

agriculture,
food security
and
child well-being

a World Vision Africa position paper



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Cover image: A woman in Mali shelling peanuts, as part of a World Vision-funded agriculture and micro-credit programme, which also trains mothers in techniques to improve their children's health and nutrition.
Photo: Justin Douglass, World Vision

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list of acronyms

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	HLTF	United Nations High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
AU	African Union	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme	NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
CFA	United Nations Comprehensive Framework for Action	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
CMAM	Community Management of Acute Malnutrition	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	ODI	Overseas Development Institute
DfID	UK Department for International Development	PANI	Pan-African Nutrition Initiative
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	REFORM	Regional Food Security and Risk Management programme
FAFS	Framework for African Food Security	RELPA	Regional Enhanced Livelihoods for Pastoral Areas
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	SPF	African Union Social Protection Framework
FFA	food-for-assets	UN	United Nations
FFW	food-for-work	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
GDP	gross domestic product	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
GPAFS	Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security	WFP	World Food Programme
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus		

executive summary

World Vision Africa Region has developed the following recommendations in response to the food crisis on the African continent. World Vision urges the African Union (AU) Member States to focus strategies and frameworks on protecting and enhancing the well-being of children as a matter of political priority, in order to achieve the African Union's goal of productive and healthy lives for the next generation.

Effective approaches to reducing food insecurity must be focused on improving child well-being and the livelihoods of households and communities where children live. The existing AU frameworks and initiatives aimed at combating food insecurity need to be more child-focused and go further to secure the needs and rights of children in the aftermath of the food, fuel and economic crises faced by the continent. In particular:

African Union Member States should

1. Begin and scale up national implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar III initiatives, which aim to address food insecurity, malnutrition and support for small-scale farmers, to ensure that children and vulnerable communities have access to nutritious, healthy food and long-term support for their livelihoods.
2. Immediately progress commitments to allocate 10 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) to agriculture in line with the Maputo Declaration, targeting smallholder farmers with the aim of implementing Pillar III initiatives.
3. Scale up investments in the area of agricultural research and extension, and increase funding for agricultural training and institutional support, while making sure that research is disseminated and positively impacts the livelihoods of small-scale farming households and communities.

4. Ensure synergies and complementarity between bilateral and multilateral initiatives undertaken at the national level to achieve maximum impact on poverty alleviation and improvements in agriculture for small-scale farmers.

The African Union should

1. Address donor fragmentation and ensure effective channelling of financial resources towards CAADP by bilateral and multilateral donors, providing better and more systematic integration between various initiatives, paying particular attention to Pillar III of CAADP and ensuring that all initiatives focus on achieving child well-being.
2. Assess the current impact of CAADP across Member States in light of the food price and oil price crises and the global financial downturn, advising Member States to implement urgently the most appropriate measures for their country contexts using existing AU and international frameworks, while paying particular attention to achieving the well-being of children.
3. Work closely with the Regional Economic Communities and Member States to implement the AU Land Policy, approved in 2009 to ensure that women have equal rights to owning, accessing and using land and that children have the rights to inherit land.
4. Continue to work with Member States on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and implementing the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group.
5. Build on the United Nations Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) and work closely with the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), towards establishing the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS).

introduction

In 2008, for the first time since 1973, the world was hit by a combination of record high food and fuel prices. Since then the situation in sub-Saharan Africa has continued to deteriorate. Despite the world declines in food prices over the second half of 2008, in many countries domestic prices of key staple foods are similar, or in some cases even higher, than in 2007.¹ The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund forecast a slow down of economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa to 1.7 per cent in 2009 from 5 per cent in 2008 due to the global financial crisis.² Meanwhile, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that the 2009 growth reductions could cost the 390 million people living in extreme poverty about US\$18 billion. This is equivalent to \$46 per person to 20 per cent of the per capita income of Africa's poor.³ With a one per cent decrease in per capita gross domestic product linked to an increase in infant mortality of between 17 and 44 per thousand children born,⁴ there is a critical need for the Member States of the African Union (AU) to make it a political priority to protect the most vulnerable communities by addressing the causes of food insecurity and their effects on children.

The World Bank estimates that child deaths in developing countries could be on average 200,000 to 400,000 per year higher between 2009 and 2015 than they would have been had the global financial crisis not happened, and that the number of people suffering permanent damage resulting from early childhood malnutrition rose by 44 million in 2008 as a result of the food crisis.⁵ With the largest prevalence of under-nourishment relative to its total population size, at 32 per cent affected, sub-Saharan

Africa saw an 11.8 per cent increase in the number of hungry people in 2009 alone.⁶ If left unchecked, rising poverty and morbidity will cost Africa the gains hard won in the last decade toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The food, fuel and financial crises continue to undermine the capacities of households, communities and African governments to achieve food security, particularly among poorer populations already affected by under-nourishment, instability, HIV and AIDS, conflict and natural disasters.

However, the current situation also offers the AU Member States an opportunity to increase expenditure in agriculture and agricultural research, to promote more productive and sustainable agricultural systems, and also to protect and restore the environment through appropriate natural resource management. It also offers the opportunity of providing support to viable markets and smallholder agricultural enterprises, building smallholder household resilience and capacity to manage risk in the face of shocks by promoting local, national and regional policies, and providing regulatory environments supportive of smallholder agricultural development – all of which will lead to better food security, healthier nations and stronger agricultural sectors.⁷

In addition, it is a critical moment for African governments to step up their focus on urgently-needed social protection measures, paying particular attention to children. Such measures may include appropriately targeted food and cash assistance where needed, and strengthening of support systems and community structures to ensure that families do not withdraw their children from school in order to earn additional income. Social protection must be supported by increased investment in community-based health care systems,

1 Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) (April 2009) *Crop prospects and food situation* no. 2

