

# Food aid and food assistance in emergency and transitional contexts: a review of current thinking

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' alone. The authors accept sole responsibility for any factual inaccuracies.



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# Acronyms

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>ACDI/VOCA</b> | Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance                                 |
| <b>ACF</b>       | Action Contre La Faim  |
| <b>AoA</b>       | Agreement on Agriculture (WTO)   |
| <b>BEHT</b>      | Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust  |
| <b>BEST</b>      | Bellmon Estimation Studies for Title II  |
| <b>BMZ</b>       | Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) |
| <b>CARE</b>      | Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere   |
| <b>CERF</b>      | Central Emergency Response Fund  |
| <b>CFS</b>       | Committee on Food Security   |
| <b>CHF</b>       | Common Humanitarian Fund   |
| <b>CoA</b>       | Committee on Agriculture (WTO)   |
| <b>CRS</b>       | Catholic Relief Services   |
| <b>DAC</b>       | Development Assistance Committee   |
| <b>DDR</b>       | Doha Development Round (WTO)   |
| <b>ERF</b>       | Emergency Response Fund  |
| <b>FAC</b>       | Food Aid Convention  |
| <b>FAO</b>       | Food and Agriculture Organization  |
| <b>FEWSNET</b>   | Famine Early Warning System Network  |
| <b>FTS</b>       | Financial Tracking Service   |
| <b>GFRP</b>      | Global Food Crisis Response Programme  |
| <b>GHFSI</b>     | Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative   |
| <b>GTZ</b>       | German Technical Cooperation   |
| <b>IASC</b>      | Inter-Agency Standing Committee  |
| <b>IGC</b>       | International Grains Council   |
| <b>INTERFAIS</b> | International Food Aid Information System (WFP)  |
| <b>IOM</b>       | International Organisation for Migration   |
| <b>LRP</b>       | Local and Regional Procurement   |
| <b>M&amp;E</b>   | Monitoring and Evaluation  |
| <b>MDG</b>       | Millennium Development Goal  |
| <b>MMT</b>       | Million Metric Tons  |
| <b>NGO</b>       | Non-Governmental Organisation  |
| <b>ODA</b>       | Official Development Assistance  |
| <b>PL 480</b>    | Public Law 480   |
| <b>PRRO</b>      | Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation   |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>TAFAD</b> | Trans-Atlantic Food Aid Dialogue                   |
| <b>USAID</b> | United States Agency for International Development |
| <b>USDA</b>  | United States Department of Agriculture            |
| <b>USGAO</b> | United States Government Accountability Office     |
| <b>WE</b>    | wheat equivalent                                   |
| <b>WFP</b>   | World Food Programme                               |
| <b>WTO</b>   | World Trade Organization                           |

# Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a review of changes in food aid and food assistance policies and strategies within the international aid system. It was carried out between January and May 2010 for the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The study provides an overview of key current issues in donor government and aid agency policies and programming practices regarding food assistance. The study was commissioned by BMZ to inform the German government's revision of its food assistance policy in emergency and transitional contexts. It involved interviews with a representative selection of officials from bilateral donors, international agencies and NGOs, and a review of recent literature and organisational policies.

A review of changes in food assistance policies and practices is important for a number of reasons:

1. A shift from food aid to food assistance by key donors, UN agencies and NGOs. In terms of assistance programming, significant trends include the shift from in-kind food aid to local and regional procurement, an increase in the use of cash transfers and an increasing role for social protection and hunger safety nets.
2. Changes in the context in which food assistance is provided. The global food, finance and fuel crises and climate change, as well as the ever more protracted nature of some internal conflicts are all factors which are putting pressure on the international community for a change of focus in food assistance policy and practice.
3. Changes in the international architecture and the delivery of food assistance. The humanitarian reform agenda (the clusters, the CERF) and the future of the Food Aid Convention (FAC), currently in debate, are critical areas of change in the international humanitarian and food security architecture.

## Changes in crisis contexts

The past decade has seen a rise in the number of natural disasters, persistent protracted conflicts and major humanitarian emergencies. Climatologists anticipate more frequent extreme weather-related disasters. In response, the need for disaster mitigation, preparedness and response measures increases. Rapid urbanisation and an ageing population are adding to the complexity of crises. The global food price crisis has led to calls for change in the international food security architecture. Even though food prices have fallen considerably following their peak in 2008, they are likely to remain volatile as a result of rising energy costs, increasing climatic variability, the growing demand for food from emerging economies such as China and continuing instability in the global financial system.

## From food aid to food assistance

An increasing number of donors and aid agencies are using the term food assistance as an alternative to food aid. For instance, WFP, in its new strategic plan, refers to the shift from being a food aid to a food assistance agency. ECHO talks about a gradual and important shift over the last 15 years from using in-kind commodity food aid as a default response to emergency needs towards considering a broader and more effective set of humanitarian food assistance tools. A major reason for the evolution in terminology is to allow agencies to include the provision of cash for food-related purposes within definitions of food assistance.

However, the ways different stakeholders presently define food assistance vary considerably. Some definitions embrace all interventions that address food insecurity and nutrition (including in-kind food aid, cash transfers, some forms of production and market support) while others limit food assistance to *direct* food and cash-based transfers. The growing use of the term 'food assistance' instead of 'food aid', but without a clear definition, raises conceptual and practical issues. When should cash transfers be considered food assistance? With regard to ODA (Official Development Assistance), should export credits or only grants be considered food assistance? What about programme aid for budgetary support or monetisation? There is an urgent need for clarity in what is becoming a definitional morass, not only to provide a basis for a possible new Food Assistance Convention, but also to determine the remit of WFP and the focus of donor policies. The issue of the definition of food assistance is of particular importance for those donors with separate food assistance budget lines.

Another debate continues, over whether food assistance is primarily a humanitarian instrument or whether it should also be used in transition and development contexts. Some donors, including the European Commission, see food assistance as primarily a humanitarian instrument and question its appropriateness in development contexts. The US (the major donor) and WFP, on the other hand, argue that food assistance can be appropriate in both development and humanitarian contexts. In many contexts, humanitarian and development needs overlap. Rather than debating whether food assistance is humanitarian and/or developmental, it may be more helpful to think about how the objectives and modalities of different food assistance and food security instruments shift with transitions from humanitarian to development approaches.

The potential of longer-term approaches to provide social protection, including food assistance, as an alternative or complement to emergency relief has gained currency, particularly

in places with chronic food insecurity, repeated periods of acute food insecurity or both. The Ethiopia Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and a Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya (HSNP) are widely known current examples.

### Food aid and food assistance trends since 2000

The confusion over definitions complicates the tracking of food aid or food assistance. There are no satisfactory statistical data on food assistance broadly defined, although funding of cash-based transfers has apparently increased. Food aid more narrowly defined – as internationally funded, concessional food commodities – is tracked by WFP through INTERFAIS.<sup>1</sup>

Three main trends can be clearly observed in terms of food aid. First, emergency relief accounts for an increasingly large percentage of overall food aid with a decline in its use for development purposes. Second, support for local and regional procurement of food aid is growing. Third, non-OECD-DAC governments are becoming increasingly important funders of food aid.

Between 1996/98 and 2006/08, the share of emergency aid rose from 38 percent to 66 percent of all food aid whilst programme aid shrank from 33 percent to 12 percent. Project aid also declined over the decade, from 28 percent to 22 percent, as did monetisation.<sup>2</sup> The last activity remains an important component of US food aid policy and of some US NGO programmes. Some NGOs, notably CARE, have been recently phasing out monetisation on grounds of efficiency and effectiveness.

Food has traditionally formed a large part of humanitarian sectoral requirements inside the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) (GHA 2009). Humanitarian assistance levels have increased since 2000, with growth accelerating from 2005 onwards coinciding with the inception of pooled funding mechanisms for humanitarian aid contributions (the CERF).

<sup>1</sup> The FAC definition of food aid is based on three core characteristics of food aid: (i) international source of funding, (ii) concessionality and (iii) food commodities. WFP also includes transactions of non-DAC funders as reported by its field staff, country partners and agencies to INTERFAIS. The report makes use of data on global food aid deliveries in metric tonnes from the database of the International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS). INTERFAIS is a dynamic database showing the interactions of donor governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, recipient countries and WFP field offices.

<sup>2</sup> The conventional categorisation of food aid by activity is explained for example in OECD (2006). *Emergency or relief food aid* is targeted on, and freely distributed to, victims of natural or man-made disasters. *Programme food aid* is supplied as a resource transfer providing balance-of-payments (BoP) or budgetary support. BoP support is given either by replacing commercial imports or by allowing additional imports where these are inhibited by foreign exchange (FOREX) constraints. This commodity aid is provided directly to a recipient government, or its agent, for sale on local markets. *Project food aid* is usually provided to support specific poverty alleviation and disaster prevention activities, targeted on specific beneficiary groups or areas. The commodities are provided on a grant basis and are usually channelled through a multilateral agency, almost invariably WFP, or through international NGOs.

Overall, food aid levels have declined but food aid remains the largest component (25–30 percent) of humanitarian assistance.

Local and regional procurement has dramatically increased both in absolute terms and as a share of food aid. The commodity composition of food aid is also changing from predominantly wheat towards maize and other coarse grains. A growing number of donors have made their funding more flexible to allow for local and regional purchase (LRP) and other triangular transactions. The major exception is the US; its Congress only approved a small trial programme of local purchasing with food aid funds from the US Department of Agriculture in 2007. However, the US has been a significant funder of local procurement under non-food aid budget lines. Local purchases and other untied (triangular) procurement practices have been found in almost all cases to be cheaper and faster than tied in-kind aid. Concerns with importing tied food aid include the potential disruption of local markets, quality control and competitive bidding. Local and regional procurement is also considered as having the potential to deliver development benefits to local markets and farmers. Initiatives such as WFP's Purchase for Progress specifically attempt to maximise positive impacts for small holders.

For the most part, the major food aid donors remain unchanged: The US provides around half of all food aid. Others major donors are the EU, its member states, Canada and Japan. Non-DAC donors are emerging as significant but less predictable funders: In 2008, for example, Saudi Arabia was a major donor and non-DAC funding accounted for 20 percent of all food aid. An increasing number of governments (for example South Sudan, India and Kenya) provide contributions to WFP operations in their own countries.

The top five recipient countries in 2008 were Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan – receiving a total of 2.6 million tonnes of emergency food aid and representing 54 percent of the total delivered. Countries having protracted crises that have already been receiving food aid for extended periods tend to dominate the food aid recipient list.

### Food security architecture

The global spike in food prices, the financial crisis and the economic recession have given impetus to re-examining food security at an international level; there have been a number of important recent developments.

In response to high food prices, the United Nations established a High-Level Task Force (HLTF) and a Comprehensive Framework of Action (CFA) to enhance the efforts of the UN system and the international financial institutions to respond to the crisis. A reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was endorsed at the World Summit on Food Security in November 2009. At the



L'Aquila G8 summit in July 2009, governments came forward with pledges totalling \$20 billion, including a significant proportion of new financial commitments. A new food security cluster, part of the sectoral coordination mechanism for humanitarian crises and jointly led by WFP and FAO, was agreed in early 2010. The World Bank Group set up the Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP) in May 2008 to provide immediate relief to countries hard hit by high food prices and established the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) trust fund to improve income and food security for poor people in developing countries in early 2010.

The UN secretary general identified the right to food as a third track of the Comprehensive Framework for Action at the Madrid High Level Conference on Food Security in January 2009. The UN High-Level Task Force has emphasised the need to address all aspects of food systems from a human rights perspective. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recently joined the High Level Task Force (United Nations 2009).

Current debates concerning the future of the Food Aid Convention (FAC) are also significant. The FAC became the subject of active but informal discussions in December 2009. A revision of the FAC (last negotiated in 1999) was put on hold in 2004 pending the outcome of the WTO Doha Round of negotiations on agriculture, which stalled in 2007. There are contrasting views amongst signatories and other stakeholders about the future of the FAC, which is the only legal instrument for ensuring minimum levels of food aid. Some consider it as irrelevant and the product of a previous era of surplus food disposal and in-kind food aid. Others believe it should be revitalised, in order to become a key component of a new food security architecture. However, no consensus amongst those favouring a renegotiation has emerged. Some have only a minimalist view, envisaging only minor changes, such as renaming the FAC the Food Assistance Convention and adjusting the list of eligible commodities. Others want a more radical revision, envisioning the FAC as providing a safety net of support for food assistance and, possibly, expanding membership.

### **The food assistance toolbox**

The debate around definitions means that clarity is lacking with regard to what instruments are to be included within the food assistance 'toolbox' and what should be seen as broader food security, social protection or poverty interventions.

Food assistance instruments might include direct food-based transfers (such as general rations, food-for-work, supplementary feeding or vulnerable group feeding, school feeding), food subsidies, cash transfers and vouchers (including school or user fee waivers) and agricultural and livestock support. Food subsidies, fee waivers and livestock

support are rarely considered to be part of food assistance, but do fit some definitions. Other instruments fall within a 'grey area'. Further ambiguity remains over whether cash transfers should be counted as food assistance, what forms of support to agricultural production (seed provision, fertiliser subsidies and extension services) and what aspects of nutritional interventions should count as food assistance

There are several key areas of debate and innovation in how food assistance is assessed, targeted and delivered. The Sphere minimum standards for disaster response are currently being revised; there is a growing use of cash transfers, a renewed focus on the nutritional aspects of food aid and continued debates around the effectiveness of school feeding. The Sphere Handbook now includes a chapter devoted to food security and nutrition, including sections on cash and vouchers as well as on food transfers, food security and livelihoods. Livestock emergency standards have recently been developed in a separate initiative.

Advances have been made in assessment. For example, the Integrated Phase Classification for classifying populations according to severity of food insecurity has been developed, and incorporating conflict or protection analysis into food security and livelihoods assessments in complex emergencies is gaining attention. The linkage between assessment and analysis of response options remains a weakness in many contexts. This applies both to food aid and food assistance. Evaluations of food distributions note poor monitoring as an issue that inhibits better understanding of impact and improved performance. In addition, studies of food aid targeting over the past decade have repeatedly shown redistribution or sharing, but this has not led to changes in programming. Tackling this dilemma head-on rather than continuing to largely ignore it should become a priority if the impact of food aid is to be better understood.

Providing people with money can prove an appropriate alternative or complement to food aid and other forms of in-kind assistance and is gaining acceptance. This is reflected both in policy positions which have been revised to include cash transfers within broader definitions of food assistance, and in practice where the use of cash in responding to disasters is growing. Cash transfers, however, still only constitute a small proportion of overall humanitarian assistance.

Under-nutrition is responsible for the deaths of more than 3.5 million children each year and the loss of billions of dollars in foregone productivity and avoidable health care spending. Faced with such huge costs, actors in the broader development sphere are increasingly focusing their actions on effectively tackling under-nutrition. Several donor governments and aid agencies argue that the nutritional composition of food assistance needs to be improved and that better links with other interventions designed to address malnutrition

are needed. General food distributions and supplementary feeding have often failed to properly assess and document their nutritional impact.

Important innovations in the treatment of severe acute malnutrition have been made. Approaches have shifted from centre-based therapeutic feeding to the widespread adoption of community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) which uses ready-to-eat therapeutic foods to treat severe acute malnutrition within the community whenever possible. Given the low coverage of many supplementary feeding programmes targeted at moderately acutely malnourished children, blanket distribution of special foods to all under fives and expanded general ration programmes are being considered more often. New products have been developed for supplementary feeding, such as 'improved CSB' and 'Supplementary Plumpy', but cost remains a constraint to their expanded use and sustainability.

School feeding continues to have fervent supporters as well as sceptics. WFP, by far the largest agency supporting school feeding, claims that the debate is largely won: *'What is so clear...is that we are beyond the debate about whether school feeding makes sense as a way to reach the most vulnerable.'* Others, notably DG ECHO, DFID and various NGOs continue to question the effectiveness of school feeding in meeting their nutritional or educational objectives compared to other possible interventions.

### Challenges for the international community

Food aid continues to make up the majority of humanitarian appeals and remains an important tool in responding to crises. However, the continuing shift from tied in-kind to untied food aid, growing levels of local and regional procurement and the increasing use of cash-based transfers are leading to a quickly shifting environment for policy and practice.

The broader concept of food assistance is gradually replacing the former narrow notion of food aid. However, there is no common understanding within the international community about terms and definitions. So it is becoming increasingly unclear what fits within the food assistance toolbox. Funders

and operational agencies need to decide whether to adopt a separate food aid or food assistance policy or to simply regard food aid, cash and agricultural inputs as part of the wide range of instruments designed to tackle food insecurity.

The resurgent interest in nutrition has an important influence on food assistance debates. This is leading to calls for a stepped-up focus on the nutritional outcomes of food assistance, and on the quality as well as the quantity of assistance provided. Focus needs to be placed not just on providing more nutritious foodstuffs, but also on monitoring outcomes (what people actually receive and consume) and building stronger linkages between food assistance and other dimensions of nutrition policy. Greater focus on the underlying causes of malnutrition as well as the risks associated with it, aspects which have remained relatively neglected over the last decade, is also needed.

This review of recent developments leads us to identify and prioritise five key areas of action for agencies and other stakeholders in their efforts to make food assistance policy and practice more relevant to current needs and anticipated challenges:

- developing a new food security architecture which incorporates food assistance;
- working towards greater clarity of terms and definitions;
- where appropriate, continuing to expand beyond food aid to the use of cash and a broader food assistance toolbox;
- linking food assistance more clearly to the expansion of social assistance within national social protection strategies and
- focusing on the nutritional outcomes of food assistance and linking food assistance more clearly to overall nutrition strategies.

These areas of action should be addressed with a clear direction in a number of contexts, from the highest levels of the UN to the G20/G8, in a more consistent and connected manner. Particular challenges include the renegotiation the Food Aid Convention, finalising the Sphere Minimum Standards, the new food security cluster, the UN High-Level Task Force and the revitalised Committee on Food Security.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The German government (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development or BMZ), with support from GTZ, is planning to revise its food assistance policy in emergency and transitional contexts. This study intends to inform that process by providing a review of the food assistance policies and strategies of key donors, UN agencies, major NGOs and the Red Cross movement. It also intends to inform other agencies' food assistance policies and provide a helpful overview of the current state of debates around key issues relating to food assistance.

Changes in recent years have affected the nature of food assistance, not least the shift in terminology from food aid to food assistance. This makes a review of food assistance policies and practices important. Recent developments include changes in the external environment, such as the global food, finance and fuel crisis; climate change and the increasingly protracted nature of many internal conflicts. In addition, there have been changes or potential changes in aid architecture, the humanitarian reform agenda (the clusters, the CERF) and discussions around the future of the Food Aid Convention (FAC). Programming approaches have changed significantly; in particular an increased emphasis on cash transfers in both emergency and development settings, including moves towards social protection and hunger safety nets. This study builds on previous German supported work, including a major 2007 conference on food assistance held in Berlin and a study in 2000 of donor and multilateral food security policies (Kracht 2000, BMZ 2007).

Section 2 frames current food assistance debates within the evolving disaster context, particularly the recent crisis triggered by high global food prices. It examines trends in volumes of food assistance and looks particularly at the growing importance of non-DAC donors in food assistance financing as well as the role played by new humanitarian financing instruments such as the CERF. Section 3 traces recent developments in the evolving global architecture for food security and focuses on debates around the renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention. The terminology has recently shifted; the term food assistance is now more commonly used than food aid in official documentation. This raises a series of definitional questions about the meaning of food assistance and about which instruments are included within this term. This is examined in Section 4. Section 5 looks at the perennial debate around relief, recovery and development and at where food assistance fits within different approaches to transition and recovery from crisis and protracted crises. Section 6 traces recent developments in assessment and early warning tools related to food assistance. Section 7 examines particular food assistance instruments and food modalities where there have been recent innovations or where

there are ongoing debates around approaches, focusing on cash and vouchers, nutrition instruments, school feeding, public works and other food security instruments. Section 8 is concerned with the process of delivering food assistance and considers procurement, monetisation and commodity management. Section 9 is concerned with the operational programming of food assistance, focusing on standards and principles, including the revision of Sphere and the right to food, targeting and monitoring and evaluation. Finally, Section 10 provides the main conclusions to the report.

### 1.1 Methodology

This study was based on a review of recent literature on food aid and interviews with people working for donor governments, UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross movement with responsibility for food assistance policy and programming. The focus was on humanitarian and transitional contexts. Ninety-one people were interviewed and grey literature relevant to food assistance policies and practices was gathered. An interview guide was developed for government and aid agency representatives (Annex 1).

There are some key gaps dictated by the time available for the study. It was not possible to interview non-DAC donors, disaster-affected governments, non-DAC WFP executive board members or developing country civil society organisations. The study was also not able to gather the views on food assistance of disaster-affected populations. The absence of G77 government voices is a key gap and a clear priority for further research.

It was not possible to comprehensively cover all of the OECD DAC donors and all major humanitarian aid agencies in the time available. In particular, the study team was not able to talk to the ICRC.

Annex 2 presents the policy positions of selected donor governments, UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs. In the time available, it was not possible to comprehensively cover all donor governments or major aid agencies. A purposive sample of OECD-DAC donor governments was selected including most of the larger food assistance donors. Some of the reports are more detailed than others. Given the dominant position of the US government in food assistance, a US-based consultant was commissioned to undertake a separate study. Visits were made to Brussels to interview European Commission officials and to Rome to interview WFP staff, Rome-based donors and FAO. Other interviews were conducted by telephone and official policy documents consulted.



# Chapter 2

## Evolving disaster contexts

According to the latest FAO estimates, the number of undernourished people in the world increased from around 870 million in 2004–6 to over one billion in 2009, mainly as a consequence of high food prices and the global economic recession (FAO 2009c, FAO 2009b, DG DEV 2009). The humanitarian system faces a number of new and ongoing challenges including climate change, volatile food prices, the financial crisis and the HIV/AIDS and flu pandemics. Longer-term issues, notably rapid urbanisation and ageing populations, will also require adaptation. Our knowledge of the linkages between climate change and disasters remains limited but there is confidence that it will mean more climate-related disasters and more need for disaster response (Webster et al. 2008, Scheumer-Cross and Taylor 2009).

The contexts in which emergency and transitional aid are needed are constantly shifting. The 2000s started with drought in the Horn of Africa, which highlighted the protracted crises that these countries face, in terms of repeatedly high levels of food insecurity and acute malnutrition. The outbreak of conflict and mass displacement in Darfur followed, the response to which remains the world's largest humanitarian response. Conflict in DRC and Somalia continues to lead to some of the world's largest and most severe humanitarian crises. The Asian Tsunami in December 2004 killed over 227,000 people and displaced some 1.7 million and led to one of the largest ever responses to natural disasters. The year 2008 started with the humanitarian aftermath of post-election violence in Kenya and conflict in Gaza. It also saw major natural disasters in Myanmar, China, Haiti and elsewhere. In 2009, the consequences of conflict in Sri Lanka and Pakistan created major crises of displacement and 2010 started with massive earthquakes in Haiti and Chile.

In terms of numbers of emergencies, the global humanitarian situation in 2007–8 appeared to have somewhat worsened compared to previous years. These years saw 52 major humanitarian emergencies (as defined by a count of the United Nations consolidated and flash appeals launched), or an average of 26 per year.<sup>1</sup> This represents an increase of 8 percent compared to the years 2001–6. Small- and medium-scale floods in particular have spiked in this period, a phenomenon attributed by some to climate change (DG ECHO 2009b). Considering a longer period, a four-fold increase of reported natural disasters occurred from around 100 in 1971 to more than 400 in 2003,<sup>2</sup> caused almost entirely by an increase in weather-related disasters.

<sup>1</sup> Figures from OCHA FTS as of 12 September 2009 (<http://ocha.unog.ch/fts>).

<sup>2</sup> Munich RE/EM-DAT (International Disaster Database) / Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters (CREED) / UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), cited in DG ECHO (2009b).

The majority of international humanitarian resources, however, continued to be focused in protracted, complex crises, such as Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as well as the high-profile contexts with great power involvement—Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, humanitarian funding requirements per emergency have increased by nearly 50 percent. This mainly reflects a broadening scope for humanitarian action that increasingly includes early recovery and preparedness (Harvey et al. 2010).

The evidence suggests that humanitarian assistance is more protected from the recession than development aid, partly because of public support for saving lives and partly because there is no clear relationship between changes in gross national income (GNI) and humanitarian assistance. In fact, governmental humanitarian assistance grew in 2008 despite a reduced growth rate of GNI in many countries (GHA 2009).

Given the unprecedented challenges outlined above, and the interplay between them, it is anticipated that humanitarian and food assistance needs will continue to increase.

### 2.1 Food price crisis

International food prices fell significantly from their peak in mid-2008. Nevertheless prices for staples remain above pre-crisis levels, especially in some low-income, import-dependent countries (Jaspars and Wiggins 2009, Johnston and Bargawi 2010b).<sup>4</sup> Studies reveal that a surprisingly high number of rural households in developing countries are net buyers of staple foods, challenging the commonly held view that high prices would benefit rural populations (Wiggins et al. 2010a, Hauenstein Swan et al. 2010). There is an emerging consensus that the groups most affected by the price spike include the rural landless, the displaced, pastoralists, smallholder farmers and the urban poor (Benson et al. 2008, Jaspars and Wiggins 2009). Poor families, for whom food is a large proportion of the household budget, have adopted negative coping strategies such as withdrawing children from schools (FAO 2009b), shifting towards less nutritious foods or reducing frequency of meals (Lang 2010), seeking more work or borrowing money (Raihin 2009). However, there is less evidence that irreversible coping strategies, such as the sale of productive assets, are being adopted (Wiggins et al. 2010b).

The more immediate causes of the 2007–8 'global food crisis' are commonly understood to include the following: the impact

<sup>3</sup> Development Initiatives, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2009* (2009), 4.

<sup>4</sup> See FAO, <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/en/> and <http://www.fao.org/giews/pricetool/>



of the rising price of oil on farming costs; measures, especially by the US, to encourage the processing of food crops into biofuels, just as the oil price spike dramatically increased the profitability of ethanol production; recognition of the rapidly rising demand for meat and feed grains in emerging economies, especially China; poor weather in Australia and financial speculation in the commodities futures markets (e.g., Timmer 2008). Others, for example, contributors to the *Journal of Agrarian Change's* 2010 Symposium on the 'World Food Crisis' point to different structural causes. The 2007–8 price volatility is seen to be an integral part of a broader agrarian and food-system crisis, in which food supply chains have become distorted by monopolistic international agro-industrial food companies and the drive for short term profits has been at the expense of environmentally and socially sustainable agriculture (Lang 2010, Van Der Ploeg 2010).

The combination of longer-term influences also suggests upward pressures on real food prices over the next twenty years. Climate change is predicted to have a negative influence on yields, livestock numbers and productivity, and to increase prices of major food crops in many developing countries (Wiggins et al. 2010a, Ludi 2009, UNDP 2007). Global population growth is also increasing existing pressure on natural resources (Martine et al. 2008). On the demand side, in addition to population growth, a demand for animal products and a diversified diet is growing in rapidly emerging economies as is the additional market for biofuel production. The potential for short term volatility is considerable, implying price crashes as well as spikes.

The global economic recession is widely perceived to have had severe negative impacts on trade, credit and foreign aid (including remittances), further reducing the incomes and employment opportunities of the poor and significantly lowering their power to purchase and grow food (GHA 2009, Wiggins et al. 2010a).

In response to what is being labelled a 'global food crisis', the United Nations established a high-level task force to enhance the efforts of the UN system and the international financial institutions to respond to the crisis. The task force developed a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) that outlined a coordinated approach to ensure access to, availability and utilisation of food. It detailed two sets of actions: those that contribute to short-term outcomes related to immediate needs and those that contribute to long-term outcomes needed for sustainable food systems able to withstand shocks (United Nations 2009).

The food crisis also led to significant efforts in 2009 towards revitalising the global architecture for food security (see Section 3).

Donors and UN agencies increased their funding and operations in response to the food crisis. WFP's response to the global

food crisis involved a 30 percent increase in beneficiaries (to 100 million). In 2008, it received an unprecedented amount of cash and in-kind contributions from both traditional and non-traditional donors, amounting to \$5.1 billion<sup>5</sup> (United Nations 2009).

The rising price of food and fuel increased the cost of WFP's operation, and had a direct impact on the cost of purchasing food aid commodities.

UNICEF allocated \$52 million as emergency funding to help national authorities in 42 countries to scale up nutrition efforts. FAO allocated \$394 million for support to smallholder farmers (seeds, tools, fertiliser and irrigation) including \$285 million from the European Union Food Facility. In addition, the World Bank Group set up the Global Food Crisis Response Program (GFRP) in May 2008 to provide immediate relief to countries hard hit by high food prices (which came to \$2 billion by April 2009) to provide immediate relief to countries hard hit by high food prices. Within the EC (European Commission), there was strong support for the creation of a European Union Food Facility in response to high food prices.

## 2.2 Food aid/assistance trends

### 2.2.1 Increase in humanitarian assistance levels

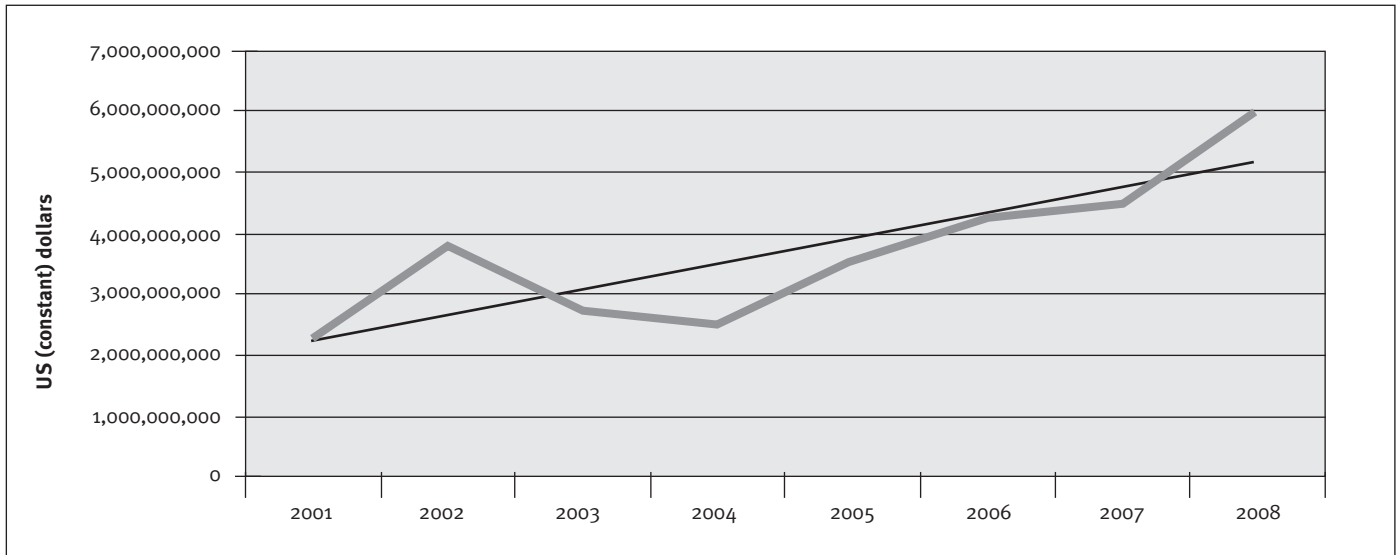
Overall, levels of humanitarian aid have been growing steadily. Like the aid worker population, calculating the total dollar amount of funding used for humanitarian action is a difficult task, and estimates vary. The most widely credited among these comes from the *Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) Report*, which estimates that international humanitarian resources totalled \$15 billion in 2007 and in the neighbourhood of \$18 billion in 2008.<sup>6</sup> The GHA report takes a donor-based approach to the calculation, factoring in official government humanitarian assistance contributions (as reported to OECD DAC), non-DAC government contributions (as reported to OCHA's FTS), OECD DAC governments' security-related and post-conflict assistance and private (non-government) contributions received by aid organisations. Looking just at targeted contributions to specific humanitarian emergency response efforts (as reported to OCHA's FTS), which do not include security related expenditures from DAC donors, brings the total down considerably to \$4.4 billion in 2007 and \$6.6 billion in 2008. These years' totals continue the general upward trend of aid humanitarian contributions, illustrated in Figure 1 (Harvey et al. 2010).

Financial data going back to 2001 indicate that humanitarian aid has risen faster than overall official development assistance (ODA) during that period, and that this rate of growth accelerated significantly after 2005. This rise correlates with the inception of the new pooled funding mechanisms for humanitarian contributions, i.e., the expanded UN Central

<sup>5</sup> All figures are in US dollars unless stated otherwise.

<sup>6</sup> Development Initiatives, *GHA Report 2009*, (Global Humanitarian Assistance, London 2009).

**Figure 1: Total humanitarian assistance flows to emergencies, 2001–2008**



Source: Compiled from the OCHA FTS as of 16 March 2009 (excludes Iraq and tsunami responses)

Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the country level Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs).

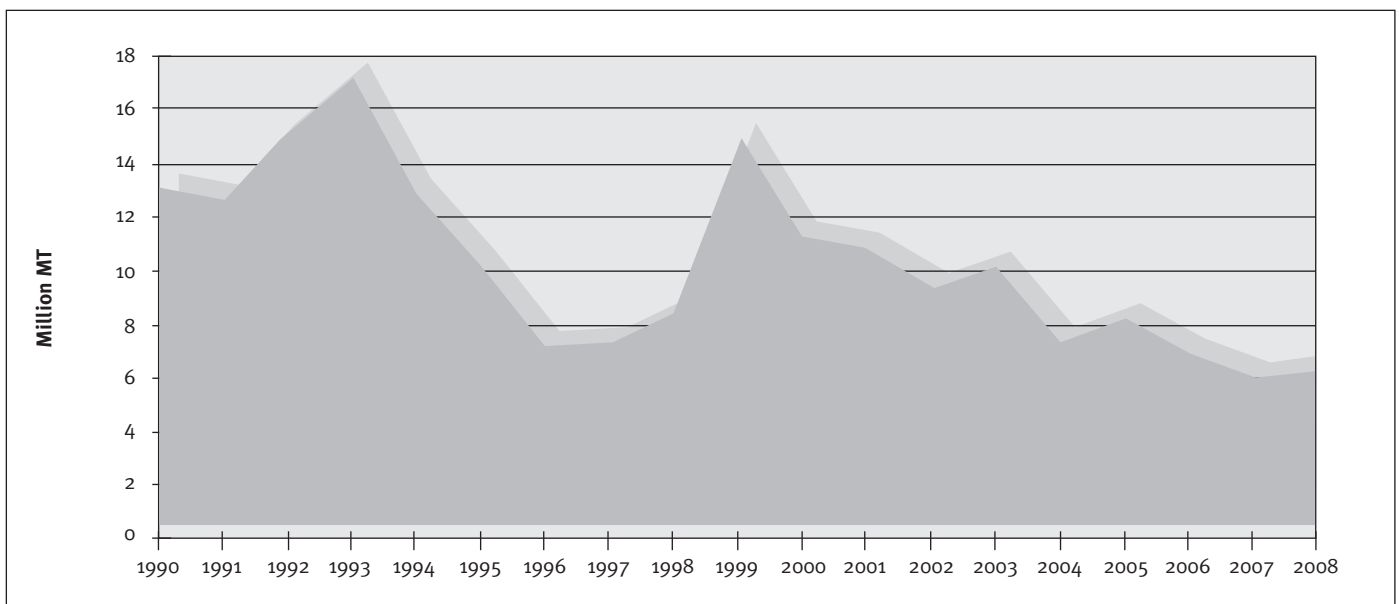
Food has traditionally formed a large part of humanitarian sectoral requirements inside the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP (GHA 2009). It has, however, become increasingly difficult to separate out food-related assistance within aid overall for two related reasons: First, as humanitarian aid has become more important, some funding of food aid may not be reported separately and second, there is increasing use of cash-based instruments to provide food assistance. Presently, there are no satisfactory statistical data on overall food assistance even as part of humanitarian assistance, quite apart from the issues of definition that are to be resolved (see Sections 3.2 and 4).

*2.2.2 Downward trend in overall food aid levels*

International food aid levels have historically been highly volatile (Figure 2) and driven by supply side influences, in particular by stock levels in donor exporting countries and global commodity prices (OECD 2006, Barrett and Maxwell 2005).<sup>7</sup> In addition, the US has provided a high proportion of food aid, around 50 percent or more since 1980, which means that US policy alone is a dominant influence on food aid flows.

<sup>7</sup> The report makes use of data on global food aid deliveries in metric tonnes are from the database of the International Food Aid Information System (INTERFAIS). INTERFAIS is a dynamic database involving the interaction of donor governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, recipient countries and WFP field offices.

**Figure 2: Global food aid deliveries by governments, NGOs and WFP, 1990–2008**



Source: WFP FAIS database

Apparent trends can be highly sensitive to the choice of period for analysis and strongly reflect US activity. The periods 1992–3 and 1999 are high-side outliers (see Figure 2). The 1999 peak was associated with the US and, on a lesser scale, the European Union providing large-scale government-to-government transitional programme aid, especially to Russia and some countries affected by the 1998 financial crisis in Asia. WFP acted as the channel for some of this crisis-related aid. After that episode, food markets progressively tightened. Thus global food aid flows have followed a clear downward trend since 1999, reaching the lowest level in 2007 since the early 1970s food crisis.

So we must ask, is the downward trend since 1999 a result of structural changes in circumstances and policy or might there be a return to food aid driven by surplus disposal? The instruments through which US government-to-government aid was channelled remain in place (see Annex 2). Presently most expert opinion anticipates, as suggested above, continuing tight market conditions with prices remaining high and stocks low. Arguably, markets are now more volatile. Part of the argument in the WTO negotiations (see below) was about preventing a recurrence of food aid acting as a vent for transitional surpluses. The downward trend is associated with two other important changes in the composition of food aid: greater flexibility in the activities that are supported and in the sourcing of commodities.

The decline in total food aid levels may also be associated with some increased funding for other forms of food assistance (e.g., cash-based transfers), humanitarian assistance more generally or support for food security, that is, a reallocation effect. However, the available data do not easily allow an exploration of this question. It would be a mistake to assume that the decline is directly associated with the untying of food aid as a policy measure. The degree of flexibility of budget lines may be an influence. For example, EC food aid has declined since the reforms of 1996 allowed the use of budget lines formerly wholly dedicated to food aid and funds for a broader range of food security actions. Probably, as this case illustrates, the way forward is to consider the issue on a donor agency basis through a detailed examination of aid expenditure.

Taking a longer-term perspective, whilst most donors have been funding less food aid, considerable differences amongst donors exist. There is a secular downward trend in US food aid funding from the high levels of the 1950s and 1960s but, in the last twenty years, the most apparent dynamic is considerable shorter-term variability. Australian, Canadian and Japanese food aid levels have been declining with some shorter-term variability related to different internal influences (the rice market in the Japanese case). European donors present a very mixed picture—overall they are contracting, as reflected (see Section 3) in their collective contributions against their FAC commitment. EC aid has been variable, but by 2008 it has

declined to around a third of late 1990s levels. France has phased out tied programme aid and, as a minor funder of WFP, has ceased to be a significant donor. German food aid levels are also trending lower. In contrast, the Nordic Plus group (including Norway outside the EU, as well as Netherlands and the UK) has sustained levels against the trend with volumes apparently sensitive to specific crises.

### 2.2.3 Change in types of food aid programmes

*Emergency food aid*<sup>8</sup> encompassing disaster assistance and continuing humanitarian operations has become the primary focus of lower volumes of food aid (Table 2). Despite critiques of its dominance in emergency appeals, food aid continues to play a leading role in responding to emergencies. Of the six million metric tonnes of food aid provided worldwide in 2008, about 60 percent was for humanitarian purposes. Food aid made up more than 50 percent of total UN consolidated (CAP) appeals in 2008 and 2009, as it had done between 2000 and 2005. As Maxwell et al. (2009) argue, ‘despite many recent changes, food aid remains the largest single category of humanitarian response world-wide’.

The structural change in food aid, from a dominance of programme food aid to emergency food aid, is clearly exposed by comparing the proportions of different types of activity during broadly similar supply-side conditions. The 2006–8 commodity price spike can be compared with 1996–8, the previous spike, and the period of tighter markets; global food aid levels were 15 percent lower in 2006–8 than a decade earlier, but emergency aid levels were 44 percent higher and the share of emergency aid had risen from 38 percent to 65.7 percent. In contrast, both programme and project aid levels declined in real terms and their shares of total food aid fell from 33 percent to 12 percent and from 28 percent to 22 percent respectively.

