

# The elimination of food insecurity in the Horn of Africa

A strategy for concerted government  
and UN agency action

FINAL REPORT

INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON THE UN RESPONSE  
TO LONG-TERM FOOD SECURITY, AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND RELATED ASPECTS  
IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

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**30 September 2000**

## **Explanatory note**

The following annexes and working documents have been prepared as part of the work of the Task Force. The annexes will be made available in printed form for the ACC meeting, to be held in October, and electronically on the ACC Horn of Africa Web site. The principal working documents, listed here, are available on the ACC Horn of Africa Web site and, upon written request, from FAO.

### **ANNEX 1**

#### **Country food security profiles**

Eritrea  
Ethiopia  
Sudan  
Somalia  
Djibouti  
Kenya  
Uganda

### **ANNEX 2**

#### **UN Task Force agency reports**

World Bank  
IFAD  
UNDP  
UNICEF  
WFP  
WMO  
WHO  
ECA  
UNEP

### **ANNEX 3**

#### **Other agency reports**

ILRI

### **WORKING DOCUMENTS**

Conflict  
Crop-Based Systems  
Databases, Statistics and Information Systems  
Drought  
Early Warning Systems/Safety Nets  
Environment, Forestry  
Food Security Policy and Strategies  
Fisheries  
Funding and Resource Mobilisation  
Governance  
Infrastructure  
Institutions, Social and Political  
Irrigation, Land and Water  
Legal/Right to Food  
Livestock  
Markets  
Report on Consultations with NGOs/CSOs  
Pastoralism  
Nutrition

# Preface

At the ACC meeting held in Rome on 6 and 7 April 2000, the UN Secretary-General announced the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Response to Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa (see Appendix, Terms of Reference). The Task Force was to consist of senior representatives of ten ACC member agencies,<sup>1</sup> with the Director-General of FAO as Chairman. Each agency nominated a focal point for the Task Force and the Director-General of FAO appointed his Assistant Director-General for Technical Cooperation as FAO's focal point.

In its role in leading the Task Force, FAO immediately set about creating a Core Team to carry out the task assigned, and a Steering Committee to oversee the work. Contacts were quickly established with all the ACC members of the Task Force and an outline of the way in which their contributions would fit into the overall exercise was circulated. Each of FAO's partner agencies submitted formal contributions, outlining their own particular perspective on the long-term problems of food insecurity in the Horn of Africa.

A two-day workshop, held at FAO in Rome in June, enabled all Task Force members to take part in intensive discussions on the challenges of long-term food security in the region. The Interim Report was submitted to a meeting of the ACC in Geneva on 29 June and the comments that emerged were taken into account when preparing the draft Final Report.

Following the submission of the Interim Report, a series of country consultations were conducted by missions representing the Task Force and led by FAO. In each country, the Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team participated actively in the discussions with government and the deliberations of the Task Force missions. The culmination of these consultations was a workshop, held at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa on 7 and 8 August, at which the Resident Coordinator for Ethiopia, the Ethiopia UN Country Team, representatives of donors and NGOs as well as the Government of Ethiopia discussed the causes of food insecurity and the way ahead for the work of the Task Force.

The purpose of this report is to outline the broad scope of the UN response to the challenge of eliminating food insecurity in the form of a Strategy and Framework for Action. It also sets out ways of moving from the framework into action itself. Every effort has been made to ensure that the strategy builds upon and is in line with governments' own strategies for food security but, in the time available, this could not be pursued with the degree of consultation that will ultimately be needed. Full ownership of the strategy and commitment by the governments of the region to its implementation will be sealed after this report has been submitted and Heads of State commit themselves, as proposed in the report, to eliminating famine and food insecurity.

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<sup>1</sup> ECA, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, WMO and World Bank.

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# Abbreviations

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
ADB	African Development Bank
ALRMP	Arid Lands Resource Management Project
CA	conservation agriculture
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCD	Convention to Combat Desertification
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CFSP	Country Food Security Programme
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CNCCR	Comité nationale de concertation et de coopération des ruraux
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSOs	civil society organizations
DES	dietary energy supply
EAC	East African Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ENSO	El Niño Southern Oscillation
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	foreign direct investment
FFA	Framework for Action
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems
FSP	Food Security Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HIPCs	heavily indebted poor countries
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group (on FIVIMS)
ICK	information, communication and knowledge
IDA	International Development Association (the World Bank)
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IDPs	internally displaced persons
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIs	international financing institutions
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LILs	learning and innovation loans
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCD	Project Concept Document
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Uganda)
PMA	Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (Uganda)
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

RC	Resident Coordinator
RDS	Rural Development Strategy
RFSP	Regional Food Security Programme
ROSCAs	rotating savings and credit associations
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIPs	Sector Investment Programmes
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
SMEs	small and medium enterprises
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security (FAO)
Task Force	The Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Response to Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSI	United Nations System-wide Initiative for Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

# Executive summary

This report estimates that some 70 million people in the Horn of Africa (45 percent of the total population) live in a state of chronic food insecurity, quite apart from the 13 million or so who have found themselves threatened by famine in 1999/2000.<sup>1</sup> These are people who, over the last 30 years, have been threatened by famine at least once in each decade. Even in normal years, the countries of the region<sup>2</sup> do not have enough food, and the average per capita dietary energy supply is substantially less than the minimum requirement. This has a devastating effect on children in particular, who face life-long physical and cognitive disabilities. In Ethiopia, for example, two-thirds of children are stunted, and in Somalia 20 percent of children die before their fifth birthday. The nutritional status of women, who are the main farmers and carers of families, is also a grave concern. In these precarious circumstances any external shock, whether a drought, a flood or an invasion of migratory pests, can push people over the edge.

The main categories of chronically food-insecure people that emerged from discussions at the country level are: a) pastoralists and agropastoralists in arid and semi-arid areas; b) small-scale, resource-poor farmers; and c) the urban poor. The report identifies the underlying causes of long-term food insecurity as a dangerous conjunction of different factors. There is a high risk of natural hazards, especially drought, because of the aridity of much of the region and the fact that rainfall is low, unreliable and unevenly distributed. There is also evidence that the climate is becoming more unstable. Widespread regional and local conflict also triggers food insecurity. It drives people from their homes and disrupts marketing and distribution systems. Governments are using scarce resources on arms and, in 1997, the countries of the region devoted US\$2 billion to the military. This discourages donors, who are prepared to support people in need but want to avoid indirectly financing warfare. All this is compounded by high rates of population growth. The population of the Horn of Africa has more than doubled since the first of the modern droughts hit the region in 1974, and it is projected to increase by a further 40 percent by 2015. This puts intense pressure on natural resources.

Many of the causes of food insecurity are in rural areas, where 80 percent of the population and most of the food-insecure are to be found. The natural resource base is fragile and degraded. The agriculture practised by almost all farmers is characterized by perhaps the lowest productivity in the world. A mere 1 percent of the cultivable area is irrigated, compared with 37 percent in Asia, denying farmers protection from the vagaries of the climate. The pastoral systems, which are well adapted to the vast arid lands, are nonetheless fragile and susceptible to climatic cycles and population pressure. For almost all rural people, household economies are narrowly based, and they have limited access to technology, knowledge and markets. Being only weakly connected to the market, few of the farmers have benefited from liberalization of the economy or from globalization. Indeed, they may well have suffered adverse consequences, having to pay more for inputs such as fertilizer, and receiving lower prices for their crops. All these factors serve to undermine the capacity of the people of the area to feed themselves or to be able to buy the food they need.

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<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that, in October 2000, almost 20 million people were in need of emergency food aid.

<sup>2</sup> Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda, which together are members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).



Poor infrastructure and low levels of basic services such as health, education and safe water supplies, mean that people are denied the opportunity of making profitable use of the limited assets they have. Access to health services is poor, and children and pregnant and lactating women are especially vulnerable to disease. The spread of HIV/AIDS is a more recent but equally worrying factor, especially since it hits the most productive part of the rural population. On top of this, the overall environment in the region is not conducive to tackling the many facets of poverty reduction. The economies of the countries concerned have been weak, with growth barely keeping pace with population. External assistance has been limited, and has declined by 40 percent since 1990, with an even greater cut in the resources going to the agricultural sector. Overall governance is poor, with a weak policy and institutional framework in many of the countries. Most important of all, there is inadequate commitment to addressing the problems of food insecurity by the governments of the region. The report not only points to the failings of governments but also draws attention to the evident shortcomings of UN agencies and donors in tackling the underlying causes of food insecurity.

The report anchors its Strategy and Framework for Action firmly in human rights and the commitment made at the World Food Summit, echoed in the recent UN Millennium Summit Declaration, i.e. to reduce by half the number of undernourished people worldwide by 2015. It proposes to redirect development to the most vulnerable and excluded people, to address food security through focusing on sustainable livelihoods, and to demand a long-term commitment by all parties. The Strategy and Framework for Action has three main pillars: a) broadening opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, by addressing issues of agricultural production, distribution and access, focusing on irrigation (where it can be shown to be viable), on enhancing pastoral livelihoods, and on the strengthening and diversification of production by small-scale, resource-poor farmers; b) protecting the most needy, by strengthening early warning and response systems, by creating dependable safety nets and by helping the urban food-insecure; and c) creating an enabling environment, aimed at improving governance, mitigating conflict, improving access to basic services, implementing effective population policies, developing infrastructure, bringing in civil society, and strengthening regional cooperation, specifically under the auspices of IGAD, which will need strengthening in order to be more effective.

In the final chapter, the report sets out its proposals for the way ahead. It is the feeling of the Task Force that it is unacceptable, at the beginning of the twentyfirst century, that people should die of starvation in the Horn of Africa, or anywhere else in the world. Strong political commitment by the governments of the region to eliminating famine and food insecurity, is fundamental. Their partners in regional organizations, UN agencies, donor agencies and civil society must focus their efforts on supporting governments in this task.

The report proposes a mechanism to help each government formulate concrete investment projects and supporting programmes which would constitute a Country Food Security Programme (CFSP). Each Programme would address both famine elimination and long-term chronic food insecurity, and would include large investment projects as well as small community-based programmes, using decentralized funding mechanisms to ensure that resources reach the vulnerable populations themselves.

Famine elimination would include actions for disaster preparedness, restructuring and strengthening early warning systems and basing them on active two-way communications between local communities and national and international decision

makers. The complex issue of strategic grain reserves and protected funds set aside for imports would be addressed, as well as means of moving quickly from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development. The need for protecting the most needy would be addressed through cash- or food-for-work schemes for the able-bodied. For the elderly, the handicapped and orphans, safety net mechanisms would be needed, but these would have to be community-based in order to be sustainable.

Programmes to address long-term, chronic food insecurity would focus on broadening the opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. The immediate focus would be on enhancing the livelihoods of small-scale resource-poor farmers, through a combination of agricultural technologies and support services, access to markets and credit, along with rural enterprises and agroprocessing. For many farmers this would mean making better use of water, through, for example, small-scale irrigation, building on the experiences of FAO's Special Programme for Food Security. In the drier areas, the focus would be more on the promotion of drought-resistant crops, as well as the conservation of both soil and water – more “crop per drop”. Pastoralists could achieve greater security if they had better marketing and information systems for their stock, as well as broader opportunities for investment instead of simply buying more livestock. They could also boost their incomes by processing milk and meat, as well as hides and skins, into products for sale. All farmers should be looking to diversify their sources of income, for example by rearing more short-cycle livestock, taking advantage of non-timber forest products and, in some places, developing ecotourism.

Underpinning these actions is the need to create an enabling environment for the economy and to enhance food security. Policy and institutional measures to resolve problems of governance would be part of the programme, as well as proposals for conflict prevention and resolution, in collaboration with the regional intergovernmental bodies. Infrastructure must be developed, especially rural roads and livestock markets, to provide better access to trading opportunities. Basic services, especially health, water and sanitation, as well as both formal education and skills training. Civil society must be allowed to play a greater role in achieving food security, using the skills and experience at community level of NGOs and rural producers' organizations.

There is clearly a need for concerted action at the regional level to address problems such as conflict, trade, transboundary human and animal health issues and early warning systems. This has led the report to call for the formulation of a Regional Food Security Programme (RFSP), which would complement and strengthen the programmes prepared by each country.

The process of preparing CFSPs would be first and foremost the responsibility of governments. Each programme would build upon existing national strategies and programmes and would, in particular, reinforce the Poverty Reduction Strategies being prepared under the auspices of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as well as the World Food Summit Follow-Up Strategies for National Agricultural Development. This work should be started quickly in order to maintain the momentum of the Task Force, and could be completed by mid-2001. In each country, UN agencies, under the charge of the UN Resident Coordinator, would need to provide support to government and local communities in identifying and formulating their priority projects to address food security. They would be able to draw upon the skills and resources of the UN Country Team and the UNDAF Thematic Group on Food Security and Agriculture. Similarly, support would need to be provided for the formulation of a RFSP.

The process envisaged would have three main phases: first, CFSP formulation, to be completed by mid-2001; second, mobilization of resources, which can start during the formulation phase; and third, implementation. The first priority is to mobilize resources for the preparation and implementation of the CFSPs and the RFSP. Once these programmes were formulated, there could be a high-level regional conference at which governments could commit themselves to the elimination of famine and food insecurity, while UN agencies, donors and NGOs could pledge their support. The elimination of food insecurity, however, is a long-term undertaking, and CFSPs would have a horizon of at least ten years. The submission of the Task Force report marks the beginning of the process.

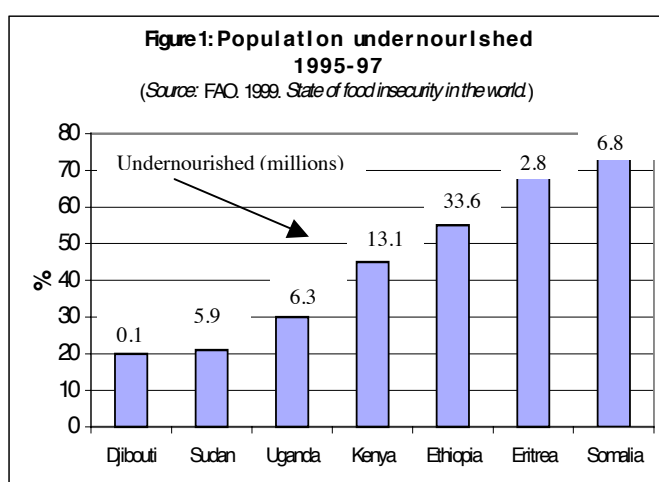
**1.**

**Food insecurity  
in the Horn of Africa  
and its causes**

## The scale and impact of food insecurity

The Horn of Africa is one of the most food-insecure regions of the world. In the seven countries of the region<sup>1</sup> that are members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), out of a total population of almost 160 million, some 70 million people (around 45 percent) live in areas that have been subject to extreme food shortages and the risk of famine at least once every decade over the past 30 years. Some 13 million people are currently judged to be in need of relief assistance<sup>2</sup> and are the target of a US\$378 million interagency appeal for emergency relief, which resulted from an assessment carried out by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the Greater Horn of Africa, the World Food Programme's Executive Director, Ms Bertini

in April 2000. During the past three decades, while on a worldwide basis there has been ample food for all people, major famines have occurred in the Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia. In 1984/85, people in all countries of the region experienced life-threatening famine, and the two major famines in the 1970s in Ethiopia and Eritrea led to massive loss of human and livestock life. In East Africa as a whole, 42 percent of the



population is undernourished, and the figures for Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia are among the highest in the world. Chronic undernourishment is reflected in a very high incidence of stunting among children and in low life expectancies. Child undernutrition, especially among those aged between six and 24 months, is particularly damaging in that it results in a life-long reduction in physical and cognitive abilities.

Drought and conflict are the main factors contributing to vulnerability to extreme food insecurity. Apart from the southern areas of Uganda and Kenya, the highlands of Ethiopia and parts of equatorial Sudan, most of the region has low and unreliable rainfall. Some 350 million ha, or 67 percent of the total land area, is classed as hyper-arid, arid or semi-arid. While drought and other natural disasters, such as floods, locusts or contagious human and livestock diseases can predispose people to food insecurity, they need not necessarily lead to large-scale undernourishment. This is caused by a failure to ensure "access by all people at all times to sufficient food, in terms of quality, quantity and diversity, for an active and healthy life without risk of

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, the term "region" means Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda.

<sup>2</sup> Figures from the mission of the UN Special Envoy to the Greater Horn of Africa indicate the following numbers: Ethiopia 7.8 million, Kenya 2.7 million, Eritrea 0.4 million, Djibouti 0.1 million, Uganda 0.2 million and Somalia 1.2 million.

loss of such access”<sup>3</sup>. It is the contention of this report that, through the combined efforts of the people of the region, the concerned governments and the UN system, it should be possible to eliminate famine and bring about significant reductions in all manifestations of food insecurity.<sup>4</sup> This will, however, be a challenging and complex process because it implies tackling the many underlying and interacting causes of food insecurity.

It is the poor, who generally have least access to natural resources, entitlements, employment opportunities and income, who are the most chronically food-insecure. They are also the people who are most vulnerable to *acute* food insecurity when external shocks, such as droughts, floods or migratory pests result in shortages and concomitant food price rises, exacerbating the poor’s already precarious situation.

Acute food insecurity is usually triggered by more or less widespread catastrophic events that tip large numbers of already poor and chronically food-insecure people into a situation in which there is little or no food available for them. Seed stocks are eaten and wild plants may be the only source of food until relief supplies arrive. In pastoral areas, drought decimates herds and, because of a collapse in livestock prices, people are confronted with reduced capacity to trade with those selling grain at inflated prices.

In four of the countries of the region,<sup>5</sup> average per capita dietary energy supply (DES) is substantially less than the minimum energy requirement, with Somalia estimated as meeting only 74 percent of its requirements (1996). Since 1974-76, there has been a downward trend in the availability of food supplies in the region. For example, in 1995-97, the supply of pulses was only half its 1974-76 level. Despite advances in national food production, and some productivity gains in the higher rainfall parts of the countries, the incidence of food insecurity has not declined and it is estimated that around 42 percent of the people in the region are undernourished. It is because chronic undernourishment is so widespread that even relatively small drops in food production can have devastating effects. Even in the worst famine years (1972/73, 1984/85 and 1999/2000), many observers believe that aggregate national production was not reduced by more than 6 to 7 percent on the long-term average. Health and nutrition indicators confirm this broad impression of chronic undernourishment in the region, even in years when there is not a drought. For example, the mortality rate among children under five years of age is more than 200 per thousand in Somalia, while in Ethiopia there has been a deterioration in nutritional status, with the incidence of stunting among children increasing from 60 to 68 percent between 1983 and 1995/96.

The 1999/2000 crisis has demonstrated the fact that pastoralists<sup>6</sup> – who amount to between 15 and 20 million people altogether – are particularly exposed to drought risks. In such situations, they stand to lose a large part of their main productive assets – their livestock. In Ethiopia, most victims of the crisis are pastoralists, who have lost an estimated 50 percent of their cattle and 20 percent of their sheep. In Somalia some 60 to 70 percent of pastoralist communities have been affected, and there have also been heavy losses of livestock among the pastoral people of northern Kenya.

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<sup>3</sup> Food security has been defined in these terms in the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit.

<sup>4</sup> Food insecurity can be *transitory*, at times of crisis, *seasonal* or *chronic*, when it occurs on a continuing basis.

<sup>5</sup> Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

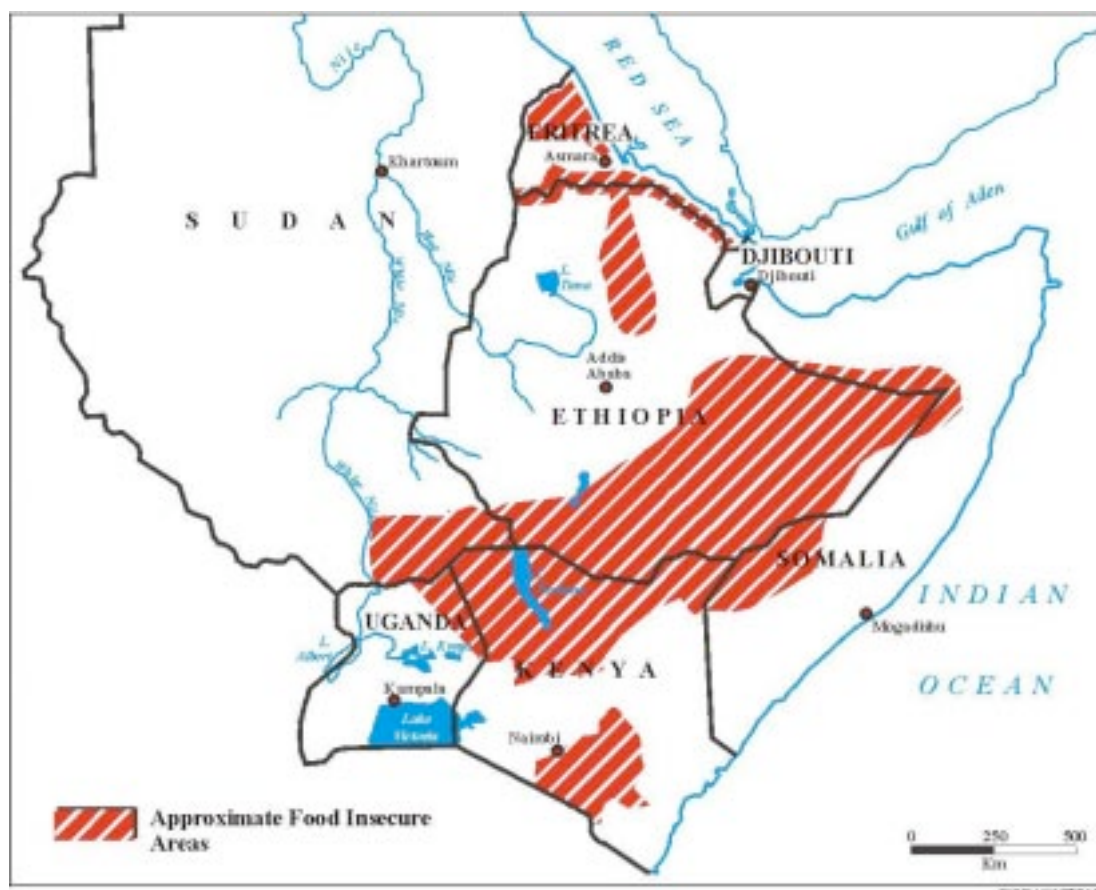
<sup>6</sup> People who derive more than 50 percent of their income from livestock.

## 1. FOOD INSECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ITS CAUSES

Although the acutely food-insecure can be identified and mapped,<sup>7</sup> as each crisis occurs, it is more difficult to pinpoint those who are chronically food-insecure (see Map 1). They are to be found scattered across the region, their dire situation caused by different factors in each country and even among and within households. The old, infirm and very young, as well as women in general, tend to be disproportionately affected by food shortages, both acute and chronic. Many of the small, resource-poor farmers living on the edge of subsistence in the higher rainfall parts of the region, and are far greater numerically than the pastoralists, are chronically food-insecure and also vulnerable to external shocks. Their vulnerability is caused by rapid population growth, which has placed extreme pressure on scarce land resources, and a lack of access to the assets and technologies that are needed for intensifying production. Such vulnerability is also to be found in remote areas where there is limited access to markets for inputs or outputs.

MAP 1

### Areas with chronically food-insecure population



While the majority of the food-insecure live in rural areas, food insecurity is also emerging as a growing urban phenomenon in the major cities of the region. Rural-urban migration, itself fuelled by rural deprivation and conflict, has led to a breakdown in traditional coping mechanisms and to widespread unemployment.

<sup>7</sup>For example, using WFP's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM).

Social services are often minimal with high death rates from preventable diseases. There is a high incidence of single-parent families, and poverty and hunger drive social problems such as street children, prostitution, child workers, substance abuse, crime and violence. Although it is often difficult to obtain precise estimates of the numbers involved, it has been estimated that more than 50 percent of the population of Nairobi (2 million people) is food-insecure, while the 2 to 3 million long-term displaced people in and around Khartoum are in constant need of food aid, and there are similar numbers of urban poor in Addis Ababa.

The impact of famine and food insecurity can be looked at from both the humanitarian and the economic standpoints. It results in many human beings having shortened life spans and living in a state of life- and health-threatening deprivation, constantly on the brink of disaster. The economic growth of the countries of the region is also being seriously constrained because large proportions of their populations are unable to contribute their full potential to economic activities as a result of the cognitive and physical disabilities resulting from chronic undernutrition.<sup>8</sup> When famines occur, they contribute to a massive depletion of natural assets (especially livestock) and divert resources away from potentially more productive uses.

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<sup>8</sup> J.-L. Arcand. 2000. *Malnutrition and growth: the efficiency costs of hunger*, draft paper for FAO, July 2000.



## The underlying causes of food insecurity

Drought and conflict are the main factors that have exacerbated the problem of food production, distribution and access. High rates of population growth and poverty have also played a part, within an already difficult environment of fragile ecosystems. The fact that almost 80 percent of the population of the countries of the region is rural, and depends almost exclusively on agriculture for its consumption and income needs, means that measures to address the problems of poverty and food insecurity must mainly be found within the agricultural sector.

