

SUMMARY OF THE FSN FORUM DISCUSSION
MAINSTREAMING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN POLICY PLATFORMS
FROM 27TH MAY TO 26TH JUNE 2008

(Proceedings available at
http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS_Mainstreaming_FSN.doc)

I. ISSUES RAISED

- Gaps in addressing food security and nutrition (FSN) in national policies (M. Immink):
 - Food security is typically viewed as a major concern of the agricultural sector, while nutrition is seen as a concern of the health sector.
 - Much less often adequate attention is given to a twin-track approach to food security, which also emphasises food access and social protection measures (food and non-food safety nets) as important components of food security strategies.
 - Poverty-food and nutrition security linkages are often overlooked in national policy statements. Even when a food security and nutrition policy is in place, little attention is given to harmonising relevant sector policies with the food security and nutrition policy, or to policy implementation by mainstreaming food and nutrition security in local level development plans.

II. OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

- **Suggestions concerning mainstreaming food and nutrition security into planning and national policies:**
 - It is needed to show solid ground level evidence that agriculture sector can indeed contribute to improving FSN. Attempts to address nutrition concerns through health sectors have had enough evidence on its own but not really in the context of achieving nutrition security where access to food has been a problem (B. Nandi)
 - In tribal areas, geographic accessibility is the main limiting factor, which has to be internalized in all planning. There is a need for an integrated view of total livelihood sources and its future development on a geographic basis in these areas (K. D. Singh)
 - Mainstream FSN within disaster risk reduction. It will build community resilience when disasters happen. For example, PIKUL (a local NGO in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia) has food security program related to disaster risk reduction (A. Y.C Sutarto).
- **Suggestions to improve the food security and nutrition situation:**
 - Sustainable agriculture practiced by small holders is a solution for the problem of FSN in India. Sustainable agriculture policy should be present in national policies (R. Banerjee, P. Pande, P. K. Patnaik).
 - Natural resource based livelihood promotion could be one more alternative towards improving FSN at all level. It is necessary to integrate sustainable watershed development with sustainable agriculture practices (P. K. Patnaik)
 - Use the Joint Forest Management committees (JFMC) for imparting training and information on land and water conservation can optimize the use of land and water (India) (S. Gopalan)

- Build community storages for food grains. If this can be refined to take care of food security for a whole year for the community, and a system put in place to replenish stocks after every harvest, by compensating the farmers, distress sales after harvest, and famine subsequently avoided (S. Gopalan)
- Adopt and promote Integrated Post Harvest Management (IPHM), which can provide adequate income enhancement to remove poverty as well as FSN (S. Roy)

Use Mid-day meal programmes: mid-day meal scheme fights hunger among the poorest children and helps them get into school. It is generally seen as another welfare scheme through which some benefits may trickle down to the poor. In India, a study using the Health Systems Research (HSR) methodology has been carried out to assess the impact of such programmes (V. Nambiar).

School feeding programmes are only one part of the solution to addressing problems of childhood malnutrition and should complement nutrition programmes for mothers and younger, preschool-aged children (A. Jones)

Gaps in mid-day meals programmes:

- implementers don't understand the importance nor the objectives of the programmes (K S Karnic);
- local people are not well involved (e.g. in supplying foods) (K S Karnic);
- lack of participation of the nutritional experts and low quality of the meals (N. Tekale)

Suggestions to improve mid-day meals programmes:

- applying the rights-based approach to recognise the roles of the rights holders and duty bearers more explicitly (G. Kent);
 - vary the type and sources of foods such as fermented food rich in minerals and vitamins, incorporation of locally grown leafy vegetables, modified nutritional recipe from locally available food grains etc, vegetable from school and home gardens; involving women self help group to grow foods (N. Tekale)
 - Separate staff should be appointed for food preparation and management instead of using teachers for this purpose (B. P. G Swamy)
 - Use environment friendly methods to cook food (B. P. G Swamy)
 - Introducing quality instant foods, which take less time for preparation (B. P. G Swamy)
 - Collective cooking for nearby schools with limited human resource (B. P. G Swamy)
 - Assess the impacts on the performance of children in school and their health status (B. P. G Swamy)
- Solving urban food insecurity is important to improving FSN status, some suggestions to improve the urban food security include (D. Sharma, A. Srivastava, V. Sethi):
 - Municipalities to play a pivotal role in locating vulnerable slum pockets through mapping and implementation of food security schemes. Mapping of existing fair price shops and ICDS centres will help in ensuring equitable spatial distribution of such facilities
 - Formation of city-level monitoring and review committees to ensure optimal functioning of PDS.
 - Formation of ward coordination committees, involving all stakeholders (elected representatives, civil society, with special preference to genuine representatives of slum poor including women).
 - Advocate for locally/ culturally compatible food grains to be included in the existing list of food grains available under PDS
 - Slum-level SHGs and community groups to be encouraged and trained to establish and manage fair price shops, and assist and aid the ICDS workers to promote appropriate dietary practices at household and community-level.
 - Facilitating the skill upgrading, training, and linkages with potential employers and access to fair credit.