*Programme food aid* is almost entirely in-kind direct transfers. The dominant form of food aid even in 1999, it has shrunk to around 5 percent of total flows, an unprecedented low level. Most donors have decreased direct transfers of food aid, and in some important cases (USA, EC, Australia and France), this reduction has not been compensated for by an equivalent increase in cash contributions for local or triangular purchases. The overall decline in food aid deliveries can therefore be attributed to a drop in *direct transfer* deliveries and abandonment of the use of programme aid, a

<sup>8</sup> The conventional categorisation of food aid by activity is explained for example in OECD (2006). *Emergency or relief food aid* is targeted on, and freely distributed to, victims of natural or man-made disasters. *Programme food aid* is supplied as a resource transfer providing balance-of-payments (BoP) or budgetary support. BoP support is given either by replacing commercial imports or by allowing additional imports where these are inhibited by foreign exchange (FOREX) constraints. This commodity aid is provided directly to a recipient government, or its agent, for sale on local markets. *Project food aid* is usually provided to support specific poverty alleviation and disaster prevention activities, targeted on specific beneficiary groups or areas. The commodities are provided on a grant basis and are usually channelled through a multilateral agency, almost invariably WFP, or through international NGOs.



trend that began in the mid 1990s (see Figure 2 and Table 2). However, this downward trend was interrupted as food aid levels rose by 3.8 percent from 6.0 million mt (metric tonnes) in 2007 to 6.3 million mt in 2008. This increase was driven by a 1 million mt increase in direct transfers of emergency food aid, almost entirely channelled through WFP, while programme and project food aid decreased by 600,000 and 200,000 mt respectively. The 1 million mt increase, mainly from the US, Japan and Canada,<sup>9</sup> was intended to meet the immediate needs of countries affected by the economic crisis and high food prices.

Development *project food aid* has also steadily declined since the early 1990s (Figure 3 and Table 2). Levels appear to be sensitive to short-term supply side influences with lows in 1995 and 2007–8 and temporary recovery in 1999–2001. The de facto evidence that a lower priority is accorded to supposedly longer-term development, and is likely to be crowded out in a crisis by emergency aid, has led stakeholders to successfully lobby in the US for legislation to provide a ‘safe box’ of guaranteed minimum levels of development project aid.

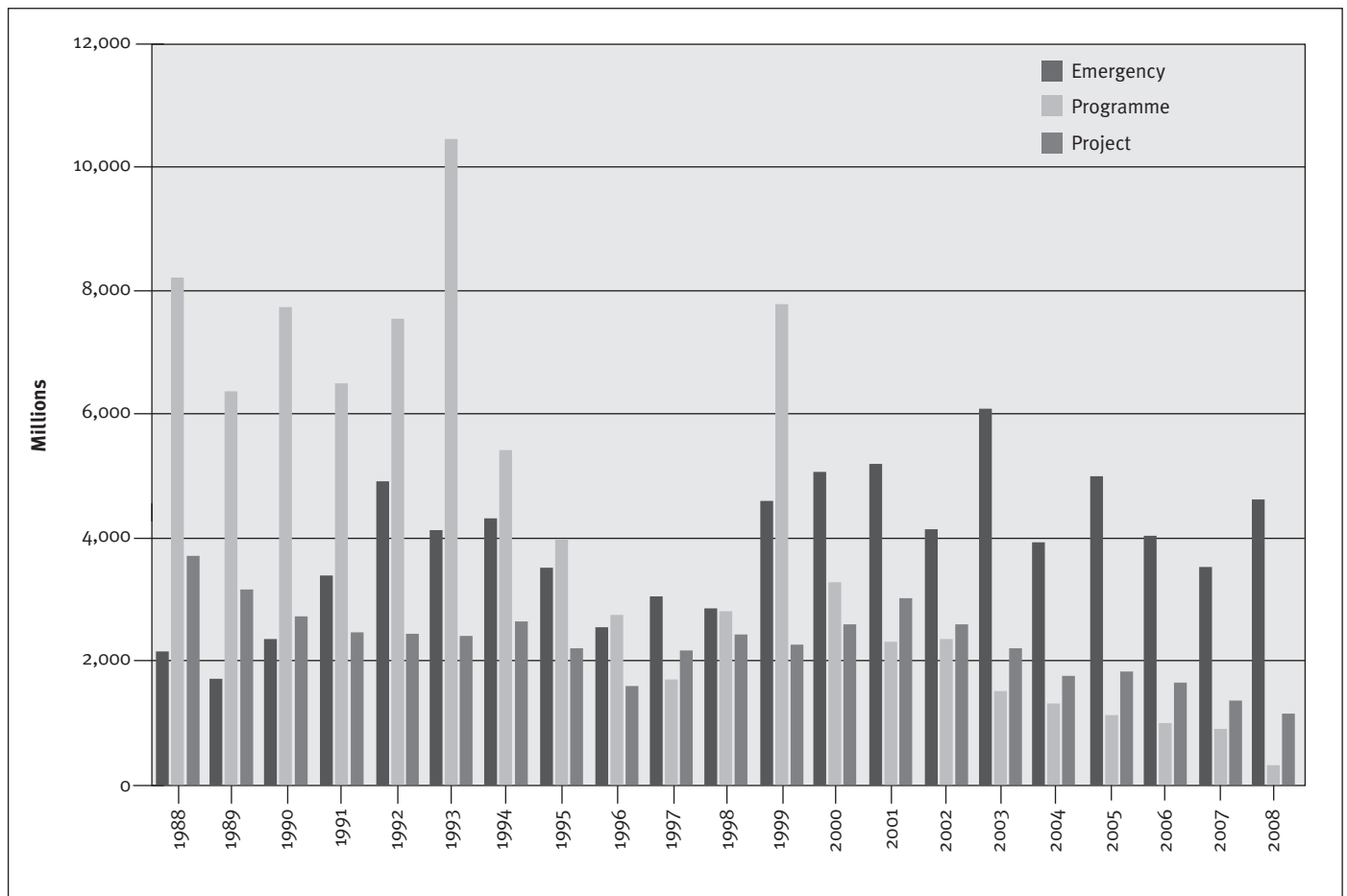
<sup>9</sup> Compared with 2007, the United States of America increased its delivery by 800,000 mt to meet the increased needs resulting from high food and fuel costs in 2008. Major increases were also registered for Japan and Canada, while the European Commission decreased its delivery by 400,000 mt.

2.2.4 *Changes in sources of food aid*

The second major change in food aid has been in the sourcing of food aid, from direct aid in-kind to cash-financed local and triangular transactions (Table 3). Whereas direct transfers typically accounted for 90 percent or more of food aid in the 1980s, the share has declined to around half. There is considerable variability in flows, especially of direct transfers with supply driven higher by upward outliers in 1992–3 and 1999, but the longer-term trends are clear. For that reason, the focus in delivering food (Section 7) is on recent experience with local and triangular operations.

The shift to local and triangular purchases has implications for the composition of food aid rations. The dominance of wheat appears to be ending. In 2008, wheat and its derivatives represented 35 percent of global deliveries, down from some 40 percent in 2007. The share of rice was 13 percent in 2008, a decline from 18 percent in 2007. Conversely, coarse grains increased their share to 31 percent of total deliveries, up from 22 percent in 2007. The shift to local and triangular purchases, a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and an increase in commodity prices can partly explain this composition of food aid. In 2008, the prices of the two main coarse grains delivered as food aid—maize and sorghum—were one-third of that of rice and two-thirds that of wheat.

Figure 3: Global food aid flows by type of activity, 1999–2008



Source: WFP FAIS database

**Table 1: Global food aid flows by type of activity, 1989–2008**

a. Tonnes in Grain Equivalent

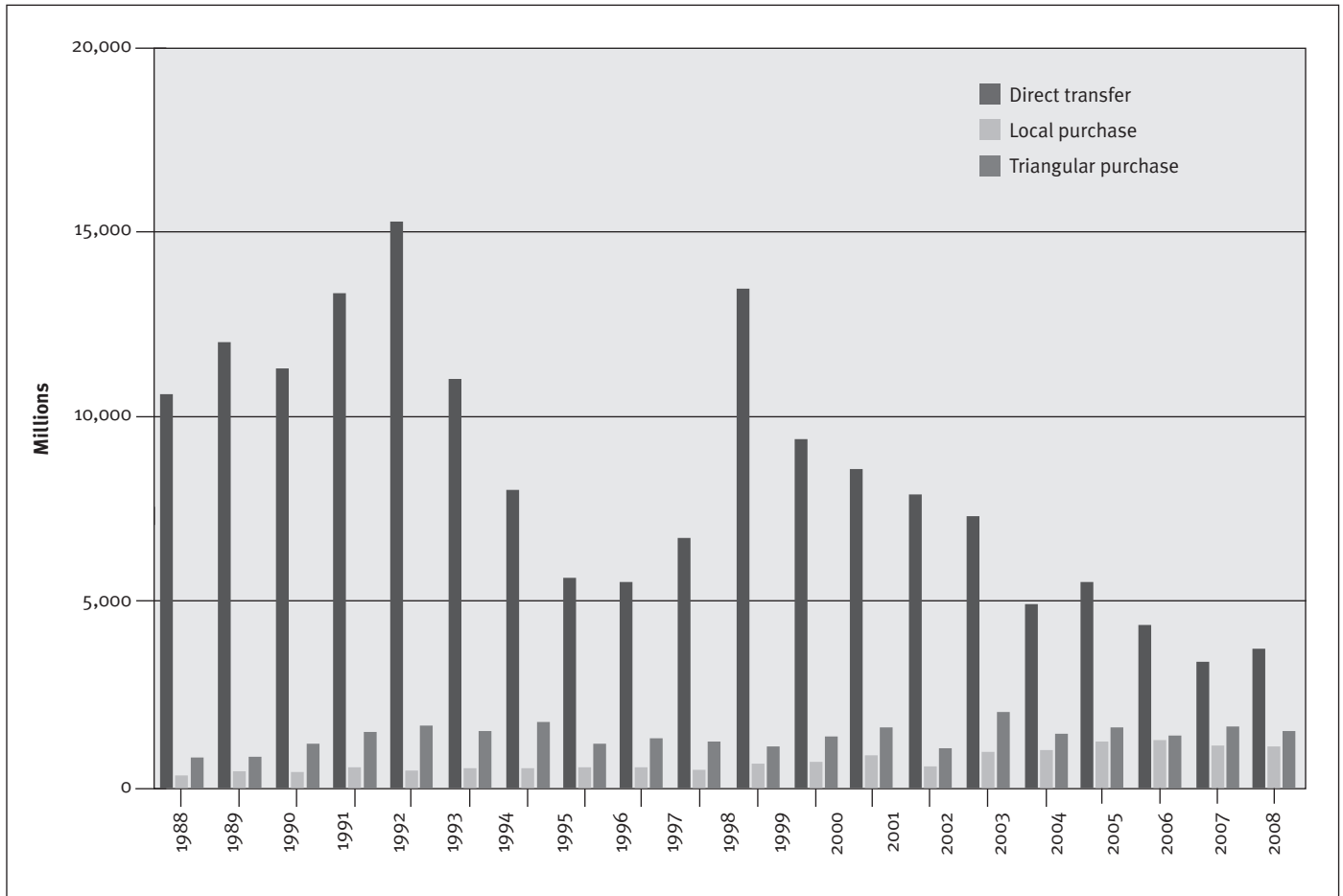
| Year | Emergency | Programme | Project    | Total     |            |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1989 |           | 1,750,363 | 6,518,762  | 3,341,213 | 11,610,338 |
| 1990 |           | 2,434,767 | 7,853,636  | 2,883,277 | 13,171,680 |
| 1991 |           | 3,470,599 | 6,634,883  | 2,623,234 | 12,728,715 |
| 1992 |           | 5,061,609 | 7,644,706  | 2,602,507 | 15,308,822 |
| 1993 |           | 4,250,191 | 10,551,561 | 2,520,852 | 17,322,604 |
| 1994 |           | 4,599,549 | 5,537,527  | 2,788,576 | 12,925,652 |
| 1995 |           | 3,719,719 | 4,147,252  | 2,334,080 | 10,201,050 |
| 1996 |           | 2,699,607 | 2,820,907  | 1,702,547 | 7,223,061  |
| 1997 |           | 3,276,262 | 1,767,672  | 2,275,188 | 7,319,122  |
| 1998 |           | 3,003,103 | 2,847,817  | 2,544,875 | 8,395,795  |
| 1999 |           | 4,815,394 | 7,825,865  | 2,401,262 | 15,042,520 |
| 2000 |           | 5,312,913 | 3,319,607  | 2,712,232 | 11,344,752 |
| 2001 |           | 5,422,803 | 2,372,037  | 3,150,263 | 10,945,103 |
| 2002 |           | 4,335,224 | 2,378,899  | 2,693,262 | 9,407,384  |
| 2003 |           | 6,411,934 | 1,534,414  | 2,269,414 | 10,215,762 |
| 2004 |           | 4,163,570 | 1,320,548  | 1,824,993 | 7,309,111  |
| 2005 |           | 5,257,415 | 1,150,933  | 1,879,710 | 8,288,059  |
| 2006 |           | 4,262,984 | 1,034,346  | 1,669,549 | 6,966,879  |
| 2007 |           | 3,725,694 | 910,871    | 1,405,688 | 6,042,253  |
| 2008 |           | 4,798,428 | 287,419    | 1,186,021 | 6,271,868  |

b. Index: 1989 = 100

| Year | Emergency | Programme | Project | Total |
|------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 1989 | 100       | 100       | 100     | 100   |
| 1990 | 139       | 120       | 86      | 113   |
| 1991 | 198       | 102       | 79      | 110   |
| 1992 | 289       | 117       | 78      | 132   |
| 1993 | 243       | 162       | 75      | 149   |
| 1994 | 263       | 85        | 83      | 111   |
| 1995 | 213       | 64        | 70      | 88    |
| 1996 | 154       | 43        | 51      | 62    |
| 1997 | 187       | 27        | 68      | 63    |
| 1998 | 172       | 44        | 76      | 72    |
| 1999 | 275       | 120       | 72      | 130   |
| 2000 | 304       | 51        | 81      | 98    |
| 2001 | 310       | 36        | 94      | 94    |
| 2002 | 248       | 36        | 81      | 81    |
| 2003 | 366       | 24        | 68      | 88    |
| 2004 | 238       | 20        | 55      | 63    |
| 2005 | 300       | 18        | 56      | 71    |
| 2006 | 244       | 16        | 50      | 60    |
| 2007 | 213       | 14        | 42      | 52    |
| 2008 | 274       | 4         | 35      | 54    |

Source: WFP FAIS food aid flows

**Figure 4: Global food aid flows by source or delivery mode, 1990–2008**



Source: WFP FAIS database

**2.2.5 Changes in donors, funders and recipients**

In 2008, the top five food aid donor governments—the United States of America, the European Commission, Japan, Canada and Saudi Arabia—accounted for 72 percent of total deliveries (Table 3). The considerable differences in sourcing policies of donors are also shown in that table with the US and, to a much lesser extent, Japan and Canada still being providers of direct food aid in-kind. Most other donors contribute cash funding, with the UN, the EC and Saudi Arabia being in 2008 the most significant providers of cash. The rankings are quite volatile with for example Saudi Arabia making a one-off large contribution in 2008 that was not repeated in 2009. The top ten donors to WFP in 2009 are shown in Table 4.

The top five recipient countries—Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan—received 2.6 million mt of emergency food aid, representing 54 percent of the total delivered in 2008. The top ten recipients of emergency food aid in 2007–8 are indicated in Table 5. Myanmar, which was hit by Cyclone Nargis, replaced the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as the tenth top recipient. The majority of these countries endure protracted conflicts or are fragile states and many have been recipients of food aid over an extended period

Non-DAC donors (government donors that are not members of the OECD DAC) have become increasingly important contributors to humanitarian responses in recent years. From 2000 to 2008, non-DAC contributions made up 14 percent of the total government contributions reported to the UN’s Financial Tracking System (FTS). China and South Korea both emerged in the 1990s as substantial providers of in-kind food aid, primarily directed to North Korea. India has periodically made one-off donations of wheat from surplus stocks. The group of non-DAC donors is widening and becoming more significant. In 2008 non-DAC (and thus non-Food Aid Convention donors—see Section 3) contributed around 20 percent of all food aid in terms of shipments.

Non-DAC donors tend to vary the forms of assistance they provide between gifts-in-kind and cash assistance. In-kind assistance is mostly food aid, but also includes other commodities as well as transport and logistics. According to FTS, non-DAC donor gifts-in-kind increased from \$36 million in 2007 to \$126 million in 2008. However, cash accounts for over 70 percent of non-DAC contributions.

Most non-DAC aid is coded as multi-sectoral; as a result, it is difficult to determine how much of the assistance is food

**Table 2: Global food aid flows by source or delivery mode, 1989–2008****a. Tonnes in Grain Equivalent**

| Year | Direct transfers | Triangular transactions | Local purchases |
|------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1989 | 10,573,503       | 769,878                 | 266,957         |
| 1990 | 12,008,821       | 773,843                 | 389,016         |
| 1991 | 11,262,488       | 1,120,928               | 345,299         |
| 1992 | 13,321,639       | 1,463,572               | 523,612         |
| 1993 | 15,257,863       | 1,639,728               | 425,013         |
| 1994 | 10,995,123       | 1,441,268               | 489,261         |
| 1995 | 7,985,360        | 1,722,624               | 493,066         |
| 1996 | 5,617,197        | 1,132,278               | 473,585         |
| 1997 | 5,501,838        | 1,302,481               | 514,803         |
| 1998 | 6,693,531        | 1,236,342               | 465,922         |
| 1999 | 13,413,943       | 1,051,208               | 577,369         |
| 2000 | 9,359,352        | 1,329,501               | 655,900         |
| 2001 | 8,543,471        | 1,575,384               | 826,249         |
| 2002 | 7,851,124        | 1,031,780               | 524,481         |
| 2003 | 7,295,074        | 1,987,821               | 932,867         |
| 2004 | 4,899,272        | 1,407,630               | 1,002,208       |
| 2005 | 5,506,657        | 1,566,498               | 1,214,904       |
| 2006 | 4,337,569        | 1,381,641               | 1,247,669       |
| 2007 | 3,345,468        | 1,597,689               | 1,099,097       |
| 2008 | 3,681,562        | 1,509,891               | 1,080,415       |

**b. Index: 1989 = 100**

| Year | Direct Transfers | Triangular Transactions | Local Purchases |
|------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1989 | 100              | 100                     | 100             |
| 1990 | 114              | 101                     | 146             |
| 1991 | 107              | 146                     | 129             |
| 1992 | 126              | 190                     | 196             |
| 1993 | 144              | 213                     | 159             |
| 1994 | 104              | 187                     | 183             |
| 1995 | 76               | 224                     | 185             |
| 1996 | 53               | 147                     | 177             |
| 1997 | 52               | 169                     | 193             |
| 1998 | 63               | 161                     | 175             |
| 1999 | 127              | 137                     | 216             |
| 2000 | 89               | 173                     | 246             |
| 2001 | 81               | 205                     | 310             |
| 2002 | 74               | 134                     | 196             |
| 2003 | 69               | 258                     | 349             |
| 2004 | 46               | 183                     | 375             |
| 2005 | 52               | 203                     | 455             |
| 2006 | 41               | 179                     | 467             |
| 2007 | 32               | 208                     | 412             |
| 2008 | 35               | 196                     | 405             |

Source: WFP FAIS food aid flows

**Table 3: Selected donors and funders: total food aid flows by source, 2008**

a. Tonnes in Grain Equivalent

| FAC Donor    | Direct Transfer | percent of total | Local Purchase | Triangular Purchase | Total     |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------|
|              | tonnage         |                  |                |                     |           |
| Australia    | 0               | 0                | 24,068         | 62,669              | 86,737    |
| Belgium      | 0               | 0                | 6,389          | 4,023               | 10,412    |
| Canada       | 111,510         | 44.1             | 36,421         | 104,863             | 252,794   |
| EU           |                 |                  |                |                     |           |
| EC           | 53,587          | 13.8             | 144,624        | 188,919             | 387,130   |
| Belgium      | 0               | 0                | 6,389          | 4,023               | 10,412    |
| Denmark      | 276             | 0.5              | 24,540         | 28,483              | 53,299    |
| France       | 306             | 0.9              | 10,299         | 23,272              | 33,877    |
| Germany      | 4,631           | 4.0              | 64,478         | 45,550              | 114,660   |
| Ireland      | 0               | 0                | 6,185          | 21,549              | 27,733    |
| Netherlands  | 0               | 0                | 44,548         | 56,610              | 101,158   |
| Spain        | 2,064           | 4.2              | 21,579         | 25,272              | 48,915    |
| UK           | 66              | 0                | 43,000         | 88,472              | 131,538   |
| Japan        | 161,658         | 45.0             | 75,279         | 122,469             | 359,406   |
| Norway       | 108             | 0.2              | 20,108         | 27,703              | 47,920    |
| Switzerland  | 2,368           | 9.0              | 8,438          | 15,472              | 26,278    |
| USA          | 2,957,574       | 95.4             | 80,882         | 61,497              | 3,099,952 |
| China        | 31,401          | 0.9              | 5,735          | 1,439               | 38,576    |
| Saudi Arabia | 4,902           | 2.0              | 56,824         | 179,379             | 241,105   |
| S. Korea     | 0               | 0                | 1,294          | 9,871               | 11,165    |
| NGOs         | 30,973          | 42.2             | 34,177         | 8,302               | 73,452    |
| UN           | 2,432           | 0.9              | 93,317         | 189,734             | 285,483   |
| Totals       | 3,363,856       | 61.9             | 802,184        | 1,265,548           | 5,431,589 |

Source: WFP FAIS food aid flows, 2008

Note: Included donors are FAC signatories (excluding Argentina); for the EU these are the European Commission and only member states surveyed in this study as well as other non-FAC funders explicitly mentioned in the text.

**Table 4: Top ten donors to WFP in 2009**

|    | Government donor    | Contribution in dollars |
|----|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | USA                 | 1,755,529,401           |
| 2  | European Commission | 342,666,730             |
| 3  | Canada              | 225,343,299             |
| 4  | Spain               | 213,851,823             |
| 5  | Japan               | 202,684,092             |
| 6  | Germany             | 132,103,739             |
| 7  | United Kingdom      | 127,624,011             |
| 8  | Australia           | 81,683,878              |
| 9  | Netherlands         | 77,593,799              |
| 10 | Sweden              | 72,487,335              |

aid. In 2006 and 2007, food accounted for 14.5 percent and 5 percent, respectively, of non-DAC donor humanitarian assistance reported through the FTS. In 2008, food accounted for 48.2 percent; however, this was largely driven by a single donor allocation of \$500 million to WFP (discussed below).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2009.

The majority of non-DAC donors prefer to provide humanitarian assistance bilaterally, as government-to-government assistance. This reflects the way non-DAC donors view aid—as a mutually beneficial relationship, and one that makes humanitarian contributions visible. According to FTS, in the period 2000–2008, the ten largest non-DAC donors channelled an average of 38 percent of their humanitarian assistance directly to the recipient government, compared to 2.5 percent for the top ten DAC donors. The preference for government-to-government assistance is more pronounced for some of the larger non-DAC donors.

Very little has been written on trends in bilateral food aid from non-DAC donors. There is evidence from examining responses, such as to the protracted crisis in Darfur and the Pakistan earthquake, that non-DAC food aid contributions have been tied, especially for the poorer non-DAC donors where discretionary resources are limited. However, examples also exist where cash has been provided to recipient governments to buy food and other communities. In Lebanon, non-DAC donors tended to provide assistance mainly through cash

**Table 5: Major recipients of emergency food aid, 2007–8**

| Recipient                      | 2007     |            | 2008     |            | Change 2008–2007 |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|------------------|
|                                | Mt (ooo) | % of total | Mt (ooo) | % of total | %                |
| Ethiopia                       | 580      | 16         | 915      | 19         | 58               |
| Sudan                          | 491      | 13         | 673      | 14         | 37               |
| Zimbabwe                       | 157      | 4          | 344      | 7          | 119              |
| Somalia                        | 93       | 2          | 326      | 7          | 252              |
| Afghanistan                    | 205      | 6          | 309      | 6          | 51               |
| DPRK                           | 374      | 10         | 305      | 6          | –18              |
| Kenya                          | 194      | 5          | 206      | 4          | 6                |
| Uganda                         | 238      | 6          | 159      | 3          | –33              |
| Occupied Palestinian Territory |          |            |          |            |                  |
| Myanmar                        | 26       | 1          | 109      | 2          | 326              |

grants. Overall, however, research in this area has been limited and non-DAC donors tend to be invisible to international evaluations on humanitarian responses. As the non-DAC donors grow, it will be important to learn more about the way in which food aid is provided bilaterally, including the extent to which the principles of untying aid are reflected in the non-DAC donor community.

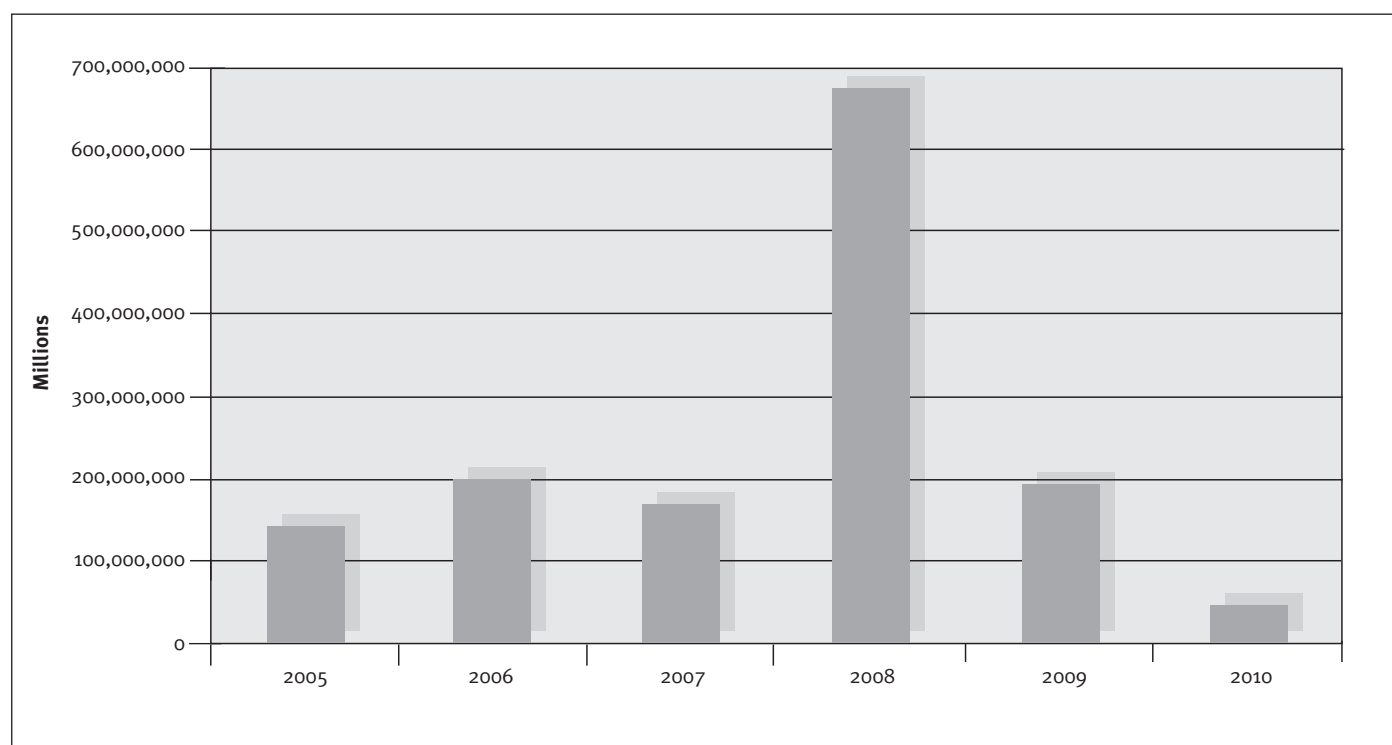
For WFP, non-DAC ‘donors’ include governments’ contributions to food aid operations in their own countries. This is more appropriately termed non-DAC *funding*, as these countries are not strictly donors, and it means that WFP non-DAC figures

cannot be directly compared with DAC assistance. Total non-DAC *funding* to WFP between 2005 and 2010 is given in Figure 5.<sup>11</sup>

WFP has benefited significantly from its efforts to improve dialogue with its non-DAC partners and has attracted some high level political attention.<sup>12</sup> In 2007, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao urged countries to double donations to WFP over the coming five years. In May 2008, Saudi Arabia donated a

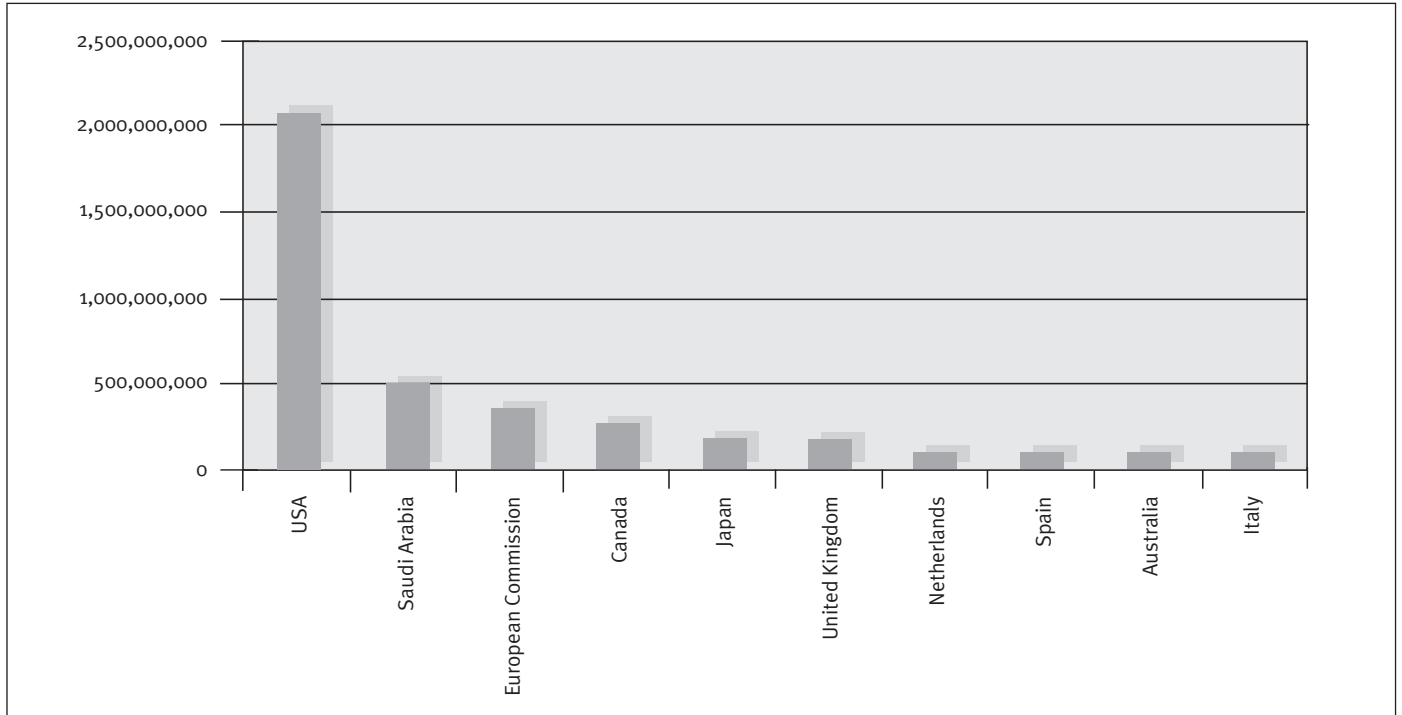
<sup>11</sup> Figures for 2010 are as of 11 April 2010.

<sup>12</sup> WFP, *New Partnerships to Meet Rising Needs – Expanding the WFP Donor Base* (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-C).

**Figure 5: Total non-DAC funding to WFP, 2005–10**

Note: Figures in US dollars

**Figure 6: Top ten donors to WFP, 2008**



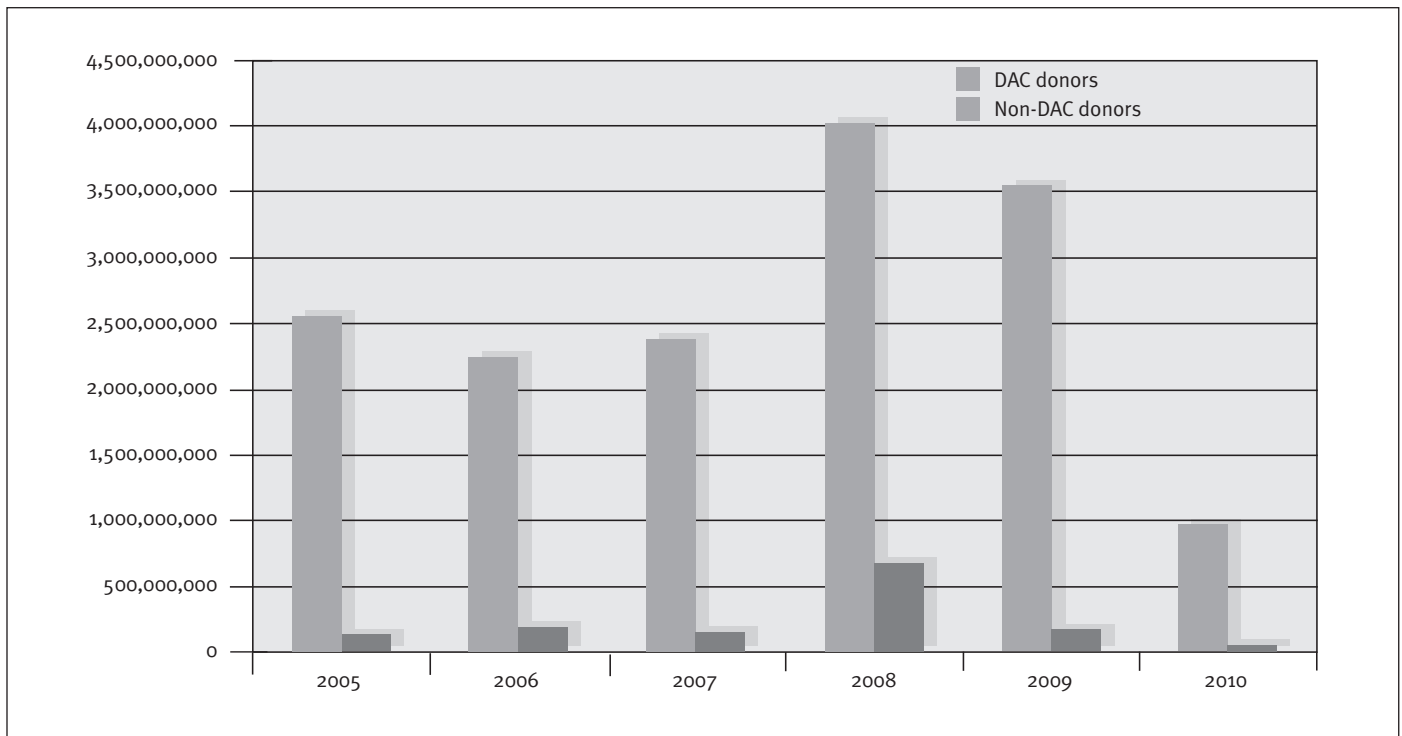
Note: Figures in US dollars

landmark \$500 million to WFP. This contribution allowed the agency to reach its appeal target of \$755 million in response to the global fuel and food price crisis and made Saudi Arabia the second-largest donor to WFP in 2008. It was the first time a non-DAC donor was one of the top ten WFP donor governments for the provision of international assistance.

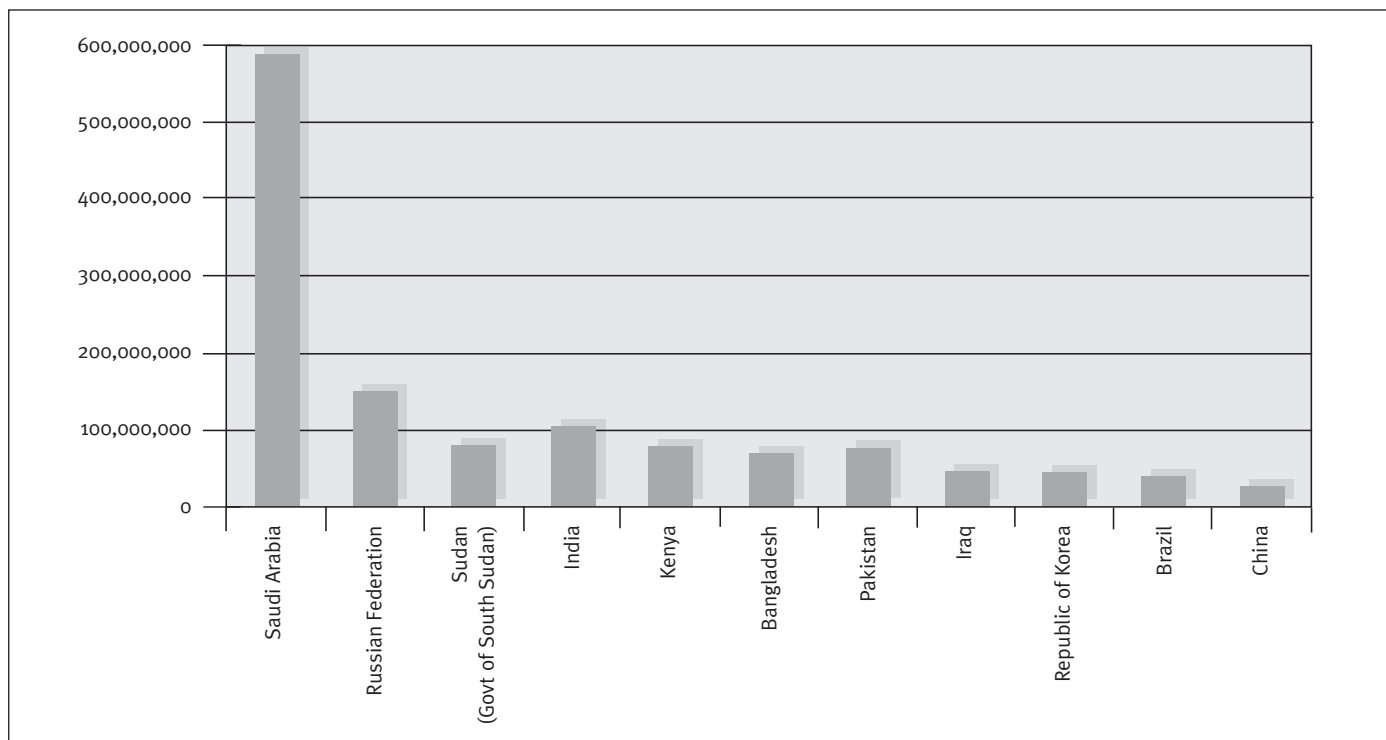
In comparing the contributions to DAC donors, non-DAC funders remain only a small portion of the total.

The growing number of countries that have become WFP funders in recent years often do so on a one-time or occasional basis. In 2006, 97 governments donated to WFP; in 2007, 88,

**Figure 7: DAC and non-DAC contributions to WFP, 2005–10**



Note: Figures in US dollars

**Figure 8: Top non-DAC funders to WFP programmes, 2005–10**

Notes: Figures in US dollars. Includes contributions by governments in their own countries.

but six became donors for the first time; in 2008, 98 donated. Funding for food aid could grow substantially if all these countries were to become regular, predictable donors.<sup>13</sup>

Non-DAC funders that have provided in-country humanitarian assistance include the governments of South Sudan, India, Kenya and Bangladesh. Their contributions are shown in Figure 8. In 2008, 38 recipient countries contributed almost \$140 million to food aid operations in their own countries, 2.8 percent of WFP's total resources. Good local harvests and the twinning principle have enabled governments to make in-kind contributions, often for the first time. For example, Bangladesh has been a consistent donor to WFP's development operations, while Pakistan contributed food to IDPs and refugees in response to the crisis in 2009. The twinning principle allows WFP to combine cash donations with commodity contributions from developing country donors. In 2008, twinning enabled six governments to make in-kind contributions. A total of \$12.0 million in cash leveraged \$12.6 million of food commodities, equivalent to 75,800 mt of food. If the cash had been used for international or local purchases instead of being twinned, the food equivalent would have been between 16,000 and 33,000 mt.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 8 shows non-DAC funders that have contributed over \$20 million in cash or in-kind resources to WFP between 2005 and 2010. Contributions from Saudi Arabia, the Russian Federation and South Korea provided most of the funding

<sup>13</sup> WFP, *Resourcing for a Changing Environment*, WFP Informal Consultation, 12 January 2010.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

to WFP's international operations. The majority of these contributions have gone to traditional regions of interest such as North Korea and the occupied Palestinian territories. More recently, however, assistance has diversified to include a much wider range of countries, many of them in Africa.

WFP has recently increased its focus on relationships with Brazil, the Russian Federation, India and China—the BRIC countries—that pledged in a joint statement to adopt a package of mid- and long-term measures to tackle global food insecurity. The BRIC countries' contributions to WFP have steadily increased over the last few years. India is the largest donor, supporting operations in-country and in neighbouring Afghanistan and elsewhere. Brazil only became a WFP donor in 2007, but has risen quickly in the ranks.<sup>15</sup>

Evidence suggests that non-DAC donors are careful about the contexts in which they will support the multilateral system. In the case of CERF allocations, non-DAC donors are more inclined to earmark funds than are their DAC counterparts. This suggests that non-DAC donors are more cautious in their engagement with the multilateral humanitarian agencies, and that whilst evidence of a growing rhetoric of support exists, they do not consistently match it in their financial contributions.

#### 2.2.6 Humanitarian reform: CERF and Pooled Funds

Since 2000, there have been some major innovations in instruments used to finance humanitarian assistance, such as the CERF, established in 2005, and the country-specific

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



common humanitarian funds (CHF) and emergency response funds (ERF).