The Horn of Africa presents perhaps the most difficult challenge anywhere in the world to achieving the goal set out in the UN Secretary-General's Millennium Report - to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. At the FAO World Food Summit in 1996, world leaders committed themselves, in the Rome Declaration and Plan of Action, to reducing by half the numbers of hungry and undernourished people in the world by 2015. Today, it is estimated that more than 50 percent of the people in the region survive on less than US\$1 per person per day.<sup>9</sup> In each country, different poverty lines have been set, reflecting in monetary terms the resources needed to purchase a diet that provides the minimum acceptable energy requirements, but the overall picture is similar and it is one of very widespread and deep deprivation.

The connection between poverty and food insecurity is important. Food production is significant because, for the majority of the poor, agriculture is the main source of livelihood and some 76 percent of the IGAD population is classed as agricultural. However, it is only when poverty can be alleviated or diminished that the level of food insecurity is reduced. Consequently, the long-term solution to food insecurity lies beyond the production of additional food and includes the need to address rural livelihoods in general. Social safety nets of various sorts are also part of the solution to absolute poverty and food insecurity, not only in exceptional circumstances such as drought, but also over the long periods required to arrive at socially inclusive sustainable solutions.

### NATURAL HAZARDS

Drought and other climatic extremes are major factors contributing to vulnerability to food insecurity. In the Horn of Africa there is no year or season in which the whole region receives normal rainfall and is free from climatic anomalies such as flood or drought. Drought is the most catastrophic natural event that causes widespread periodic famine in the region, but it is by no means the only natural hazard facing the people of the area. Periodically, floods afflict localized parts of even the driest areas (as was the case at the outset of the current crisis), and the threat of locust swarms is often present. For example, during 1997/98 severe floods were observed over many

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<sup>9</sup> Figures for the proportion of the population living on less than US\$1/person/day are available for: Ethiopia (46 percent), Kenya (50 percent) and Uganda (69 percent) (UNICEF. 1999. *The state of the world's children, 1999*. New York.)

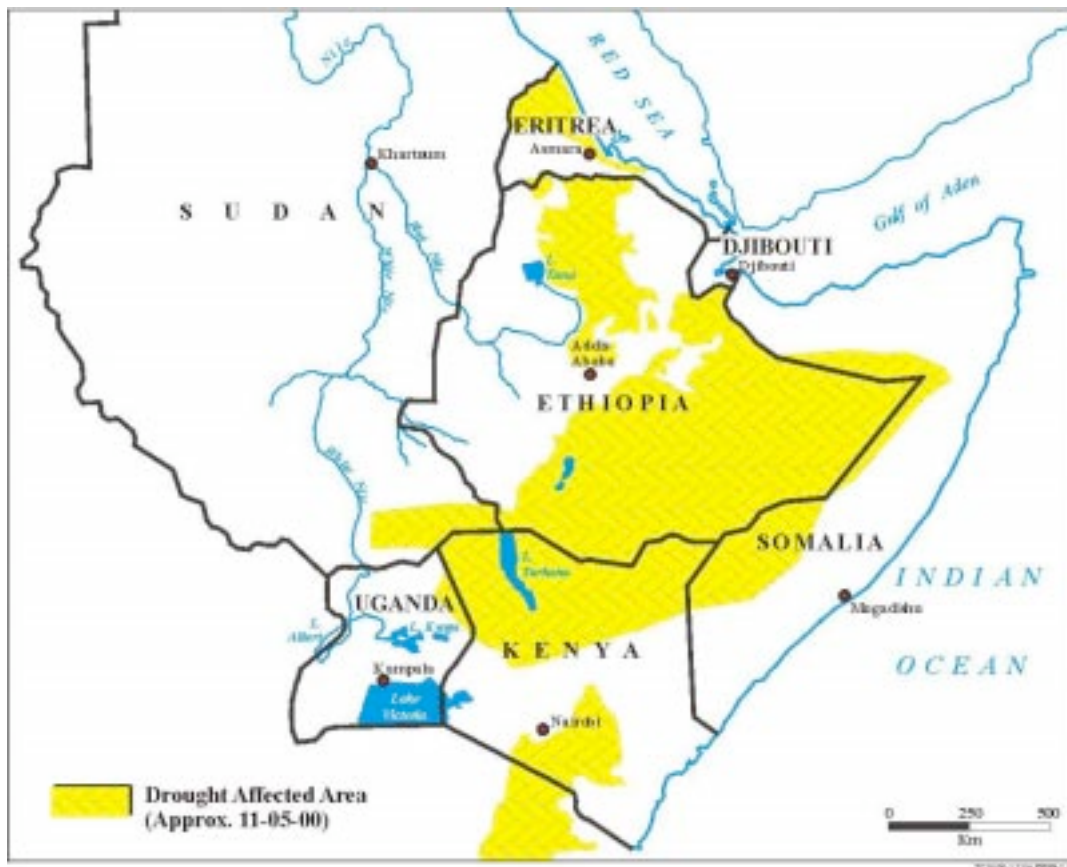
## 1. FOOD INSECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ITS CAUSES

parts of the region, and were followed by the drought that has persisted over parts of the Horn since late 1998.

Drought is a fact of life in many parts of the Horn of Africa – it has been recorded from as far back as 253 B.C. Large parts of the region are arid and semi-arid, with annual rainfall of less than 500 mm and subject to a high degree of unreliability, both from year to year and in the distribution within each year. In the last 30 years there has been at least one major drought episode in each decade. There were serious droughts in 1973/74, 1984/85, 1987, 1992 to 1994 and, now, 1999/2000. In Ethiopia alone, the 1984 drought affected 8.7 million people, about 1 million died and 1.5 million livestock perished. In the Sudan 8.5 million people were affected by the same drought, and about 1 million people and 7 million livestock died. In 1987, about 2 million people in the Sudan, more than 5.2 million in Ethiopia, 1 million in Eritrea and 200 000 in Somalia were severely affected. The current drought, which started in 1998, is affecting about 16 million people in the Horn of Africa (see Map 2). Drought is, therefore, a recurring phenomenon in the region and there will always be certain locations experiencing localized drought conditions.

MAP 2

### Drought-affected area



As well as the well-known and documented cyclical nature of drought, there is also evidence of increasing climatic instability in the Horn of Africa. Drought is becoming more frequent and the cycles more severe. Floods are also common in the region. In countries where the infrastructure is less well developed, even moderately sized

floods, such as those that can be expected on average once every ten years, can lead to disruption of road and rail transport, cuts in telecommunications and the breakdown of electricity and water supplies. The major direct impacts of flooding are the destruction of crops, the drowning of animals and the siltation of reservoirs. In some parts of the region, periods of above-average rainfall are triggered at certain times by the warm phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), while droughts are associated with the cold phase disturbance, or La Niña.

Drought has a perhaps unique impact on agricultural systems because of its duration, which often extends over several seasons. The people of the region have, over centuries, evolved mechanisms for coping with the risks of the environment in which they live. Farmers have, up to a point, learned to cope with late rains or with the mid-season cessation of rains, spreading risk by planting different crops and at different times, through on-farm storage and by resorting to hunting and gathering at times of stress. For the pastoralists, travelling with their herds and flocks to follow the rains and the growth in pasture is a natural part of their system, while setting areas aside for grazing reserves and splitting herds to minimize risk are elements of their coping mechanism. Increases in population have, however, disturbed the equilibrium between people and natural resources.

The overall degradation of the natural resource base, in particular land and vegetation, has led to increasing rainwater losses through runoff (and associated soil erosion), which in turn has exacerbated the impact of drought. This downward spiral of environmental degradation has resulted in further land productivity decline, loss of biodiversity and continuing desertification.

## CONFLICT

The Horn of Africa has been plagued by conflict since time immemorial. Although the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has attracted the most media attention, the region has suffered from almost continuous civil conflicts over the last 30 years in Ethiopia (as formerly defined), the Sudan, Somalia and Uganda, and these have spilled over into Djibouti. The countries of the region devote between 8 and 50 percent of central government expenditure, or between 2 and 8 percent of gross national product (GNP), to the military, totalling US\$2 billion in 1997. These figures rise substantially, of course, whenever conflict flares up. Conflicts in the region undoubtedly exacerbate the famine and food insecurity triggered by drought. Even before the recent hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea, more than 1 million people from the region were refugees. Large populations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were to be found in the Sudan, Somalia and Uganda. Conflict removes able-bodied men from agricultural production and, incidentally, places an extra work burden on women. It also diverts resources, directly and indirectly, from more productive and socially beneficial uses, and tests the willingness of the international community to provide assistance.

Transboundary conflicts hit the headlines but, especially in areas where the pressure on available natural resources is intense, local conflicts abound. Pastoral areas, which are under pressure from the expansion of cropping into marginal areas and increasingly degraded rangelands, are especially susceptible to local conflict and cattle raids, which break out when people have ready access to modern weapons. Northern Kenya and northern Uganda have been particularly prone to prolonged outbreaks of such violence. Such tendencies are exacerbated when drought hits and

the scramble for limited grazing and water intensifies. Poor countries, which have few resources to allocate to minorities, to the regions and to remote areas, are particularly vulnerable to internal conflict. Consequently, any measures that promote growth and reduce food insecurity are also likely to help conflict prevention.

Conflict, whether transboundary or internal, exacerbates the vulnerability of poor people, displacing them from their homes and depleting their assets. It makes emergency relief operations directed towards IDPs difficult and dangerous for those involved. Conflict also has a much more insidious impact on long-term development efforts, diverting scarce resources, both national and external, away from development activities and into war. The fungibility of funds means that donors face the risk of funding conflict when their intention is to alleviate poverty through development programmes.

## POPULATION GROWTH

The population of the Horn of Africa has more than doubled since the first of the major droughts of recent times hit the region in 1974, and it is projected to increase by a further 40 percent by 2015. The population dynamics of the region are not encouraging (see Table 1). Population growth rates have historically been high, at 2.5 to 3.5 percent, and are still at least 2 percent everywhere. The momentum for future increases in population remains strong because of the age structure and youthfulness of the population. Fertility and mortality rates are high and the low prevalence of contraception use almost everywhere means that there is little chance of a decline in fertility in the immediate future. Family sizes are large, especially in rural areas, and the dependency burden<sup>10</sup> is high, exacerbated in many countries by the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS, which strikes the working-age population hardest.

TABLE 1  
Demographic indicators

Country	Average annual population growth 1995-2000 (%) <sup>*</sup>	Total fertility rate 1995-2000 (%) <sup>*</sup>	Dependency <sup>*</sup> ratio, 1997 <sup>*</sup>	Population per ha of arable land or permanent cropland <sup>*</sup>	Contraceptive prevalence (%) <sup>**</sup>
Djibouti	n.a.	n.a.	79.8	n.a.	n.a.
Eritrea	3.8	5.7	89.4	5.0	8.0
Ethiopia	2.5	6.3	95.5	4.1	4.0
Kenya	2.0	4.5	91.8	4.7	33.0
Somalia	4.2	7.3	n.a.	4.7	n.a.
Sudan	2.1	4.6	78.9	4.7	8.0
Uganda	2.8	7.1	107.9	5.4	15.0

Sources: <sup>\*</sup> UNFPA. 1999. *The state of world population*. <sup>\*\*</sup> UNDP. 1999. *Human development report*.

Over the last 25 years, there has been considerable rural-urban migration, the rate of which is projected to increase. However, there has also been an increase in the number of people dependent on agriculture. Population increase has led to a dramatic increase in energy demand and this has been met mainly by wood (from range and forest) and organic matter such as animal manure. The natural resource base has, if

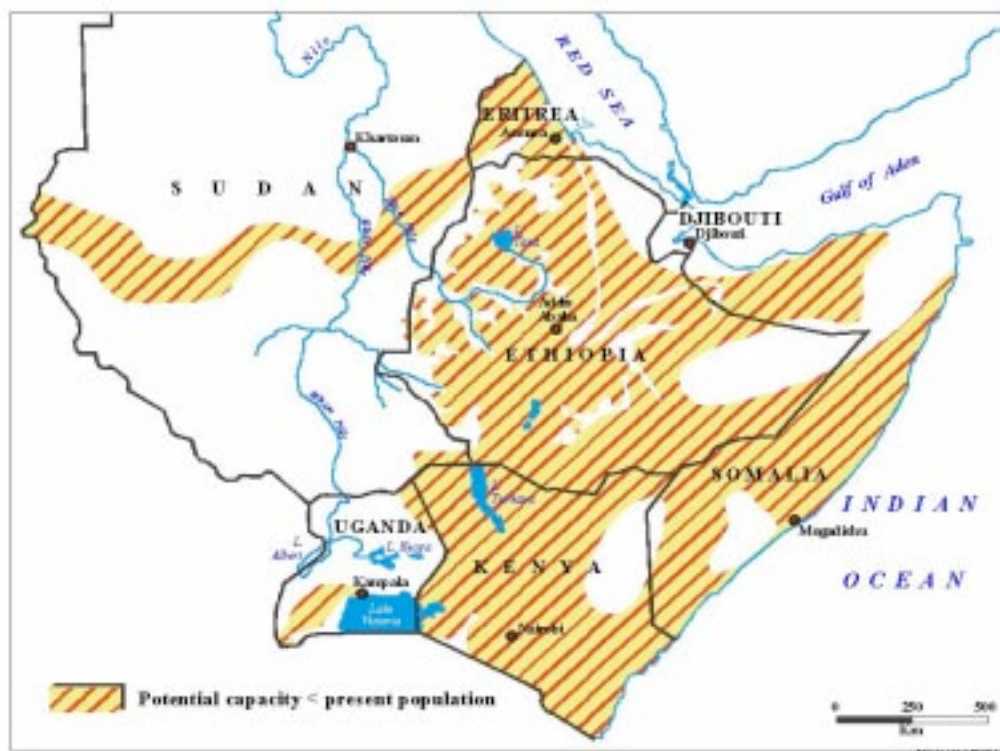
<sup>10</sup> The population aged less than 15 years and more than 64 years as a proportion of the working population.

anything, declined as a result of land degradation and urban encroachment on arable land. To the extent that there has been any increase in the area of land being farmed, this has taken place largely in marginal areas, using systems that may not be sustainable. Shrinking land resources have not been compensated for by increases in land productivity. Average cereal yields are a mere 860 kg/ha and, where comparative data are available, statistics confirm the general impression that yields are declining. For example, in the Sudan and Uganda, average yields have dropped by 12 and 18 percent, respectively, over the last decade.

The result is that, throughout the region, farmers have to cope with reduced productivity and less land from which to feed themselves and to supply food to the ever-expanding cities. In many parts of the region, the pressure of the human and livestock populations on the resource base has increased to the point where land use, employing currently available technology and management systems, is not sustainable. This is particularly true in the arid and semi-arid lands which make up 70 percent of the region and where the resource base is fragile. A FAO study from 1982<sup>11</sup> shows that, even then (with data from the mid-1970s), for most of the region population exceeded estimated long-term carrying capacity (see Map 3).

MAP 3

## Human population carrying capacity



<sup>11</sup> FAO. 1982. *Potential population-supporting capacities of lands in the developing world*. Technical Report FPA/INT/513.

## The causes of food insecurity in rural areas

Food insecurity in the region is principally, but not exclusively, a rural problem. When famine strikes, it is the rural population who is most vulnerable. Interventions need to be planned on the basis of a good understanding of the factors that contribute to the particular vulnerability of rural people.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural resource base for the poor and food-insecure is invariably narrow and, in many areas, fragile. With the exception of Uganda,<sup>12</sup> only 4 to 10 percent of the land area is classed as arable, and just 21 million ha of land is suitable for rainfed cultivation. The greatest numbers of poor people are concentrated in the arid and semi-arid ecosystems and on marginal land in the higher rainfall parts of the region. It has become axiomatic to say that poverty is one of the main causes of environmental degradation. This can be seen all too clearly in the farming of steep slopes, which takes place as an increasing population is forced to cultivate marginal land. The falling crop yields that characterize the marginal areas are a result of the loss of massive quantities of topsoil throughout the region, declining soil fertility as fallow systems are replaced by continuous cultivation, reductions in soil organic matter as manure is burnt for fuel, and shrinking holding sizes. However, the poor are also the most vulnerable to environmental degradation because they depend on the exploitation of common property resources for a greater share of their incomes than richer households do.

In the rangelands, the evidence for long-term secular environmental degradation is ambiguous. The successive cyclical growth and decline of herds reflects cycles of rainfall and rangeland productivity, and is perfectly normal. As animals die in large numbers, the rangelands recover remarkably quickly. However, when there is a major drop in the number of animals, the people who depend on them for their livelihoods also suffer. Development programmes that have sought to increase animal production on rangelands through water development and animal disease prevention have all too often failed to find, at the same time, sustainable ways of increasing animal nutrition, so the resulting increased numbers of animals may wreak havoc on the range itself.

Many of the available freshwater resources are in river basins and lakes that extend beyond the boundaries of individual nations. Shared water resources include lakes Victoria, Albert, Edward, Kivu and Turkana and major rivers such as the Blue Nile, White Nile, Atbara, Awash and Shebele. The potential for developing irrigation from these sources is constrained by the problem of achieving agreement on sharing the resources and avoiding conflict.

Although natural climatic factors have played their part in the process of desertification, in general, it is increased population and the related development of unsustainable production systems that have had most negative impact on the fragile natural resource base. Wood and manure have remained the main sources of domestic energy, even in urban centres. This situation has contributed to depleting the forest

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<sup>12</sup> Arable land accounts for 25 percent of the land area in Uganda.

and range resources, resulting in an overall decrease in biomass and biodiversity, reduced water infiltration and increased runoff and soil erosion. These factors, which contribute to the impoverishment of ecosystems, have led to a vicious circle of environmental degradation, lower system resilience to erratic rainfall, decreased agricultural productivity and increased poverty and food insecurity.

### **CROP-BASED SYSTEMS**

Agriculture in the region is, for the most part, characterized as being low-input/low-output. The level of technology is generally basic, and productivity per hectare and per person employed are perhaps the lowest in the world. In the parts of the region with higher potential (i.e. those areas with high and reliable rainfall), in which crop-based systems predominate and population densities are highest, productivity is constrained by lack of knowledge, lack of financing and poorly articulated markets. In these areas a substantial proportion of farmers live at the edge of subsistence, and are food-insecure simply because they have limited access to land. For example, in Ethiopia, almost 40 percent of farm households have less than 0.5 ha of land, and more than 60 percent have no more than 1 ha from which to support a family of between six and eight people.

In the areas of low potential, where there is less than 600 mm of precipitation per year and unreliable inter- and intrayear rainfall patterns, risk avoidance is the most important strategy. Few of the technologies generated for high rainfall areas (such as hybrid seed and fertilizer) meet the rigorous demands of risk minimization that farmers have to meet in drier zones. Little of what has emerged from research is suitable for marginal and drought-prone areas because few resources have been devoted to this topic, perhaps reflecting the low perceived profitability of investment in such areas.<sup>13</sup> However, there are many reasonably well-understood technologies that are not yet widely used, including improved water control and water harvesting, improved tillage systems and drought-resistant varieties of crops and agroforestry species. There are also valuable lessons and technologies from other parts of Africa and the world that could be usefully applied.

In the Horn of Africa, only 6 percent of the cropped area and less than 1 percent of the cultivable area is irrigated, compared with 37 percent in Asia. While irrigation development, especially through small-scale, farmer-driven initiatives, is beginning to prove its worth in some areas, it is unfortunate that the coincidence of available perennial water, suitable land and population is so rare in the marginal areas of the region that are most prone to drought.

### **PASTORALISM**

If the crop-based systems in marginal areas have received little attention from research and extension services, pastoral systems have been almost completely neglected. A generation of ill-conceived, externally funded projects, aimed at providing water for livestock in apparently “empty” areas of rangeland as well as veterinary services, rangeland management, genetic upgrading and fattening schemes, have had severely adverse environmental impacts and may even have contributed to increasing the

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<sup>13</sup> Technology for large-scale mechanized farming has been introduced, but this has little relevance for food-insecure rural people.

vulnerability of pastoralists to the very drought problems they were intended to solve. Since the early 1990s, there have been few new initiatives, and programmes directed to the pastoral economy have been limited. Attention has shifted to promoting pastoralist self-reliance, but this has come at a time when governments are no longer willing and/or able to afford to deliver such services as health, education and water to these areas. The new participatory approach has been accompanied by increasing numbers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) delivering services and, in many cases, by technically ill-conceived development programmes that ignore the lessons of the past.

In view of the fragile ecosystems involved, it is intrinsically difficult to develop technology that will bring sustained increases in productivity without adverse environmental effects. Because they result in increased livestock numbers, even successful animal health programmes, including the virtual eradication of rinderpest, face the challenge of improving animal nutrition in a low and unpredictable rainfall environment. A policy and marketing framework that encourages sales and offers alternative outlets for savings must also be in place if off-take is to increase. However, it must be recognized that, in this environment, livestock are still the best investment and will consequently tend to be accumulated by those who can afford them.

### **KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

Knowledge and information systems underlie a broad range of fields, including social safety net policies, agricultural knowledge, the environment, health and education, administration, marketing, and even political information. Their poor state of development in the region handicaps both households and communities in their efforts to survive and prosper under difficult conditions. It also limits the capacity of governments to formulate appropriate policies and programmes that address the problem of food insecurity. Knowledge enhancement services, early warning systems and management information systems underpin all other efforts to address food security.

Information systems have been geared almost exclusively to the collection of performance data that are relevant to crop production areas, using a combination of remote sensing and field data-gathering networks to provide early warning of emerging food insecurity situations. In some countries, there is a multiplicity of early warning and vulnerability systems, operated by governments, donors and NGOs. Systems for providing a similar warning of impending disaster in pastoral systems have emerged only recently and are being tested on a pilot scale. Over time, there has been increased capacity to provide accurate early warning information. However, the ability or willingness to respond adequately to the warnings that are produced has not improved. The recent crisis has demonstrated that there are weak links in the chain between early warning, pledges of food aid, ultimate delivery and properly directed distribution. It has also highlighted the one-way nature of current information systems in the vulnerable areas, where the capacity to disseminate knowledge and information in order to improve the coping abilities of the population remains poorly developed.

### **HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY**

The poor and food-insecure generally have a narrow economic resource base with few options for expanding their incomes, either on- or off-farm. Almost total dependence



on agriculture in a high-risk environment makes them vulnerable to any external shock, such as drought. The opportunities for diversification within agriculture depend on access to markets or a fundamental change in access to productive assets, such as the development of irrigation. Productivity-enhancing technological innovations normally benefit men, while women may even find themselves with additional work and no greater food security. Because of generally low levels of education and skills, off-farm employment is usually seasonal and low paid. Migration to the city or to work on large farms, similarly, results in an extra burden on the women who remain on the farms. It is significant that, except for the Sudan, none of the countries of the region has any significant exploitable mineral resources, thereby limiting the options for economic diversification.

### **MARKETING AND CREDIT SYSTEMS**

Market liberalization has spread throughout the economies of the region over the last decade, as part of structural economic reforms. While this has undoubtedly opened up new opportunities to those farmers who have access to good land, irrigation and markets, it has virtually by-passed the resource-poor farmers and those in low-potential and remote areas. Indeed, many such farmers may well be worse off now than they were before the reform process, when some of them benefited from subsidization through the operation of pan-territorial prices for inputs and outputs which were offered by state marketing agencies. The people in these areas now find themselves in the painful position of having to pay the highest prices for agricultural inputs and consumer goods, while being paid the lowest prices for their surplus production. In the liberalized economy, fewer rural enterprises appear to be profitable, with the result that farmers retreat into subsistence production. Pastoralists, many of whom have benefited from the profitable export market in the Gulf countries, are periodically hit by cross-border controls and disease outbreaks which interrupt this trade.

As with marketing, the liberalization of financial markets is gradually providing the larger and more accessible farmers with access to rural financial services. However, the poor, who are deemed to be at high risk, are the least likely to have access to formal credit and must rely on family, friends and local moneylenders when in need of a loan. Consequently, borrowing is almost always for a family celebration or emergency, and is rarely for productive investment. Institutions in the commercial financial sector are unlikely to reach down to the small farmers for many years to come because of the high transaction costs and perceived risks, thus these farmers are deprived of an important tool for development. In the meantime, small savings and credit schemes, often operated by NGOs and indigenous rotating savings and credit associations, offer the only way to enable poor households to accumulate funds and invest.

### **ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE**

The poor state of development and maintenance of roads and transport, energy sources and telecommunications in the marginal areas of countries in the Horn of Africa makes it difficult for these areas to become integrated into the national and regional economy. As with all other indicators of development, the countries of the region have some of the worst figures worldwide with respect to access to roads and

water supply. A recent report<sup>14</sup> suggests that, in terms of access to infrastructure, the gap between Africa and the rest of the world has widened over the past 15 years.

The sparse road and communications network hampers emergency relief operations as well as the commercialization of the rural economy. The density of the road network in the countries of the region gives an idea of both how difficult it is to reach people in rural areas with services and the problems such people face in participating in the market economy. For example, in Ethiopia, every kilometre of road serves 72 km<sup>2</sup> and 3 000 people, compared with only 8 km<sup>2</sup> and 850 people in North Africa.