- **A set of common issues should be used to organizing the lessons learnt on mainstreaming food and nutrition security**, including (J. Opio-Odongo):
 - The kinds of results that were being sought through mainstreaming food security and nutrition;
 - The different stakeholders (domestic and external) who were involved and how they were individually and collectively expected to contribute to the realization of the results ; and whether or not those expectations were met;
 - The communication strategies used in enhancing the prospects of getting food security and nutrition issues on the policy agenda. How the strategies helped to enhance the salience of food security/nutrition both as a public policy and a human development concern;
 - The mainstreaming strategies put in place by the agency that was primarily responsible for promoting mainstreaming;
 - Whether the methods used combined "paper mainstreaming" (getting the FSN issues embedded in the national or sector policies) with the difficult task of getting increased budget allocations for food security and nutrition;
 - The extent to which what got mainstreamed were effectively implemented;
 - The monitoring mechanisms used to gauge progress towards the desired mainstreaming outcomes;
 - Positive and negative surprises on process and products of mainstreaming as a cross-portfolio.

III. RELEVANT INITIATIVES

- **Successful initiatives towards mainstreaming food security and nutrition into national policies:**
 - **Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF)**, India, is a need base fund which is essentially used for the regional poverty alleviation activities and designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The fund provides financial resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows in state plans (PIP). Rational and logical use of the fund especially integration of poverty initiatives with the Food and Nutritional Security have been proposed. More information can be obtained from <http://www.brgf.gov.in> (**S. H Naqvi**)
 - The project **"Integrated Rural Development of Fishing villages in Sierra Leone"** (West Africa) funded by UNDP, UNCDF and implemented by FAO: The objective of project was holistic for the development of 11 fishing villages. The mainstreaming idea was to provide training for improving livelihoods, organise them for preparing village plan and mechanism of development through village cooperatives, supply necessary inputs on credit and manage revolving funds, market produce by taking it to bigger markets in district level to realise higher price. The learning experience of this project and similar nature of projects gives **basis to the planning process for integrating or mainstreaming the safety net policies** (i.e. food, nutrition and health) **in poverty reduction plans and programmes. Lessons learned:** there is need to emphasise planners at all levels to give adequate fund allocation for food and nutrition security to communities and it is more relevant when prices of agriculture commodities are rising beyond the purchasing power of poor and affecting livelihoods of millions poor in developing countries (M. Upare).
 - The work done in East Africa in the 80's, e.g. in Zambia, where the students at the NRDC (National Rural Development College) shared courses with others aiming for jobs in agriculture and other rural development roles on growth monitoring, surveillance,

supplementation, weaning food preparation. Those with the nutrition focus were employed as district nutritionists, and in those roles were well-placed to work out local initiatives coordinating with their colleagues in health, agriculture and education, with whom they shared a training background. The idea was good, but implementation was eroded as the Zambian economy collapsed (J. Appleton)

- **Experience of J. Appleton in mainstreaming FSN in Sudan:** she worked with national consultants to tease out national and many local issues beyond the agriculture-health-education triad. In addition to identifying work required in those sectors, the priorities, and who could or would be needed to do it, they added many others in the strategies they worked through, assigning key roles also to ... the media, and to the food industry. Despite objections from the emergencies caucus, they categorised the crises in Darfur, Kassala and elsewhere as failures of a system which should be protecting the poor in the ways described in the main policy, and outlined further political and peace steps to be taken alongside extra support for those populations. A policy draft has been written (J. Appleton)
- **Successful initiatives aiming at improving the food and nutritional security:**
 - The projects implemented by ICAR under Jai Vigyan-NATP (<http://pib.nic.in/feature/fe0699/f0806991.html>) for ensuring Household FSN in tribal, hilly and backward areas during 2000-2005: the project adopted 2 approaches. The first consists in providing poor people guaranteed jobs in road construction, land development as well soil and water conservation activities and other developmental activities. The second aims at developing entrepreneurship for micro enterprises based on local resources, e.g. raising milch and meat animals and some processing of meat and milk, growing fruits and vegetables either in kitchen garden or small holding and their processing and preservation (R. T. Patil).
 - In India, many interventions have resulted in better food and nutrition status, including home, school and backyard gardening; development of local nurseries for fruits and vegetable growing plants and seeds; local level food processing; trainings on these to women and self help groups; and involvement of the local Panchayat members (I. Chakravarty)

IV. REFERENCES

- "Sustainable Agriculture: a pathway out of poverty for India's rural poor" (P. Pande) (http://www.mamud.com/sustainet_india.htm)
- Nutritional Quality of Organic Versus Conventional Fruits, Vegetables and Grains (OP Rupela) http://km.fao.org/fsn/resources/fsn_viewresdet.html?r=333
- List of publications supporting organic agriculture (OP Rupela) http://km.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/OF%20nutrition%20lit.doc
- ICDS and Right to Food, *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 41, No. 45 (November 11, 2006) (G. Kent) <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~kent/ICDS%20and%20Right%20to%20Food.pdf>
- Designing Rights-Based School Feeding Programs" (G. Kent) <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~kent/Designing%20Revision%202.doc>
- In India, there has been many programmes which mainstream FSN, some of the details of the programmes and progress can be accessed at (P. Ramachandran) http://www.nutritionfoundationofindia.res.in/publication_others.asp