The CERF is a fund open to both the UN system and IOM (International Organization for Migration). The emergency relief coordinator (the head of UN OCHA), who decides on the allocations of funds, manages it. The fund is split into two elements, one focusing on rapid response and the other on under-funded emergencies. Funding for the CERF (which has been seen as largely successful) has increased year on year with total expenditure now in excess of \$1 billion.

The CERF aims to ensure that funding flows more equitably between different crises while the country-level pooled funds are designed to channel funding to priorities within a specific crisis. Funding for both has been increasing for three years; in 2008, they received \$861 million between them, compared to \$582 million in 2006. Some donors are actually channelling substantial shares of their humanitarian aid through these structures—over one-fifth of the United Kingdom's and the Netherlands' total official humanitarian assistance was allocated to these mechanisms in 2005.

All of those interviewed for this study felt that the CERF has generally been a success and helped to ensure that funds are available in a more timely manner. Some expressed concern over the lack of a common approach to addressing food security needs within the CERF appeal process, with the result that food interventions are often spread across several budget lines including food aid/assistance, livelihood interventions and agricultural interventions.

The CERF and other new pooled-funding mechanisms have resulted in reduced discrepancies in funding for different sectors of humanitarian response. Coverage of stated requirements in appeals has gone up in all operational sectors; increases have been largest in chronically under-funded sectors (economic recovery, shelter) and smallest in the food aid sector, which was previously the best funded (Stoddard 2008). In DRC and Sudan, pooled funds are seen as having filled sectoral gaps (Willits King et al. 2007). However, the CERF has not led to a reduction in the funding available for food assistance (as feared by some at its inception). In 2009, WFP received \$163 million or 38 percent of the total funding to agencies in support of new emergencies or under-funded operations (WFP 2010b). A study of the transaction costs of new funding mechanisms noted that the CERF and CHF entailed considerable management costs and increased workloads at headquarters and field levels, for all agencies including WFP (Salamons 2009).

The CERF contributes significantly towards coordination and support services, including logistics, emergency telecommunications and humanitarian air services, for which the CERF is often the largest donor. Contributions are usually small in amount, but because they arrive early, they provide a critical foundation for common services to initiate deployment. For instance in Pakistan—in a situation described as the largest and fastest displacement of people in the last 15 years—a \$200,000 CERF contribution in May 2008 enabled WFP to make adequate storage facilities available for humanitarian agencies to provide support for two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing conflict in the North West Frontier Province (WFP 2010b).



# Chapter 3

## Food security architecture

This section places the ‘discussions’ about negotiations on a new Food Aid Convention (FAC or Convention) within the context of the broader efforts to provide a food security architecture. This addresses both current realities of rising, rather than falling, levels of hunger and anticipated global problems of more frequent extreme disasters, increasing market volatility and a reversal of the long-term downward trend in food prices.

### 3.1 Towards a new food security architecture

The global spike in food prices, and the subsequent severe global financial crisis and economic recession, have given an impetus to re-examining food security at an international level. These discussions have been set within the framework of the Comprehensive Framework for Action, the L’Aquila G8 and G20 meetings and the World Food Security Summit. Food security is again a topic for discussion at the 2010 G20 meeting in Canada. Along with global food security, problems of chronic hunger and fragility of states have been of equal concern.

The food crisis led to an increased focus on improving the links between food assistance and food security and to stronger coordination between the Rome-based agencies. There is now greater conceptual coherence and stronger UN coordination driven by the UN High Level Task Force. Within the EU, a new working party on humanitarian aid and food aid (COHAFA) began in 2009, and meets once or twice a month. Other donors (e.g., the US Presidential Initiative on Hunger and Food Security) are also considering these issues closely (USAID 2010).

The potential new food security architecture has a number of components. These include a reformed Committee on Food Security (CFS), a food security cluster as part of the humanitarian reform process, a shift in WFP programming categories and, most importantly, a renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention (FAC).

The World Summit on Food Security in November 2009 endorsed a reformed Committee on Food Security. The reconstituted CFS is to be more inclusive, involving member countries and a wider range of organisations working on food security and nutrition, including civil society institutions. The CFS will receive advice from a high-level panel of experts on food security and nutrition and aim to provide a platform for greater policy convergence through the development of international strategies and voluntary guidelines (FAO 2009a). However, those consulted in this study have a range of views on the capability of the CFS to be effective in this role

The UN cluster coordination system for humanitarian crises only recently included a food security cluster. As the cluster approach evolved in IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) deliberations from a response to ‘gap sectors’ to a preferred mode of coordination, the absence of a food aid or food security cluster became an issue as food aid or food security clusters started emerging at country level (Stoddard et al. 2007). Recognition of this omission led to agreement in early 2010 to establish a food security cluster with joint leadership from FAO and WFP. Donors broadly welcome this development seeing it partly as a recognition of what was already happening at field level and partly as potentially offering a useful forum for policy and strategy discussions at a global level.<sup>1</sup>

WFP is currently engaged in a ‘financial framework review’, which re-examines its programme categories (Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations or PRROs, Emergency, Development and Special Operations) (WFP 2010).

Debates continue within the executive board for WFP and on the part of its main donors about whether WFP should focus more narrowly on humanitarian and transition situations or continue to play a significant development role. Some donors are unconvinced about WFP’s role in recovery programming Harvey et al. (2009) found that several donor representatives argued the need for a more tightly defined recovery role, with clearer exit strategies which focus more carefully on where food assistance is most appropriate.

However, the G77 developing countries on WFP’s executive board tend to be supportive of a development role. The food price crisis and subsequent debates around food security architecture have contributed to shifting the terms of debate around WFP’s role in development, with more actors seeing a potential role for WFP in supporting the development of social protection strategies, particularly in fragile states.

### 3.2 A future Food Aid or Food Assistance Convention

The future of the Food Aid Convention became the subject of active ‘informal discussions’ in December 2009 after a hiatus of more than five years. The agenda is widely considered to be open and the outcome unpredictable. The Convention, a freestanding agreement to provide minimum levels of food aid, which was first negotiated in 1967 in the era of food surplus disposal, might be allowed to lapse. Alternatively, it could be radically revised as part of efforts to create a global

<sup>1</sup> WFP, ‘Resources for a Changing Environment’, *Policy Issues: Agenda Item 5*, February 2010.

food security architecture with a role in addressing different and rapidly changing physical environmental, political and economic circumstances.

This section intends to set out the issues at stake that are otherwise the subject of informal discussions because of perceived political sensitivities. As the decision about extending the current FAC is pending, some stakeholders are reluctant to make public statements. Nevertheless, it is possible to indicate the range of views on these questions from informal discussions and recent public statements on food aid.

After briefly setting the context for these negotiations in terms of the Convention and its history, this section focuses on a set of key questions regarding its future:

- Is there a continuing need for a Convention within the emerging new Food Security Architecture?
- If the FAC is to be renegotiated, should this be a minimal or more radical revision? What then is implied by radical revision?
- Should it become a Food Assistance Convention?
- Should signatories continue to make quantitative commitments and, if so, what should count as food assistance contributions and how should these be measured?
- Should the membership of the Convention to be expanded by including additional 'donors'?
- How should the Convention be better integrated into a reformed food security architecture?

### 3.2.1 Background: food aid as a special case

The international institutional arrangements for regulating and organising food aid have been inherited from an era in which food aid was about 25 percent of all ODA with a large share of global trade in cereals and few other commodities. Presently food aid accounts for only about 3 percent of ODA and a smaller proportion of global food commodity trade. It is however, significant for a relatively small number of least developed countries and in disasters and for humanitarian relief (Clay and Stokke 2000, FAO 2005).

Food aid was overwhelming supplied until the mid-1990s as *direct transfers* from the donor country, that is in-kind tied commodity aid (Table 1). From the outset, not only donors but also other exporters (e.g., Argentina for cereals and New Zealand for dairy products) recognised this commodity aid as a potential source of trade-distorting competition.

The Convention was then negotiated as a stand-alone international agreement in 1967 and lodged with the International Grains Council (IGC) that acts as secretariat. Signatories are legally committed to provide minimum amounts of food aid to ODA-eligible countries. Historically the principle object of the Convention was to provide a safety net to protect

recipient countries against potential downward fluctuations in annual shipments of food aid. Second, it was a burden-sharing agreement amongst DAC donors (plus Argentina), effectively a donor club. The Convention was probably accorded most importance when, in 1980, joint minimum contributions of then 7.6 wheat equivalent mt were explicitly linked to an international target of 10 mt of food aid.

The supervisory Food Aid Committee reviews matters pertaining to the Convention and is recognised amongst signatories as a forum for consultation about threats to global food security.<sup>2</sup> As a stand-alone agreement the Convention has not been explicitly integrated into other international arrangements for global food security. There is however an explicit link to the WTO agreement on agricultural trade.

On the insistence of the major provider, the USA, food aid has been exempt from the various voluntary 'soft' law international agreements under the OECD to minimise trade-distorting export competition amongst donors and to promote untying. Instead, food aid has been the subject of a separate set of stand-alone agreements and, unlike other ODA, is a subject under the 'hard' WTO treaty based rules and disciplines concerning agricultural trade.

In 2004, the 1999 Convention was extended and possible renegotiation deferred pending the outcome of the negotiations on food aid as part of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) within the WTO Doha Development Round (DDR). Then the DDR stalled in 2008. Whether or not the DDR successfully restarts, one issue to address in FAC is whether and how to take into account the sections of the draft AoA that concern food aid and set the trade law context for the Convention.<sup>3</sup> This linkage between the AoA and the Convention takes us directly to the characteristics that distinguish food aid from other forms of official development assistance.

### 3.3.2 The basics of the Food Aid Convention

As originally negotiated, the Convention had a narrow but explicit focus on assuring minimum levels of cereals food aid. Subsequent renegotiations have modified these levels in an adaptation to a changing reality, although they can also be seen as a dilution of the Convention's purpose.

The present 1999 Convention aims to contribute to world food security and improve the ability of the international community to respond to emergency food situations and other food needs of developing countries through making appropriate levels of food aid available, in a way that is consistent with agricultural development in recipient countries within a framework for cooperation, coordination and information-sharing amongst members (IGC 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Signatories meet twice a year at an official level at the IGC in London.

<sup>3</sup> WTO, *Revised Draft Modalities for Agriculture*, (Committee on Agriculture Special Session 2008) TN/AG/4/Rev/8 February 2008. See especially Annex L: International Food Aid.

**Table 6: FAC 1999 signatories: total food aid as percent of minimum contribution in Wheat and Grain Equivalent**

|             | Minimum Contribution WE MT 000 |    | FAC 2005 (%) | FAIS 2005–6 (%) | FAC 2006 (%) | FAIS 2006–7 (%) | FAC 2007 (%) | FAIS 2007–8 (%) | FAC 2008 (%) | FAIS 2008–9 (%) |
|-------------|--------------------------------|----|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Australia   |                                | GE | 61           |                 | 63           |                 | 51           |                 | 37           |                 |
|             | 250                            | WE |              | 72              |              | 46              |              | 87              |              | 66              |
| Canada      |                                | GE | 65           |                 | 41           |                 | 51           |                 | 62           |                 |
|             | 420                            | WE |              | 107             |              | 113             |              | 124             |              | 131             |
| EU*         |                                | GE | 83           |                 | 90           |                 | 79           |                 | 62           |                 |
|             | 1908*                          | WE |              | 150             |              | 130             |              | 114             |              | 119             |
| Japan       |                                | GE | 137          |                 | 80           |                 | 81           |                 | 124          |                 |
|             | 300                            | WE |              | 118             |              | 106             |              | 143             |              | 185             |
| Norway      |                                | GE | 308          |                 | 308          |                 | 271          |                 | 163          |                 |
|             | 30                             | WE |              | 653             |              | 598             |              | 343             |              | 298             |
| Switzerland |                                | GE | 122          |                 | 110          |                 | 81           |                 | 70           |                 |
|             | 40                             | WE |              | 154             |              | 178             |              | 175             |              | 149             |
| USA         |                                | GE | 142          |                 | 142          |                 | 105          |                 | 129          |                 |
|             | 2500                           | WE |              | 193             |              | 155             |              | 145             |              | 170             |
| Total       |                                | GE | 112          |                 | 119          |                 | 88           |                 | 95           |                 |
|             | 5448                           | WE |              | 164             |              | 138             |              | 131             |              | 146             |

## Notes:

Total food aid as percent of minimum contribution in wheat and grain equivalent. GE = grain equivalent; WE = wheat equivalent. Grey Box = GE less than 100 percent. Black Box = WE less than 100 percent. \* The equivalences between cash and commodities in the EU contribution are here given as WE.

Source: Based on total food aid flows as reported by WFP FAIS (calendar year) and IGC (split year July–June)

To this end, both commodity-based commitments and value or cash commitments (including transport costs) were allowed for the first time. The eligible product list was also extended to cover virtually the entire range of commodities and processed foods likely to be provided as humanitarian relief or in nutritional programmes. Seeds of eligible products are allowed. These allowances marked a significant change in the Convention: It allows parallel but different commitments and weakens the links to cereals aid and grain markets. The 1999 Convention also recognised, but failed to reaffirm, the minimum contributions as part of a wider commitment to the minimum of 10 million tonnes of cereals aid first made in 1980.

Overall levels of commitments have been progressively reduced to accommodate wishes of some signatories (including Australia, Canada and the USA). The minimum contributions under the 1999 Convention are shown in Table 6. The commitments are by DAC member countries plus Argentina.<sup>4</sup> As this is a trade-related agreement, the EU has always acted as a single signatory, making in effect a joint commitment on behalf of its now 27 members.

*The European Union* has been the second largest contributor to every Convention. Initially DG (Directorate General) Agriculture led on behalf of the EU. That responsibility passed to DG

<sup>4</sup> Argentina's involvement reflects the agricultural trade origins of the Convention. Although a signatory from the outset, Argentina has, in practice, apparently hardly ever met even part of its obligation to contribute 20,000 tonnes a year of food aid.

Development and is presently with ECHO (DG Humanitarian Assistance). The EU Council agreed on an explicit division of responsibility for the EU's tonnage commitment between Community Action organised by the European Commission under EU budget lines for food aid and National Actions of member states.<sup>5</sup> However, in a retreat from transparency, the EU discontinued under the 1999 Convention the long established (30 years) practice of making an explicit division of responsibility between the Commission and members states. Instead, the Commission regards this division of responsibility for eligible food aid operations as an 'internal matter'.

Signatories report annually and retrospectively on their eligible food aid transactions in fulfilment of their obligations. However, the EU has always reported collectively, and so the association between the food aid of member states and the Convention can only be inferred.

### 3.2.3 The WTO dimension

Food aid was specifically exempted from disciplines under the 1994 rules and the Convention was recognised as having a possible role in supporting the adjustment of food-importing developing countries to the WTO rules (Konandreas et al. 2000).

<sup>5</sup> As states joined the EU, they either brought with them their previous Convention obligations (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Spain and Sweden) or took on a share of the joint commitment (Greece, Ireland and Portugal). The UK, a signatory to the 1967 Convention, withdrew from the 1971 Convention, but rejoined on acceding to the EU in 1974. This action could be a relevant precedent for current negotiations allowing a signatory to withdraw without prejudicing the formal continuation of the Convention.

The Convention has also been recognised as having a role in the supervision of food aid.<sup>6</sup> In the Doha Development Round, food aid became a focus of intense negotiation, as reflected in the sequence of draft Agreements on Agriculture,<sup>7</sup> and the reason for putting renegotiation of the Convention on hold.

The draft AoA is only concerned with *international food aid*. It sees cash-based (i.e., fully untied) food aid as conforming with the rules on agricultural export competition, whilst setting out a rule-based framework for in-kind (i.e., tied) food aid that approximates WFP's category of direct transfers (WTO 2008).<sup>8</sup> A 'safe box' is envisaged for emergency (humanitarian) food aid that includes two requirements: (1) a *declaration* or appeal by the UN secretary general, governmental or regional agency, a Red Cross agency or an NGO working with one of the former and (2) an *assessment* coordinated by an international agency or the Red Cross. Further disciplines on non-emergency in-kind food aid are envisaged, including a requirement that an assessment is to be undertaken by a UN agency or donor and NGO working with government. Monetisation faces additional restrictions. An issue for the FAC to clarify is whether transactions accepted as fulfilling future obligations should conform with these draft disciplines. The draft rules are likely to be similar to what will be agreed if the DDR is successfully completed.

The draft AoA also provides for a derogation of rules on export competition to allow an exporter-donor response in exceptional global crisis conditions. The Marrakesh Accord makes an explicit link to the Food Aid Convention and food aid as a way to limit the costs of adjustment to trade reform for net food-import dependent countries, a provision which, so far, has not been activated (e.g., Konandreas et al. 2000, Konandreas 2005). Should a new Food Assistance Convention address such trade issues or restrict itself, as some stakeholders suggest, to emergency and humanitarian concerns as part of a wider global food security architecture?<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2.4 A new Food Aid Convention?

Signatories, in consultation with other key stakeholders, have embarked on informal discussions about a new convention. The working group is organising these discussions to be wide ranging, addressing a set of issues on which signatories have already offered informally their preliminary views:

<sup>6</sup> For example when New Zealand raised the issue of US dairy aid as unfair export competition in the Committee on Agriculture, this was deflected as arising under the CSD or the Food Aid Convention.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Clay and Riley (2005), Clay (2006) documenting the evolving proposals on food aid in the DDR AoA.

<sup>8</sup> An area of ambiguity is 'partially tied aid' where, for example, the EU allows procurement in the single European market or in a specified list of developing countries. A substantial part of local and triangular transactions is funded with such partially untied funding.

<sup>9</sup> The WTO Committee on Agriculture presently has no specific capacity to assess the legitimacy of food aid transactions. If cases are raised about a member's actions, should these be referred to the Food Aid Convention secretariat or to some other part of a reconstructed global food security architecture, or should the WTO acquire the capacity to handle internally such trade-related issues?

- rationale and governing principles of a new Convention
- overall objectives and scope of a Convention
- role and types of commitments and reporting
- role of committee

The issue of reforming the Convention (or the institutions for governing and organising food aid more generally) repeatedly surfaces, because it originates in and reflects to a considerable degree a previous era. In reviewing options when the 1999 Convention was being negotiated, Clay and Stokke (2000) suggested three types of possible changes to the FAC: (1) declaratory changes in terms of objectives, targets and labelling; (2) adaptation to short-term influences and (3) reconfiguration of the architecture of international institutions as part of a longer term strategy. All three forms of response are visible amongst the proposals for a renegotiated Convention.

### *What is the rationale? Is there a continuing need for a Convention within the emerging new food security architecture?*

Some stakeholders feel that the Convention has ceased to have relevance to their programmes or to the wider food security or humanitarian concerns of the international community. Recently Norway ceased to attend the committee. In some European aid agencies, it is difficult to find anyone who is informed about the Convention or who has responsibility for fulfilling their share of the EU's contribution. Some, in contrast, see the Convention as a way of ensuring a minimum predictable flow of food to the world's hungry irrespective of market conditions and so see little need for modification. In the context of discussions on the right to food, others see the Convention as having a symbolic significance as the only legally binding treaty committing donors to provide funding for food aid or any form of humanitarian assistance without prejudging the specifics of that commitment.

*If the FAC is to be renegotiated, should this be a minimal or more radical revision?* The Convention could simply be allowed to lapse but that is unlikely because of the negative symbolic message this would convey. Instead the choice would seem to be between further modest adaptation, as has occurred in previous renegotiations, or a radical revision as part of the reconstruction of global food security architecture.

### 3.2.5 The minimalist option

The Convention could be modified in several obvious ways without radically changing either objectives or scope. First, there is relabeling: As food assistance replaces food aid in official discourse, renaming the Convention would recognise the already wide range of eligible contributions. Second, further adjustments could be made to the *list* of eligible commodities and the *size* of signatory commitments. Third, apart from the EU, other signatories could opt for a combination of physical and cash contributions. Fourth, new signatories who were willing to make a minimum contribution could be admitted or others might withdraw, as the UK did from the 1971 Convention.



Some stakeholders, notably the EU, lack interest in modifying minor aspects of the agreement and desire to continue with an agreement broadly similar to the 1999 Convention, that basically commits signatories to provide or fund the acquisition of food and its delivery. In comparison, the EC and some others informally indicate a wish to move towards a Food Assistance Convention that is integrated into the wider food security architecture, that makes a demonstrable contribution to food security in crises and that is more broadly based (includes the range of food assistance instruments).<sup>10</sup>

Indications are that the USDA and USAID are concerned that the strength of the legally binding agreement will be sacrificed if it moves away from being primarily food focused with quantitative commitments. US-based NGOs involved in food assistance have taken a similar view.

Japan has apparently little problem with the existing Convention which recognises as eligible both its funding for developing country acquisition and donations-in-kind from its domestic stocks.<sup>11</sup>

Others, including WFP staff and the TAFAD group of NGOs,<sup>12</sup> are concerned about the risks involved in abandoning quantitative commitments. They consider the FAC obligations of some donors as providing a budgetary assurance of resources for food-related assistance typically channelled through WFP and NGOs. This indirect budgetary assurance could be lost without quantitative obligations.

Many stakeholders and analysts (e.g., Barrett and Maxwell 2005) argue that circumstances have changed to such an extent that piecemeal changes of the kind suggested above will not be enough to reverse the progressive marginalisation of the Convention.

### 3.2.6 A more radical reconstruction: options for change

Stakeholders need to be clear about *the overall objective* of a new Convention. Does it, as at present, primarily provide a safety net of support for food assistance—an assurance against volatility in commodity markets and the global economy or the vagaries of donor policy? Is the safety net to cover all food assistance or primarily focus on humanitarian needs? Alternatively, should there be a more ambitious arrangement for addressing changing needs for food assistance or humanitarian assistance more broadly?

<sup>10</sup> The European Commission in its operational strategy for 2010 states: 'The Commission will also coordinate negotiations for the reform of the Food Aid Convention (that is on behalf of the EU). The main challenge is to turn this international treaty into a modern and meaningful convention that has a stronger humanitarian focus and supports an appropriate range of food assistance responses.'

<sup>11</sup> In 2008 Japan was the largest provider of government-to-government programme food aid, mostly in the form of rice.

<sup>12</sup> TAFAD (Transatlantic Food Aid Dialogue) is a group of US and European NGOs with the explicit aim of influencing food aid policy, in particular the Food Aid Convention. It was established in early 2005, when the NGOs participating included Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Canada, ACF-France, SC-UK, SC-US, WVI Canada, CARE-US and CRS.

The argument for the former (as made by WFP, TAFAD, etc.) is that minimum requirements for emergency and recovery assistance and longer-term support for the displaced and refugees continue. High profile events such as Iraq (2003), the 2004 Tsunami or Haiti (2010) will be addressed and can crowd out other operations.

*Minimum contributions and monitoring signatory performance.* The issue of quantitative commitments seems to be the nub of the debate about the relevance of a Convention. Current obligations are made in terms of metric tonnage in wheat equivalents (WEMT) based on annually agreed conversion ratios. This way of measuring commitments—in an era with an increasingly wide set of in-kind commodities and cash funding of food-based transfers—appears anachronistic and finds little support. It is now difficult to relate signatory commitment transactions to what is happening in the world of food aid. This is reflected most obviously comparing transactions with deliveries reported in WFP FAIS (Table 5).

The lack of correspondence between operations reported to the International Grains Council (IGC) and deliveries is illustrated in Table 5. First, reported FAC contributions are compared with obligations under the 1999 Convention in *wheat equivalents (WE)*, showing that almost all donors met their obligations through the recent food price spike. They performed far better during 2006–8 than during the previous spike in 1995–6. In contrast, when these quantitative obligations are expressed in *grain equivalents (GE)*, a crude but better proxy of real amounts of food distributed (one tonne of wheat is equivalent in energy terms to one tonne of rice, maize, etc.), then the indices of actual food aid flows confirm that the food aid of signatories has been strongly pro-cyclical. As Figure 1 shows in actual tonnages or Table 3 in grain equivalents, there was a far more serious contraction in 2006–7 than in the mid 1990s.<sup>13</sup> This comparison highlights the unsatisfactory nature of the way commitments are defined. A fuller analysis is required, but the relatively more serious contraction in the food aid of FAC signatories during the 2006–8 food price spike than in the 1995–7 spike is masked by the broadened range of eligible commodities.

The performance of EU and its member states is especially opaque, as the EU reports on a consolidated basis and no longer indicates, as under previous Conventions (1995 and before), how responsibility for obligations between the Commission and member states is shared. As a wider range of instruments come into use, but without systematic and integrated quantification, the picture regarding food assistance provided by signatories or the DAC donor group is increasing unclear.

Few independent investigations have cast doubt on the effectiveness of the Convention commitments in providing a

<sup>13</sup> The actual levels of food aid were lower in 2006–8 than during the previous price spike in 1995–7, but as reported to the FAC Convention signatories performed worse in 1995–7 under the 1995 Convention. The apparent better performance in 2006–8 is apparently a consequence of broadening the range of eligible commodities in the 1999 Convention.

robust floor or safety net underpinning international food aid (e.g., Benson 2000, Hasenclever et al. 1998, Hoddinott and Cohen 2007). Consequently, some stakeholders insist that the credibility of a new Convention must depend on vigorous monitoring of a transparent set of commitments.

Many stakeholders now appear to be focusing on the issue of what might replace the obligations made in the discredited wheat equivalents:

- First, should commitments be in physical or financial terms?
- Second, how can commitments be measured in a way that is understandable and transparent?
- Third, how can the negative, pro-cyclical effects of fluctuating commodity price and transport cost be addressed?
- Fourth, what should be included in the list of eligible forms of food assistance?

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the wheat equivalent formula. However replacing it with anything more satisfactory and transparent is a challenge. Contributions expressed entirely in financial terms are vulnerable to price movements and must be revised at least annually (and on an emergency basis in the event of an unanticipated major food security crisis). There is a case for expressing contributions in nutritional terms or the intended number of beneficiaries, but when such formulae are explored, these prove to be complex, opaque and difficult to administer (Hoddinott and Cohen 2007).

In effect, parallel in-kind and cash contributions already exist. These can be expressed in simple grain equivalent terms, since wheat has lost its dominant place within food aid. As the 1999 Convention illustrates, a cash contribution can be expressed in commodity equivalent terms. The complexities of non-cereal, blended and nutritional product aid are not easily reflected except in terms of financial costs. The cost of other forms of food assistance (e.g., cash-based transfers) is also easily expressed in financial terms. If a new Food Assistance Convention were to include quantitative commitments, then a possible solution would be to take it a step further and allow a combination of physical and cash-based contributions.

### 3.2.7 Convention membership and the Committee

Regarding the committee for administering the Convention, its membership and actual functions, a near consensus presently exists that objectives are not realised and it is not fit for purpose. A common criticism of the Convention encountered in this study is that, as a stand-alone agreement with a narrow membership, it lacks integration with the wider food security architecture. The committee is not even a broad donor club, as the present group of signatories includes only those funding about 80 percent of food aid (as reported by WFP for 2008). There is the issue of the possible role of other stakeholders, taking into account, for example, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to which signatories have committed themselves.

There are two broadly divergent views about membership. Some see a continuing useful role for a committee of donors or funders, suggesting that the Convention could simply expand, if others (for example G20 countries that are providing funding in support of food assistance) wished to become signatories. Some suggest that as a committee of funding or aid donors, it would be more appropriate for EU DAC members to participate individually rather than collectively as participation of the EU as a single signatory reflects the trade-related origins of the Convention. This arrangement would cease to be appropriate as cash replaces in-kind contributions, making food assistance more like other ODA, and it is a source of non-transparency. This change would turn the Committee into a 'DAC plus' body. Thus, the Convention could resolve the aid architecture problem by operating under another OECD-type voluntary agreement. Trade-related issues would remain the responsibility of the WTO CoA.

Others oppose such a narrow membership and argue that representation should expand to include aid-recipient countries, international agencies and civil society organisations. The legitimacy and usefulness of a purely donor grouping is called in question. In developed version of this view, the Committee would, in effect, become a sub-committee of an enhanced CFS within the wider food security architecture (e.g., Barrett and Maxwell 2006).<sup>14</sup>

There is, in contrast, near consensus on the lack of and need for effective monitoring. Some see remedying this, and the need to accept some form of peer group review amongst signatories, as a matter of political will.

To conclude, first, currently there is a wide range of views on if or how the Convention can be strengthened. In undertaking this review, it has been interesting to compare the informal responses of stakeholders and their public statements with those made at the time of the 1999 renegotiation (Clay and Stokke 2000). It is apparent that limited interest exists in purely cosmetic relabeling. Concern and intent amongst stakeholders (including both governments and civil society) has shifted from adaptation towards a radical reconfiguring of institutional arrangements. However, what appears missing is an informed basis for negotiation if this is to go beyond adaptation.

Second, there is a lack of robust evidence on the effectiveness of the Convention. There are the obvious difficulties of finding an improved basis for determining contributions in a way that links commitments to needs. The IGC has never been provided with the in-house capacity for either monitoring or food aid policy analysis. This implies the need, first, for external assistance and addressing these issues in the course of negotiations and, second, for ensuring that the reconfigured food security architecture provides a capacity for monitoring and analysis.

<sup>14</sup> The analogy here is with the Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal, which is under the FAO Committee on Commodity Problems.



# Chapter 4

## Defining food assistance

An increasing number of donors and aid agencies are using the term food assistance as an alternative to food aid and including a wider array of interventions within the umbrella of food assistance. However, there continues to be a wide array of terms and definitions in use and a degree of confusion around the parameters of different terms.

The ways in which official discourse about food aid is evolving provides an important insight into policy change or changes that some are seeking to achieve.<sup>1</sup> This discourse is reflected in official documentation such as the Food Aid Convention, WFP reports on food aid flows and publications by policy analysts and those involved in policy advocacy both inside and outside of agencies.

The FAC definition of food aid is based on three core characteristics of food aid: (i) international source of funding, (ii) concessionality and (iii) food commodities.<sup>2</sup> WFP also includes transactions of non-DAC funders as reported by its field staff, country partners and agencies to INTERFAIS. INTERFAIS has always included NGOs and has recently begun to include ‘private’ funders in total food aid flows, so that there is no exact equivalence with ODA in the form of food aid as reported by the OECD. The inclusion of private funders is presumably to legitimise its own engagement with private sector partners.

The 1999 Food Aid Convention (see Section 3.2) allowed ‘seeds’ as an eligible transaction, going beyond the conventional categorisation of food aid as commodities and processed foodstuffs intended for human consumption. That definition excludes animal feedstuffs. This example of definitional expansion raises the possibility, as some have recognised, of regarding the emergency distribution of ‘starter packs’ of seeds and fertilisers as ‘food assistance’.

In the Doha Development Round negotiations from 2000 onwards ‘international food aid’ is under consideration which raise issues of export competition: (traded) shipments of food in-kind from the donor country or that are cash funded and acquired by some form of international competitive procurement. So non-traded cash-funded transactions within the recipient country are excluded from consideration (see Section 3.2).

<sup>1</sup> See Wood (1985) and Moncrieffe and Eyben (2007) on the importance of explicitly analysing ‘labelling’ in official policy discourse. Clay (1991) and Clay and Stokke (2000) discusses ‘grey areas’ of food aid within this conceptual framework.

<sup>2</sup> The WFP definition of food aid closely follows FAC definitions (IGC1999) and those of the OECD on concessionality of official development assistance (ODA). These are reflected in what transactions are included in the (INTER) FAIS database and as reported in food aid flows and the annual report.

### Box 1: What is food assistance? Some recent definitions

*Food assistance* refers to the set of instruments used to address the food needs of vulnerable people. The instruments generally include in-kind food aid, vouchers and cash transfers (WFP 2009e).

*Humanitarian food assistance* aims to ensure the consumption of sufficient safe and nutritious food in anticipation of, during, and in the aftermath of a humanitarian crisis, when food consumption would otherwise be insufficient or inadequate to avert excess mortality, emergency rates of acute malnutrition or detrimental coping mechanisms. This includes ensuring food availability, access to nutritious food, proper nutrition awareness and appropriate feeding practices. Food assistance may involve the direct provision of food, but may utilise a wider range of tools, including the transfer or provision of relevant services, inputs or commodities, cash or vouchers, skills or knowledge (European Commission 2010).

*Food assistance* is direct transfers to individuals or households for the purpose of increasing the quality and/or quantity of food consumption (Canadian Food Grains Bank).

*Food assistance* is all actions that national governments, often in collaboration with non-governmental organisations and members of civil society, and with external aid when necessary, undertake to improve the nutritional well-being of their citizens, who otherwise would not have access to adequate food for a healthy and active life (FAO 1996).

This distinction underpins the separate categorisation of *local purchases* from other forms of food aid.

World Bank analysts, for example, introduced the concept of *food-based transfers* or transactions to describe interventions such as food for work or school feeding, irrespective of the source of funding (Barrett and Maxwell 2005, OECD 2006). This distinction is perhaps helpful in its context because the World Bank, which does not report any of its operations as food aid, funded some of these safety net interventions involving food transfers. The use of IDA (International Development Association) credits by some disaster-affected governments to fund food imports have also not been reported as food aid (Clay and Stokke 2000).

More recently, the concept of *food assistance*, including both food-based transfers as well as voucher and coupon

schemes, has become more widely adopted. Some propose that a Food Assistance Convention should replace the Food Aid Convention. The growing acceptance of food assistance as a concept, as illustrated in Box 1, points to the need for clarification within this complex area of overlapping definitions and constructs. Are concessional official export credits a form of food assistance? Should interventions such as starter packs (or only the seeds) intended to increase food production by households for their own consumption to be considered as food assistance? What is the boundary between a financial transfer that is a form of social protection for households that are spending a very high proportion of disposable income on food and a voucher nominally linked to buying food? The recent evolution of the discourse on food aid and food transfers raises many important policy issues relevant for example to the discussions on a future Food Assistance Convention or the remit of WFP Emergency Operations (EMOPs and Protracted Relief and Recovery operations (PRROs).

Germany is currently working on a definition of food assistance. Within COHAFA, Germany also participated actively in discussions on formulating a joint EU food assistance definition. The food assistance definition in the making will relate to definitions of social safety nets and social protection and look to feature nutrition issues more prominently. In the US, the terms food aid and food assistance tend to be used interchangeably.

WFP, in its new strategic plan, talks about shifting from being a food aid to a food assistance agency. ECHO (2009b) talks about a gradual and important shift over the last 15 years from the use of in-kind commodity food aid as a default response to emergency needs towards consideration of a broader and more effective set of humanitarian food assistance tools. The reason for the shift is to allow agencies to include the provision of cash for food-related purposes within definitions of food assistance.

When cash should or should not be counted as food assistance, however, remains unclear. Save the Children (2006) explicitly excludes cash from its definition of food aid. 'Given the inherent fungibility of cash itself, the provision of cash to recipients is not classified as food aid, even if the recipients choose to use some or all of that cash to purchase food'. Others try to define cash grants as food assistance if they have explicitly food- or nutrition-related objectives or if the majority of the cash provided is used to purchase food. When and whether cash counts as food assistance, however, remains a grey area. This is true, for instance, of safety net programmes such as the PSNP (Productive Safety Net Programme) in Ethiopia or the Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya. These were designed as alternatives to recurrent provisions of emergency food aid with the hope that more-predictable safety nets would provide a better way of dealing with chronic hunger. Even less clear

is whether donor-supported safety nets without explicit food security objectives—such as pensions or child benefits—but in contexts where people spent most of the cash on food, should count as food assistance.

Another area of ambiguity is whether interventions to provide agricultural inputs, such as seed or fertiliser distributions designed to increase access to food by boosting production, fall within definitions of food assistance. They would, for instance, seem to fall within ECHO's definition. Would such interventions be considered as food assistance in an emergency context, but not as part of support for longer-term agricultural development? Such a distinction raises the issue of who determines what an emergency is, an issue that has been a subject of much discussion in the Doha Development Round (see Section 3). A final area of uncertainty is whether food assistance has to imply international aid. This used to be one of the key dimensions of many food aid definitions but is not part of many current food assistance definitions (Barrett and Maxwell 2005). This means that domestic programmes of support such as food subsidies could potentially count as food assistance.

ECHO's broad definition of humanitarian food assistance encompasses a wide range of interventions including food aid, cash, provision of agricultural inputs, provision of fodder, de-stocking, re-stocking, veterinary services, and support to livelihoods and markets (European Commission 2010). Having been published in an EU communication, EU member states may adopt this definition. An issue raised by accepting such a broad definition is that food assistance becomes hard to distinguish from food security and the extensive range of possible interventions used to promote food security. On the other hand, narrowing the definition risks a degree of arbitrary exclusion. One way of developing a narrower definition is the route that the Canadian Food Grains Bank has taken with its focus on direct transfers for the purpose of food consumption. 'Measures that directly support the consumption of food' is a definition suggested by some of those interviewed for the study.

Agreement on a definition is needed not least to clarify what forms of aid transaction should or should not be included in any renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention. It would seem to be of key importance in determining the operational mandate for WFP and the division of labour between WFP and FAO. It also matters for donor governments where food aid or food assistance is a separate budget line. For donor governments without a distinct food aid budget line the debate over definitions is perhaps less important.

Part of the current confusing definitional picture seems to be a conflation of objectives, instruments and financing mechanisms in much of the discussion. It is helpful to separate these out. Food aid or food assistance is not in itself an objective but is

provided for under a range of objectives such as alleviating food insecurity, supporting livelihoods or saving lives in crises. A range of actors (UN, non-governmental, governments) can provide food assistance and international aid or national governments can finance it. Food aid as a form of ODA is a specific instrument for achieving many possible objectives including, for example, budgetary support. Food assistance is an umbrella term for a range of instruments, including food aid, cash and vouchers. However, it sometimes includes others, depending on the definition used, to achieve objectives relating to nutrition and food security. Some actors increasingly simply

talk about food security, with food aid or food assistance as one of the potential instruments for tackling food insecurity.

To summarise, there has never been a single agreed definition of food aid, but specific definitions have been adopted in different domains. Clearly, attempts to define and work within a definition of food assistance, that is broader than food aid, raises many conceptual and practical issues. Some of these are explored further in Section 7 in terms of what might be included in a food assistance toolbox. There is an urgent need for clarity in what is becoming a definitional morass.



# Chapter 5

## Linking relief and development: humanitarian, transitional and development food assistance

Debate continues over whether food assistance is primarily a humanitarian instrument or whether it should be used in emergency as well as transition and development contexts. Some donors, including the European Commission, see food assistance as primarily a humanitarian instrument and question its appropriateness in development contexts. The US, the major donor, and WFP, on the other hand, continues to argue that food assistance can be appropriate in both development and humanitarian contexts.

The ongoing confusion over terminology does not help to bring clarity to debates about how better to link relief and development or the role of food assistance within that spectrum of activities. Some donor governments argue that food assistance is not an appropriate development instrument. They support expanding social protection and providing safety nets, in which food assistance (especially if defined to include cash assistance) plays a part. Part of the problem seems to be a confusion between food assistance instruments and differing humanitarian, transition and development objectives. Food assistance instruments, including cash and food, are clearly potentially appropriate in both development and humanitarian contexts and the many places where humanitarian and development needs are overlapping. Food, whether provided as part of social assistance measures or long-term nutrition programmes, often forms part of development assistance. Rather than labelling food as humanitarian and other instruments as developmental, it is more helpful to think about how the modalities and objectives of different food security instruments may shift as transitions from humanitarian to development approaches take place.

The potential of longer-term approaches to provide social protection and assistance as an alternative or complement to relief has gained currency, particularly in places where chronic vulnerability has seen long running relief programmes (Harvey et al. 2007, Harvey et al. 2009). The Ethiopia Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and a Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya are widely known current examples. Shoham et al. (2007) noted that there was widespread agreement that the PSNP represents a significant improvement over previous relief programming and a positive step towards finding long-term solutions to Ethiopia's food insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These issues are not new, but were addressed for example in the 1980s and 1990s in Bangladesh (Shaw and Clay 1993, Dorosh et al. 2001).

There has been a long running concern to better link relief and development and to find new and more effective mechanisms for international engagement in long-running crises. Concerns with the limitations of humanitarian aid as the instrument of last resort have led to growing engagement from development aid actors in 'expanding their capacity to mobilise, coordinate and disburse resources as well as set the policy framework for interventions in protracted crises' (Harmer and Macrae 2004). A renewed interest in social protection provides one avenue for moving forward what had become a somewhat stagnant debate about the appropriate roles of relief and development actors. In arguing for more predictable and long-term support in unstable situations, it is important not to assume that longer-term safety nets will be a complete substitute for short term humanitarian responses. As the introduction of the Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia indicates, there may be major problems with exclusion from cash-based safety nets and with the capacity of governments to effectively deliver longer-term support (Kebede 2006). More fundamentally, a long-term safety net may reduce the vulnerability to food security of those households receiving it following a shock such as drought or floods, but humanitarian relief will still be needed as a short-term response. Longer-term safety nets will also need to be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances in long-running crises (Harvey et al. 2007).