2 World Bank/IMF (2009) *Global monitoring report 2009: A development emergency*

3 UNESCO (2009) *Education For All global monitoring report 2009, Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters*

4 Harper, C., Jones, N., McKay, A. and Espey, J. (March 2009) *Children in times of economic crisis: Past lessons, future policies*, background note

5 World Bank/IMF (2009) *Global monitoring report 2009*

6 FAO (June 2009) *More people than ever are victims of hunger*, press release http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Press%20release%20june-en.pdf

7 World Vision International (2009) *DRAFT Global agricultural strategy*

ensuring that primary health care approaches integrate nutrition interventions to effectively address under-nutrition; by investment in Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) to deal with cases of severe acute malnutrition; and by deployment of additional health staff to carry out nutrition assessments, promote basic hygiene and prevention of HIV and communicable diseases, as well as to ensure access to health care for mothers and children.

In 2008, at the Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, the African Union reiterated its commitment to and the importance of achieving the MDGs for the prosperity and well-being of children:

“Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)... in Africa holds the promise of saving millions of lives; empowering women; addressing the scourge of illiteracy, hunger and malnutrition; and ensuring that Africa’s children have access to high-quality education and good health to lead productive lives.”⁸

8 UN, AU, EU, IMF, OECD and WB (2008) *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa*. Recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group. New York: UNDP, p. 1

agriculture and food security

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) defines food security as the availability, accessibility and utilisation of food, which ensures adequate nutrition.⁹ Faced by multiple constraints such as poverty, disease, lack of purchasing power, lack of rights and access to land and other productive resources, coupled with poor nutritional practices, people need more than increased agricultural production to guarantee their food security. Thus, food security needs to be addressed in combination with other context-appropriate livelihood-enhancing strategies that aim to increase people's coping capacities to deal with the vulnerabilities and risks they face.¹⁰

African countries continue to be characterised by a substantial decline in public sector support for agriculture and small-scale producers. A loss of access to markets, extension services and inputs has led to a weakening of the economic and social positions of the rural poor.

Since the 1980s, Africa has been a net importer of food, costing the continent an estimated US\$18.7 billion in 2000 alone. Full implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) for the continent, between 2002 and 2015, would cost an estimated \$17.9 billion – just 90 per cent of Africa's annual cost of agricultural imports.¹¹ Despite this, only seven out of 53 countries have implemented the Maputo Declaration's commitment to dedicate 10 per cent of national gross domestic product (GDP) to agriculture, signed by the African Union (AU) Member States in 2003. Another 13 countries have budget allocations between five and 10 per cent. The rest have allocated less than

5 per cent or did not disclose their progress.¹² Moreover, the 10 per cent allocation remains non-compulsory: there is no guarantee that governments will use this allocation to implement the CAADP framework and initiatives, despite the fact that the way they spend this money can ensure or undermine support for smallholders.¹³

Small-scale farmers, largely producing staple foods, carry out about 80 per cent of African agriculture.¹⁴ Evidence shows that countries that increase agricultural productivity most rapidly also see the most significant reduction in poverty. Research into the impact of agricultural productivity growth on the incidence of poverty in the Least Developed Countries shows that for every one per cent increase in recorded agricultural yields in Africa and Asia between 1985 and 1993, there was a 26.7 million annual reduction in the number of people living on less than \$1 per day, which was 2.45 per cent of the total number of people in this poverty range.¹⁵

However, smallholder agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa is at a crisis point. The majority of Africa's small-scale farmers live on less than two hectares of land, do not have adequate access to extension and marketing services, grow food without access to critical agricultural inputs, and are under threat from drought and floods due to poor coping mechanisms and increased vulnerability.

9 FAO (2008), *Right to food core glossary 2008*

10 Adopted from World Vision International (2009) DRAFT Global Agricultural Strategy

11 AU/NEPAD (2002) *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme*, pp. 3–4

12 NEPAD (November 2007) 'Progress in raising funds for NEPAD's Africa Agriculture Programme', *Dialogue Online Weekly*, Issue 205 http://www.triamedia.co.za/work/nepad/newsletters/2007/issue205_23Nov2007.html#toc1. Countries allocating 10 per cent and above: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger and Malawi; countries allocating between 5 and 10 per cent: Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal, Sudan, Gambia, Tunisia and Zimbabwe; countries allocating less than 5 per cent: Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Liberia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia

13 AU, NEPAD, COMESA (2009) *CAADP: The 10 percent that could change Africa*

14 FAO (2008) *The state of food insecurity in the world 2008* p. 35

15 Thirtle, C., Lin, L. and Piesse, J. (2003) *The impact of research-led agricultural productivity growth on poverty reduction in Africa, Asia and Latin America*. Proceedings of the 25th International Conference of Agricultural Economists (IAAE)

The increasing frequency of natural disasters, such as floods, drought, and crop and livestock susceptibility to diseases and pests, compounded by man-made degradation of the environment, have thrust some communities into a cycle of progressively deteriorating livelihoods. This is resulting in increased poverty and chronic food insecurity as households experience new shocks before they have time to recover from a previous one.

Since the 1970s, the number of natural disasters has been increasing rapidly, with Africa seeing the largest increase in drought-related disasters between 1991 and 2005.¹⁶ Drought in many African countries, especially in the east and Horn of Africa, is a cyclical phenomenon. However, the intervals between droughts are rapidly decreasing, with the long-term effects of climate change felt especially among the poorer communities. The coping capacities of poorer households are diminishing, with a clear inability among communities to restore their livelihood security before the next disaster hits. This means that slowly, their livelihood resources are being depleted year after year, resulting in increased vulnerability to shocks. Small-scale farmers and pastoralists are among the worst affected, with usual crop varieties reaching their heat tolerance limits and livestock losses occurring due to depletion of grazing pastures and lack of access to water sources.