Even after strenuous efforts by development agencies and NGOs, access to a clean water supply is still an unobtainable luxury for most rural inhabitants in the Horn. Piped systems are uncommon in rural areas and protected wells and hand pumps are the best that rural communities can expect. The burden of collecting water, as with so many other menial tasks, falls almost exclusively on women in the communities, who must spend many hours each day collecting water from unsafe sources. The statistics on access to water and sanitation reveal wide differences within the region. In three countries (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia), only one-quarter of the population has access to safe water, and in two others (the Sudan and Uganda) the figure is less than 50 percent. Access to sanitation is as low as 13 percent and, except for Kenya, barely exceeds 50 percent anywhere.

## ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

The indicators of access to social services in the countries of the region are also among the lowest in the world. While the average figures are bad enough, they mask fundamental inequalities in access to services within the region. Again, rural areas, especially remote, low-potential areas, are the least well served. Nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists are the most difficult populations to provide services to and, consequently, they are invariably the ones with the poorest health services and least education. All these indicators, combined with malnutrition and poor access to safe water, have adverse consequences for productivity and for the long-term physical and cognitive development of people in the region.

### Health services

Expenditure on health services is low, ranging from 1 percent of GDP in Kenya to 4.7 percent in Uganda (see Table 2). Data for the region suggest that there are fewer than 0.1 hospital beds and fewer than 0.05 doctors per thousand population.<sup>15</sup> Kenya has the most hospital beds, at 1.6 per thousand. Children are, of course, the most vulnerable to disease, with 5 million in Ethiopia showing signs of vitamin A deficiency. Two-thirds of women of reproductive age suffer from anaemia, which accounts in part for the exceptionally high levels of maternal mortality (between 450 and 1 540 per 100 000 live births). Children suffer from infectious diseases, especially measles, as well as malaria and internal parasites, which are closely related to water

<sup>14</sup> ADB/African Economic Research Consortium/ECA/World Bank. 2000. *Can Africa claim the 21st century?*

<sup>15</sup> World Bank. 2000. *World development indicators 2000*, average for 1990-1998. No data for Djibouti and Somalia.

## BOX 1

**HIV/AIDS and food security**

Some 24.5 million people are living with AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, and about 6 million are in the countries of the Horn of Africa. Overall prevalence is around 2.5 percent, but some areas are more affected than others, with high rates of HIV infection in urban areas especially. As with any other disease, HIV/AIDS causes direct costs in terms of medical and funeral expenses and indirect costs associated with its impact on labour, which causes loss of income.

Country	Proportion of total population living with HIV/AIDS %	Prevalence in 15- to 24-year-olds %
Djibouti	6.2	11.4
Eritrea	1.2	n.a.
Ethiopia	4.9	9.7
Kenya	7.2	9.7
Sudan	0.5	n.a.
Uganda	3.8	5.7

Funeral expenses alone can wipe out a family's entire savings. Women who are widowed face problems of extra expenses, reduced access to land, and the care of children on their own. The impact of HIV/AIDS on population structure also affects agricultural production, with the people who would normally be the most productive being those who are the most affected.<sup>1</sup> Surviving women are put under even greater labour pressure than normal. Time lost attending funerals has a serious impact on labour availability. The overall effects are, ultimately, reduced cropped area and yields and a narrowing in the range of crops grown. The impact is pronounced in farming systems that are labour-intensive, since there is less labour available to prepare the land and tend the growing crops. There is a tendency to reduce the area of crops that require high labour inputs and to increase the area of fallow crops and those that do not require weeding or irrigating. Less labour means more pests and diseases and reduced soil fertility, as conservation techniques that require labour cannot be undertaken.

A survival strategy tends to mean concentrating efforts on subsistence crops and progressively neglecting cash crops. Where livestock are part of the system, cattle often have to be sold to meet medical expenses, and general standards of husbandry decline as less labour is available. Where oxen are important for cultivation, HIV tends to increase the differentiation between those who own and those who do not own work oxen. Pastoralists, who are increasingly mixing with their sedentary neighbours and move around in search of pasture and water, can form a major vector for the spread of HIV, since their comparative wealth allows them to visit bars and patronize prostitutes.

The spread of HIV/AIDS is also having a negative effect on household food security. Not only does the energy balance deteriorate, but so does nutritional status. This in turn increases susceptibility to diseases, such as sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis and pneumonia, and deaths from malaria. The reduction in household incomes and labour means that fewer children attend school, and the increase in the number of orphans presents a major problem for communities.

<sup>1</sup>FAO/UNAIDS. 1999. *Sustainable agriculture/rural development and vulnerability to the AIDS epidemic*. UNAIDS Best Practice Collection.

supply problems. The incidence of HIV<sup>16</sup> is a more recent but most worrying health development (see Box 1).

TABLE 2  
**Health and education indicators**

Country	Population with access to safe water 1990-96 %	Rural population with access to safe water with 1990-96 %	Population with access to adequate sanitation 1990-96	Rural population with access to adequate sanitation 1990-96 %	Life expectancy at birth 1998 (years)	Net enrolment: primary -secondary ratio	Proportion of relevant age group %
Kenya	53	49	77	81	51	65	61
Sudan	50	45	22	4	55	n.a.	n.a.
Uganda	34	32	57	55	42	n.a.	n.a.
Eritrea	7	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	51	29	38
Ethiopia	27	20	8	n.a.	43	35	25

Source: World Bank. 2000. *World development indicators 2000*.

## Education

Access to education in the region is also poor, especially in the remote and low-potential areas where pastoralists live. On average, countries in the region devote slightly more than 3 percent of GNP to education, national figures ranging from 0.9 percent in the Sudan to 6.5 percent in Kenya.<sup>17</sup> There are great variations in access to education and in indicators of educational level. On the one hand, Somalia and Ethiopia have primary school enrolment rates of 11 and 37 percent, respectively, with female enrolment at not much more than half of male enrolment figures and adult literacy rates of 24 and 33 percent, respectively. Kenya, on the other hand, has a primary school enrolment rate of 85 percent for both males and females, and an adult literacy rate of 77 percent. Uganda has recently made the provision of improved education and health services a top priority in its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), and the same aims are emerging in the PRS in Kenya.

<sup>16</sup> The 1997 figures for percentage of adults infected are: Eritrea 3.17 percent; Ethiopia 9.31 percent; Kenya 11.64 percent; the Sudan 0.99 percent; and Uganda 9.51 percent.

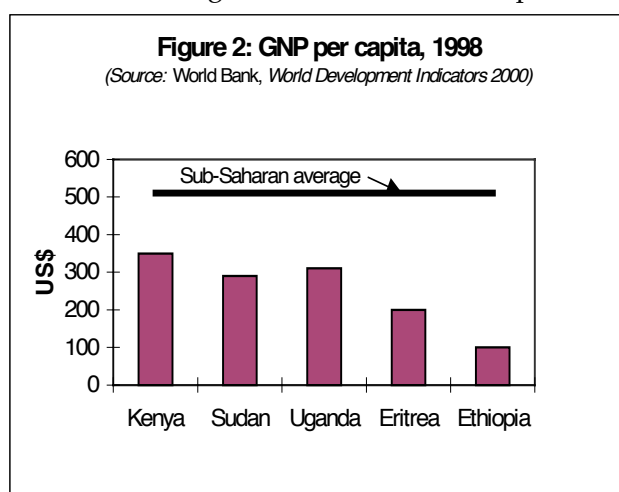
<sup>17</sup> FAO/UNAIDS, 1999, see footnote for Box 1, figures for 1997.

## The supporting environment

Food insecurity must be viewed in the context of the national and international supporting environment. Sometimes weak economic performance and poor governance, including governments' lack of commitment to securing the rights of their populations to food, must bear part of the blame for the dire situation that can be seen today. The international environment must also share this blame because of poorly developed regional cooperation, sometimes inadequate and misguided humanitarian and development assistance and economic globalization, the negative consequences of which are now emerging.

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

The economies of the Horn are among the poorest in the world (see Table 3), with average GNP per capita of just US\$190, ranging from US\$110 in Ethiopia to US\$340 in Kenya.<sup>18</sup> Although official growth rates have been relatively high in the past decade, in the Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia<sup>19</sup> average rates over the period 1965-1998



are less impressive and, except for in Kenya and Uganda, which averaged annual growth of 4.8 and 3.8 percent, respectively, they are below or only equal to the population growth rate. There is heavy dependence on rainfed agriculture in the region, with this sector contributing between 26 percent (Kenya) and 60 percent (Somalia) of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>20</sup> The dependence is reflected in the fact that there is invariably a spurt in the growth

statistics following a good rainy season. Similarly, a drought or other disaster has an immediate negative impact on growth. Several of the economies are also highly susceptible to international commodity prices, especially coffee and tea which dominate Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. With the exception of the Sudan, none of the countries of the region is well endowed with known mineral resources.

The growth that has occurred in some of the economies has to generate the resources required to address the problem of food insecurity. Even in those countries

<sup>18</sup> All these figures are below the sub-Saharan average of US\$510.

<sup>19</sup> The GDP average annual growth rates for 1990-1998 are as follows: the Sudan 8 percent; Uganda 7.3 percent; Eritrea 5.2 percent; and Ethiopia 4.8 percent. These are substantially above the sub-Saharan average of 2.3 percent.

<sup>20</sup> The contribution of agriculture to GDP is much lower in Djibouti (1 percent) and Eritrea (9 percent), largely because of the predominance of port revenues. In Eritrea (before the recent war), Assab accounted for about 50 percent of GDP.

# 1. FOOD INSECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ITS CAUSES

TABLE 3

Country indicators for the Horn of Africa: 1998 estimates

	Area	Population		GNP			GDP
	In thousands of sq. km	In millions	Average Annual Growth Rate 1965-98	US\$ billions	Average Annual Growth Rate 1965-98	Per capita in US\$	US\$ billions
Djibouti	23	0.6	1.9%		1.5% <sup>4/</sup>		0.5 <sup>1/</sup>
Eritrea	118	4	2.7%	0.8	2.2% <sup>2/</sup>	200	0.6
Ethiopia	1,104	61	2.7%	6.2	2.2%	100	6.5
Kenya	580	29	3.3%	10.2	4.8%	350	11.6
Somalia	638	9					4 <sup>5/</sup>
Sudan	2,506	28	2.5%	8.2	2.5%	290	10.4
Uganda	241	21	2.9%	6.6	3.8% <sup>2/</sup>	310	6.8

	Exchange Rate System	Balance of Payments (US\$ million)					
	All countries have single commercial exchange rate	Exports of Goods and Services	Imports of Goods and Services	Trade Deficit	Net Transfers minus incomes	Current Account Deficit	CA Deficit as % of GDP
Djibouti	Pegged to the US\$	207 <sup>1/</sup>	285 <sup>1/</sup>	(78) <sup>1/</sup>			4%
Eritrea	Independent Floating	129	583	(454)	237	(217)	36%
Ethiopia	Managed Floating	1,037	1,815	(778)	258	(520)	8%
Kenya	Managed Floating	2,849	3,737	(888)	382	(506)	4%
Somalia	Floating <sup>3/</sup>	197 <sup>6/</sup>	280 <sup>6/</sup>				
Sudan	Independent Floating	612	1,968	(1,356)	(640)	(1,996)	19%
Uganda	Independent Floating	641	1,844	(1,203)	510	(693)	10%

	Government Finance	Total External Debt		Aid/Investment		Military Expenditures
	Overall Deficit as % of GDP	In US\$ millions	Debt Service as % of Exports	Aid as % of GNP	Foreign Direct Investment in US\$ millions	As % of Public Expenditures <sup>1/</sup>
Djibouti	0%	187	7%		6	
Eritrea	38%	149	2%	21%	0	18%
Ethiopia	7%	10,352	11%	10%	4	8%
Kenya	0%	7,010	19%	4%	11	7%
Somalia		2,635				
Sudan	1%	16,843	10%	2%	371	54%
Uganda	6%	3,935	24%	7%	200	24%

	Poverty	Rural Population	Agriculture	
	% of Population below US\$1 (PPP) a day	As % of Total Population	As % of GDP	Average Annual Growth Rate 1990-98
Djibouti		17%	4% <sup>1/</sup>	
Eritrea		82%	9%	5.2%
Ethiopia	46%	83%	50%	2.6%
Kenya	50%	69%	26%	1.3%
Somalia		73%	60% <sup>5/</sup>	
Sudan		66%	39%	15.3%
Uganda	70%	87%	45%	3.6%

<sup>1/</sup> In 1997.

<sup>2/</sup> 1988-98.

<sup>3/</sup> Somaliland has its own currency, which is pegged to the US dollar.

<sup>4/</sup> In 1997-98.

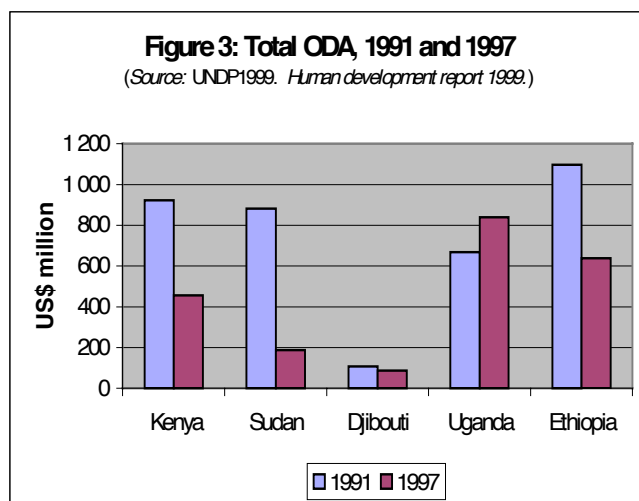
<sup>5/</sup> US-CIA estimates.

<sup>6/</sup> Based on partners' trade data.

Source: World Bank, IMF, EIU and AfDB publications.

that have experienced growth at rates above the growth of population there is little sign of measurable improvements in the living standards of the poorest people. For most of the last three decades, governments and external donors have focused development resources on higher-potential areas, in pursuit of economic growth. There are growing fears that, even if rapid economic growth could be achieved, without deliberate redistributive measures it would not rescue the large numbers of poor and food-insecure (most of whom are concentrated in the marginal pastoral and highland areas) from their dire situation during their lifetime.

Consequently, both governments and donors need to reassess their approaches to addressing absolute poverty and food insecurity by providing more resources and assistance directed to the poorest and the most neglected, low-potential parts of their countries. The high profile that droughts and their associated emergency relief efforts receive conceals the fact that, for a variety of reasons, several countries<sup>21</sup> in the region have historically been the recipients of some of the lowest levels of external aid



per capita in the developing world. Since 1990, Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the region has fallen by 40 percent, from US\$4.2 billion to US\$2.5 billion, and is currently equivalent to US\$15 per capita per year. Furthermore, the share of ODA going to agriculture has declined from more than 13 to less than 7 percent, implying a cut of 50 percent in the external resources going into agriculture.<sup>22</sup>

## GOVERNANCE

### Commitment to food security

Although most governments of the region have food security policies or poverty reduction strategies and programmes that encompass food security issues, the allocation of national resources to achieving food security does not reflect the level of commitment that is needed. For example, throughout the region, budget allocations to supporting the agricultural sector are small and declining while, in many cases, expenditures on arms have soared. There has been a tendency to increase dependence on external assistance for meeting food security goals, especially when humanitarian considerations play a part.

### Policies

The long process involved in creating national policy frameworks that are conducive to economic growth is coming to fruition. For the most part, countries in Africa,

<sup>21</sup> Per capita aid levels in 1998 were below the sub-Saharan Africa average (US\$21) for the three largest countries: Ethiopia (US\$11), Kenya (US\$16), and the Sudan (US\$7) (World Bank. 2000. *World development indicators 2000*).

<sup>22</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data.

including those in the Horn, have freed national currencies and liberalized external trade and internal markets. They are now in the process of privatizing key parastatals and down-sizing the civil service, and have pricing and taxation policies that are intended to enhance economic performance. The earlier systematic bias against the agricultural sector has been largely removed. So far, however, there is little if any evidence to suggest that these pro-growth reforms have had a positive impact on the poorest people and the remotest parts of the countries of the Horn. In part, this is because the resource-poor are often inadequately connected to the newly liberalized markets and, hence, are unable to benefit from the new opportunities that exist. They are also likely to benefit least from some improvements in security of tenure – 0.5 ha of marginal land will not feed a family. Being poor and in high-risk areas, they are also excluded from newly created commercial banking and rural finance initiatives.

At present, few governments in the region have explicitly pro-poor policies.<sup>23</sup> Pressure to change this situation is coming from the international community, especially under the auspices of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative, and the need for governments to formulate their own PRS is being recognized.<sup>24</sup> The most important manifestation of a pro-poor policy is the allocation of public expenditure to those populations and areas in which the poor predominate. In practice, this almost invariably means devoting greater amounts of public resources to rural areas and leaving more activities to the private sector in the higher-potential areas and sectors.

The most important policies for governments to adopt are the basic human right to food and poverty eradication. The eradication of poverty addresses the ability of households to produce enough food or to earn enough money to purchase it, as well as their capacity to secure entitlements to food in emergency situations. Some governments have begun to look at the more general problems of food security by formulating and implementing food security strategies and programmes. A few countries, recognizing the difficulty of meeting the needs of the poorest and most insecure, have attempted to implement safety net programmes,<sup>25</sup> but the fiscal sustainability of these efforts is always in doubt.

### **Institutional framework**

Several countries in the region have taken bold steps in improving their governance, especially by introducing more democratic forms of government, tackling the problem of corruption and ensuring the rule of law, and decentralizing administration. The need for personal security and confidence in the judicial system is fundamental to achieving food security. Without this foundation, people's energies are focused on survival, and they are reluctant to invest in the land, save for the future or engage in market contracts beyond their own trusted kin. Decentralized administration can effectively give a greater voice to the people in all corners of a country. However,

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<sup>23</sup> Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan is a notable exception.

<sup>24</sup> The HIPCs are in the process of formulating PRS Papers (PRSPs) as part of the process of qualifying for debt relief and access to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) of the International Monetary Fund. (IMF). PRSPs are now part of the process through which all poor countries gain access to the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) concessional loans.

<sup>25</sup> A system of social security aimed at those who, by reason of age, infirmity, handicap or other excluding factors (such as lack of access to employment), are unable to fend for themselves.



decentralization has not always been matched by effective fiscal devolution, and limited local-level capacity to plan, fund and implement government programmes remains a constraint. Ultimately, greater devolution of responsibility to the people in marginal and remote areas is likely to improve the responsiveness of governments and donors, not only to emergency situations, but also to the real priorities for development in these areas.

## **HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

All countries in the Horn of Africa have had external donors and UN agencies as partners in seeking to address the multifaceted problems of underdevelopment. The help these donors and agencies have provided has, by and large, failed to address successfully the causes of poverty and constrained access to food. Large-scale food aid programmes and emergency relief operations have been a near permanent feature of the last decade. While these have undoubtedly saved lives, in some countries a pattern of dependence on external emergency assistance has emerged, and this is not only unsustainable but has also sapped the political will of governments to tackle the fundamental problems they face with their own human and financial resources. It has become apparent that, although donors driven by humanitarian appeals are prepared to meet emergency needs, external assistance flows indicate an increasing reluctance to embark on longer-term development activities to address the problems of food insecurity in the region.

Despite repeated efforts to re-engineer themselves and their programmes, the UN agencies have been unable to meet the challenge of providing more coherent and consistent support to governments struggling with intractable development problems and periodic disasters. The agencies have been weakened by changing targets and declining resources, while fragmented and unfocused programmes have exacerbated the situation.

As part of the UN reform programme, the adoption of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) has marked a substantial step forwards in improving collaboration among UN agencies at the country level. Of the countries in the region, only in Kenya is the UNDAF being implemented. In all the other countries (except Somalia) a Common Country Assessment (CCA) has either been completed or is on-going, but only in Ethiopia has the work of formulating an UNDAF been started. Local circumstances have meant that the CCA and UNDAF formulation process has been implemented differently in each country. It is too soon to judge what the long-term impact of the UNDAF will be, but the participants currently undergoing the process recognize its potential utility. In the specific context of food security, it is important that a more clearly defined sectoral strategy for each country be developed. The first step in this process is the formation of a Food Security and Agriculture Thematic Group in which all stakeholders are represented. There is also a need for a mechanism within the Resident Coordinator system to ensure that the efforts of the many different agencies that can contribute to eliminating food insecurity are more effective and better coordinated.

## **THE REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTS**

Globalization, regional integration in many parts of the world and market liberalization are proceeding apace and, inevitably, have an impact on the countries of

the region. All developing countries are being increasingly brought into the global economy through international flows of trade, investment and knowledge. Although there are undoubtedly many advantages from globalization, which might accrue to the countries of the region, there are also many risks, especially in the short term. Small farmers in the region who are poorly connected to the market are unlikely to realize the benefits of liberalization. As they become part of more open markets, both domestic and international, they will inevitably face stiff competition from larger producers around the world who have ready access to modern technology, various forms of protection and growth in farm scale. The small and poorest farmers are the least able to participate in the new “knowledge-based” global economy, because they are hampered by limited access to capital, technologies, market knowledge and extra land, as well as having weak supporting institutions. Indeed, there is an evident danger that entire economies, including those in the Horn of Africa, find themselves permanently excluded from rapidly evolving technology and on the wrong side of the “information divide”. Ways need to be found, at the international level through the World Trade Organization (WTO), and nationally, to ease the process of adjustment to globalization and, in particular, to protect the interests of the poor and food-insecure.

## Conclusions

Whatever the nature of the triggering event, disaster strikes because many people in the region are extremely poor and have little or no insurance in the form of food reserves or any type of asset protection. They have become increasingly vulnerable to disaster-triggering events because of rapid population growth in marginal areas, the increasingly degraded environment that results from overutilization of the fragile resources, an inability to diversify their sources of income and the difficulty of “escaping” to other areas because of political boundaries, conflict and sheer lack of opportunity for betterment. Misguided development programmes have often encouraged farmers and pastoralists to adopt productivity-enhancing practices that compromise long-term risk-avoidance strategies.

Despite decades of nationally and internationally funded development programmes in agriculture and rural development and sustained inflows of food aid and emergency relief operations, abject poverty, undernourishment, food insecurity and, periodically, famine still characterize the lives of a large proportion of the population of the Horn of Africa. The natural conditions in many parts of the region make life intrinsically difficult, and these conditions have been made worse by a shrinking and degraded resource base, combined with an expanded population. The economies of the countries are largely dependent on the agricultural sector and are weak, reflecting the failure of strategies and programmes to stimulate growth in the sector.

The fact must be confronted that the opportunities for dramatic improvements in the livelihoods of people living in the low-potential, marginal areas of the Horn of Africa are limited. It is a harsh natural environment where mere survival is an achievement. However, some opportunities to reduce the risk of famine and food insecurity in these areas are presented by modern technology, the adoption of a comprehensive approach that is more sensitive to the needs and potential of the area and an increase in the allocation of resources to these areas. The approach should aim to derive synergies between restoring the natural resource base and enhancing agricultural productivity.

It is clear that the problem of food insecurity in the Horn of Africa cannot be solved within the agricultural sector alone. It is a complex and multifaceted task in which knowledge systems, education, health, energy and infrastructure development provide the framework that will allow people to broaden their economic opportunities and increase their incomes. For this reason, it is essential that the UN agencies with different responsibilities take concerted action with the aim of assisting governments and other partners in eliminating food insecurity.

The overall diagnosis of the underlying causes of food insecurity was endorsed during discussions between the Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Response to Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa and governments of the region (see Box 2).

BOX 2

**Country consultations**

**The results**

Senior representatives of government in prime ministers' and presidents' offices and in different ministries (agriculture, water resources, health, education, infrastructure, etc.) expressed their strong support for the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Response to Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa. Common elements of the views expressed by governments are that:

- The scale and depth of chronic food insecurity is much greater than published statistics suggest.
- The main categories of food-insecure are: a) pastoralists and agropastoralists in arid and semi-arid areas, b) small, resource-poor farmers, and c) the urban poor.
- The approach suggested in the Framework for Action, of building on local strategies and programmes for food security and the link with the PRS process, is crucial.
- Conflict resolution, at the international and community levels, is a prerequisite for food security.
- There is a need to consolidate and strengthen early warning systems and to make them more responsive.
- There is a need to move from dependence on emergency relief assistance towards long-term development aimed at ensuring food security.
- Improved governance is vital for implementing effective long-term food security programmes.
- There is a need for well-defined long-term engagement by UN Agencies and donors.

The response of the UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators was unanimously positive, endorsing the diagnosis of the causes of food insecurity and the main thrusts of the Framework for Action. In each country, the view was expressed that the initiative was timely and represented a unique opportunity for UN agencies to work together in addressing food insecurity as the most urgent problem facing the region.

## **2.**

### **Elements of a long-term strategy for food security**

# The basic premises

## ADOPTING ATTAINABLE GOALS

All countries of the region have committed themselves to the achievement of development goals which were set at a series of UN conferences during the 1990s. Most of these goals have also been formally adopted by the donor community as represented by the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The goals are as relevant to the Horn of Africa region as they are to the rest of the world. It is logical, therefore, to adopt them as the targets at which a joint government-UN partnership will aim.

Central to the objective of improving food security is the commitment made at the World Food Summit to reduce by half the number of undernourished people worldwide by 2015. In regional terms, this implies a goal of cutting the number of chronically undernourished people from around 70 million to 35 million by 2015. A first step towards achieving this goal must be to ensure that the threat of famine will never be allowed to recur. Through concerted commitment and action, this target may even be exceeded.