The growing interest in social protection has stemmed in part from the positive experience with conditional cash transfers in Latin America that resulted in increased children's enrolment in education, improved health and a reduction in the poverty gap for participating households. There has also been renewed interest in the positive impacts of pensions in South Africa and Namibia that played an important role in poverty reduction and enabling old people to bear some of the burden of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Case and Deaton 1998, Devereux et al. 2005, HelpAge 2004, Samson et al. 2006). Recent developments in Africa have included the introduction of universal pensions in Lesotho; pilot cash transfer social assistance in Zambia, Kenya and Malawi; the productive safety net project in Ethiopia and well developed plans for social assistance programmes in Rwanda and Uganda (Samson et al. 2006, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Development 2007, Hunger Safety Net 2008, World Bank 2009). In Asia, India has introduced the National Rural Employment Guarantee and there are several long-

running social assistance programmes such as Samurdhi in Sri Lanka and the IGVGD (Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development) programme in Bangladesh (Hossain and Zahra 2007). DFID has committed to ‘significantly increase spending on social protection in at least ten countries in African and Asia by 2009, supporting national governments and working with the UN and NGOs in fragile states’ (DFID 2006). African governments, including conflict-affected countries such as DRC and Sierra Leone have made key commitments to include social protection in national development plans in an African Union process (African Union 2008).

Social protection has been presented as an agenda that can strengthen the legitimacy of the state by allowing it to re-shoulder responsibilities for ensuring the basic survival of its citizens. Social protection instruments implemented by the state, such as pensions, can be seen as a central part of the political contract between a state and its citizens. Green (2008) argues that social protection offers, ‘a practical and effective way to reduce chronic vulnerability, tackle poverty and inequality, bridge the gap between emergencies and development and nourish the relationship of rights and responsibilities between citizens and states that lies at the heart of successful development’.

As an example of current interest in this issue, WFP is increasingly engaging in policy discussions around transitions from relief to longer-term social protection approaches. This implies interacting with a different set of organisations and institutions and WFP staff’s skill and capacity to play active roles in national level policy discussions. WFP staff needs to be able to sit at the table with governments, the World Bank, NGOs and donors and articulate a clear role for WFP within longer-term social protection programmes and strategies. For instance, a Burundi review recommended that government

and the three Rome-based UN agencies lead the formulation of a food security and livelihood protection strategy (WFP Burundi 2008). For example, one donor noted that WFP in development contexts was often seen as old fashioned, parallel and projectised. WFP is starting to recognise this but its corporate culture needs a major shift to become more successfully engaged in longer-term social protection debates. Donors are concerned that if WFP does move in the direction of engaging more strongly in social protection debates, it could distract attention from its humanitarian response capacity. Engaging with development actors around longer term social protection strategies may also require WFP to rethink its funding strategies—rather than largely relying on PRROs it may need to compete on a level playing field with other international agencies and private sector actors for particular contracts and projects. WFP may have comparative advantages around its field presence and ability to implement at scale but it will need to make a convincing case to donors in specific contexts for its efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Clearly, the long-term goal for social assistance is that it be state owned and delivered in accordance with Paris principles. However, in fragile states where state capacities are weak, an argument may exist for engaging with non-government actors to provide social assistance in the short to medium term. What combination of state and non-state actors should be involved in expanding social protection and in transitions from emergency to development approaches will always be context specific. In some chronic crises, potential exists for greater investments in social assistance as part of social protection strategies to reduce reliance on emergency food assistance that has been provided for many years. This does not mean, however, that food assistance, particularly if broadly defined to include cash transfers where appropriate, should not play a part in longer-term social assistance.



# Chapter 6

## Assessment, early warning and analysis

Investments and developments in food security assessment and information systems over the past decade have been significant. In spite of this, needs assessment remains a key weakness within the broader humanitarian system, as successive independent evaluations and reviews have identified (Vaux 2006, Cosgrave and Herson 2008, United Nations 2009:15). ECHO's annual survey on the consolidated appeal process found that needs assessments had somewhat improved, in particular at the sector level, though some concerns remain on the overall quality. In particular, the inter-sectoral analysis and the identification of gaps are still regarded as weak. In response to the 2007–8 'Food Price Crisis', the UN Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) concluded that there is a need to strengthen global information and monitoring systems. OCHA's (2009) mapping of humanitarian assessment initiatives found that agencies and clusters were seriously engaged in efforts to standardise and improve their own assessment practices and build partnerships for joint assessments and information consolidation.

Country-level investments have improved analytical capacity. Boudreau (2009) highlights the Livelihoods Integration Unit in Ethiopia in 2006, which aims to build the capacity of the government's early warning system using the household economy approach as an analytical framework and has 'advanced the science' in the area of disaster risk assessment. Recent efforts have improved the assessment of markets in emergencies to enable more appropriate responses and have developed an emergency market analysis tool (EMMA) (Albu and Murphy 2007).

Other new tools that have been positively received include the multi-cluster rapid assessment mechanism (McRAM) in Pakistan and the Post-Nargis Joint Needs Assessment (PONJA) in Myanmar. The Assessment and Classification of Emergencies (ACE) project aims to improve the basis on which relief actors identify needs and make decisions on the prioritisation and allocation of resources by supporting, harmonising and improving the comparability of inter-agency assessments and analysis activities (OCHA 2008).

The Integrated Phase Classification (IPC), as developed by FAO, is a multi-agency technical approach which aims to provide decision makers with timely, reliable and accessible information about the food security situation. Six countries regularly use it and it is being piloted in others (IPC 2008). The approach has significant advantages in that it combines a range of different indicators derived from different food security assessment methods rather than choosing one method to base the classification on. Furthermore, the focus is

on convergence of evidence, rather than the strict application of indicators. The food security phase is determined by a technical working group, and subject to technical peer review, rather than on strict adherence to indicators crossing critical thresholds (FSAU 2006). The classification enables comparison between population groups and countries. However, weaknesses persist, for example, in relation to the interpretation of malnutrition and mortality indicators, which was the subject of a recent review (Young and Jaspars 2009), and its ability to distinguish situations of less-severe acute food insecurity. There has also been an on-going debate on whether the classification mainly identifies severity of current food insecurity or whether it should also include a temporal dimension (Lawrence and Maunder 2007). OCHA is working on a tool for consolidating core humanitarian information in a consistent and accessible manner, currently referred to as the 'Humanitarian Dashboard', which is being further developed and field tested (United Nations 2009).

WFP food security assessments have increased their use of more quantitative data, reflecting a search for a single quantitative indicator that will determine severity of food insecurity and which can therefore be comparable across countries. Examples include the dietary diversity, and coping strategies index. This complements the development of the IPC, FAO's integrated phase classification to determine different levels of severity of food insecurity. Each food security phase is determined by a range of indicators, all of which need to have a 'reference outcome' or threshold. Whilst these quantitative indicators provide valuable new indicators of food insecurity, their use could divert attention from collecting qualitative data on the causes of food insecurity. There is a danger that this will limit the range of interventions to address food insecurity.

In conflict-related crises, a number of studies have advocated for greater incorporation of protection concerns into food security or livelihoods assessments. For example, Young (2007) notes the need for WFP activities to better incorporate security and protection concerns into strategic planning and assessment processes. She also argues in the context of Darfur that a livelihoods approach to assessment would better inform programme strategies by accommodating and analysing the underlying processes, institutions and policies that are linked to the conflict and destroying livelihoods. Jaspars and O'Callaghan (2010) make similar recommendations for linking protection and livelihoods analysis and strategy development. In addition, they argue that livelihoods interventions can contribute to addressing protection concerns, and that protection issues need to be considered when designing

livelihoods programmes (including food aid) so as not to exacerbate existing power imbalances or put people at greater risk.

An evaluation of WFP's recovery programming and a Feinstein Center/WFP study on targeting in complex emergencies found that limited connections were made between the findings of needs assessments and the design of programmes. Assessments and programme designs often do not clearly explain the rationale behind the programming choices and modes of delivery selected (including the other options considered) to achieve the most efficient and effective results in line with existing delivery capacities. Partly as a result, project documents often contain a very standard package of

interventions with little adaptation to context. In addition, programme design tends to be based predominantly on initial assessments, without periodic re-assessments or information updates, and lack the flexibility to be adapted to changing circumstances (Harvey et al. 2009). A review of food security responses in the Great Lakes region similarly found that the vast majority were the standard package of food aid and seeds and that these were often of questionable appropriateness (Levine and Chastre 2004). Various initiatives are underway to improve response analysis. For example, ECHO is currently funding FAO to develop a response analysis framework for food security emergencies. The IPC intends to support more effective response strategies by linking information with a strategic response framework.



# Chapter 7

## The food assistance toolbox

There is considerable debate about what types of interventions fit within the food assistance toolbox, as already indicated in the section on definitions. Table 7 sets out a range of food assistance instruments, defined as specific *instruments of intervention* directed to food consumption and nutritional objectives. The table also identifies issues having a link with definitions of food security, food assistance or food aid. A key issue is whether the food assistance intervention under consideration is concerned with food insecurity and nutritional needs in an emergency and humanitarian crisis context. Or are instruments being considered more generally in the context of chronic food insecurity and nutritional problems? Again, it would seem important to distinguish between such forms of intervention and the aid instruments that may be used to support such interventions.<sup>1</sup>

As the table suggests there is a considerable degree of ambiguity around what sits within the food assistance toolbox and what should be seen as broader food security, social protection or poverty interventions. Whether or not this ambiguity matters is another question. For donors and aid agencies with flexibility to move between food assistance (or food aid) and food security budget lines—or where food assistance is simply part of an overall food security approach—clear distinctions are not needed and the question is semantic or presentational. Where it does matter is in enabling donors to fulfil Food Aid Convention (FAC) obligations; some donors want an expanded definition of what can be counted as FAC contributions to better reflect the changing nature of food assistance. In addition, presently *food aid* rather than food assistance is subject to special treatment under OECD voluntary rules and with respect to WTO disciplines. Greater clarity would help distinguish between humanitarian and food assistance interventions that are internationally supported and food assistance that forms part of domestic, government and civil society responses to food insecurity.

The following sub-sections examine some of the key current debates around some of the instruments in the food assistance toolbox. The scope of the study precluded a comprehensive survey of all of the food assistance instruments outlined above

<sup>1</sup> 'Food aid as a form of ODA resource transfer needs to be distinguished from *food-based programmes* (FBP) or interventions undertaken by governments and NGOs in developing countries. These food-based interventions take various forms: *the direct distribution of food*, such as FFW or SFP, which provide either take-home food or school meals, or market interventions, such as food price subsidies; and financial transfers, such as food stamps. FBPs are *funded* largely internally, as in India or Mexico, or *supported* by internationally sourced food aid and financial aid, as in Bangladesh or Ethiopia. The scale of FBPs is declining throughout most of the developing world with liberalisation of internal markets and international food trade' (OECD 2006: p. 23).

and of all of the different food aid modalities (general food distributions, food for work, school feeding, etc.). Instead, the review focuses on those issues where innovative new practice is emerging or where there are current debates around approaches. The discussion of categories of intervention is organised under conventionally accepted boundaries (e.g., nutrition) and takes the ambiguities of definition as understood. Cash and vouchers (7.1), nutrition (7.2), school feeding (7.3), public works (7.4), and other food security instruments (7.5) are examined.

### 7.1 Cash and vouchers

Acceptance is growing that giving people money can be an appropriate alternative or complement to food aid and other forms of in-kind assistance in response to disasters. This is reflected both in revised policy positions to include cash transfers within broader definitions of food assistance and in practice where the use of cash in responding to disasters is growing. The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami was a major influence in the increased adoption of cash transfer programmes by both NGOs and UN agencies (i.e., WFP and UNICEF). Cash transfers were an appropriate response as markets quickly recovered; most goods were quickly available and agencies had large amounts of private funding that could be used for innovative approaches like cash transfers. In 2010, however, the provision of cash remains small in comparison to volumes of in-kind food assistance (Harvey 2007).

Numerous guidelines for cash transfer programming have been developed—including by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (2007), Oxfam (2006), Action Contre la Faim (2007), Horn Relief (2007) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (2007)—reflecting the growing demand within humanitarian agencies for tools to assist them in undertaking cash transfer projects. These guidelines cover similar territory, providing practitioners with valuable guidance on how to determine when cash transfers are appropriate, as well as how to design, implement and monitor cash transfer projects. WFP has developed a policy framework for cash transfers and vouchers and ECHO has developed funding guidelines (WFP 2008, Lor-Mehdiabadi and Adams 2008). Cash-based responses also have been the target of substantial research, monitoring and evaluation, resulting in an explosion of information on lessons learned.

WFP is continuing to expand its use of cash and voucher-based approaches. A cash and vouchers manual has been produced and a cash and vouchers unit has been established in headquarters to provide oversight, technical guidance and

**Table 7: Food assistance instruments: issues and grey areas**

| Instrument   | Grey Areas  |
|--|---|
| Food-based transfers and/or food aid                   | <p>There is a broad consensus that food-based transfers such as emergency distributions, food-for-work and school feeding are instruments of food assistance.<sup>a</sup> However, some areas of debate remain:</p> <p>If and when should monetisation of international food aid count as food assistance?<sup>b</sup></p> <p>When and if should programme food aid be considered as food assistance?<sup>c</sup></p> <p>Are domestic food-based interventions by developing country governments and/or NGOs without international support food assistance?</p>   |
| Cash   | <p>The general formulation is that only cash grants which have specific food or nutrition objectives should count as food assistance or that cash primarily used to purchase food should count as food assistance although some argue for excluding it altogether. Evidence also shows that even when provided with food or nutrition objectives, it is fungible, that is, it is used for a variety of purposes.<sup>d</sup></p>  |
| Agricultural input supply: seeds                       | <p>These are now included as food assistance within ECHO's definition and within the FAC. However, many would see seed provision as a food security rather than a food assistance intervention because seeds do not directly affect consumption.</p>  |
| Other agricultural inputs: e.g., fertiliser or subsidy | <p>These are usually regarded as food security or agricultural development interventions rather than as food assistance interventions.</p> <p>However, emergency 'starter packs' typically include seeds and fertiliser.</p>  |
| Food subsidies   | <p>These are usually not considered to be part of the toolbox, because international aid now rarely supports them. However, these means may be adopted as an emergency response and thus would fall within some current definitions of food assistance.</p>   |
| School or user fee waivers                             | <p>These tend not to be considered as a food assistance intervention but do promote access to food by freeing up household income.</p>  |
| Livestock interventions                                | <p>Fodder provision, veterinary support, de-stocking and re-stocking are generally seen as food security rather than food assistance interventions. They can, however, have direct food and nutrition impacts, for instance by sustaining food supply and fodder provision which boost milk production leading to better nutrition in young children. They do fit within some current definitions of food assistance such as that used by ECHO.</p>   |
| Nutrition interventions                                | <p>These are a hybrid category. Therapeutic feeding and supplementary feeding are generally seen as food assistance instruments. Actual micronutrient supplementation is increasingly considered as food assistance. However, there is less unanimity on whether regulatory requirements for fortification of foods or nutrition education should be included. Interventions to address malnutrition would include a much wider range of responses, including disease as an immediate cause of malnutrition, and those which address food insecurity, the health environment and social or behavioural factors which are underlying causes of malnutrition.</p> |

a For example these interventions are explicitly mentioned in the L'Aquila summit statement on food security (AFSI 2009, para. 6).

b For example the draft AoA distinguished between monetisation directed to meeting the transport and other incidental costs of supplying and distributing emergency food aid and for developmental purposes.

c For example the 1999 Food Aid Convention regards programme aid including export credits that qualify as ODA under DAC rules as eligible for inclusion in a reported contribution.

d The L'Aquila statement distinguishes between cash and vouchers as 'emergency assistance' and in the longer term 'cash-based social protection' (AFSI 2009, para. 6).

corporate capacity building. The manual includes programme and operational adjustments of all project cycle issues relevant to cash and vouchers (e.g., budget templates, WINGS, plan of operations, etc.) The Spanish government gave €10 million that is being used to implement pilot projects in Uganda, Niger, Yemen, Ecuador and East Timor; IFPRI is providing randomised evaluations for each project. In addition, cash and voucher approaches are increasingly being included in country-level appeals on a demand-led basis. The 2010 biannual management plan forecasts that 7 percent of all programming (approximately \$300 million) will be cash based but this is a very rough estimate. In 2009, an estimated 2–2.5 million WFP beneficiaries received cash and voucher assistance. A key issue moving forward is the need to link improved market analysis with feasibility studies, partner capacities and scaling up responses.

Under the general heading of cash and voucher-based responses, various types of innovative programming have occurred. In Darfur, ACF has provided vouchers to cover milling expenses for households settled in IDP camps and benefiting from general food distributions. The programme significantly reduced the percentage of households selling part of the general food distribution. The vouchers covered approximately 20 percent of household expenditures. An evaluation concluded that the programme led to improved diets as more of the ration was consumed and more income was available to purchase fresh foods (Mattinen and Palmaera 2008). WFP is now piloting this approach in Darfur.

Providing cash to meet basic needs remains the primary objective of most projects using cash transfers. Cash transfers have been framed principally as an alternative to food aid, and this continues to be one of their prime uses. However, cash is usually spent on other crucial basic needs, such as household goods, debt repayments and protection of access to health care and education. An important advantage of cash is that it enables people to meet a range of immediate priorities without having to sell in-kind assistance on unfavourable terms. In addition to enabling access to food, cash, like food aid, can have broader objectives, such as protecting livelihoods or preventing distress coping strategies. If transfers are calculated purely on household food deficits and do not include other basic needs, households may spend money ‘intended’ for food on pressing non-food needs (Bailey et al. 2008). Dunn (2008) notes, when reviewing Oxfam cash transfer projects in East Asia, that

*Although needs assessments clearly show that households have immediate needs other than food, these needs are often not included in the calculation of the cash transfer value. Often the calculation of the value of the cash transfer is based only on household food needs and a desire to supplement food aid.*

### Box 2: Innovative technologies for cash delivery

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has launched an electronic food voucher pilot project to aid 1,000 Iraqi refugee families in Syria. Iraqi refugees living in Damascus will receive a text message on their mobile phones providing a unique number enabling them to cash in all or part of a ‘virtual voucher’ at selected government shops. They will be able to exchange their electronic vouchers for rice, wheat flour, lentils, chickpeas, oil and canned fish, as well as cheese and eggs—items that cannot usually be included in conventional aid baskets. Each family will receive one voucher per person, worth \$22, every two months. After each transaction, families will receive an updated balance, also sent by SMS to their mobile phones. This means that people will no longer need to queue at food distribution points or travel long distances to distribution centres.

The mobile phone service provider MTN donated SIM cards for the project, which is expected to run for four months, but may be extended depending on the outcome of the pilot (WFP 2009a). In Somalia, WFP is developing a software package to support a mobile phone-based voucher system where beneficiaries will be issued with voucher cards that will enable them to collect full food rations in smaller tranches from traders using an SMS-based debit system (Lofvall 2009).

Action Against Hunger is currently involved in a cash project in northern Uganda in which recipients will be able to access their cash using solar-powered point of sales devices at local traders within their villages. The lack of power infrastructure and bank presence in these villages make the agents and solar power particularly appropriate.

In Kenya, as part of the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP), cash is delivered using a smart card system. Recipients have their finger prints scanned and receive a smart card which they take to a local trader or agent to get their cash. The local trader or agent uses a point of sale device to verify recipients’ identities. People are also able to get their cash from a branch of Equity Bank. In addition, also in Kenya, in urban slum areas in response to food price increases and post-election violence, Concern and Oxfam, in conjunction with the Government of Kenya, are using mobile phones to transfer cash. Recipients are provided with a SIM card (and sometimes a mobile phone, if they do not have one) and can retrieve the cash at any participating M-PESA / Safaricom agent.

Growing support for cash among donor governments (which are generally receptive to greater funding for cash-based responses), underpins the increased use of cash-based responses among operational aid agencies. With growing recognition that, in certain contexts, cash can more effectively and efficiently meet project objectives than other in-kind transfers, coupled with increased experience and capacity for implementing these programmes, it is likely that this overall

(but limited) trend is set to continue. However, many donors are increasingly moving away from direct support to NGOs and towards multilateral funding mechanisms such as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and other pooled funding mechanisms. This is part of an overall drive within the donor community to rationalise budgets that are growing in a context of static or shrinking staff. As a result, donors are increasingly turning to UN agencies to act as grant providers. It also means that, despite the evidence supporting cash responses, the potential for donor innovation is limited, which may help to explain why few donors have developed specific policies or procedures around the use of cash (Bailey et al. 2008).

## 7.2 Nutrition

Each year, under-nutrition is responsible for the deaths of more than 3.5 million children, the loss of billions of dollars in foregone productivity and avoidable health care spending. Many countries lose at least 2–3 percent of their gross domestic product to under-nutrition (Horton et al. 2010). Under-nutrition is a concentrated epidemic but of low national priority. An estimated 32 percent of children in developing countries are stunted, with the highest prevalence found in Africa (40 percent) (Black et al. 2008). Just 20 countries are home to 80 percent of the world's undernourished children (stunting or low height for age) (DFID 2009, Black et al. 2008). The causes of stunting are broadly associated with poverty, and stunting itself is associated with child mortality, poor school performance, decreased work capacity, increased risk of adult morbidity and early death (Shrimpton et al. 2001). It is also associated with increased health care costs and lost productivity. In the face of these huge costs, actors in the broader development sphere are increasingly focused on strong actions to tackle under-nutrition.

A recent World Bank report calls for a package of 13 direct nutrition interventions of demonstrated effectiveness, including complementary and therapeutic feeding interventions. Providing complementary food to prevent and treat moderate malnutrition in children less than two years of age in the 36 countries with the highest burden of under-nutrition would cost \$3.6 billion a year and treatment of severe acute malnutrition would cost \$2.6 billion per year (Horton et al. 2010). However, as stunting is an indicator of long-term under-development and poverty in the population as a whole, these interventions need to be combined with development programmes to address poverty.

In addition to the high prevalence of stunting found in developing countries, a number of countries, particularly in the Horn of Africa, repeatedly suffer high levels of acute malnutrition (Mason et al. 2008). Such situations have been called a 'chronic' famine (Devereux 2006), or extended food crisis (Darcy and Hoffman 2003). In recent years, considerable debate has ensued over whether different emergency thresholds (or reference levels) should be applied

in such situations and whether these high levels of acute malnutrition are due to particular body shapes, particularly for pastoral populations. At a recent workshop to discuss a review of malnutrition and mortality indicators for food security classification, it was concluded there was insufficient evidence of the functional outcomes associated with acute malnutrition in these population groups to change reference levels for classifying an emergency (Young and Jaspars 2009). What is clear, however, is that such situations require a different and longer-term response than those where nutrition rapidly deteriorates because of acute crisis.

Several donor governments and aid agencies argue that the nutritional impact of food assistance needs to be improved and that better links with other interventions that address malnutrition are needed. General food distributions and supplementary feeding have often failed to properly assess and document the nutritional impact of food received. There are also efforts underway to look critically at the composition of food aid baskets depending on whether the primary purpose is, specifically, nutrition or food security or, more generally, income support. USAID is currently funding the major, 'Food Aid Quality Review', which aims to examine the nutritional needs of beneficiary populations across the developing world, and the nutritional quality of commodities currently available to meet those needs.

A particular recent focus of attention has been the nutritional needs of children under two. CARE (2010) for instance notes that 'there is increasing recognition that current interventions (for moderate acute malnutrition) based on the use of fortified foods are inadequate and that a greater focus on 0–24 month old children and the nutritional quality of supplementary foods is needed.' A recent review of the management of acutely malnourished infants under six months of age in emergency programmes found that wasting in infants less than six months of age is a prevalent public health problem and that current guidelines lack consideration for this age group. It should not be assumed that infants under six months are well nourished or that care designed for older children can be safely extended to this age group (Kerac et al. 2009).

Evidence from past emergencies, however, suggests that older children face the greatest proportional increase in malnutrition and mortality as the nutritional situation deteriorates. If the aim of humanitarian response is to prevent excess mortality, interventions should cover the entire affected population. This would be an argument for general ration distribution rather than supplementary feeding targeted at under twos (or even under fives) (Young and Jaspars 2009).

In the US, agencies particularly focus on ensuring that Title II, Food for Peace commodities are more nutritionally balanced. The 'RoadMap' developed by several NGOs calls for expanded nutrition programmes that focus on particular needs of pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of two. MSF is campaigning for food assistance interventions to



better address malnutrition (MSF 2009). Its 'roadmap to end global hunger' for instance calls on the US government to

*support measures to enhance the nutritional quality of food aid, such as improving the consistency and nutritional profile (both in the US and locally) of commodities provided, diversifying the basket of commodities provided as non-emergency rations, and engaging governments, the UN, NGOs and other partners to promote the adoption of national fortification policies.*

CARE's new emergency food security and nutrition strategy commits it to a greater focus on moderate acute malnutrition and notes that 'the scale of CARE's emergency food security operations as well as strengths in food aid management mean that CARE is well placed to address moderate acute malnutrition' (CARE 2010).

Important innovations in the treatment of severe acute malnutrition are being tried. Therapeutic feeding has changed from centre-based approaches to community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) which uses ready-to-eat therapeutic foods to treat severe acute malnutrition in the community whenever possible (Deconinck et al. 2008, Valid International 2006). This highly successful approach not only treats severe malnutrition effectively, but also increases the coverage of therapeutic feeding programmes, particularly in rural populations. It has now been endorsed by WHO. The main constraint to further expansion of CMAM is the relatively high cost of ready-to-eat therapeutic foods such as Plumpinut; efforts are under way to support local manufacture in several countries, including Malawi, Ethiopia and India.

Navarro-Colorado (2007) argues for the exploration of alternatives to supplementary feeding of moderately acutely malnourished children, given the low coverage and population-level impact of current supplementary feeding programmes. His research highlighted the weakness of reporting and analysis of the impact of supplementary feeding programmes. The Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) is developing minimum reporting standards. Navarro-Colorado et al. (2008) argue for approaches such as blanket distribution of special foods during pre-harvest periods or expanded general ration programmes. ENN is about to start a research project that will compare outcomes from a traditional supplementary feeding approach with one having expanded general rations. Criticism of the use of CSB (corn-soya blend) for supplementary feeding is increasing. This has led to innovation in developing new products such as 'improved CSB' and 'Supplementary Plumpy'. Again, a major constraint to expanding the use of new commodities, and therefore the ability to sustain programmes and hand them over to national governments, is cost.

Blanket distribution to all under fives has been recommended in response to high levels of acute malnutrition (those falling

more than 20 percent below -2 z-scores) since MSF's first nutrition guidelines in 1995 (MSF 1995). This approach is still used, particularly in situations where there are constraints to improving the general ration or the way in which it is distributed. WFP in Darfur is currently providing blanket supplementary feeding on a seasonal basis in areas or population groups with the highest levels of acute malnutrition. Mattinen (2008) describes an ACF blanket distribution of high-energy biscuits to under-five-year-olds following the detection of extremely high malnutrition rates in IDP camps in north Darfur in June 2007. Mattinen argues that timely blanket distributions using appropriate products accompanied by sensitisation can effectively tackle transitory malnutrition peaks but that they remain costly especially when products must be purchased overseas and airlifted.

The UNICEF framework on the causes of malnutrition shows that it is driven by a combination of food security, maternal and child care, health services and environmental factors. Young et al. (2004) note that within the food assistance sector there has too often been a 'food-first' bias which assumes that nutrition is primarily linked to food security and argue for greater attention to social factors and the health environment in addressing malnutrition. A recent review on the interpretation of malnutrition and mortality indicators in emergencies highlights that the relative importance of these different underlying causes varies with the type of crisis, and with the severity of the crisis (Young and Jaspars 2006). Furthermore, the relationship between food insecurity, social and caring behaviours and the health environment is likely to change as food security deteriorates (Young and Jaspars 2009).

Other developments in nutrition include a focus on stronger action to tackle micronutrient deficiencies. UNICEF et al. (2009) argue that 'effective programmes are in place that warrant greater investment' and 'innovative research continues to create new options for micronutrient delivery'. The World Bank study (World Bank 2009, in MSF 2009) on scaling up nutrition programmes in 36 high-burden countries recommended

*for children under the age of five: periodic Vitamin A supplements, therapeutic zinc supplements for the management of diarrhoea, multiple micronutrients, and de-worming drugs. For pregnant and lactating women: iron-folic supplements as well as iodised oil capsules where iodised salt is not available. Iron fortification of staple foods and salt iodisation will be made available for the general population. The total cost for these interventions would amount to \$1.5 billion yearly.*

In general, it can be concluded that over the past decade an increasingly narrow view of nutrition as a clinical condition, and hence a focus on treatment rather than prevention, has predominated. Whilst significant advances have been made in such treatment, it is important to revive the discipline of

public nutrition, which takes a broader view of the problems of nutrition in society and which attempts to analyse and address its causes as well as the consequences.

### 7.3 School feeding

During the last decade, the number of school feeding programmes (SFPs) funded by donor governments and the wider international community has increased substantially. For example there has been the major USDA-managed McGovern-Dole initiative in 2000 (see Annex 2). In 2009, WFP's school feeding activities reached 22.6 million beneficiaries in 68 countries.<sup>2</sup> Renewed interest in school feeding is partly due to the need to identify acceptable uses for donors' agricultural surpluses, and partly because it directly addresses the goals of a number of international commitments: the millennium development goals on primary education and hunger reduction; the six 'Education for All' goals outlined in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000); boosting agricultural production goals as included in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) adopted by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2003 and, more recently, as a safety net in various national and international action plans<sup>3</sup> responding to the impact of rising food prices (DG ECHO 2009a, WFP 2009).<sup>4</sup>

#### 7.3.1 Definitions, aims and objectives

School feeding programmes have focused primarily on two broad goals: improving nutrition and improving education. The first is concerned with improving the health and nutritional status of school children. The second is concerned with increasing enrolment and attendance, reducing drop-out rates and, ultimately, enhancing cognitive development and academic performance at school (Adelman et al. 2008a, Bennett 2003, Clay et al. 1998, WFP 2009d). However, school feeding is also increasingly being used in emergency and transitional contexts to achieve a broader range of goals: providing a 'safety net' to alleviate short-term hunger; providing a platform for nutrition and health interventions; reducing gender and social inequities by encouraging families to send all children to school; protecting children from violence or exploitation by providing a safe environment; reinforcing local economies through purchase of local goods and services and establishing basic infrastructure to support governments to run their own SFPs (WFP 2009b). As Bundy et al. (2009) note, the effectiveness of SFPs in achieving these goals depends on several factors: the way in which school meals are provided (in-school meals, fortified biscuits, take-home rations or some combination of these); whether school children are actually the most nutritionally vulnerable; whether poor children can

2 Two million of these were reached through trust fund mechanisms (WFP 2010).

3 See Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) Yokohama Declaration and the FAO High Level Conference on World Food Security.

4 In 2008, 20 national governments chose to scale up SFPs as a response to soaring food prices in order to benefit those in need (WFP 2009a).

attend school and thus whether targeting is effective and the associated costs.

School feeding has been broadly defined as 'a set of interventions supporting both medium-term nutritional and long-term education objectives that are being implemented with food as the primary resource' (Bennett 2003). Others have adopted a narrower definitions distinguishing between school feeding as 'meals or snacks prepared and given to children at school' and food for education, seen as broader, which refers to any food used as a resource to improve educational outcomes, including programmes where children are given take-home food rations in exchange for school participation (Adelman et al. 2008b, DG ECHO 2009a, Save the Children 2007).<sup>5</sup> WFP does not make this distinction, defining school feeding as 'the provision of micronutrient fortified biscuits, snacks or meals at school, jointly with a de-worming solution; and/or take-home rations. It is conditional upon enrolment at school and regular attendance. It is a safety net with nutrition, education, gender, and wider socio-economic benefits that transfers valuable food resources to schoolchildren and their households in crisis, recovery and development contexts.'<sup>6</sup>

#### 7.3.2 Evidence, policy and practice

School feeding continues to have fervent supporters as well as a significant body of sceptical opinion. WFP, by far the largest agency supporting school feeding, claims that the debate is largely won: 'What is so clear . . . is that we are beyond the debate about whether school feeding makes sense as a way to reach the most vulnerable. It does. In the face of global crises, we must now focus on how school feeding programs can be designed and implemented in a cost-effective and sustainable way to benefit and protect those most in need of help today and in the future' (Bundy et al. 2009).<sup>7</sup> Others, notably DG ECHO, Medecins Sans Frontieres and various members of the European Emergency Food Security Group<sup>8</sup> (Oxfam GB, Save the Children UK, ACF-IN and German Agro-Action) continue to question the ability of school feeding programmes to adequately address the causes of hunger, malnutrition, poor school attendance or performance. They also question the cost-efficiency of school feeding compared with other interventions for achieving similar goals, such as waiving school fees or providing cash transfers directly to vulnerable households.

There is some evidence that school feeding alleviates short-term hunger and acts as an incentive for parents and/or

5 These transfers can be up to 10 percent of household expenditures and even more in the case of take-home rations (Bundy et al. 2009).

6 Email correspondence cited WFP School Feeding Policy and WFP Programme Guidance Manual.

7 WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran and World Bank President Robert Zoellick, Foreword to *Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector*, a joint publication by the World Food Programme and the World Bank Group.

8 The EEFSG is a sub-group of EuronAid/Concord's European Food Security Group (EFSG). Members include Action Contre la Faim, Concern Worldwide, EuronAid, German Agro-Action, ICCO, Oxfam GB and Save the Children UK.

carers to send children to school (Kazianga et al. 2009, WFP 2009d), but evidence that it improves children's nutritional status or cognitive and learning capacity is less conclusive (Bennet 2003, EEFSG 2006). The findings from evaluations are inconclusive and indicate a need for more investigation of the circumstances under which school-feeding programs could improve nutrition and academic performance (Adelman et al. 2008c, Kazianga et al. 2009).

Other concerns, cited by supporters and sceptics alike, are that school feeding programmes are not the most effective way of targeting the most nutritionally vulnerable, such as those not enrolled in school<sup>9</sup> or those less than five years of age who are most at risk of both chronic and acute malnutrition. There are also concerns that long-term commitments to school feeding can reduce the resources available and flexibility needed to respond to new emergencies, when support to school feeding in WFP countries with limited programmes or PRRO budgets reduces funds available for other priorities. Legitimate concern regarding the sustainability of SFPs remains, given the high costs of maintaining recurrent food and non-food supplies. In countries with a low GDP per capita, an SFP typically costs half or more of their education budget (WFP 2009).

WFP has identified eight benchmarks for good quality SFPs: (1) sustainability; (2) sound alignment with the national policy framework; (3) stable funding and budgeting; (4) needs-based, cost-effective quality programme design; (5) strong institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring and accountability; (6) strategy for local production and sourcing; (7) strong partnerships and inter-sector coordination and (8) strong community participation and ownership (ibid).

Amongst the NGOs surveyed, Canadian Food Grains Bank, CARE International, Catholic Relief Services and World Vision all implement school feeding, either in partnership with WFP or independently. CRS's current policy is to expand school feeding to cover pre-school children. World Vision views school feeding as a platform for undertaking health interventions, such as health promotion and HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Oxfam GB has opposed school feeding, but is now in the process of developing a policy which endorses school feeding, if only in the context of protracted crises, as part of an overall strategy to address food insecurity.

### 7.3.3 School feeding in emergencies

Debate is ongoing about the extent to which school feeding may be considered an instrument in the humanitarian food assistance 'toolbox'.

WFP takes the view that school feeding is applicable in most contexts and is a food-based 'safety net' in all situations. Its

<sup>9</sup> Level of enrolment and attendance are critical. For example, the 'Nutribun' programme in Jamaica in 1986 reached its targeted beneficiaries because of the almost universal enrolment rates of primary school children (Clay et al. 1998).

policy states that school feeding can be used in emergencies, protracted crises and situations of seasonal food insecurity to offer an expanded safety net for children and their families hit hard by shocks. It also promotes the use of school feeding in post-conflict, post-disaster and transitional contexts to assist in restoring the education system, encouraging the return of internally-displaced people and refugees and improving social cohesion and integration among children (WFP 2009b). Of the 22.6 million beneficiaries of WFP's school feeding programmes in 2008, 10 million were beneficiaries of development programmes, 8.7 million were beneficiaries of Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations, and 4.5 were beneficiaries of emergency operations (WFP forthcoming).

Others question the applicability of school feeding in emergency contexts. For example, DG ECHO's guidelines for funding school feeding state that 'school feeding is not considered an appropriate means of delivering food and nutritional support to vulnerable children in emergencies, except in exceptional circumstances where all other more effective response options are unfeasible'. It argues that school feeding is unlikely to be the best use of limited resources for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in most contexts (DG ECHO 2009a). It is however, increasingly considered as a tool to use in protracted crises, as part of a long-term safety net or where targeting general rations is problematic. As indicated by Oxfam's new policy, however, it should not be implemented in isolation, as it does not necessarily reach the most vulnerable groups (the poorest and/or malnourished).

## 7.4 Public work

Much food assistance continues to be delivered through food or cash for work programmes also called Public Works programmes (McCord and Slater 2009, Lamadé et al. 2009, Harvey et al. 2009). The objectives of cash and food for work are often both to provide resources to the most economically vulnerable and to create community assets that promote food security (dams, roads, wells, etc.). Cash and food for work therefore require significant additional funds to provide the technical and management support for these projects.

WFP evaluations highlight weaknesses in terms of the quality and sustainability of the assets being built and the availability of sufficient complementary resources, tools and technical skills. In many cases assets built tend to deteriorate unless explicit care is taken to putting in place institutions and capacities ensuring their regular upkeep. The lack of adequate budgets for the non-food costs of food for assets programmes is a recurring theme. For instance, a WFP evaluation in Kenya noted a lack of tools for soil excavation in a dam construction project; a lack of tools was noted in Sierra Leone and insufficient budgets for non-food resources was noted in Angola (WFP Kenya 2007, WFP Angola 2005, WFP Sierra Leone 2008).



Cash and food for work projects are often assumed to be self targeting but in practice this rarely seems to be the case unless wages are set so low that they risk failing to meet other objectives (Barrett and Clay 2003). The chronically vulnerable (sick, elderly, handicapped) usually need a separate safety net of direct food or cash distribution. Recent evaluations showed again that self targeting is ineffective, as the marginal value of labour varies considerably between households and the short-term employment attracts less food-insecure households with a lack of other work opportunities (Harvey et al. 2009, Dietz 2006a, Dietz 2006b).

A recent WFP evaluation in Uganda highlights the issue of work being spread thinly with insufficient work being available to satisfy demand (WFP Uganda 2005). Communities often address the high demand for work opportunities by spreading the employment benefits evenly across all households and rationing the number of days each household can work. There are some positive examples.

A recent WFP evaluation in Pakistan saw food for work (FFW) activities as particularly appropriate in the post 2005 earthquake context because there was a range of immediate needs for short-term infrastructure repair that lent itself to labour intensive and simple public works (WFP Pakistan 2006). In Ethiopia, the MERET programme (Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transition to more sustainable livelihoods) works with communities to invest in sustainable land management through food for assets activities. It was used as a model for developing food for assets activities in the PSNP and is often cited as an example of good practice (WFP Ethiopia 2008, Riley et al. 2009, WFP 2005). Examples of GTZ public works that balance cash and food for work in Nepal and Afghanistan are shown in Box 3.

### 7.5 Grey areas: other food security instruments

Although sometimes now included in the food assistance toolbox, there was not scope in this study to focus in depth on recent developments in relation to agricultural input and livestock interventions. Seed distributions continue to dominate agricultural programming in emergency and recovery contexts. Interest is growing in a wider range of livestock interventions in pastoral areas, including destocking, re-stocking and fodder provision. New livestock emergency standards have recently been produced (Alinovi et al. 2007, Watson and Catley 2008). Greater attention has been given to a broader range of interventions to support livelihoods and promote market development (SEEP 2007, USAID 2007, Maxwell et al. 2008). The Small Enterprise Education and Promotion (SEEP) network has published a new set of minimum standards for economic recovery after crisis that focus on strategies and interventions designed to promote enterprises, employment, cash flow and asset

#### Box 3: GTZ Cash and Food for Work (CFW) in Nepal and Afghanistan

##### *Nepal*

A partnership between the Ministry of Local Development, BMZ, WFP, GTZ and DFID in Nepal has been implementing a public works programme that has provided short-term employment to nearly 60,000 people every year, largely on road building projects. An evaluation of the 'Rural Community Infrastructure Works programme' (Dietz 2006a) focused in part on the appropriate balance between payments in cash or food, recommending cash in areas with established markets, food aid for short-term programmes in remote areas and a mixture of cash and food for longer-term projects in remote, mountainous areas.

The evaluation found that cash payments were likely to be more cost efficient than food aid and less plagued by delays given the huge logistical challenges of delivering food in Nepal. Cash would enable people to buy alternatives to rice, potentially containing 'more nutrients and calories'. The evaluation argued that CFW was largely substituted for other forms of employment and so a switch to greater use of cash would not create inflation risks. Programmes using cash had developed procedures for managing security risks. The main reason for caution in the expanded use of cash was that cash might increase the costs for recipients in remote areas who would have to travel long distances to purchase and transport food to their homes.

##### *Afghanistan*

GTZ has been implementing BMZ-financed emergency and transition assistance (DETA) programmes in Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces in northern Afghanistan since 2002. Cash for work activities started in 2004, and gained momentum in 2006. GTZ's CFW activities have guaranteed roughly 15,000 workers access to some cash over the last three years, benefiting more than 100,000 Afghans annually. In Badakhshan province, 150,000 work days were provided every year. On average, CFW beneficiaries have participated in CFW schemes for 15 days (Lamadé et al. 2010).

management among affected enterprises and livelihoods (SEEP 2009).