World Vision's work in emergency responses shows that the majority of households that require food aid following disasters suffer from chronic food insecurity, which means they are persistently unable to provide adequately for their consumption needs. This leads to the conclusion that households receive food aid because they are poor, rather than because they are suffering from a specific shock that has led them to become food-insecure on a temporary basis. Therefore, when dealing with chronic food insecurity which is predictable, our response also needs to be predictable, with an increased focus on social protection measures and provision of safety nets, such as

cash transfers or food-for-work and food-for-assets programming (FFW/FFA). Where FFW/FFA is deemed appropriate, it must be meaningful to the community, targeted at the right groups, gender sensitive ensuring consideration of different positions of men and women and their influence on food security in a given community or household, timely, and of appropriate duration to ensure sustainability of the benefits and assets created.¹⁷

In order to protect community and household livelihoods in the face of natural and man-made disasters, urgent investment is needed in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and better preparedness mechanisms at the country level, as well as involvement in and support for regional and sub-regional level DRR. More must be done to link DRR to livelihood strategies aimed at increasing community coping capacities, and to integrate disaster risk management into national agricultural programmes looking to protect the most vulnerable households and children.

Drought and floods are further compounded by the unsustainable use of water resources. This leads to land degradation and bad irrigation practices, which result in reduced production yields and loss of crop land. However, according to the FAO,

Large benefits could accrue to small farmers by expansion of irrigated land to increase and stabilize the level of production, while also minimizing the role of rainfall uncertainty in agriculture. Irrigation investment projects have high rates of return, estimated as exceeding 15 per cent and even reaching 30 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. Significant gains in terms of welfare improvements are also expected from expanding irrigation investment. Increasing investment in irrigation by one per cent has been estimated as having reduced poverty by nearly five per cent in Kenya.¹⁸

17 Adopted from World Vision International (2009) *Sustainability of FFW/FFA programmes: A World Vision global review*

18 FAO (2008) *The state of food insecurity in the world 2008*, p. 39

16 *Ibid.*, accessed on 25 May 2009

Systems of rights and land tenure arrangements in many African countries require urgent updating, together with a reduction of gender bias in country policies to improve the security of land tenure for traditional and modern farming. With 60 to 80 per cent of labour in food production carried out by women,¹⁹ there is an urgent need for legal policy implementation based on equity and governance, where women have equal rights to owning, accessing and using land and where children's rights to inherit land, as well as protection measures for orphans and widows, are in place.

The majority of the 22 million HIV-positive adults and children in sub-Saharan Africa²⁰ live in rural areas. AIDS-related deaths and HIV are expected to substantially undermine household food security, with a negative impact on agriculture, especially at the smallholder level where production mainly relies on manpower. Death of productive family members and family members' time diverted to caring for those affected by HIV and AIDS can lead to loss of farming knowledge, loss of savings and household and farm assets, as well as to less land under cultivation, resulting in increased food insecurity at the household level and a decline in household incomes.²¹

If Africa is to have a viable, sustainable smallholder agricultural sector that has the potential to feed the continent, it also needs to move towards a widespread introduction of sustainable irrigation methods and tools. Furthermore, soil degradation, lack of crop diversification and lack of protection against market fluctuations need to be effectively managed to achieve food security. Investment is needed to support vulnerable households affected by HIV and AIDS through social protection, community health provision and smallholder agricultural

schemes which take into account the levels of labour input that such households can generate.

World Vision believes that a productive agriculture, together with proper management of the natural resources on which it depends, is essential to the well-being of children. Agriculture is one of the sectors that can help households and communities achieve secure, sustainable livelihoods that increase their food security and coping capacities during external shocks such as destabilising climatic, social and economic factors. It can also help households with asset creation and lead to increased financial resources. Evidence shows that when households are food-secure, children are more likely to be healthy, attend school and stay protected from external shocks. (See **Case study: Malawi**.)

Agricultural systems need to be framed in such a way that engage and enable poor households to generate sustainable livelihoods. Many policies focused on increasing agricultural production have neglected investment in post-harvest enterprises and non-agricultural assets, which can help diversify rural livelihoods. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET) argues that

To reverse this trend, governments and external partners should improve their understanding of labour markets and migration patterns and incorporate that understanding in national policies; establish functioning land markets, so that people are more able to move to new forms of economic activity; promote entrepreneurship; and tailor investments in infrastructure, education and health services to new livelihood patterns.²²

Agricultural sector investments need to target the organisation of smallholder agricultural producers and their integration into marketing and production systems. Investment should not rule out the possibility of creating

19 FAO Women and Population Division, 'Rural women and the right to food', <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/W9990E/w9990e10.htm>, accessed October 2009

20 UNAIDS (2008) *AIDS Outlook 09: World AIDS Day 2008*

21 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division (2004) *The impact of AIDS*, p. 62

22 OECD (2006) *Promoting pro-poor growth: Agriculture*, p. 13

new structures to replace the important role played by government parastatals (and in some cases, of reviving the now-defunct agricultural parastatals) in the provision of inputs and credit, as well as in marketing and negotiating power with crop buyers and input suppliers. In Latin America, a well-developed co-operative movement of small coffee farmers successfully caters for this function. The issues of land inheritance and secure land tenure need to be addressed as a priority. The African Union (AU) Land Policy, approved in 2009, needs to be implemented through the Regional Economic Blocs and at the national level in all Member States.

Bryson and Ekilina Chimwendo inspect their maize harvest following a farm input loan from World Vision. The three-year loan included fertiliser and maize seed as part of a wider agricultural recovery programme in Malawi. Money that the Chimwendos have earned from the sale of surplus maize has helped the family diversify into vegetable growing, buy clothes for their children and support the local secondary school to provide for other children in the community.