Other international goals for 2015 that are of relevance to the region and to the elimination of food insecurity, and for which region- and country-specific targets and indicators that can be monitored would be developed, include:

- reduction in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by at least half;
- universal primary education;
- reduction in infant and child mortality by two-thirds of the 1990 level;
- reduction in maternal mortality by three-quarters of the 1990 level;
- access through primary health care systems to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate ages;
- reduction by half of the proportion of people who lack sustainable access to affordable and safe water;
- reversal of current trends in environmental degradation and compliance with the international conventions on conservation of biodiversity, climatic change and desertification control.<sup>1</sup>

## HUMAN RIGHTS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

The right to food is among the fundamental human rights enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), to which all nations in the Horn of Africa have subscribed.<sup>2</sup> The Universal Declaration and subsequent covenants provide

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

<sup>2</sup> The right to food as a human right is firmly established under international law, as are a number of other rights. Under Articles 1, 55 and 56 of the UN Charter, States Members of the UN have undertaken binding legal commitments to respect, protect, promote and cooperate collectively in the observance of human rights, rights that were later spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in legally binding covenants. The primary source of the right to adequate food is Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which provides: "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an

a useful starting point for any long-term strategy through which the concerned governments and the UN system can jointly address food insecurity and deprivation in the region. These rights are enshrined in international law and have been reiterated in the declarations of the 1990s summits and international conferences. The regular recurrence of famine in the region is evidence that rights have been infringed, whether wantonly or inadvertently.

The formulation of a long-term strategy to address the problem of food insecurity in the Horn of Africa is something that *must* be, first and foremost, the responsibility of the governments of the region. When respect for the fundamental human right to freedom from hunger and deprivation is adopted as a central goal of development, and its implications are acknowledged, it is possible to define a set of broad strategic principles which can guide the way ahead.

Full respect for human rights, and particularly the right to food, can create an enabling environment for achieving improved food security and can become a powerful tool in mobilizing the required resources. It requires that governments:

- desist from actions that undermine the food security and well-being of any part of the population. In particular, governments must desist from using food as a weapon in times of conflict. When this fundamental obligation has been ignored, the consequences in terms of human suffering have been terrible;
- actively pursue policies that address the problem of poverty and food insecurity, if necessary with external assistance when resource requirements exceed those that can be mobilized domestically. The obligation to provide basic security, thus enabling people to exercise their rights to acquire food, is fundamental. Particularly in the pastoral and agropastoral areas, which are especially prone to the effects of drought, communal and individual rights have been regularly infringed or ignored;
- provide an enabling environment in which all parts of the population can thrive. This means encouraging all actors – the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and individuals – to pursue activities that will ensure inclusive food security and prosperity.

Within this framework, governments and their partners can address the critical constraints to improved livelihoods by:

- **Allocating greater resources:** Human and financial, national and external resources are needed to combat both the immediate and long-term problems of food insecurity and poverty.
- **Strengthening entitlements:** The entitlements of all food-insecure people can be enhanced through helping them to broaden their livelihoods in a sustainable way, and by building on and strengthening existing coping mechanisms.

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adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food ...". Article 11(2) of the Covenant recognizes "the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger". The Covenant is a legally binding international treaty, ratified, as at 18 September 2000, by 143 States. Every State Party has the obligation to "take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, ... to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights" recognized by the Covenant (Articles 2[1] and 11[2]).

- **Increasing household income and output:** All viable technological opportunities that are appropriate and sustainable should be exploited.
- **Enhancing knowledge and information systems:** Households and communities, especially in remote and marginal areas, must have access to the knowledge they need to be able to survive and prosper, and governments and the international community must have the information to be able to react quickly and efficiently when emergency situations loom and to formulate appropriate mitigation and development policies.
- **Strengthening the overall environment:** The framework for enhanced economic activity and reduced risk, especially in remote and marginal areas, must be improved through better governance, including decentralization of administration and resources, avoidance of conflict, provision of physical infrastructure that will enhance access to markets, improvement of social services to raise the overall health and educational status of vulnerable people and a policy framework that encourages increased production as well as growth in domestic, regional and international trade.

### **Ensuring inclusive food security**

The rights-based framework recognizes that some people will not benefit from improved policies and will remain at risk of food insecurity and that existing coping mechanisms may fail, especially in the face of drought or other hazards. For those who are unable to take advantage of the opportunities for improving their livelihoods that become available, governments are obliged to ensure that social safety nets are in place in order to prevent undue deprivation without compromising human dignity. However, the history of direct intervention in the provision of food by governments through price controls and rationing should serve as a clear warning of the need for the careful planning and direction of any actions in the future. Government capacity to take full responsibility for poverty eradication and food security is often highly limited and, particularly in the Horn, external agencies (including both relief and developmental organizations) must continue to play a central role in supporting governments' efforts to fulfil their obligations.

### **REDIRECTING DEVELOPMENT**

Recent episodes of famine or acute food insecurity in many parts of the region show that the previous efforts of governments and their development partners have been both inadequate in scale and persistence and, frequently, misdirected. Some well-intentioned interventions have had the unintended effect of increasing, rather than reducing, vulnerability to drought and other adverse events. For example, the injudicious development of water for livestock in some pastoral areas has led to the expansion of herds beyond the capacity of the range, resulting in environmental degradation and reduced resilience in time of drought. The strategy must be refocused so that the driving force comes from communities and local institutions, who are ultimately responsible for identifying, formulating and implementing programmes and projects. The strategy must provide a greater role for civil society organizations (CSOs), including farmers' unions and CBOs, NGOs and the private sector, and



explore alternative investment channels that promote rather than undermine self-reliance.

Within such a strategy, while there is a place for certain major investments in large-scale infrastructure items (such as improved ports and highways), the bulk of investments should be in response to local preferences and demands, and should avoid top-down “technical solutions”. Appropriate financial mechanisms and participatory design processes must be used, devolving the responsibility for choices to the local level. The details of national action and local investment plans must be generated from the countries and localities concerned.

### **Focus on excluded people**

The beneficiaries of past government and donor-financed programmes have often been limited in number and have seldom been the most needy people. Typically, the poorest people, especially those living in remote areas, have little voice in the design of programmes, and therefore do not reap the benefits. International investment in poverty alleviation should be directed to the least privileged elements of society. Even if programmes do not have a specific poverty alleviation or food security focus, due attention must be paid to distribution of the costs and benefits of investments and to the implications of programmes for household and community claims on resources. There is a need to shift the bias towards the people living in remote, fragile and highly famine-prone highland areas and arid and semi-arid lowland areas throughout the Horn. This shift must include a focus on pastoral and agropastoral people, who have been largely neglected by government services and investment projects and who continue to have very little influence on national policies. The needs of marginalized groups in urban areas, such as street children, should also be considered. Most importantly, mechanisms must be created, especially at the community level, to ensure that excluded people are able to participate in the design and implementation of programmes and share in their benefits.

The most important response by the international community to the realization that pro-growth policy reforms have not reached the poorest people and the remotest parts of countries has been to put poverty reduction at the top of the development agenda. This is reflected in the focus of bilateral donor programmes and in the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) being promoted by the Bretton Woods institutions. The World Bank’s and IMF’s decision to make client governments’ adoption of pro-poor, poverty reduction policies the principal criterion for the approval of assistance marks a fundamental change in the way in which the international community operates.

### **Focus on gender**

Women are critical to food security in the Horn of Africa. They are the primary agricultural producers, the preparers of food and the carers of the family. However, they are more vulnerable than men, for a variety of reasons. They are typically illiterate and have neither basic education nor appropriate technical skills. They invariably lack access in their own right to productive assets such as arable land and inputs for production, and undertake the majority of agricultural tasks with just simple tools and by working long hours. Women suffer discrimination because they have no recognized independent status as farmers, and their contribution is

considered as secondary, both within the family and in society. Their livelihood strategies are based on successfully managing the natural resources to which they have access, but these are often the hardest hit when disasters occur.

Customary traditional values and laws limit women's opportunities to participate in local decision-making processes and restrict their access to credit, research and the use of improved technologies. Despite their important contributions to the household economy, food security and sustainable family livelihoods, women are excluded from decision-making at the household, community and national levels because of these restrictions. Women's local knowledge of the environment and community natural resources, together with their social networks, offer important avenues for both disaster mitigation and development activities which should not be neglected.

Both women and men have gender-defined roles and capacities that must be taken into consideration when planning and implementing programmes intended to reduce vulnerability and develop community self-reliance. Women's coping strategies and skills should be reinforced and utilized, not only for disaster mitigation but also for eliminating long-term food insecurity. At the same time, they need to be protected from extra work loads and their involvement in decision-making processes should be encouraged through broadening female participation in local organizations.

### **Focus on sustainable livelihoods**

Offering people the tools to attain prosperity entails considering, not just how to increase crop and livestock production, but also how to open up alternative sources of income. In the marginal areas it also means building on people's own ways of dealing with risk. Where crop- and/or livestock-based production systems can provide neither a sufficient nor a reliable livelihood, diversification out of agriculture may be the only sustainable and viable option. It is almost impossible for external agents to identify activities that will support sustainable livelihoods. Priorities must be set by the communities themselves, as they know more than any outsider about the constraints they face and the opportunities available.

The basic philosophy behind the strategy recognizes that there is no single solution to the underlying problems of deprivation in the Horn of Africa and that synergies among different elements of the strategy must be exploited. For example, efforts to introduce more efficient agricultural technologies are likely to fail if people are not sufficiently educated to understand their implications or if the transport infrastructure is too weak to permit efficient marketing and input supplies. Similarly, nutrition interventions will have little impact if mothers do not have a basic understanding of child care, have no access to basic preventive health services and have no clean water supply.

This philosophy has much in common with the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach<sup>3</sup> (SLA) which seeks, *inter alia*, to focus development on people and their livelihood strategies in a way that recognizes the numerous strategies that people may follow and the diversity of institutions that may support those strategies. Only by capturing the diversity can sustainable poverty reductions be achieved and will people be able

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<sup>3</sup> C. Ashley and D. Carney. 1999. *Sustainable livelihoods: lessons from early experience*. DFID; and V. Alterelli and A. Carloni. 2000. *Interagency Experiences and Lessons, Forum on Operationalizing Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches*, Pontignano, Italy, 7 to 11 March 2000.

to pursue effective strategies for coping with risks. The SLA also emphasizes full participation at the local level, and recognizes the need for policies that are informed by local people's knowledge and insights.

### **A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT**

While it is certainly possible – and necessary – to avoid recurrence of famine, it will take many years to achieve better livelihoods under the very difficult resource-poor conditions in which the region's most vulnerable people live. This is a process that involves fundamental social transformation, ultimately leading to a better equilibrium between population and natural resources. Improved nutrition and sanitation will reduce disease and premature mortality and enable people to gain more from improved education, which in turn will lead to a progressive slowing of population growth rates. Better health and education will enhance creativity, opening up more opportunities for economic diversification and raising people's competitiveness in labour markets. It will also enable stronger local institutions to emerge.

These are long-term processes that cannot be externally driven. They can, however, be facilitated and nurtured by the careful and sensitive provision of external financial and technical support in response to local needs and offered in a spirit of mutual confidence. Critical to the success of any interventions will be an acceptance by partners, local and external, of the need for a long-term and reliable engagement that spans many more years than the typical development project.

# Proposed strategy and framework for action

## ◆ 1. BROADENING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

The fact that almost 80 percent of the population of the region lives in rural areas means that increasing agricultural productivity and production in various ways will be the principal approach to solving the problem of long-term food insecurity. This means securing *production*, improving *distribution* and ensuring *access* to food. The promotion of technologies to enhance both crop and livestock production will play a part, as will the need to remove constraints to agricultural services and marketing. In a broader context, diversifying incomes within rural areas, for example, through small stock-keeping, artisanal fisheries and domestic processing and crafts, contributes to increased incomes, which will ensure wider access to the available food. Improved health and knowledge strengthen the human resource base, and education in particular will be essential to increasing employment opportunities outside agriculture (which are accounting for an ever-growing share of rural incomes) and is vital for future generations.

To the extent that the people of the region are successful in improving their livelihoods, they will become more resilient to shocks, and the need for emergency interventions will diminish. However, the resource base on which to build better livelihoods is generally poor, and this limits the range of options that are open to the people whose very capacity to respond to opportunities is constrained by the deprivations that they suffer. Where there are opportunities for improving agricultural and pastoral systems in ways that can contribute to better living standards and food security, these must be seized. Throughout much of the area, however, improvements to agricultural and pastoral systems will not be sufficient, in themselves, to bring about significant or rapid improvements in living standards. Improved nutrition, health and education will play fundamental roles in the transformation of rural society, contributing to a greater capacity within communities to make better use of the resources available to them, to diversify the local economy and to increase the competitiveness of their members in the labour market. Improvements in health and access to knowledge will lead to a progressive reduction in reproduction rates which, together with migration from the most fragile areas, will contribute to a better equilibrium between population and natural resources.

The challenge will be to induce a process of rapid transformation without undermining the self-reliance of the people of the region and thereby creating dependencies on governments and external players. Instruments must be put in place that can respond flexibly and reliably to demands rather than seeking to impose externally devised solutions.

### **Maximizing sustainable agricultural production**

There is immense variation in the agro-ecological conditions within the region and, hence, in the range of opportunities facing people for improving their livelihoods

## BOX 3

**Better land, water and crop management**

Improvements can be achieved through the positive synergies resulting from the combined adoption of improved crop/plant, soil and water management practices that offer both production and conservation benefits. This is the essence of what is referred to as the “better land husbandry” approach. Land husbandry addresses the totality of the farm household livelihood system with regard to the management of inputs, outputs and land resources and aims at improving the productivity and sustainability of production systems. The following are intrinsic components of better land husbandry:

- *promotion of an integrated resource management* embracing locally appropriate combinations of the following technical options:
  - *buildup of soil organic matter* to optimum sustainable levels (for improved moisture and nutrient supply and soil structure) through the use of compost, farmyard manure, green manures, surface mulch, enriched fallows, agroforestry, cover crops and/or better crop residue management;
  - *integrated plant nutrition management* with locally appropriate and cost-effective combinations of organic/inorganic and on-/off-farm sources of plant nutrients (e.g. organic manures, crop residues, rhizobial N-fixation, transfer of nutrients released by weathering in the deeper soil layers to the surface via tree roots and leaf litter, rock phosphate, lime and chemical fertilizer);
  - *better crop management*, improved seeds of appropriate varieties, improved crop establishment at the beginning of the rains (so as to increase protective ground cover thereby increasing water infiltration), weed management, integrated pest management;
  - *better water management* to increase infiltration and reduce runoff so as to improve soil moisture conditions within the rooting zone, thereby lessening the risk of moisture stress during dry spells, while reducing soil erosion;
  - *improvement of soil rooting depth and permeability* through the breaking up of cultivation-induced compacted soil layers (hoe/plough pan) with conservation tillage practices that use tractor-drawn subsoilers, ox-drawn chisel ploughs and hand hoe planting pits/double-dug beds and/or interplanting of deep-rooted perennial crops/trees and shrubs);
  - *reclamation*, where appropriate (i.e. if technically feasible and cost-effective), of arable land that has been severely degraded by such processes as gullying, loss of topsoil through sheet erosion, soil compaction, acidification and/or salinization;
- *adoption of people-centred learning approaches* through which farmers are able to learn about, and investigate for themselves, the costs and benefits of alternative land husbandry practices;
- *community-based participatory approaches* to planning and technology development that build on rural people’s inherent skills and capability to formulate and implement their own development plans and develop and disseminate their own improved land husbandry technologies;
- *better land husbandry for business* through the promotion of field-level interventions that offer farmers tangible economic, social and environmental benefits.

through adjustments in the way in which land, water and human resources are used. No wholesale solutions can be prescribed because each community, and indeed each household, is faced with different options, depending on the resources at its disposal and its aspirations. There is a need to stimulate the capacity of rural communities and individual families to take stock of their resources and the particular opportunities open to them, to help them test alternative solutions and to improve their access to sources of relevant knowledge and expertise as well as capital and markets.

*Crop and mixed farming systems.* In areas where rainfall is reliable, population density tends to be very high and farms small and, often, fragmented. The technical opportunities for raising farm output are reasonably well understood and there are generally good yield responses to the use of seed of improved crop varieties and inorganic fertilizers, provided that these are part of good land and crop husbandry practices (see Box 3). Whether farmers can exploit these opportunities, however, depends particularly on the size of their holdings and on their capacity to generate production that is surplus to their families' consumption needs and, hence, can be sold to generate the cash needed to buy inputs. The opportunities for improving livelihoods in such areas will tend to come from shifting – where markets permit – from production of grains for subsistence purposes towards the labour-intensive cultivation of higher-value commercial crops, and increased diversification into livestock.

As rainfall diminishes and becomes less reliable, the options open to farmers tend to become fewer, although farm area may be less of a constraint. The priorities are likely to be to maximize the returns on available moisture, to reduce interannual variations in output and to improve labour productivity.

Irrigation is intuitively the most appealing solution to the problems of crop production in marginal areas, but the practical difficulties of irrigation development and operation are considerable. One of the unfortunate aspects of the region's geography is that there is, **in general, a poor coincidence between available water resources and suitable land for large-scale irrigation**. Where both land and water are available, constraints on irrigation development may be imposed by transboundary water-sharing agreements. There are, however, important opportunities in most of the concerned countries for improving the performance of existing major irrigation schemes by raising management standards and rehabilitating infrastructure. Such measures, however, while contributing importantly to national food supplies, will tend to benefit those rural populations that are least at risk.

For the more drought-prone populations, the main opportunities for improving water use include small-scale irrigation, water harvesting and, above all, better use of available moisture in the rainfed farming systems, on which the bulk of farmers will continue to depend. Conservation tillage and land husbandry measures that result in increasing the *in situ* infiltration and retention of rainfall and allow timely sowing have the potential advantages of raising the availability of water for crop growth, reducing runoff and soil erosion and raising labour productivity by enabling farmers to cultivate larger areas (see Box 4). Their application may be constrained, however, by extreme shortages of available organic matter, which can only be rectified by land use changes that, by increasing fuelwood and forage production (possibly using enriched fallows), allow more manure and crop residues to be applied to croplands. In order to

reduce the demand for organic material for non-agricultural uses, such a strategy should be complemented by the development and promotion of alternative sources of fuel for domestic use, such as kerosene, solar energy and sustainable fuelwood production. Concerted action on a community-wide basis, supported by skilled facilitation, is required if such far-reaching but necessary changes are to be made.

## BOX 4

**Conservation Agriculture**

Conservation Agriculture (CA) is a farming approach aimed at making more efficient use of the soil, water and biological resources. It contributes to environmental conservation as well as to enhanced and sustained agricultural productivity. It can thus also be referred to as resource-efficient/resource-effective agriculture. The better land husbandry approach is fully in line with and encompasses CA principles.

The key principles of CA are ensuring the recycling and restoration of soil nutrients and organic matter and the optimal use of rainfall. One important element is the retention, where possible, of a permanent soil cover, which implies “zero or minimum tillage”. In extreme arid and semi-arid environments this may be reduced to maintaining underground root systems as the above-ground biomass may be totally desiccated and lost. As a result of permanent soil cover from vegetation and residues, soil erosion and water loss through runoff are drastically reduced, plant production is less vulnerable to the vagaries of climate and higher yields can be obtained. CA also reduces farm labour and farm power requirements through reducing or eliminating tillage and, to a lesser extent, weeding requirements.

CA is extensively practised in Brazil, where it has been spontaneously adopted and adapted to suit different farm contexts and farming systems. Problems of soil erosion (and, in drier areas, vulnerability to drought) have decreased significantly, and farm output has increased, leading to improved farmer welfare and security. CA is also being developed in Africa, for example in Zambia, Zimbabwe and the United Republic of Tanzania.

*Agropastoral and pastoral systems.* The options for improving the livelihoods of agropastoralists and pastoralists are still more constrained. Conservation farming methods and the use of drought-tolerant varieties of crops may help agropastoralists to improve the reliability of cropping for subsistence purposes in the areas of erratic and low rainfall, short rainy season and poor soils in which they have settled. Although there are many resource use conflicts between crop production and livestock keeping, the complementarities that the extended households in these areas have exploited as a way of spreading their risks could be built on.

True pastoralists in the Horn of Africa are decreasing in number and occupy a peripheral social and political position, in spite of the importance of livestock production to the national economies of most of the countries. Pastoralists have been neglected in terms of public investment and, of all vulnerable populations, they have the poorest access to safe water, human and animal health services and education. However, it is indisputable that they make the most efficient and sustainable use of the low rainfall, high-risk marginal lands that they occupy. Many past attempts aimed at improving the livelihoods of pastoral people have had unintended negative

consequences for pastoralists and the environment by disturbing the delicate equilibrium that has developed among people, livestock and range resources. Any interventions that tend to increase animal numbers, for instance through providing improved livestock health services, must go hand-in-hand with measures to raise offtake rates.

### **Distribution: markets, marketing and trade**

Markets for inputs and outputs at the local, national, regional and international levels determine the capacity for growth and the efficiency of an economy. In many parts of the region, markets barely exist, or they operate inefficiently, and many farmers and pastoralists are only loosely connected with the marketing system. It is possible to address some of the marketing problems facing small farmers and pastoralists through improving physical infrastructure and market information systems.

***Improving crop and livestock markets.*** The volatility of grain markets in areas that are chronically food-deficit, or where there are periodic and seasonal deficits, has a serious and adverse impact on the poorest people, who invariably have to sell grain soon after harvest, when prices are lowest, and must purchase later in the year, when prices are high. Various solutions to this chronic problem have been tried. Improved on-farm storage can greatly reduce physical post-harvest losses, but does not really solve the problem for those who are forced to sell grain out of necessity. Village-based cereal marketing and storage schemes (cereal banks), which enable producers to sell after harvest and store locally so that grain can be made available, quickly and cheaply, during the lean period or if drought or other disaster strikes, have had a chequered history. Similarly, inventory credit schemes, which allow farmers to borrow for consumption or other needs against a stored crop, have only been tried on a pilot basis.

Improved access to markets is an essential step in increasing the offtake from herds and redressing the balance between stock numbers and range resources. The lack of information on markets and trade, and problems with regional policy harmonization to facilitate cross-border trade are major constraints. Animal health measures, the collection and dissemination of market information and improved market infrastructure (such as the establishment and refurbishment of national and transboundary stock routes, associated water points and holding areas, and improved grazing) would greatly facilitate the domestic and export marketing of livestock in pastoral areas. The link between primary and terminal markets, and promotion of private investment in export and domestic slaughter facilities, meat, leather and wool processing and transportation are crucial.

***Better market information.*** With scattered and poorly integrated markets for food and other agricultural products, provision of market information is a priority. Improved market information systems need to be directed to the needs of producers, but better livestock market information can also serve as an effective indicator of the condition of livestock and be part of an early warning system for pastoral areas.

***Trade and trade policy.*** International trade is constrained by complex and high tariff structures, inefficient, bureaucratic and lengthy licensing procedures, problems of



compliance with sanitary regulations and the lack of an effective customs union in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region. International disputes have undermined economic relations, and improved trade structures and agreements would be of great benefit to many consumers and surplus-producing households in the region.

### **Access to food: diversifying employment and income sources**

The broadening or diversification of the household economic base is fundamental to reducing food insecurity and vulnerability. In some areas, this can be achieved by diversifying the farming system, particularly by expanding the use of short-cycle livestock such as poultry, sheep, goats, pigs and, where water resources allow, fish. In pastoral areas, the processing of milk and meat products, hides and skins may provide opportunities for supplementing incomes. Options for raising additional earnings from non-wood forest products have also been noted.

In the long term it is essential that conditions be created whereby people have increasing access to employment opportunities outside agriculture. The ingredients for this include a combination of improved education, better transport and communications, easier access to markets and financial services and, in some cases, a reduction in the legal and bureaucratic barriers to entry into business.

### **Safeguarding natural resources**

For the longer term, a slowing down of population growth provides the best option for relieving pressure on the region's natural resources and must, therefore, be encouraged. Governments in the region, however, are starting to gather experience in shifting from a regulatory approach for natural resources management to one in which communities assume greater responsibility for safeguarding resources and are encouraged to share in the benefits. The legalized exploitation of forest products such as fuelwood, poles, gum arabic, olibanum, myrrh, bee products and medicinal plants, as well as the use of wildlife for ecotourism, can become significant sources of income, which lead those who benefit to develop a vested interest in the sustainable management of forest and wildlife resources.

Similarly, the more that farmers themselves see the benefits of soil and moisture conservation measures, rather than having what they may perceive as unsuitable methods imposed on them, the greater their interest in the sustainable use of agricultural land and related environmental management will be.

## **◆ 2. PROTECTING THE MOST NEEDY**

Highest priority must be given to preventing the recurrence of situations in which the people of the region suffer from extreme deprivation or famine. To the extent that the region remains highly vulnerable to natural and human-induced disasters, measures to improve the response capacity of national and international institutions are central to the strategy. Such measures will be derived from the lessons of previous crises in the Horn of Africa, as well as in other drought-prone areas that have had to address similar problems. For those in need of support during emergencies, or for chronically vulnerable groups (such as the handicapped and elderly), social safety nets that enable people to survive with dignity are required.