Interest is increasing in the possible use of insurance as a form of response to food insecurity and disasters. Micro-finance providers have been examining the possibility of extending their product range to provide micro-insurance; at a more macro level some governments have taken out 'catastrophe bonds' against extreme weather events and UN agencies have been piloting weather based insurance indexes (Twigg 2004, WFP 2005, Slater and Dana 2006). Interest is growing in questions relating to land in humanitarian crises and a recognition that better addressing land issues is crucial (IDMC 2009).

# Chapter 8

## Delivering food assistance

There are a growing range of options and innovations in both the delivery of food assistance as food and of cash to people. In delivering food-based transfers, the traditional model of surplus in-kind food aid being transported from donor countries to developing countries is continuing to decline, although tied food aid continues to be a large part of some donors’ portfolios, notably the US. A growing volume of food aid is being procured locally and regionally—this is the focus of attention as the main area of innovation. WFP is making efforts to ensure that its procurement policies benefit to smallholder farmers in developing countries. WFP and NGOs such as CARE have developed strong partnerships with private sector logistics organisations (TNT and UPS) to strengthen their commodity management systems.<sup>1</sup>

### 8.1 Food aid procurement

There is an emerging near consensus amongst funding and operational agencies about the appropriate sequence of steps in deciding how to provide food assistance, especially in an emergency or relief context. First, an assessment is required that determines whether food assistance is required. The subsequent steps are presented in the following decision tree, which is adapted from that set out by Barrett and Maxwell (2005, Figure 10.1).

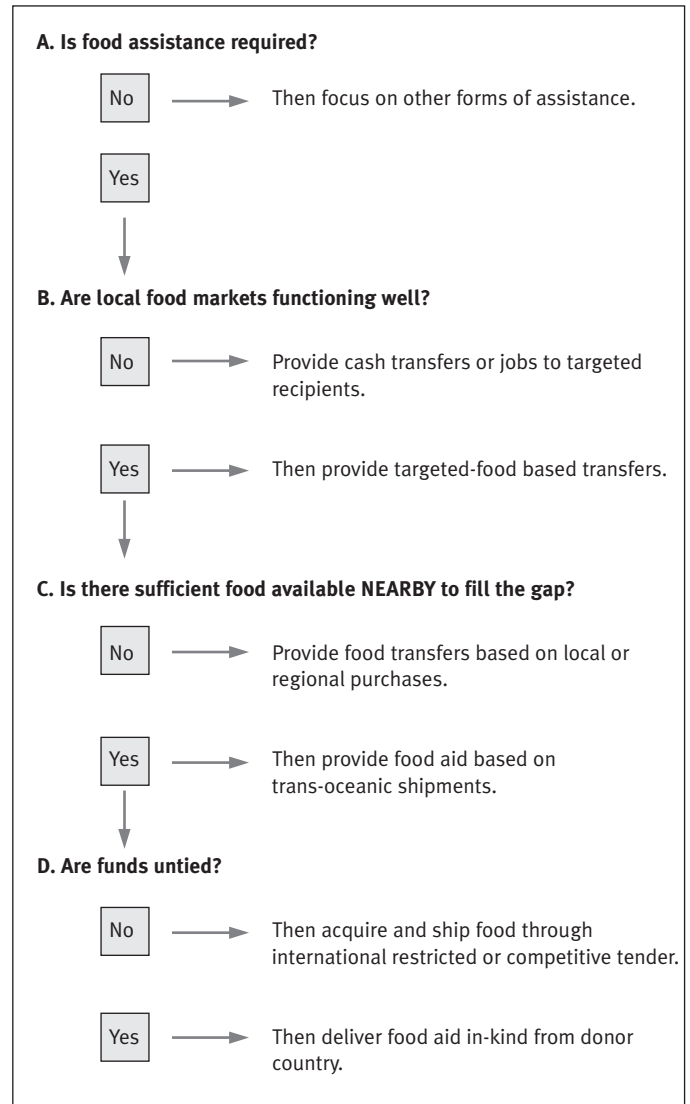
Procurement is a key link in the supply chain that brings food assistance to those in need. When food transfer, as opposed to providing cash or vouchers, is deemed to be the most appropriate tool then three possible procurement response options:

- (i) using cash to purchase food aid locally or regionally;
- (ii) using cash to purchase on international markets or
- (iii) providing direct transfers of donor-sourced or ‘tied’ food aid.

Actual decisions involve a judgement about the range of specific needs for particular products and commodities and their market conditions. Decisions must be sensitive to the likely elapsed time for delivery and quality. As both regional procurement and international tendering involve trade-based transactions, WFP and other donors have conventionally aggregated these as ‘triangular transactions’ that are sourced outside the donor or recipient country. A more refined categorisation would be helpful where country economies are

<sup>1</sup> However, some in European agencies felt their capacity to manage the procurement and delivery of food whether locally or from Europe had been weakened when the non-profit EuronAid, which many had used, had to cease operation.

Figure 9: Decision tree for food assistance



small and the differences in arrival times can be considerable. For example, moving maize from Tanzania to Malawi has quite different implications than organising an international tender or shipping in-kind from the USA.

In terms of origins, the balance of direct transfers of in-kind tied aid and cash-funded local and triangular transactions has shifted strongly to the latter, as shown in Section 2 (Table 2). If the levels of aid during the two most recent commodity price spikes and periods of relatively tight supply are compared (1996–8 and 2006–8), the considerable change in sourcing becomes clear. Total food aid volumes during the more recent and more severe price spike in 2008 were down 15 percent on the previous spike but the levels of direct in-kind aid were down 46 percent. In contrast, levels of triangular transactions

and local purchases were respectively 22 percent and 136 percent higher than during the previous spike.

In quantitative terms, local purchases during the five years 2004–8 have exceeded one million tonnes. Triangular transactions, a composite group of regional procurement often restricted to neighbouring countries and international competitive procurement, are more variable around a 1.5 million tonnes level. The US is the main supplier of in-kind tied food aid, accounting for 89 percent of all the direct transfers from the funders covered in this study (Table 3) with Japan and Canada making smaller but, relative to their own programmes, large direct transfers (45 percent and 44 percent respectively). Most funders support local and triangular transactions, with the EC and the UN being the largest in 2008.

Cash contributions from donors specifically to WFP are also increasing. According to WFP staff interviewed, in 2009 cash made up 53 percent of total contributions. Thus, WFP is able to procure more food in developing countries. In 2009, 82 percent of the food procured by WFP through local, regional or international competitive tenders was sourced in 75 countries that have been classified as least-developed countries (LDCs) or other low income countries (OLICs), at a cost of \$ 772 million (WFP 2009d).<sup>2</sup>

## 8.2 Local and Regional Procurement (LRP)

The critical issues in procurement concern the sequencing of decisions and the actual flexibility that agencies have in sourcing and delivery. As noted in Section 2, during the last decade most donors have made their funding more flexible through embarking on systematic untying (e.g., Australia and Canada) or removing residual tying (e.g., Denmark and Norway). In consequence, WFP and other operational agencies with their support have favoured LRPs and other triangular transactions, especially in emergency contexts. In contrast the US as the largest provider, is still almost entirely limited to direct transfer including a high proportion of tied shipping.

When market conditions are favourable, LRP typically reduces procurement costs through savings in commodity purchase, transport and handling (ACF 2006b, Aker 2008, CARE 2006 USA, OECD 2006, Coulter 2007, DG ECHO 2009b, USGAO 2009b, USDA 2009, Tschirley and del Castillo 2009). For example, the 2006 OECD study found that local purchases were on average 40 percent less costly and triangular transactions 30 percent that direct transfers. This result is reconfirmed by the US Government Accountability Office (USGAO 2009b) report which found that during the period 2001–2008 food commodities purchased in and shipped from the US cost some 34 percent more than had these same commodities been purchased in the Sub-Saharan African recipient countries.

<sup>2</sup> WFP's *Food Procurement Annual Report* provides a breakdown of the sourcing countries: <http://www.wfp.org/content/food-procurement-annual-report-2009>

(Comparative costs of tied versus in-country procurement of food for Latin America were, however, roughly the same.) The study also found that food from the US required 147 days on average to reach ten selected African countries, whereas locally purchased food was available in 35 days and food procured in neighbouring countries in 41 days.

Another reason why LRPs are favoured is their potential to benefit developing country agriculture and strengthen the food markets upon which many of the poorest and most food-insecure households depend (CARE 2006 USA Coulter 2007, DG ECHO 2009b, WFP 2009a).

Just as the favourable examples come from evaluations and studies commissioned by agencies supporting or organising LRPs on a large scale, so the cautionary examples seem to come from those more committed to in-kind aid. A USDA study suggests that the cost efficiency timeliness and developmental gains from LRPs are more likely attainable with predictable multi-year food procurements for delivery in development contexts, and some protracted crises, than with one-off emergency food aid purchases (USDA 2009).

Considering the now-large scale of LRPs and triangular transactions, the actual reported cases of negative effects such as inflating consumer prices and disrupting local market structures are few, but do occur, for example as in Niger in 2005.<sup>3</sup> This example somewhat tempers the notion that local and/or regional purchase is always the best response to food shortages and points to the need for context-specific decisions and further developing-market analysis capabilities.

Other challenges in organising LRP exist: Contracting instruments in some recipient countries are often more difficult to enforce. Quality control measures are sometimes less rigorously enforced. Locally-procured transport may not be available in needed quantity or timeliness (USGAO 2009a). For such reasons, WFP is keen to maintain a flexibility to buy some of its commodities, in particular fortified and blended foods such as corn-soya blend (CSB), biscuits and vegetable and palm oil, in middle income and developed countries.

Few would now argue that direct transfers of tied aid are likely to be the more efficient way to reach the most vulnerable or disagree that where possible agricultural production and food markets in developing countries should be supported. Risks are associated with direct transfers: inappropriate

<sup>3</sup> In 2005 a combination of local purchases of food by the Government of Niger, WFP and a number of international NGOs combined with speculation by local commodity traders caused food prices to rapidly escalate beyond the reach of most rural people, increasing food insecurity. A joint, independent evaluation of the humanitarian response to the crisis concluded that the negative impact of the local purchases was particularly severe because of specific market conditions. The local and regional cereal deficit in 2004–5 and lower-than-anticipated potential for cereal imports were not adequately taken into consideration (Wilding et al., 2005). Consequently, the local purchases served to reduce supply from some localities already experiencing a deficit.

#### Box 4: WFP's Purchase for Progress (P4P) Initiative

WFP's P4P initiative is currently underway in 19 of 21 selected countries. It intends to use WFP's purchasing power and demand for staple food commodities (cereals, pulses and blended foods) to help smallholder farmers and small traders benefit from its operations in agricultural markets. This goal is aligned with other national, regional and global efforts to address food insecurity by promoting smallholders' agricultural production and access to markets, such as the NEPAD's CAADP, ACTESA (Alliance of Commodity Trade in East and Southern Africa) and the Comprehensive Framework for Action. A total of \$121 million has been allocated to the programme by the Howard G. Buffet Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, European Commission and governments of Belgium, Canada and the United States.

The P4P pilot aims to test a range of new procurement approaches:

- **Competitive processes** under conditions favourable to farmers' organisations and small/medium traders such as 'soft tenders' with less stringent conditions, cereal fairs and commodity exchanges.
- **Direct contracting** negotiated between WFP and farmers' organisations to 'bring demand down the value chain'. In some countries, warehouse receipt systems have been established, whereby farmers might deposit their commodities in a certified warehouse in return for a receipt, which can be exchanged for cash at a local institution. The commodities need to meet certain standards of quality and grade.
- **Forward contracting** committing WFP to purchase a specified quantity and quality of a food commodity at some point in the future at a minimum guaranteed price. Food purchased through forward contracts would tend to be for school feeding or nutritional programmes in recovery contexts, where demand can more easily be predicted. Such a contract would not be signed for food aid in response to a sudden-onset emergency.

P4P also aims to promote the development of local *food processing capacity* by linking it to smallholder farmers to supply raw commodities.

WFP is working with over 50 partners including governments, UN agencies, international and national NGOs and the private

sector to implement P4P, as well as providing sub-grants to supply side partners. All of the \$121 million supports capacity building activities such as strengthening farmers' associations, constructing warehouses, facilitating farmers' access to credit, providing training in P4P procedures and ensuring the participation and empowerment of women.

Compared with the 2.6 million mt of food procured by WFP in 2009, P4P is small scale. By December 2009, 174 mt of food had been contracted under P4P modalities in 14 countries. Seventy-six percent was contracted in East and Southern Africa, 15 percent in Central America and 9 percent in West Africa. Of this, 60 percent (23,148 mt) was contracted through farmers' organisations, either directly or through soft tenders; 19 percent (7,583 mt) through the Commodity Exchange in Zambia; 14 percent (5,512 mt) through small and medium traders in Mozambique and Zambia and 6 percent (2,240 mt) through different forms of warehouse receipt systems in Uganda and Tanzania (WFP 2010a).

Quality control, limited presence of supply-side partners at field level, insufficient availability of rural credit for smallholder farmers, the difficulty of price discovery (the process used to identify the price for a particular commodity) and natural disasters including floods and droughts are the main challenges identified by WFP's purchase for progress team. Others note that P4P could negatively affect markets and the welfare of producers and consumers, particularly if its underlying assumptions—(i) smallholder farmers have limited access to markets; (ii) P4P purchases will have a minimal impact on consumer prices; (iii) higher farm-gate prices will encourage farmers to produce more in the long-term—are not valid (Aker 2008). Higher prices paid to smallholder farmers via P4P also have the potential to displace small-scale traders and alter traditional relationships between farmers and traders (ibid).

P4P's impact will depend entirely on the context, quantity and purchase prices of procurements (Beekhuis 2008, cited in Aker 2008). WFP's Vulnerability Assessment Unit will need to monitor a range of indicators very closely including prices, production levels and trade flows. For this reason, Aker cautions that P4P is not necessarily a 'win-win', but a 'win-maybe'. A mid-term evaluation is planned for 2011.

commodities, the strong likelihood of higher costs and delays and consequent market disruption, especially if emergency aid arrives too late. LRP are also not without risks for any donor or agency that is intervening in the markets of a developing country. As the decision tree (Figure 9) makes clear, key issues are a proper assessment of nearby market conditions and the flexibility at an operational level to make the most appropriate response in these specific circumstances.

As the use of LRPs has grown, realising their developmental potential is a recognised challenge. In some cases, those

on the supply side directly benefiting from LRPs are more likely to be either larger-scale farmers with surpluses to market or larger traders who can deliver large quantities of high quality grain, bid from existing stock positions and meet other contract requirements (USDA 2009). However, in many developing countries, particularly in Africa, larger-scale farmers do not tend to produce the staple food commodities—cereals, rice pulses etc.—that currently make up WFP's food basket. In such cases, larger traders tend to buy from a multitude of smaller-scale farmers, who are often not in a position to sell their commodities for a 'fair' price at the farm



gate. Recognising that smaller producers and traders are likely to be disadvantaged, WFP launched Purchase for Progress (P4P)—a five-year (September 2008–13), \$121 million pilot initiative—that aims to use the agency’s purchasing power and the technical expertise of a wide range of partners to enable 500,000 smallholder farmers, cooperatives and small/medium traders sell their staple food commodities at a fair price (see Box 4). The concerns expressed about this initiative suggest that there could be potential trade-offs between the multiple objectives which are being loaded on to purchasing.

### 8.2.1 Donors and agency policies

All the donors and agencies surveyed for this study endorsed the provision of cash to fund LRPs, albeit to different degrees. Australia and Canada provide funds to WFP and NGOs to procure food aid as close to the area of need as possible. The European Commission (EC) and several EU-member states (including Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany and Ireland) support WFP and a range of NGOs to procure locally and regionally in both emergency and non-emergency contexts as a means of supporting the growth of agriculture, markets and livelihoods in developing countries. For example, Belgium was the first country to participate in WFP’s Purchase for Progress initiative and has supported Belgian NGOs working in DRC to promote local purchases in surplus areas for delivery in food emergencies in that country.

The US government is actually, because of the sheer relative scale of its food aid budget, a significant funder of regional procurement as emergency assistance. The administration also recognised (in its unsuccessful proposals—up to and including the 2009 Farm Bill—for 25 percent of Title II resources administered by USAID) that LRPs could, depending on local circumstances, be an appropriate response to food insecurity in emergencies and non-emergencies. Section 3206 of the 2008 Farm Bill provides the USDA, not USAID, with \$60 million over four years for the implementation of a Pilot Local and Regional Purchase Program that will permit greater flexibility in responding to both emergency and chronic food aid needs around the world (USDA 2009). The experience is to be evaluated by an independent M&E firm, starting in 2011. There is also current interest in, although little experience with, using LRP to benefit small farmers in low-income communities (USDA 2009).

USAID spent \$125 million in 2009 development assistance (DA) and international disaster assistance (IDA) resources on local and regional purchase, as provided by the 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act (*ibid*).<sup>4</sup> In addition, bills have been introduced in the present Congress that would

<sup>4</sup> WFP FAIS data indicate that the US funded local purchases of 84,560 tonnes of cereals and 16,018 tonnes of non-cereals in 2008, as well as 58,945 tonnes of cereals and 19,718 tonnes of non-cereals through triangular transactions in third countries. To put these acquisitions in perspective they represented about 9 percent of local and triangular purchases in volume and exceeded the total food aid levels of France or Germany or Netherlands.

provide the Administration with an additional \$200 million in international disaster assistance, some or all of which could be used for LRP, or in providing cash vouchers or cash transfers directly to food insecure recipients. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives have introduced bills to initiate legislation, in the context of the President’s Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative (see below) that would, among other things, enable greater LRP. It is unclear, at this point, whether these bills<sup>5</sup> will eventually be enacted into law. However, greater recognition of the need to respond to the problems of global hunger and food insecurity strongly suggest that additional funds will be made available (outside the food aid legislative process) that can be used for LRP. However, this effort to increase LRP has been strongly resisted by commodity, transport and NGO interest groups and, as a recent USGAO noted, as long as US law requires 75 percent of American food to be shipped on US flag vessels, the ability to use LRP will continue to be constrained (Hanrahan 2009).

Donors rely heavily on WFP to carry out LRPs. These operations have been broadly found to be cost-effective relative to other modalities when large quantities are needed for large-scale operations (e.g., OECD 2006). However, WFP operational practice is not without its critics, because of what is seen to be relatively inflexible procedures (Tschirley and del Castillo 2009). WFP’s general procurement policy is to purchase from pre-qualified suppliers through a competitive bidding process. WFP engages in three different ‘levels’ of food procurement: local, regional and international, all three of which can result in the purchase of food from developing countries. WFP’s financial rules dictate that ‘when conditions are equal, preference will be given to purchasing from developing countries.’ Before issuing a tender, careful consideration is given to the location of the most advantageous place to buy, relative to the area of need. Factors such as taste acceptability, delivery time and comparison of local prices to import parity play an important part in the evaluation. In addition, restrictions in both donor and recipient countries on the trade in genetically modified foods influence donor and agency decisions about where to source food aid. The number of bans or restrictions on the importation of genetically modified foods in Southern African countries is a possible factor behind the increase in WFP’s local and regional maize procurements during the past five years (USDA 2009).

If local prices rise above import parity, tension rises between the preference for local purchase and cost-efficiency. However, in emergencies, the need for timeliness has led WFP to occasionally purchase at prices above import parity in order to reach those in need in an expeditious manner and to avoid pipeline breaks.

A significant challenge facing WFP in achieving cost-efficiency is that donors’ contributions are, in most cases, made on an

<sup>5</sup> HR 3077 and Senate Report 111-19, both on the Global Food Security Act of 2009.

operation-by-operation basis. As such, money pledged by donors does not always arrive in a timely manner. Delays can undermine procurement planning and result in cost inefficiencies, particularly in emergencies as demand surpasses supply and prices begin to rise towards import parity. According to WFP, multi-annual, multilateral contributions would help to address this. Australia is among the first donors to formalise a multi-year, multilateral commitment to WFP and this agreement is being used as a benchmark to encourage others to follow a similar approach. As a rule, WFP only accepts contributions from donors for full recovery of the cost of international transport, storage and handling.

Donors may also fund NGOs, commercial traders or umbrella humanitarian procurement centres (HPCs) to procure food aid independently from WFP. Some 86 percent of local purchases and 93 percent of triangular purchases are channelled multilaterally (WFP 2008).

Relatively little quantitative evidence is available on NGO procurement policies and practices since the demise of EuronAid (see below). CRS indicated that it had done \$10 million worth of local purchases from its own funds over the past seven years, which is relatively small in comparison to WFP. CRS's current policy is to expand local and regional procurement of commodities, using practices that ensure quality and avoid price spikes and hardships to nearby consumers, to increase the flexibility of emergency response and to use local and regional purchase to stimulate agricultural market development across the food system value chain including growing, milling and processing (CRS 2009). Welthungerhilfe indicated that approximately one third of the food aid it delivers is from WFP; the rest it procures independently.

Umbrella procurement on behalf of NGOs can be a cost-effective way of reducing the analytical and operational demands on NGOs and donor country offices, while maintaining the flexibility provided by NGOs (Tschirley and del Castillo 2009, EuronAid 2009). However, in 2008, EuronAid, an EC-supported HPC, collapsed after the EC changed its public procurement law and, in particular, its rules on award procedures for contracts. The changes left no legal basis for contracting with an entity owned by private charities, such as EuronAid. Single contracting based on competition became the only way to comply with the EC's new framework for procurement using ODA funding, which spelled the end of EuronAid.

To summarise, the commonly cited and widely demonstrated advantages of LRP are that it facilitates the delivery of nutritionally or socially appropriate commodities, is timely and cost-effective and can support agricultural and market development. In contrast, the inefficiencies and potential negative effects of tied aid in-kind have been well documented (OECD 2006, FAO 2005, Clements 2007, USGAO 2009b). However, all food-based transfers imply intervening directly or

supporting intervention in the markets of recipient countries. For donors and operational agencies, especially in emergency contexts, making difficult decisions based in extremely incomplete information and judgements about the balance of risks must be challenging.

### 8.3 Monetisation

In the last decade, there has been a major shift in the use of monetised food aid, and monetisation<sup>6</sup> is now little practiced other than by NGOs using funding from the US government. Monetisation in the arena of food aid refers to sale of US (or other donor) food aid overseas in a developing country in order to generate cash resources for other programs addressing the causes of hunger. During the last twenty years, monetisation has largely been the province of US NGOs that have generated several billion dollars worth of 'local currency proceeds'. Originally it was allowed in small portions ('partial monetisation') as a way to permit NGOs to generate some local cash to pay the expenses of transporting and distributing food aid, where the food was delivered directly to beneficiaries. By the 1990s, many food aid programs involved the sale of all food aid to an NGO in a country. The scope for monetisation and conditions for avoiding WTO disciplines is potentially far more restricted than at present if the draft AoA were to be ratified (WTO 2008).

Some NGOs, for example World Vision, continue to rely on monetisation for a significant amount of their funding from the US government and are therefore reluctant to stop using it as an instrument despite acknowledging its inefficiencies. Their position is that monetisation continues to provide valuable development resources and that the US Congress is not likely to approve equal levels of cash. If monetisation were phased out, the total resources available for their development programmes among food-insecure populations would almost certainly be reduced. They see the sale of food commodities for local currency as a 'second best' resource. The focus then shifts to the effectiveness of those local currency resources in delivering food security benefits for targeted food insecure communities and households versus the financial and efficiency costs and negative consequences, if any, of the monetisation process. This is an area of enquiry needing considerably more scrutiny than has been undertaken to date.

Other international NGOs including CARE, a major US food aid partner, and especially the members of the European food security grouping have ceased to be supportive of monetisation. For example, Save the Children calls for greater

<sup>6</sup> Monetisation is, from an economic perspective, analytically indistinguishable from programme aid. The formal distinction is one of channel (*indirect aid* through an NGO or multilateral agency) and, usually, specification of the use of the funds. In practice, the distinction between programme food aid and monetised project food aid is often one of scale and channels. Monetisation is usually associated with more specifically defined off-budget uses through NGOs. Project aid is usually on a smaller scale. Project actions are also more likely to be marginal in relation to the total supply of commodities in the recipient economy (OECD 2006).

**Box 5: CARE USA's position on monetisation**

'Experience has shown that monetization requires intensive management and is fraught with risks. Procurement, shipping, commodity management and commercial transactions are management intensive and costly. Experience has shown that these transactions are also fraught with legal and financial risks.

Monetisation is economically inefficient. Purchasing food in the US, shipping it overseas, and then selling it to generate funds for food security programmes is far less cost-effective than the logical alternative—simply providing cash to fund food security programmes.

When monetization involves open market sale of commodities to generate cash, which is almost always the case, it inevitably causes commercial displacement. It can therefore be harmful to traders and local farmers, and can undermine the development of local markets, which is detrimental to longer-term food security objectives.

Source: CARE USA, 2006.

flexibility from donors to provide the most appropriate resources. It argues that monetisation is an inefficient resource transfer mechanism that should be replaced by equivalent

cash resources. Where cash resources are not available Save the Children will 'advocate for a principled approach to monetisation' (Save the Children 2006). In 2006, CARE, committed itself to shift out of monetisation by 2009 (CARE 2006, USA). The problems CARE USA saw with monetization are indicated in Box 5.

Monetisation had been a big part of CARE's portfolio and CARE's food for peace funding has reduced significantly since 2006. The white paper created perceptions internally and externally that CARE was 'getting out of food for peace' or 'getting out of food aid' rather than just phasing out of monetisation. CARE does still have big food aid programmes (e.g., in Ethiopia with the PSNP) and it is WFP's second largest partner. CARE is increasingly looking to do its own local and regional purchase of food aid via funding from USAID and Food for Peace to enable it to retain core procurement and logistics capacity, which were starting to be lost with the phase out of monetisation.

Critics as well as defenders of monetisation are concerned about the predictability of funding where emergencies have first call on food aid. This concern explains the requirement for minimum monetisation written into earlier farm bills and the introduction of a 'safe box' for developmental food aid in the 2008 Farm Bill (see Annex 2).



# Chapter 9

## Operational programming of food assistance

This section focuses on recent developments in the distribution and programming of food assistance including the Sphere revision process, challenges in targeting and the innovative use of new technologies for registration and distribution processes.

### 9.1 Rights, standards and principles

The most important new development in standards and principles relating to food assistance is the revision of the Sphere Minimum Standards. Now reaching completion, it features a revision of the ways in which food security, food aid and nutrition are dealt with. In place of separate sections on food aid, nutrition and food security, one chapter on food and nutrition security is currently divided into six sections: assessment and analysis

- infant and young child feeding
- treatment of acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies
- food transfers
- cash and voucher transfers
- food security and livelihoods

One of the standards relates specifically to the use of cash and vouchers. The food security and livelihoods section has standards relating to primary production, income and employment and access to markets (Sphere 2010). Rather than standing separately, food transfers and cash and voucher transfers are now more clearly integrated with food security and nutrition. The chapter is currently in draft form for public review and will be finalised in 2010.

The focal points for the, food security and nutrition chapters are, however, still grappling with the issue of definitions so this may change in the final drafting process. The new chapter aims to better integrate food security, food assistance and nutrition. As well as including cash and voucher transfers as possible instruments within the food security section, other new elements are strengthened sections on supply chain management (including the ethics of transport contracting) and stronger attention to cross cutting issues such as gender, the elderly and the environment. Some of the indicators have been made more specific. For example, rather than saying that distribution points should be 'as close as possible' to the beneficiaries a proposed core indicator states

*Travel time and distance to final distribution points: beneficiaries should not have to walk more than 10 km (approximately 3 hours) each way.*(Sphere 2010).

It is hoped that providing a more specific benchmark will help to focus attention on the issue and provide a starting point for debate with authorities.

Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security were adopted at the 127th session of the FAO Council in 2004 (FAO 2005). These voluntary guidelines provide a widely accepted framework for food security and have been used to promote a more rights-based approach to food assistance emphasising the accountability of duty bearers, principally recipient country governments, donor governments and intergovernmental agencies (BMZ 2007). The UN secretary general identified the right to food as a third track of the Comprehensive Framework for Action at the Madrid High Level Conference on Food Security in January 2009. The UN High Level Task Force has emphasised the need to address all aspects of food systems from a human rights perspective. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recently joined the High Level Task Force (United Nations 2009).

### 9.2 Targeting and sharing

Over the last decade, a number of studies have been done on food aid targeting. Without exception, these studies conclude that targeting within communities inevitably led to sharing of rations except for a few cases where the food insecurity was not severe and the proportion of the population targeted was high (Jaspars and Shoham 1999, Jaspars 2000, Taylor and Seaman 2004, Mathys 2004).

Reviewing current targeting practices in complex emergencies, Maxwell et al. (2010) note that targeting by group identity, such as IDPs, is the most common form of administrative targeting. In southern Sudan, a major focus in 2008–9 was on returnees, even though those who never left or who were displaced locally may be equally food insecure. As in previous studies, findings were that food aid is shared among a much larger group of people than planned by humanitarian agencies. This is because everyone within the community is perceived to be entitled to food aid, or affected by the emergency. However,

it also happens for security considerations. In Somalia, for example, not distributing food equally to everyone would pose a security risk for clan leaders involved in the distribution.

Redistribution was sometimes well managed but at other times was chaotic, violent and coercive and posed considerable risk for the distribution agency and beneficiaries alike. This was particularly the case where small amounts of food aid had to be distributed to large numbers of people and the crisis was severe. In such instances, it is common that the most vulnerable (socially, politically or economically) will receive the least or are excluded altogether, as was found in South Sudan in 1998 and in Somalia in 1992 and now (Jaspars 2000, Jaspars and Maxwell 2008). The consequence is that vulnerable or marginalised groups have to expose themselves to greater risks to make a living; in 2008, some IDPs in Afgoy went back into Mogadishu to find work or charity in the midst of on-going conflict. In contrast, in Karamoja, Uganda, general food distribution is being provided to the majority of the population and is contributing to protecting livelihoods and decreasing the frequency of which people are forced to engage in negative coping strategies. Similarly in Darfur, food aid was found to be effective in minimising protection risks associated with engaging in livelihoods strategies in unsafe areas (Buchanan-Smith and Jaspars 2006, Jaspars and O’Callaghan 2008). Some more findings from the Tufts University–WFP targeting study are shown in Box 6.

Analysing the risks of doing targeting through local institutions or governance systems is an important part of planning food distributions in complex emergencies. Are they accountable? Representative? Local institutions can vary from clan leaders, to government, to relief committees especially formed for the purpose of distribution. Participation in decision-making is a key factor. Distribution works best when checks and balances already existed within traditional governance mechanisms, or where they can be introduced through monitoring, providing information on entitlements or establishing a complaints mechanism (Maxwell et al. 2010). The team produced guidance notes for WFP on how to do this (Maxwell, Young et al. 2009)

### 9.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Evaluations and studies of food aid consistently note poor monitoring as an issue. An important example is the Tripartite Evaluation of WFP by Canada, Netherlands and Norway (Christian Michelsen Institute 1993). Recent examples, including Maxwell et al. (2010), note that ‘the lack of good monitoring makes it extremely difficult to assess impact or targeting error’. In Kenya, Simkin et al. (2008) note for WFP that ‘in many cases the impact indicators and monitoring tools were not successfully informing and improving programmes’. Maxwell and Burns (2008) note ‘little monitoring of livelihoods and almost no post-distribution monitoring’ in Southern Sudan. In a review of supplementary feeding programmes, Navarro-Colorado (2007) found programme reporting and

#### Box 6: Targeting in complex emergencies

Redistribution or sharing is common in targeted food distributions and needs to be planned for. Redistribution is frequently ignored in reporting and post-distribution monitoring. This has major implications for the impact of food assistance on nutrition and food security; tackling this dilemma head-on rather than continuing to largely ignore it should be a priority in better understanding the impact of food assistance on food security. Targeting decisions are often not made on the basis of assessment information. This occurs for a number of reasons; First, a registration, once it has been done (as in 2005 in Darfur), determines food aid allocations—food aid may continue to be provided to these same registered people for many years regardless of assessment information. Second, assessments rarely gives information that allows targeting beyond the district or livelihood zone level. In Somalia, a very small number of food monitors determined which villages would get food within a particular livelihood zone and which would not. Security considerations were often paramount (Jaspars and Maxwell 2008, Young and Maxwell 2009).

analysis of outcome statistics to be ‘grossly inadequate’ in many programmes and recommended minimum reporting standards.

WFP donors have expressed concern over a lack of documented evidence about impact and outcomes. For example, a review in Burundi cited one donor insisting on the need for ‘simple evidence of what is the impact of their support to WFP’ in order to continue funding the PRRO (WFP 2008b). Several donors mentioned the failure of evaluations to ask broader questions about the role and relevance of food aid (WFP 2007e). A recurring theme of WFP evaluations is limited capacity for analysis of what monitoring data is being collected. In Kenya, an evaluation found no data on the extent to which assets were protected or negative coping assets avoided. Vastly over-complicated post distribution monitoring forms were being used with the result that data was not being properly collected, analysed or used (WFP Kenya 2007).

The problem may relate to WFP’s tonnage-based funding model, long recognised as a constraint to programming quality because it makes it difficult for WFP to maintain core capacity (staff, for assessment and monitoring) when, as an emergency ends, the volumes of food being delivered start to fall (e.g., Barrett and Maxwell 2005).

The volume of food assistance and whether or not it is enough to have any significant effect on livelihoods and processes of asset recovery are other issues. In south Sudan, for instance, the sufficiency of the ration provided to returnee households has been questioned: ‘Assistance provided to a typical returnee household (three month food ration, seed

for one feddan) appears to underestimate need.' In Upper Nile and Jonglei, 'currently the food ration and other inputs provided to returnees are not enough to enable them to effectively re-establish their livelihoods' (Frankenberger 2007, Bailey and Harragin 2009).

WFP still lacks comprehensive measurements of outcomes at the operational level to be aggregated at the corporate level. Auditor reports, internal evaluations and the executive board continue to express concerns regarding WFP's weaknesses at reporting on outcomes. As an example, in 2008, only 33 percent of all active WFP operations contributing to Strategic Objective 1 reported on the corporate outcome indicators for the objective. WFP has identified a lack of accountability mechanisms within the organisation to reinforce outcome measurement, a lack of staff with the technical skills needed for good analysis and limited basic monitoring capacities within partner organisations as key constraints to improving outcome-monitoring performance.

WFP recognises these weaknesses in monitoring and acknowledges the wider issue of how to promote better sharing of learning and innovation through a stronger knowledge base. Efforts are underway to generate improvements by setting up a new M&E unit and focusing on results-based management. Food consumption scores and the coping strategy index are now used to demonstrate impact. For instance in Afghanistan, the food consumption score is used to assess the impact of general food distribution activities on meeting minimum dietary requirements as well as to improve the nutritional quality of food consumption. In pilot food voucher programmes, it provided an estimation of the impact of trying to avoid borderline populations sliding into poor consumption as a result of soaring food prices starting at the end of 2007. In Darfur a food security monitoring system has been developed to draw on new tools such as dietary diversity and food

### Box 7: Rations spread thinly

In Karamoja, food being generally distributed to the majority of the population is contributing to protecting livelihoods and decreasing the frequency of which people are forced to engage in negative coping strategies. In practice, however, general food distributions in Karamoja have sometimes been spread thinly and erratically (due to pipeline breaks). Issues with registration and diversion mean that rations are being shared between several households.

Adele Okono is a food aid recipient in Arecek Village near Moroto town. She is a widow with seven children (three of whom are adults and now married). She is on the food aid register and received general food distributions four times in 2008 but each time had to share her rations with three other households. She was not sure about the reason for this but there were concerns that the volunteers managing the distributions might be diverting some of the food aid. The household had harvested very little due to poor rains and was coping largely through sales of firewood and charcoal and casual labour in the nearby town. This means that she had received only about 68 kg of maize in nine months—better than nothing but a relatively small contribution to her food security and livelihood needs.

Source: Harvey et al. 2009

consumption scores to produce richer data which focuses on consumption and food aid utilisation, not just on what has been delivered (WFP 2009b). Cash transfers on the other hand, have been rigorously monitored and evaluated from the start, by both WFP and the range of other agencies involved in cash distributions. This is evidenced by the large number of evaluation reports available in agencies such as Oxfam GB, ACF, SC-UK, and others



# Chapter 10

## Conclusions

Food assistance continues to make up the majority of humanitarian appeals and to be an important tool in responding to crises. However, the continuing shift from tied in-kind to untied food aid, growing levels of local and regional procurement and increasing use of cash-based transfers are leading to a quickly shifting environment for policy and practice. The establishment of the CERF has increased the ability of the UN to respond rapidly to emergencies. Overall, these changes have led to a greater flexibility for responding to food crisis.

The overall trend in funding for food assistance broadly defined is unclear. Food aid as an ODA transfer in-kind or funding for purchase and delivery of food has been declining. The USA remains the largest food aid donor, providing around half of global food aid, mainly in-kind. Understanding US policy is therefore key to understanding global food aid governance. There are two clear developments in the overall pattern of other DAC members' funding: the near general shift to untied funding for developing country procurement and a considerable contraction in food aid levels of some donors, notably the EU, Australia and France. The number and importance of non-DAC funders has been increasing: They provided around 20 percent of food aid reported by WFP in 2008. However, relatively little is known about other non-commodity food assistance, as reporting on these activities has not been standardised and integrated. The reporting on food assistance is clearly inadequate and the implications of these developments have not been sufficiently examined.

Regarding recipients, food assistance is concentrated in a relatively small number of countries affected by conflicts and other protracted crises, many of which have received food aid for prolonged periods. The protracted nature of many food 'emergencies', where food aid has been provided on a regular basis for many years, has led to a number of initiatives to provide longer-term social safety nets as part of social protection strategies. Such strategies also provide potential for harmonisation and alignment with national governments. In contexts such as Ethiopia's PSNP and Kenya's HSNP, donors are working with both governments and a range of international actors.

The global architecture for food security and within it food assistance appears to be in the midst of significant changes. Developments include the revival of the Committee on Food Security, the UN High Level Task Force and the recently agreed food security cluster as part of the humanitarian reform process. There is an on-going debate about the FAC, with some regarding it as irrelevant, some wanting to maintain it as a legal instrument for ensuring minimum levels of food

aid, and some seeing it as the basis for a new food assistance convention. The majority view appears to be that a radical re-configuring is required. This would involve reviewing the nature of commitments, how to express them (i.e., moving away from wheat equivalents), membership and monitoring and reporting requirements.

In parallel, changes in global information systems for classifying the severity of crisis (ACE, IPC etc.) have been made. However, these have not yet been matched by linking assessment information to appropriate responses. The evidence reviewed here indicates a still significant gap. Similarly, the use of methodologies that consider the causes of food insecurity, such as livelihoods or protection approaches is still very limited. Similarly, although more studies have been done, little progress has been made on finding more appropriate targeting methods, or on assessing and monitoring impact. Targeting practices have remained largely unchanged, regardless of the growing evidence of the challenges of doing this effectively, in particular of reaching certain households within communities in complex emergencies.

A broader concept of food assistance is gradually being adopted in place of the former focus on food aid. Some important donor agencies such as ECHO have recently developed food assistance policies. Many agencies also increasingly deal with food assistance within the broader framework of food security and humanitarian policies. In the revised Sphere Handbook for Minimum Standards, food assistance has been more clearly integrated with food security and nutrition.

There is no common understanding within the international community about the terms and definitions in use. This makes it increasingly unclear what fits within the food assistance toolbox. Funders and operational agencies need to make choices about whether to have a separate food aid or food assistance policy or to simply see food aid, cash, agricultural inputs and so forth as part of the range of instruments available to tackle food security.

Views about the usefulness and effectiveness of certain types of programmes differ considerably. For example, WFP and some NGOs implementing programmes, see school feeding as an important food assistance tool, whereas other NGOs dispute whether it is in fact the most cost effective tool either to improve nutrition within the most vulnerable groups or to improve school attendance.

The majority of donors that have untied their food aid in humanitarian and transition contexts increasingly channel this

support through WFP. Its growing importance makes WFP's policies, strategies and partnerships an important domain for debating food assistance. The growing use of cash as an instrument for humanitarian response encourages a wider range of actors, and is an area in which NGOs as well as WFP are looking to expand their activity.

A resurgent interest in nutrition is the other big trend influencing food assistance debates. This is leading to calls for a stepped-up focus on the nutritional outcomes of food assistance and on the quality as well as the quantity of assistance provided. This trend needs to encompass not just more nutritious foodstuffs but also the monitoring of outcomes (what people actually receive and consume) and the building of stronger linkages between food assistance and other dimensions of nutrition policy. It should include a focus on the underlying causes of malnutrition as well as the risks associated with it, something that has been relatively neglected over the last decade.

This review of recent developments leads us to identify and prioritise five priority areas for agencies and other stakeholders in their efforts to make food assistance policy

and practice more relevant to current needs and anticipated challenges:

- developing a new food security architecture which incorporates food assistance;
- working towards greater clarity of terms and definitions;
- where appropriate, continuing to expand the use of cash and a broader food assistance toolbox beyond food aid;
- linking food assistance more clearly to the expansion of social assistance within national social protection strategies and
- focusing on the nutritional outcomes of food assistance and linking food assistance more clearly to overall nutrition strategies.