Photo: Baldwin Chiyamwaka, World Vision

Case study: Malawi

World Vision's work in smallholder food security in Malawi, which has previously experienced very poor agricultural growth, has focused on reducing food insecurity through improvements in agricultural productivity and natural resource management in vulnerable rural small-scale farming households.

The Malawi Smallholder Food Security Project was initiated in 2001, following severe food shortages. This project integrated agriculture, food security and educational, health and business strategies to ensure diversification and strengthening of household and community livelihoods. World Vision helped 8,700 farmers and 35,000 members of their families by assisting communities to establish a revolving fund for agricultural inputs and drugs for livestock, and to initiate a Farmers' Association, an institution whose key objective was to sustain the development initiatives launched by the project. Activities focused on improving crop production through crop diversification, storage, processing and marketing facilitation, including support for a number of small retail businesses; improving livestock production of small stocks; and improving the health status of vulnerable groups in the local population by integrating improved nutrition interventions and through care for children orphaned by AIDS and for people living with HIV and AIDS. The project encouraged natural resource conservation and management through appropriate training and timely supply of essential farm inputs, particularly for food crop production.

The project review showed an average four-fold increase in the income of targeted households, a significant increase in the total crop production per household, a marked reduction in negative coping strategies (such as selling of household assets during the winter months), with evidence that additional income was being used to buy new clothes for household members, pay for children's education and buy more food from the market. The prevalence of underweight children and wasting decreased by 8.8 per cent and 2 per cent respectively.



child well-being and food security

World Vision's child focus places its highest priority on children, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and empowers them, together with their families and communities, to improve their well-being.²³

To achieve the sustained well-being of children and fulfilment of their rights within families and communities, World Vision pursues a set of specific outcomes: **girls and boys enjoy good health, are educated for life, are cared for, are protected, and participate in decisions that affect their lives.** The foundational principles of these outcomes uphold rights and dignity for girls and boys regardless of their religion, ethnicity, HIV status or disability.

Child well-being within the household and community is the focus of World Vision's work on livelihoods, agriculture and food security. In every response, particular attention is paid to child nutrition (which is used globally as an indicator of household food security), as well as to child health, protection and education.

It is important to recognise that food security on its own does not guarantee good child nutrition. Nor is it guaranteed that children are protected, and have access to health care and education, if their family's livelihood from agriculture is secure. However, in the absence of food security it is impossible for a child to be well-nourished, and without 'a sustainable, resilient, ecologically sound, and economically viable agricultural system..., failure is guaranteed.'²⁴

A lack of food security is influenced by both quality and quantity of food, and food insecurity in itself is just one of the underlying causes that can lead to malnourishment, poor health and negative coping strategies for children. This is why food security strategies must focus on preventive responses, which include social protection, to ensure that children are healthy, that they have access to

free primary and, where possible, secondary education, and that their families have access to national security schemes such as social security and pensions.

Access to health infrastructure, water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as education, play a key role in preventing malnutrition and ensuring adequate child and maternal health. Malnourishment can erode human capital and undermine economic growth, reduce productivity and have a significant impact on reductions in income and increases in poverty. In the short term, the consequences of malnourishment include increased mortality, morbidity and disability. In the long term, under-nutrition can lead to stunted growth, decreased intellectual ability and economic productivity, reduced reproductive performance in mothers, and metabolic and cardiovascular disease.²⁵

Therefore, governments must ensure that primary health care approaches integrate nutrition interventions to effectively address under-nutrition and must develop comprehensive strategies that grant high priority to community- and district-level maternal, neo-natal and child health services for the poorest and most marginalised segments of society;²⁶ they also must place a high priority on the protection of vulnerable groups during disasters, through appropriate, timely and targeted emergency relief. The dramatic increase in the price of food during the second half of 2007 and 2008 has exacerbated malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies in children. Households have been employing negative food- and non-food-based coping strategies to deal with this increase, affecting dietary diversification and the quality and quantity of food consumed, as well as decreasing expenditure on non-food items, including health and education.²⁷ (See **Figure 1.**)