### **Improving emergency prediction and response capacities**

*Drought and extreme events prediction, early warning systems and response capacities.* Early warning systems have an important role to play in disaster preparedness, during emergency relief and as part of long-term solutions. Meteorological information can be particularly useful for farmers and pastoralists. Computer-based predictions of droughts and floods can now give several months notice and enable farmers to take pre-emptive action to minimize the impact of such events. It is therefore essential that national and regional policies for the planning and management of disaster early warning and preparedness be put in place, through restructuring and refocusing existing early warning systems, improving the accuracy and policy relevance of early warning system outputs and making meteorological information available to farmers and pastoralists in a timely way.

Early warning systems also provide information that allows the planning of relief interventions. Over the last 15 to 20 years, a variety of different agencies have made large investments in early warning systems in the region. However, there is room for improvement through reducing duplication and filling gaps. For example, high priority should be given to providing coverage of pastoral and agropastoral populations and to strengthening and rehabilitating meteorological networks. The main immediate concern to be addressed is the weak link between the information generated by the early warning systems and the capacity to act on it. Paradoxically, part of the problem stems from the many different messages emerging from the early warning systems, but at both the national and the regional levels there are weaknesses in the institutional arrangements that bring together governments and donors for decision-making on required interventions with ample lead times. In the longer term, there will be a need to invest in systems that improve the accuracy of predictions by taking advantage of emergent information-sharing and communications technologies.

*Emergency funds and reserves.* Among the most controversial issues to be addressed within each country and at the regional level is the question of whether or not there should be strategic grain reserve stocks to ensure an adequate and timely response to disasters and, if so, the size and locations of those stocks. This is of particular concern to land-locked countries and ones in which the most vulnerable populations are distant from seaports. Two of the countries of the region maintain reserves and have gained valuable expertise in their management. The experience of these two countries suggests that autonomous management is essential and that reserves must be operated in close collaboration with the private sector, in order to avoid the potentially destabilizing effects of badly timed purchases or releases of grain. In some cases, the setting aside of budgetary reserves for the purchase of grain when needed may be a more satisfactory approach, provided that the funds can be protected from diversion to other uses.

At the international level, responses, particularly with regard to food aid deliveries, are often delayed because of a lack of ready funding and the customary but time-consuming approach of raising relief finance through appeals on a case-by-case basis as each emergency arises. Enough is known about the probability of disasters occurring to justify the buildup of financial reserves internationally and these can be quickly disbursed to ensure rapid response to the requirements of crises in specific locations.

***Relief, recovery and rehabilitation.*** The experience of the 1999/2000 emergency suggests that national and international response mechanisms, although still flawed, have improved immeasurably since the 1984/85 tragedy. Humanitarian resources, however, often fail to reach the right people at the right time, and for the foreseeable future there will be a continued need for intermittent relief interventions. There remains scope for improving the effectiveness of food aid, through better design of interventions to ensure that they really benefit those most in need at the particular time. This, in turn, depends on accurate and up-to-date information on vulnerability. Standards of relief management are variable, and there is a need for stronger self-regulatory capacities among NGOs, with a view to ensuring common basic standards. Free food relief interventions can be down-sized if recovery programmes are launched swiftly in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. While the recovery elements of relief programmes, including the distribution of free or cheap farm inputs, are being assigned increasing attention, several constraints remain. These include the lack of local capacity and expertise to implement rapid recovery programmes, variable standards in the technical content of NGO-led initiatives (particularly in relation to seed standards) and, above all, a lack of sufficient funds. Only by substantially increasing the scale and fungibility of humanitarian assistance (from both government and donor contributions) can this last problem be resolved.

After a relief intervention, it is often necessary to revitalize the disaster-affected area, if security conditions permit, through the rapid disbursement of funds for investment in the rehabilitation of infrastructure and services. Both local and international funding for rehabilitation in the Horn of Africa have consistently fallen well short of needs and have been sustained for far too short a period.

### **Creating dependable safety nets**

Social safety nets, which ensure that those without access to food are adequately fed are needed for entire communities in times of acute need and for the elderly, handicapped and incapacitated within a community on a more or less continuous basis. Moving away from free food aid distribution to alternative measures, especially for able-bodied adults and their families, helps to strengthen household livelihoods, improve overall nutrition and contribute to self-reliance. To the extent that safety nets reinforce traditional community-based systems for protecting vulnerable members, they are likely to prove more sustainable than ones driven from outside the community.

***Labour-based interventions.*** Food- and cash-for-work programmes give labourers an income in times of hardship and also build up local physical and social assets. Although such programmes are now quite common, their coverage is too limited to form a comprehensive safety net, especially for those in marginal and pastoral areas. It is important to forge public-private-NGO partnerships for such activities, so as to broaden their coverage in ways that do not induce excessive dependence. In addition to the construction of local roads, schools or clinics, for example, this sort of programme could include interventions aimed at restoring the natural resource base. Activities such as tree planting, natural agroforestry parkland management and area closure could improve the environment and have both national and global benefits.

***Credit- and insurance-based mechanisms.*** Local financial mechanisms such as rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) can protect people from short-term consumption shocks and increase their productivity. There are substantial benefits to be reaped from supporting the establishment of viable, self-supporting credit and insurance institutions at the community level that use existing informal savings and loans groups, often through NGO partnerships, offering training and supervisory services.

***Nutrition interventions.*** School and hospital feeding serve the short-term goal of preventing severe child malnutrition and also increase the school or clinic attendance of poor children, thereby increasing their chances of healthy mental and physical development. The high costs of such interventions can be reduced by directing them to schools and clinics in the poorest areas and devolving management, food preparation and feeding functions to the local community and parents' groups. For full effectiveness, feeding must be linked to nutrition education.

***Support to vulnerable groups.*** The provision of social safety nets for those who are elderly, handicapped, orphaned or otherwise incapacitated has to be fiscally sustainable and based on local coping mechanisms, which exist in some form in all communities. When such mechanisms break down because of acute problems, including drought or incidence of such diseases as AIDS, external support that builds on local, community-based initiatives is needed.

### **Helping the urban food-insecure**

The problem of poverty and food-insecurity in urban areas is growing as a result of rural-urban migration and the failure of urban economies to grow sufficiently quickly to absorb the expanding labour force. Access to essential services, health and education is obviously important to ensuring a healthy and skilled workforce in, and food should be directed to those who fall temporarily below the survival line by being unemployed. Street children, the elderly and handicapped should, of course, be eligible for safety net support. However, it is difficult to balance the need to deliver humanitarian support with the danger of attracting still more rural people into urban areas, where conditions, although wretched, may be better than in rural areas.

## **◆ 3. CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY AND POVERTY**

Most countries in the region are engaged in a process of institutional reform that is leading to a reduction in the role of government and a corresponding growth in the activities of civil society and the private sector. This process includes decentralized administration, greater responsiveness to local needs and a strong commitment to fighting corruption and improving public service efficiency. Such measures are generally positive for economic growth, poverty alleviation and food security. However, further steps are needed to identify and resolve so-called "second-generation" policy issues, in order to accelerate and consolidate the institutional adjustment process and to ensure a greater responsiveness to the needs of the poorest and remotest members of society. Mechanisms to resolve conflict at the international

and local levels underpin all other aspects of the enabling environment. Support needs to build on the efforts of governments to control the flow of arms and to develop swift and effective forms of mediation. Throughout the region there is a need for improved infrastructure, including communications that use satellite technology, as well as investment in water supply, roads, power and directly productive infrastructure such as irrigation. Basic social services such as health and education need to be expanded, as do supporting institutions, including those for agricultural research.

### **Strengthening governance**

Although institutional reform processes over the last decade or so may have created problems that have had a negative impact on more vulnerable members of society, current trends are generally positive for economic growth, poverty alleviation and food security. The process of continued reform warrants support, especially when it is aimed at accelerating and consolidating the institutional adjustment process and giving a greater role to the market.

*Supporting policy and institutional reform.* Governments are encouraged to develop and implement a comprehensive food security and poverty alleviation policy framework that distinguishes between the roles of the public sector, the private sector and civil society.<sup>4</sup> The framework should embrace, not only agricultural production, but also education, health, population and nutrition, the development of infrastructure (including water resources), the diversification of employment, marketing and processing, women's participation in political and economic activities, the environment, and disaster preparedness. Where governments have successfully redefined their core functions to include only those activities that cannot be supplied more efficiently by the private sector or civil society and have formulated viable policies and strategies, support may usefully be provided to reinforce the performance of essential public services. The second-generation policy reforms that need to be pursued include further civil service reform, tax and legal reform, removal of remaining trade restrictions, liberalization and promotion of competition in banking and rural financial services, streamlining budget planning and implementation, and combating corruption.

*Creating space for the private sector and CSOs.* It cannot be assumed that a robust private sector and an active civil society will simply develop to fill the gaps left by the decreased role of government. Even where privatization is being actively pursued, governments may still have to improve the enabling environment for the private sector, through streamlining regulations and procedures, improving access to finance, simplifying trade regulations and upgrading infrastructure and communications systems. Getting the balance right in terms of regulating NGOs so as to encourage initiative but, at the same time, prevent abuse is a challenge facing most governments in the region. Emphasis must be given to building self-reliant CBOs that can assume welfare and management responsibilities, especially in remote areas, that were formally held by government agencies.

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<sup>4</sup> To the extent that governments are already engaged in preparing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), this may be the appropriate vehicle through which to address such issues.

*Decentralization and increasing capacity to respond to local demand.* Effective decentralization of legislative and administrative functions means that local people have more say in the political process and strategy formulation and that services are better able to respond to local needs. The programme's institutional strategy should focus particularly on raising the fiscal and administrative capacities of decentralized public bodies and encouraging the emergence of strong community-based organizations that can contribute to improved livelihoods.

*Legislation and the upholding of rights.* Clearly defined and effectively protected legal rights provide a basis for a prosperous and harmonious society. Broadly, there is a need to strengthen legislation (aligning it with the new roles of the public and private sectors), support the judiciary and assign more autonomy to traditional institutions for determining communal and individual rights. It is particularly in the area of land and water rights that greater clarity is needed to encourage investment and to minimize the risk of conflict, especially in pastoral areas.

Issues of international water rights have a major bearing on the opportunities for irrigation development in the region, and may have to become a subject for international arbitration.

### **Mitigating conflict**

Local and cross-border conflicts have had devastating effects on the lives of large numbers of civilians in almost all the countries of the region. There is a clear need to find ways of ensuring swift and independent mediation aimed at reducing the incidence, scale and duration of conflict. This is an essential element of any strategy for reducing poverty and improving food security in the region. Equally important are measures to reduce domestic and cross-border flows of arms.

### **Enhancing access to basic services**

*Broadening primary health care services.* Generally poor standards of health and nutrition reduce productivity and increase the susceptibility of people to serious diseases at times of crisis. It is important to strengthen primary health care services so as to address serious problems such as vector-borne diseases, mainly malaria and gastrointestinal disease (water-borne, bacterial and viral), and respiratory infections, including tuberculosis. HIV/AIDS deserves a special mention because it deprives the community of its most productive people and leaves large numbers of orphans. Governments, NGOs and other agencies need to work together to strengthen health care delivery systems, in order to provide preventive interventions such as vaccinations, treat common childhood illnesses and revitalize health information systems and infrastructure. It is important to work closely with local authorities in developing and maintaining public health facilities and to train staff in supplies management and field logistics. Attention should be given to maintaining or re-establishing cold chain operations, restocking medical stores and distribution systems and ensuring supplies of vaccines and essential drugs.

*Ensuring adequate nutrition.* Apart from being consistent with the concept of food as a human right, ensuring regular and adequate access to food is a fundamental element

in any strategy for bringing about long-term improvements in food security and poverty reduction. Adequate food, especially for the young, is a prerequisite for people to attain their full physical and cognitive potential, and therefore quite as important as education in raising the productive and adaptive capacity of the region's population, thereby contributing to economic growth. To the greatest extent possible – and this is consistent with human rights concepts – it should be the responsibility of individuals, their families and the communities in which they live to ensure inclusive access to adequate food. The government and, by extension, the international community, however, have a responsibility to fulfil food rights when the task falls beyond the capacity of the community. Accurately directed feeding programmes, ideally linked to school and health service attendance or to the development of community assets through food-for-work, are likely to be an essential element of any long-term development programme.

Ensuring adequate access to food does not guarantee adequate nutrition, and hence has to be linked to improved health care, nutrition education and safe water supplies.

***Expanding access to safe water supplies and sanitation.*** Increasing the proportion of the population with access to safe, reliable and conveniently located sources of drinking-water must be given the highest priority. Clean water is a vital ingredient of a healthy life, and any time saved collecting water lessens the burden on women and children. In the region, there is ample experience of the development of water supplies, and lessons can be drawn on the causes of success and failure. Community ownership, use of labour-based construction methods and simple but robust technologies, hygiene education, training in operation and maintenance and provisions for cost recovery to meet operating costs appear to be central to success.

***Expanding access to formal and non-formal education systems.*** Providing access to formal and non-formal education is one of the investments that has been shown to have clear long-term returns to society and the economy. Educated people are likely to be more productive than uneducated people and will make better use of the information and knowledge that are available. They are also far more versatile, and hence more able to adapt to a changing environment, cope with emergencies such as drought and find employment opportunities outside their communities. Beyond the obvious need to provide more schools and teachers, especially at the primary level, it is important that schools be developed as channels for communicating with families and communities on practical issues, and that they are used to teach drought preparedness and resource conservation skills, as well as the essential elements of maintaining a healthy life. All this means integrating relevant topics into the curriculum, training primary and secondary school teachers in these subjects and investing in the transformation of local primary schools into social development centres. Post-emergency situations offer the opportunity to use education, not only to impart knowledge, but also as a way of helping communities to achieve a sense of “reattachment”, especially for affected children. Particular problems are associated with providing schooling to nomadic communities, where there must be agreement on an appropriate curriculum that avoids the risk of becoming “non-formal” and being perceived as somehow inferior to mainstream education.

***Strengthening information, communication and knowledge systems.*** Information and knowledge systems are poorly developed in the region. They constitute major constraints to progress, as reflected in the weak industrial and service sectors and continued reliance on traditional, low-productivity farming. There is an urgent need to strengthen information, communication and knowledge (ICK) systems, which should complement formal education systems, since it is known that those with even limited formal education benefit most from ICK. Such development must be directed to rural communities and remote and marginalized people, who are currently the most starved of information and are the most likely to benefit. The devolution of communication and information management systems is an important element of the decentralization process that is taking place throughout the region. As ICK systems are developed, it is important to ensure that women have at least equal access to them and that the systems be designed according to the demands of the client group, so that the sort of information they need is actually provided. In the interests of efficiency, every effort should be made to harmonize the ICK systems in the region, both across countries and across the different sectors, so that health, relief, education and agriculture use a common hardware platform and optimize the investment in telecommunications.

### **Implementing effective population policies**

Effective national population policies and programmes need to be formulated and implemented in order to reduce population growth rates to more sustainable levels. Such policies should include the provision of enhanced health services delivery in rural areas and improved education, especially for girls and women.

### **Developing infrastructure and services**

While community-level interventions must necessarily be determined on a demand-driven basis, important investments are required in the rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure on the national and, in some cases, the regional scale (see Strengthening regional cooperation).

***Transport and communications.*** The region's involvement in international trade is severely hampered by the poor state of its ports and of the roads and railways that serve them. The present deteriorated condition of infrastructure, which is a result of inadequate maintenance, a lack of modernization and barriers to the use of ports during conflict, adversely affects farmers and makes it more difficult for them to survive in an increasingly competitive world market. The farmgate cost of imported inputs is inflated, and the farmgate value of outputs reduced, by the high costs of transport. In emergencies, the delivery of relief to those in need is unnecessarily delayed.

The development and rehabilitation of infrastructure is an urgent need. Large-scale infrastructure developments such as ports, railways and major roads are undertakings in which governments need massive external support. Small-scale infrastructure, especially feeder and farm-to-market roads, are needed to bring isolated communities into the market and to open up a wider range of activities to them. Such roads should use labour-based construction methods so as to minimize foreign exchange costs and



create valuable employment in poor communities. Community-based maintenance has to be an integral part of such developments.

In the modern world, where growth and progress are a function of access to knowledge and information, the countries of the region find themselves increasingly excluded. In this respect, the development of satellite-based telecommunications is not a luxury for the elite but a necessity for the future of the economy. The first steps have been taken in making modern telecommunications and access to the Internet available in rural areas through creating multipurpose community telecentres. Such facilities can provide education, market price information and business advice, as well as acting as a mechanism for alerting the central authorities about emerging crises. They also empower small farmers by providing them with access to the seat of government. Of course, such developments are predicated on the availability of rural power supply, and this emphasizes the need for rural electrification by conventional means or by local power generation, such as solar or mini-hydro, for example.

**Major development projects.** In most of the countries of the region, a number of large-scale projects, especially in the fields of irrigation, drainage, river basin development and soil conservation, have the potential, when rehabilitated or constructed, to contribute significantly to improved livelihoods, food security and sustainable natural resource management. As well as fitting into an overall development strategy for the region, each such project would have to be prepared and appraised in its own right.

**Services.** The provision of improved services, whether in health, education, agriculture or other sectors, needs to be looked at from both the national and the local perspectives. From a national point of view, the particular requirements will be for building local delivery capacities and monitoring performance, but there may also be the need for strengthening national institutions (e.g. agricultural research institutes and training institutions, food standard laboratories, and mapping and survey institutions). Strengthened planning and coordination across national boundaries (e.g. for locust and rinderpest control) will also be an important element of the strategy.

Experience suggests that governments have particular difficulties in developing effective services – whether in education, health, safety net management or agricultural extension – in the poorest and most remote areas. The service delivery strategy must, therefore, emphasize support for alternative service providers, particularly community-based organizations and NGO's which may be well placed to perform an intermediary role between communities and higher-level public sector institutions. Within agricultural extension and livestock health services there are good opportunities for promoting farmers as service providers.

### **Involving civil society**

CSOs are playing a crucial role in relief and rehabilitation operations, providing information for early warning systems and vulnerability targeting and ensuring basic social services in the less well-endowed regions. NGOs have developed particular expertise in a number of areas that help to strengthen rural livelihoods, including microfinance and rural credit, literacy, income-generating activities for women and young people, processing units, and cereal banks. Some work with local communities to develop farming systems that are adapted to dryland areas, others specialize in

resource and conflict management, and still others have developed education and advocacy programmes to broaden public debate and defend human rights. Some NGOs have been pioneers in the development of participatory approaches aimed at increasing the organizational strength of local communities and their ownership of project activities. The experience accumulated through these activities, especially where active local NGOs are involved, constitutes a resource that is not being fully utilized.

Relations between government and civil society are often characterized by mutual distrust. Suitable legislative frameworks are needed to govern the operations of the various types of CSOs, balancing flexibility with the need for coordination, and to establish effective fora for debate at all levels. Relations between NGOs and rural producers' organizations also need to be strengthened, as do partnerships between national and international NGOs.

### **Strengthening regional cooperation**

Some of the underlying causes of food insecurity, especially that related to conflict and trade, are of a distinctly regional nature and cannot be addressed by separate national or local institutions or investments. These are areas in which regional cooperation would contribute substantially to solving the problem of food insecurity through creating a more favourable environment for conflict resolution, trade and economic development and the sharing of knowledge and ideas. The recent example of the burgeoning success of Southern African Development Community should serve as an inspiration and model for what might be achieved.

***Improving political cooperation.*** It is clear that in the Horn of Africa conflict has been one of the major underlying causes of food insecurity. The most effective way to alleviate this problem at the international level is through improved political cooperation among the governments of the region and a renewed commitment to negotiating over potential areas of conflict. Support for regional organizations including the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and IGAD in undertaking the difficult task of conflict prevention and mediation, should be a priority (see Box 5). This may often mean calling in external assistance to complement the efforts of peacemakers within the region, who are seriously underfunded to perform this role.

Political cooperation is also fundamental to the peaceful resolution of cross-border issues related to international water rights. The commitment of governments in the Horn of Africa to cooperation, under the Nile Basin Initiative, could serve as a model for similar cooperation on the utilization of other international rivers and water bodies.

***Strengthening economic integration.*** Cross-border issues need to be dealt with systematically if they are to create opportunities for faster economic growth and exploitation of the comparative advantages that are available to the different countries within the region. For example, policies regarding external trade and financial market integration could provide scope for enhanced trade, which would benefit all parties. The development of regional infrastructure, especially roads linking neighbouring countries and telecommunications, and the establishment of information and communications networks would all enhance trade and serve to generate potentially

huge external benefits for the economies of the region. Increased economic and transport integration are particularly important with regard to mobilizing responses within the region to drought and famine before there is recourse to external sources.

Many of the most vulnerable people are to be found in border areas. This is especially true of pastoralists, for whom territorial borders often have little meaning. The control of transboundary livestock and crop pests and diseases, as well as trade policy harmonization, would have an immediate positive impact on these people.

### BOX 5

#### **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)**

IGAD, which has its headquarters in Djibouti, was founded in 1996, superseding the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification. It is governed by an Assembly of Heads of State and Government, with a Council of Ministers that meets biannually. The Secretariat is headed by an Executive Secretary and, at present, it has three directors and 21 professional staff. An IGAD Partners' Forum plays an important part in formalizing the authority's working relations with partner donors and multilateral agencies.

IGAD has the task of revitalizing and expanding cooperation among Member States.<sup>1</sup> Its mandate is to coordinate the efforts of Member States to advance their development goals in economic cooperation, political and humanitarian affairs and food security and environmental protection. Economic integration and sustainable development as part of wider regional and continental integration are the ultimate goals of IGAD. The gradual harmonization of macroeconomic policies and of programmes in social, technological and scientific fields is being promoted, creating an enabling environment for foreign, cross-border and domestic trade and investment. Capacity building in conflict prevention and the alleviation and mitigation of humanitarian crises are important aspects of its programme. IGAD's policy on food security is being implemented through a Food Security and Environment Protection Programme. This embraces projects to establish a regional integrated information system, remote sensing, market information systems, drought-tolerant crops, livestock production, integrated water resources management and natural resources management.

<sup>1</sup> Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda.

*Promoting technical cooperation.* There are many areas in which technical cooperation among the countries of the region could be of benefit to all parties. In the area of agricultural research and information, for example, findings and programmes on cropping in arid and semi-arid zones would be relevant to certain areas in all countries. Similarly, approaches to the development of pastoral production systems could be profitably shared by all countries. Technical collaboration and information sharing in the field of meteorology and drought and famine early warning systems are already occurring but could usefully be strengthened as part of a programme to eliminate famine in the region.

### Consensus building

As an initial step in building consensus on the Strategy and Framework for Action outlined above among the development partners in the Horn of Africa, teams representing the Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Response to Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa visited the countries of the region between July and September 2000. The teams worked closely with representatives of government, Task Force member agencies, other UN agencies, and regional intergovernmental

#### BOX 6

#### Country commitment to food security

##### Djibouti

The Government has prepared long-term plans related to food security and rural development. These include a National Master Plan for Water Management and a Special Programme for Food Security. Within the framework of the UN Convention on the Environment, Djibouti has an Environmental Strategy and Action Plan which includes programmes for desertification prevention, biodiversity and poverty reduction. As an integral part of the rural development process, the Government has also prepared national programmes for education and health. There are a number of initiatives being implemented for the rural sector under bilateral and multilateral donor agreements, the main ones being a fishery development project, a social fund (African Development Bank) and a public work scheme (Agence djiboutienne d'exécution des travaux d'intérêt public [ADETIP]), financed by the World Bank.

##### Eritrea

Government priority, as spelled out in its macropolicy, is poverty eradication, with reduction of food insecurity being given special prominence. Owing to the increasingly unreliable rainfall patterns throughout the country, both public and private sector development efforts are focused on irrigation. However, pastoralist and small-scale livestock, as well as fisheries, development projects are currently being designed as integral parts of the country's long-term food security programme. The Government considers it essential that any programme aimed at reducing food insecurity addresses the needs of families displaced during the protracted war of independence and the recent conflict with Ethiopia. The initiative is timely because:

- IMF, the World Bank and other donors have resumed their assistance following the promising initial steps taken, under UN and OAU auspices, towards the cessation of hostilities with Ethiopia.
- The Government is in the process of formulating a Food Security and Nutrition Strategy with the support of the UN Country Team.
- A PRSP is planned to be prepared with the support of the World Bank.
- The UN Country Team has initiated the process leading to formulation of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

## Ethiopia

The Government is keen to undertake both small- and large-scale irrigation development to address the problem of food insecurity caused by increasingly unreliable rainfall patterns, as well as programmes in support of pastoralists. The initiative is timely because:

- Cessation of the war with Eritrea is prompting financing institutions and bilateral donors to consider resuming development programmes.
- A well-conceived Food Security Strategy exists, and the Government is seeking external support for a Food Security Programme.
- A PRSP is being prepared.
- The process of UNDAF formulation is beginning.