These challenges should be addressed with a clear direction in a number of contexts, from the highest levels of the UN to the G20/G8, in a more consistent and joined-up way. Challenges include the renegotiation the Food Aid Convention, the finalising of the Sphere Minimum Standards, the new food security cluster, the UN High-Level Task Force and the revitalised Committee on Food Security.



# Annex 1

## Interview guide

### Agency interviews (NGOs, UN)

1. Does your organisation have a food aid, food assistance or food security policy or strategy? If so, can you share it with us?
2. Does your organisation have its own definitions for food assistance and food aid? If not, to which ones do you refer in your policy formation, programming and operations?
3. What is included within your organisation's chosen definition of food security, food aid or food assistance? How has this changed over the past 10 years? How does food assistance relate to broader food security policies and initiatives?
4. Which departments within your organisation deal with food aid/assistance?
5. Do you have any details about food aid or food assistance revenues and expenditure in 2007 or 2008?
6. What are the most common contexts and projects in which your organisation provides food aid/assistance? Is food assistance provided for humanitarian and development purposes?
7. How does your organisation determine whether in-kind food aid or other food assistance measures (e.g., cash or vouchers) are more appropriate? What else determines the response?
8. Has your organisation adapted its food aid/assistance policies, programmes or strategies in response to the global food, fuel and financial crisis since 2007? If so, how?
9. Has your organisation adapted its food security (including aid/assistance policies, strategies or programmes) in response to climate change? If so, how?
10. Have your organisation's policies in relation to the following aspects of food aid/assistance changed in recent years? If so, how?
  - School feeding
  - Nutrition
  - Targeting of food aid
  - Procurement and shipping
  - Agricultural production
  - General distributions, food for work and food for training
  - Cash transfers and vouchers
  - Monetisation
11. How does your organisation's approach to food aid/assistance relate to linking relief and development challenges and social protection and safety net policies and programmes?
12. How does your organisation's approach to food aid/assistance relate to disaster risk reduction policies and programmes?
13. Does your organisation have an advocacy position on food assistance? Are you members of TAFAD, Coalition for Food Aid, European Food Security Group, and do you have any views on their effectiveness?
14. Is your organisation involved in the discussion on the Food Aid Convention? How?
  - How do you think this fits within a global food security architecture, or within the new humanitarian architecture (reform process)?
  - Which are the instruments of food assistance that should be included in a potential "new" food assistance convention?
15. Does your organisation have a view on the way food aid was treated in the draft Agreement on Agriculture in the WTO Doha Round and what the implications would be if the Doha Development Round were brought to a conclusion?
16. How has the humanitarian reform process impacted food aid/assistance?
  - How is the evolving food security cluster process affecting the coordination around food aid/assistance?
  - Do you think there is a need for a global food or food security cluster? Why?
  - What have been the impacts of financial reforms including the CERF?
17. Do you have any recent reports, evaluations or studies relating to food aid or food assistance that you can share with us?
18. Do you have any other views about the key challenges and debates in food aid and food assistance within your organisation and globally?

### Donor/government interview guide

1. Does your government have a food aid, food assistance or food security policy or strategy? If so, can you share it with us?
2. Does your government have its own definitions for food assistance and food aid? If not, to which ones do you refer in your policy formation, programming and operations?
3. What is included within your government's chosen definition of food security, food aid or food assistance? How has this changed over the past 10 years? How does food assistance relate to broader food security policies and initiatives?
4. Which ministries or departments within your government are responsible for food aid and food assistance?
5. What are the main budget lines relating to food aid and food assistance? Would you be able to provide detailed about food aid or food assistance expenditure in FY 2007 and 2008? What is the breakdown of humanitarian and



- development food assistance and bilateral (government to government and through NGOs and multilateral funding)?
6. What are the most common contexts and projects in which your government provides or funds food aid or food assistance? Is food assistance provided for humanitarian and development purposes?
  7. How does your government determine whether in-kind food assistance or other food assistance measures (e.g., cash or vouchers) are more appropriate? What else determines the response?
  8. Has your government adapted its food aid and food assistance policies, programmes or strategies in response to the global food, fuel and financial crisis since 2007? If so, how?
  9. Has your government adapted its food security (including food aid and food assistance policies or programmes) in response to climate change? If so, how?
  10. Have your government's policies in relation to the following aspects of food aid and food assistance changed in recent years? If so, how?
    - School feeding
    - Nutrition
    - Targeting of food aid
    - Procurement and shipping
    - Agricultural production
    - General distributions, food for work and food for training
    - Cash transfers and vouchers
    - Monetisation
  11. How does your government's approach to food aid and food assistance relate to linking relief and development challenges and social protection and safety net policies and programmes?
  12. How does your government's approach to food aid and food assistance relate to disaster risk reduction policies and programmes?
  13. How is your government involved in the discussions on the future of the Food Aid Convention? Here are some of the questions that have been raised and on which we would like to know your government's position or to discuss informally.
    - What is its position regarding the future of the Convention?
    - What are your views on a potential renegotiation process?
    - How do you think renegotiation might fit within a global food security architecture, or within the new humanitarian architecture (reform process)?
  - Should the Food Aid Committee responsible for oversight of the Convention continue or its responsibility transferred to some other body? What is the advantage to have the FAC and the Committee?
  - Would your government feel the lack of a "Food A Convention?" What would change in those circumstances?
  - Should the Food Aid Committee play a role in the international food security architecture? What? How could it be strengthened to play a role?
  - What are the forms of food assistance (and related aid instruments) that should be covered by a potential "new" convention?
  - Which instruments should not be included?
  - How might contributions of donors (presently stated in "wheat equivalents") be measured in the future (e.g. no change, cash, calorie supply per person, number of beneficiaries, taking into account standards like connectedness etc.)
  14. Does your government have a view on the way food aid was treated in the most recent version of the draft Agreement on Agriculture in the WTO Doha Round, and what would be the implications if the Doha Development Round were brought to a conclusion?
  15. Do you have any views on the effectiveness of international agency and non-governmental or civil society advocacy around food assistance and the role of networks such as TAFAD, Coalition for Food Aid (CFA) and the European Food Security Group?
  16. How has the humanitarian reform process impacted on food aid and food assistance as provided by your government and more generally?
    - How is the evolving food security cluster process affecting the coordination around food aid/assistance?
    - Do you think there is a need for a global food or food security cluster? Why?
    - What have been the impacts of financial reforms including the CERF?
  17. Do you have any recent reports, evaluations or studies relating to food aid or food assistance that you can share with us?
  18. Do you have any other views about the key challenges and debates in food aid and food assistance within your government and globally?

# Annex 2

## Policy Positions of Selected Donor Governments, UN agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs

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# I. Introduction

This annex presents the policy positions of selected donor governments, UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs. It was not possible to comprehensively cover in the time available all donor governments, or all major aid agencies. A sample of OECD-DAC donor governments was selected representing most of the major food assistance donors. Some of the reports are more detailed than others.

Given the dominant position of the US government in food assistance, a separate study by a US-based consultant was commissioned. Visits were made to Brussels to interview European Commission officials and Rome to interview WFP staff, Rome-based donors and FAO. Other interviews were conducted by telephone and official policy documents consulted.

## II. Donors

### 1. United States: changing food aid policy, 2007–10

#### 1.1 Explanatory introduction

US food aid policy is largely established in legislation, most of it in so-called Omnibus Farm Bills enacted by Congress at five-year intervals. This legislation is both enabling and, in many respects, directive. It not only establishes the general goals and directions, it sets many of the operational parameters and modalities. Congress *authorises* funding ceilings for each category of food aid (see Table 2 below for the categories) in these multi-year Farm Bills, but, in addition, formal *appropriations* of funds are required each year in amounts that cannot exceed the authorisation levels but can—and often do—fall below these levels. Almost all food aid is contained in budgeted line items of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and, as a result, it is the agriculture committees of Congress which establish policy and budgets for food aid, rather than the foreign affairs committees that govern other forms of US official development assistance (ODA). This is important in understanding some of the unique characteristics of American food aid.

The formulation and management of actual food aid programmes is divided between the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) of USDA and the Food for Peace Office (FFP) of USAID. Each year, the descriptions of individual programmes are submitted to the Congress by USDA and USAID implementing offices for review and appropriation of funds.

USDA is in charge of the Food for Progress programmes (established by the Food for Progress Act of 1985 and reauthorised in the 2008 Farm Bill). Under this programme, US agriculture commodities are provided to developing countries and emerging democracies committed to introducing and expanding free enterprise in

the agricultural sector. Commodities are currently provided on a donation basis to foreign governments, private voluntary organisations, non-profit organisations, cooperatives, or intergovernmental organisations such as WFP. The implementing organisations request commodities and USDA purchases those commodities from the US market. USDA donates the commodities to the implementing organisations and pays for the freight to move the commodity to the recipient country.

USDA also manages the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program that promotes education, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children. It provides donations of US agricultural products, as well as financial and technical assistance, for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income countries. The programme was authorised by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 and reauthorised in the 2008 Farm Bill. Commodities are provided to WFP, NGOs and cooperatives for use in infant and child nutrition programmes, the majority of which are primary-school based.

USAID manages the Food for Peace Title II programme (established in 1954 and reauthorised in the 2008 Farm Bill) which contains two components—emergency programmes and non-emergency, development programmes. US food commodities intended for single-year emergencies are provided largely through WFP and NGOs; those intended to promote multi-year food-security focused development objectives are provided for NGO and cooperative projects. More than half of commodities intended for these development activities are monetised (see discussion of monetisation in a later section of this report). All US food aid is provided on a grant basis.

Three other food aid programmes exist in law, but are effectively moribund. These are Title I and Title III of the Food

**Table 1: US food aid programme levels, FY 2000–FY 2010**

| Programme  | 2000  | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010<br>(estimated) |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------|
| Food for Peace<br>(P.L. 480) <sup>1</sup>                  | 1,293 | 1,086 | 1,095 | 1,960 | 1,809 | 2,115 | 1,829 | 1,787 | 2,061 | 2,321 | 1,690               |
| Section 416(b)   | 504   | 1,103 | 773   | 213   | 19    | 76    | 20    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0                   |
| Food for Progress  | 108   | 104   | 126   | 137   | 138   | 122   | 131   | 147   | 220   | 216   | 148                 |
| McGovern-Dole<br>IFECN                                     | °TM   | °TM   | °TM   | 100   | 50    | 90    | 96    | 99    | 99    | 100   | 210                 |
| Local and<br>Regional<br>Procurement<br>Pilot <sup>2</sup> | °TM   | °TM   | °TM   | °TM   | °TM   | °TM   | °TM   | °TM   | 0     | 5     | 25                  |
| TOTAL  | 1,905 | 2,293 | 1,994 | 2,410 | 2,016 | 2,403 | 2,076 | 2,033 | 2,380 | 2,642 | 2,073               |

Source: USDA 'Annual Budget Summary', various years, as shown in Ho and Hanrahan, *International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues*. Congressional Research Service. Library of Congress. Washington, D.C. 3 February, p.10.

## Notes:

All figures in US \$ million.

In addition to appropriated funds, these figures contain emergency supplemental appropriations, carry-overs from previous years, transfers and reimbursements from other agencies.

<sup>1</sup> Titles I, II and III combined

<sup>2</sup> This programme is described later in this report.

for Peace Act and Section 416(b) of the Agriculture Act of 1949. The first two were so-called *programme* food assistance categories (i.e., non-project, government-to-government subsidised credit and grant food transfers), and the third was a surplus-disposal activity making US-government owned stocks of food available to supplement either emergency or development activities in Title II or Food for Progress categories. None of these three programmes have received funding in recent years.

US food aid is distinctive from that provided by most other donors in three ways. First, it is largely provided in commodity form and shipped in US flag (registered) vessels from the US Second, a significant share of non-emergency food aid is made available to NGOs and cooperative voluntary organisations (most, but not all, American-based). As noted, more than half of these commodities have been monetised in recent years. Third, there are tough legislative restrictions on procurement from sources other than the US, on shipping on non-US flag carriers, and on the percentage (in financial terms) of this food that must have had some form of value added in the US

## 1.2 Overview

In many respects, the policy environment in which US food aid programmes operate has changed little over the past 15–20 years. To be sure, programme food assistance—i.e., government-to-government concessional food sales (Title I and Title III of P.L. 480<sup>1</sup>) has declined to zero in recent years

<sup>1</sup> The term 'P.L. 480' has been replaced by the term 'Food for Peace Act' in the 2008 Farm Bill.

and appears unlikely to be revived. However, the modalities of non-programme food aid—emergency and development alike—remain very much in 2010 as they were ten, even twenty, years earlier. Grant food aid for both emergencies and developmental, food-security-focused projects is still almost entirely tied to procurement in the US and is mostly shipped on US-flag vessels. The much-criticised practice of 'monetisation' (the sale of Title II and Food for Progress food commodities in recipient countries for local currency used to cover the internal management and shipping costs of the food aid and for food security and nutrition-related development programmes) proceeds unabated. Regulations supporting maximal value-added (e.g., food fortification, bagging, etc.) prior to dispatch from US shores remain in effect. Congress has repeatedly rejected attempts by the administrative branch to increase the share of US food aid purchased locally in recipient or neighbouring countries (LRP), as well as moves within the overall food aid effort to use more cash and less food to deal with growing hunger and food insecurity in poor countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. US food aid continues to account for more than half of all global food aid shipments from all donors, as has been the case for over 50 years.

This is the picture of US food aid viewed from a distance, or when looking primarily at the visible surface of these programmes. Close up and under the surface, a different picture may be emerging. Much is happening that is likely to lead to significant, though probably gradual, changes in the major parameters of American food aid in the years ahead. This brief report attempts to identify and discuss these elements.

During the 56-year history of American international food aid<sup>2</sup> there has been, in fact, a continuing evolution in both the objectives of US food aid and in the methods used in the various food programmes for attaining them. The gradually changing nature of US international food assistance during the first 50 years (1954–2004) is described and analysed by Riley (2005). This present report focuses on significant changes that (i) occurred in the context of the 2008 Farm Bill or (ii) are a result of concern within the US government and among humanitarian organisations and researchers over the disconcerting growth since 2006 of hunger and food insecurity in many countries. Progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving hunger in the world by 2015 has been progress in the wrong direction, as the number of the chronically hungry has increased rather than decreased over the past 20 years. There is now a widespread belief in the US and elsewhere that something more must be done to reverse this trend, involving both food aid and development assistance.

Specific sections of this report look at

- changes in law contained in the 2008 Farm Bill;
- changes underway in the two historically most criticised elements of US food aid—tied procurement, and ‘monetisation’ and

<sup>2</sup> Domestic food transfer programs aimed at the poor are not included in this report. From this point onward the term ‘food aid’ signifies *international* food aid programs.

- the role of President Obama’s Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative (GHFSI) in dealing with both the causes and consequences of hunger and food insecurity in selected countries, and what role, if any, is foreseen for food aid in that effort.

### 1.3 Elements of US food aid

Six programmes constitute US food aid. These are shown in Table 2.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these six programmes, the ‘Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust’ is a combined food commodity and cash reserve in USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation that can, when needed, be utilised as a supplemental source of food donations in emergencies. As noted above, Titles I and III of the Food for Peace programme and Section 416(b) of the Agriculture Act of 1949 have not been active or received funding for several years. There are no current plans to use them, although, in theory, they could be revived. Virtually all food for on-going programmes is purchased in the US and shipped on US flag vessels for use in emergencies and food-security-focused development programmes by NGOs, US

<sup>3</sup> This table is derived from US Government Accountability Office (USGAO) ‘International Food Assistance: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight.’ Washington, D.C. p.13. Title II budget data are from USAID’s ‘US International Food Assistance Report, 2008’ Washington D.C. Appendix V.

**Table 2: US Food Aid Programmes**

| Programme                    | Food for Peace (formerly P.L. 480)  |   |   | Title III   | Food for Progress  | McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition  | Section 416(b)   |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|
|                              | Title I   | Title II Development  | Title II Emergency  |   |  |   |  |
| 2008 funding (in \$ million) | 0   | 354   | 1,981   | 0   | 166  | 99  | 0  |
| Managing agency              | USDA  | USAID   | USAID   | USAID   | USDA   | USDA  | USDA   |
| Description                  | Concessional sales of US agricultural commodities. (Not funded for past several years.) | Grant food commodities and transport. Some is sold for local funds used by NGOs for food security-related development projects. | Grant food commodities and transport-emergency programmes | Grants of commodities to governments for development programmes. (Not funded for past several years.) | Grants or credit sales of US food aid for development projects in selected food-insecure countries | Grant of food commodities and transport and financial and technical assistance for school meals and infant nutrition programmes | Grants of surplus commodities and transport in support of Title II, Title III and Food for Progress. No commodities have been available in recent years. |
| Implementing partners        | Governments and private entities.   | US and local NGOs   | WFP and US and local NGOs                                 | Government agencies   | Governments, agricultural trade organisations, WFP, NGOs and cooperatives                          | Governments, WFP, NGOs  | Same as for Title II, III & Food for Progress programmes.  |



cooperatives and the World Food Programme. NGOs<sup>4</sup> have the authority to convert food intended for non-emergency, food-security-focused, multi-year development projects to local currency by selling food imported from the US in the recipient country (occasionally in neighbouring countries) for local currency for use in those projects. The legislatively mandated *minimum* of non-emergency food commodities that must be used for monetisation is 15 percent. For several years, *actual* levels of US non-emergency Title II and Food for Progress commodities thus sold have been in excess of 50 percent. In 2008, nearly two-thirds of USAID's non-emergency Title II was monetised, as was all USDA's Food for Progress food.

#### 1.4 The 2008 Omnibus Farm Bill

American food aid policy is periodically re-codified in the context of the so-called 'Omnibus Farm Bills' which are legislated at five-year intervals. Food aid is but one element among hundreds, in these bills. Each proposal for change included in a pending Farm Bill is negotiated within the agriculture committees of the Senate and House of Representatives with the active involvement of interest groups of diverse nature: agricultural, trade, transport, storage, value-added manufacturers, public interest, and—in the case of the food aid provisions—NGO interest groups and cooperatives. After passage by both houses the bill is sent to the president for signature and subsequent enactment.

##### 1.4.1 Food aid policy and procedural changes in the 2008 Farm Bill

Most existing elements of laws relating to P.L. 480 (permanently renamed the 'Food for Peace Act' in this Farm Bill) and other food aid programmes were re-enacted, but with several significant changes:<sup>5</sup>

'Export market development' was deleted as an objective of the Food for Peace Act.

'Food security' and support of 'sound environmental practices' were more clearly identified as objectives of food aid policy.

Title II 'purposes' were amended to recognise that food deficits to be addressed could result from human-caused situations.

A 'Sense of Congress' declaration was included that (i) directed the president to seek commitments of higher levels of food aid from other donors; (ii) indicated that food aid implementing organisations receive food resources based on their own 'needs assessments' that analyse the potential for disincentive

<sup>4</sup> The term NGO used from this point on refers to US, international and recipient country private voluntary organisations and US-based cooperative organisations engaged in using US food aid for development programs or emergency feeding in developing countries.

<sup>5</sup> This discussion reflects information contained in Hanrahan, Charles E. 'CRS Report to Congress: International Food Aid Provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill.' Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Washington, D.C. (updated July 10, 2008).

effects to local producers and markets and (iii) highlighted congressional concern regarding how elements of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations relating to food aid could adversely affect US food aid policy and programmes.

Average Title II commitments for the period 2002–07 including both regular and supplemental appropriations averaged between \$1.5 and \$2 billion annually. The 2008 Farm Bill sets the annual authorisation level for the 2008–12 period at a higher level—\$2.5 billion—and subject, as always, to annual appropriations of funds. The percentage of Title II funds available to NGOs, cooperatives and intergovernmental organisations as dollars for administrative and distributional expenses was raised to a range of 7.5–13 percent from the previous range in the 2002–7 period of 5–10 percent. This could be interpreted as a means of helping these organisations to reduce the percentage of Title II food aid they need to 'monetise' (see discussion below), since some of their in-country costs previously covered by monetisation proceeds could be covered by the greater availability of these so-called Section 202(e) funds.

The on-going requirement that the administrator of USAID make available a minimum of 2.5 million MT of commodities each year to all Title II programmes was extended through 2012 as was a contingent requirement that not less than 1.875 MMT of this amount be utilised for development (i.e., non-emergency) programmes.<sup>6</sup> This latter requirement has rarely been observed in the past, since the USAID administrator retains the authority to waive it if the food cannot be used effectively or is needed for emergencies. Such waivers have been granted as a matter of course in past years due to the large number and magnitude of emergencies. This has created a problem for NGOs. Non-emergency development programmes are normally comprised of projects in agriculture, nutrition and primary education which, taken together, are intended to reduce, over the long term, the numbers of households suffering from food insecurity. When funds intended for these multi-year activities are diverted to emergencies, achievement of development outcomes is reduced.

In recognition of this enduring problem, especially in a post-2006 period characterised by heavy demand for emergency food aid, the 2008 Farm Bill establishes for the first time a so-called 'safe box' for Title II food earmarked for non-emergency purposes. It would ensure continuing availability of food commodities for NGO multi-year development projects. For 2009, the 'safe box' funding level was set at \$375 million, rising to \$425 million by 2012. The 'safe-box' provisions can still be waived in extreme cases, but the criteria for granting such waivers are considerably stiffened. Resources of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust must first be fully exhausted and the president must formally request additional funds from Congress equal to the combined amount of any proposed

<sup>6</sup> The 2.5 million MT commodity commitment is broadly equivalent to the US minimum commitment under the 1999 Food Aid Convention of 2.5 million MT wheat equivalent.



reduction in the safe box and total commodities utilised from the Emerson Trust.

#### 1.4.2 Local and Regional Procurement (LRP)

The most contentious food aid issue in the 2008 Farm Bill was the Bush administration's continued strong push to increase the proportion of total US food aid that could be purchased locally in recipient countries or in neighbouring countries in emergencies (in other words, a proposed reduction in tied food aid for emergencies). This effort to increase local or regional procurement (LRP) was strongly resisted by commodity, transport and NGO interest groups. The US is unique among major food aid donors in tying its food aid (emergency and non-emergency alike) largely to purchases in the US. In 2008, the administration requested the authority to use up to \$300 million for LRP to speed the delivery of food in emergencies and to reduce costs. As had been the case in the face of earlier requests in 2006 and 2007, Congress was unwilling to agree to the president's request. However, in the 2008 Farm Bill there was a concession of sorts. Approval was granted for initiation of a small LRP 'pilot' programme to be operated by USDA. It would use \$60 million of non-Food for Peace funds over a four-year period, 2009–12, to undertake local and regional procurement for selected NGO and WFP programmes and to formally monitor the results—financial, economic and institutional. The experience is to be evaluated by an independent M&E firm, starting in 2011.

There has been criticism for many years by the development and academic communities over the policy of tying most American food aid to procurement in the United States. Recently, additional public criticism has been voiced from within the government as well. In May 2009, the US Government Accountability Office (USGAO) issued a report<sup>7</sup> which found that, during the period 2001–8, food commodities purchased in and shipped from the US cost some 34 percent more than had these same commodities been purchased in the Sub-Saharan African recipient countries. (Comparative costs of tied versus in-country procurement of food for Latin America were, however, roughly the same.)

Using data from WFP, USGAO further determined that food from the US required an average of 147 days to reach 10 selected African countries, while locally purchased food was available in 35 days and food procured in neighbouring countries in 41 days. The report cautioned there were potential detrimental impacts inherent in LRP, however. These included the possibility that relatively large-scale procurement could drive up food prices paid by the poor in recipient countries; that contracting instruments in some recipient countries are often more difficult to enforce; that quality control measures are sometimes less rigorously enforced and that locally-procured transport may not be available in the needed quantity or time period. Nonetheless,

<sup>7</sup> USGAO. 'International Food Assistance: Local and Regional Procurement Can Enhance the Efficiency of US Food Aid, But Challenges May Constrain Its Implementation' Washington, D.C. May 2009.

in emergencies, local or regional procurement, more often than not, is sensible both economically and in terms of timing. Therefore, USGAO concluded, it should be available as an option, particularly when speed of delivery is of the essence. The USGAO report also noted, however, that, as long as US law requires 75 percent of American food to be shipped on US flag vessels, the ability to use LRP will continue to be constrained. It is also unclear, even after thorough review, whether US flag restrictions must be applied to regionally procured food as well.

It is important to note that the above discussion pertains only to food aid legislation, not to funds made available from other budgeted US government accounts for use in other foreign aid programmes. USAID, using funds contained in non-Farm Bill legislation (in this case, the 2008 supplemental appropriation bill, P.L. 110–252) has been able to engage in a certain amount of local and regional food procurement in emergencies.<sup>8</sup> In addition, bills have been introduced in the present Congress that would provide the administration with an additional \$200 million in international disaster assistance, some or all of which could be used for LRP, or in providing cash vouchers or cash transfers directly to food insecure recipients. Bills have been introduced in both the Senate and the House of Representative to initiate legislation, in the context of the President's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative (see below), that would, among other things, enable greater LRP. It is unclear, at this point, whether these bills<sup>9</sup> will eventually be enacted into law. However, greater recognition of the need to respond to the problems of global hunger and food insecurity strongly suggests that additional funds will be made available (outside the food aid legislative process) that can be used for LRP.<sup>10</sup>

#### 1.4.3 Monetisation

The practice of monetisation has been criticised for a number of reasons. It is seen as a manifestly inefficient means to generate cash for NGO development programmes. It is viewed as potentially harmful to food producers in the countries where US food aid is sold because it increases the supply of the monetised commodities in local markets which tends to reduce prices earned by local producer and, consequently, rural household income.<sup>11</sup> In addition, there is evidence in some recipient countries of possible displacement of commercial

<sup>8</sup> WFP FAIS data indicate that the US funded local purchases of 84,560 tonnes of cereals and 16,018 tonnes of non cereals in 2008, as well as 58,945 tonnes of cereals and 19,718 tonnes of non-cereals through triangular transactions in third countries. To put these acquisitions in perspective they represented about 9 percent of local and triangular purchases in volume terms and exceeded the total food aid levels for example of France or Germany or Netherlands.

<sup>9</sup> HR 3077; Senate Report 111-19.

<sup>10</sup> This information is derived from Hanrahan, Charles E. 'Local and Regional Procurement for US International Emergency food Aid.' Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service. Washington, D.C. August 10, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> The pros and cons of Title II monetisation are discussed in two recent papers: i) Barrett, Christopher B. & Erin Lentz. 'US Monetization Policy: Recommendations for Improvement.' A study prepared under the auspices of the Global Agricultural Development Initiative. Ithaca, N.Y. December 2009.; and ii) Simmons, Emmy. 'Monetization of Food Aid: Reconsidering US Policy and Practice.' Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa.

imports where commodities monetised represent a significant proportion of total imports or total consumption of these and substitute commodities. Further, if total non-emergency US food aid increases, particularly in the context of a greater focus on fewer food-insecure countries (now 20 countries) the consequence could well be higher levels of monetisation, concentrated in fewer countries.

The issues are complex and not as straightforward as both critics and supporters of monetisation contend. Evidence of substantial or sustained harm remains to a large degree anecdotal or based on less than faultless data. Evidence of positive outcomes is, with but a few exceptions,<sup>12</sup> similarly more anecdotal than analytical. A major area needing further analysis is the temporal dimension of identified adverse or beneficial consequences of the monetisation process. It is certainly true that the process is inefficient and problematic, but how well-authenticated are the contentions that the process is entirely—or on balance—negative? How does one compare a major but short-term adverse market effect of local commodity sales against a modest but long-term developmental impact derived from the expenditure of the local currency thus made available? Have the secondary and tertiary consequences been appropriately identified and adequately measured? The poor analytical quality of Bellmon determinations,<sup>13</sup> the lack of good-quality baseline data, and of rigorous results monitoring and evaluation reporting, taken together make it conceptually difficult to support monetisation in most instances. It is undeniable, however, that in all but a very few cases, cash grants to cooperating sponsors in lieu of monetised food would be more fiscally responsible and likely to create fewer detrimental impacts.<sup>14</sup>

Proponents of monetisation have consistently argued that while the above is, on balance, likely to be true, it has historically, nonetheless, been far easier to obtain congressional approval for use of commodity food aid for monetisation than for congressional appropriation of budgeted dollars to accomplish the same food security objectives. Simply stated, senators and representatives receive positive support from their farm-

<sup>12</sup> For one of the better of these exceptions, see: Save the Children and World Vision: 'An Analysis of PL 480 Title II Monetization Data (2001-2005): Impacts on Domestic Production, Local Marketing and Global Trade.' February 9, 2006

<sup>13</sup> Legally-required determinations that in-country storage is adequate and that the monetisations will engender no substantial or lasting harm. Recently, USAID has been engaged in efforts to improve the validity of the results of Bellmon-related data gathering and analysis in the so-called BEST exercise. While an excellent step in the right direction, it is too early to see what improvements will result from BEST.

<sup>14</sup> There are several examples of NGO projects in chronically food insecure countries or regions where the process of monetising imported food was itself essential to the long-term success of the activity. Examples include the ACDI/VOCA programs in Cape Verde—a chronically food import dependent country with inadequate foreign exchange earning capacity where monetisation is tied to structural changes in small holder agriculture—and a project in northern Uganda which used the process of monetising imported vegetable oil through a vegetable oil auction system to develop a small-scale, edible oil processing industry to gain a foothold in rural areas.

based and agribusiness constituents for using American food commodities to generate local currency. There is no similar support from their constituencies for approving purchases of local currencies directly with dollars. As a result, many<sup>15</sup> NGOs are convinced that any reduction in the magnitude of monetisation will not be replaced in food aid legislation by increased grants of in US government dollar resources. The result would be a significant reduction in their agricultural development, nutrition and other forms of food-security-related assistance. With a few exceptions, NGOs argue that the benefit of these development activities outweigh the detrimental impacts of the monetisation process.<sup>16</sup> Thus far, Congress has bought these arguments.

Efforts are presently (at least informally) underway in the US government to find alternative ways to make dollar support available to NGOs in order to at least partially displace monetisation. Some in the administration are presently considering a tactic that would reduce annual de facto monetisation from the present 50–60 percent of non-emergency Title II commodities to the legally mandated *minimum* of 15 percent of Title II development assistance and make up the difference from development assistance funds (i.e., budget resources outside the Farm Bill). Barrett and Lentz (2009) and Simmons (2009) note that this type of approach would be a significant step toward reducing the scale of monetisation. Both of these studies caution, however, that such changes, if the decision were made to effectuate them, would almost certainly be implemented only gradually. Such an effort is also made more difficult at present by existing and projected US government budget shortfalls.

#### 1.4.4 Other 2008 Farm Bill-related food aid changes

The existing micronutrient fortification programme was retained in the Farm Bill and limitations on the number of countries in which fortified foods may be distributed were removed. Efforts to improve the monitoring and evaluation of non-emergency food aid were strengthened by the identification, as noted earlier, of \$22 million for enhancing USAID's M&E capability, including added support for FEWSNET, increasing the size of USAID's monitoring and evaluation staff and strengthening M&E methodologies. Funds for prepositioning shelf-stable foods were augmented to increase the size of stores available for emergency response. Critics contend that the costs and effectiveness of prepositioning emergency food commodities have not been determined.

The USDA Food for Progress programme was extended through 2012 and the USDA McGovern-Dole Food for Education and International Child Nutrition was likewise extended, increased in size and recognised as a permanent programme, thus

<sup>15</sup> But not all. CARE has very publicly taken exception to the practice of monetisation in most instances. (See: CARE. 'White Paper on Food Aid Policy' June 6, 2006.) Catholic Relief Services is also on record as being critical to several aspects of monetisation.

<sup>16</sup> The principal arguments on both sides of this long-standing debate are analysed in the cited papers by Barrett/Lentz and Simmons.

enhancing the importance of school feeding and child nutrition as identifiable elements of US international food aid. The concept of a continuing food reserve in the form of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust was retained and reauthorised for the period 2008–12. The cap of four million MT on the size of the commodities that can be held in the reserve was removed as a sign of concern over the increasing magnitude and number of food emergencies in recent years. The reserve can be held in either cash or commodities.

#### 1.4.5 Other recent US food aid policy changes

Improving the coordination of the various agencies and programmes involved in US food aid has been an objective of policy since the 1990 Farm Bill. Over the years, these efforts have made modest progress, such as establishing the Food Aid Consultative Group within several agencies of government. In addition, various inter-agency coordinating mechanisms have been convened, and extra-governmental efforts have been made among food aid stake holders that focus on ending hunger and promoting food security objectives using food aid as a significant input in that effort. USGAO reports<sup>17</sup> are quite clear, however, that coordination between US agencies in the food aid domain is still inadequate on many levels, particularly in harmonising objective and actual non-emergency food aid projects in recipient countries.

There are efforts underway in USAID and USDA to define a US position for the long-overdue update of the 1999 Food Aid Convention. The effort would ostensibly clarify the role of food aid within a coordinated effort of all donors to better focus food resources—in concert with other forms of development finance—more effectively on positive food security outcomes. This effort, however, as well as any further updating of the US position on food aid in the WTO Doha Round negotiations, will almost certainly await the results of efforts now underway in a number of US government agencies to effectuate the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative announced by President Obama at the L'Aquila Summit in September 2009—a major new US effort to reduce hunger and food insecurity in a targeted set of food insecure countries in the world. This presidential initiative and the likely role of food aid in this effort is briefly described in the remainder of this report.

#### *The Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative*

The growing number of people facing hunger and food insecurity in many of the world's poorer countries has led to alarm that global efforts to reduce hunger are not working.

17 USGAO. 'International Food Assistance: USAID Is Taking Action to Improve Monitoring and Evaluation of Nonemergency Food Aid, But Weaknesses in Planning Could Impede Efforts.' Washington, D.C. September 2009.

USGAO. 'International Food Assistance: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight.' op. cit.

USGAO. 'International Food Assistance: A US Government-wide Strategy Could Accelerate Progress toward Global Food Security.' Washington, D.C. October, 2009.

USGAO. 'Global Food Security: US Agencies Progressing On Government-Wide Strategy But Approach Faces Several Vulnerabilities.' March 11, 2010.

FAO and others report that the number of the world's food-insecure people has not reduced, but has grown from an estimated 800 million at the time of the Millennium Summit in 2000 to more than one billion in 2009.<sup>18</sup> The causes are many and include

- the global financial crisis;
- a loss of purchasing power by many of the world's poorest confronted by spiraling food prices in local markets;
- simultaneous secular growth in global food prices—particularly for staple grain—highlighted by a 2006–8 spike in prices attributed in part to increased use of grains to produce fuel and
- declines in food production in major producing countries attributable to greater variance in climate conditions in agricultural areas, a lack of enabling policies and increasing agricultural input, transport and energy costs.

The US government has responded to what is widely perceived as a hunger and food insecurity crisis likely to continue for years into the future. At the 2009 L'Aquila G8 summit, President Obama announced his intention to commit the US to a three-year, \$22 billion, multi-donor effort to reduce chronic hunger, raise incomes of the food insecure poor in selected countries and reduce the number of children suffering from under-nutrition. A large number of US government agencies were assigned the task of concerting efforts with private firms, not-for-profit development agencies, universities and foundations to generate a strategy framework and implementable programmes in the shortest possible time to do that—under the leadership of the Secretary of State. The first comprehensive description of the challenges and the broad parameters of the GHFSI are contained in the *Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative: Consultation Document*.<sup>19</sup> It reiterates the principals enunciated at L'Aquila: (i) a comprehensive approach to food security focused on agriculture-led growth, reducing under-nutrition and increasing the impact of humanitarian food assistance; (ii) leadership by each recipient country; (iii) strengthened strategic coordination at all levels—locally, nationally and internationally; (iv) leveraged benefits from multilateral organisations and (v) delivering on a sustained and accountable commitment.

Work to give concrete form to this initiative has been underway for several months as of this writing. The strategic plan for accomplishing these objectives was announced by the US government in late May, 2010 as the "Feed the Future initiative".<sup>20</sup> Already the administration has woven pieces of the \$3.5 billion US portion of the initiative into the February 2011 US government budget request document. A total of \$1.8 billion is earmarked for the GHFSI in 2011—\$1.2 billion

18 FAO. 'The State of Food Insecurity in the World.' Rome. October 2009. The MDG goal was to reduce the number of the world's hungry from over 800 million to 420 million by 2015.

19 Available at the US Department of State website

20 See: <http://www.feedthefuture.gov/>

for agriculture programmes, \$200 million for nutrition and \$408 million for global food security partnerships under the leadership of the World Bank. In addition, but outside the initiative, the 2011 budget request for food aid includes \$1.7 billion for Food for Peace (Title II programmes) and \$2.5 billion for refugees, migration and international disaster assistance other than food aid. When added together, these amounts, if appropriated, represent a substantially increased US commitment to combating both the effects of hunger and food insecurity and their causes.

The principal focus of the initiative is on improving food security by investments in agricultural production in selected food insecure countries, 12 in Africa, 4 in Latin America and 4 in Asia.<sup>21</sup> This will be complimented by investments to improve nutritional status in infants and young children in these countries. Agricultural development and increasing food production in these 20 food insecure countries will be its primary focus. The countries were selected using agriculture productivity, infant nutrition and household income indicators.

The concept of ‘country led’ as enunciated at the L’Aquila summit and subsequently, is still being clarified. Food Security’ is defined as follows: “...having four main components: availability, access, utilization and stability. Families and individuals require a reliable and consistent source of quality food, as well as sufficient resources to purchase it. People must also have the knowledge and basic sanitary conditions to chose, prepare, and distribute food in a way that results in good nutrition for all family members. Finally the ability to access and utilize food must remain stable and sustained over time.”<sup>22</sup>

Earlier food security thinkers (e.g., Amartya Sen, Shlomo Reutlinger, Simon Maxwell) were concerned that inadequate access to food rather than inadequate availability was at the centre of causality of chronic food insecurity. While, “access” is a component of the FTF definition of food insecurity, the FTF strategy seems, at this point, to be largely focused on increasing “availability” rather than on enhancing the capabilities of the food insecure poor to attain continuous entitlement to food. The focus on ‘livelihood security’ as, possibly, a more suitable approach in addressing the full nexus of causality of food insecurity is nowhere to be found in the work undertaken thus far in giving programmatic form to the initiative.

In its just released report<sup>23</sup> on the status of US efforts to confront global food insecurity, the USGAO found that ten agencies of government<sup>24</sup> are engaged in international food

21 The countries are: *Africa* – Ethiopia, Chana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia; *Asia* – Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Tajikistan; *Latin America* – Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua.

22 [http://www.feedthefuture.gov/FTF\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.feedthefuture.gov/FTF_Guide.pdf), p.ii

23 USGAO. ‘Global Food Security: US Agencies Progressing On Government-Wide Strategy But Approach Faces Several Vulnerabilities.’ *op. cit.*

24 USAID, USDA, Dept. of State, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Treasury, Department of Defense, US Trade & Development Agency, US Trade Representative, Peace Corps and the Office of Management & Budget.

security activities but that they do not utilise a common definition of food security or a common understanding of how to measure success of programming activities meant to promote it. As a result, the net impact—or the actual relevance—of the total \$5 billion (half of it in food aid) spent by these agencies in 2008 in efforts to address food insecurity cannot be measured. Weaknesses in funding data and in the monitoring and evaluation of actual results, outcomes, impact and sustainability, if not rectified, will greatly weaken the ability to determine within the GHFSI what progress is being made, what works well and what does not:

*Currently no single information database compiles comprehensive data on the entire range of global food security programs and activities across the US government. The lack of comprehensive data on current programs and funding levels may impair the success of the new strategy because it deprives decision-makers of information on all available resources, actual costs, and a firm baseline against which to plan. (p.5)*

One further point about the FTF Initiative: It is clear from interviews that pressure is tremendous to produce early successes, apparently as a means of generating evidence to counter future criticisms and to improve the prospects for additional ‘out-year’ funding. There seems to be very little interest at this point in learning from what has been undertaken by all development organisations over the past 20 years to confront food insecurity or to be informed by knowledge about what has succeeded, what has failed and why. This is a point of concern.

#### *The role of food aid in the FTF initiative*

There has been little public discussion of the future role of food aid as an element of the FTF Initiative. One interviewee suggested this was a conscious decision to ensure that the initiative was not publicly perceived as another type of food aid programme. Other respondents revealed that there is a certain ambivalence about food aid as an element in a ‘Feed the Future’-styled initiative. Food aid is seen within many agencies of government as an emergency feeding programme, not a development programme. Other respondents suggested, however, that the role of food aid in support of the initiative would be very clear: It is, and would remain, a ‘safety net’, continuing to provide food transfers to the hungry poor while the GHFSI programme operates separately and simultaneously to increase locally produced food availability, reduce food price variance over time in recipient countries and raise household incomes. If so, and in the meantime, food aid appears likely to continue in a form quite similar to that of the past several years. This will be particularly the case if the present food-aid NGOs are not incorporated into the group of implementing agents of the FTF Initiative.



## 2. Canada

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)'s overall Development Strategy accords a high importance thematically to food security as one of three priorities for action: Food Security, Children and Youth, and Sustainable Economic Growth.

CIDA's *Food Security Strategy*, launched in October 2009, has been rethought following the global food crisis of 2007–8. The strategic objective is to respond to immediate food needs while increasing access to quality, nutritious food over the longer term. The strategy will also seek to improve the governance of the global food system.