23 World Vision International (2008) DRAFT Food security strategy framework. Annex 9, p. 130

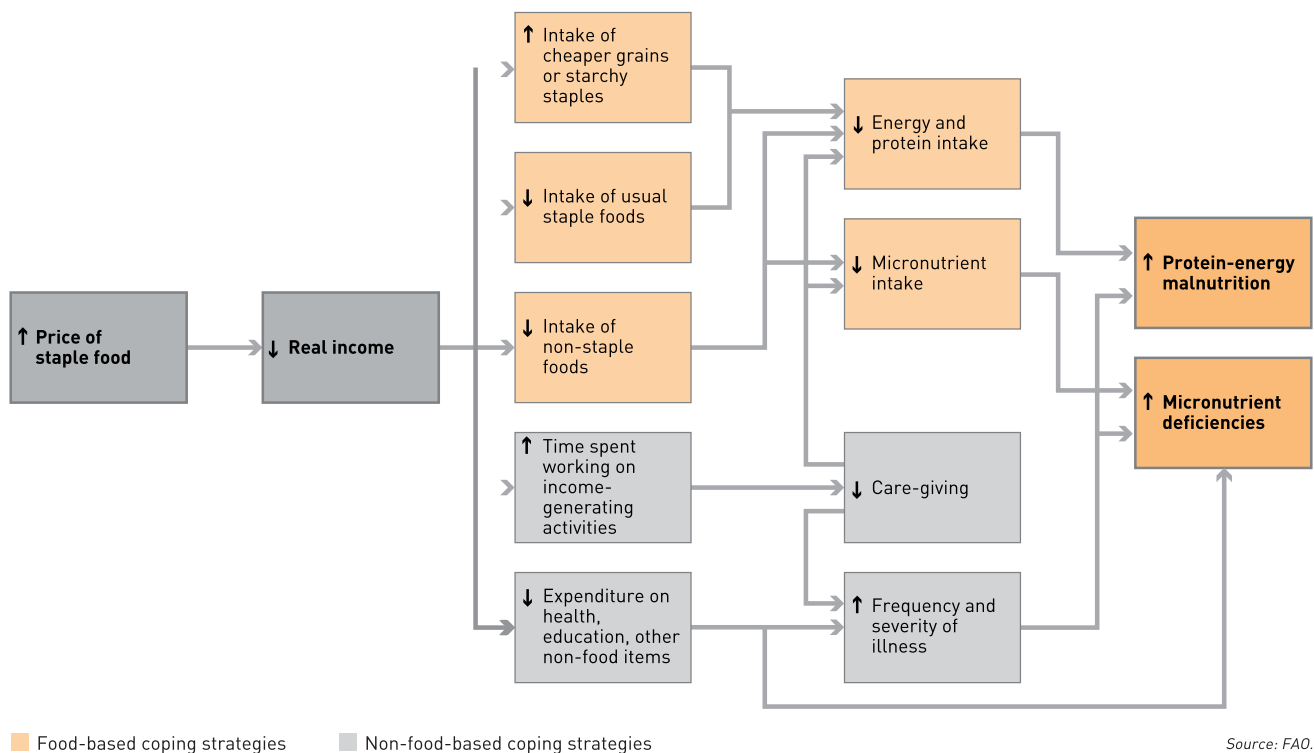
24 *Ibid.* p. 11

25 Black R, Allen L, Bhutta Z, *et al.*, for the Maternal and Child Undernutrition Study Group. 'Maternal and child undernutrition: Global and regional exposures and health consequences'. *The Lancet* 2008, Vol. 371, p. 244

26 World Vision International (2009) *Putting Children at the Centre of Health Care*, World Vision International Briefing Paper no. 2

27 FAO (2008) *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2008* p. 28

Figure 1: An FAO framework analysing household coping behaviours and nutrition impacts following a sudden rise in food prices²⁸



Such coping strategies undermine child well-being and reduce children’s access to health, education and protection, resulting in increased household vulnerability. They must be reversed through appropriate short-term and long-term interventions. In the absence of such interventions, countries in sub-Saharan Africa face the prospect of longer-term economic declines, and an undermining of their ability to compete because of malnutrition’s negative long-term effects on the current and future labour force.

Social protection, nutrition and health monitoring must form a critical part of any food security strategy, and be employed by governments with a specific focus on mothers and children. Even though governments monitor malnutrition, the monitoring systems are not adequately

resourced and need to have greater monitoring frequency, with improved quality and coverage of areas and of children in the monitored populations, as well as increased frequency in analysing and using the results to guide government policies.

A focus on mothers and children will allow health workers to intervene at the household level and to interact with households to facilitate access to treatment of sickness and to protect children’s health. For successful intervention, particular attention also needs to be paid to improving women’s literacy, improving and providing health facilities, and addressing water and sanitation to improve hygiene.²⁹

29 Mason J.B., et al. (2006) ‘Community Health and Nutrition Programs’ in *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries*, Second edition, Jamison D.T. and Breman J.G. et al. (eds), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank

Nutritional interventions focusing on under-two-and under-five-year-olds must be aimed at increasing the diversification of diets and adequate intake of an appropriate number of food groups. Despite this being a universally accepted age for interventions, appropriate infant and young child feeding practices need to be strengthened through training of health workers deployed at the community level. This should be coupled with increased distribution of appropriate and timely supplementary feeding. In the presence of severe acute malnutrition, interventions should focus on delivering Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM).

Particular attention must be paid to households affected by HIV and AIDS, where the erosion of food security and malnutrition are likely to be more severe due to the reduced productive capacity and income of the family members. In these households, children are most at risk of food insecurity through the loss of the main breadwinner, which can lead to the loss of access to land due to poor enforcement of, or the absence of inheritance laws. Most orphans face the additional risk of less nutrition, care and education.³⁰

World Vision's programmes in the areas of health and nutrition are targeted at achieving child well-being, and range from CMAM and Nutrient and Health to School Feeding and Long-Term Nutrition Security programmes – all of which include elements to address children and households affected by HIV and AIDS. These go hand-in-hand with programmes for food security and agriculture.

However, investments must be made at the government level to put in place preventive strategies which ensure that children and mothers do not require curative interventions for malnutrition in the first place. These strategies must be comprehensive, evidence-based and costed, granting high priority to community- and district-level maternal, neo-natal and child health services for the poorest and most marginalised segments of society. These must also ensure that cost is not a barrier to accessing treatment for children and pregnant women. Government leadership and strategic capacity to develop and implement national nutrition policies and action plans that target maternal and child care need to be strengthened, recognising that primary health care approaches must integrate nutrition interventions to effectively address under-nutrition.³¹

Investments in primary health care need to be coupled with programmes that support smallholder and other community livelihoods that enhance household capacities to cope with shocks. This will ensure that the household asset base is not being depleted and that families have the ability to sustain themselves without reverting to negative coping strategies, which can lead to children being withdrawn from education in order to work to earn an income.

30 Slater, R. and Wiggins, S. (2005) *Responding to HIV/AIDS in agriculture and related activities*. Natural Resource Perspectives, Overseas Development Institute

31 World Vision International (2009) *Putting children at the centre of health care*, briefing paper no. 2, 2009

recommendations to the African Union and the Member States

World Vision recognises that the African Union has existing mechanisms to address the current food crisis. We believe that a key part of the response must be accelerated implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), established by the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). CAADP was developed to address under-investment in the African agricultural sector and to contribute to achieving Millennium Development Goal 1: to reduce poverty and hunger by half, by 2015. It is a comprehensive strategy recognised by international multilateral and bilateral donors, and it must continue to guide country development efforts and partnerships in the agricultural sector.