## Kenya

Government priority is to address food insecurity in the arid and semi-arid areas, especially for pastoralists, who have been most seriously affected by the present emergency. The drought continues to worsen and its impact to spread. The initiative is timely because:

- IMF and the World Bank have recently resumed assistance.
- A broad reform programme has been initiated with a “Dream Team” of senior civil servants drawn from the World Bank, IMF and the private sector.
- A PRSP, in which food security is a central theme, is being prepared.
- A UNDAF that includes food security as a focus exists.
- A Rural Development Strategy (RDS), which is at an early stage of preparation by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, proposes to focus on food security issues.

## Somalia

The team held discussions with the UN Country Team resident in Nairobi and visited Baidoa and other UN bases for two days. There are positive signs for the formation of a government which offer an opportunity to begin providing longer-term assistance to Somalia. The implementation of the Framework for Action in Somalia could begin by supporting the formulation of a long-term food security programme when a new government emerges. Peace and stability in Somalia would not only enhance food security there but would also bring immediate benefits to the country’s neighbours through ending the spillover effects of conflict (arms flows and refugees) and opening access to this strategic part of the Horn for trade.

## Sudan

The Government is anxious to improve smallholder rainfed agriculture, rehabilitate major irrigation schemes and enhance livestock productivity. The initiative is timely because:

- There are promising signs of resolving the civil war which would immediately improve the food security prospects of the large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- Having been largely excluded from external assistance for a decade, the Government is keen to re-engage with the donor community.
- IMF voting rights have been restored.
- The initiation of oil exports is allowing the Government to devote resources to food security and rural development issues.
- A poverty alleviation strategy being prepared.

## Uganda

In Uganda, the incidence of poverty is declining. The Government has a Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), in which food security issues are addressed, and a Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA), which focuses on the adoption of improved technologies for the rainfed sector and small-scale irrigation. Having been favoured by donors and with an interim PRSP prepared, the Government is less concerned with resource mobilization than are others in the region. However, the Government agreed that the initiative could:

- focus on concrete, community-based activities within the PEAP, the PMA and the PRSP;
- support rehabilitation and development in the arid areas of the north (Karamoja).

organizations and international research organizations in the region. In each country, the conclusions of the Task Force Interim Report were presented to senior government officials, who responded by highlighting the key elements of their strategies aimed at achieving food security. There was a broad consensus that, for different reasons, the Task Force initiative was timely (see Box 6).

The Task Force Interim Report was also discussed with UN Country Teams, meetings of the donor community and representatives of NGOs and civil society. There was broad agreement with the Strategy and Framework for Action in each country; a conclusion that was endorsed at a workshop to discuss the results of the Country Consultations held at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 7 and 8 August (see Box 2).

# **3.**

**From framework  
to action**

## **Towards a commitment to food security**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, while there are ample aggregate supplies of food in the world, agricultural production technologies are advancing in leaps and bounds and increasingly sophisticated early warning and information systems are in place, it is unacceptable that people should die of starvation in the Horn of Africa, or anywhere else in the world. The reason that this has happened, yet again, is that there has been a failure in the system to prevent such disasters, both nationally and internationally.

The events of 1999/2000 that triggered the Secretary-General's establishment of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Response to Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa renewed the image of the region as a place characterized by starving people, conflict and dependence on the outside world for support; an image that has prompted a new round of humanitarian assistance by donor governments and individuals in rich countries. However, these events also highlighted the fact that both governments and international agencies remain ill-prepared to cope adequately with such crises, let alone to solve the underlying causes. The principal message of this report, in line with the Rome Declaration on World Food Security of 1996 and the recent Millennium Summit Declaration (see Box 7), is that it lies within the capacity of the countries concerned, working in partnership with the UN system, international financing institutions, bilateral sources of assistance and civil society, to end famine and malnutrition within the region.

### **COMMITMENT BY PARTNERS**

As we move from outlining a Framework for Action to action itself, it is important to address what must be acknowledged as failures over the last three decades, by governments, UN agencies and donors, in preventing famine and chronic food insecurity in the Horn of Africa. The beginning of a new millennium offers the opportunity for governments and their partners in the international community to commit themselves to the elimination of famine and food insecurity. The main partners in such a commitment would be the governments of the region, regional organizations, UN agencies, the donor community and civil society. The commitment would be to a set of common goals, policies and programmes.

#### **Governments**

On the part of governments, it is important to make an explicit political commitment, not only to eliminating famine and food insecurity, but also to taking the necessary steps in support of achieving this goal, especially with respect to governance, health, education, water and population policy and people's empowerment. The most tangible commitment would be in the form of resource allocation, especially to support basic productive activities in agriculture that are carried out by small farmers.



## BOX 7

**World Food Summit and UN Millennium Summit Declarations**

At the World Food Summit in 1996, world leaders reaffirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food ... and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”. At the UN Millennium Assembly in early September 2000, world Heads of State and Government declared their commitment to a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. Many elements of this Declaration are echoed in the proposals of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Long-Term Food Security, Agricultural Development and Related Aspects in the Horn of Africa. One of the fundamental freedoms is that of being free from hunger, and this is the focus of the Task Force efforts. In line with the Declaration, crucial elements of the Strategy and Framework for Action are to strengthen respect for the rule of law, internationally and nationally, to strengthen cooperation between UN and regional organizations, and to develop partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations. At the heart of the Strategy is poverty eradication, through promoting good governance and mobilizing resources by way of debt relief and more generous development assistance. The Declaration’s goal, “to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world’s people whose income is less than US\$1 a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger”, reiterates the World Food Summit goal and is embraced by the Task Force’s aim to *eliminate* famine and food insecurity. Respect for the environment is also part of the Strategy’s call for the promotion of sustainable production systems in rural areas.

The Task Force identified conflict as one of the most important underlying causes of food insecurity and, mirroring the Declaration, proposes enhanced roles for regional organizations in conflict resolution. Similarly, in attributing a share of responsibility to the UN for the failure to reduce food insecurity, the Task Force proposes greater policy coherence and better cooperation among UN agencies, and the Bretton Woods Institutions, in order to achieve a fully coordinated approach to the problems facing peace and development.

This would mark a fundamental step in reversing the syndrome of dependence and erasing the images of poverty and famine that have for long characterized the region.

To achieve this, it is essential that governments take full and explicit responsibility for eliminating famine and food insecurity in their countries. Not least, their efforts must be directed to securing peace and stability, nationally and in the region as a whole. Joint efforts aimed at conflict prevention and resolution, as well as closer working together through regional bodies in order to realize the potential benefits of regional economic integration and technical cooperation, would need to be a central part of the commitment.

The governments of the region must also take on the task of formulating, strengthening and implementing national strategies for poverty reduction and food security (where they do not already exist), building on the World Food Summit Food Security Strategies, in order to put together comprehensive Country Food Security Programmes (CFSPs). The CFSPs would comprise investment programmes aimed at broadening the opportunities for sustainable livelihoods among the food-insecure, measures to protect the most needy and reforms and other measures to create an enabling environment for sustainable growth.

#### **Regional organizations**

The principal regional intergovernmental organizations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Organization for African Unity (OAU), as well as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the recently revived East African Community (EAC),<sup>1</sup> would need to renew their commitment to promoting peace, cooperation, trade and economic integration in the Horn of Africa.

This commitment, which must be underpinned by the political support of the governments belonging to IGAD, should be expressed through the formulation and implementation, with the involvement of all concerned governments, of a Regional Food Security Programme (RFSP) which would cover the diverse fields that are susceptible to a regional approach. The RFSP would build on the World Food Summit Regional Strategy for Agricultural Development and Food Security, and would need to encompass the resolution of conflicts, the expansion of technical and research cooperation, the liberalization and harmonization of trade policies, the promotion of interregional infrastructure development, the fostering of trade (especially in food and food products) and, as an ultimate goal, the economic integration of the countries. It should also, as a matter of urgency, strengthen the capacities of regional institutions.

#### **UN agencies**

The UN agencies would need to commit themselves, within the coordinated approach provided by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), to collaborating more closely together and to providing increased support to governments in focusing their efforts on eliminating famine and food insecurity. The actions of the UN agencies should encompass the provision of support in the form of advocacy, policy dialogue, capacity building and assistance with the delivery of basic economic and social services. UN agencies should also assist governments in directing and setting priorities for the formulation of development programmes aimed at enhancing food security, identifying areas of vulnerability for the purpose of disaster preparedness and mitigation, and building partnerships with the main development actors, especially with respect to facilitating resource mobilization.

#### **Donors**

Donors, both multi- and bilateral, should pledge to provide long-term and reliable funding, in support of national efforts aimed at the elimination of famine and food insecurity in the region, on a scale that is commensurate with the size of the problem being addressed. Although a substantial part of such funding would need to be made available through traditional mechanisms such as soft loan or grant-funded projects and sector programmes, donors would have to consider changing the way in which they contribute to tackling food insecurity. This would include making a longer-term commitment to supporting programmes, as well as facilitating the introduction of innovative funding mechanisms,<sup>2</sup> at the country level, in order to allow greater flexibility and responsiveness to local-level initiatives. There would also need to be acceptance of the need to adopt, as far as possible, common mechanisms for funding,

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<sup>1</sup> EAC comprises Kenya and Uganda, among the Horn of Africa countries, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

<sup>2</sup> Such as a multidonor trust fund with decentralized management.

disbursement and reporting so as to facilitate the implementation of individual CFSPs and reduce overhead costs.

#### **Civil society**

All forms of civil society, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers' and community-based organizations and the private sector, need to commit themselves to collaborating with governments, donors and external sources of financing in order to tackle the problem of food insecurity. They would take an active part in the policy dialogue on food security issues and support the process of participatory planning through the diffusion of information and by sharing experiences on successful activities at the community level. They would also seek to play an active role in the provision to rural people of services that are often lacking in the newly privatized market economies. They would do this in their own right as well as in collaboration with governments and agencies. In particular, they would attempt to build on successful examples of mediation in conflict situations, working especially with IGAD, OAU and the UN system.

#### **SECURING COMMITMENT**

In the region, the launching of a programme to eliminate famine and food insecurity should be marked by a formal commitment on the part of all concerned. One way in which this might be achieved would be through a meeting of Heads of State with senior representatives of regional organizations, UN agencies, donors and civil society organizations (CSOs), at which a joint commitment would be made, possibly in the form of a *Compact*.<sup>3</sup> Governments would commit themselves to eliminating famine in their countries and to undertaking all necessary measures to address long-term food insecurity. Regional organizations, UN agencies, donors and CSOs would commit themselves to supporting government initiatives in this respect, through the provision of financial and technical support and food over a period of at least ten years. Each government would agree to formulate a CFSP and, together with IGAD, governments would jointly prepare an RFSP.

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<sup>3</sup> This could be launched in conjunction with an IGAD Heads of State meeting.

## Country Food Security Programmes

In order to define specific actions directed towards famine and food insecurity, each government would need to formulate a CFSP, using the World Food Summit Food Security Strategies as a starting point and comprising the following two elements:

- **a programme to eliminate famine**  
with policy, investment and institutional proposals aimed at famine preparedness and mitigation and directed to the most vulnerable areas and populations;
- **a programme to address the problems of long-term chronic food insecurity**  
comprising specific investment projects, proposals for strengthening the enabling environment in terms of policy and institutional reform, conflict resolution, the setting of priorities for basic service provision and infrastructure development, and a procedure for the formulation, funding and implementation of community-based, food security-enhancing investments and restoration of the natural resource base.

The formulation of CFSPs, and of the concrete investment projects that would translate them into specific activities, is a government responsibility and would attract the support of UN agencies and donors. If it is to be soundly based, the actual process of formulating CFSPs and identifying and formulating projects must be inclusive and participatory.

### FAMINE ELIMINATION PROGRAMMES

Each country would undertake to put together, as a matter of urgency, a programme to eliminate famine. Political commitment would be paramount in underpinning this programme as well as in allocating its own resources through the regular budget process. UN agencies and donors would support those governments that make a political commitment by providing technical assistance to help in the design and implementation of the programme and financing towards the cost of its execution. The form, structure and scale of the programmes would have to be tailored to the needs and capacities of the different countries and to the levels of resources that governments commit (see Box 8).

Early warning systems are at the heart of disaster preparedness and famine prevention. Although governments, external agencies and NGOs have put a lot of effort and resources into these systems over the last 15 to 20 years, there are critical gaps in the way in which they operate and in the response systems that they trigger. One recent important development has been the ability to provide predictions, with a lead time of a few months, of droughts that are likely to result in famine. As a first step, it will be necessary for governments to diagnose weaknesses in existing disaster preparedness systems and, through the incorporation of climate predictions into these systems, to formulate programmes that improve the capacity to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. Early warning systems themselves may need to be restructured, consolidated (linking them to regional systems) and refocused to strengthen coverage of pastoral and agropastoral areas and improve their accuracy and policy relevance. Improvements in early warning would need to be complemented by adequate food reserves, improved logistics and contingency

## BOX 8

**The cost of famine prevention**

Dependence on food aid is likely to be difficult to reverse. On average (1990-2000), some 1.5 million tonnes of food aid are delivered to the region each year. Valued in terms of grain prices at source, this is worth at least US\$170 million per year, and is close to US\$750 million when valued at the full cost of delivery to the beneficiaries. This is equivalent to one-third of the total 1997 official development assistance (ODA) to the region as a whole. To the extent that food aid is *not* fully fungible, countries that wean themselves off such assistance are likely to suffer a net reduction in external assistance. Not only are the savings in food aid unlikely to be matched by increases in ODA, but shortfalls in aggregate grain production will also have to be met by commercial imports and/or from the national budget.

In order to ease the transition from dependence to self-reliance, and at the same time help governments to eliminate famine, it is important that donors commit themselves to delivering a base level of food aid each year for the next five or more years, as a contribution to the famine elimination programme. Such aid could go into establishing prepositioned strategic grain reserves, which would be available for rapid response to famine situations, or it could help to finance other measures. The cost of guaranteeing the supply of one-quarter of current average food aid needs would be some US\$200 million per year.

planning that address problems of port capacity and access (in a regional context) and commodity tracking systems.

A serious weakness in existing early warning and response systems seems to be the absence of two-way flows of information at the community or household level – communities rarely receive advance warning of impending drought or flood and have no means of alerting decision-makers about emerging food shortages. While international observers across the world may know about impending climatic disasters, the farmers in the area concerned have no means of receiving this information and reacting to it. This need would be met by a system for the provision of essential information to farmers and pastoralists that is based on the predictions available from international centres and the Drought Monitoring Centre in Nairobi, but expressed in the terminology of the farmers of the region.

Similarly, while farmers know that food stocks are running low and their animals are dying, the mechanisms for passing such information on to those who can decide to make strategic food stocks available are flawed. There is a need within governments to create an administrative capacity, especially in high-risk areas, for detecting and responding quickly to incipient food crises. Capacity building is needed for technical and administrative field staff, with special emphasis on measuring key indicators of stress at the community level and on the accurate direction of assistance. Institutional mechanisms must be established that are able to take rapid decisions in the event of impending crises. To the extent that international assistance may be needed, steps must also be taken to minimize response time, particularly by ensuring that the financial capacity exists to commit urgently required resources rather than embark on cumbersome appeal processes.

An important element of an effective famine response system is the design of mechanisms to hedge against emergencies, possibly through strategic grain reserves or other cost-effective but reliable measures with adequate funding. The multifaceted

features of such a system make its design rather complex. It needs to balance the demands of rapid and reliable response in the event of disaster against the dangers of under- or over-responding which would cause, respectively, starving people or the damage of local markets by excess food supply. Management of the scale and turnover of strategic stocks must take account of frequently long supply lead times for imports and the need to be neutral with respect to normal seasonal market price fluctuations. All of this calls for specialist design expertise that draws on skills within the commercial world. Other long-term measures would include helping farmers to reinforce existing coping mechanisms by, for example, setting aside land for growing more drought-tolerant crops such as sorghum and millet (see Box 4).

The national agencies responsible for disaster preparedness and mitigation would also commit themselves to adopting measures to speed the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development. The provision of cheap or free farm inputs, tools and/or credit during the emergency interventions might be used to kick-start the recovery of a disaster-affected area through the rapid disbursement of funds for investment towards the rehabilitation of local infrastructure and services.

Examples of famine prevention and disaster preparedness programmes in the region, in other parts of Africa and in other continents<sup>4</sup> should be reviewed as part of the process of deciding on the most appropriate model for each country. The programmes should be designed to operate as partnerships among governments, donors, the private sector and NGOs with a view to minimizing operating costs and neutralizing potentially damaging political influence. They should also involve regional organizations so that complementarities in food production and in the production cycles of different countries can become a source of strength.

Alongside the formulation of a credible famine elimination programme, donors would be expected to make a commitment to provide food stocks, and possibly medicines and family survival kits, to be prepositioned in zones with high risk of food insecurity, as well as budgetary support for the operation of the system.

#### **PROGRAMMES TO ADDRESS LONG-TERM CHRONIC FOOD INSECURITY**

Each CFSP would need to include a range of prioritized activities to address the underlying causes of long-term food insecurity. The mix and balance of components would vary from country to country and would reflect the country-level diagnosis of the principal causes of food insecurity, the location and characterization of the food insecure and vulnerable populations, the constraints and opportunities that exist, and the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the overall enabling environment. The CFSP would deliver a coordinated programme aimed at helping the most food-insecure and vulnerable populations in specific parts of the country, and would avoid broad, poorly directed national approaches.

#### **Broadening opportunities for sustainable livelihoods**

In view of the fact that the majority of the food-insecure live in rural areas and are almost entirely dependent on agriculture, an obvious starting point for actions to

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the Maharashtra Employment Generation Scheme in India which gives every able-bodied person the chance to earn enough money to eat each day.

address long-term food security is in the agricultural sector. Actions would be expected to focus on ways of increasing rural household incomes and the productivity of agricultural activities, as well as strengthening existing coping mechanisms. A crucial element in the tailoring of programmes to different areas and types of rural economy is the adoption of a sustainable livelihoods approach to analysing opportunities. All activities supported by the CFSP should, of course, take account of their potential impact on the environment. It is important to promote coping mechanisms, tenure and land management systems that arrest natural resource degradation, contribute to its restoration and reverse the downward spiral of natural resource and agricultural productivity decline.

There are many ways in which small farmers might diversify their household economic base. Diversification is not simply a way of spreading risks, but it can also help to smooth out seasonal peaks and troughs of income and, of course, alleviate the common pre-harvest hunger period. Farmers need technical support and possibly “seed money” to make the best use of the assets to which they have access. Such assets might include crop residues and by-products for feeding small, short-cycle livestock such as poultry, pigs, sheep and goats, or common grazing and forest for the exploitation of non-timber forest products, wildlife and even ecotourism. Strengthening the institutional and infrastructural framework for the delivery of animal health services to livestock keepers would be an essential part of the support provided to allow farmers to diversify their production base (see Box 10).

There are large populations of food-insecure rural people in the countries of the region for whom, even under normal weather conditions, survival is a constant concern. These are mainly the small farmers in highland areas who, through the growth in population and the degradation of land resources, find themselves with such small and degraded landholdings that they can barely survive, even in a normal year. Drought may be an infrequent phenomenon, but even slight shortfalls in rainfall or extended dry periods during the crop season add to the precariousness of these people’s situation. In higher rainfall areas, programmes would aim to promote the use by such small farmers of better land, water and crop husbandry (see Box 3).

The development of water resources is crucial to achieving food security (see Box 9). Where there are suitable water resources, projects for the development of small-scale, low-cost irrigation, when it can be shown to be technically and financially viable and sustainable, would be particularly beneficial and enable rapid leaps in productivity and food security. In some cases, the rehabilitation of existing irrigation systems would be the best solution, as long as the causes of decline can be diagnosed and the redesigned system can be shown to be technically and financially viable and sustainable (see Box 11).

#### BOX 9

#### Water and Food Security

Water related issues are fundamentally intertwined with most sectors of national economies. The development of water resources and increasing efficiency in water use are central to ensuring food security and will become increasingly important as population increases.

Fresh water resources in the Horn of Africa are under severe natural and social pressure. Lack of water is a serious impediment to intensifying agriculture and to opening up new land. Water delivery infrastructure, including small-scale irrigation systems and larger, more expensive dams, reservoirs and canal networks, need to be developed.

Natural conditions and human activities have, over the years, affected the quality and quantity of available water. Most countries in the region are subject to recurring floods which damage irrigation schemes. Much of the devastation is caused by lack of flood forecasting systems, and the absence of proper land and water management.

Demand for water grows as population increases, a process exacerbated by rapid urbanisation. Countries, such as Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, desperately need to develop their water resources. Unless a solution is found, growing water scarcity will severely limit the response of countries in the Horn of Africa to the development challenges of poverty reduction and food security.

There is a need for adequate hydrological data monitoring, collection and dissemination systems at national and regional levels. Up-to-date information on the availability and quality of freshwater resources is needed to support food security plans. The WMO programme, World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS) and the development of its IGAD-HYCOS component, will contribute to information exchange at national and regional levels.

Conflicts over water rights can also arise, and special mechanisms and techniques are needed to strengthen and promote cooperation among the different users.



## BOX 10

**Helping small, resource-poor farmers**

Although drought and conflict are major underlying factors, food production, distribution and access are fundamental to solving the problem of chronic food insecurity in rural areas. Increased agricultural production must, therefore, be at the core of a strategy to help small, resource-poor farmers. Their livelihoods can be improved in a sustainable way, through a combination of agricultural technologies and support services, access to markets and credit, rural enterprises and agroprocessing, all supported by the delivery of sound education and health services.

There are important lessons to be learned from FAO's Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS).<sup>1</sup> SPFS has shown that there is substantial scope for resource-poor farmers to broaden their production base and increase their productivity when they are provided with access to improved production technologies (including low-cost, small-scale irrigation). However, realization of this involves the provision of support to address the various constraints that poor, resource-poor farmers face, such as lack of technical knowledge, inadequate support services (including extension and credit), lack of market access and an unfavourable institutional and policy environment.

Increased food production may come from intensification of production through the adoption of improved simple, low-cost, low-risk land, water and crop management techniques (see Box 2). Problems of post-harvest losses must also be tackled, and good quality seed of appropriate varieties must be secured for the following seasons. Most small farmers welcome supplementary sources of income that can help to guarantee food security. Such income may be derived from sales of high-value produce such as horticultural crops and medicinal/aromatic plants grown with the help of low-cost irrigation (see Box 11). Broadening the production base through keeping small stock such as poultry, goats and sheep and through aquaculture and beekeeping, as well as selling non-wood tree products and producing value-added outputs through processing, can also generate extra income. Such developments must be associated with the establishment of appropriate input/output marketing, as well as credit and advisory services.

Especially in areas where rainfall is unreliable, or land and other assets are insufficient to sustain a family solely within agriculture, complementary off-farm income opportunities are even more crucial to survival. These might include cash- or food-for-work schemes, which are aimed at infrastructure development and environmental management, and using artisanal skills for a local market. Part of such income may, in turn, be invested in small rural/agricultural enterprises.

These options for reversing the downward spiral of poverty and food insecurity must be implemented as part of a farmer- and community-centred process, facilitated by public and private partners, including NGOs. Strategies must be developed, and actions agreed, with the full participation of the people concerned. The process should be dynamic and flexible, building on farmers' groups and using participatory monitoring and evaluation methods.

Clearly, education and capacity building programmes, tailored to the needs of both children and adults, are vital to securing a broader economic base for small resource-poor farmers. The development of good communication and transport facilities will help small farmers enter the market and the "knowledge economy", while safe water supplies and local preventive health services will help them to rise above mere survival.

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<sup>1</sup> Launched in 1994 by FAO to contribute to the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action; the Special Programme for Food Security is in operation in all Horn of Africa countries, except Somalia.

## BOX 11

**Promoting irrigation for small farmers**

Moisture is the key to agricultural production in the Horn of Africa, and failing rains have been the predominant cause of famine in the region. Food and water security are inextricably linked and can only be achieved through concerted action to raise water productivity by maximizing crop production from both rainfed and irrigated agriculture by a more effective use of water. "More crop per drop" has become the overriding strategy, aimed at increasing outputs per unit of rain and per unit of irrigation water.

Options for increasing rainfed or "green water" productivity include various techniques to increase effective rainwater storage as well as the development of crop varieties with better drought resistance characteristics and a more favourable water conversion rate. Rainwater harvesting can help further to secure water supply at critical stages of growth, restoring the viability of indigenous cultivation practices.

Irrigation is an important option for ensuring a more secure water supply for agricultural production. In the Sudan, Somalia and Djibouti, crop production is largely dependent on irrigation, with more than 70 percent of the total potential area already equipped for irrigation, mostly in government-led irrigation developments and centrally managed schemes. Considerable potential for irrigation exists, especially in Ethiopia, where it is a top priority of government, and also in Uganda and, to a certain degree, Kenya and Eritrea.

The options for further development are seriously constrained by lack of water, degraded infrastructure, salinity problems and the collapse of management. On average, only 60 percent of the area equipped for irrigation is effectively irrigated. Raising performance of existing irrigation systems will, therefore, be a priority action in any food security strategy. Yield levels in existing irrigation can be raised substantially if farmers receive effective incentives and support services.

A greater involvement of farmers in management of the schemes, through setting up water users' groups and cost-recovery mechanisms, has proved effective. This process started only recently in the region and needs considerable support to make it work and to ensure that operation and maintenance are carried out effectively under farmer management. Supporting policies and financial instruments must be developed, as well as important institutional restructuring, including the reform of inefficient irrigation bureaucracies and the promotion of private sector modes of operation.