Priorities for Action include: Sustainable Agricultural Development, Food Aid and Nutrition, and Research and Innovation. Within the area of Food Aid and Nutrition CIDA seeks to:

- Support the efforts of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to meet the food-aid needs of vulnerable populations in developing countries.
- Explore innovative initiatives on food aid and nutrition programming. For example, CIDA will contribute \$30 million to the UN WFP's Purchase for Progress program, which buys from local farmers.
- Work with other countries on continued improvements to the Food Aid Convention, including showing leadership by continuing to meet Canadian commitments.
- Work with multilateral organizations and national governments to increase micronutrient programming.
- Support national and regional strategies to incorporate nutrition considerations into broader food security initiatives.
- Support and strengthen national and regional food reserves and food crisis alert and prevention systems.

A review of Canadian policies, including interviews with operational partners and scrutiny of CIDA's departmental expenditure, as well as food aid as reported to the WFP

Interfais and the FAC, confirms a high degree of consistency between stated objectives, priorities and how resources have been spent during fiscal year April 2008 to March 2009.

### 2.1 Aid responsibilities and expenditure

Canada's development cooperation budget sits with CIDA, a separate agency, with the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture and Agri-Food and inevitably Finance as interested and engaged parties for humanitarian and food assistance. CIDA demonstrates the relatively high importance accorded to food assistance within a policy framework that also gives a high priority to humanitarian assistance in its pattern of aid expenditure. In fiscal year 2008-9 15% of CIDA ODA was on humanitarian assistance (well above the DAC average of about 10%) and 41% of that humanitarian expenditure was on emergency food aid (Table 3). Overall emergency and development food aid and food security programs accounted for 9% of bilateral ODA and 7.6% of total ODA double the overall DAC share of food aid, and in contrast to most European donors who are allocating under 1% of funding to food aid.

### 2.2 Untying Canadian food aid

Canada has been a food aid donor since the 1950s, exporting cereals, oil seeds and dairy products both as direct distribution and as budgetary and/or BOP support. Then, in 1997, a CIDA Food Aid Performance Review highlighted resource transfer inefficiencies of Canadian programme food aid and the similar experience of other donors. At that stage untying was not considered a practical option, so the focus shifted to making targeted nutritional improvement the primary goal and programme aid for sale was phased out. There was very limited partial untying to allow local procurement. In 2005, in the context of WTO agricultural negotiations and citing further OECD evidence on resource transfer efficiency, a policy decision committed CIDA to partial untying of 50% of food aid funding. In 2008, food aid was fully untied. These steps were made following NGOs meeting with domestic agricultural interests

**Table 3: Canada: ODA expenditure as food aid, Food Security (FS) programmes and humanitarian assistance, fiscal year 2008–2009**

| Sector  | Bilateral | Multilateral | Total ODA |
|---|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| i. Expenditure in Canadian \$ (millions)                            |           |              |           |
| Development food aid and food security programmes                   | 53.4      | 0.2          | 53.6      |
| Emergency food aid  | 211.2     | 8.5          | 219.7     |
| Total humanitarian assistance                                       | 447.8     | 88.0         | 535.9     |
| Total ODA (sector)  | 2,924.1   | 659.4        | 3,583.5   |
| ii. Percent (%)   |           |              |           |
| Total food aid and food security programmes as percent of Total ODA | 9.0       | 1.3          | 7.6       |
| Emergency food aid as percent of humanitarian assistance            | 47.2      | 9.7          | 41.0      |
| Humanitarian assistance as percent of total ODA                     | 15.3      | 13.3         | 15.0      |

Source: CIDA Statistical Report on International Assistance, fiscal year 2008–9

Note: Total food aid and food security includes development food aid and food security programmes and emergency food aid.

to emphasise the benefits of local and regional sourcing on developing country small farmers and the likely negligible effects on Canadian agricultural exports and the importance of providing increased assistance to beneficiaries.

The effects of untying on the sourcing of food aid funded by Canada have been dramatic: whereas over 94% of commodities delivered in 2000-2003 were direct transfers from Canada, in 2008 direct transfers accounted for 43%, 14% were local purchases and 43% were triangular transactions. CIDA has not so far reported formally on its progress in untying food aid or its impact. However process of untying more widely, a major change for Canada, with its largest and also NAFTA trading partner, the US moving much more slowly, will require a report back to the federal Treasury Board.

*Definitions and concepts:* CIDA typically follows the usage of WFP. CIDA has begun to work with the concept of food assistance as being consistent with a shift to making available untied funding for a set of food related transfers services instead of, as previously, commodity aid.

### 2.3 Policy in practice

The priority accorded to meeting immediate food needs is also reflected in practice: some fourth fifths of food aid expenditure in 2008-9 was emergency food aid and 20% for development food aid and food security projects. WFP INTERFAIS also reported 78% of Canadian funded commodities were emergency aid and 22% for development projects.

WFP is CIDA's major partner accounting for almost 90% of expenditure in 2008-9. Some 10% was channelled through NGOs, almost entirely in partnership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). In the case of CFGB, this support was matching funding to contributions by supporters. Whereas these had traditionally been in-kind from the farming community, most support is now in cash often through the local sale of previously donated commodities. There were also small contributions to UNRWA and other agencies.

Organisationally food assistance and nutrition is largely the responsibility of the Multilateral and Global Programs Branch whose budget accounts for around 60% of all bilateral food assistance and 80% of humanitarian food aid. Additional Geographical Programs were responsible for over 90% of developmental food assistance and food security programs. Multilateral core funding for food aid as distinct from humanitarian assistance, which is mostly directed, is relatively unimportant. However CIDA has made what has been in effect five-year programmatic commitment of C\$25 million to support WFP school feeding programs in Africa.

Since the late 1990s CIDA has accorded a high priority to nutritional improvement in its food assistance policy. This is reflected in the commitment to school feeding. Untying has

been seen as an opportunity to focus in a less constrained way on quality of food assistance. Micro-nutrient supplementation continues to be a high priority in its health strategy. The emphasis on mother and child health in the G8 process also accords with this priority.

CIDA, after untying its food assistance resources in two stages, 2005 and 2008, is now programming food assistance in terms of directing support to broad needs. It now leaves it to partners to determine what are appropriate food-related transfers and is found to accept the use of a wide set of modalities.

CIDA responded in the short term to the global food crisis by committing an additional C\$50 million in 2008-9. Taking a longer term perspective, the 2009 food security strategy would appear to be an attempt to learn from the crisis and the more depth reviews and consultations that were part of the response with the L'Aquila statement on food security providing the broad framework for collective action.

As a signatory to the *Food Aid Convention*, after encountering difficulties in the early 2000s, CIDA has sought to ensure that Canada meets its minimum commitments under Convention. Canada also unilaterally took the initiative to report more fully to the secretariat on its food aid transactions that counted towards its contribution. Canada will take on the rotating chair of the Food Aid Committee in June 2010 and is committed to working with other countries to make continued improvements to the Convention. Regarding the wider humanitarian reform process, it is understood that CIDA sets a high value on the cluster system process as discussed in the main report, and is also a strong supporter of the CERF and WFP being able to access these funds for food assistance purposes.

Canada has been a member of the like-minded group on development cooperation and more recently associated itself with the so-called Nordic Plus grouping. The evolution of CIDA's policy during the last decade for food assistance and humanitarian assistance more broadly, especially the high level of multi-lateral channelling of aid and untying, have resulted in it moving more closer to the longer established positions of others in that grouping.

## 3. European Commission

In 2007, the responsibility within the European Commission (EC) services for financing humanitarian food aid in crises was centralised within DG ECHO as part of the EC's financial perspectives for 2007-13. In addition to using its own humanitarian budgets, DG ECHO can also draw on dedicated contingency funds under country allocations of the European Development Fund.

In post-crisis situations other non-humanitarian EC instruments can contribute to restoring national food security, including the



**Table 4: DG ECHO food assistance partners, 2007–9**

|                                     | 2007 (%) | 2008 (%) | 2009 (%) |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| UN                                  | 78       | 70       | 59       |
| NGOs                                | 20       | 23       | 37       |
| Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement | 2        | 7        | 4        |

Instrument for Stability (IfS). Longer-term food security support is managed by the development and cooperation services of the EC (DG DEV, DG RELEX and DG AIDCO)<sup>25</sup>, and is financed by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), drawn from the EC's budget, as well as by the European Development Fund (EDF) for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Any such food security strategies must be framed within Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) and Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs), mutually agreed with beneficiary countries. In addition, notably in fragile contexts or in countries where these geographically oriented instruments cannot be used, certain food security objectives can be pursued through the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP). Additional temporary ad hoc financial instruments can also be established, such as the Food Facility, designed to address both causes and consequences of high food prices, in the short-to-medium term, from 2009 to 2011. The FTSP was established in 2007 and is implemented through DG AIDCO. Its mandate is to address food security in situations of transition and in fragile and failed states, where other EC food security instruments may not be adequate or appropriate.

WFP has been the main recipient of DG ECHO food assistance funding but this is starting to shift as the use of cash, delivered by a wider range of partners, grows and awareness grows about the wider range of interventions that the policy allows.

A new EC policy on food security and food assistance is in the late stages of being finalised. DG ECHO has developed a humanitarian food assistance policy that has been published as an EU (European Union) communication to which member states will sign up with a complementary staff working document. A food security in development policy paper is also being developed within DG DEV and the EC has attempted to ensure coherence between the two.

### 3.1 Definitions

Food assistance is defined as follows:

*Food assistance, in both humanitarian and developmental contexts, generally describes any intervention designed to tackle food insecurity, its immediate causes and and its various negative consequences.*

*Food assistance includes the transfer or provision of relevant services, inputs or commodities, cash or vouchers, skills or knowledge.*

*Food assistance aims to ensure the intake or consumption of sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets dietary needs and food preferences for adequate child growth and an active and healthy life (European Commission 2010d).*

This broad definition leads to an equally broad typology of responses that the EC recognises as food assistance and which are described as

- unconditional food transfers
- unconditional cash transfers
- conditional food or cash transfers (food or cash for work, food for training)
- vouchers
- emergency livelihood services such as agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer), pastoral services (fodder and water provision, de-stocking and re-stocking, veterinary care), agricultural training, irrigation and income-generating activities
- infrastructural projects to improve access to, and functioning of, markets in crisis-affected areas
- support to emergency food security monitoring and early warning systems
- milling of cereals or provision of items required for preparing food such as cooking sets, cooking fuel and water
- training and awareness raising on nutrition, dietary management and feeding practices
- treatment for acute malnutrition
- treatment of moderate acute malnutrition through supplementary feeding
- micronutrient supplementation

### 3.2 Policy positions

DG ECHO has remained clearly opposed to school feeding in humanitarian contexts and its guidelines for funding school feeding state 'school feeding is not considered an appropriate means of delivering food and nutritional support to vulnerable children in emergencies, except in exceptional circumstances, where all other more effective response options are unfeasible' (ECHO 2009).

In the area of nutrition, the new policy paper endorses support for community based approaches to therapeutic feeding (CMAM). In recognition of the new products and approaches to supplementary feeding and nutrition more broadly it is developing an internal position paper on nutrition in emergencies, which is feeding into an inter-service process of policy development on nutrition. There is recognition that the simple divide between chronic malnutrition as a development

<sup>25</sup> DG = Directorate General.

issue and acute malnutrition as an emergency issue does not work, as many development contexts have high levels of acute as well as chronic malnutrition. Concern exists that new products and approaches lack coordination and endorsement of and that the complex array of new products risks turning into a mess. ECHO is encouraging WFP, UNICEF and WHO to come up with a clear joint position and statement on new products.

The humanitarian food assistance policy makes it clear that local and regional purchases are favoured where food aid is deemed the most appropriate response tool. This is based on 'the need to reduce costs, limit transportation delays and prevent market distortions; and to provide economic opportunities for small farmers in countries where purchases are made'. DG ECHO, however, has been lukewarm in its views on WFP's purchase for progress initiative, seeing dangers in the short-term manipulation of markets and in the movement of WFP beyond its main areas of competence.

The EC is in the process of formulating its policy on the use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) in developing countries. In the meantime the new policy calls on partners to conform to the relevant national policies and legislation in the country of operation.

DG ECHO supports the roll-out of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) approach to food security analysis and has been a major contributor. The new policy also requires food assistance interventions to 'consider opportunities for mainstreaming risk reduction, preparedness and mitigation'.

DG ECHO is concerned over the continuing weakness of food assistance monitoring but has seen recent signs of improvement. In Darfur, a food security monitoring system has been developed drawing on new tools such as dietary diversity and food consumption scores to produce richer data which focuses on consumption, not only on what has been delivered. WFP is now reporting on more than just tonnage in 50 percent of its contracts, up from 5 percent in recent years. Its new strategic results framework promises further improvements and its vulnerability and analysis mapping capacity (VAM) is being placed more prominently at the centre of reporting.

Concerning the Food Aid Convention, ECHO aims to see whether it can be made more meaningful as part of the renegotiation process and recognises that abandonment might be politically unpalatable. ECHO is supportive of the new food security cluster.

## 4. Belgium

The Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGDC) spends over €20 million on food aid and actions for food security and this amount is planned to double in coming years. The DGDC (Directorate-General for Development Cooperation)

### Box 1: ECHO's approach to mainstreaming risk reduction

The EC's humanitarian food assistance should aim for the following (European Commission, 2010d):

- a) incorporation of disaster-risk analysis in all food assistance assessments (for example, assessing the risk of flooding on land to be cultivated using seeds and tools provided as humanitarian food assistance);
- b) short-term reinforcement of early-warning systems, particularly to incorporate an appropriate range of indicators related to emergency food insecurity and acute malnutrition, and linking these systems to rapid prevention, mitigation and response systems (for instance, looking beyond agricultural production figures for food availability, and analysing food price trends as possible indicators of the poorest's diminishing access to food);
- c) systematic respect of the 'do no harm' principle so as to make sure that a response to one crisis does not increase beneficiaries' risk exposure and vulnerability to other crises (for instance, ensuring that food distributions do not lead to overcrowded settlement around distribution points, promoting HIV awareness campaigns for food aid transporters);
- d) disaster-proofing emergency response interventions to minimise future risks (for instance ensuring that emergency food storage facilities are strong enough to withstand extreme climatic conditions) and
- e) developing capacities for preparedness and building resilience during the response and recovery stages (for instance by exploiting the window of opportunity when having whole communities assembled at food distribution points to promote disaster and/or HIV awareness, or 'building back better', for instance by ensuring that previously flooded agricultural land has improved flood protection).

also spends about €40 million through the Belgian Survival Fund, which subsidises programmes that tackle the causes of poverty and food insecurity.

Food assistance for Belgium is housed within the Department of Humanitarian Aid of the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation. The ministry's food assistance strategy is integrated within a broader food security strategy (2008–12). Belgium takes the position that in-kind food aid should be limited to emergency and recovery or rehabilitation contexts. It does not provide any in-kind food aid, only cash. Belgium's funding for food aid is channelled primarily through WFP, FAO, UNHAS (the UN Humanitarian Air Service) and some Belgian NGOs.

Belgium has a budget line called 'food aid and short-term food security' from which it finances its food assistance. This budget is aimed at increasing food security and has three categories of projects:

- food aid supplied in crisis situations mainly through the World Food Programme, UNRWA (the UN Relief and Works Agency) and Belgian NGOs;
- food security projects that help to increase food production by restoring food production systems after a crisis, the main partners being FAO and Belgian NGOs and
- structural food aid that supports the food security policy of partner countries and is usually provided on a bilateral basis.

In 2007, the total budget line was €19.6 million, of which €19 million went to UN agencies (WFP, FAO and UNRWA) and €600,000 went to an NGO. In 2008, the total budget line was €22,602,000, all of which went to UN agencies (WFP, FAO and UNRWA). In 2009, the total budget was €37,188,203, all of which went to UN agencies (WFP, FAO and UNRWA).

The countries for which the Belgian government earmarks its funding vary every year depending on the crisis and the level of need. In 2009 it financed the following countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, OPT, Ethiopia, Niger, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Kenya, Laos, Yemen and the Philippines. It prioritises local and triangular purchases where appropriate and adequate and has been a leader on this issue within the European community. It also provided funds to WFP and FAO as part of WFP's Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, which aims to help small farmers to increase their revenues. In 2007, the Belgian government provided €500,000 to WFP for the initiative in DRC. In 2009, it provided another €1 million to WFP and €650,000 to FAO, also in DRC. The purchase of GMOs is prohibited (Belgian Development Cooperation 2008).

## 5. Germany

### 5.1 Structure and budget

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has overall responsibility for food assistance. Within BMZ, there are two departments dealing with food security/assistance:

- Department for Development-Oriented Emergency and Transitional Aid (DETA), which includes BMZ's partnership with WFP
- Department for Rural Development and Food Security

Also involved are the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV). In humanitarian crises, food aid is partly managed by the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt) during the immediate response (first six months). The Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) is responsible for the following topics or areas:

- 1) world food affairs and collaboration with FAO (For example, since 2002 BMELV has supported projects dedicated to

overcome malnutrition and hunger through a bilateral trust fund with FAO with an annual budget of €8.3 million. Altogether, the BMELV provided €67 million for 51 projects.);

- 2) the right to food and
- 3) international trade issues and the WTO.

The BMELV also convenes the (annual) international conference 'Policies against Hunger'.

Support to emergency and transitional assistance interventions implemented by WFP, GTZ, German NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was roughly €130 million in 2009 and €92 million each year in 2007 and 2008. Support to WFP development food aid interventions has been €25 million per annum since 1985.

In addition, further emergency and transitional aid interventions implemented by the WFP are financed through a third BMZ budget line administered by the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). In 2008, this budget line encompassed approximately €42 million and in 2009, €30 million. This was largely in response to the food price crisis. In addition, bilateral food security programmes are implemented through technical cooperation. Out of all these budget lines, multilateral contributions (to WFP) amounted to US\$100.5 million in 2008 and US\$132 million in 2009.

In response to the global food crisis, Germany has committed US\$3 billion over three years as part of the L'Aquila process. DETA's budget for food assistance increased by roughly 30 percent between 2008 and 2009 and Germany's contribution to WFP was its highest ever in 2009.

### 5.2 Policy

Germany is in the process developing a new food assistance strategy as part of its overall food security strategy (this study is intended to contribute to that). Previous strategies and policies are scattered—not located in one place. The BMZ strategy for development-oriented emergency and transitional aid (DETA) contains a section on food security that mentions the following instruments: short-term food aid, procured in the region where possible; cash and food for work and seeds, fertiliser and agricultural inputs. Medium-term food security programmes take a grass roots and multi-sector approach and include fostering food self-sufficiency; supporting the reconstruction of economic, social and institutional infrastructure and supporting economic activities and market and social structures (BMZ 2005). Further guidance for integrated food security programmes is set out in project guidelines (BMZ/GTZ 1997).

### 5.3 Definitions

Germany is currently working on a definition for food assistance and within COHAFA (the Working Party on Humanitarian

Aid and Food Aid) has participated actively in formulating a joint food assistance definition. An appraisal of activities and measures implemented by governmental and non-governmental, bilateral and multilateral organisations and funded by the German government is under way in order to get a complete picture of the approaches, instruments and standards used. This exercise will contribute to sharpening Germany's definition of food assistance. There is an expectation that nutrition issues should be featured more prominently in current definitions of food aid and food assistance (e.g., targeting children less than two years of age, pregnant women, and 'windows of opportunity'). Germany's definition of food assistance 'in the making' will also relate to the definition of social safety nets and, more broadly, social protection systems (see FAO, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2009*).

#### 5.4 Instruments

In DETA, instruments such as cash and vouchers for work have assumed a growing importance. Food assistance is also seen as an integral part of safety nets, a subset of broader social protection systems. Germany has increased support to school feeding through WFP. Nutrition has been a recognised weakness and there are plans to step it up. Food and cash for work has been a major part of the DETA portfolio, with large-scale cash and food for work programmes in Afghanistan and Nepal (Lamade et al, 2009; DFID, GTZ and WFP 2007).

#### 5.5 Food security architecture

Germany would like the Food Aid Convention to be adapted to new realities and evolve from being a food aid to a food assistance convention. Commitments of members should move away from the tonnage-based system. Furthermore, the Food Aid Committee should transform itself into a 'Food Assistance Committee'. It should prepare discussions among donors and representatives of potential recipient countries and initiate more timely debates, especially when new emergencies arise. Recipient countries should play an active role in finding a balance between short- and long-term food security responses. The committee could and should take over a more ambitious and pro-active role and be a donor forum that undertakes activities, for example, in the fields of needs assessment, applied research (e.g., on the effectiveness of food assistance to achieve national food security), monitoring and evaluation (e.g., possible negative impact of food aid on markets and sustainable food security, planned and confirmed food assistance allocation), definition of food assistance (toolbox, etc.), assessment of donor performance (peer reviews) and promotion of best practices and exchange of information on lessons learnt. Germany supports the renegotiation process, sees the commitments that form part of the FAC as being important signs of political solidarity and believes that letting the FAC wither would send the wrong signal.

Food aid is a key unresolved issue in the Doha Round of negotiations. European governments disagree with the US position as the US is campaigning for the status quo to be maintained. However, if the status quo of the Uruguay Round of negotiations, under which food aid is exempt from WTO disciplines on export subsidies is upheld, food aid will continue to function as a means of increasing subsidised donor-country exports. Furthermore, this would contribute to a general lack of efficiency in the provision of aid, as the tying of food aid prevents flexible management, particularly in emergencies. Along with European governments, Germany does not feel that the untying of food aid will automatically lead to a decline in the levels of food aid being delivered, as argued by the US. In fact, the untying of food aid would not only lead to lower costs, it would also increase flexibility and efficiency in terms of the administration of aid, as well as promote the local production of food. However, untying would need to be carefully monitored in order to make sure donor countries comply with the requirements of untied food aid both formally and in practice.

Germany is supportive of the newly agreed food security cluster, which it sees as providing an open forum for dialogue on policies, strategies and innovations in food programming *at the operational level*. Food clusters have spontaneously emerged in a very large number of emergencies, showing the high demand for the cluster. Furthermore, the cluster system has evolved to be the preferred mode of coordination in emergencies worldwide (Stoddard et al., 2007). It will be important that functions and mandates are clearly defined to avoid overlap with the work of other global governing food assistance bodies like CFS, FAC, Global Partnership, etc.

## 6. Netherlands

Within the government of the Netherlands, three ministries are responsible for food assistance: the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry for Development Cooperation. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights deals with humanitarian aid, one component of which is food aid. The Department of Economic Development deals with food security. Food assistance straddles the border between these two.

The Netherlands adopts the definitions of WFP and UNICEF for food assistance and nutrition. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights is currently in the process of developing a humanitarian aid policy. However, this makes little reference to food assistance because it is not considered a high priority at this time. The policy pays much more attention to issues of accountability, coordination, needs assessments and partnerships with NGOs.

In 2008, the Department of Economic Development developed the paper *Agriculture, Rural Economic Development and Food Security*, in which food security and cash transfer mechanisms



(including social and productive safety nets, cash-for-work schemes and school feeding programmes) are seen as one strand of a five-track approach that also includes increasing agricultural productivity in the context of climate change, supporting institutions and infrastructure, creating sustainable value chains and improving market access (Department of Economic Development 2008).

The Netherlands gives an annual, multi-lateral general contribution to WFP of €40 million. This amount was increased to €40 million from a previous level of €27 million in 2008 in response to high food prices and remained at that level in 2009. In addition, it provides €15 million a year in bilateral food aid to humanitarian crises in specific countries, namely Uganda, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Somalia. Netherlands adopts EU policy on local and regional procurement and does not engage in monetisation. It prefers to provide humanitarian aid via the CERF because this promotes better coordination and ease of monitoring.

Although the Netherlands supports school feeding in both emergency and development contexts, it does not have a specific policy on this. In addition to supporting WFP's emergency school feeding programmes, it provides bilateral support to the Ghana School Feeding Programme and is an active member of the Ghana Agricultural Initiative Network (GAIN).

The Netherlands sees the development of a food security cluster at the global level as a positive step, and a sign that agriculture is back on the policy agenda following a long period of neglect.

## 7. Norway

For Norway, food assistance sits strictly within its humanitarian policy and is part of its overall approach to food security. Specifically on food aid it states that 'food aid must be used with caution to prevent it undermining sustainable local and regional agriculture' and notes that 'the distribution of money is a more effective alternative in many situations' (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009).

Norway's funding for food aid is primarily through WFP although it also supports ICRC. It provides a core multilateral annual commitment to WFP that has been earmarked for the last two years. This is due to a growing concern with WFP's open-ended strategic commitments and what Norway sees as a lack of prioritisation on WFP's core mandate of emergency response to shocks. In the absence of earmarking, it felt its contribution was being used for under-funded projects and countries that Norway did not see as priorities. Norway's contribution is now earmarked for use in least-developed and food-deficit countries. Norway also contributes to WFP through responses to individual appeals and through the CERF (19 percent of the CERF of which WFP is the largest recipient).

Norway feels that WFP is failing to differentiate sufficiently between acute and chronic hunger and that it is spreading itself too thinly in attempting to respond to chronic hunger issues that would be more appropriately dealt with by other, primarily development, actors. It feels that by attempting to do too much WFP is hurting its preparedness to deal with shocks and that it would struggle to cope with concurrent major emergencies. Norway feels that WFP needs to make strategic choices in part to deal with a \$2.6 billion deficit in 2009 and that this should take the form of focusing on its emergency operations.

Norway is supportive of the current financial framework review and would like to see WFP moving away from the tonnage-based funding model and be more selective about what it includes in its PRRO category. It would like development projects to be clearly labelled in long-term country programmes and not included in PRROs. Norway is not in favour of greater WFP engagement with long-term social protection because it desires to see WFP maintain an emergency focus. However, Norway recognises that WFP's is sometimes one of the few actors present in fragile states and protracted crises and therefore it is difficult to hand over to development actors.

Norway is in favour of WFP's move from a food aid to a food assistance agency and embraces cash-based programming. It has concerns over purchase for progress and would like FAO to play a greater role, as WFP is not and should not be an agriculture organisation.

Norway does not contribute to school feeding and has concerns about the weakness of exit strategies. It also feels that WFP's monitoring capacity needs to improve. WFP has a good gender strategy on paper but needs to improve how this is implemented at field level and should have a greater focus on protection issues.

Norway has disengaged from discussions around the FAC and sees no need for a new convention. The emerging global food security architecture coming out of L'Aquila, G8 and G20 discussions, the HLTF (High-Level Task Force) and the revised CFS mean that the debate has moved on and food aid should fit within this broader food security architecture.

On clusters, Norway sees good practice emerging at field level; for example, in Haiti WFP, FAO and IFAD, using the cluster model, worked well together and with an appropriate division of responsibilities.

## 8. Sweden

Sweden only provides food assistance for humanitarian purposes, primarily through WFP as well as funding for the Red Cross Movement and the CERF (where Sweden is the third largest donor).

**Table 5: Swedish funding for WFP, 2004–10**

| 2004        | 2005        | 2006        | 2007        | 2008        | 2009        | 2010        |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| SEK         | SEK         | SEK         | SEK         | SEK         | SEK         | SEK         |
| 290,000,000 | 390,000,000 | 410,000,000 | 390,000,000 | 450,000,000 | 415,000,000 | 480,000,000 |

Sweden's annual letter to WFP, which sets the framework for how WFP can use the Swedish core contributions, says expressly that WFP must not use the money in its development programmes. By saying so, Sweden is stressing that sees WFP's comparative advantage as humanitarian operations and views the organisation as a humanitarian actor, not as a development actor (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2008). Sweden would like to see a tighter use of PRROs with a narrower definition of what constitutes recovery. It is supportive of WFP's financial framework review and would like to see a stronger prioritisation process both between and within emergencies on the part of WFP.

A Swedish review of WFP assessed its internal and external effectiveness as good and noted its strong country presence and progress in the areas of local procurement, handover strategies and better needs assessment, which Sweden sees as important (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008).

Sweden does support the use of cash, the shift to local procurement and other innovative tools for food assistance. As its food assistance comes from its humanitarian budget line and is solely for WFP, the debate over definitions is not of particular importance. Sweden has not been very involved in debates over the renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention, which it does not see as a major priority.

## 9. United Kingdom

The Department for International Development (DFID) does not have a food assistance policy in one identifiable place. The 2002 paper 'Eliminating Hunger' is still relevant. DFID's humanitarian policy contains a short section on appropriate responses and commits DFID to examining the role of food aid on a case-by-case basis. A social protection policy is being drafted and a new nutrition strategy has just been launched. DFID also fed extensively into the new ECHO humanitarian food assistance policy and agrees with its principles. DFID still tends to use the terms food aid and food assistance interchangeably but is increasingly moving to using food assistance and agrees with the ECHO policy definition.

The food price crisis led to a greater focus on food security within DFID, especially on agricultural production, nutrition and access issues, notably social protection. It created a better awareness that food security is not just about agricultural production but also about poor peoples' access to food. A global level, it led DFID and others to push for stronger leadership around food security issues—the UN

HLTF and G8 and G20 engagements have been welcome results.

DFID's food aid support is largely channelled through WFP. Depending on the definition of food assistance used, it would also include DFID's support to safety net programmes such as the PSNP in Ethiopia and the Kenya Hunger Safety Net.

DFID continues to be supportive of the use of cash where appropriate. However the food price crisis did challenge assumptions that cash should be the transfer of choice. Evaluations such as one carried out by Save the Children in Ethiopia have argued for a mix of food and cash, but with the flexibility to choose between cash and food instruments, something that is often difficult in practice.

In general, DFID does not fund WFP to do development because it channels most of its sectoral funds through country-led sector-wide programmes or general budget support. It also reflects concern over the programming quality of much of WFP's traditional developmental work. School feeding for example, would need to be part of a government-led education programme and funded through the government budget. DFID applauds WFP reconsideration of the way it delivers school feeding. However, it still thinks that universal delivery is unaffordable in poorer countries. It believes school feeding needs to be carefully targeted on the most vulnerable. DFID is also sceptical about WFP's food for work/assets programmes, which have a patchy record. Food transfers are seen as an odd 'organising principle' around which to design education, training or asset-building activities—and a hangover from the era when there was a need to find things to do with surplus food.

DFID continues to strongly support the expansion of social protection and the White Paper in 2009 "Building our common future (DfID, 2009) contains a commitment to bringing another 50 million people into social assistance and related measures. DFID is also looking to build stronger links with disaster risk reduction programming, improving livestock responses in pastoralist areas and exploring new options for food security support, such as micro-insurance.

The labelling of assistance as humanitarian or development is not always helpful and it is possible to see the connectivity of food assistance as part of strengthening social protection as both developmental and humanitarian. People within DFID are increasingly thinking in terms of developmental approaches—more about how you do things than about what you do.



DFID encourages WFP to focus on its core humanitarian and logistics capacities. However, it is now seeing a potential for WFP to work on social protection, nutrition, risk management and capacity building if it can demonstrate real added value, particularly in fragile states and chronic crises. DFID country programmes are becoming more willing to consider an expanded WFP role. However, WFP does not have a huge cadre of staff appropriately skilled to engage in these areas.

DFID sees the continuation of the HLTF as important and that it will continue to be needed whilst FAO goes through a process of reform. The revised Committee on Food Security is seen as important from a democratic point of view, bringing in G77 and NGO voices. There are concerns over its lack of usefulness in the past and that the revised structure will need to prove its worth. DFID increasingly sees the FAC as having outlived its usefulness and as being superseded by broader debates around a revised food security architecture.

## 10. Australia

The Australian government does not have a formal food aid or food assistance policy. It does now have a food security strategy (since 2009) supported by additional financing (\$464.2 million Australian over four years). This focuses on strengthening agricultural productivity, rural livelihoods and building community resilience in selected countries. Food aid, however, is not included within the strategy. Australia's 'food aid/assistance programme' was finally untied in 2005, the same time at which the broader aid programme was being untied. AusAID does not have its own definitions for food aid or food assistance and follows those used by WFP.

Although Australia does not have a formal definition of food aid or food assistance, it does see itself as flexible in how it provides food assistance. Australia supports not only the provision of relevant commodities but also the logistics, emergency telecommunications, cash transfers and food vouchers, nutrition research, mapping and needs assessments, which all contribute to ensuring that vulnerable populations receive nutritious food in a timely fashion. One example of the flexible approach is Australia's provision of funding to WFP over the last three years to enhance WFP's emergency preparedness, needs assessment and response in the Asia-Pacific region.

Responsibility for food aid sits in the humanitarian branch whereas food security sits within the economic and rural development and infrastructure branch of AusAID. The primary focus of AusAID's food aid is its partnership with WFP. Australia also supports provision of food aid through UNRWA (\$5.2 million (US dollars in this financial year)). Much of Australia's support to NGOs is provided through broad funding to a number of NGOs in partnership agreements, rather than earmarked funding. Some of this may be used for food aid but

the government is not currently in a position to advise on the scope and scale of this work. Steps are being taken to ensure that this support is reported in future.

Australia provided \$35 million Australian to WFP as a multilateral regular contribution in 2009–10. This was covered under an earlier MOU (memorandum of understanding), which has now been superseded by the Australia-WFP Strategic Partnership Agreement. Australia's multilateral regular contribution has been supplemented with over \$64 million Australian to respond to emergencies and other country priorities identified and agreed jointly by Australia and WFP. The new strategic partnership agreement guarantees \$35 million Australian a year, unearmarked, for four years and an additional \$10 million Australian for school feeding. The agreement also provides for additional contributions to particular emergency appeals on a case-by-case basis (AusAID 2009). This sort of unearmarked multi-year contribution is still unusual and the agreement is being used by WFP as a benchmark to encourage other donors to follow a similar approach.

In broad terms, AusAID considers WFP to be a well-performing UN organisation and supports its broader food assistance work. It supports current attempts to review WFP's financial framework to move beyond the tonnage-based funding model and to allow greater flexibility in definitions and cut-offs between WFP's different programming categories. AusAID supports WFP's efforts to strengthen forward budget planning and continued strengthening of its monitoring and evaluation functions. AusAID is in favour of WFP's commitment to greater use of cash-based approaches where appropriate, increasing engagement with wider social protection debates and purchase for progress initiative. It would like to see gender concerns more firmly embedded in WFP's work. AusAID is following current debates in the nutrition sector with interest, particularly US-funded research on improving the nutritional value of food aid.

Australia is a member of the FAC and has engaged in debates about its renegotiation. It is in favour of allowing more flexible delivery mechanisms and as much flexibility as possible in terms of what is reported. This would include 'twinning' where one donor provides cash support for commodities provided by another donor. It sees potential for restructuring the committee, which needs to do more than report against FAC commitments. If the FAC is to be renegotiated it wants to see it play a more useful role. Australia does not want to have a renegotiation just for the sake of it. It still reports its metric tonnage commitments against the FAC, which it has, mostly, been meeting. However, it feels that its contribution is under-reported because current rules mean that not all of its support to WFP is counted.

## 11. Japan

Japan provides food aid to developing countries faced with food shortages and supports efforts to improve the food

productivity of such countries as a mid- to long-term effort. Japan does not have a specific food aid policy, but has been active in the L'Aquila G8 summit and other international food security meetings.

'Food aid' is understood to refer to aid given for humanitarian purposes to help those who suffer from hunger. By contrast, 'food assistance' is understood to be much broader, encompassing both food aid and longer-term efforts to achieve food security. The two ministries responsible for food aid/assistance are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Agriculture.

In 2007, Japan disbursed a total of around ¥16 billion in food aid (KR: Kennedy Round) to countries faced with food shortages. Of this amount, ¥7.28 billion was provided in the form of bilateral assistance to Nepal, Eritrea, Cabo Verde, Burkina Faso, Haiti

and other countries; ¥8.68 billion was provided to Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Palestine and others in the form of multilateral assistance through WFP and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Japan has been making active contributions to the WFP and became its fifth-biggest donor in 2007. It does not fund school feeding programmes.

Japan is committed to increasing agricultural output, irrigation facilities and food production through technical cooperation and other assistance provided to developing countries. In recent years, Japan has supported Zambia's efforts to diversify edible farm products for food security at the regional and household levels in areas frequently hit by droughts. In Uganda, Japan has introduced sustainable irrigation farming that effectively uses water resources in order to increase rice production.

## III. International agencies

### 1. World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP has an increasingly dominant position in providing international food assistance. In 2008, donors contributed more resources than ever before to WFP (US\$ 5 billion) and WFP assisted over 102 million beneficiaries with over 3.9 million metric tonnes of food. This included an extraordinary appeal in relation to rising food and fuel prices, which eventually totalled \$1 billion, including a \$500 million contribution from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (WFP 2009a).

A relatively small number of large-scale emergencies continue to make up a large percentage of WFP's portfolio. Afghanistan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan together accounted for 45 percent of programme expenses in 2008, with Sudan, the largest operation, accounting for 16 percent on its own.

WFP in its new strategic plan set itself the task of transforming from a food aid agency to a food assistance agency; this included a commitment to providing cash or vouchers where appropriate and to strengthening the developmental gains for small-scale farmers from local procurement through the Purchase for Progress initiative (WFP 2008c). It has also continued to develop private sector partnerships (WFP 2009a). According to WFP (2009a, 20) the new strategic plan

*embodies a shift in WFP's approaches in response to global changes; there is an emphasis on assessment and analysis to determine appropriate responses to hunger in terms of context and in ways that contribute to the safety and dignity of the populations in need. WFP will employ a toolkit that is broader and more flexible: it will*

*include cash and voucher programmes, innovative nutritious food products to prevent and treat malnutrition, and Purchase for Progress (P4P) to enable small-scale farmers to access new markets and to encourage increased production.*

The areas of new emphasis in the strategic plan include

- disaster preparedness and resilience
- adaptation to climate change
- improved nutritional response through new products and approaches
- special attention to the needs of IDPs and refugees
- post-crisis and post-conflict situations
- expanded local purchase and clear handover strategies to ensure local ownership

WFP has yet to develop a definition for food assistance. The relatively new shift in the new strategic plan from food aid to food assistance means that within WFP there is still a lack of common understanding around the term. In a paper on cash and vouchers it defines food assistance as referring to 'the set of instruments used to address the food needs of vulnerable people. The instruments generally include in-kind food aid, vouchers and cash transfers' (WFP 2009f). This is a narrower definition than that proposed by ECHO—WFP is conscious of the need for a relatively narrow definition to delineate the boundaries between its work and that of FAO, which has the wider food security mandate.

The number of donors contributing to WFP has continued to increase. In 2008, there were 98 donors of which 66 were not part of the OECD. Pooled funding has become an increasingly

important aspect of WFP's financing. In 2008, pooled funds were the fifth largest revenue source, with the bulk (75 percent) coming from the CERF. WFP's share of the CERF has been one third between 2005 and 2008. WFP has a ten-year strategy for expanding private sector partnerships and fundraising. In 2008, companies and foundations contributed \$145.5 million in cash and \$48.8 million in in-kind contributions. Partnerships included TNT, Vodafone, Unilever, the Boston Consulting Group and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. WFP has a growing interest in playing a role in debates around longer-term social protection and safety nets. Its strategic plan talks about integrating assistance to re-establish livelihoods in transition situations with national social protection strategies and assisting governments in developing sustainable food assistance systems (WFP 2008c). It sees itself as primarily being involved in social assistance programmes where improving access to food is the objective and hunger is the problem being addressed.

Debates continue within the executive board of WFP and on the part of its main donors about whether WFP should focus more narrowly on humanitarian and transition situations or continue to play a development role. The food price crisis and subsequent debates around food security architecture have contributed to shifting the terms of debate around WFP's role in development; more actors see a potential role for WFP in supporting the development of social protection strategies, particularly in fragile states. Broadly speaking, some donors would like to see WFP play a narrow humanitarian role whilst others see WFP as playing a potentially useful development role. The G77 developing countries on WFP's executive board tend to support its assumption of a development role. The food crisis also led to an increased focus on improving the links between food assistance and food security and on stronger coordination between the Rome-based agencies. There is now greater conceptual coherence and stronger UN coordination driven by the UN High-Level Task Force.

In nutrition, WFP in 2009 developed a new approach to nutrition improvement. It has been working for many years on improving the food basket through areas such as fortification. The current focus is on both new products and new approaches. WFP is increasing its focus on preventing malnutrition through approaches, such as blanket feeding for under-twos during lean seasons, that aim to bring down seasonal peaks in global acute malnutrition. WFP recognises that traditional channels for nutrition programmes such as health centres have often resulted in limited coverage and that new channels need to be explored. WFP has developed an improved form of CSB known as CSB+ and is using new RUTF (Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food) products such as Supplementary Plumpy. Some confusion and scepticism on the part of donors exists about these new products, but CSB+ is based on FAO and WHO food standards (Codex Alimentarius) and existing guidance; the expert nutritional view is that it is safer and better than the previous CSB formulation. In order to demonstrate the most

cost effective options, testing of the new approaches and products to discern which to use in what contexts is ongoing. In general, food distributions, improved CSB and the use of micronutrient powders are helping to enhance the nutritional value of general rations. New tools such as dietary diversity scores and the 'cost of diet tool' developed by Save the Children are helping to better monitor the nutritional impact of food assistance.

A new policy towards food assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS is being developed and will be available in June 2010. Two areas of intervention are planned. The first is 'food by prescription' where eligibility is assessed by anthropometric criteria with clear entry and exit criteria and nutrition assistance is provided through the health sector and linked to treatment. The second is food assistance for affected households, orphans and vulnerable children where food or income transfers may be provided.