Using the recommendations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Africa Steering Group at the 2008 AU Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, the AU identified a list of 11 key opportunities to scale up the achievement of the MDGs.³² Among them, four directly relate to food security, agriculture and child well-being and, if implemented as part of the wider response, can have a significant positive impact on combating the crises faced by the continent: meeting short-term emergency food needs resulting from the global rise in food prices to prevent malnutrition and contain political unrest; launching an African Green Revolution within the framework of CAADP to double agricultural yields, accelerate economic growth and combat hunger; implementing national school feeding programmes using locally produced food and providing full coverage of micro-nutrients through national nutrition programmes to drastically cut malnutrition and hunger; and strengthening health systems and phasing in of child survival interventions to achieve a two-thirds reduction in child mortality rates.³³

World Vision concurs with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) that despite the availability of such comprehensive strategies, and despite Africa's on-going commitment to the achievement of the MDGs, national implementation of policies to combat the effects of the rising food prices, a driving force of food insecurity on the continent, has been very poor.³⁴ According to FAO data, compared to other regions of the world Africa emerges as having taken the least action in almost all of the listed measures. (See **Figure 2.**) The World Food Programme (WFP) also notes that the current responses are driven mainly by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the organisations of the United Nations, with limited participation from governments or the private sector.³⁵

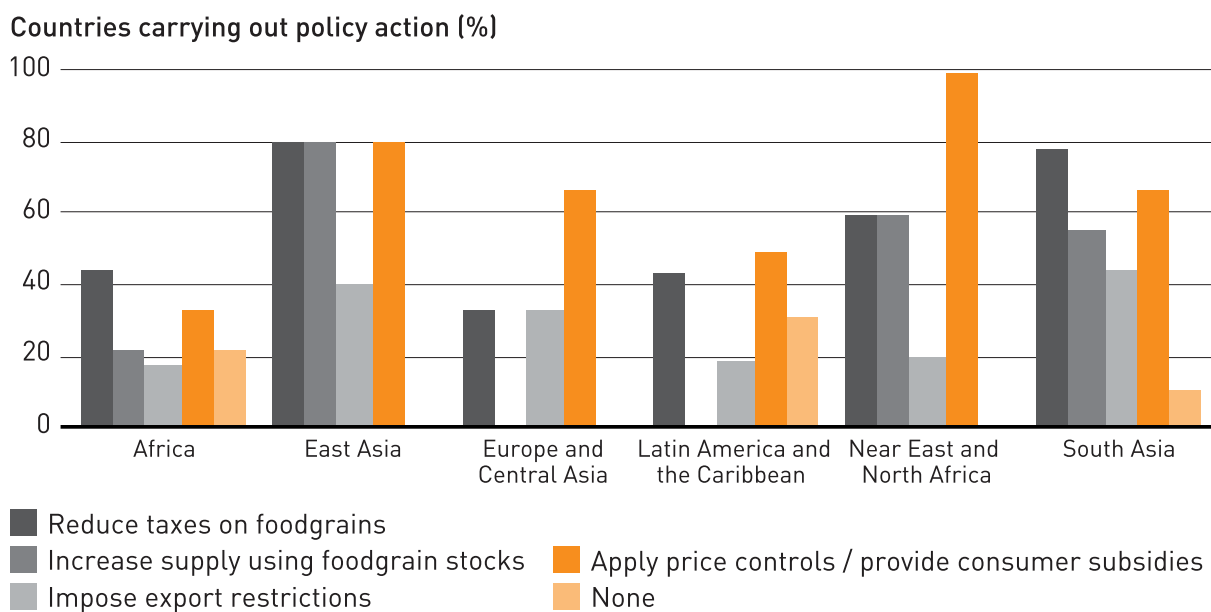
32 UN/AU (2008) *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa*, p. 4

33 *Ibid.*, p. 4

34 FAO (2008) *The state of food insecurity in the world 2008* p. 32

35 Gandure, S. (2008) *High food prices in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa: Assessing impact and tracking progress towards meeting the CFA objectives*, World Food Programme, p. 11

Figure 2: Policy actions taken by regions of the world to address high food prices³⁶



Note: Based on preliminary information collected by World Bank staff and amended by FAO (April 2008). Source: FAO.

An urgent and co-ordinated response by the African Union Member States is required to protect child well-being and to support small-scale farmers, in order to ensure the long-term economic growth and competitiveness of their countries.

Agriculture

Agriculture is central to reducing poverty, combating hunger and malnutrition, and accelerating economic growth in Africa. The rise in food prices poses serious risks to African countries: it has exacerbated food insecurity among the poor and is set to undermine hard-won development gains.

In order to increase agricultural productivity among smallholder farmers and to ensure food security and sustainable livelihoods at the household and community

level, Member States must guarantee smallholder access to basic agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and improved seeds; must support viable markets and smallholder agricultural enterprises; and must build smallholder household resilience and capacity to manage risk in the face of shocks.

Promotion and implementation of favourable legal and regulatory environments, and information flows supportive of smallholder agricultural development at local, national, regional and international levels, are both key to a healthy, resilient and sustainable agricultural sector that can support national consumption and lead to child well-being. The issues of land inheritance and land tenure need to be addressed as a priority.

