lot of confusion about the pricing of these goods and services and about the crucial role that well-established pricing or cost recovery policies will play. Attention to affordability under conditions of inadequate resources will bring decision makers to address major trade-offs, some of which are not that easy to settle. For example, in most cases, how one decides between one dollar allocated to food production and distribution *vis-à-vis* the same dollar allocated to health care is not a trivial matter.

5.6. Human Rights and Participation (Representation)

Real human rights application demands the active participation of all the development stakeholders. While this may sound trivial to many, participation has not been uniform and equal across income groups or social strata in most countries. This includes the industrialized countries as well. There are few countries where poor people participate fully in the definition and vision of their own destiny. Also, it is important to note that participation is not cost free. In some cases, participation may be extremely costly due to a lack of infrastructure, communication systems, and the like.

5.7. Human Rights and the Sustainability of Development Efforts

Most actions in the sphere of human rights must be conceived as long-term interventions. Experience demonstrates that short-term palliatives simply will not do. But a long-term view of the development process is absent in many countries because the system responds to immediate challenges and demands. To change the situation would require focusing on the sustainability of action plans and programs, what we have called the “sustainability of the development effort”. Central to this is the ability of countries to take their destiny in their own hands: ownership and identity are fundamental. This is why political and social spaces are needed to consolidate country ownership and identity in development. These will be essential, since without this foundation, sustainability is impossible to attain.

5.8. Human Rights and Targeting the Poor

Targeting populations who have not been able to exercise their rights means effective inclusion. And this challenge of inclusion must be central to this debate. But inclusion is not a trivial proposition. Experience with many social programs demonstrates that actually reaching the targeting populations is a very difficult task. The same happens when a number of safety nets (including those for food) are implemented which, in the end, benefit lots of people outside the target group. Reaching the target population – i.e., the hungry – is the key acid test of successful policies.

5.9. Human Rights and Existing Value-Systems

In the end, the only way for a society to respect human rights in all its dimensions is to embrace a value system that starts from a human value-based society. Adding human rights to an existing, and biased value-system does not ensure that people will see their rights implemented. We violate rights because development is guided by another value-system. In most cases, economic value-systems are exclusive rather than inclusive; there is exclusion through purchasing power.

Mainstreaming the right to food demands a value-system where human rights are not residuals of other values and belief systems, but rather an integral part of it. This requires a major cultural shift or a return to many societies’ original human values.

5.10. Human Rights and Social Contracts

Putting emphasis on human rights and the right to food is like creating a new social architecture. Many societies will have to draw up new social contracts, but the time that it takes to agree on them may be so long that the process itself involves the self-defeat of mainstreaming.

5.11. Human Rights and Styles of Development

Mainstreaming will remain a theoretical proposition when a style of development is biased against rights. There are styles of development that are more egalitarian than others; that are more inclusive than others; and that care about the needy more than others. These biases cannot be ignored. And, in most cases, mainstreaming may challenge the prevailing development paradigm.

5.12. Human Rights: Individual and Collective Actions

We need to embrace both individual and collective actions. It appears that the future may depend quite a lot more on collective actions. As I mentioned earlier, this is particularly the case with public goods generated at the national, regional and global level. The spread of famines demonstrates the example of a public bad that needs to be urgently addressed. However, major collective action is needed at all levels. So far, there has been little or no research into how these actions affect mainstreaming activities.

5.13. Human Rights and Our Vision of the Future

We also need to conceive and implement human rights within an agreed vision of our future, a vision for the country and the planet in and on which we live. Without this vision, mainstreaming will have no identity and no direction. This vision will be the compass that will direct all our efforts in making sure that all rights are respected and complied with. This vision may demand new and more profound notions of what economic progress and human welfare are all about and what they imply. This vision may need to go to the roots of what life is all about in its material and non-material dimensions. It is this vision that will provide the true normative character in mainstreaming human rights into development: defining rights and responsibilities and embracing economic, social, cultural, ethical, moral and spiritual values.

5.14. Human Rights and Leadership

Even if all the above elements sound relevant, there is nothing can replace good and effective leadership. For the time being, leadership is in an advocacy corner, but it cannot remain there. And this leadership needs to be holistic and inclusive. A vacuum is present today at the regional or global levels, where leadership is more than lacking.

Macroeconomic management and globalization. Needless to say, many of the issues and dimensions raised above – such as equity, poverty eradication, empowerment, affordability

etc. – demand a very effective process of macroeconomic management. In some cases, the development patterns embodied in a given situation are such that major adjustments may need to take place.

I know that nobody likes the word adjustment because it is identified with structural adjustment.

However, the realization of the right to food and other human rights will certainly demand important adjustments in such areas as institutional development, elaborate and inclusive justice systems, and so on. Furthermore, this adjustment will touch on the ways in which the economic surplus is distributed over space and time, on the type of obligations each of the development stakeholders has in the realization of everyone's rights, including the private sector, and on many other factors.