WFP's food security analysis service has seen major improvements in assessment practice in recent years with the development of standardised approaches coming out of the SENAC (strengthening needs assessment capacity) process. The shift from a sole focus on food aid to food assistance and greater coordination with other food security actors means that new tools are needed to better prioritise solutions. German government funding is supporting an initiative to improve response analysis. WFP has also been involved with the development of stronger tools for market analysis. In Haiti, in coordination with Oxfam, WFP used the EMMA tool for market assessment. WFP desires to continue to build partnerships for national level food security forums and national capacities for food security analysis.

WFP is continuing to expand its use of cash- and voucher-based approaches. A manual has been produced and a unit has been established in headquarters to provide oversight, technical guidance and corporate capacity building. The manual includes programme and operational adjustments of all project cycle issues relevant to cash and vouchers (e.g., budget templates, WINGS, plans of operation, etc.). WINGS II is the updated version of the WINGS system that WFP has used since 2001 to keep track of all of its activity, from planning projects and tracking food aid shipments to managing finances and paying staff salaries.

Spanish government funding of €10 million is being used to implement pilot projects in Uganda, Niger, Yemen, Ecuador and East Timor with IFPRI providing randomised evaluations for each project. In addition, cash and voucher approaches are increasingly being included in country-level appeals on a demand-led basis. The 2010 biannual management plan forecasts that 7 percent of all programming (approximately \$300 million) will be cash based but this is a very rough estimate. In 2009, it was estimated that there were between 2.0 and 2.5 million cash and voucher WFP beneficiaries. Key issues moving

forward are the need to link improved market analysis with feasibility studies, partner capacities and scaling up responses.

In early 2010 it was agreed that WFP could co-chair with FAO a new food security cluster, which will replace the agriculture cluster. WFP also leads the logistics, emergency and telecommunications clusters.

## 2. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR has a strategic plan for nutrition and food security for the years 2008–12. It was developed in coordination with other sectors in the newly established Public Health and HIV Section (previously Technical Support Section) in the Division of Programming and Support Management (previously Division of Operational Services). It includes HIV/AIDS, malaria, reproductive health and water/sanitation, in order to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach across these sectors. The strategic plan aims to guide operations in camp, urban and other non-camp settings according to all stages of an emergency, as well as in local integration and returnee situations, during the period of 2008–12. It outlines four key strategies: (1) improving nutrition (including micronutrients), infant and young child feeding and food security; (2) ensuring provision of a general food ration where required, which is sufficient in terms of quantity, quality, regularity and equity; (3) supporting food security through strategies to enhance self reliance and (4) providing essential non-food items where required.

UNHCR works in close collaboration with WFP to ensure that food security and related needs of refugees and returnees are adequately addressed. It has a memorandum of understanding with WFP (established in 1985 and revised in 1992, 1994, 1997 and 2002), which sets out the division of responsibility and arrangements for, inter alia, needs assessment; resource mobilisation; logistics; appeals; monitoring and evaluation and nutritional surveillance, reporting, and coordination.

According to the MOU, WFP is responsible for transporting, storing and delivering basic food rations when the number of people in need of food assistance in a given country is at least 5,000, unless otherwise determined and agreed upon by WFP and UNHCR on a case-by-case basis. If less than 5,000, UNHCR and WFP will separately meet the food needs of persons of their concern, as well as the needs of any persons who, while falling within the MOU's scope, have been excluded by a situation-specific agreement (UNHCR/WFP 2002).

According to UNHCR staff, the only countries having less than 5,000 refugees/IDPs in need of food assistance are Eritrea, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In such cases, UNHCR will transport, store and deliver food rations. In situations where there are more than 5,000 refugees/IDPs in need of food assistance, WFP will provide basic food rations, and UNHCR will provide complimentary food commodities, such as groundnut oil, fish and tomato paste, particularly when refugees have limited access to fresh food items. Arrangements for the final distribution of food commodities to beneficiaries are agreed-upon jointly by the government, UNHCR and WFP, in consultation with beneficiaries, particularly women's committees, and in conformity with the established commodity distribution guidelines. A joint needs assessment mission will determine the specific food and non-food commodities and quantities required.

Where UNHCR procures its own food aid, it has a preference for local and regional procurement, where appropriate. For example, in Eritrea food aid is procured locally, and aid to Zimbabwe is purchased in South Africa. However, these quantities are very small. As such, there is no specific food aid procurement policy. UNHCR is currently piloting cash transfer programmes in a number of countries.

UNHCR acknowledges that nutritionally, food aid is sub-optimal and that in the case of refugee populations, even greater constraints to achieving good nutrition exist, given that, in many cases, their ability to produce food or access land is extremely compromised. As such, UNHCR is engaging with the international nutrition community to explore ways of improving the micronutrient intake of refugees. Depending on the context, UNHCR adopts several approaches that include the use of fortified foods such as CSB + and CSB ++, lipid nutrient supplements such as nutributter and/or PlumpyDough and micronutrient powders. While it recognises the need for long-term sustainable nutrition solutions, it also sees a need for continued use of imported fortified food commodities to treat high levels of anaemia and under-nutrition in camps.

UNHCR is also working to promote infant and young child feeding practices, linking them, where possible to local production. For example, in crowded camps in Bangladesh, UNHCR is working together with partners to grow vegetables on the roofs of dwellings, and linking this to the feeding of the most vulnerable populations in the camps such as pregnant and lactating women and young children.



## IV. Non-governmental organisations

### 1. Action Contre la Faim-International Network (ACF-International)

Food aid/assistance falls within the food and livelihood security departments of the ACF-International member agencies. These departments are currently changing their terminology from ‘food aid’ to ‘food assistance’ to reflect that a significant proportion of their food assistance is cash-based. However, these changes are not yet in ACF-International’s policy documents, which still distinguish between ‘food aid’ (including food commodities or vouchers) and ‘cash-based interventions’ (including free or conditional cash, vouchers and cash-for-work programmes) on the basis that these respectively address problems of food *availability* and food *access*.

ACF-International’s Food Security and Livelihood Policy (2008) frames ‘food assistance’ as one component of a broader package of instruments for addressing food, nutrition and livelihood security, including agro-pastoral interventions, cash-based interventions, food aid and income-generating interventions. It also emphasises the need to ensure ‘food sovereignty’ in least-developed countries, that is, ‘the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems’ (ibid).

ACF-International has a preference for cash programming where appropriate, partly because of its potential to stimulate markets and the local economy, and partly because it is simply easier to implement. For example, fewer problems related to shipping or storing large quantities of food occur. In 2006, ACF-International developed a position paper on political aspects of food aid, which recommends that in-kind food aid should be used only in acute local food shortages and that donor countries should enhance local purchases and triangular transactions by reducing in-kind donations in favour of cash donations (ACF 2006b). It has also developed guidelines on implementing cash-based interventions (ACF 2007).

More recently, ACF-International has developed a position paper on hunger safety nets, defining a hunger safety net as a ‘program that provides timely, adequate, predictable, guaranteed and multi-year resources transfers to chronically hungry people, thereby helping them to meet adequate minimum food requirements (in quantity and quality) and to protect, and sometimes promote, their livelihood assets and strategies’ (ACF 2009). ACF-International sees a role for hunger safety nets in preventing food insecurity and malnutrition, in particular in chronic food insecurity contexts, for crisis prevention, and impact control (ibid).

ACF-International currently engages in a range of approaches addressing disaster risk management, including climate change adaptation (CCA) efforts (such as providing drought-tolerant varieties of seeds), social protection (via the promotion of hunger safety nets), natural resource management (NRM) (linked with water and agriculture) and preparedness and mitigation action for disaster risk reduction (DRR). It has produced a paper on the links between climate change and under-nutrition, which it describes as a neglected issue that requires further analysis and urgent action (Crahay, P. et al., 2010). It is producing a disaster risk management policy that will integrate DRR, climate change adaptation and natural resource management with social protection unified by a livelihoods approach. This will also be applicable to conflict contexts. ACF-International is a member of the Trans Atlantic Food Aid Dialogue (TAFAD) and supports reform of the commitment structure of the FAC, as well as its integration into the Committee on Food Security.

### 2. Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB)

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of Canadian church-based agencies working to end hunger in developing countries. On behalf of its fifteen member agencies, the Foodgrains Bank collects grain and cash donations from Canadians, provides funds and expert advice for food aid, nutrition and food security projects submitted by member agencies and their partners, manages the procurement and supply of food commodities and engages in public policy and public education activities related to hunger and food security.

The Foodgrains Bank defines food assistance as ‘direct transfers to individuals or households for the purpose of increasing the quality and/or quantity of food consumption’. By contrast, food aid is defined as ‘direct *food* transfers to individuals or households for the purpose of increasing the quality and/or quantity of food consumption’. The Foodgrains Bank regards food assistance (which subsumes food aid) as an integral part of food security. Due to its programming relationship with CIDA (and hence the Food Aid Convention) it makes an administrative distinction between ‘food assistance’ and ‘non-food assistance food security activities’ (usually agricultural and/or nutritional in focus).

The Foodgrains Bank is currently in the process of updating its food security framework to place greater emphasis on rights-based programming and the empowerment of food insecure people, especially smallholder farmers. The learning of the past decade has called for a reframing of its food security programming to provide more clarity for its members and local partners.

The Foodgrains Bank spent \$15.8 million Canadian on food aid in 2007–8, \$26.7 million Canadian in 2008–9 and \$31.4 million Canadian in 2009–10. In 2008–9, 54 percent of its food aid programming was for emergency relief, almost entirely for slow onset crises; 36 percent, rehabilitation and 20 percent, social protection/development. In addition to conventional food transfers, the Foodgrains Bank is also supported by CIDA to implement nutrition programming despite the fact that these activities may not qualify towards Canada's FAC commitment. However, due to its funding relationship with CIDA and the Canadian commitment to the FAC, the Foodgrains Bank remains financially constrained in the greater use of cash transfers and vouchers.

Since the partial untying of Canadian food aid in 2005, the Foodgrains Bank has rapidly expanded its local and regional procurement activities. This has required the development of new procurement procedures more suited to the less predictable commercial arrangements in many developing countries. Today virtually all of the food aid commodities programmed by the Foodgrains Bank originate outside Canada, although the possibility to procure in Canada remains, should it prove appropriate. The Foodgrains Bank has not yet carried out any local or regional purchase through WFP although it is monitoring closely WFP's new P4P initiative.

The Foodgrains Bank has strict guidelines for the use of monetisation and has had very few projects over the past decade that meet the criteria. It requires a demonstration that monetised food provides additional supply to the market and does not substitute for local products or those that are commercially imported.

The Foodgrains Bank became involved in discussions concerning the FAC when Canada fell into arrears on its commitments in 2002. It successfully advocated for meeting Canada's commitments and then, recognising the problems associated with the current commitment structure, went on to work for the reform of the Convention itself. The Foodgrains Bank was a founder of the Trans-Atlantic Food Assistance Dialogue (TAFAD) and a Canadian Food Aid Convention advisory group (CanFAC). TAFAD advocacy was particularly effective at the time of the Berlin Food Aid Conference in May 2007 but has been hampered more recently by the slow pace of FAC reform. The Foodgrains Bank takes the position that the FAC, renamed the Food Assistance Convention, should, at minimum, collaborate as appropriate with the new Committee on Food Security (CFS) and possibly be integrated into the CFS in the future.

The Foodgrains Bank's food security activities are entirely funded by privately raised money. Food security programming made up approximately 25 percent of its total programming in 2009 (\$10.1 million – US dollars). The Foodgrains Bank has been actively supporting conservation agriculture and the use of sand dams, which are clearly linked to more efficient water use, a vital issue in responding to climate change. It is currently in the

process of deciding whether or not to classify these activities as 'climate change responses' and funding them as such.

### 3. CARE US

Within CARE International, CARE US leads on emergency food security and increasingly on food security more broadly. It is in the process of developing an emergency food security and nutrition strategy informed by commissioned research on best practice that was published as a HPN Good Practice Review (Maxwell 2009). Emergency food security is part of a broader food security strategy that also encompasses social protection, agriculture and value chains, nutrition and financial services. The food price crisis helped to drive the development of a global food security strategy and internal investment within CARE on food security. Food assistance is seen as not just food aid (including local and regional purchase) but also cash and vouchers.

In 2006, CARE produced a food aid white paper that committed them to ending monetisation (CARE 2006). This came into effect in September 2009. Monetisation had been a big part of the portfolio and CARE's food for peace funding has reduced significantly since 2006. The white paper created perceptions internally and externally that CARE was 'getting out of food for peace' or 'getting out of food aid' rather than just phasing out of monetisation.

CARE does still have big food aid programmes (e.g., in Ethiopia with the PSNP) and it is WFP's second-largest partner. CARE is an implementing partner with the PSNP in Ethiopia and with the Hunger Safety Net in Kenya. It also piloted social protection approaches in Zambia.

Its education unit does not see school feeding as a good idea, and policy says that CARE should not do school feeding. CARE believes it does not promote good education outcomes and has questionable sustainability. From a food security standpoint, it is seen as a bad targeting option. There are exceptions; for example, in 2009 in Zimbabwe school feeding was one of the only ways to get food to people.

In nutrition, CARE's food security strategy talks about a focus on food assistance in the short term but about a greater focus within CARE on moderate and acute malnutrition in the medium term. CARE wants to focus on moderate acute malnutrition and has been supporting the ENN (Emergency Nutrition Network) work on minimum reporting standards. It would like to look at commodities and alternative approaches but funds are currently constrained by the financial crisis. CARE wants a greater focus on the causes of malnutrition and on integrated approaches that include health, WASH (water, sanitation and health) and care, as well as food security.

CARE does have some cash experience but has not documented it well. Examples of this are a big CFW programme in Kabul



with funding of \$8 million over 12 months, cash grants in urban slums in Kenya and cash grants to host families in DRC. However, cash has not been institutionalised in CARE to the same degree as it has in some other organisations. CARE sees a risk of the pendulum swinging too far away from food aid. It sees a need to identify situations in which combining cash and food could be appropriate, rather than treating the choice as either or.

In the area of market analysis, CARE has been developing tools (EMMA and MIFIRA or Market Information for Food Insecurity Response). MIFIRA came out of the monetisation decision and was developed with Cornell. Cornell is running a seminar series and is applying it in Kenya and Uganda in the spring of 2010. A key issue is a lack of people with the right skills to support the tools—now the tools are available, but not the people. CARE is also trying to integrate procedures for good market analysis into preparedness systems so that it becomes a routine part of assessment and response. Funding for market analysis is tricky to access. CARE is asking FFP (Food for Peace) to provide small amounts for market analysis. Good market analysis is currently one of the weakest links in moving towards better practice.

CARE is increasingly looking to do its own local and regional purchase with funding from USAID and Food for Peace. FFP is starting to have budget lines for local purchase (\$90 million in 2009, a 2010 budget that has been increased to \$300 million). Annual Programme Support can be used for LRP (up to \$30 million) so significant large scale programmes are increasingly possible. This can also be used for cash and vouchers (there is no limit, unlike ECHO) although it is expected, in practice, to be smaller.

The \$300 million provides real scope to do more LRP and CARE is looking at the feasibility for LRP in each crisis. It is considering several possibilities for using LRP: in woredas (districts) in Ethiopia that are not currently receiving GFD but where needs are high, in Nairobi as a replacement for a voucher programme for which it has not been able to get renewed funding and in Zimbabwe for a targeted safety net. LRP also helps CARE to retain its food aid capacity, which is important as some core procurement and logistics capacity was starting to be lost with the phase out of monetisation. CARE is developing a strategic partnership with UPS and is trying to revamp its commodity management tools where it was seen as a leader but has fallen behind. It is developing new inventory and warehouse software.

CARE has been building new coalitions through work with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies and the Chicago Committee for Foreign Affairs. CARE's move away from the Coalition for Food Aid opened up new doors. It has switched from lobbying to change the Farm Bill to trying to get new legislation to Congress, where it has had greater success. It has been involved with the roadmap for global food security.

Engagement with new NGOs has helped to give greater momentum to advocacy efforts. CARE was part of TAFAD but has decided that it was not worth continuing to invest in efforts to renegotiate the FAC. It decided to focus its efforts on US policy reforms.

#### **4. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (also known as German Agro-Action)**

Welthungerhilfe (also known as German Agro-Action) does not have a specific definition of food assistance but supports those of the EC and TAFAD. It implements all elements of a consistent LRRD (linking relief, rehabilitation and development)-approach (inter alia, food aid, food for work and cash for work interventions) in emergency, recovery and development contexts in 31 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, with a particular focus on supporting smallholder farmers. Support is considered successful if people improve their quality of life to such an extent that they can take responsibility for providing for themselves—helping people to help themselves. Welthungerhilfe views food aid and cash transfer-programming as an integral part of broader food security instruments and approaches. Its definition of food security follows the internationally recognised 1996 World Food Summit definition: 'Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life' (FAO, 1996). It recently created a Knowledge, Innovation and Consultancy Department, which has a dedicated member of staff dealing with food assistance and food security. Other departments that deal with food assistance are the policy department and the finance department.

In the past, Welthungerhilfe has had reservations about school feeding as a food assistance instrument. However, it is currently implementing a school feeding programme in Burundi in partnership with WFP, encouraged by WFP's new, more holistic school feeding strategy.

Welthungerhilfe's Procurement Department is responsible for procuring all food aid not received from WFP (about two thirds of the total amount). It procures food aid locally, regionally or internationally. It has a preference for local procurement, seen as supporting local business and markets, but only if market conditions allow. It may also procure regionally or internationally. While it does not have a procurement policy in place, it does have clear rules for awarding contracts. It also specifies certain criteria, for example, that goods are delivered in a timely manner and that they are free from genetically modified organisms. As a rule, Welthungerhilfe does not engage in monetisation of food aid.

Welthungerhilfe supports the reform of the commitment structure of the FAC, but is keen to ensure that this is done

in a way that better considers beneficiary needs and in which beneficiaries are protected from the risks of price volatility. Given the many ongoing reform processes (for example, the reform of the Comprehensive Framework of Action (CFA) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), as well as the development of EU Food Security Strategy and Humanitarian Food Assistance Policy), Welthungerhilfe is keen that these be coherent. In this regard, Welthungerhilfe is lobbying for putting food aid and food assistance within an overall food security framework based on the right to food: This approach would ensure that food aid/food assistance targets those most in need, does not undermine local food production and markets, assures food safety, respects local diets and takes the most appropriate form. This approach tends to favour local and regional purchase, channelling resources to women and an explicit exit strategy as part of all food aid.

## 5. International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC)

In 2003, the IFRC developed a global ‘food security and nutrition policy’ which provided guidance and direction on food security interventions. This policy is currently being revised to broaden the focus, and to take into account the impact of the food price/economic crisis and climate change realities, as well as IFRC’s new ten-year strategy (*Strategy 2020: Saving Lives, Changing Minds*). IFRC along with ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) has also issued *Guidelines for Cash Transfer Programming* in 2007, which reflects de facto policy and practice, and are widely used by its national societies and external partners. Other guidance documentation focuses on nutritional and livelihood support for people living with HIV/AIDS (developed with WHO), and on food security assessment. The ICRC Nutrition Manual (Mourey, 2008) serves as a comprehensive reference, and guidance on nutrition education is forthcoming from IFRC.

The IFRC distinguishes between addressing the immediate needs of those in food crisis through its humanitarian work and working to reduce vulnerability through longer-term support to livelihoods and food security. IFRC primarily views food aid as a humanitarian relief mechanism for use in emergency and recovery contexts. Generally, there is a preference for cash or local purchase where appropriate. In emergency response and recovery, IFRC works to meet basic needs, to support livelihood recovery and rehabilitation and to address malnutrition in emergencies. Given the relevance of livelihoods and food security to longer-term risk reduction, and the inter-relationship between nutrition and health, IFRC is seeking to increase its engagement in food security and nutrition, and forging clearer linkages with livelihood programme approaches. It believes that the unique role that Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their volunteer networks play at the national level provides strategic opportunities to address community based risk to food, nutrition and economic insecurity.

A range of small- and medium-scale food security programmes is underway. There is a particular commitment in a core group of African national societies that developed a five-year food security strategic framework for integrated community based programming in 2008. It sees this work to strengthen livelihoods as at the heart of the IFRC’s work in disaster risk reduction, and to be integrated with community based health care, water and sanitation, and HIV/AIDS in order to strengthen the safety and resilience of vulnerable communities (IFRC 2008).

The majority of food assistance is resourced through Disaster Response Emergency Fund and/or emergency appeals through multilateral channels (by IFRC) or bilateral (through Partner National Societies). Some National Societies, mostly in Africa, also provide food assistance in partnership with WFP. WFP and the International Federation pursue further collaborative efforts in linking nutritional support with ARV treatment and operational research in the area of nutrition and ART (ARV therapy). It has also agreed to joint advocacy and regular consultations at all levels.

The Red Cross Red Crescent categorises food assistance as follows:

- *Short-term assistance:* The need for short-term food relief, rapidly followed by recovery/rehabilitation and development activities, is typical of many ‘sudden’ disasters, including floods, earthquakes, high winds, fires, pest attacks, short-term civil disturbances, etc. Food stocks can be destroyed, normal food supply and market systems disrupted, and crops damaged or lost. The aid might be required for only a few days—which is the case with many earthquakes—or up to the next harvest, if subsistence farmers and agricultural labourers have totally lost food stocks and crops.
- *Deferred assistance:* Assistance deferred—until just before the next harvest, for example—will be the case following events which have damaged but not totally destroyed crops or food stocks, as in many floods, storms and localised droughts.
- *Long-term assistance:* Assistance is provided over a long period and combines both relief and self-reliance development activities. Over time, the balance shifts progressively away from food relief. This type of assistance applies to emergencies due to successive crop failures and most situations involving refugees or displaced people.

## 6. Oxfam

Oxfam GB’s Humanitarian Department produced guiding principles for response to the food crisis in 2002, to promote effective humanitarian assistance to save lives and protect livelihoods in food crises. These guiding principles were informed by a review of the nature of food crisis and responses, including both an examination of Oxfam internal issues and the policies and practices of other actors. This review was

later built on and published as a Field Exchange supplement (Jaspars 2006). The principles promote the identification of appropriate interventions based on assessment, food security interventions which protect livelihoods as well as save lives and, in particular, the use of alternatives to food aid. The principles also recommend that food aid should only be provided when

- livelihoods are at risk because of food insecurity;
- lives are at risk because of deteriorating nutritional status;
- there is an absolute shortage of food and
- certain population groups suffer restricted access to food.

In 2005, Oxfam GB developed its food aid policy, which was adopted across the organisation. The policy was developed because Oxfam sometimes has contradictory positions between the humanitarian department, the livelihoods team and the trade team within the policy department. WTO trade negotiations and the FAC were being renegotiated in 2005, so it was important to develop a common position within the agency.

Oxfam's food aid policy defines food aid as 'the donation of internationally sourced food to recipient households, communities or governments, either as concessional sales or free of charge'. It states that food aid should only be provided in emergencies and, more specifically,

- when there is a total lack of food availability;
- food will not be provided through markets if the affected population is provided with cash and/or
- people are actively denied access to food as a war strategy or have otherwise been cut off from their normal food sources.

It also states that the humanitarian imperative will always take precedence over any concerns about negative impact on livelihoods and trade. Food aid in development contexts is discouraged, with the exception of social safety nets. The policy takes an explicit position against monetisation of food aid. School feeding is discouraged. Alternatives to food aid are promoted and, if it is necessary, that as much as possible should be locally purchased.

Oxfam has no specific definition or policy on food assistance but considers food assistance as including all interventions to address food insecurity.

Oxfam's cash transfer guidelines were produced in 2006 to assist staff in using cash transfers as an appropriate humanitarian response, but also to influence others (Creti and Jaspars 2006). Cash programmes have continued to expand within Oxfam. A recent review found that cash and voucher interventions implemented by Oxfam were largely appropriate, but also that more work needs to be done on market assessments and on calculating the size of the cash transfers. More than one cash transfer was often needed to

assist recovery. It also showed that it is possible to distribute cash in insecure environments using a number of different approaches. Cash was used not only to meet basic needs, but also to pay off debts and to meet social obligations. In addition, it stimulated trade. The report recommends a two-stage response in rapid onset emergencies: cash grants based on rapid assessments, followed by more in-depth analysis to examine impact and further needs.

The Oxfam position on social safety nets was not well developed in its food aid policy. It needed additional work, the importance of which became evident towards the middle of the decade. Oxfam International produced a compendium on social protection in 2009, and Oxfam GB more detailed guidelines on social protection. The Oxfam-International compendium views social protection as a right and as a means of addressing chronic vulnerability and repeated risks, which is particularly important following the recent food crisis and in the face of climate change. Oxfam considers social protection programmes as involving long-term commitment as well as needing to be large scale and achieving high coverage. Social protection is also seen as a means of linking relief and development. The choice of instruments depends on the context.

For Oxfam GB, social protection includes social assistance and safety nets (cash, food aid), legislation and social insurance. It is seen as a tool for reaching vulnerable people that are not benefiting from livelihood promotion projects and for reducing dependency on humanitarian aid, as well as addressing social and economic inequality. Within Oxfam GB, the purpose of social protection is to contribute to household income and to economic leadership of women, with approaches including both direct implementation and advocacy. DRR is considered to fall under social protection.

Oxfam has recently developed a position on school feeding. It does not support the use of school feeding in emergencies, but may support such programmes in chronic crises. However, implementing school feeding in isolation of other food security support is not recommended; rather, it needs to be combined with support for education and for safety nets.

Oxfam does not carry out supplementary or therapeutic feeding, but has a policy on infant feeding in emergencies. This policy highlights the risks of providing infant formula in emergencies (increased disease and death in small children). Oxfam therefore aims to support breastfeeding and supports the various international codes against the distribution of breast milk substitutes.

## 7. Save the Children

Save the Children UK and Save the Children US produced a joint policy paper on food aid in 2006 and a joint position paper on school feeding in 2007. The policy paper on food aid

frames food aid as one component in a range of food security responses that can help hungry people to access food in a predictable manner with dignity. It calls for a comprehensive response to food insecurity that includes food aid but also encompasses strategies for livelihoods preservation, market interventions, cash transfers, policy reforms and efforts to tackle disease and inadequate caring practices. It argues that ‘on its own food aid is only a partial but sometimes essential response’.

The policy paper defines food aid as the ‘provision of commodities or vouchers by donors for the purchase of food commodities by recipients on a grant or concessional basis’. Cash transfers are specifically not classified as food aid, given the inherently fungible nature of cash.

It argues that food aid should only be provided when there is a lack of food in communities to be targeted and that alternative ways of helping people to access food would either take too long or otherwise be inappropriate or unreliable. To make determinations about the appropriateness of food aid or alternatives such as cash, the paper calls for analysis of local markets and the likely impact of the response on local producers and consumers of food.

The paper calls for local or regional purchase of food aid when possible as it can be quicker, cheaper and provide more-appropriate and preferred commodities. It calls for greater flexibility from donors to provide the most appropriate resources. Save the Children argues that monetisation is an inefficient resource transfer mechanism that should be replaced by equivalent cash resources. Where cash resources are not available, Save the Children will ‘advocate for a principled approach to monetisation’.

Where possible, Save the Children argues that food aid programmes should be linked to wider national social protection systems and is encouraging governments to develop longer-term safety nets for chronically poor populations. Finally, the paper commits Save the Children to respecting the decision of national governments with regard to the acceptance of genetically modified commodities as food aid (Save the Children 2007).

On school feeding, Save the Children’s position is that school-feeding programmes may not be the most cost-effective way of achieving educational and nutritional objectives. It argues that non-food strategies such as deworming, micronutrient supplementation and the abolition of school fees may be more cost effective and sustainable activities. The position paper proposes a decision tree for country offices considering engagement in school feeding programmes, which asks, ‘is school feeding the most efficient mechanism available to address your outcome of interest’ (Save the Children 2007).

## 8. World Vision International (WVI)

WVI’s food aid policy was revised in 2008 to include both in-kind and cash that is programmed to respond to the causes of hunger and malnutrition. World Vision continues to use the term food aid so using food assistance is potentially confusing. (Food assistance has tended to be used in the US as a term for aid within the US. Food aid is that which is provided outside the US.). It is debating whether to include agricultural production support (seeds, fertiliser) as part of the food aid policy.

The Food Aid Management Group is part of the integrated strategy team and is one of a number of technical groups. It cuts across the three WVI ministry pillars of relief, development and advocacy and is responsible for policy, procurement and programming in relation to food aid.

WVI has continued to develop its cash-based programming, following a pilot project in Lesotho. In Pakistan, it provided cash and vouchers for shelter. It is currently discussing the use of cash in Haiti. Cash has also been used in Zambia, Uganda and Malawi. More work needs to be done to embed cash within the organisation but, in general, openness exists to consider cash as an option for a growing number of projects. How they are to be managed and supported is still unclear. At the moment, the Food Aid Management Group is taking responsibility, but often doing so somewhat outside of its mandate.

The global food crisis meant that WVI reached fewer beneficiaries per dollar because of higher food prices. The increasing numbers of hungry people also meant that WVI did not meet its own corporate goals. It did see a big increase in donor support, with funding levels the highest in years (although tonnages were less, due to high prices).

WVI is engaged in school feeding and has been making investments to better understand it, including what its limitations are and what it can expect to achieve in different settings. WVI sees school feeding as a platform for integrating other issues such as HIV/AIDS education. It has a draft internal position paper on school feeding.

Concerning nutrition, World Vision is involved in debates about new products and approaches to supplementary and therapeutic feeding. It increasingly recognises that quantity is not enough and that a focus on the quality of food aid is needed. World Vision is examining whether food aid can advance and link more closely with its health and nutrition programmes. It is trying to be more inclusive in food aid targeting to groups the health teams in WVI see as vulnerable.

World Vision is getting involved in local and regional procurement (LRP). A policy has been submitted to senior

management. LRP does expose the organisation to different types of risk. At the moment, LRP levels are static and the policy recommends only cautious expansion.

World Vision was an observer on TAFAD and still has some representation through World Vision Canada, but there were conflicts over monetisation policies. It has been doing advocacy with WFP, other donors, NGOs and ECHO partners around the issue of pipeline breaks. World Vision’s position on monetisation is that any tool is better than nothing, given the 1.2 billion hungry people in the world; it advocates for a broader restructuring of the global food security architecture to reform monetisation.

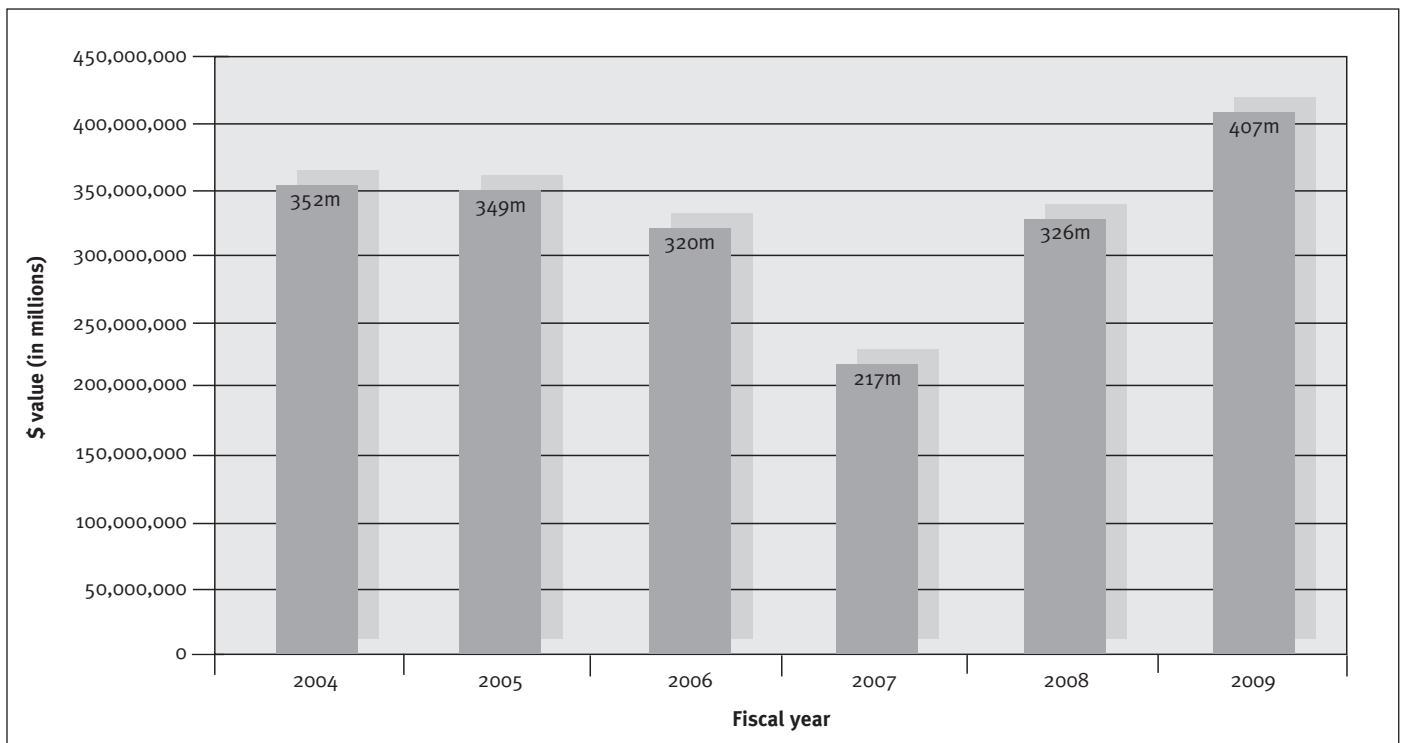
In relation to the Food Aid Convention, World Vision sees a need to look at the measurement of allocations and to move away from wheat-based commitments and to include micronutrients. Quality and quantity need to be advanced at the same time. Donors need to honour commitments and provide greater accountability and transparency.

In relation to cluster coordination, World Vision sees a need to have some autonomy for food aid, given that the speed and

pace of food aid responses is often much greater than those for food security. In World Vision’s partnerships with WFP there are ongoing concerns with overheads. Negotiations are often painful and sometimes overheads are inadequate. WFP still pays on a tonnage level and this leaves WVI exposed when there are pipeline breaks or WFP fails to deliver committed food aid. WVI feels a need to move away from a tonnage-based system.

World Vision continues to roll out its ‘last mile solution’. World Vision has piloted an automatic identification and data collection (AIDC) project, a ‘systematic effort to leverage innovative technology and business practices within World Vision’s last mile humanitarian programming’ (Narhan 2008, 2). This led to a hardware and software system using mobile barcode-scanners to manage the identification of recipients and the allocation of food. The evaluation of the pilot conducted in the autumn of 2008 concluded that, while attention to outstanding technological issues was needed before further scale-up, ‘implementation of handheld devices by World Vision in food programming will be of significant value’ (Carr 2008, 18; Ramalingam et al. 2009).

**Figure 1: World Vision Food Programmes, FY 2004–FY 2009**







# Annex 3

## List of people interviewed

- Katja Albrecht, EC DG Development
- Kilfemariam Amdemariam, Senior Officer, Food Security, Community Preparedness and Risk Reduction Department, IFRC
- Mary Atkinson, Food Security and Livelihoods Adviser, British Red Cross
- Ahmed Baba Fall, Senior Food Aid Coordinator, UNHCR
- Jock Baker, CARE International
- Suzanne Berkey, Managing Director, ACDI/VOCA
- Kirsten Bjuor, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN organisations in Rome, Royal Norwegian Embassy
- Susan Bradley, Director, Office of Policy, Program and Management, DCHA Bureau, U.S. Agency for International Development
- Rebecca Bratter, Director of Policy, U.S. Wheat Associates, Inc.
- Courtney Brown, OFDA
- Mary Chambliss, Deputy Administrator, Foreign Agriculture Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (retired)
- Stuart Clark, Senior Policy Advisor, Canadian Foodgrains Bank
- Marc Cohen, Senior Researcher, Humanitarian Policy and Climate Change, Oxfam America
- Silvia Croes, Food Aid Desk officer, Humanitarian Aid Department, Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation
- Ron Croushorn, Director, Food Assistance Division, OCB, FAS, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Jeanineke Dahl Kristensen, Counsellor, Danish Embassy, Rome
- Steve Darvill, Ex OECD-DAC, now CDA Inc, Listening Project
- Jan Delbaere, Deputy Chief, Food Security Analysis Service (ODXF), WFP
- David Del Conte, UN OCHA
- Ilaria Dettori, Chief, school feeding Programme, Design and Support Division, World Food Programme
- Stefan Doyon, Nutrition – Access Campaign (CAME), MSF
- Henning Envall, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Multi-lateral Development Cooperation Division
- Irene Fellmann, Deputy Head of DETA division, BMZ
- Marco Ferroni, Executive Director, Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture
- Damien Fontaine, Focal Point for Agriculture and Food Security, Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation
- Ugo Gentilini, Policy Officer, Cash, Vouchers and Safety Nets, Policy, Planning and Strategy Division (PS), WFP
- Nils Grede, Policy Officer and Deputy Chief, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS Service (PS), WFP
- Charles Hanrahan, Senior Specialist in Agricultural Policy, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress
- Jim Harvey, DFID
- Adair Heuchan, Ministre-Conseiller, Alternate Permanent Representative of Canada to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the UN
- Hans-vanden Heuvel, Department for Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands
- Melissa Ho, Analyst in Agricultural Policy, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress
- Arne B. Hønningstad, Norwegian Government
- Hisham Khogali, Independent Consultant
- Lisa Kuennen, Catholic Relief Services
- Heike Kuhn, First Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Germany, Rome
- Nupur Kukrety, Oxfam
- Nicolas Lamade, GTZ
- Rebecca Lamade, Monitoring and Evaluation Programme Officer (OXMD)
- Paul Larsen, Director of Multilateral Relations, WFP
- Sarah Laughton, Policy Officer, Child Hunger Initiative (PS), WFP
- Chris Leather, Food Policy Advisor, Oxfam International
- Simon Mansfield, DFID
- Thabani Maphosa, Senior Director, FPMG – Operations and Strategy, World Vision
- Neil Marsland, FAO
- Hannah Mattinen, Food Security and Livelihoods Advisor, ACF
- Dan Maxwell, Feinstein Centre
- Mary-Ellen McGroarty, WFP (P4P)
- Nicole Menage, Director, Food Procurement, WFP
- Joop Menkveld, Head, International Procurement, WFP
- Walter Middleton, Vice President, Food Programming and Management Group, World Vision
- Mathias Mogge, Executive Director Programmes, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe
- Marianne Muller, Policy Director and Chief of Staff, UN System Coordination (Pandemic Influenza and Food Security Crisis)
- Miles Murray, CARE USA
- Sharon M. Murphy, Economics and Planning, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Ireland and Chair, Food Aid Committee
- Henrik Nielsen, Danish Government
- Jennifer Nyberg, FAO
- Willem Olthof, EC-DG Development Head of Sector, Agriculture and Food Security
- Vincent O'Reilly, FAO
- Frank Orzechowski, CRS
- Mads Oyen, UNICEF
- Maria Paris-Kettering, EC DG-Relex
- Rein Paulsen, Director, Quality, Strategy and Humanitarian Policy, Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs, World Vision International
- Silke Pietzsch, Food Security and Livelihoods Advisor, ACF

Jacques Prade, EuropeAid

John Prout, Senior Donor Relations Officer, Programme Design Service (ODXP), WFP

Alex Rees, Save the Children

Kate Sadler, Feinstein Centre

Patricia Sheikh, Deputy Administrator, Foreign Agriculture Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Kazumasa Shioya, Japanese Government

Jeremy Shoham, ENN

Flora, Sibanda-Mulder, Senior Advisor, Nutrition, UNICEF

Emmy Simmons, Assistant Administrator for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT), U.S. Agency for International Development (Retired)

Dale Skoric, Chief, Policy and Technical Division, Office of Food for Peace, DCHA Bureau, U.S. Agency for International Development

David Stephenson, Director, Policy, Planning and Strategy Division (PS), WFP

Anna Taylor, DFID

Phillip Thomas, Assistant Director, International Affairs and Trade, U.S. Government Accountability Office

John Tjaastra, International Grains Council

Heloise Troc, EuropeAid, AIDCO

Jeff Tschirley, Chief, Rehabilitation and Humanitarian Policies Unit, FAO

Paul Turnbull, Senior Programme Adviser, Programme Design Service (OMXD), World Food Programme,

Yuichiro Uoi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Tina Van Den Briel, Chief, Nutrition, MCH & HIV/AIDS (ODXP), WFP

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Constanze von Oppeln-Bronikowski, Referentin Ernährungspolitik / Food Aid and Food Security Policy, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe

Tim Waites, DFID

Nancy Walters, Chief, School Feeding Policy, Planning and Strategy Division, Office of the Executive Director, UN World Food Programme

Nicholas Weatherill, Policy Coordinator, DG ECHO

Patrick Webb, The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Caroline Wilkinson, Senior Nutrition Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Caitlin Wilson, Counsellor of Development Cooperation, Australian Delegation to the OECD, Australian Embassy, Paris

William Whelan, Program Analyst, Food Assistance Division, OCBD, FAS, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Dr Petra Windisch, Head of Food Assistance, Emergency and Transitional Aid, GTZ

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