Small farmer irrigation has proved the most effective form of irrigation development, directly benefiting the resource-poor farmers. The introduction of low-cost irrigation technologies, such as the treadle pump, simple well-drilling techniques and low-cost drip systems for vegetable and fruit-tree production, can raise farm incomes dramatically and have proved highly cost-effective, as demonstrated in several FAO-SPFS programmes.

In drier areas, unless there are reliable perennial water sources that allow the development of small-scale irrigation, improved land management is likely to be the most viable activity. This would include the promotion of drought-tolerant crops and pastures, agroforestry, soil and water conservation and water harvesting techniques, minimum or zero tillage aimed at improving soil moisture retention and increasing labour productivity, other measures aimed at raising soil organic matter levels (such as adjusted crop rotations and enriched fallows), and manual and mechanical forms of land reclamation. Programmes would be formulated to promote conservation agriculture, which would be particularly relevant for this environment (see Box 4).

## BOX 12

**Pastoral livelihoods**

*The dilemma:* The pastoral areas incorporate some of the harshest environments in the Horn of Africa and contain some of its most vulnerable communities. One consequence has been a major shift of assistance away from long-term development towards emergency relief. Clearly, there is a moral and humanitarian obligation to alleviate human suffering, yet the dilemma of how to balance humanitarian responses with addressing the underlying development and environmental issues remains. The pastoral crisis in the Horn of Africa is essentially about people, and demands solutions that focus on pastoralists and their livelihoods.

*The issues:* The rangelands of the Horn of Africa are characterized by ecological variability, climatic unpredictability and resilience. The pastoralists respond with mobility, flexibility and opportunism. The pastoral systems are based on common property rights and have highly evolved coping mechanisms to deal with stress, including drought. It is now well accepted that pastoralism is a sustainable and ecologically sound response to harsh environments. However, the systems are coming under increasing pressure and it is questionable whether traditional mechanisms can cope. Grazing areas are declining and access is restricted as a result of insecurity. Human populations are increasing and household herd/flock sizes often fall below the numbers needed to sustain the family.

Numerous agencies have programmes in these areas, primarily focused on emergency relief, yet there is little coordination. The pastoral communities continue to be marginalized in terms of access to education, health and other essential services and lack a coherent policy environment. Interventions need to support pastoralism as a sustainable system but provide alternative livelihoods for those that it can no longer support.

*The way forward:* For those countries where it is appropriate, CFSPs might include a focus on *pastoral livelihoods* tailored to the specific needs of each country's pastoral communities. Such a programme would involve all stakeholders – CSOs, donors, government and UN agencies. It would be holistic and encompass all the aspects that impinge on pastoral livelihoods and would focus on addressing the long-term issues, while ensuring adequate safety nets when emergencies occur. It would develop the potential synergies between on-going programmes and agencies, identify gaps and priorities, lobby for additional resources and promote the development of a pastoral policy framework. Some activities that could be incorporated would include:

- *human health* – recognizing the problems of child malnutrition, pregnant women and mothers and access to appropriate primary health care;
- *land and water* – comprising human and livestock water requirements, land degradation, settlement, common property rights, land tenure, etc.;
- *agricultural development* – sustainable agricultural practices for dry marginal areas (see Box 4);
- *disaster management* – incorporating early warning systems with strategies for mitigation and rehabilitation;
- *investment and infrastructure* – access to credit, roads, communications and processing;
- *policy framework* – creating awareness of and developing an appropriate enabling policy environment;
- *human education* – access to appropriate education and skills development;
- *livestock development* – marketing, promoting offtake, disease surveillance, control and health certification;

- *conflict management* – linking with the national and regional conflict resolution units;
- *institutional development* – capacity building, research and development of strong vertical and horizontal linkages;
- *monitoring* – the status of the environment.

In addition to the national programmes, many of the issues need to be addressed at a regional level, such as transboundary diseases,<sup>1</sup> movement control and animal health certification and trade standardization. This would be incorporated into the RFSP.

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<sup>1</sup>Through, for example, FAO's Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES), which includes the control of serious epidemic diseases and the eradication of rinderpest – the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP).

A substantial proportion of the most vulnerable people in the countries of the region are those for whom drought is an ever-present threat. The pastoralists who inhabit arid and semi-arid zones need to be assisted in making the most of the environment in which they live and in reducing the risks that are inherent to their systems. Elements of the programme would include providing access to safe water supply, human and animal health services and education, as well as measures to reduce pastoralists' vulnerability and improve their food security without damaging the environment. Market access would be improved through information systems, stock routes and watering points, as well as through providing pastoralists with access to viable alternative ways of saving and investing. The local processing of dairy and meat products, hides and skins is a generally underexploited opportunity (see Box 12).

In the Horn of Africa, the degradation of the environment can be described in terms of land degradation, losses of biodiversity, deforestation, desertification, reduced ecosystem resilience to adverse climatic factors and declining agricultural productivity. Such manifestations of environmental degradation have an impact at the regional and global levels through their effects on climatic change and international waters. Improved and sustainable livelihoods are closely related to restoration of the natural resource base, and hence to the need to make the most of the synergies between environment and agricultural production agendas. These linkages have recently been emphasized by the international community and, led by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)<sup>5</sup> implementing agencies (the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], the United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] and the World Bank), an Integrated Land and Water Management Initiative for Africa has been launched. Its activities will help communities to take responsibility for managing their natural resource base, and support best practices that bring environmental, agricultural and livelihood benefits (see Box 13).

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<sup>5</sup> GEF Operation Programme No. 12 on Integrated Ecosystem Management supports a land management programme of action to derive global environmental benefits with regard to biodiversity, international waters and climate change.

## BOX 13

**Synergies between the agricultural and environmental agendas**

Sustainable agricultural management practices contribute, simultaneously, to enhancing agricultural production and providing national and global environmental benefits. Such benefits include prevention and mitigation of land degradation and drought, reduction of carbon emissions or enhancement of carbon sequestration, sustaining of agricultural biodiversity and maintenance of vital ecosystems.

There is a need to develop sustainable cropping and livestock systems and management practices that provide economically viable, environmentally friendly and socially and culturally acceptable alternatives to practices that are degrading natural resources and threatening the sustainability and resilience of agricultural ecosystems. The ecological regulatory functions that sustain ecosystems include the following:

- humus formation in topsoil through organic matter breakdown and nutrient recycling;
- nutrient mobilization, retention and slow release in a plant-available form, and breakdown of pollutants;
- buffering and resilience of land and water systems against sudden alterations;
- climatic moderation (release of greenhouse gases, carbon sequestration, solar energy, hydrological cycle);
- provision of habitats for living organisms, including vital soil biota;
- resilience of plant, fish and animal populations and reduced invasion by harmful/less useful species;
- conservation of soil and water resources (land cover, landscapes, watersheds).

There is a strong argument for refocusing the attention of stakeholders, from policy-makers to resource users, to finding “win-win” scenarios, or best practices that contribute to agricultural production and provide socio-economic benefits, such as food and livelihood security, as well as environmental benefits. In this regard, Conservation Agriculture (see Box 4), integrated production systems (crop/livestock, aquaculture and agroforestry), complex home gardens and sustainable range management are opportunities for:

- maintaining a good vegetative cover and rooting structure;
- maintaining or enhancing soil moisture availability, soil biological activity and soil fertility;
- conserving and ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity;
- monitoring the environment and climate change;
- sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Not all agricultural systems will provide the full range of benefits. The aim should be to maximize synergies and generate multiple benefits for the diverse stakeholders at the household, community and national levels, while maintaining resources for future generations.

**Protecting the most needy**

*Safety nets.* Over and above the measures that should be taken to protect those who are the victims of natural disasters, there is a need to secure the rights to food of those who are chronically food-insecure in a community and are not able-bodied, such as the elderly, orphans, the handicapped and the incapacitated.

Social safety nets, which are needed for such groups on a more or less continuous basis, will always be difficult to maintain. However, such measures are the ultimate solution for these groups of people, and may be tackled through nutrition

## BOX 14

**Safety nets**

Addressing the needs of the chronically food-insecure in a community includes the need to ease the burden of external shocks on the most vulnerable. In normal times, the destitute typically account for 10 to 15 percent of the community and can be divided into productive (or potentially productive) and non-productive groups – a determining factor in terms of defining appropriate measures.

The productive poor have no entitlements, which means that they have little or no access to factors of production (land, capital, labour) and do not have the necessary skills to improve their access. Nevertheless, the fact that they are able-bodied implies that they can be assisted in generating their own income. Public works schemes, and other employment-generating activities such as the Safety Nets Programme in Ethiopia, provide a minimum necessary income and can serve as a “safety trampoline”, lifting households out of dire poverty and on to the road to self-reliance. Cash- or food-for-work programmes have the added advantage of being self-directing and so are more cost-effective in terms of public resource allocation.

The unproductive poor, i.e. the elderly, the orphaned and those who are not able-bodied, cannot rely on their own labour, and addressing their needs requires fundamentally different measures. Traditionally, communities assist the destitute through the social obligation of neighbours and family to provide food, labour and services to the poorest. However, as the economic environment and social values change and the number of destitute increases (for example through the spread of AIDS), this system begins to break down. In some cases, governments have stepped in to assist the unproductive poor, by providing food or cash payments. Unfortunately, these initiatives have generally failed to deliver the expected benefits to the target group: centralized control and highly complex administration have led to high costs of delivery and leakages. The many inefficiencies of government safety net schemes and the fiscal burden of direct assistance have, in most cases, led to their termination.

A combination of traditional and government-sponsored assistance could supply the needs of the unproductive poor. The basis should be existing community initiatives, be they labour-sharing schemes or the provision of goods (food, seeds, clothes) or services (care of orphans or elderly), which should, ideally, be complemented by a grant from government in the form of cash or food. This system builds on existing structures and activities, thereby ensuring ownership and minimizing the problems of badly directed and misused funds. Another important feature is the concept of cost-sharing between the communities and the government; these are not hand-outs provided with public funds, but complementary funds to enhance the scope and effectiveness of community-initiated activities to protect their own destitute. The handling of public funds at the local level, optimizes their use and allows the system greater flexibility.

interventions, such as school and hospital feeding, and by promoting community-based safety nets involving cost-sharing arrangements among communities, government and donors (see Box 14).

*The urban food-insecure.* The growing numbers of poor and food-insecure in urban areas are particularly difficult to reach. In some situations, it may be possible to provide such people with start-up assistance in growing their own food or even producing vegetables and keeping poultry or small livestock to supply the adjacent urban markets.

## BOX 15

**Addressing urban food insecurity**

Concentrations of vulnerable groups of the urban food-insecure are generally located in informal settlements at the edges of major cities. Here, the constraint is not so much availability as access to entitlements or incomes with which to purchase food, and reduced ability to absorb nutrients through poor health. Intra-urban and peri-urban agriculture can play a significant role in reducing food insecurity for urban populations. It provides incomes by enabling urban farmers to produce fresh supplies of perishable foods to a huge nearby market. It also gives such farmers, many of whom are women, an opportunity to improve their families' diets directly by growing nutrient-rich fresh foods.

Support for food production in cities may include inputs such as information about seeds, fertilizers, chemicals and the safe use of pesticides, organic waste materials and water, as well as credit. The infrastructure needed to facilitate these activities may be physical inputs such as water supply and improved market sites (both of which also improve hygiene). Since most of the cities in the region still depend heavily on wood for fuel, secure tenure is important so that peri-urban fuelwood plantations can be established. Cash-for-work programmes to provide incomes to the urban poor, through street cleaning and construction or repairing of sewage systems, for example, can reduce food insecurity and, at the same time, help to improve the quality of basic services available to the poorest people.

While many NGOs have emerged in cities in response to urban poverty and squalor, few UN agencies devote resources to working specifically in urban areas. However, the few initiatives that exist could be used as starting points for programmes aimed at eliminating urban food insecurity and poverty. FAO recognizes the importance of peri-urban agriculture and has produced a briefing guide for local authorities and urban planners in developing countries as part of its SPFS. This guide addresses questions of food supply, distribution and health and the associated planning, policy and programme factors.<sup>1</sup> The World Food Programme (WFP) is reviewing its projects in urban areas in order to improve its understanding of the nature of urban food insecurity and how it can be affected by rural crises such as drought and conflict. It is keen to address the consumption needs of food-insecure urban populations without disturbing local food markets. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) traditionally addresses food insufficiency through maternal and child health (MCH) interventions. UNDP has supported the development of school gardens, in Nairobi for example, with land given by the school, and labour by parents and children. The importance of NGOs operating in urban areas suggests that partnerships between UN agencies and NGOs would be especially important in addressing this problem.

<sup>1</sup> FAO. *Food for the cities*. FAO Collection DT/43-00E; food supply and distribution policies to reduce urban food insecurity, a briefing guide for mayors, city executives and urban planners.

In an urban environment, the application of cash- or food-for-work programmes that improve and maintain urban infrastructure and environment could have widespread positive impact on urban communities. The need to ensure the provision of basic health and education and skills training to the urban poor, usually in collaboration with NGOs, is particularly important, because of the frequently overcrowded insanitary conditions that exist and the fact that the urban economy will benefit from a pool of more skilled workers. Some governments have tried the option of resettling the urban poor in rural areas. However, this is always an expensive task if it is carried out properly, with supporting infrastructure development and services, and invariably poses difficulties of finding appropriate land and resolving potential

conflicts with people inhabiting the target area (see Box 15).

### Creating an enabling environment

**Improving governance.** A fundamental priority for governments seeking to address food insecurity is to tackle the multifaceted problem of governance. Governments must define and take steps to strengthen their “core functions”, especially with respect to the provision of services to the agricultural sector. They must move ahead with effective decentralization and empowerment of people, and provide an enabling environment for the private sector through capacity building. They should also reinforce the market-based policy reforms that have been undertaken, through more rigorous application of non-interventionist policies, and should begin to address the “second-generation” policy issues related to food security, such as reforms in the legal framework. A priority is the strengthening of legislation and the rule of law in general, through putting emphasis on fighting corruption, empowering communities and using local mechanisms for resolving land, water and other disputes.

**Conflict resolution.** Conflict resolution, whether between nations, ethnic groups, communities or individuals, is a challenge that regional organizations, governments and community leaders must face. Although *international* conflicts cause massive waste of human and financial resources, conflicts between communities over land, water or pasture are especially disruptive because they create an environment of uncertainty and may lead to the displacement of people, both of which exacerbate food insecurity. Community conflicts increase the risks of investing in land and water development and reduce affected people’s ability to adopt effective coping strategies when natural hazards, such as drought, strike.

Each CFSP would be expected to include specific proposals for conflict prevention and resolution. At the regional level, IGAD and OAU would be expected to play a critical role in conflict prevention and resolution, through developing methods of obtaining early warning of potential conflicts and testing ways of resolving them when they do occur, possibly in collaboration with NGOs that have experience in this field.<sup>6</sup> Proposals to implement a Common Security Framework in the region, involving collaboration between OAU and IGAD, could also be supported.

**Infrastructure development.** Proposals for large-scale infrastructure development such as ports, railways, major roads and telecommunications using modern, satellite-based technology would, in most cases, form part of existing national, long-term development programmes. The most important task would be to review these proposals in the light of a renewed commitment to poverty reduction and the elimination of food insecurity. This might mean, for example, reordering priorities to ensure greater coherence in addressing the needs of remote areas or particular groups of vulnerable people, and accelerating implementation. The role of the private sector in undertaking and even financing such developments, should always be sought.

With respect to small-scale infrastructure, rural roads are likely to be a high priority in all countries of the region, because they reinforce integration of the market system and enhance access to basic services. The development of community-based

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<sup>6</sup> Promising examples of the role of NGOs in resolving conflict between communities may be found in a DFID programme in Kenya.



safe water supply for the human population and, where appropriate, livestock water sources and the establishment of markets, especially for livestock, would also be priority areas for investment. However, infrastructure development at this level would need to be community-driven in order to be sustainable.

*Strengthening the role of civil society.* Civil society, in all its forms, can make a potentially major contribution to solving the problem of food insecurity. Increasingly, the private sector and NGOs have a greater presence at the community level than government agents. They may play a commercial role, providing inputs – often with supplier credit – together with technical advice; a developmental role, promoting rural activities; or an advocacy role, supporting the empowerment of rural people. In all of these activities, the power of civil society needs to be harnessed within programmes that address food security. In each country it would be necessary to examine the roles of formal and informal CSOs and their interactions with government, exploring their strategies, capacity and successes that merit replication. Governments might need assistance in developing legislative frameworks and procedures aimed at creating an effective enabling environment for the operation of CSOs. IGAD could be helped with the establishment of a programme for civil society cooperation that takes inspiration from the experience of its sister organization, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), in West Africa.

For rural producers' organizations and national NGOs, important areas for participation are in policy dialogue, providing the services that rural producers require in a privatized and liberalized market economy, and in developing their organizational capacity to a level where they are competent in participatory planning, decision-making and resource management. Networking among CSOs within the region would be encouraged through support to electronic exchanges and exchange visits, particularly those involving the arid regions of West Africa, where producers' organizations and NGOs are operating in similar climatic conditions (see Box 16).

#### BOX 16

#### **The farmers' movement and CILSS in West Africa**

Over the past few years effective cooperation has developed between the emerging farmers' movement in the Sahel and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the sister organization of IGAD. Building on the strength of the farmers' movement in Senegal, where the Comité national de concertation et de coopération des ruraux (CNCCR) has earned the government's recognition as its interlocutor on all questions affecting rural and agricultural development, a Network of Farmers' Organizations in the Sahel was established in 1996 with the official recognition of the CILSS Council of Ministers. This network, which has recently broadened to include other West African countries, serves as a forum for sensitizing farmers' organizations to important policy issues, developing common negotiating positions at the national and regional levels and building its members' capacity to respond to the needs of rural small producers. The network has received support from NGOs, government cooperation programmes and intergovernmental agencies, in particular FAO, the OECD's Club du Sahel and the World Bank.

## Formulating Country Food Security Programmes

The shape and content of a CFSP would be determined by the priorities and capacities of governments and the needs of food-insecure communities. Overall, a CFSP would be a mix of large and small investment projects focused on specific vulnerable groups and funded by international financing institutions and bilateral donors, as well as micro-, community-based projects financed through some form of decentralized trust fund mechanism. It would be implemented by government agencies, but with NGOs and the private sector playing an important role. The programme would be sure to include famine prevention and conflict resolution elements, with early warning system development and regional cooperation as integral parts. The programme of UN support would aim to strengthen governments' planning and implementation capacity and would, for instance, help in the profiling of vulnerable people, the analysis of gaps in strategy and policy frameworks and the building of long-term capacity at all levels. UN assistance would also complement specific investment projects by providing technical support and capacity building.

### BUILDING ON NATIONAL STRATEGIES

If the governments in the region are to embrace the overall Framework for Action as their own and translate it into CFSPs, it is essential that proposals build on existing national food security initiatives. For example, each country has prepared an outline food security strategy as part of the follow-up to the World Food Summit, and this can serve as a valuable starting point for its CFSP. In Ethiopia, a lot of effort has gone into formulating a national Food Security Programme (FSP), and in Uganda a comprehensive Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) has been prepared. The CFSPs should be viewed as an integral part of the Poverty Reduction Strategies that most countries have either recently completed or are in the process of preparing within the context of participation in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and, more recently, in order to become eligible for concessional finance from the Bretton Woods institutions. Other important national initiatives that should be taken into account are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) National Sustainable Development Strategies, programmes under the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa (UNSI) and the World Food Summit Follow-Up Strategies for National Agricultural Development which were prepared under FAO sponsorship and are now being updated with broad-based national participation. These national strategies form the natural starting point for planning future interventions, and governments and other stakeholders must be sure to take these existing programmes into account when they consider the overall CFSP. The country consultations conducted by the Task Force revealed a number of common elements across countries in terms of the causes of food insecurity and the priorities of governments, but also a diversity of starting points for country programmes (see Box 6).

#### **INCORPORATING EXISTING PROJECT INITIATIVES**

As well as building on existing strategies, it is essential to recognize that the foundations for CFSP formulation already exist. Initiatives that are already in operation and projects that have been identified but have not yet been funded should be incorporated into the CFSP. They would need to be adjusted, where necessary, to address the priorities of the potential funding sources, and would be used as the starting point for implementation. This approach is important so that the momentum of the work started by the Task Force can be sustained by initiating activities quickly.

#### **GENERATING COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS**

In order to acquire access to decentralized funding sources for local projects aimed at enhancing food security, much of the project identification and design would have to be carried out at a subnational, district or community level. This would require the formation of local groups comprising local authorities, NGOs and representatives of civil society and local communities. The basic platform would be regular meetings, supported by a secretariat charged with arriving at broad consensus over the focus, nature and implementation modalities of local programmes and projects. Its way of working would need to ensure the full participation of the local community, including women and other typically excluded groups. The local administration would have to be fully engaged in this activity so that it could take on the responsibility for overseeing implementation at the local level.

#### **Participation**

In order to be operational and sustainable, it is important that specific food security investment proposals and initiatives be generated at the local and community levels. While CFSPs will serve to give some structure to these investments, the basic identification, formulation and implementation must be as decentralized as much as possible, to ensure that investment is channelled towards activities that reflect local priorities, respond to needs and opportunities for sustainable poverty and risk reduction, and are considered to be worthwhile and profitable by the direct beneficiaries.

#### **PROJECT FORMULATION**

Teams to formulate investment projects would need to be set up or strengthened under the auspices of the national agency selected to take overall responsibility for CFSP formulation. The role of such teams would be to facilitate local people's formulation of projects that would attract funding and meet basic criteria of viability, sustainability and equity. To achieve this, the teams would need to identify the people and groups who would be directly involved in the implementation of the projects that are being prepared. The underlying rationale is that local people are perfectly capable of conceptualizing projects, provided that they are aware of the donor's basic standards and the requirements of the funding agencies. The teams would comprise local agencies, NGOs and private sector organizations with, where necessary, support from donor agencies.

### Guidelines and support for investment formulation

The basic approach for donor or government project finance should be that mechanisms for selecting projects must be flexible and demand-driven. However, in order to attract funds, some basic donor and national standards must be adhered to. Local teams would be encouraged to use the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA), which ensures a systematic examination of the constraints and opportunities of households in different situations, and would be given training and guidance in its use. Formulation teams would also need to be guided by vulnerability profiles and food security assessments which outline the main vulnerability characteristics of particular groups and communities. There has been progress in providing guidelines for creating these profiles, under the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS) programme (see Box 17). Formulation teams would be helped in creating national document repositories, as part of the development of a solid knowledge base on which to build national programmes. This knowledge base would be central to ensuring that a rolling programme of project development became increasingly effective over time.

#### BOX 17

#### Information on food insecurity and vulnerability

Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS) is a creation of the Plan of Action of the 1996 World Food Summit. Its objectives are to:

- increase global attention to problems of food insecurity;
- improve data quality and analysis through the development of new tools and capacity building in developing countries;
- promote effective and better directed action on poverty and hunger reduction;
- promote donor collaboration on food security information systems at the global and country levels;
- improve access to information through networking and sharing.

Work on FIVIMS is coordinated through an Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) comprising more than 25 members (UN agencies, the World Bank, bilateral donors, research organizations). IAWG members are united by a shared commitment to reducing hunger and malnutrition and its multidimensional causes rooted in poverty. Both development agencies and countries need solid information on *who* the hungry and malnourished are, *where* they are located, *what* their livelihood systems are, and *why* they are in this situation. When they have answers to these questions, development partners at all levels can combine their efforts to reduce food insecurity and human poverty through better policies and better designed and directed interventions.

IAWG members are trying to improve food security information systems around the world and aim to work together more effectively at the country level within the UNDAF and Common Country Assessment (CCA). FIVIMS is making significant progress on the basis of solid technical fieldwork enhanced by new computational and communication technologies. At the country level this involves the diagnosis of existing information systems and analysis of how well they are meeting the multiple needs of different user groups, promoting coordination and more useful products from among information and mapping system partners and mobilizing complementary resources for these efforts as needed.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Financing institutions and donors**

Experience has shown that speedy and successful funding of projects comes from close partnerships with the financing institutions and donor agencies. While governments must take the lead in formulating overall programmes, specific development investments are most likely to emerge when potential funding agencies have been involved from the very beginning. For this reason, it would be important, during the process of formulating CFSPs, to work closely with the principal multi- and bilateral agencies by mounting multidonor missions to review the CFSP and by identifying, tentatively, the specific elements that different agencies might finance.

### **Civil society organizations**

NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and other elements of civil society can play a critical role in helping to articulate the disparate needs and priorities expressed by different parts of the target communities which are food-insecure. Governments that are formulating CFSPs should be encouraged to bring representatives of civil society into the process and to call on the knowledge base of these representatives when carrying out vulnerability profiling and other exercises aimed at identifying and characterizing the food-insecure. NGOs and CBOs would be particularly strong allies in carrying out project design work at the community level, and should be provided with technical and financial assistance to enable them to play this role.