And, as stated earlier, there is no doubt that macroeconomic policies will be central to the realization of the right to food and other rights, as these are not neutral as regards who benefits and who bears the costs. Thus, macro-policies will once again be in the forefront of the debate on country assistance strategies. These policies may be different from those needed in the past but no country can disregard their key influence in the realization of all human rights.

In the midst of a major globalization process, external variables will also play a role. This will make the matrix of macro-management much more complex as there are many elements of the right to food that are mainly global in nature. Examples of these global dimensions are global warming, the loss of biodiversity, the depletion of the ozone layer, the pollution of the oceans and space, and the transmission of major diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS). These dimensions have to be explored and studied in detail.

The macroeconomics of realization. The central challenge for many developing countries is the improvement of the effectiveness of economic planning and implementation in the realization of human rights.

Economics and finance do matter. And even if we improve some of the economics in decision-making at the sector level, this will not be enough. In some cases such improvements are necessary but certainly these are not sufficient. A good example is that of the food production sector, where major improvements in the nutritional status of the population most affected will require concerted actions in all the sectors of the economy.

In this regard, two important elements need to be discussed. The first one relates to the economic and social dimensions of public expenditure patterns. It is at this level that most of the questions concerning the right to food are to be discussed. Research has often shown that in those countries where the levels of public expenditures are low in the agricultural and rural sector, the level of food security also tends to be very low. This has been the target of many discussions for a long time because the level and composition of public expenditures is at the core of the realization and affordability of rights.

The second relates to the definition of compacts and whether the inclusion of food security within the compact will ensure any progress in the direction we want the economy to follow. As you are aware, for many reasons, including that of manageability, a compact

including education, health and food has been suggested for the realization of the right to development. However, the creation of these compacts may miss the point that effectiveness in implementation will depend on effectiveness in many other sectors that are not systematically included in the compact. And, if one pushes the situation to the limit, it is evident that we will end up managing huge boundaries far beyond one sector of the economy.

6. Concluding Remarks

Let me now conclude my presentation. We have shared some of our experience and the conceptual and practical elements that are involved in this debate, a debate that is far from over.

Clearly, we are fully engaged and committed to alleviating poverty and making everyone in the world more food secure. Food security is a precondition for human security, sustainable peace and social stability, no matter where one is. Thus, we do not disregard at all the importance of these issues and the implications that the concept of the right to food has in this whole picture.

We started by outlining the foundation of a comprehensive concept of sustainability and the implications that this has in the attainment of the right to food and food security. Then, we outlined a number of elements that provide the canvas against which we are working on today at the sectoral and global levels as well – a long list of issues that should form a quilt for future research and studies. Indeed, we need more rigorous and systematic approaches to deal with the issues at hand.

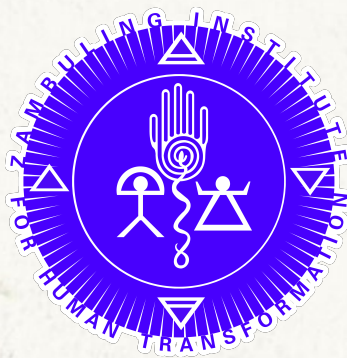
We illustrated what the Bank is doing and the key elements of a strategy that is markedly dominated by “The Rule of 14”, which comments on the role played by the political economy in the right to food. The issues are many but straightforward solutions are hard to find. There is too much diversity and dispersion in the analysis; too many factors account for the situation as we see it today.

Thus: where to go from here? In my view, there are a number of necessary conditions we all share and there is no point in belaboring them. We need to pay more attention to a selected number of really sufficient conditions. It is in this context that I would like to identify three of these:

- *first, there is a need for a major revolution in values.* The values we have now are not conducive to respect for, and the implementation of, human rights. This revolution should be based on the humanization of economic systems and programs. Without this revolution in values, human rights cannot be attained, or at best, these rights will become the residual of market transactions and economic exchanges;
- *second, nothing will happen without a strong political commitment at all levels of decision-making.* This is not just a general statement; this is at the core of the political economy of human rights. And, it is this political economy that is the foundation of all rights and their implementation. The lack of political commitment is responsible for the results that we see;

- *third, there must be major institutional changes to anchor the needs for the realization of rights onto organizations and forms of governance that benefit the poor.* These governance structures have to perform at the grassroots level as well as at the national, regional and global levels. In most cases, these structures are weak or non-existent and, as a result, many of these rights remain once again on paper.

Finally it is essential to distinguish between the private and public good natures of food and food security. This will have major implications for the ways in which we define the roles of the different actors in attaining the aims of the right to food. One important factor is the role of the private sector, which often remains on the sidelines.



Lasting peace and human security, Sfeir-Younis argues, depend on the effective realization of the right to food. The paper identifies the key determinants for implementing this right and links food security to the foundations of sustainable peace.