New ways to effectively support small-scale producers through the provision of inputs and credit, and through

36 FAO (2008) *The state of food insecurity in the world 2008* p. 32, figure reproduced with permission from the publisher

improving their marketing and negotiating power with crop buyers and input suppliers, must be investigated. These strategies need to be coupled with an increase in expenditure for agricultural research, which promotes investment into crops that are environmentally suitable for the conditions of the given country and that promote national dietary diversification, nutrition and health. Productive and sustainable agricultural systems must also protect and restore healthy agro-ecosystems through appropriate natural resource management.

Africa ought to have a viable, sustainable smallholder agricultural sector that has the potential to feed the continent. As such, the organisation of smallholder agricultural producers needs to be improved rapidly to ensure integration of marketing and production systems.

The African Union needs to address the issue of pastoralists beyond the Pillar III Regional Enhanced Livelihoods for Pastoral Areas (RELPA) initiative, and needs to promote pastoralism as a viable, economically significant sector of national economies – one that can contribute significantly to gross domestic product (GDP). The development of livestock and fisheries should be awarded the same attention as agriculture within CAAPD. Evidence shows that the livestock sectors in Kenya and Uganda contribute close to 25 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively to the total national GDPs of the two states.³⁷

Child well-being

Malnutrition and macro- and micro-nutrient deficiencies among vulnerable populations – especially children, pregnant and lactating women, people living with HIV and AIDS, the disabled and the elderly – must be addressed as a matter of priority through comprehensive, evidence-based and costed health strategies. Existing and future health strategies must grant high priority to the poorest and most marginalised segments of society.

All primary health care approaches must integrate nutrition interventions to effectively address under-nutrition. More broadly, immediate social protection packages targeting poor communities should include school feeding programmes³⁸ in order to prevent children being taken out of school and to protect children from engaging in labour activities to secure their nutritional needs.

These strategies should be combined with targeted food and cash transfers, which will allow households to continue keeping children at school, to acquire necessary non-food items such as medicine, and to invest in livelihood activities, which can lead to positive livelihood outcomes and increase household capacity to cope with distress. National governments should improve investment in food-for-work and food-for-assets (FFW/FFA) programmes to ensure provision of developmental food aid, which provides household safety nets and moves households towards achieving long-term sustainable livelihoods.³⁹

Acknowledging progress

The African Union must be commended for the progress already made through the CAADP framework. The Maputo Declaration's commitment of 10 per cent of national gross domestic product towards agriculture has been a significant step towards agriculture taking a central place within national economies. However, a lot remains to be done for the Declaration to be fully realised by the Member States.

37 Omondi S.S. and Odhiambo M. O. (2009) *Pastoralism, policies and practice in the Horn and East Africa. A review of current trends*. ODI Humanitarian Policy Group, UK, pp. 3–4

38 Where introduced, School Feeding Programmes should cover a set of wide-ranging objectives, such as education, nutrition and health, livelihoods, and environmental protection and sustainability. Innovative approaches must be sought to ensure that school feeding is integrated into and fits alongside the wider relief-development continuum, contributing to a sustainable reduction in food insecurity (read more about World Vision's Food for Education and Enhanced Development (FEED) framework in World Vision International (2009) *An assessment of school feeding programmes: Programming food for development*)

39 Adopted from World Vision International (2009) *Sustainability of FFW/FFA programmes: A World Vision global review*. Food Programming and Management Group

World Vision also welcomes the AU commitment in 2007 to mobilise resources to advance maternal, infant and child health, as well as the 1999 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), which sets out Africa's commitment to reducing infant and child mortality and improving nutrition. The AU Social Policy Framework (SPF), released in 2008, also provides key guidance to Member States on the issues of social protection, health (including HIV and AIDS), education, agriculture, food and nutrition, as well as specific recommendations on issues pertaining to the family, children, adolescents and youth, among others. All of these, if implemented in a manner that complements other recommended strategies, could result in child well-being and food security for the most marginalised and vulnerable groups, as well as a decrease in poverty.

In the same year of 2008, the AU and NEPAD developed a Framework for African Food Security (FAFS) under Pillar III of CAADP, which provides guidance for Member States for addressing food security challenges, specifically the inadequate management of food crises, the inadequate food supply, and the widespread and persistent hunger and malnutrition.⁴⁰ The AU partnered with the FAO, World Bank, WFP, IFAD, the African Development Bank and bilateral partners, such as the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and others, to put in place the High Food Prices Plan of Action to address both the short-term and the medium- to long-term effects of the rise in food prices.

However, there is still a lot of fragmentation among different plans of action, even within CAADP. Child well-being remains on the margins of the majority of action plans. With the exception of the Pan-African Nutrition Initiative (PANI), which focuses directly on nutrition without touching on the details of the wider issues of social protection, health and household

livelihoods, children are barely visible past a few mentions within the other Pillar initiatives and strategies.

Children remain the largest vulnerable group in Africa. Despite this, African countries continue to perform the worst in the areas of child and maternal health, MDGs 4 and 5. Member States that wish to have a healthy and productive workforce, and to develop their countries socially and economically, must make child well-being a political imperative today.

Based on the above discussion, and in recognition of the positive steps already taken with the intention of ensuring that the progress towards reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs is not reversed, World Vision makes the following recommendations to the African Union and its Member States.

Recommendations

World Vision calls upon the African Union and its Member States to

Member States

- I. Begin and scale up national implementation of CAADP Pillar III initiatives, which aim to address food insecurity, malnutrition and support for small-scale farmers, to ensure that children and vulnerable communities have access to nutritious, healthy food and long-term support for their livelihoods.
 - a. Implement the Pan-African Nutrition Initiative (PANI), ensuring delivery of nutritional and health programmes at the household and community levels for maximum impact on children and pregnant and lactating women. Particular attention must be given to improving the quality and coverage of areas and of children during data collection; increasing frequency in collecting, analysing and using disaggregated data

40 AU/NEPAD (2008) *Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar III. Framework for African Food Security (FAFS)*

and statistics on the rate of malnutrition among children to guide government policy responses; increasing distribution of appropriate and timely supplementary feeding for moderately and severely malnourished children; deploying more health staff to deal with basic hygiene promotion, HIV and communicable disease prevention, health and nutrition assessments and access to health care; preventing at an early stage human illnesses such as severe protein energy deficiency, diarrhoea, kwashiorkor and tuberculosis; improving macro- and micro-nutrient intake through appropriate health programmes; improving sanitation and the distribution of potable water in order to prevent disease outbreaks; and increasing allocation of resources to the prevention and management of malnutrition as part of the National Health Budgets by Member States.