## **ASSEMBLING THE ELEMENTS OF A CFSP**

The Framework for Action is only a general outline. The details of how to formulate specific investments and the identification of the policy and legislative amendments that are needed must be worked out, on a country-by-country basis, in collaboration with development partners at all levels (international, national and local) and in a fully participatory fashion. At each level, the decision-making process should involve a range of institution types, including not only the UN and government organizations, but also NGOs, CBOs and other elements of civil society. Indeed, at the local level, emphasis should be placed particularly on involving non-governmental and community organizations.

At the national level it would be necessary to create a broad consensus on the implementation modalities and priorities for investment, to integrate existing and planned programmes into the strategy, to ensure strong participation of all relevant organizations and to agree on a set of basic guidelines for local investment plans and project proposals. This task would be the responsibility of an appropriate national agency, preferably one with multisectoral responsibilities, which would be strengthened, as necessary, with appropriately qualified staff, capacity building, equipment and adequate operating resources. Governments would be encouraged to draw on the breadth of skills available from the Food Security and Agriculture Thematic Group. At the local level, it would be necessary to identify the needs and priorities of communities, and to tap the knowledge and skills of local administration and NGOs to facilitate this process.

In the first phase of designing a broad Framework for Action, a critical factor has been the fostering of collaboration among the Bretton Woods and UN organizations,

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through the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). This process would need to be broadened to include other UN agencies, major NGOs and CSOs, multi- and bilateral donors and international research centres. Such a process would stimulate the commitment and active participation of all the main international players and draw on international knowledge and experience from the international research and academic community. Outputs of this would be a coherent strategy for addressing food security on the part of UN agencies and effective ways of providing knowledge resources to those involved in formulating programmes at the national and local levels.

The partner agencies would assist governments in formulating CFSPs in different ways. They would prepare detailed thematic and country-level discussion papers, review existing and planned programmes and reach common agreement on the broad priorities for policy and investment. They would also help to develop effective *modus operandi* for implementation. Links to other regional groupings such as CILSS and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) would be fostered so that the organizational and technical lessons learned might be assimilated into the process for the Horn of Africa.

## Implementing Country Food Security Programmes

As specific investment projects and supporting programmes are being formulated, it is crucial both that funding mechanisms be created to ensure that proposals can be effectively implemented and that a sound institutional framework be created to oversee implementation and monitor progress.

### ESTABLISHING NATIONAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

It is likely that there would need to be substantial funding of larger sectoral and subsectoral food security-related projects and programmes through the conventional channels of bilateral grants and concessional loans. Such projects would need to be processed in the usual way, through the pipelines of the different funding agencies.

In order to make sure that projects reach the food-insecure themselves, it will be necessary to create new and innovative funding mechanisms or to strengthen existing ones. Such new mechanisms would be aimed at simplifying resource transfers and disbursements and empowering communities through providing more flexible and direct access to funding through decentralized trust funds for community-based initiatives. These mechanisms, which might take the form of trust funds, could provide grants to communities for a wide range of investments that could be shown to contribute directly or indirectly to improved food security. Such investments at the community level might include water supplies, schools and telecentres, health services, access roads and bridges, energy generation, activities leading to improved use of land and water resources (including farmer-led experimentation, small-scale irrigation and water harvesting, soil conservation, afforestation and integration of crop/livestock systems), activities that support employment diversification, and safety nets, especially directed nutrition programmes.

There would also need to be a source of funds during the formulation and implementation of CFSPs, in order to meet the government demand for supplementary technical services. Such services might be supplied by local consultants, NGOs or, indeed, UN agencies, and every effort would need to be made to decentralize such resources so that responsibility for contracting services could be transferred to the provincial or district level and to communities themselves.

### INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The overall responsibility for implementing CFSPs would be with the governments of the region. The precise institutional framework for this would, of course, need to be tailored to the structures and capacities of each country concerned. However, a basic structure would need to be put in place to underpin the central role of government and the effective engagement of UN agencies, donors and civil society in the process.

#### Government coordination mechanism

The process of CFSP formulation and implementation would need to be overseen at the national level by some form of coordination group in which all the principal line

ministries would be represented. Day-to-day implementation would be the responsibility of the different line ministries involved, utilizing normal procedures and supported by appropriate capacity building measures delivered by UN agencies and donors. A national focal point institution would need to be selected, and support provided to ensure that it is professionally staffed and properly equipped to fulfil its responsibilities, which would be to:

- serve as secretariat to the national coordinating body;
- organize and supervise, where necessary with the assistance of external technical agencies, local teams to carry out investment formulation, working with districts and communities in identifying and formulating investment projects;
- ensure coherence in the investment programme and congruity with the overall aims of the food security programme;
- maintain regular communications with the international partners and with local/district bodies charged with overseeing community-level formulation;
- track financial commitments;
- coordinate programme monitoring and evaluation.

There would need to be coordination at the provincial or district level, utilizing existing structures wherever possible. A national mechanism would need to be constituted to oversee the management and utilization of funds committed for the implementation of the CFSP, which would need to reflect the interests of line ministries, the UN Resident Coordinator, the main donors, NGOs and the communities themselves.

#### **UN agency support**

The role of UN agencies in the design of CFSPs and in the identification and formulation of projects would be to support government initiatives at all levels. The process must be driven by the governments themselves. The types of support that might be provided would be specific to the needs expressed by different governments. At one level it might include methodology transfer of techniques for vulnerability profiling, for the design, collection and analysis of information from formal and informal surveys and for the targeting of programmes and the setting of priorities. It might also include support for study tours among the countries of the region, in order that they could exchange experiences in the formulation of poverty reduction strategies and food security programmes, the design of disaster preparedness and drought prevention and mitigation programmes, and the management of strategic grain stocks and alternative methods of famine prevention.

The arrangements for providing support to the national agency selected to take charge of the formulation process and to coordinate efforts on the part of the UN agencies would rest with the Resident Coordinator, who would draw on the resources of the Country Team. In view of the focus of the work, it is envisaged that FAO would take the lead in this task, through its role as chair of both the UNDAF Thematic Group on Food Security and Agriculture and the ACC Rural Development and Food Security Network. The Thematic Group would oversee the process and provide specific technical support by drawing on staff and consultants provided by the appropriate specialized agencies. The responsibilities of the Thematic Group would be to:



### 3. FROM FRAMEWORK TO ACTION

- enter into dialogue with government on the process of formulating a CFSP and identify associated projects;
- arrange technical and financial support for the national agency charged with responsibility for formulating the CFSP;
- review, with government, the existing food security and poverty reduction strategies, identifying priorities and gaps;
- facilitate the recruitment of local and, where necessary, international consultants to undertake the formulation of the CFSP and projects;
- identify needs for technical backup support to be provided by different agencies;
- establish and/or revitalize the ACC Rural Development and Food Security Network as a forum for government, UN, donor and NGO partners to discuss and monitor progress in the formulation and subsequent implementation of the CFSP;
- assist in setting up a national coordination mechanism;
- assist the national unit to prepare a six-monthly progress report to be sent through ACC to the Secretary-General;
- assist in the setting up of a mechanism to manage the funds provided for implementation, on behalf of government, donors and NGOs.

#### **Conflict resolution mechanism**

Mechanisms to promote conflict prevention and resolution would need to be created in each country, including the setting up of systems for conflict early warning. The focus would need to be on national problems, dealing with intercommunity or zonal conflicts. Strong links would need to be forged with NGOs and UN agencies that are active in this field and with the OAU Conflict Management Centre, to which early warning information would be supplied and from which advice and technical assistance could be provided.

## **A Regional Food Security Programme**

There are important areas in which regional cooperation would contribute substantially to solving the problem of food insecurity. For this reason, a RFSP should be formulated as a matter of urgency. For example, external trade, financial market integration, control of transboundary livestock and crop pests and diseases, conflict resolution, international water rights, regional infrastructure development (especially roads and telecommunications), information and communications networks (particularly in connection with providing effective early warning systems) and research facilities are all areas in which progress cannot be made without the countries of the region collaborating closely together.

### **IGAD**

At the regional level, IGAD would be expected to play a lead role in formulating the RFSP and overseeing its implementation, and would need to be strengthened for this purpose. The process would start with a renewed political commitment, on the part of Member Governments, to the goals of regional cooperation and economic integration. This would need to be reflected in the commitment of appropriate financial and workforce resources to IGAD, by the Member States, as a gesture of partnership with UN agencies and donors. UN agencies, and in particular the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), would provide technical and capacity building support to the institution in such areas as market and regional integrated information systems, early warning systems, agricultural research and development, livestock development, natural resources management, trade policy harmonization and the promotion of regional infrastructure development. Particularly in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, IGAD would work closely with OAU, which would be expected to play a key role through its Conflict Management Centre, which is already supported by UNDP. Proposals would be prepared for strengthening the regional intergovernmental organizations in collaboration with bilateral donors such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union (EU).

### **REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Formulation**

As with all other aspects of planning and implementing a food security programme, the process of formulating a RFSP should be as inclusive as possible. This would mean full political commitment, on the part of the governments of the region, to the formulation of a plan, and their commitment of resources, in partnership with UN agencies and donors, to its implementation. The programme would need to take into account existing regional strategies, including the World Food Summit Regional Food Security Strategy for IGAD.

#### **Funding**

Funding for the common planning and coordination activities of the RFSP implemented through IGAD would have to come from bilateral agencies. Both USAID<sup>7</sup> and the EU currently support IGAD programmes in a number of different fields. However, investment projects with a regional dimension (such as regional roads) and programmes with a common focus (such as a pastoralist initiative) would have to be implemented in parallel by the different governments concerned. In this case, IGAD would play a coordinating and monitoring role.

#### **Coordination**

The lead agency for the RFSP would be IGAD. The Food Security and Environment Protection Programme within IGAD could be expanded in order to provide the services of secretariat for overseeing the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the RFSP. Assistance from the UN agencies would be directed by the lead regional Resident Coordinator in Ethiopia. A mechanism for coordinating regional-level activities would need to be created, possibly under the auspices of the lead regional Resident Coordinator, together with representatives of member governments, OAU and ECA.

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<sup>7</sup> Through its Greater Horn of Africa Initiative.

## Strengthening the role of the UN agencies

There are potentially important gains to be made in strengthening the impact of UN agencies' programmes aimed at food security through improving interagency collaboration and setting more focused goals for assistance. The introduction of the UNDAF is an important first step towards this goal. However, there are already certain lessons that might be learned from the process:

- Earlier UN-initiated processes aimed at food security, such as the World Food Summit Food Security Strategies, should be made the starting point for future efforts.
- It is important to strengthen the diagnosis that is at the heart of CCAs, and to make sure that all agencies contribute wholeheartedly to the process, especially the Bretton Woods Institutions.
- Although the UNDAF is primarily about interagency collaboration, government participation in determining the content of the programmes should be encouraged, so that the framework builds on and reinforces governments' own programmes.
- Thematic Groups on Food Security and Agriculture need to be set up in all countries of the region and be made as inclusive as possible with respect to the different agencies that need to be involved in food security issues.
- Strong links between the UNDAF and the World Bank-promoted Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) will be essential.

The UN agencies also have an important role to play in mobilizing substantially increased resources for poverty reduction and food security programmes in the region. However, finding ways to raise the scale of external assistance to the levels required, without inducing further dependence, is one of the most complex issues confronting any initiative that might be catalysed by the UN.

## The way ahead

It is important when moving from the framework for action to action itself, that a clearly phased and properly sequenced approach be adopted, that mechanisms for securing the resources needed to accomplish the programme be set in place, and that the entire process be subject to careful monitoring, evaluation and review.

### A PHASED APPROACH

A participatory approach to programme formulation and implementation is time-consuming, but this is a necessary price for coherent policy and investment that has broad political and financial backing. Three main phases are envisaged:

1. **Formulation:** Concrete investment projects and supporting programmes comprising the CFSP would need to be formulated – this would be completed by mid-2001.
2. **Mobilization of resources:** The process of seeking funds to implement the CFSPs would be started during the formulation phase and would culminate in country-by-country multidonor meetings, at which funding proposals would be presented.
3. **Implementation:** The full implementation of the overall programme would need to have a horizon of at least ten years.

### MOBILIZING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

A critical part of the strategy for the elimination of food insecurity in the Horn of Africa, is to secure a substantial increase in the resources allocated to the task, by both governments and the international community, and to ensure that such resources are better focused on the problem. Over the last two decades, there has been a distinct tendency for the external resources allocated to the countries in the region to be increasingly directed to emergency and relief activities, rather than long-term development. This has been a logical reaction to the recurrence of crises in which large numbers of people in the region have been threatened with famine and death. However, it also represents a degree of frustration on the part of the donor community with the intractability of achieving long-term solutions to the problems of the region.

#### Domestic resources

Governments in the region need to reassess their overall budget expenditures, with a view to allocating substantially greater amounts to programmes and projects that focus on eliminating famine and addressing food security problems. An important indicator of governments' commitment to eliminating famine and food insecurity would be the extent to which they have increased budget allocations to the area of food security.

#### International resources

Given the tight fiscal situation in most of the countries, and the many other calls on expenditure, it seems inevitable that a substantial proportion of the resources required to finance long-term development will have to come from international sources. Part

may come from the reallocation of existing bilateral and multilateral commitments, as well as from the proceeds of debt relief. However, very substantial additional new commitments will be needed. In view of the magnitude of the problem, a special effort will be required to mobilize the necessary resources. This effort would need to be directed to the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the EU and bilateral donors, as well as the private sector, and would be crucial to the success of the CFSPs. In view of the procedures adopted by these institutions for the identification and formulation of projects, it is important that they make every effort to introduce food security as a priority area in their programming documents,<sup>8</sup> where this is not already the case. The most likely entry point for project ideas would be at the project conception stage,<sup>9</sup> either as full investment projects or through other financing mechanisms such as the World Bank's Adaptable Program Loans (APLs) and Learning and Innovation Loans (LILs). Several countries in the region would also be eligible for HIPC debt relief, and all would need to prepare a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in order to qualify for concessional loan funding from the Bretton Wood Institutions (see Box 18).

The funding role of UN agencies would be through the prioritization of food security under the UNDAF. Some complementary funding might be available from GEF for activities that link integrated land management and sustainable livelihoods and produce regional and global environmental benefits.

The private sector, in the form of both international and domestic investors and philanthropists, has so far played little part in tackling the problem of food insecurity. The failure to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to the region has been a major flaw in the economic reform and restructuring of the countries of the region.<sup>10</sup>

Philanthropists' contributions have been made mainly through international and, to some extent, local NGOs. Efforts could be directed to attracting additional private support for credible CFSP proposals from international foundations and from the East African communities who are living and working in Europe and North America.

### **Cofinancing, collaboration and coordination**

The joint commitment by governments, UN agencies, donors and NGOs to tackling famine and food insecurity makes it imperative that the partners work together closely in implementing the CFSPs. Cofinancing of specific projects by financing institutions should draw on the strengths of the different institutions in a complementary way, using soft loans and grants, with UN agencies supplying technical, supervisory or administrative support, in order to provide an added guarantee of success. If agencies are to collaborate effectively in funding an agreed programme aimed at eliminating food insecurity, they must, as far as possible, establish common implementation, financing and reporting arrangements.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS), IFAD's Country Strategy Opportunities Paper (COSOP) and ADB's Country Programme.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the World Bank's Project Concept Document (PCD).

<sup>10</sup> Apart from Uganda, which has witnessed a major increase in FDI (reaching US\$200 million in 1998), other countries for which there are data show low levels of FDI and a decline over the period from 1990, including Ethiopia (from US\$12 million to US\$4 million) and Kenya (from US\$57 million to US\$11 million) (World Bank, 2000. *World development report 2000*).

## BOX 18

**HIPC debt relief**

Since the Cologne meeting of G7 in 1998, at which a programme of debt relief for HIPC was agreed, the Bretton Woods institutions have focused their assistance more clearly on the eradication of poverty. From now on, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will make their programmes of assistance to governments seeking HIPC debt relief and funding facilities (now called the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility –[PRGF]) conditional on the formulation of a PRS. A PRS Paper (PRSP) would comprise pro-poor and poverty reduction policies and programmes, and would include a pro-poor shift in the pattern of public expenditures, towards items that would have an impact on poverty.

The formulation of PRSs is at an early stage and, in the Horn of Africa, has been initiated in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Experience to date has shown that there is an inherent bias in the PRS towards the provision of social infrastructure, if for no other reason than that this can be readily planned and monitored. However, programmes that address agricultural production and livelihood aspects are intrinsically more difficult to formulate, implement and monitor, and consequently tend to be neglected in the PRS formulation process. The formulation of Country Action Plans that address long-term food security could provide an invaluable complement to the PRS process and substantive content for the utilization of both HIPC debt relief funds and PRGF resources.

**MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

Following the in-country formulation of CFSPs and investment proposals, it is logical that the governments themselves assume responsibility for the monitoring of implementation. Once again, there would be full compatibility with the implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS), in which a key element is the definition by governments of outputs that can be monitored and the creation of capacity to undertake the monitoring itself. Rigorous evaluation of CFSP implementation would be essential. After decades of effort with few results, it is important that this new programme is not allowed to slip into benign neglect. Since the CFSPs would be built on local initiatives and innovative design, independent and regular evaluation is essential in order to judge what is working and what has failed. Such evaluation could be contracted to a local university or consulting company, which would present its conclusions to the ACC Rural Development and Food Security Network as a forum for review. Progress in achieving the goals of the overall programme should be reported regularly to the Secretary-General through the lead Resident Coordinator's office in Ethiopia and the regular meetings of ACC. A first external, multidonor review of progress would need to be programmed to take place no more than three years after commencement of the RFSP.

## Starting the process

The submission of this Task Force report to the Secretary-General marks the beginning of a process that should lead to the implementation of specific investment projects and supporting programmes at the national and regional levels, aimed at eliminating famine and food insecurity in the Horn of Africa. Outlined below is a tentative programme of tasks that would need to be initiated quickly in order to maintain the momentum that has been generated by the work of the Task Force. The immediate time horizon is mid-2001.

### ACC MEETING

The ACC meeting scheduled for 27 and 28 October 2000 would be the forum at which the Task Force report is discussed and decisions taken about possible follow-up actions. This should include agreements on the following:

- the further dissemination of the report within and beyond the UN system;
- the calling of a meeting of the UN Country Teams in the Horn of Africa so that they are fully informed concerning the report, and to expedite follow-up activities;
- modalities for starting the process of mobilizing resources for the formulation phase and implementation;
- modalities for starting the process of formulating CFSPs and the RFSP, together with a timetable;
- the possibility of arranging a high-level regional conference to launch implementation of the Food Security Programmes in countries of the region.

### MEETING OF UN COUNTRY TEAMS

In view of the importance of food security issues in the programmes of the UN agencies represented in the Horn of Africa countries, a meeting of the UN Country Teams from the seven countries concerned should be called soon after the ACC meeting. This meeting would include:

- assessment of the implications of the final Task Force report for programming the work of the UN agencies, bearing in mind the directives emanating from the ACC meeting;
- agreement on how thematic groups for food security and agricultural development could be established, where this has not already been done, and what their composition would be;
- agreement on an institutional framework for the formulation and implementation of the CFSPs, and the support services that would be required;
- agreement on a programme to review the status of the World Food Summit Food Security Strategies, CCA, UNDAF, CDF and PRSP in each country and how, in order to achieve more effective focus and impact, all programmes could be brought within the umbrella of the PRS and contribute to a single strategy document for food security;
- agreement on the most effective way of presenting the recommendations of the Task Force to IGAD's governing body, and mobilizing support for the formulation of the RFSP.



## RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The ACC should decide on the immediate steps that need to be taken to mobilize resources from the World Bank, IFAD, ADB, IDB, the EU and bilateral donors, and from the private sector. In pursuit of this objective, governments in the region, and their partners in the UN agencies, would need to:

- identify an immediate source of funding to enable UN agencies to begin the process of working with governments in formulating CFSPs, and with IGAD in putting together a RFSP;
- define a strategy and mechanism for the mobilization of longer-term resources with which to support the implementation of CFSPs and the RFSP;
- recommend arrangements at the country level for initiating, disbursing and replenishing funds for the implementation of food security-related programmes.

## INITIATING FORMULATION OF CFSPs AND THE RFSP

The process of formulating CFSPs and the RFSP should begin as soon as initial funding has been secured, with UN agencies providing all necessary support to this government-led initiative. The steps involved in this would include:

- recommending to governments the need to define a mechanism and responsibilities for CFSP formulation and implementation;
- defining mechanisms within UN agencies for the delivery of support to governments for CFSP formulation and implementation, including methodological guidelines;
- reviewing existing national and regional food security, poverty reduction and agricultural sector strategies and programmes, and identifying gaps, as part of the process of formulating CFSPs and a RFSP;
- agreeing, with IGAD, a procedure for formulating a RFSP.

## HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

If it is decided to proceed with the follow up activities proposed in the Task Force report, the ACC might wish to consider the possibility of holding a regional conference to launch the implementation phase. Such a meeting, in which governments (preferably represented by Heads of State), the principal donors, UN agencies and NGOs would participate, could be scheduled for mid-2001, at which point the individual CFSPs and the RFSP would have been formulated.<sup>11</sup> The main objectives of the conference would be:

- for each government to take formal responsibility for eliminating famine and food insecurity in the region, possibly in the form of a *Compact*, and for all relevant UN agencies, donors and NGOs to pledge support;
  - to agree on general performance indicators relating to budget allocations and improvements in governance;
  - to secure pledges of funding for the implementation of CFSPs and the RFSP;
  - the drawing up of a timetable for the implementation of the CFSPs and the RFSP;
- to reach agreement on a system for reporting progress and a set of objectively verifiable indicators to measure the impact of the programmes being implemented.

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<sup>11</sup> Such a high-level meeting could be scheduled to coincide with the annual IGAD Heads of State meeting.

### 3. FROM FRAMEWORK TO ACTION

In the run up to the regional conference, a publicity campaign should be initiated, directed to donor agencies and countries in the Western world, to raise public awareness of the new resolve on the part of governments, UN agencies, donors and NGOs to tackle the underlying causes of famine and food insecurity in the Horn of Africa.

#### TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

DATE	ACTIVITY
30 September	Submission of Final Report to Secretary-General
27/28 October	ACC Meeting in New York
November	Mobilization of resources for CFSP/RFSP formulation phase
November	Meeting of Horn of Africa Country Teams
December	Start-up process of CFSP and RFSP formulation
January to June 2001	CFSP and RFSP formulation
July 2001	High-Level Regional Meeting

# Appendix

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## **Terms of reference**

The terms of reference for the Task Force  
are captured in two letters contained in the Appendix  
from the UN Secretary-General to the Chairman of the Task Force,  
FAO's Director-General Dr Jacques Diouf



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

31 March 2000

Dear Mr. Diouf,

I would like to share with you my concern about the growing humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa. As you are aware, the prolonged drought in the region has led to increased food insecurity and severe food shortages across the entire region. The devastating effects of drought are further compounded by armed conflicts in and among several countries in the region. Tragically, the humanitarian situation is expected to deteriorate in the coming months, with more than 15 million people estimated to be at risk across ten countries.


In order to address the immediate humanitarian concerns and to ensure that the United Nations is prepared to avert a possible famine, I have asked Ms. Catherine Bertini, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, to travel shortly to the region to raise awareness and support among the international community, and to provide recommendations on strengthening the relief response. She will also explore ways to involve the region's governments and regional organizations in our efforts and the manner in which the immediate response may lay the groundwork for longer-term food security in the region. A copy of the Terms of Reference is attached.

Mr. Jacques Diouf  
Director-General  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Rome

I believe that it is incumbent upon the United Nations system to address collectively the challenge of promoting long-term food security and development in this region. To this end, a High-Level Task Force should identify actions that need to be undertaken at the international, regional and national levels. I would like to invite your organization, as well as UNDP, WFP, IFAD, the World Bank, WMO, UNEP, UNICEF and ECA to participate in these efforts and to consider how you can contribute to the work of the Task Force.

The forthcoming Administrative Committee on Coordination meeting in Rome will provide a suitable opportunity for us to pursue this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Kofi A. Annan



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

24 April 2000

Dear Mr. Diouf,

I would like to thank you for agreeing so readily to chair the recently created Task Force to articulate recommendations to promote long-term food security and development in the Horn of Africa.

As you know, Ms. Catherine Bertini<sup>1</sup> my Special Envoy on the Drought in the Horn of Africa, has recently visited countries in the region. She will report to me shortly with recommendations on how the United Nations system could better support the affected countries in addressing their immediate emergency requirements.

The Task Force, in contrast, needs to focus on the broader issue of why the Horn of Africa continues to experience famine during periods of drought, unlike other drought-prone regions. In the course of addressing the issue of food security, it will also be important for the Task Force to review the role of longer-term structural issues, such as poverty, conflict and the need to encourage sustainable development and good governance, in the occurrence of famine.

Mr. Jacques Diouf  
Director-General  
Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations  
Rome

Since our discussions in Geneva, I have received very strong support from Governments who look to the United Nations system for leadership in addressing this challenge. I attach great importance to our building on this momentum in order to maximize support from the international community. I would therefore appreciate it if the Task Force, under your able leadership, could complete its work in as short a time frame as possible.

I look forward to receiving your plans for the work of the Task Force and eventually its recommendations in time for me to present the findings to the General Assembly in September. In the meantime, I would appreciate receiving periodic briefings on the progress of the work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan', with a stylized, flowing script.

• Kofi A. Annan