- b. In addition, Member States must work towards implementation of the Abuja Declaration commitment of allocating at least 15 per cent of government budgets to health by the end of 2010, and must develop comprehensive, evidence-based, costed strategies that grant high priority to community- and district-level maternal, neo-natal and child health services for the poorest and most marginalised segments of society; must strengthen leadership and strategic capacity to develop national nutrition policies and action plans that target maternal and child care, recognising that primary health care approaches should integrate nutrition interventions to effectively address under-nutrition; and must set up and adequately resource national health monitoring systems that include growth monitoring for children under five years, and birth and death registration.

- c. Complement programmes to address malnutrition with social protection measures, through increased budget support towards existing social protection programmes targeting children with school feeding programmes to help ensure they remain in education, cash transfers, and targeted food-for-work and food-for-assets programming. This should go hand in hand with the wider national implementation of the AU Social Policy Framework (SPF).
- d. Implement the Regional Enhanced Livelihoods for Pastoral Areas (RELPA) initiative, paying particular attention to investment in infrastructure development and social protection measures, as well as improved access to markets and pasture. Specific interventions must include improved prevention of pest infestation and disease outbreaks in livestock; provision of early warning systems and information to pastoral communities, particularly on animal disease outbreaks and drought; improved animal health services delivery, such as improved availability of animal drugs and adequately trained animal health workers; improved security in pastoral regions; increased investment in infrastructure to create markets and access to markets for pastoralists in order to improve pastoral livelihoods through the integration of pastoral economies into national economies; policy recognition of the cyclical movement of livestock in the form of securing and promoting mobility within the pastoral production system, and allowing pastoralists to gain access to pasture, water and markets and market information; provision of credit facilities and livestock insurance to pastoral communities; increased investment and promotion of livelihood diversification and education systems that are favourable to pastoral communities, especially girls; and

negotiation of bilateral and multilateral treaties to permit pastoralist access to pasture across country borders.

- e. Implement the Regional Food Security and Risk Management (REFORM) programme, paying particular attention to smallholder farmers by increasing household dietary diversification through the distribution of sufficient agricultural produce and products (aided by the availability of appropriate agricultural inputs, support to local markets and targeted agricultural subsidies); improving prevention of pest infestation and disease outbreaks in crops; promoting better agricultural methods that ensure conservation, protection and rehabilitation of natural resources; addressing the issue of land tenure and inheritance rights by carrying out legal land surveys and valuations and providing title deeds, ensuring that both women and men have access to or ownership of land for food production or farming; building capacity of farmers in rainwater harvesting and conservation, planting and nurturing of context-appropriate crops and livestock; and implementing relevant policies that address water harvesting, conservation, storage and distribution, especially in remote, drought-prone isolated locations.
 - f. Hand-in-hand with the REFORM initiative, ensure national adaptation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the AU 2011–2015 Programme of Action, to address and mitigate climatic shocks and increase the coping capacities of vulnerable communities. Give priority to building the capacity of communities to gather and use information through appropriate early warning systems; building and investing in institutions that focus on building community capacity in DRR; integrating DRR into national development policies and planning processes, as well as into emergency response and recovery strategies; increasing the mobilisation of funding for full implementation of DRR plans and programmes by translating DRR legislation and policies into poverty reduction, sustainable development and climate change adaptation strategies; investing in the strengthening of risk assessment, forecasting, monitoring and extreme climate event analysis within national meteorological departments and hydrological services, regional monitoring centres and other academic, research and scientific institutions; and including DRR in national school curricula.
 - g. Target and implement all the above initiatives at the regional and national levels in line with the AU Framework for African Food Security (FAFS) and the High Food Prices Plan of Action, to ensure maximum impact and concentration of resources towards children and the most vulnerable households.
2. Immediately progress commitments to allocate 10 per cent of GDP to agriculture in line with the Maputo Declaration, targeting smallholder farmers with the aim of implementing Pillar III initiatives.
 3. Scale up investments in the area of agricultural research and extension, and increase funding for agricultural training and institutional support, while making sure that research is disseminated and positively impacts the livelihoods of small-scale farming households and communities.

4. Ensure synergies and complementarity between bilateral and multilateral initiatives undertaken at the national level to achieve maximum impact on poverty alleviation and improvements in agriculture for small-scale farmers.

African Union

1. Address donor fragmentation and ensure effective channelling of financial resources towards the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) by bilateral and multilateral donors, providing better and more systematic integration between various initiatives, paying particular attention to Pillar III of CAADP and ensuring that all initiatives focus on achieving child well-being.
2. Assess the current impact of CAADP across Member States in light of the food price and oil price crises and the global financial downturn, advising Member States to implement urgently the most appropriate measures for their country contexts using existing AU and international frameworks, while paying particular attention to achieving the well-being of children.
3. Work closely with the Regional Economic Communities and Member States to implement the AU Land Policy, approved in 2009 to ensure that women have equal rights to owning, accessing and using land and that children have the rights to inherit land.
4. Continue to work with Member States on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and implementing the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group.
5. Build on the United Nations Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) and work closely with the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), towards establishing the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS).

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